

# **INDIA IN HIND SWARAJ**

**DEV DUTT**

**The paper was written for South Asian Dialogue on  
Ecological Democracy (SADED), New Delhi**

**E-mail: [networkscommunication@gmail.com](mailto:networkscommunication@gmail.com)**

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Devdutt

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

The main objective of this booklet is to present the essential facets of M.K. Gandhi's thought and practice as presented in *Hind Swaraj* so that intelligent citizens can identify the aberrations in Gandhi's heritage reflected in *Gandhigiri* or other over-simplified versions of Gandhi's thought and practice today.

The other objective is to participate in the ongoing debate on the relevance of essentials of Gandhi's heritage in 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when (a) industrial capitalism and industrially advanced capitalist countries are under siege, (b) the system of governance based on liberalism is under strain and (c) rapid nuclearization threatens the very existence of mankind as well as that of this planet.

The following facts may be borne in mind while reading and assessing the text of *Hind Swaraj*. First, that *Hind Swaraj* is a classic. It should be delinked from the life-long political activism of Gandhi. Second, that not Mahatma Gandhi, but (Manmohan Das Karam Chand) a forty year old struggling young man wrote *Hind Swaraj*. Third, that the thinking of Mohan Das Karam Chand must have been conditioned by (a) his rural Kathiawadi background (b) his understanding of the social reforms movements in India during the period 1857-1904, (c) his view of the early phases of industrialization in the U.K., (d) his experience of Passive Resistance in South Africa and, (e) his dialogues and discussions with leading Indian patriots in the UK who believed in violence and the views of a few influential British intellectual bureaucrats.

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There is one more point; initially, Hind Swaraj was addressed to a limited audience, viz., patriotic Indians in the U.K. attracted by terrorism and political violence; the extremists and the moderates in the Congress; and the emerging middle class ruling elite in India and in Britain. But during the past few decades of twentieth century, the ecologists, the pacifists, and the peace workers etc. who also were dissatisfied with modern civilization should find Hind Swaraj relevant in their quest for alternatives. Not with standing the fact that a few formulations in Hind Swaraj are either simplistic or hyperbolic, as a whole, Hind Swaraj should contribute not only to the debate on the above mentioned specific challenges but also to the ongoing critical debates on globalization and international terrorism which have surfaced during the last three or four decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Preface

### (i)

There is considerable evidence that throughout national struggle in India politically eminent Indians, important Indian thinkers in 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century were inspired by British version of liberalism. For example, Rabindra Nath Tagore, in an article entitled, "Crisis of civilization" admits this point

"As I look back on the vast stretch of years that lie behind me and see in clear perspective the history of my early development, am struck by the change that has taken place both in my own attitude and in the psychology of my countrymen—a change that carries within it a cause of profound tragedy. Our direct contact with the larger world of men was linked up with the contemporary history of the English people mainly through large-hearted liberalism of the nineteenth-century... I was impressed by this evidence of liberal humanity in the charter of the English and thus **I was led to set them on the pedestal of my highest respect. I could never have remotely imagined that the great ideals of humanity would end in such ruthless travesty**".

Even the British intellectuals and the British ruling elite perceived themselves as “missionaries” of civilization. For example, in his famous essay "Foundation of the Government of India" (1883), James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-94), Law Member of the Viceroy's Council, said:

the objective of imperialism in India is, to promote modern European morality, modern European political economy, and modern European conceptions of security of property and person... 'the English in India are the representatives of a belligerent civilization. The English in India are the representatives of peace compelled by force. Only a belligerent civilization can suppress by force the internal hostilities between Indians and teach them 'to live in peace, and tolerate each other. The introduction of such a civilization into India was the great and characteristic task' of Britain in India.

Also India's intellectual and political leaders (Tilak, Aurobindo and M.N. Roy and a few communist leaders in the first three decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century) dwelt on the post-colonial system of governance in India. In the late twenties and the early thirties, the British Government

organized a series of Round Table Conferences to replace the Government of India Act of 1917. These discussions led to the adoption of the Government of India Act, 1935. In late forties the communists and in fifties Vinoba Bhave campaigned for alternative systems of governance.

It may be also recalled that in forties of twentieth century Gandhi and Nehru exchanged their views about the post-independence set up. Gandhiji was not impressed by the two available dominant models of modern economy, viz., the capitalist free market economy and the socialism of the communist countries. He sought to create a system based on non-violent non-exploitative relationship. Gandhi held that property in excess of basic needs of human existence was a man-made privilege. Gandhiji had profound belief in economic equality. He would restrict the right of private property to what was necessary to yield an honorable livelihood. While for the excess, he prescribed the principle of trusteeship. Gandhi put down four objective. First, to ensure man's mental, economic, political and moral development; second, every individual should have equal rights and opportunities; third, there should be equality between the villages and the cities and therefore their food and drink, their way of life, their dress and their habits should be the same...people should produce their own cloth and food, their own houses, their own water and electricity; fourth, in order to make sure that one person does not ride on another's back, the unit should be an ideal village or social group which will be self-sufficient, but the members of which will be interdependent. According to the economist Prof. M.L. Dantewala, the salient features of Gandhian economy are:

- (1) Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one.
- (2) It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
- (3) It does not exclude legislative ownership and use of wealth.
- (4) Under state regulated trusteeship an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for selfish satisfactions or in disregard of the interest of the society.
- (5) Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society.
- (6) The character of productions will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

J.D. Sethi, a Gandhian economist postulates the following four underlying ethico-economic principles of trusteeship: 1. Non- possession (2) Non- exploitation (3) Bread labour (4) Equality of rewards.

In other words, Gandhi did not favour an industrial polity; Gandhi favoured a rural civilization. Gandhi believed in labour-intensive (*charkha*-centric) science and technology. Gandhi had also

an over-arching vision of human civilization based on Truth and Non-violence as an alternative to "modern civilization". He was convinced that India was qualified to serve as a laboratory, as it were, for experiments leading to alternative civilization or system.

Nehru disagreed. He told Gandhi

"Reading many of your articles in *Young India* and your autobiography etc. I have often felt how very different my ideals were from yours... You misjudge greatly, I think, the civilization in the west and attach great importance to its many failings. I certainly disagree with this view point and I neither think that the so-called **Swaraj** was very good in the past nor do I want it back... I think industrialization is bound to conquer India, may be with many changes and adaptations... You have criticized strongly the many obvious defects of industrialization and hardly paid any attention to its merits. It is the opinion of most thinkers in the West that the defects are not due to industrialization as such, but to the capitalist system which is based on exploitation of others... I believe you have stated that in your opinion there is no necessary conflict between labour and capital. I think that under capitalist system this conflict is unavoidable... You have advocated eloquently and forcefully the claims of *daridranarain*. I do believe that the remedy suggested is not very helpful to them. I doubt very much if the fundamental causes of poverty are touched by you.

In short, Nehru believed that urbanization is inevitable. Nehru accepted labour saving modern science and technology. Nehru was committed to only building a modern nation state based on egalitarianism with international cooperation.

Ultimately, the thinking of Nehru, as the first Prime Minister of Independent state in India, seems to have had a major impact on the policies and programmes of the Indian nation-state in the fifties of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the fact that recently Hind Swaraj has attracted the attention of more and more concerned citizen' in India has encouraged us to undertake the task of writing this booklet.

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# Chapter One

## key perceptions in Hind Swaraj

### Narrative

A number of key problems of contemporary Indian polity have been covered in Hind Swaraj. However, for a clearer understanding of the relevance of Hind Swaraj in regard to these problems an understanding of the implicit as well as explicit formulations in Hind Swaraj, should be helpful. The implicit formulations are: (a) there are two world-views, viz., non-dualistic world-view and the dualistic world-view; (b) the importance of the spirit of enquiry on the part of the seekers to conduct experiments with even eternal values (Truth and Non-violence) with a view to revalidating them in relation to time and space; (c) the concept of "necessary evil" which has been derived from non-dualistic world-view, (d) the concept of two cultures: one, culture of restraint and the second, culture of expression; (e) that embourgeoisement is inherent in modern industrialization; (f) the intrusion of the modern nation state, (particularly the system of governance) into the domain of civil society and that of the privacy of the individual.

