

**GANDHIAN VALUES REVIEWED IN  
POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA THROUGH INDIAN  
NOVEL: ENGLISH AND HINDI (1947-2000)**

स्वातन्त्रयोत्तर भारत में गाँधीवादी मूल्यों की समीक्षा: अंग्रेजी व हिन्दी  
भारतीय उपन्यास के परिपेक्ष में (1947–2000)

**A Thesis**

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**By**

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**2019**

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## Preface

Reviewing Gandhian values in Post-Independence India is an extremely challenging and contemporary topic in view of the phantasm Gandhi invokes amongst the youth of twenty first century India. Gandhi had been the harbinger of freedom to enslaved India and had drawn millions to his ideology including the Indian novelist, both English and Hindi. Post-Independence the nation at large gradually started moving away from the man as well as his creed. The violent bloodshed of partition ushered in the first wave of disenchantment. As expected, novels too could not remain unaffected and the shift could be observed in literature as well. The thesis is a descriptive study of the ideological Gandhi divided in three periods of post-independence Indian history for analytical ease. The first phase (1947-64) was full of hope dreaming high for a new India worthy enough to make a mark for itself in post world war scenario. Incidentally not many were convinced of the efficacy of a pure Gandhian model for India's resurgence and the result was the State policy of industrialization and adoption of western growth model. Literature too bore the brunt. Although there was no direct disparaging of Gandhi yet a questioning mode had emerged in the novels of both the languages along with Marxism as a possible alternative. Again there was a plethora of new experiences that the newly independent people were facing ranging from war with neighbors to growth in cities, issues of migration and the spurt in the educated unemployed, corruption in politics to the corroding of rural lifestyle. Still there was hope because social welfare continued to be the aim of literature and many held on to the Gandhian aka indigenous Indian values. Indigenous because at a deeper probing Gandhi basically imbibed the raw resources for his ideology from Indian philosophy albeit after chafing it against science and logic. As a result many continued to write on rural India attempting hard to amalgamate Gandhi's vision to the post-independence reconstruction. The second phase (1964-80) witnessed 'individualism' in both public and private sphere. There was a general vacuum in the country's value system therefore the novelists chose a safer diversion and focused more on individuals' character traits and psychological

maladies instead of socio-political issues plaguing the nation. If we compare, the departure was more in case of English novelists than Hindi. Did it happen because the concept of individualism is more of a western capitalistic term than the intrinsic Indian or Gandhian 'critical traditionalism.' Does English still functions as a mediator or an agent of this post-independence western imperialism. Could it also be because Indian writing in English caters to white readership and critics for international awards and recognition? The answer becomes apparently clear with the third phase (1981-2000) of globalization. The period saw the State adopting an aggressive stand towards any kind of dissent, opening up Indian economy for private investment and ushering in the IT age. In literature the eight decade ushered in post-modernism and a mocking attitude towards Gandhi, especially in the gamut of English novelists. Was it being done to discredit Gandhi and his values so that the trends and traits of globalization could make a smooth take over by denouncing the only value system that could have stopped it? Interestingly the Hindi novelists were more aware of this covert threat and vocally voiced the demerits and detrimental effects of globalization on Indian life. The English novelists who dared to criticize the loss of Gandhi did it in a subtle manner. A bohemian sexually liberated and materialistically lifestyle for women was vouched by both English and Hindi writers though the intensity was definitely higher in case of English than Hindi novelists. Thus the study divided into three periods tried to establish the connection between the socio-political and economic occurrences of the time with the space and significance given to Gandhi in the literature of the same. The last chapter 'Gandhi in Twenty First Century India' as per its nomenclature breaks the time boundary set up for the research and offers food for thought for further research. Certain illustrations received due to the magnanimity of some friends and academicians have been added to augment the credibility of the work. An appendix with a brief bio-sketch of both English and Hindi novelists has been added to make the interdisciplinary work comprehensive to both the Historians and the Literati.

**Persis Latika Dass**

## **Candidate's Declaration**

I, hereby, certify that the work, which is being presented in the thesis, entitled **Gandhian Values Reviewed in Post - Independence India Through Indian Novel: English and Hindi (1947 – 2000)** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, carried under the supervision of Dr. Hukam Chand Jain and submitted to the Government Arts Girls College, Kota, University of Kota represents my ideas in my own words and where others ideas or words have been included. I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. The work presented in this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree or diploma from any Institutions. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will cause for disciplinary action by the University and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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**Date:**

**Dr. Hukam Chand Jain**

**Research Supervisor**

## **Acknowledgment**

Studying Gandhi in twenty first century India is not much in vogue nonetheless the enthusiasm and support of my Supervisor Dr Hukam Chand Jain made me hold on to the less popular path. Again the suggestion to chafe and analyse the ebb and flow of Gandhian ideology against a literary genre like novel came from Dr Jain, choosing both English and Hindi, to add a comparative slant to the study. I would stay indebted to him lifelong and fall short of words to express my earnest gratitude for his benevolent guidance and mentorship.

The study was interspersed with literature and covered the whole gamut of writings starting with Gandhi's own to Indian novels, English and Hindi delving into Gandhi both positively and critically, visit to different libraries was a must. I wish to thank the librarians of Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, Gandhi Museum Library, New Delhi, Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha, Jain World University, Ladnun, Banasthali Vidyapeeth, Government Arts Girls College, Kota, SPC Government College, Ajmer, MDS University, Ajmer, Gandhi Library, Ajmer and Sophia Girls' College, Ajmer for their generosity and cooperation.

Family forms the crux of any successful endeavor. Being blessed with extraordinarily loving and sacrificing parents and patient and understanding husband and children is the lucky charm that not all can boast of, I thank the Almighty for their presence in my life. I also wish to thank Dr Sr. Pearl, the Principal of Sophia Girls' College, Ajmer where I have been teaching for the last seven years. Her prayers and words of encouragement served as the pillar of strength for me, giving me full freedom and patronage to pursue my academic endeavors. Lastly I thank my student Akshita Maheshwari, for helping me sail through all the technical glitches as well as analyzing the theoretical details in the composition of the constituent chapters. At the end my earnest acknowledgment and sincere gratitude goes to all those who helped me in this herculean task.