According to the non-dualistic world-view, the whole is not a mechanical aggregation of the parts; life processes are not solely determined by the dialectical processes (thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis) but these are also determined by the process of i.e., *samanvay* (conciliation). Non-Violence and Truth keep the social systems, as a whole as well as its ingredients, in a state of dynamic equilibrium.

The dualistic world-view implies antagonism between the sacred and the secular, the temporal and the spiritual, man and nature, individual and collectivity, the global and the local, politics and economics, ends and means. Above all, each one of the ingredients of the two world views have its own constant. For example, the concept of "*man as a political animal*" and concept of "*economic man*".

\* \* \*

"Hind Swaraj" is based on the non-dualistic world-view according to which each of the various ingredients of a system are balanced by the "constant", (**dharma**) which (a) gives rise to "culture of restraint" as opposed to "culture of expression; (b) that which is moral is also good politics and vice-versa, (c) that there is harmony between man and nature which implies that "reverence for life", and "reverence for the Nature" should determine the use the limits of the of science and technology for human welfare and prosperity.

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The approach in Hind Swaraj is marked by "spirit of enquiry". **Hind Swaraj** variant of spirit of enquiry differs from that of modern scientific spirit of enquiry; the later aims at knowing truth by the separation of the subject and the object and the former aims at knowing the truth by the identification of the subject and the object.

It is note-worthy that Hind Swaraj questions almost all the major values and institutions of modern civilization viz., democracy, technology, economy, and means of resolution of conflicts, including war and violence.

The notion of "necessary evil" has been mooted in Hind Swaraj; but pragmatically. It is argued that the challenge in life is not one of achieving the "good" and fighting the "evil". In fact, the challenge is how to respond to "necessary evil". For example, machinery (read modern technology) has been denounced as outright "evil" and "sin". But, an exception has been made of printing machine; it has been admitted to be "good".

It can be argued that since the notion of "necessary evil" could degenerate into opportunism, only a sense of constant concern for moral and ethical means as well as sense of social responsibility can prevent it's degeneration, even in the hands of well meaning practitioners of the political power.

One of the differences between the approach in Hind Swaraj to "necessary evil" and its other variations is that Hind Swaraj rules out violence of any kind as a means, only the use of non-violence is recommended to tackle "necessary evil".

There is one more point; undoubtedly, the ideal of the Good deserves to be held in 'reverence'. But it does not mean, "romanticization" or "glamorization" of the good. On the contrary, it has to be constantly subjected to the process of "demystification" or 'deromanticizing'. Similarly, 'evil' has to be held in awe but it is not to be "demonized", but "humanized" and deemed as "necessary evil". In fact, the response to evil has to be calibrated, since different type of evils merit different responses; for instance, some 'evil' deserve to be ignored, some to be benevolently smiled at, some to be politely shrugged off or defanged or sympathetically exposed; only a few "necessary evil" call for direct action or confrontation – that too only by passive resistance, civil defiance, and sacrifice of all that is precious, including life. In short, the ultimate objective is not to conquer evil but to ensure that the good prevails.

**Hind Swaraj** suggests a number of non-violent techniques to give differentiated response to evil, viz. **satyagrah**, non cooperation, civil **disobedience**, fasting, self-suffering, and Constrictive Work Programme as well as many other devices which were developed by Gandhi during 1919- 40 in course of his active involvement with "several forms of necessary evil," for example, the weaknesses of the Congress Party and its leaders, the failings of his opponents and the failings of the people of India.

The concept of the bread labour in Hind swaraj has been also derived from "non-dualistic" world-view. According to it, intellectual labour and physical labour are not separate categories of labour. Bread labour implies that each adult member of society is a primary producer and that he fulfills his primary needs (food, shelter and clothing) by the sweat of his brow. Besides intellectual skills, an individual must also acquire skills to be self-reliant. This explains why **Hind Swaraj** is harsh to lawyers and doctors...who symbolize parasitical middle classes. The concept of bread labour should discourage reckless expansion or proliferation of middle classes and middle class values. It is an anti-dote to the unwholesome consequences of unchecked urbanization and consumerism which also creates ecological problems, including climate changes.

It may be re-called, since its birth after the collapse of feudalism in Europe the nation-state has been persistently creative and dynamic. But unfortunately, in Europe the nation-state is not only pathologically expansionist and exclusive, but it is also responsible for ethnic conflicts

imperialist and colonial exploitation, oppression and violence and wars in the contemporary age. No nation-state has willingly given up its hold on the territory, on the land resources and sovereignty; no nation-state has so much respected the right of self-determination of indigenous people; no nation-state has been able to overcome the temptation or the urge to undermine its own creator, viz., the civil society; it is homogenizing as well as hegemonic. Nation state is predicated at the cost of civil society. It is wrongly assumed that there is a politically imagined community of theoretically unified citizens who, despite living in distant locations and desperate social positions share similar set of interests.

### (iii)

Four civilizational values of India have been revalidated in **Hind Swaraj**. According to **Hind Swaraj**, "the tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being and that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality". Our ancestors dissuaded us from pleasures and to limit our indulgences. "It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They, therefore, after due deliberations decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet...". According to **Hind Swaraj**, it was by choice that the people of India's disfavoured urban living and they opted for rural living. The reasoning was that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance, that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and the poor men would be robbed by rich men. **Hind Swaraj** shows that passive resistance is a "specialty of India". It has been asserted that soul-force has been generally used as a political weapon by the people of India<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "The fact is that in India, the nation at large has generally used passive resistance in all the departments of life. We cease to cooperate with our rulers when they displease us this is passive resistance". I remember an instance when in a small principality; the villagers were offended by the prince. The former immediately began vacating the village. The prince became nervous, apologized to his subjects and withdrew his command...Many such instances can be found in India." (P.83-84)

According to **Hind Swaraj**, "the Indian civilization is unquestionably the best... and that the European is a nine days wonder". A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others . Therefore, Gandhi thinks,

"In order to restore India to its pristine condition, we have to return to it. In our own civilization there will naturally be progress, retrogression, reforms, and reaction, but one effort is required and that is to drive out western civilization. All else will follow".

Having revalidated the Indian civilization, Hind Swaraj offers *chutkara, that is the way out*".

"So understanding and so believing, it behooves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilization even as a child clings to the mother's breast..." e.g., we want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored... we can not tolerate the idea of your spending many on railways and the military we shall manage with articles produced and manufactured at home.

Its strength is immeasurable. When other civilizations succumbed, the Indian civilization survived many a shock. But because the sons of India were found wanting Indian civilization has been placed in jeopardy.

It has been argued since the fringe of the ocean has been polluted, it is those who are within the fringe alone need cleansing. We who came under this category can even cleanse ourselves. My remarks do not apply to the millions. I would certainly advise you to go into the interior that has yet been not polluted..." It is only for this "polluted minority" viz., lawyers, doctors and the wealthy and the like, which was affected by the European civilization.

**Hind Swaraj** enunciates a 19-point programme of action in the chapter entitled *Chhutkara*. This can be classified under four heads. The first relates to language. Make use of the English lanugage on rare occasions. A lawyer will take up a hand-loom and devote his knowledge to enlightening both his people and the English; not meddle with the quarrels between parties but will give up the courts, induce the people to do likewise; "refuse to be a judge". The doctors have been advised to give up medicine, and understand that rather than mending bodies, he should mend souls and that they should understand that no matter to what religion he belongs, it is better that bodies remain diseased rather that they are cured through the instrumentality of the diabolical vivisection that is practiced in European schools of medicine. Doctors will take up

a hand-loom, and if patients come to him, they will tell them the cause of their diseases, and advise them to remove the cause rather than pamper them by giving useless drugs.

The wealthy, men have been asked to

"speak out his mind and fear no one... devote his money to establishing hand-loom, and encourage others to use hand-made goods by wearing them himself, know that this is a time for repentance, expiation and mourning; at a time of mourning, there can be no indigence, and that, whilst we are in a fallen state, to be in goal or in banishment is much the best, that we shall become free only through suffering"; "that deportation for life to the Andaman's is not enough, expiation for the sin of encouraging European civilization".

To sum up, a plea has been made for a system which discourages any process which enlarges the base or the size the middle classes and which promotes middle class values. For this purpose, a plea has been made for abjuring the English language, rejecting the present system of education, abandoning the present laws and legal processes, deflating the importance of parasitical professionalization and commercialization and to simultaneously build alternative system of education, technology and economy in a decentralized set up etc... It has also been argued that since modern industrialism is the "mother" of sickness, its craze must be overcome.

Nevertheless, Hind Swaraj does not reject modern machinery *entoto*. It is said, 'I want to save time and labour for all. I want concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in a hands of all. Today machinery helps a few to ride on the backs of millions'.

Read as a whole, while **Hind Swaraj** rejects in principal all machinery but it is also admitted that some machines will remain.

Today India seems to be slipping into anarchic conditions under cover of individual freedom and rights. The collective inhibitions are getting loosened. **Hind Swaraj** is specially relevant in these circumstance. Social pressure could be generated by non-cooperation for the sake of social health and sanity.

The vision in **Hind Swaraj** has also the potential to respond to the challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century experience of the consequences of the application of modern technology on a massive

scale are compelling a growing number of people to endorse limited industrialization mooted in the Hind Swaraj .

## Chapter Two

### India in Hind Swaraj

**Hind Swaraj** has twenty chapters which cover one hundred and ten pages; theme-wise, it broadly covers (a) a critique of modern civilization, (b), a defense of the values of Indian civilization, (c) conditions of India, (d) *chutkara*, the way out. About thirty pages are exclusively devoted to six specific themes, viz., (a) education, especially primary school system suited to Indian conditions and needs; (b) relations between Hindus and Muslims; (c) machinery and its role in life and society; (d) the role of middle classes with special reference to lawyers and doctors in India; (e) brute force and passive resistance and (f) India's political culture.

Contemporary India also faces the above mentioned challenges viz., reconstruction of educational system, social harmony, system of industrialism based on modern technology, and growth of violence in civil society. The other challenges relate to basic issues viz., suitability of liberal democracy and India's political culture; existential challenges, (e.g., ecological degradation and climate change, global warming, international terrorism, violence in civil society) posed by the technology-driven and trade-oriented economic globalization.

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### Education

Since independence, the education system in India has been perpetually under reconstruction. Several commissions and committees were set up and several plans formulated. But still there are large backlogs and flaws.

Admittedly, Hind Swaraj offers neither a blue print of system of education for free India nor does it contain a comprehensive scheme of education. But it does demonstrate the rotteness of the education system. and makes a plea for restoring "our ancient school system.

It briefly emphasises three points viz., (a) need for incalculating ethical or moral values at the stage of primary education and character-building to have the first place in it, (b) reasons to discard the existing system of education

Importance of multi- linguism has been discussed, i.e.,

Every cultured Indian will know in addition to his own provincial language, if a Hindu, Sanskrit; if a Mahomedan, Arabic; if a Parsee, Persian; and all, Hindi. Some Hindus should know Arabic and Persian; some Mahomedans and Parsees, Sanskrit. Several Northerners and Westerners should learn Tamil.

The universal language for India should be Hindi, with the option of writing it in Persian or Nagari characters. In order that the Hindus and the Mahomedans may have closer relations, it is necessary to know both the characters. And, if we can do this, we can drive the English language out of the field in a short time.

The question of religious education has been emphasized. For instance,

We should abandon the pretension of learning many sciences. Religion, that is ethical education, will occupy the first place. Rank atheism cannot flourish in this land. The task is indeed difficult. My head begins to turn as I think of religious education. Our religious teachers are hypocritical and selfish; they will have to be approached.

But it has been re-assured that this is not very difficult... since

“Only the fringe of the ocean has been polluted and it is those who are within the fringe who alone need cleansing. We who come under this category can even cleanse ourselves because my remarks do not apply to the millions... In order to restore India to its pristine conditions, we have to return to it.

It must be admitted that the views on education in Hind Swaraj are not sufficient to be adopted for the reconstruction of today. However, we could consider these formulations on education in **Hind Swaraj** which were concretized in mid-thirties, on the bases of experiments in **Nai Talim** at primary level in the Wardha. It may be recalled that immediately after independence the Government of India adopted the **Nai Talim** as an integral part of the school system at primary level. No doubt, this system was abandoned in course of time; but this experience can be examined and lessons drawn.

## **Hindu-Muslim relations**

In Hind Swaraj there is no chapter Hindu-Muslim relations. The theme has been discussed in different context in the book. Firstly, the fact of communal disharmony has been admitted; for example, it is noted that the two communities have quarreled in the past and that the Hindus and Muslims have different perceptions; for example, Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing and Mohammedans do not. The two communities own allegiance to different religious texts. It is also admitted that the two nation theory is supported by the Hindus as well as Muslims. "Further, Hindus and Mohammedans are old enemies. Our proverbs prove it. Mohammedans turn to the west for worship. Whilst Hindus turn to the East. The former look down on the Hindus as idolaters. The Hindus worship the cow, the Mohammedans kill her. The Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing, the Mohammedan do not. We thus meet with difference at every step. How can India be one nation?"

But, several causes of disharmony have been noted, for example it has been stated that the question arises because of the presence of railways... If we do not rush about from place to place by means of railways and such other maddening conveniences, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated... I am so constructed that I can only serve my immediate neighborhood, but in my conceit I pretend to have discovered that I must ...serve every individual in the universe. In thus attempting the impossible man comes into contact with different nations, different religions and is utterly confounded. It must be apparent to you that

railways are a most dangerous institution. (b) The enmity between Hindus and Mohammedans is invented by our mutual enemies. The Hindus flourished under Muslim sovereigns and Muslims under Hindus. The quarrel recommenced with English advent. (c) The Hindu-Muslim question arises because of the presence of lawyers and of doctors; (d) people become enemies because they change their religion.

In short, Hindu-Muslim relations in Hind Swaraj have been examined with reference to technology, foreign rule, lawyers (representing middle classes) two-nation theory or minority-majority concept, secularism sans morality (religion), language and medium of instruction.

These factors or forces are operative in India even after sixty years of Independence, the civil society is precariously cohesive; the Hindu-Muslims relationship often become a problematic For example, the relations were rendered worrisome following wanton demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and Anti-Muslim riots in Gujrat in 2002. The proponents of 'Hindu nationalism' (Bhartiya Rashtravad) became very demanding, and Muslim were called upon to prove their credentials to the nationalism.

Many responsible leaders of Muslim public opinion felt that even in a country which has a secular constitution and where the major political parties are committed to secularism, the largest minority in India lives with a sense of fear and uncertainty. Further, the incidence of Hindu-Muslim riots in free India has not been eradicated. There is an articulate and organized section of public opinion which still promotes two-nation theory based on religion.

Hind Swaraj rebuts the theory. It is argued, the followers of different faiths are not different nations. In the holy Koran there are hundred of passage acceptable to the Hindus. The Bhagwat Gita contains passages that should not make a Mohammedan take exception. Am I to dislike Mohammedans because there are passages in the Koran I didn't understand or like? It is also

said India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it.

The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals. Those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If the Hindus believe that India only for Hindus, they are living in dream-land. The Hindus, the Mohammedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country and they are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.

### **Machinery**

In Hind Swaraj two chapters (one is entitled "Railways" and the other is entitled "Machinery"), deal with social, political, economic and moral issues relating to machinery in India. The contents of these chapters reflect Gandhi's basic approach to machinery. Further, the perceptions of machinery in Hind Swaraj which were elaborated and clarified by Gandhi in response to his critics, during 1915-48 are also relevant today.

Rather harsh language has been used for machinery in Hind Swaraj. It has also been compared to a 'snake hole' which may contain from one to hundred snakes. Several arguments have also been given against machinery; for example, machinery accentuates the evil nature of man; bad men fulfill their desires with greater rapidity with the help of machine. It has been argued that means of artificial-locomotion have increased the health hazard. Further, the opposition to machinery has been justified on the basis of historical experience viz., machinery has desolated Europe. As regards India, R.C. Dutt's Economic History of India has been quoted to

prove that machinery has impoverished India. It has been also stated that the machinery has enabled the British to strengthen their hold on India.