**Persis Latika Dass**

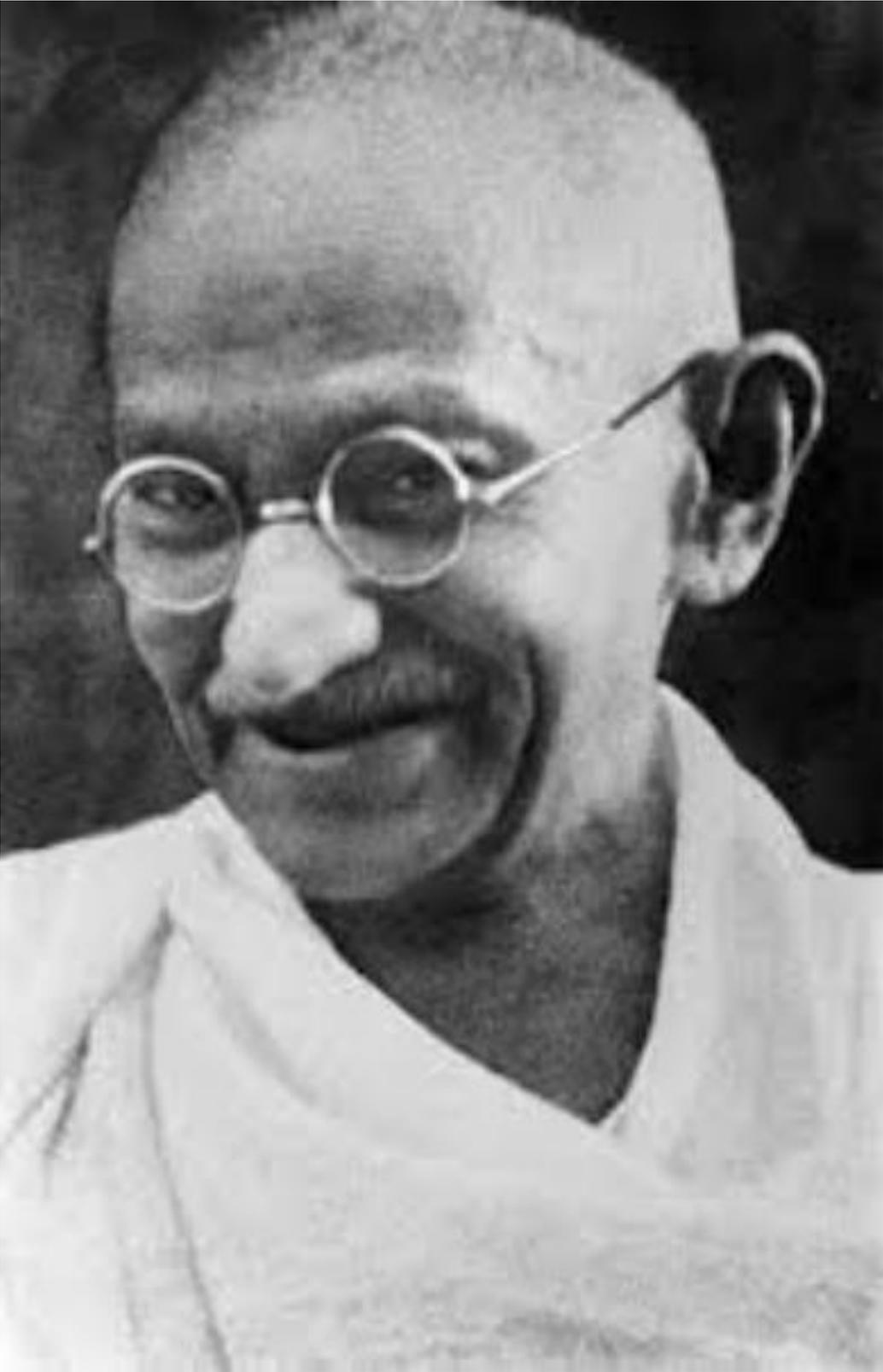
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**CHAPTER – 1**  
**Gandhi and Gandhism**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Gandhi and Gandhism**

Soft dark eyes, a small frail man, with a thin face and rather large protruding eyes, his head covered with a little white cap, his body clothed in coarse white cloth, barefooted. He lives on rice and fruit and drinks only water...Yet you feel his indomitable spirit. He makes no compromises and never tries to hide a mistake. Nor is he afraid to admit having been in the wrong. Diplomacy is unknown to him; he shuns oratorical effect or rather, never thinks about it; he distrusts mobocracy and the unbridled passions of the populace. He feels at ease only in a minority, and is happiest when he can listen to the “still small voice” within.<sup>1</sup>

Romain Rolland

French Idealist and Gandhi's Biographer

The man who stirred three hundred million people to revolt and shook the foundations of the British Empire belonged to the present state of Gujarat. Since past immemorial Gujarat has been resourcefully ushering in material wealth to the Indian subcontinent and coincidentally the same land also gifted us with Gandhi, the man who even in Twenty-First Century is a synonym for India worldwide. His family had served the erstwhile rulers of Kathiawar and the photograph of the house he was born in tells of the financial comfort of the family. Although, the Gandhis belonged to the Bania caste and categorized as Vaishnavites yet the family in practice followed syncretised tradition. Not only the house was frequently visited by many Jain friends, but his own mother, Putli Bai belonged to the Parnami Sect which had Islamic prayers as part of its religious nuances. Gandhi's penchant for Ramanama was imbibed from his servant Rambha who made him overcome his fears and anxiety by repeating the rhythmic phrase, so much so that even in death they were his last words. As a child, Shravan Kumar and Harish Chandra formed his ideal heroes. His school memoirs speak of his innate truthfulness even during his boyhood period. The inability to cheat even though prodded by the teacher to do so, confessing pilfering gold

from his older brother and giving up meat-eating due to the guilt of lying to the parents, are some of the incidents that foretell his later addiction for truth. At the age of thirteen he was married to a girl who became the axis that kept his life in order when he was exploring and experimenting, both in South Africa and India. In his autobiography he is quite candid in admitting his sexual-lust for his wife that twice weakened his fortitude towards the vow of Brahmacharya. Under peer pressure he even visited prostitutes but never committed adultery. Whether it was fear or his inherent reticence, it saved him from sin and strengthened his morale in practicing celibacy in the later years. After matriculation he sailed for England to study law and broke the first of many traditions viciously gripping his community that failed the test of truthful logic.

Gandhi stayed in London from 1888 to 1891. In his initial phase like any regular Indian student he tried hard to fit into the English culture, but the attempts were mostly superfluous limited to clothes, language, music, dance, table manners etc., his inner recesses remained true to the vows of vegetarianism and marital fidelity he had taken before his mother. His London phase made him an intellectually converted vegetarian;<sup>2</sup> he read ample books on the subject and even initiated a vegetarian society to encourage the plea of vegetarianism. On the issue of marital fidelity he did the same as other students and hid his marital status for a while but when things started getting serious he suffered no qualms in confessing. Incidentally, it was in a foreign land that Gandhi became acquainted with the philosophical attributes of 'Bhagawat Gita'. He was introduced to it by his two English theosophist friends and Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the work titled 'The Song Celestial' remained with him till the end. In India as a child, Gandhi had seen the missionaries censuring and belittling Hinduism. Their criticism of his birth religion had developed in him an aversion towards Christianity but his reading of the Sermon on the Mount in England made him fall in love with the religion so much so that he endeavoured a synthesis of Gita with Christ's teachings. England gave him his first taste of cerebral religion which he continued to cultivate and expound before his countrymen through his speeches and writings during the freedom struggle. After clearing his exam Gandhi returned to India but proved a failure at the law courts of both Rajkot and Bombay. He had

tried public speaking in England but failed and continued to do so even on return. One silver lining during his dismal stay was his meeting with Raichand Bhai whose godliness and urge for self-realization in spite of his wealth impressed him and he sought his advice whenever in crises even in later years.<sup>3</sup>

In 1893 he got a call from a Gujarati firm in South Africa to handle its lawsuits. Having failed to leave a mark in India Gandhi availed the offer and sailed for Natal. In South Africa a series of incidents made him take up the cause of the racially discriminated Indians. On his first visit to court he was asked to remove his turban, thrown out of the train at Maritzburg for travelling First-Class, beaten up for not sitting at the footboard of the stagecoach and refused room in hotels in Pretoria, and all this within nine days of landing in South Africa. The events touched a cord and he organized a meet of Indian settlers in Pretoria, gave his first public speech and started the first initiative towards political demands and social reform which would form the core of all his future movements. It was here only he made friends with local Christians-Roman Catholics, Protestants, Quakers, who touched him with their purity of thought and fear of God but there were others who suffered with a feverish superiority regarding their religion and tried hard to convert him to the religion. Gandhi was without doubt impressed with Christianity but its theory of Christ being the only means to atonement failed to convince him. He was more into Tolstoy's approach to Christianity as written in the latter's 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' His experience with the falsehood and money associated with the legal profession made him settle the case he had come for from India, out of court. He ended up forging a compromise between Dada Abdullah and his relative and saved the time and cost of litigation for both of them. Thus having completed his work he was about to set sail for India but God had some other design for him. At his farewell party he read the news of attempts being made at government level to disfranchise Indians in Natal and he decided to stay back to help his people. He organized a working committee of volunteers and getting public signatures petitioned the Assembly but the bill was passed, nevertheless, the exercise made the Natal Indians aware of themselves as a community with common needs and rights. The episode launched him in the arena of public work and he never looked back.