It has been argued 'where there is machinery, there are large cities, where there are large cities, there are tramcars railways and there only we see electricity'. In another words, it is argued that machinery erodes the rural character of civilization and gives rise to urbanization. It is asserted, the people of India were one nation before the English came India. But it was after the advent of quicker means of transportation that we began to believe in distinctions and that we are many nations.

Nevertheless, it has been conceded in **Hind Swaraj** that machine is a necessary evil. The overall strategy implicit in the approach to machinery in **Hind Swaraj** has two dimensions .First, the notion that machinery is a hallmark of progress has been demystified. Secondly, having accepted machinery as a "necessary evil", it has been said, we should gradually do away with it', We can not shed it straight away because "nature has not provided anywhere that we can reach a desired goal all of a sudden. If instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we would look upon it as an evil which would ultimately go.

In short, machinery has been rejected out right in **Hind Swaraj** because of its intrinsic tendency to enslave, to dehumanize and to divide and exploit the people, and, above all, as engine of rapid urbanization. Nevertheless, machinery has been accepted as a 'necessary' evil. In Hind Swaraj M.K. Gandhi is not against all machinery, that what he objected to the craze for labour saving machinery.

It is note worthy that the critical approach to machinery in Hind Swaraj has been acceptable today in an influential section of the leaders of public onion, including Nobel scientist, who point that the relentless applications of modern science and technology for prosperity have given rise to existential problems and hence there is need for immediate "course correction". In fact, there is also a small but determined section of common people in the West who no longer think of modern science and technology with the same unquestioning faith as people did in the past. (The emergence of Green Movement in Germany and the movement for ecological democracy in Scandinavian countries reflect this trend).

But India's dominant political class, the intelligentsia and even the common people have unquestioning faith in modern science and technology as the only means of economic development and prosperity. They also consider it as a symbol of status, power, and prestige. In fact, they are literally 'crazy' about science and technology, as if it is a **Brahmastra**. The perception of machinery in **Hind Swaraj** is relevant today for "course correction" and to recast the national mind on industrialization.

## **Middle classes**

The role of lawyers and doctors in India is one of core themes of **Hind Swaraj**. In addition, to the substantial comments on these professions in several parts of **Hind Swaraj**, one chapter has been devoted to these professionals classes. It has been said that the lawyers teach "immorality". "The lawyers, advance quarrels, instead of repressing them". "The greatest injury they have done to the country is that they have tightened the English grip. "The lawyer have enslaved India, they have accentuated Hindu-Muslim problem authority. Those who know anything of Hindus-Mohammedan quarrels know that they have been due to inter-vention of lawyers.

Hind Swaraj is against modern system of medicine. The doctors violate our religious instinct... we have become deprived of self-control. There is no real service of humanity in the profession. It has been stated that the English have certainly effectively used medical profession for holding us. English physicians are known to have used the profession for political gains".

In short, these two professions representing middle class in **Hind Swaraj** have been perceived as socially divisive economically predatory and pro-power. They are considered as roots of public immorality. Nevertheless, **Hind Swaraj** perceives these two professions, representing middle classes, as integral part of the present set of modern system which has been compared to an "Upas tree. Its branches represented by parasitical professions, including those of law and

medicine, and has over the trunk, been raised the axe of true religion. Immorality is the root of the tree.

It is said that, these views represent the combined experience of many". But it is note worthy that after having criticized these professions, it has been admitted in Hind Swaraj that if these professionals mend their ways, they can play a constructive role. For example, out of nineteen items enumerated in the chapter (entitled Conclusion) more than half are addressed to lawyers and doctors.

The characteristics of the two professions in **Hind Swaraj** are not only shared by the other professionals in contemporary India, but these have aslo got accentuated and have been institutionalized. These professionals constitute not only an all-India force having close links with corporate sector. It seems that the two professions constitute a sizeable proportion of Indian population called "middle classes" which, as compared to their counter parts in other countries, have now got diversified substantially in the era of economic liberalization after mid-eighties - for example, (a) chartered accountants (b) political power entrepreneurs (c) educational entrepreneurs (d) media entrepreneurs (e) the service sector, public relations, fashion industry, petty, businessman in the retail sector etc.

The middle classes in India today differ from the pioneering middle classes in Europe in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. They also differ from those in India in the last three decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century and first few decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. As compared to their predecessors, a large section of India's middle classes to day is devoid of a minimal sense of social responsibility

Today we have services sector which contributes a sizeable percentage of G.D.P. But it parasitic and predatory, ambitious, narrow-versioned, amoral and it is even crimonginic. It is pro-status quo and spiritually antagonistic to pro-people fundamental social changes. In short, the future of the culture and the welfare of the people of India in rural are is not safe in the hands of dominant middle classes.

In order to counter the the dangers of large scale process of embourgeoisment of Indian society today, the overall vision of society in **Hind Swaraj**, can be relevant.

## **Non- violence and passive resistance**

Non-violence has been covered in twenty pages (nine pages for Brute Force and twelve pages of Passive Resistance) in Hind Swaraj. It is stated, 'The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe will disappear without the existence of that force. The greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the existence and the success of this force is found in the fact that there are so many men still alive shows that it is based not on force of arms but on the force of truth or love... in spite of wars of the world, it still lives on. Thousands, indeed tens of thousand, depend for their existence on very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily life disappeared before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History is readily a record of every interruption of the course of nature soul force being natural, but is not noted in history.

It is said passive resistance is superior to the force of arms. It is strange 'indeed that you should consider such a weapon to be a weapon merely of the weak'... It is argued, passive resistance blesses him who used it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far reaching results. It never rusts, can not be stolen. (p. 83). Above all, passive resistance is considered a "specialty of India". According to Hind Swaraj, it does not mean its few princes, but it means its teeming millions on whom depends the existence of its princes and our own.

The concept of Brute Force and Passive Resistance has also been examined with reference to the larger theme of "ends and means".

"We have assumed that we can get to do things by force, therefore we use force. The belief that there is no connection between means and ends is a great mistake. This reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose by planting a noxious plant. The means may be likened to a seed and the end, likened to a tree and there is just the same inviolable connection between means and end as there is between the seed and tree.

Particularly since 1945 Indian people have been prone to suffering from paroxysms of large scale collective violence. It is said out of 149 countries in the world, "India is least peaceful place in the world. It is getting less peaceful year after year. The situation is

comparable to underground fires in Jharia coal mines. Currents of intolerance, pugnacity and aggressive competitiveness run deep though India's civil society as well as functioning of the India; democratic state. Both the Indian state and the corporate sector have been jointly innovating new tools of violence.

There is urgent need to emphasize the value of non-violence and peace today. For example, recently dalits were driven out of Husainpur village near Bhiwandi in Alwar district of Rajasthan after a violent attack by the dominant Meo muslims of the region. They were unable to return to their homes because of a "reign of terror" reported to be prevailing in the area a minister is alleged to have extended support to the aggressors and tried to protect the accused. On 4 December 12, in a Surat *taluka* in Dharmpur village, a 35- year old women was tied naked to a tree, chilli powder was applied to her private parts by two women who also suspected that she was involved with the husband of one of them. Additional Collector of Nashik district, Yashwant Sonawane, was burnt to death by kerosene mafia in Manmad (Nashik). The Nashik Superintendent of Police told journalista that Mr. Sonawane, who was going in his official vehicle spotted a kerosene tanker. On suspicion, he went up to the tanker and found a person taking kerosene from the vehicle. Mr. Sonawane immediately called the supply inspector and asked him to come over and conduct an inquiry. In the meantime an argument ensued. Four persons arrived on motorcycles and they started to beat him up and doused him with kerosene. In Assam a Gorkha League leader who opposed the demand for nation of Gorkha Hill council was murdered.

In addition to numerous such accidents of violence, there is also evidence of periodic occurrences of large-scale violence, for example, (1) The anti- Sikh riots in Delhi in 1984 lasted several days.(2) There were larger scale anti- Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002. (3) There was eruption of violence during the agitation for Punjabi Sabha in the early 1960's. (4). There was violence in the wake of the movement for Ram Temple at Ayodhya in 1989. (5) There were hundreds of communal riots during 2001-2009 in various parts of India. During riot in Mumbai in 2011. Large scale violence spread over many months at a stretch in Kerala in the recent past due to rivalries between major political parties.

In Hind Swaraj violence and non-violence have been discussed primarily with reference to both covert and hidden forms of violence. But the discourse on violence and non-violence in Hind Swaraj needs to be further spelt out with reference to several other varieties of violence which today manifest themselves spasmodically in various parts of India, for example, (i) terrorism, revolutionary violence, sectarian violence, state violence at macro level; (ii) violence in India's civil society, viz., inter-caste conflicts, inter-faith and intra-faith conflicts, and ethnic or racial conflicts, (iii) violence accompanying fury of nature. (iv) numerous variants of "violence of love" in interpersonal and intra personal discourses or behaviors e.g., indifference, dislike, aggressiveness, animosity, belligerency, jealousy, envy, suspicion, distrust, antipathy, betrayal of confidence and of trust etc.

It may be noted that during 1915-1948 Mahatma Gandhi and several others conducted several experiments in the resolution of conflict in various fields through passive resistance and non-violence. But the challenges were not as imminently or conspicuously lethal as they are today. Therefore, if interpreted and elaborated in the context of the new forms of violence today, the concept of passive resistance in Hind Swaraj is still relevant

## **Democracy**

Hind Swaraj is very critical about parliamentary form of government with reference to the one in the U.K. For example, it is said, the parliament has not yet of its own accord, done a single good thing. The best men are supposed to be elected by the people. The electors are considered to be educated and therefore we should assume that they would not generally make mistakes in their choice. The working of such a Parliament should be so smooth that its effects would be apparent day by day.

But as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. What is done today may be undone tomorrow... Members vote for their party without a thought. Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation... Parliament is without a real master. Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady but it is buffeted about like a prostitute. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of Parliament. ..Prime Ministers are known to have made Parliament do things merely for party advantage... open to subtler influences. In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours... To the English voters their newspapers is their Bible. They take their cue from their newspapers

which are often dishonest. If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined...

Moreover during the past century the theory and practice of liberal democracy has been critically examined even in the west, its birth place. Scholars, intellectual and researchers as well as statesmen have been engaged in the rethinking about liberal democracy, as it evolved in the west in general.

We will concentrate on the a few developments in the west which underline the need for rethinking on liberal democracy. First, large scale migrations tend to convert monoculture states into multi culture states. Traditional liberal democratic institutions are unable to cope up the challenge of multi-culturalism. Secondly, international terrorism also has compelled the state to abridge fundamental rights. Thirdly, though it is also being realized that liberal democracy has failed in some respect the idea of democracy still inspires the masses and a growing number of countries have begun to adopt liberal democracy of one variety or other. Their search for alternative to liberal democracy. Fourthly, in the west- the nursery of liberal democracy, several distortions in the system based on liberal democracy have taken place. In the USA it is said, "We have been deprived of our franchise. We are in the dictatorship that has been totally militarized. Every one is spied on by the Governance". Noble Laureate Gore Vidal. On 17 November, 2008 said that the ineffectuality of parliaments is one of the main problems in several parliamentary democracies today: for example, in the UK it is public knowledge that 95 per cent of the the Labour MPs in a 659- seat chamber were against the Iraq invasion but in the end only 139 voted against it. All the Labour MPs were given an infamous- dossier claiming that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction which could be deployed against the UK in 45 minutes seminal.

In short, all these failings or short-comings are inherent in the very concept of and practice of liberal democracy. Therefore, today there is need for an alternatives to liberal democracy and Hind Swaraj does offer a approach to tackle this challenge.

## Chapter Three

### India Today and Hind Swaraj

India has a parliamentary system of government which has effectively disproved the miggiving of Churchill at the end of World War-II, when the labour party Government in the U.K, decide to transfer power to the leaders of India's political parties. He had said,

"Liberty is man's birth-right. However, the passing of the reins of the Government to the Congress at this juncture is to hand over the destiny of hungry millions into the hands of rascals, rogues and freebooters. Not a bottle of water or a loaf of bread will be free and the blood of hungry millions will be on the head of Mr. Clement Attlle. India will be lost to political squabbles. It will take a thousand years to know the periphery of the philosophy of politics. Today we hand over the Government to men of straw of whom no trace will be found in a few years".

In fact, the sixty year old Indian-nation-state has many mentionable achievements to its credit in domestic and international fields. The Indian Constituent Assembly which although elected on the basis of very narrow franchise drafted a constitution contains some of the best elements of the concept and practices of liberal democracy in the UK, Canada, the USA, Ireland and France. For the first time in the history of India the adult franchise empowers an individual citizen regardless of sex and caste and economic status. It also and provides for a federal system of governance.

Two provisions of the Constitution, viz., the Preamble and the Directive Principles of the State Policy aim at the transformation of Indian feudal and wbnial system and creation of a free, open and egalitarian polity.

During the past sixty four years successive governments at the centre and in the states have only concentrated on implementing only the provision of the constitution relating to adult franchise independent judiciary, federalism, and decentralization of power down to panchayat level. But the feudal, casteist and illiberal values continue to determine the political mind of India and the functioning of the liberal institutions in India. In Indian nation-state empowered and strengthened itself it has also been slow in the implementation of even the Preamble of India Constitution which is a modest agenda of empowerment of people - social, and economically. During the past 60 years, the middle classes have come to exercise a measure of power and influence in national life which is disproportionate to its contribution to its size the production of real wealth. On the contrary, the middle classes consume 50% of gross national product.

India has been categorized as one of the "flawed" democracy in the world and it figures 35<sup>th</sup> in the democracy ranking out of 54 countries declared as having flawed democracy; for example, India's system of governance has not been able to get rid of the baggage of hundreds of colonial laws and subsidiary laws and jurisprudence.

On account of the consequences of the malfunctioning of the institutions of governance in India over decades more and more people resort either to judicial activism or are attracted by non-party political mobilization by gurus and **swamis** or for mass movements inspired by extremist ideologies left-wing extremism.

It seems that the dynamics of the process of governance in India has reached a plateau or a saturation point, as it were. There is speed, no direction. There is movement but there is no displacement. Most of the major attempts to solve the basic problems of the people in rural India have not only fractionally succeeded but every time an effort is made by the Indian state to deal with a problem, new forces come up.

It is true that India's parliamentary system also India has not been ruined as per the forecast in **Hind Swaraj**. But it is also a fact that the nation state is flourishing at the cost of people, it supports of not only the dominant articulate middle classes but it also favours the corporate sector.

The political culture of our people is still being vitiated by imitative westernism and unreflecting industrialism. The concept of economic man, (the principal feature of which is 'high sensitivity and positive response to pleasure, or to affluence), which has been accepted by the dominant elite in India, has also been uncritically accepted gradually by the common people. There is also wide spread unwholesome politicalization of civil society. Moral inhibitions, particularly in the ruling elite, are getting relaxed.

Tyranny, hypocrisy, double-speak double-think, and cut-throat competitiveness veiled authoritarian are pervasive. This process having been inaugurated dramatically in 1969 and intensified in the nineties when India adopted the policy of economic liberalization. Communal conflict and caste-antagonisms, of which the atrocities against Harijans is a painful feature, continue. The English-speaking and the English knowing elite have complete hold over India's mind. This is part of a larger process, the process of rapid enlargement of middle classes and diffusion of values rooted in culture of expression.

National unity, economic consolidation and inter-societal contacts and interactions between sub-cultures have been enhanced. The new means of communication are growlingly becoming disseminators of gilded indices of prosperity. The quicker means of communication and persuasion are being used to further corrupt the consciousness of our people. Gandhi too was worried about the evils of railways symbolizing modern technology. But India today is exposed to many other diverse technology-driven means of coercion and persuasion namely-radio, TV, films, paperbacks, periodicals, advertisements etc.