These early experiences taught him to prepare selfless volunteers, collect and manage public funds and involve the trodden indentured section of the Indian community along with the educated or moneyed elite in such public movements. In 1896 he came back to India to fetch his family and used the voyage to learn Urdu and Tamil on deck. It was during his six month stay in India that he accepted Gokhale as his political guru, visited the untouchable quarter for the first time and gave public speeches in Bombay and Madras to make Indians aware of the condition of their fellow countrymen in South Africa. Incidentally he had to return to South Africa as the struggle against disfranchisement and the £3 annual tax was still pending with the Natal Indian Congress. On reaching Durban he had to pay for highlighting the plight of South African Indians. Many whites felt offended and Gandhi for the first time became a victim of the wrath of a misinformed public. The incident made him realize the role of leaders in steering the people in the right direction and he refused to litigate against the perpetrators.<sup>4</sup> Gandhi was a true learner and nothing escaped his domain of work. He washed and starched his own clothes and even played the barber for his sons. He had a predilection for nursing, not only did he volunteer as a compounder at a local hospital but even delivered his wife's fourth child. The Gandhis did not keep maid for the children but their infant needs were looked after by Gandhi himself in spite of being busy with public work. Gandhi refused to send his children to schools where other Indian children could not go and decided to Home-teach them. In his autobiography he gives a lengthy discourse on the subject. In spite of having a difference in opinion with his eldest son, Gandhi claims no regret in preferring valuable lessons on liberty and self respect for his sons than non-utilitarian 'artificial western education.'<sup>5</sup> The period is quite momentous not only with regard to gaining and safeguarding civil rights for the Indian community but Gandhi's own transformation also. Gandhi was a man of temper and many around him bore its brunt including Kasturba. Gandhi's critics including his son Harilal often blamed him for treating his house as a laboratory and family members as subjects for experimenting and perfecting his socio-political ideology. Washing the chamber pots, coaxing Kasturba to return the necklace which brought forth an emotional outburst from the 'obedient wife' and bringing down Manilal's fever through Naturopathy

are some of the instances quoted by such votaries. The charges could be true, still the man deserves some empathy given the fact that these were his formative years where he was trying hard to find semblance amidst a deluge of discoveries pertaining to public and personal life. Nonetheless with self-will and practice he mastered the baser instincts and developed the peaceful demeanor characteristic of his later years. His tryst with Brahmacharya also started in South Africa. He tried to practice sexual abstinence in order to save his energy for public work but failed twice. Kastur Bai was willing; the failing was due to his own weakness. Finally in 1906 he took the vow and remained true to it till his death.<sup>6</sup> During the Boer War (1897-99) Gandhi organized an Ambulance Corp of Indians, free and indentured, and served both outside and within the firing line. His argument was quite logical, if Indians demand citizenship rights from Britain than they need to side with it in time of need. The service was applauded by the press in both Natal and England while General Buller appreciated and recommended medals for the same in his dispatch.<sup>7</sup> It was the same rationale and zeal that made Gandhi support Britain during the First World War. On the eve of Second World War Gandhi's aim was complete independence resulting in the changed attitude towards the British. In 1901 he returned home and attended the Calcutta session of the Congress. The unhygienic condition of the venue, accompanied with the brazen attitude of the volunteers and use of English pained him even then. It was here only that he got the opportunity to stay with Gokhale and understand and appreciate him enough to accept him as his political guru which he openly accepted in his writings many a times.<sup>8</sup> It was here he became a critic of religiously sanctioned animal sacrifice, witnessed the activities of the Brahma Samaj and met Sister Nivedita. Visit to Benaras via train and the overwhelming filth plaguing both the places distressed him a lot. He never hesitated to publically criticize and condemn the basic aversion Indians have for keeping their surrounding clean. He was just settling himself in Bombay when he was requested back to South Africa to present the Indian case to Chamberlain. He met him as a Natal representative but due to the scheming mechanics of the white officials could not do so in Transvaal. The episode made him shift from Durban to Johannesburg. Meanwhile he continued with his experiments in Naturopathy, started *Indian Opinion* a weekly paper

edited by his European friends, met Polak and Kallenbach who were more than blood brothers to him, read Ruskin, corresponded with Tolstoy and started the Phoenix Farm. The Asiatic Act demanding Indians to carry Registration Certificates took him to his first jail pilgrim. It may be termed so because imprisonment for Gandhi was a divine opportunity on self retrospection and soul cleaning. The guileless acceptance of General Smuts proposal and the violent reaction of the Indian community on his person reflected his innate desire of reaching a consensus between the oppressors and the protestors. South Africa was preparing him well for all the eventualities he were to face on his home turf in India. South Africa was moving towards a Federal Union and Gandhi in order to impede the passing of more anti-Indian laws went to London. Even Gokhale's visit to South Africa was used to gather the promise of repealing the Act. The Union Government failed to keep its promise; rather gave a new concern to the Indian agitation; it declared all non-registered marriages illegal with the Indian marriages too falling in its gamut. This law made the Indian women join the agitation along with a large number of Indian laborers. More than two thousand men, women and children started a protest march against the unjust anti-Indian laws in South African Union. The protestors started from Natal crossing into Transvaal with the aim of reaching Tolstoy Farm. The Government arrested Gandhi, Kallenbach and Polak and deported the protestors. The whole affair became a prelude of what was awaiting Gandhi in India and could be viewed as a precursor of Dandi March. The Government perpetrated a string of inhuman atrocities on the protesters inviting criticism from Lord Hardinge the British viceroy in India. An inquiry commission was set up to look into the grievances but Gandhi was dissatisfied as no Indian was taken as a member. On July 18, 1914 a Bill was passed that repealed the Three Pound Tax and validated Indian marriages.<sup>9</sup> The battle having won Gandhi returned to India via England. Meanwhile the World War started, Gandhi formed the Ambulance Corp and supported the British in war. He still considered himself a British subject and believed in supporting it while demanding citizenship rights.

On returning to India Gandhi stayed in Tagore's Shanti Niketan and tried to weave in his ideals of hygiene and bread labor amidst the Ashram inmates. Although the experiment

was short-lived yet it proved his zeal towards these values.<sup>10</sup> After few months Gandhi established his own Ashram in Gujarat, first at Kochrab then Sabarmati. Funded by businessmen of Bombay and Ahmedabad, Sabarmati Ashram became the navel for Indian National Movement.<sup>11</sup> As advised by Gokhale, Gandhi took a tour of silent observance across India to take an overview of the country's condition before public expression of his political views. He commenced his political career in India in February 1916 on the occasion of the foundation ceremony of Banaras Hindu University. It was here that Gandhi criticised the lack of mass involvement in Indian National Movement forcing many senior congress leaders to walk out in protest. At the Lucknow session of 1916, Gandhi refused to speak in English. It was here only that Rajkumar Shukla persuaded Gandhi to come to Champaran where the latter launched his first Satyagraha in India in defense of the peasants forced to grow indigo by white plantation owners. Gandhi was adamant but agreed to the compensation offer of 25 % of the plantation owners, for Gandhi, the fact that the powerful Britishers had relented was more important than the amount.<sup>12</sup> Champaran was followed by Satyagrahas in favor of the peasants and mill workers of Kheda and Ahmedabad which caused his first public fast resulting in the practice of arbitration between mill workers and owners.<sup>13</sup> In 1919 the passing of the Rowlatt Act cajoled him to launch his first nationwide Satyagraha popularly called the Rowlatt Satyagraha. It was Gandhi's first act against the British Government. Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy that through the Satyagraha pledge, "We hope to show that physical force is nothing compared to moral force and that moral force never fails."<sup>14</sup> The call for hartal resulted in violent incidents scattered across Bombay, Gujarat and Delhi but the situation in Amritsar became worse resulting in the death of hundreds of innocent lives in Jalianwala Bagh Tragedy. November 1919 brought him close to the 'Khilafat Issue.' To protest against the indifferent attitude of the Imperialist government over the Punjab killings as well as the as the abolition of Khalifaship Gandhi returned the medals awarded to him by the British in lieu of his services offered during the Boer War and Zullu Rebellion. In a letter to Lord Chelmsford dated August 1, 1920 he expressed his deep disappointment with the British government and alleged it of acting in an "unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner and

moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality” making him lose his respect and affection for such a government.<sup>15</sup> Thus was born the ‘Non-Cooperation Movement’ a term negative enough to be peaceful but positive enough to be effective. The Nagpur Session of the Congress in 1920 passed the Non-cooperation, Congress was gradually turning into a mass organization with ‘less of English language and clothing and more of India’s middle class and poor.’<sup>16</sup> As Louis Fischer writes, “In a nation that was powerless, Gandhi became a symbol of strength. In a nation of slaves, he behaved like a free man.”<sup>17</sup> Charkhas produced homespun while the bonfires consumed foreign cloth. By September 1921 Gandhi came down to loincloth-the clothing of the poorest of the poor. The earnestness of Gandhi’s conviction in Satyagraha averted his arrest due to his impression on the Viceroy, Lord Reading who, claim many, did his best to give Gandhi leverage in the matter.<sup>18</sup> He was planning to take the movement further with the Bardoli experiment but the Chauri Chaura incident shook him to the core. He declared it a heinous crime and withdrew the movement.<sup>19</sup> He fasted because he believed it to be his failure to not to have made the people understand the true spirit of Satyagraha. He owned the responsibility and was given six years simple imprisonment by the Government. His jail term that lasted no more than two years was spent in spinning, reading and meditation. For a while Gandhi withdrew from active politics and focused more on constructive work that included ending untouchability, promoting communal harmony, Khadi and prohibition. He took extensive tours of the country stretching from Assam to Kerala, to Sindh to Almora, to promote his program. Meanwhile Simon Commission arrived and witnessed the wrath of the Indians who did not cooperate at all with this all white commission. A silver lining in the bleak times was the success received by the Bardoli movement. The 1929 Lahore session of the Congress adopted ‘Poorna Swaraj’, hoisted the tricolor flag on 31<sup>st</sup> December and celebrated 26<sup>th</sup> January as the Independence Day. When Lord Irwin contemptuously rejected Gandhi’s 11- point demand the latter embarked on a 385 Km march to Dandi to break the salt law giving ‘a signal to the nation to start the Civil Disobedience Movement.’<sup>20</sup> The Government wrecked havoc by beating and arresting thousands of Congress volunteers. More than a lakh were behind bars including many

women. The Dharwad salt unit in Bombay is a witness to the epitome of Indian character ready to bear all kinds of inhuman atrocities in lieu of dignified living. In Dec 1930 was organized the First Round Table Conference and the Government realized the efficacy of Gandhi's presence resulting in the Gandhi Irwin Pact of 1931. Gandhi visited London as a Congress representative to discuss the issue of dominion status. He stayed at Kingslay Hall the working class section of the city, interacted with the British common class but came back empty handed due to his differences with Ambedkar over the issue of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. According to him, "A separate electorate for the Depressed classes is harmful for them as well as Hinduism."<sup>21</sup> On returning he tried to revive the Civil Disobedience Movement but it had lost its appeal with the people. Meanwhile the British Government announced a scheme ratifying Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates for the Dalits. Gandhi went on a fast unto death against the proposal. He wanted a living pact that would eradicate untouchability root and branch.<sup>22</sup> The Poona Pact of 1932 repaired the trench line between Gandhi and Ambedkar but tagged him anti-Dalit in many sections despite his starting the Harijan Sewak Sangh, living in Bhangi colonies, agitating for temple entry etc.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile Gandhian experiments and suggestions in dietics continued. He was a votary of vegetarianism and nature cure. He accepted the concept of vegan diet more than hundred years ago and considered milk and its by-products equivalent to animal food. He was against allopathy and even refused to treat his gravely ill son Manilal of it instead choosing nature cure in form of mud packs and wet sheet packs to treat him. Later Gandhi proudly declared Manilal to be the healthiest of all his sons due to never succumbing to the lure of allopathy. The British Government brought the Govt of India Act 1935 granting autonomy to the provinces. Gandhian constructive work continued unabated. He had withdrawn from active membership of the Congress in 1934 to be able to do more social work<sup>24</sup> yet he remained the axis around which the party's political program revolved. To the allegations that he was retarding India's independence by entangling the national movement with social reconstruction he retorted that the two were intertwined and the first would be meaningless without the other. World War II made Gandhi ask for a promise of Dominion Status for

India but when no confirmation came the congress ministries resigned. 1940 witnessed the unstoppable march of fascist dictators over Western Europe resulting in massive bloodshed and bombing filling the lives of innocent masses with chaos and anarchy. At such a juncture Gandhi wrote letters to Hitler appealing to his humane side and even volunteered himself as a mediator between the two camps. In June 1940 when Belgium had been destroyed, France had fallen and the British were struggling against the Germans, he wrote the following lines to Lord Linlithgow, “This manslaughter must be stopped. You are losing; if you persist, it will only result in greater bloodshed. Hitler is not a bad man. If you call it off today, he will follow suit. If you want to send me to Germany or anywhere else, I am at your disposal. You can also inform the cabinet about it.”<sup>25</sup> To this Lord Linlithgow answered, “As long as we do not achieve our aim, we are not going to budge...Everything is going to be alright.”<sup>26</sup>

Although mocked for holding on to his utopian vision he continued stoking the fires of nonviolent resistance before the military might of Europe. There were others like him charged with the same dream of freeing India but wanted to use force against the British. The foremost in this ideology was Subhash Chandra Bose who parted ways from him forming the Forward Bloc. Gandhi is often criticized for not availing the preliminary Allied setbacks in the World War for India’s freedom struggle and even blamed for cohorting with the British and delaying the nation’s independence. The truth was far from it. The anti war speeches delivered by Vinoba, Nehru and Patel and their subsequent arrest was part of Gandhi’s endeavor to resist Indian for war. In such a scenario the appearance of the Japanese resulting in their occupation of Burma deteriorated the condition. Gandhi gave the call for Quit India hoping that a British free India would not be victimized by the Japanese. He said, “Leave India to anarchy or to God.”<sup>27</sup> By the midnight of 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942 Gandhi and others were arrested. Gandhi lost Mahadev Desai his secretary of 25 years, the English translator of his Autobiography, companion and more closer than his own sons. With no one to guide them the Indian youth took to the streets and at many places acts of vandalism were reported. The British reacted violently firing at crowds and putting more than a lakh Indians behind bars. Although the movement was suppressed

within a year, the verdict was out, “all sections of Indian opinion demanded immediate transfer of power.”<sup>28</sup> The ensuing violence and false Government accusations led Gandhi to take on a 21 day fast. Many doubted his ability given the age factor, the Government even made preparation for his cremation but as his physician said, “He fooled us all.” His detention lost him Kasturba too who breathed her last on 22 February 1944. After her cremation Gandhi said, “I cannot imagine life without Ba.....We lived together for 62 years.....And she passed away in my lap. Could it be better? I am happy beyond measure.”<sup>29</sup> Second World War came to an end and on the eve of San Francisco Conference for United Nations Gandhi said, “There will be no peace for Allies or the World unless they are determined to hammer out a real peace based on the freedom and equality of all races and nations...”<sup>30</sup> The British declared their decision of granting independence to India because the war debts had turned India into a white elephant for them.