Gandhi did not launch an India-wide movement aimed at building a system portrayed in Hind Swaraj. Only laboratory scale experiments were conducted, he being a realist knew that the whole of "India is not ripe for it". Nevertheless, there is hardly any major aspect of collective life in which small scale experiments were not conducted: be it, sexuality, man and women relations, education, journalism, or resolution of conflict between the ruler and the ruled and be it conflict between the exploited and the exploiter and be it between labour and capital, and landlord. Nevertheless, the larger question is, even if Hind Swaraj were relevant in respect of specific fields, it is also relevant in the and conditions prevailing in India today.

We are inclined to think that, seen a perspective, the civilizational challenges which the west poses before India-to-day are essentially the same as those which India faced vis-a-vis the western dominance a century ago. For instance, even today the people in India are exposed to the (a) imitative westernism and unreflecting industrialism; (b) the concept of economic man, the principal feature of which is 'high sensitivity and positive response to pleasure', or to affluence, has been accepted by the dominant elite in India as a social ideal, and is being sold to the people through powerful media of communication and large-scale politicalization; (c) inhibitions, particularly in the ruling classes and the leadership, are getting relaxed, moral decadence permeates the centers of power.

No doubt, national unity, economic consolidation and inter-societal contacts and interaction between sub-cultures have been enhanced. But the new means of communication are growingly becoming disseminators of evil trends.

The quicker means of communication and persuasion are being used to corrupt the consciousness of people. A century ago Gandhi was worried about the evils of technology like railways only. But today India is exposed to large-scale impact of several diverse forms of communication technology (radio, TV, films, paperbacks, periodicals, advertisements and politicking) which accentuate malevolent element of the nature of the Indian man. The anti-social forces now can fulfill their evil design with greater facility.

Marxism, Liberalism, Freudianism and Industrilaism-(great movements in their time cannot deal with the ailments of the modern age, particularly those of India. But Hind Swaraj points out to some unfailing sources of renewal within our culture, history and ethos.

Further, Hind Swaraj explains to some extent the psyche of our people in regard to their response to injustice. It has been stated in Hind Swaraj, 'Peasants have never been subdued by the sword, and they are not frightened by the use of it by others... The fact is that, in India, the nation at large has generally used passive resistance in all departments of life. We cease to cooperate with our rulers when they displease us... I remember an instance when, in a small principality, the villagers were offended by some command issued by the prince. The former immediately began vacating the village. The prince became nervous, apologized to his subjects

and withdrew his command. Many such instances can be found in India. Real Home Rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people.

The knowledge of the mind of our people (as described in Hind Swaraj) is relevant today. Having watched how our people, specially in rural and tribal areas, are passing through the nightmarish experience of economic crisis, it seems that there is little chance of the Marxian expectations coming to pass; namely that deepening economic crises will ultimately on their own create revolutionary contradictions; that the exploited masses will become so aggressively assertive and that they will bring about a revolution of a type not consummated elsewhere.

Under the prevailing circumstances, a revolutionary upheaval can not be on the agenda of a people. Their strategy for action against authoritarian, unjust, immoral order, can only be based on (a) passive resistance and non-cooperation and (b) the creation of independent centers of power outside the formal framework of our polity, with a view to the wielding of political power by the people.

## **Hind Swaraj and new society**

Finally, the general prescriptions for the attainment of a new society in Hind Swaraj may lack the glitter or sophistication and conventional analytical approaches, but it can be a basis for fundamental transformation of society. For example, the following specific points (implied or explicit) in Hind Swaraj are worth considering while planning for a movement leading to the total transformation of our society.

(a) Discourage every process which enlarges the base of the middle classes and promotes middle class values. For this purpose, the fascination for English, reject the present system of education, abandon the present laws and legal processes, deflate the importance of parasitical professionalisation and commercialization.

(b) Since industrialism is the mother of our sickness, its craze must be overcome. Under the present circumstances, India must resolve that as long as we cannot make even pins without machinery, so long will we do without them. In this context, it seems that Hind Swaraj does not

reject modern machinery in toto. It is said, "I want to save time and labour for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery helps a few to ride on the backs of millions". It is clear that Hind Swaraj aims at neutralising the dehumanizing, enslaving and exploitative tendencies of modern machines.

Obviously, Hind Swaraj as such is not a plea for the practice of voluntary poverty; of course, it can be so interpreted say that voluntary control of the use of modern machinery and living within our means signifies the voluntary acceptance of lower standards of living for the time being. More over, our rulers who have been sodden with power and affluence should practice voluntary poverty and abjure violence.

In short, as explicitly made out, Hind Swaraj is a brief but comprehensive enunciation of the conditions of India, of what should be our approach to deal with our sickness and what specific and broad lines of action should be followed to build a new society.

The vision of Hind Swaraj, is practical and feasible. It is in tune with the compulsions of our age and its long-term problems. There is evidence that the consequences of the application of modern technology on a massive scale are forcing the people to accept the basis of Gandhi's vision, of limited industrialization. In fact, several states in the USA are beginning to accept slower development and a lower standard of affluence. A section of the leaders of public opinion is favours of human and manageable units of organizations.

Even in India, Goa has shown a sense of realism. While there is a scramble among the other states for industrial projects, Goa has turned down the Centre's proposal for setting up a thermal power plant there. Not that Goa is not power hungry, but ecological considerations have weighed with the state in rejecting this lucrative proposition. Earlier, Goa had rejected the Centre's offer to locate a huge refinery and fertilizer complex on similar and aesthetic grounds.

One may hope that given effort, education and a greater ecological consciousness, a more favourable climate will be created for the implementation of Gandhi's vision.

Moreover, except for a limited impact of urbanization, etc., a majority of our people are still in a sense, outside the contest in which a fraction of the rising middle classes, the vusted interests and the nouveau riche-are fiercely engaged. The majority of our people still live in

socially closed communities, untouched by administrators, policemen and politicians. They are outside the formal framework established by the ruling elite in India. Consequently the soil is virgin and the opportunities are large.

It is an over- simplification to say that modern technology is the root cause of our troubles. We cannot fix the responsibility on impersonal forces of westernization. The question, is who fosters this technology. The question is who promotes westernization.

Our rulers, in partnership with their counterparts in other countries, are against self-reliance, self-rule and self-defination. Themselves products of a set of three forces, they are out to foist on the nation a non-indigenious culture.

Hence the basic problem is how to deal with these people foreces? And for this Hind Swaraj has an approach-viz., non-cooperation and building centres of power outside the present institutional framework.

## Chapter Four

### Chhutkara

The question whether the perceptions or the vision of India in Hind Swaraj is relevant today has been examined several times in the past. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru dismissed Hind Swaraj as "irrelevant" But eminent scholars and social anthropologists had a positive perception. A few social activists in the west have also discussed it positively. In India, besides the followers of Gandhi, as well as a growing number of concerned individuals and groups are inspired by Gandhi's seminal ideas have experimented with the values in Hind Swaraj.

Gandhi's Public life can be divided into two phases. The first phase covers the period 1893-1914; during this phase he experimented with his seminal ideas in his Ashrams "Hind Swaraj" is the quintessences of the thinking and practice of Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi (mind you not Mahatma Gandhi of later years).

The second phase of his life in India covers the period 1915-January 1948 which has two facets; first, leadership of the national movement under the Congress formally up to 1934 and informally after 1934. The first phase has been described as parliamentary **Swaraj** which, he believed, was not only unavoidable but imperative in order to advance towards a society imagined in **Hind Swaraj**. During the Second phase Gandhi set up institutions or organization aimed at experimenting with following programme of Constructive Work which in its final form in 1945. With covered: 1. Communal unity 2. Removal of untouchability 3. Prohibition 4. Khadi 5. Other village industries 6. Village sanitation 7. New or Basic Education 8. Adult education 9. Women 10. Education in Health and Hygiene 12. Economic Equality 13. Kisans (peasants) 14. Labour 15. Adivasis 16. Leprosy 17. Students 18. Improvement of cattle 19. Nature cure

Gandhiji believed that the "Constructive Work Programme" is a truthful and non-violent way of achieving **Poorna Swaraj** (complete independence)". According to Gandhi, Constructive Programme Work together Civil Disobedience, are a substitute for an armed revolt. But he

emphasized that training is as essential for civil disobedience and Constructive Work Programme as it is for an armed struggle. In other words, the Constructive Programme in its entirety should enable, the socially responsible forces in a polity to be engaged in the task of bring about social changes non-violently and peacefully.

Since Independence numerous socially responsible group and individual have been engaged in constructive work programme in various parts of India for example the following villages in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra. (1). Kamyapeta ; Eastern Ghat Vishakhapatnam, (Andhra Pradesh), (2) Nagarhole (125 Villages) : Nagarheole, Rajiv Gandhi National Park. (Karnataka), (3) Dungarpur, Banswara (Rajasthan). (4): Ranchi (Jharkhand) (5) Horomocho: Hazari Bagh (Jharkhand). (6) Mendha (32 Villages): Gaahrchiroll (Maharashtra). (7) Kuchhcupada: Rayagada (Orissa) (8) Nimalapedu: Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).

The *gram sabhas* plans execute and resolve all affairs inside these village “republics”. The Government programmes are accepted only when the gram sabha accepts them. In many of these villages, the role of the forest departments, police and other officials is restricted to executing the programmes chalked out by the gram sabhas. For example the Former Governor of Maharashtra, P.C. Alexandar had to seek the permission of the gram sabha in December 2000 to visit Mandhe village.

1500 village republics<sup>2</sup> in the various states are conducting the self-rule movement peacefully within the framework of PRI Act of 1992. Some of them are also functioning according to Bhoodan laws in the states. The peaceful movement in 1500 villages reflects total no-confidence of the people in the capacity of the Indian State to ensue fair and equitable means of subsistence during the past decades for example, Menda (MS), Bhaonta, (Uttarakhand), Chilka Lake (Orissa), Bilgiri (Karnataka), hundreds, of village communities are regenerating their forest and taking over their management; e.g. decentralized water harvesting systems have made a strong comeback and posed a challenge to big dams; organic and sustainable farming systems are beginning to show that chemical, poison-laden Green

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<sup>2</sup> Richer Mahapatra with Prabanjan Verma, Nidhi Jamwal Kaxiuudin Ahmed "The second independence "Down to Eearth" Vol II No 7, 31 August 2000 New Delhi.

Revolution technologies are not inevitable to grow adequate food; urban residents' associations are beginning to demonstrate the success of waste recycling roof-top water harvesting and adopting other measures that make them less of a parasite than they currently are; and importance of biological and cultural diversity is also being articulated again.

The transformation in agricultural output and productivity has been achieved through effective watershed management by availing of Government grants and services of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra of ICAR. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra's water harvesting techniques are showing results at some places for example water tables have risen by 150 feet, enabling irrigation and consequently multiple cropping. The viability of marginal holdings has been enhanced by inter-cropping fruits and vegetables along with animal husbandry. The value chain of processing agricultural output is carried forward in Udyamita Vidyapeeth where agricultural products are processed and packaged for commercial sale. The Vidyapeeth also has other economic activities like making products for local use: for instance, tiles, bricks, handicrafts. The landless are trained and are encouraged to form self-help groups. Even in the field of education an innovative *gurukul* model has been adopted. Each gurukul houses 80 children with retired couples, looking after groups of 10 children. The children are inculcated with values to study in groups in an inspiring atmosphere.

An important aspect of this functioning is the strong accent on establishing management practice and resource improvement at every juncture, it is achieved by a collection of detailed information on all activities, processes and functionaries, and planning future steps.

It is well-known that eighty percent of rural population in India comprises of marginal farmers and those who own economically unviable holdings of 2.5 acres for a family. Chitrakoot in 1991, was a semi arid area the border between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh with water table at the depth of 250 to 300 feet, marginal holdings with a single crop, populace prone to water borne diseases, sustainable livelihood virtually impossible without being supplemented by remittances from migrants.

This area was adopted by Nanaji Deshmukh as nearly two decades ago it is claimed that today not only has migration stopped but people are returning and marginal land-holdings (1.5 acre irrigated and 2.5 acres non-irrigated) are providing sustainable livelihood to families of six.

There are indications that this movement has commenced in many parts of the world outside India. For example, there seems to be a sort of renaissance, in some part of Africa where the youth is bending towards African Values... They are working out new ways of being 'Africa' and even "South African". They are seeking new ways, since pre-determined categories do not help. This concern for "swadeshi" is reflected in the thinking of many concerned intellectuals in Croatia (in Europe), in New Zealand, in Ghana and even the U.K. For example in Ghana, New Zealand, Australia and Croatia the marginalized and the indigenous youth are painfully struggling against the dominant western model and are trying to evolve a "swadeshi" system of thought and idiom of action against globalization.

Even in the nation-states which were committed to centralization and industrialization and market economy, the concerned common people opt for decentralization in times of crisis. For example, an Austrian small town *Wörgl* adopted "local currency to deal with the economic crisis in twenties. The experiment succeeded for thirteen and half months. Each shilling of local currency in circulation in the areas was 12 and 14 times more efficient in creating employment than a shilling of national currency. But the state government repressed it when 200 other Austrian towns decided in favour of decent realization the Central Government panicked because economic and political decentralization was considered inimical to the Central Government. Nevertheless the idea of experiments in local currency is still alive. In the year 2001 in 2500 cities, towns and rural municipalities in the world have launched their own complimentary currency at least at an experiment level. For example, BerkShares note, one of the five denominations in a currency have been adopted by towns in western Massachusetts (U.S.A.) to support locally owned businesses over national chains. There are about 844,000 Berk Shares in circulation, worth \$ 759,600 at a fixed exchange rate of 1 BerkShare to 80 US. 10 months in circulation, they've become a regular feature of the local economy. Businesses that accept BerkShares @ 1 cup of coffee sells for 1 BerkShare, a 10% discount for people paying in BerkShares. About 280 cafes, coffee shops, grocery stores and other businesses in Great Barrington and in neighboring town accept BerkShares.

The BerkShares programme is one of about a dozen such efforts in the nation. Local groups in California, Kansas, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Wisconsin run similar ones. One of the oldest is in Ithaca. New York which went into circulation in 1991 in Ithaca. About 120,000 of that currency circulate in the rural town. Unlike BerkShares, Ithaca

cannot officially be freely converted to dollars, though some businesses buy them. Stephen Burkle, President of the Ithaca programme, said the notes are badge of local pride.

The tiny community of Vauban, (Germany) made news this when it was reported that 70 per cent of the families in the affluent suburb own no cars. This isn't by diktat. Cars ownership is allowed, but parking spaces are limited. Cars are forbidden on most of Vauban's streets, and houses cannot have driveways or garages. While not quite car-free - not yet, any way- the community is a highly car-reduced area. The residents of Vauban are being hailed as land-use pioneers of a trend to separate suburban life from automobile use, helped by what's being called 'smart planning'.

But can this experiment be replicated elsewhere? In terms of the environment and perhaps man's peace of mind car-free towns would be ideal. Experts say that automobile dependence in suburbs, where the middle class resides, is an impediment to current efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Passenger cars are responsible for 12 per cent in some car-intensive areas in the United States. Biking and walking are the main means of transport in Vauban, and residents report an improved quality of life for being rid of cars for the most part.

Many American are abstaining from air conditioning is a masochistic folly akin to refusing Novocain or renouncing the dishwasher. Lisa Finkelstein, a freelance editor, stopped using the semi-functional air conditioning and heating unit in her rented cottage in Tallahassee, Florida, two years ago, mostly for economic reasons. "You live with your windows and doors open, you use fans, drink lots of cold liquids and take it easy," she said.

According to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers in Washington, D.C., shipments of air conditioners from manufacturers to distributors were down by 39 per cent in the first half of this year compared with the first half of last year, and shipments of central air-conditioning units have been down by 10 per cent a year for the past few years, according to the Air-Conditioning Heating and Refrigeration Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

Genma Holmes, a 42-year-old mother of three in Nashville, and her husband, Roger, declared their suburban ranch house a no-air-conditioning zone last summer as surging gas prices ate into the profits of their pest control business. Their children- now aged 17,18 and 23 were not amused, given that average summer temperatures in Nashville are in the high 80s Ms.