The decision of the British to free India started a new chapter in the annals of Indian National Movement. Even before the declaration, numerous proposals had come regarding the nature of Dominion Status in India however with the declaration the exercise became more intense. The British did not want to leave India in the hands of Congress alone and insisted the inclusion of all political parties. Gandhi blamed the Government of continuing its sinister game of ‘Divide and Rule’ and wanted immediate departure of the British. He believed that with the British gone from India the League and the Congress will sort out the differences and the Country will not be divided. Jinnah was however adamant and proved his obstinacy by not cooperating with the proposal of a loose Federation of the Cabinet Mission in 1946. “Direct Action Day” by the League heaved the country in the throes of communal frenzy that continued unabated even post-independence, Gandhi implored upon the people to stop the killings traveling on foot to riot affected areas stretching from Noakhali to Punjab but the butchery continued. Many researchers and writers have blamed Gandhi for partition. Charging him with mixing religion with politics,<sup>31</sup> appeasing Jinnah, choosing Nehru over Patel, not supporting Bose and his Azad Hind Fauj, giving more share of the exchequer to Pakistan....the list is exhaustive. In reality

the Congress itself had stopped paying heed to the sane voice of Gandhi, his work was over, his morals and values were obstructing the political ambitions of the congress leaders. Gandhi was vehemently against partition, he quietly heard the discussion of the men debating partition he wanted the British to leave India with its anarchy but his was a voice crying in wilderness and despite his protest partition was accepted as a rational solution.<sup>32</sup> The whole nation was overjoyed with the dawn of independence but Gandhi continued to walk amongst the dead of the holocaust appealing for restraint and better sense in turbulent times. Gandhi had exacted a pledge from the Hindus in Calcutta as well as Muslim majority in Noakhali to guarantee the safety of their minority brethren and it was due to his efforts that Calcutta remained peaceful on 15<sup>th</sup> August when other places were simmering with violence.<sup>33</sup> Gandhi was very much distressed with the happenings, with the loss of lives and property and was urging the people through his speeches and writings to maintain peace. Dr Rajendra Prasad in the Foreword of *Delhi Diary* containing the prayer speeches of Gandhi from 10-9-'47 to 30-1-'48 wrote,

“It is a sad commentary on our life and work that instead of achieving the object which he had in view he had to lose his life. That he had lost interest in living, if he could not bring about communal unity, is apparent in these pages and one can see an undercurrent of pessimism which was a precursor of the tragedy which overtook the country on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January last. Truth and Ahimsa work in many inscrutable ways and it may be that the miracle which was not performed by Mahatmaji during his lifetime may now be performed by him by his death.”<sup>34</sup>

Gandhi's opponents could no longer bear to see him alive and preaching the cult of non-violence when the nation was being born out of the ambers of killing and sectarian violence. Many attempts had already been made on Gandhi and what happened on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1948 was sure to occur sooner or later.<sup>35</sup> The man had given his message on subjects ranging from politics to religion, Brahmacharya to Nature Cure, Veganism to Swadeshi...his teachings basically suggestive in nature had already been imparted. It was time to leave the people he loved more than his family, maybe it was time to take another

birth in a different place amidst different people...we don't know. He was gunned down on that fateful day before the masses gathered together for the prayer meeting at Birla House. The next day the body placed upon an army truck was pulled by two hundred jawans of the armed forces ".... no motor was used." The death parade was led by an English officer Roy Bucher. Gandhi was cremated on the banks of river Yamuna his ashes dispersed across the Ganges. Gandhi was no more physically, Nehru declared "The light has gone out of our lives"<sup>36</sup> however his soul continues to guide us through his teachings left behind in his writings.

### **Gandhism-His Thoughts**

Gandhi believed in the unity of human life, which is a synthetic whole. It cannot be divided into separate, watertight compartments – religious, moral, political, economic, social, individual or collective. They are inextricably intertwined. Whatever their external form of presentation and expression, Gandhi's ideas were new and revolutionary. They arose out of the creative mind of an individual whose reforming zeal was deeply concerned with the social situation and the difficulties of his times. For him historical precedents and examples were no barrier to fresh thinking and discovery.<sup>37</sup> Gandhi followed in the footsteps of the old masters and reformers. He did not rely upon elaborate arguments. He rarely quoted authorities. He had made no special or systematic study of the many subjects he dealt with. Gandhi did not follow any method of proving his propositions. For instance, in placing before the nation the program of khadi and village industries, he did not systematically work out in the language of the economists all the implications of his scheme. He did not write a learned thesis to prove the need for and the value of decentralized industry in the economy of India. He did not discuss such profound questions as value, cost of production, demand and supply, etc. Rather he gave simple and homely reasons and examples for his new and revolutionary ideas. He talked of the poverty of the masses and their enforced idleness. He emphasized the facts that real India lived in her villages therefore in order to make the villages self-reliant, labor using and not labor saving techniques should be used to bolster the country's economy.<sup>38</sup> Gandhi was a mass leader and well understood the

intricacies required for the same. He knew very well that only a mass movement could retrieve freedom for India and for the purpose he charted out a set of altruistic values as guiding principles for the people that were cohesive and utilitarian, aiming at the welfare of all. Thus constructive work became a basic component of Gandhian mass movement especially during the 'passive phase' of civil disobedience catering to those who lacked disposition for parliamentary work. Gandhian constructive work was based on connecting and revival of the egalitarian and autonomous pre-colonial village life. It included promotion of khadi, spinning, national education, Hindu-Muslim unity, upliftment of Harijans, boycott and swadeshi.<sup>39</sup> Romain Rolland Gandhi's first biographer and contemporary proclaims Gandhi's doctrine to be a huge edifice whose foundation is based on religion while the structure has temporal campaigns of politics and society. Adapted to the prevalent conditions it is the best possible structure in contemporary times.<sup>40</sup> Thus, although realizing the intertwined nature of Gandhian philosophy the need for academic analysis compels the study of his thoughts under the following headings.

## **1. Gandhi's Political Thought**

The different aspects of his political thoughts would be

(i) **Satyagraha**-The ethereal Gandhian formula based on Truth and Non-Violence, expressing itself in soul force, an inner infinite strength of humanity having the ability to morally transform the hearts of even the most vicious of oppressors is satyagraha. It is the most legitimate, constitutional and purest way of registering a protest bereft of any ill will.<sup>41</sup> Boyhood stories of the legendary King Harishchandra formed the basis of Gandhi's Satyagraha. It became an ordeal of fire for Gandhi in which there is willingness to sacrifice one's all for the supreme truth. This mechanism shatters the sham coverings and brings out the conflicts in the open. A votary of Civil Disobedience works hard to create a public opinion towards his cause but if he fails in his objective he carries on the struggle all by himself.<sup>42</sup> Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armory which cannot be used by everyone. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, rare. There can be no room for selfishness, anger, lack of faith, or impatience in Satyagraha. Infinite patience,

firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose and perfect calm along with a complete faith in the creed of Ahimsa are the traits required for the practice of Satyagraha. A Satyagrahi cannot bear ill will towards the oppressor. Patience and sympathy towards the aggressor, are the only two armor that he or she can afford to wield against the opponent. The votary of Satyagraha should have the ability to surrender before the adversary but not when the latter is more powerful but when both are on equal footing. Dialogue with the antagonist is always given precedence in this approach. Trusting the better instincts of the oppressor is imperative to the success of this system. Faith, hope, transparency and credence constitute the basic makeup of a Satyagrahi. Satyagraha is the voice of human conscience present universally but suppressed by majority due to selfishness. Therefore if used truthfully it can work miracle and appeal and transform the course of human history. Satyagrahi never inflicts pain on the oppressor due to which the struggle always ends with friendship between the two. Satyagrahi is never in search for false praise that is why suffers no qualms over admitting his mistake and withdrawing to do penance. It could be used as a means for redressing the wrongs committed by a person, an institution, community, organization, country etc., the process is slow but everlasting.