Holmes, who ripped the thermostat from the wall after her offspring repeatedly turned on the central air while their parents were out.

It was when the family put up an awning and fan over their patio-effectively transforming it into their living room, (where they spent about three hours a night grilling, playing games and talking instead of going their separate ways) - that they discovered the upside of an uncontrolled climate. "We spend an entire summer getting to know our kids by sitting outside trying to keep our electricity bill down," said Ms Holmes, who estimated that the family saved \$ 2,100 last summer: "It was very therapeutic and we got closer. We also got thinner- all of our diets changed because we were eating a lot of grilled food. And by the time fall came around, with the change in the economy, we had learned to live off less".

## Appendix 1

### Summary of Hind Swaraj<sup>3</sup> by M.K. Gandhi

We give below the contents of letter to a friend in which Gandhi summarized Hind Swaraj :

1. There is no impassable barrier between East and West.
2. There is no such thing as western or European civilization, but there is a modern civilization which is purely material.
3. The people of Europe, before they were touched by modern civilization, had much in common with the people of the East; anyhow the people of India, who even today are not touched by modern civilization, are far better able to mix with the offsprings of that civilization.
4. It is not the British people who are ruling India, but it is modern civilization, through its railways, telegraphs, telephones, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilization.
5. Bombay, Calcutta, and the other chief cities of India are the real plague-spots.
6. If British, rule were replaced tomorrow by the Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better, except that she would be able to retain some of the money that is drained away to England; but then India would only become a second or fifty nation of Europe or America.
7. East and West can really meet when West has thrown over-board modern civilization, almost in its entirety. They can also seemingly meet when East has also adopted modern civilization, but that meeting would be an armed truce, even as it is between, say, Germany and England, both of which nations are living in the Hall of Death in order to avoid being devoured, the one by the other.
8. It is impertinence for any man or any body of men to bring or to contemplate reform of the whole world. To attempt to do so by means of highly artificial and speedy locomotion is to attempt the impossible.

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<sup>3</sup> It is given in a letter dated 14 October 1909 to Polak. This text of the letter is available in Tendulkar, D.G., Mahatma Vol. I page. 104-107 and Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 10 page 167-171

9. Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth.
10. Medical science is the concentrated essence of black magic. Quackery is infinitely preferable to what passes for high medical skills as such.
11. Hospitals are the instrument that the Devil has been using for his own purpose, in order to keep his hold on his kingdom. They perpetuate vice, misery and degradation and real slavery. I was entirely off the track when I considered that I should receive a medical training. It would be sinful for me in any way whatsoever to take part in the abominations that go in the hospitals. If there were no hospitals for venereal diseases, or even for consumptives, we should have less consumption and less sexual vice amongst us.
12. India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learned during the past fifty years or so. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper classes have to learn to live consciously and religiously and deliberately the simple life of a peasant knowing it to be a life giving true happiness.
13. India should not wear to machine-made clothing whether it comes out of European mills or Indian mills.
14. England can help India do this and then she will have justified her hold on India. There seems to be many in England today who think likewise.
15. There was true wisdom in the sages of old having so regulated society as to limit the material conditions of the people: the rude plough of perhaps five thousand years ago is the plough of the husbandman today. Therein lies salvation. People live long under such conditions, in comparative peace much greater than Europe has enjoyed after having taken up modern activity, and I feel that every enlightened man, certainly every Englishman, may, if he chooses, learn this truth and act according to it.

It is the true spirit of passive resistance that has brought me to the above almost definite conclusions. As a passive resister, I am unconcerned whether such a gigantic reformation, shall I call it, can be brought about among people who find their satisfaction from the present mad rush. If I realize the truth of it, I should rejoice in following it and, therefore, I could not wait until the whole body of people. All of us who think likewise have to take the necessary steps, and the rest, if we are in the right, must follow. The theory is there; our practice will have to approach it as much as possible. Living in the midst of the rush, we may not be able to shake ourselves free from all taint. Every time I get into a railway car or use a motor-bus, I know that I am doing violence to my sense of what is right. I do not fear the logical result

on that basis. The visiting of England is bad, and any communication between South Africa and India by means of ocean greyhounds is also bad and so on. You and I can, and may outgrow these things in our present bodies, but the chief thing is to put our theory right. You will be seeing there all sorts and conditions of men. I, therefore, feel that I should no longer withhold from you what I call the progressive step I have taken mentally. If you agree with me, then it will be your duty to tell the revolutionaries and everybody else that the freedom they want, or they think they want, is not to be obtained by killing people or doing violence, but by setting themselves right and by becoming and remaining truly India. Then the British rulers will be servants and no masters. They will be trustees, and not tyrants, and they will live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India. The future, therefore, lies not with the British race, but with the Indians themselves, and if they have sufficient self-abnegation and abstemiousness, they can make themselves free this very moment, and when we have arrived in India at the simplicity which is still ours largely and which, was ours entirely until a few years ago, it will still be possible for the best Indians and the best Europeans to see one another throughout the length and breadth of India and act as the leaven. When there was no rapid locomotion, teachers and preachers went on foot, one end of the country to the other, braving all dangers, not for recouping their health, though all the followed on their tramps, but for the sake of humanity. They were Benares and other places of pilgrimage, the holy cities, whereas today they are an abomination... (167-171, CW : 10)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Hind Swaraj on Parliament**

That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliament is like a sterile women and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. That Parliament has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing; hence I have compared it to sterile women. The natural condition of that Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time. Today it is under Mr. Asquith, tomorrow it may be under Mr. Balfour.

Reader: You have said this sarcastically. The term “sterile women” is not applicable. The Parliament, being elected by the people, must work under public pressure. This is its quality.

Editor: You are mistaken. Let us examine it a little more closely. The best men are supposed to be elected by the people. The members serve without pay and therefore, it must be assumed, only for the public weal. The electors are considered to be educated and, therefore, we should assume that they would not generally make mistakes in their choice. Such a Parliament should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effect would be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive. What is done today may be undone tomorrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicted for its work. When the greatest questions are debated, its members have been seen to stretch themselves and to drowse. Sometimes the members talk away until the listeners are disgusted. Carlyle has called it the “talking shop of the world.” Members vote for their party without a thought. Their so-called discipline binds them to it. If any member, by way of exception, gives an independent vote, he is considered a renegade. If the money and the time wasted by the Parliament were entrusted to a few good men, the English nation would be occupying today a much higher platform. The Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation. These views are, by no means, peculiar to me. Some great English thinkers have expressed them. One of the members of that Parliament recently said that a true Christian could not become a member of it. Another said that it was a baby. And, it has remained a baby after an existence of seven hundred years, when will it outgrow its babyhood?

### Appendix -3

#### Selected list of writings and speeches of M.K. Gandhi 1890-1909

1. Ethics of Passive Resistance (speech at Emerson Club on 8 October, 1909, London).
2. "East and West (speech at a meeting held under the auspices of Hampstead Peace and Arbitration Society at Friends Meeting House on 13 October, 1909, London).
3. Speech at the Farewell Meeting, on 12 November, 1909, London.
4. Crazy Civilization *Indian Opinion*, 2 October 1909.
5. Did they reach North Pole (*Indian Opinion* 9 October 1909).
6. Civilization or Barbarism, (*Indian Opinion*, 8 October 1910).
7. Letter to Under Secretary of Colonies the UK Parliament, dated 20 September, 1909.
8. Letter to H.S. Polak, 14 October, 1909.
9. Letter to Lord Ampthill 30 October, 1909.
10. A speech on *Swadeshi* on 14 February 1916 at Madras (*Young Indian*, 25 January 1919).
11. Secret of Satyagrah in South Africa 27 July 1916.
12. Hindu Caste System 7 October 1916.
13. The Present system of Education, October 1916.
14. Does economic progress clashes with real programme (Speech at Muir College, Economic Society, Allahabad 22 December 1911)

## Appendix 4

### Books

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2. Nageshwar Prasad, (edited) *"Hind Swaraj : A Fresh Look*, Gandhi Peace Foundation New Delhi 1985, page 254.
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