(ii) **Truth**-Truth was God for Gandhi, an uncompromising fact of nature that was priceless and bereft of any substitute or any utilitarian bearings. He wrote, "Truth is changeless, benevolent and eternal like God."<sup>43</sup> For Gandhi Truth was the voice of God veritably making it the duty of every man, woman, young and old to be truthful in every aspect and at every hour of their lives.<sup>44</sup> It is the inner voice that makes us choose the virtuous path even when evil is offered on a dazzling platter. It beckons us to do God's will. Truth clears away the mist of darkness that veils our sight from virtue and honor. Truth teaches us to be humble and chaste. Prayer is the most effective means to attain Truth and reach God. There is immense beauty in Truth because it is the expression of the soul. It shines out amidst mediocrity and deceit. Truth grants inner peace and the way to salvation. Gandhian Truth is plain and pristine. There are no shades of grey in it. There are no 'ifs' and 'but' in its expression. One should never deter from the principle of truth even when the tide is against us. Although devoted to the core principle Gandhian truth is not rigid and changed with the

influx of new ideas. And this too happened as part of his consistent search for truth. Giving testament to the statement are his lines addressed to the readers and appearing on the first page of every book that he has written, “In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and therefore when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.”<sup>45</sup>

(iii) **Non-Violence**-Gandhi was a firm believer in the creed of ‘Ahimsa’ and considered it to be an essential requisite that segregates humanity from the animal world. Non-violence is the greatest force dispensable to mankind and mightier than the most indigenous weapon of mass destruction. Gandhian Ahimsa, has neither a beginning nor an end. It transcends time, nations and people. The believer in nonviolence shares with many others the goal of a decent, just and equitable society. He wants to see an end to injustice, tyranny, corruption, and the exploitation of men by their fellow beings. He is deeply concerned to establish peace in the world. The follower of Ahimsa believes in the greatest good of all and even dies in the attempt to realize his ideals.<sup>46</sup> Gandhi believed that nonviolence has to be learned just like any other subject of study. The votary of nonviolence has to cultivate the ability to sacrifice as well as be fearless and most important love his oppressor. The penchant for nonviolence only comes with deliberate effort and practice. It is part of the basic creed of every religion of the world. Nonviolence is the purest manifestation of Godly love. Many argued nonviolence was only for individual emancipation and not suitable for worldly affairs but Gandhi refuted them declaring it to be elemental for everyday life.<sup>47</sup> Truth and nonviolence are the two sides of the same coin and complement each other. Still for better understanding nonviolence could be categorized as the means to achieve the goal of truth. An adherent of nonviolence not only abhors violence in thought, speech and action but exerts himself to comprehend and ameliorates the troubles and tribulations of humanity at large. In this way nonviolence is not a passive creed but an

action oriented forceful methodology. Had mankind endeavored to create ammunition to spread peace and nonviolence with the same persistence as he did for war the world would have been a better place to live and leave for our children?

(iv) **Swaraj**-A sacred word for Gandhi meaning 'self rule,' where the good of the nation is paramount, above all other considerations including personal profit, where 'right' is closely followed by 'duty' and to be equally enjoyed by all irrespective of class, caste, gender and religion. Swaraj means the Government by the many but if these many are immoral or selfish, their government will only spell anarchy and nothing else. It was assumed in many circles that Indian Swaraj will be the rule of the majority community, i.e. Hindus. But Gandhi clarified the misconception when he declared it to be the rule of all people...the rule of justice. He said, "The Swaraj of my dream is a poor man's Swaraj. Under Swaraj all can read and write, sickness and disease are reduced to minimum, no one is a pauper, there is no place for gambling, drinking and immortality or for class hatred. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jeweled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation, no encroachment upon just rights and no one can possess unjust rights."<sup>48</sup> Thus Gandhian swaraj is a poor man's swaraj where basic amenities of life will be available to all without distinction of wealth or class. His swaraj was not limited to political freedom but was comprehensive of both social and economic swaraj. He was quite clear about the moralistic means to achieve the swaraj of his dreams. He wrote, "Swaraj has to be won, worked and maintained through truth and ahimsa alone."<sup>49</sup> Swaraj attained by immoral and violent means will create a State inheriting the same nature as the parent movement. Gandhian swaraj did not nurture aggressive nationalism. It only promoted a healthy patriotism dedicated to the benefit of the whole universe. He wrote, "Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we exploit none, just as we will allow none to exploit us. Through Swaraj we will serve the whole world."<sup>50</sup>

(v) **Sarvodaya**-It was John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' that introduced him to the concept of the 'welfare of all' going beyond the popular utilitarian view of 'welfare of the majority.' Gandhian Sarvodaya incorporates all the values that are associated with Gandhi's life and

works i.e., truth liberty, equality, fraternity, social justice and non- violence. It envisages a society of vibrant individuals who would enjoy their utmost freedom through self-sacrifice and self-regulation. He found the following values in Sarvodaya, (1) the good of the individual is contained within the welfare of all, (2) the weightage of the work of a lawyer and that of a barber are the same and (3) the laborious lives of peasants and artisans are the lives worth living. He realized that he was fully aware of (1) while (2) he had an indistinct impression of however the (3) did not occur to his mind. On further contemplation it revealed to him that the second and the third are implicit in the (1).<sup>51</sup> A highly ethical and comprehensive Gandhian ideal that aims at the greatest good of all with no utilitarian compunctions and to be achieved in all the fields of human endeavor i.e., political , social and economic is Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya has been an innate trait of the indigenous Indian culture. Imperative to the success of Sarvodaya is the Gandhian ideology of non-possession that could be achieved by limiting the wants. If the rich voluntarily give up their possessions there would be sufficient food and land for all. However this should be attained only through nonviolence by appealing to the souls of the wealthy and never through coercion. Hoarding for the future is equivalent to stealing because it creates false scarcity of the resource, escalating its price and putting it beyond the reach of poor and ordinary people. The imbalance gives birth to despair, antagonism and violence, promotes crime and corruption and ultimately leads to imperialistic slavery. The struggles between class, caste, community and gender become intense and push the country towards a downhill slide.

(vi) **Ramrajya**-‘An ideal State’ where welfare of the subjects is the primary concern of the government and religion, in form of God and ‘morality’ guides the conscious of the rulers. For those who objected to his usage of the religious term for the whole of India Gandhi wrote, “By Ramrajya I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramarajya Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate

and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya.”<sup>52</sup> Gandhian Ram Rajya means rule of ethics, justice, love and nonviolence. It can come only when each follow his duty religiously. Nobody is worried or apprehensive of their ‘rights’ for they come attached with one’s duties. The State will never have to use force and coercion on its citizens but rather operate with their proffered support and cooperation. The people will be self disciplined and conscientious about their work. The majority will consider it their duty to protect the minorities who will enjoy the same privileges as the majority. The State will be benevolent in nature and endeavour for the welfare of all.

(vii) **Non-Cooperation**-The program of "non-violent non-cooperation" included the boycott of councils, courts and schools was set up by the British and was introduced in India by Gandhi in 1920 as a nationwide mass movement. Gandhi claimed that his movement was not unconstitutional and totally legitimate as it was against the State that was politically and economically exploiting the basic rights of the people of the land. The British saw that the success of "non-cooperation" would paralyze their administration. Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, tried to kill it with ridicule, calling it "the most foolish of all foolish schemes", which would "bring ruin to those who had any stake in the country". A number of eminent "moderate" politicians joined official critics in highlighting the risks of mass non-cooperation as proposed by Gandhi. However, the movement gained momentum and drew in people from all sections of Indian society and geographical locales. The constructive program attached to NOC nourished a vision for the future of colonial free India amongst the masses adding succor to the program. Non-Cooperation was the most effectual weapon wielded by Gandhi in which he urged the masses to nonviolently withdraw their support from the oppressive Government if the latter’s actions are causing harm to the innocent, and thus bend the offenders to see reason.

(viii) **Civil Disobedience**-Thoreau’s essay on Civil Disobedience titled ‘The Duty of Disobeying Laws’ greatly influenced Gandhi during his movement in South Africa and he brought out a simple version of the same in Indian Opinion. Louis Fischer aptly remarked,

“There was a Thoreau imprint on much that Gandhi did.”<sup>53</sup> This is again a Satyagrahi’s modus operandi comprising of peaceful processions, public meetings, picketing and works of public service, done within the limits of non-violence without causing problems for the masses, but effective enough to disrupt the smooth functioning of the abusive authority. To quote Gandhi, “Civil Disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the State has become lawless or corrupt. And a citizen who barter with such a State shares in its corruption and lawlessness.”<sup>54</sup> Civil Disobedience goes a step further than noncooperation by urging the Satyagrahi to break civil laws but within the purview of a nonviolent peaceful manner. The movement launched by Gandhi in 1930 with his Dandi March and breaking the salt laws cajoled thousands of nationalist Indians to nonviolently break laws, suffer brutal lathi charge and in some instances police bullets and offer arrest. The whole nation came to a standstill for a year but the enthusiasm did not wane. Ultimately the government buckled down and invited Gandhi for talks and with drawl of the movement.

(ix) **Communal Harmony**-Different religions represent diverse paths leading to the same goal, i.e., God, and it is crucial for Indians of different faiths to live amicably with each other, respecting and appreciating each others beliefs rather than merely tolerating one another. Gandhi wrote, “Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this harmony. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean political unity which may be imposed. It means an unbreakable heart unity. The first thing essential for achieving such unity is that every congressmen, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew, etc., shortly, every Hindu and non – Hindu. He has to feel his identity with millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressmen will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.”<sup>55</sup> Gandhi distinctly declared that without solving the problem of minorities India will never have true swaraj. He wrote, “Let no one imagine that because the Hindus constitute the majority community they can win Swaraj for India or even for themselves by organizing civil disobedience without the backing or support of other communities.”<sup>56</sup> When the voices of religious dissent continued to grow strong in spite of his exhortations

he wrote, “....Hindustan belongs to all those who are born and bred here and who have no other country to look to. Therefore it belongs to Parsis, Beni Israels, to Indian Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindus as much as to Hindus. Free India will be no Hindu Raj, it will be Indian Raj Based not on the majority of any religious sect or community but on the representatives of the whole people without distinction of religion.”<sup>57</sup>

(x) **Fasting**—The most revered yet misinterpreted Gandhian method till date, used to purge oneself of all ill feelings against the tyrant and also protest against his policies that injure the common good of all is fasting. In spite of all the aspersions casted against the methodology a genuine fast cleanses body, mind and soul. It crucifies the flesh and to that extent sets the soul free. A fast to be true must be accompanied by a readiness to receive pure thoughts and determination to resist all Satan’s temptation.<sup>58</sup> Gandhi said, “My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray<sup>59</sup> ....It is my firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh.”<sup>60</sup> Fasting to attain some personal need amounted to coercion by Gandhi. It is to be done only as a means to atonement as Gandhi himself did after the violent incidents of Quit India in 1942 or to resist and protest against any social, political or ideological injustice being perpetrated by any authority or institution. Gandhi’s fast against the proposed separate electorates for Depressed classes in September 1932 could be quoted to illustrate the latter type of fasting.

(xi) **Panchayati Raj**—Panchayats had been part of the socio-political milieu of India since the advent of Aryans. Even during the Muslim rule the Imperial Sultans and Badshahs did not interfere in the autonomous status of the villages except to collect revenue. However with the advent of the British and their western institution and ways of revenue collection and judiciary the Panchayats lost their prominence and utility. When the national movement began to grow with Gandhi as the pivot, the demand for the re-emergence of panchayat raj gained strength. Besides Gandhi, C.R. Das and Bhagwan Das also prepared a draft of Panchayat based constitution for India. According to Gandhi, freedom of India meant that the rulers should depend on the will of those who are under them. It must begin

at the bottom. “Thus every village must be a republic or Panchayat having full power. It follows that every village has to be self sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world... ultimately it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude willing help from neighbor or from the world..... Every village must be a cultured society..... everyone should know what he wants.” Through Panchayat Raj Gandhi wanted to set up village- centric republics for all villages in India. This would bring the republics face to face with the communities. The Panchayats executives would be elected directly by the villagers themselves. According to him, there should not be any party based elections so that such elections might not be a hindrance to the progress of the villages rather than a help. Panchayats would be responsible for all – round developments of the village.<sup>61</sup>

## **2. Gandhi’s Social Thought**

Gandhian Social thought covers a gamut of issues that formed the plethora of Gandhian social ideology, some of them are as follows:

- (i) **God**-Romain Rolland calls Gandhi a man of religion and the doctrine he propounded was also essentially religious. According to Rolland, Gandhi was a political leader by necessity, because other leaders of the time had disappeared and Gandhi was forced by circumstances to pilot the ship through the storm and give a practical and political expression to his doctrine.<sup>62</sup> Although a scholar of different religious texts, Gandhi remained a Hindu till his death. However his spectrum of Hinduism was very wide and not limited to textual interpretations, rituals or traditions. He was overtly critical of all the vices and evil customs that had entered Hinduism through the centuries. Gandhi believed in the equality of all religions but considered Hinduism to be the most tolerant and liberal of all. Although tilted towards the spiritual aspect of God Gandhi did not condemn the popular symbolic rituals like idol worship or cow veneration in Hinduism. Ideologically Gandhi’s God was an abstract, omnipotent, omniscient and unfathomable entity that symbolized Universal Truth, and expected ‘His’ followers to raise their voice and agitate peacefully to wipe out pain and misery from the lives of their fellow brethren. Gandhi equated Truth with God but he also called him ‘Daridranarayan’ meaning the ‘God of the poor’...who lives in the heart of

millions of poor. He wanted to attain God by serving humanity. His God had no form but the inner voice that tells us to be true.<sup>63</sup>

(ii) **Varna Dharma**-Gandhi was a votary of the Vedic Varna system and considered it to be a pragmatic division of society based on work and individual skills, however the modern connotation of the caste system purely based on birth was totally abhorred by him. He was pained by the incomplete understanding of the Varnashram Dharma by the people. For him, “The Four Varnas are complementary to each other and none superior or inferior to any other, each necessary for the whole body of Hinduism.”<sup>64</sup> Gandhi assiduously believed in the equality of mankind and voraciously condemned any discrimination. However his belief was on equality of souls and not body because physically as well as temperamentally all beings are different. The varna system is actually the Hindu human resource management where work was assigned as per the aptitude and ability of the individual for the maximum benefit of the society at large. He considered the varna system to be the result of scientific dissertation of the Hindu sages of ancient India. He wrote, “Varnas are four to mark our universal occupations, imparting knowledge, defending the defenseless, carrying on agriculture and commerce and performing service through physical labor. These occupations are common to all mankind but Hinduism has recognized them as the law of our being....When Hinduism was seized with inertia, abuse of varna resulted in innumerable castes with unnecessary restrictions on inter-marriage and inter-dining. The law of varna has nothing to do with these restrictions.”<sup>65</sup>

(iii) **Untouchability**-The most heinous of all the ancient Indian tradition, untouchability was voraciously condemned by Gandhi who considered it as a sin against humanity and wanted his countrymen to clean themselves of this cursed practice. He considered it a sin against God and man and like a poison slowly eating away the vitals of Hinduism.<sup>66</sup> He denounced it as an “ineffaceable blot”<sup>67</sup> and a curse on Hinduism. Gandhi was an advocate of the varna system but rebuked the caste system that had given birth to untouchability. The system was against the law of nature and the human spirit of compassion. Gandhi’s constructive program for the freedom movement was based on eradication of untouchability. He said, “We are guilty of having suppressed our brethren; we make them

crawl on their bellies; we have made them rub their noses on the ground; with eyes red with rage, we push them out of railway compartments. What more than this has British rule done? What charge that we bring against Dyer and O'Dwyer, may not others, and even our own people, lay at our doors? We ought to purge ourselves of this pollution. It is idle to talk of swaraj so long as we do not protect the weak and the helpless.”<sup>68</sup> Under his leadership, the Congress agitated and demanded freedom of movement to join schools, to enter temples and the right to draw water from the village wells for the untouchables. He believed their unrestricted entry will remove the stain of untouchability from the minds of the Depressed classes and make them contribute healthily to the society. Besides demanding constitutional remedy Gandhi exerted hard to change the outlook of the high castes through his speeches and writings because he understood that the real transformation does not come with legislation but by changing the mindset of the people. To develop a sense of dignity and give them spiritual strength he rechristened them as Harijans or Children of God. To launch and implement programs for their socio-economic development he organized the ‘Harijan Sewak Sangh.’ To end the taboo of inter-dining and living associated with them Gandhi during his visits to different parts of India made sure to stay in their colonies.

(iv) **Women**-Gandhi said, “Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in every minute detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him.”<sup>69</sup> For him, women had as much right to shape their destiny as men. He wanted the parents to educate their daughters so that they don't fall victim to the vice of dowry prevalent in the Indian society. He wanted mutual love and consent rather than monitory concerns to become the base of marriage He decried men for considering themselves as lords and masters of women instead of treating them as friends and co-workers. He believed education to be essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights. He wanted sons and daughters to be treated on equal footing. He was against the patriarchal system of forcing norms of chastity solely on women. He advocated the practice of sexual morality for both men and women. Besides he said, “Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be protected by the

surrounding wall of the 'purdah.' It must grow from within... it cannot be superimposed."<sup>70</sup> He encouraged his young followers to marry without dowry to discourage the evil practice. He was also against the system of forced widowhood imposed on many women of Indian society. Voluntary widowhood adopted as a choice by a woman adds dignity and honor to her person but enforced widowhood is akin to an unbearable yoke breeding corruption and moral degradation in the process. He animated many a youth to marry Dalit girls as well as widows especially child widows to usher in a social revolution in the country. Although a votary of nonviolence he told women to use violence bereft of any inhibition in order to safeguard themselves from rape and abuse.<sup>71</sup> He vehemently condemned the Devdasi system prevalent in many temples in India. To defend this evil practice in name of God and religion was declared blasphemous by him. He gave his full support to the bill abolishing the act and created public awareness in its favor through his speeches and writings. He wanted women to be treated as honored comrades in common service and their participation was whole heartedly encouraged by him in all his schemes pertaining to the reconstruction of India. Gandhi placed the onus of promoting Charkha, picketing, health and sanitation on women and their participation in multitude in the Civil Disobedience movement stands witness to the statement.

(v) **New Education**-For Gandhi, education was a means by which a student acquires necessary skills to earn a livelihood followed by an all-round development that draws out the best from-body, mind and spirit. His concept of holistic education included the intellect, physical and the spiritual. If only academics is stressed it leads to a lopsided development creating imbalance and disharmony in the society. He was saddened by the fact that students in India after receiving modern western education imparted in colonial schools look down upon manual labor. He wanted manual work to be included in the syllabi to enable poor children to pay for their education. He wrote, "Manual work will have to be the very center of the whole thing...The children will produce marketable articles in an entertaining and intellectually stimulating manner."<sup>72</sup> He was dissatisfied with the British induced education that focused on the literary alone and assiduously neglected the vocational aspect. In a land of teeming millions suffering with unemployment vocational

education imparting skills to earn a livelihood was a must. He wrote, “Vocational Education will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a just social order in which there is no unnatural division between the ‘haves’ and ‘haves not.’”<sup>73</sup> In addition to vocation, character building was another important object of education for Gandhi. If education cannot produce morally sound citizens capable of discerning between the righteous and the evil then it is useless and simply a waste of time and money. In 1939 addressing a gathering of teachers he said, “What we need is educationists with originality, fired with true zeal, who will think out from day to day what they are going to teach their pupils.”<sup>74</sup> Gandhi had experimented with education at both the Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm in South Africa and did the same in India at Wardha. It was here he formulated the scheme for ‘Basic Education’ principally designed for village children to transform them into model villagers and keep them rooted to the soil so that they do not leave the land of their ancestors in search of employment to the cities.

(vi) **Proselytisation**-He was strongly against conversions and wanted the followers to strive to bring perfection in their respective faiths and do away with the practice of abandoning the religion of their forefathers. According to Gandhi, all religions proceed from the same God and whatever imperfections they have is due to human intervention which could be easily remedied. Again, proselytization under the garb of human service is worse. He questioned the missionary methods of spreading Christianity through medicine and education services. He declared, “India is in no need of conversion...Conversion in the sense of self-purification, self-realization is the crying need of the hour.”<sup>75</sup> His experience of conversions in South Africa had convinced him of its futility. The converts instead of imbibing the moral precepts of Christianity end up imitating European lifestyle. Besides a true votary of faith does not need to be vocal about its extraordinary principles but would himself become a living symbol of that faith luring people to him as well as to his faith. Again if a Hindu in spite of not knowing about Jesus practices love and forgiveness in his life but indulges in idol worship it is nobody’s concern to tell him of Jesus and converting him from Hinduism. Another reason why Gandhi was critical of the missionaries was their racist attitude and the habit of ridiculing

Indian customs and traditions which had generated his own antagonistic attitude towards Christianity in his growing years. Viewing the other side the lampooning proved beneficial also when it coaxed the non-Christians to review their practices and introduce reforms.<sup>76</sup>

(vii) **Hygiene and Sanitation**—Gandhi declared, “Cleanliness is next to godliness. We can no more gain God’s Blessings with an unclean body than with an unclean mind. A clean body cannot reside in an unclean city.”<sup>77</sup> Public Hygiene was a virtue that he found missing among the Indian masses and urged the people to keep their surroundings clean and disease free. He was grieved by the callous ways of his countrymen who did not flinch from contaminating India’s rivers and lakes with their personal as well as public refuse and advocated numerous ways to channelize the waste in utilitarian avenues. He said, “Diseases spring from a willful or ignorant breach of the laws of nature.”<sup>78</sup> Blaming his countrymen he said, “Leaving night-soil, cleaning the nose, or spitting on the road is a sin against God as well as humanity.”<sup>79</sup> Gandhi knew that health and sanitation could only be maintained by the cooperation of all. He wrote, “No municipality can cope with insanitation and congestion by the simple process of taxation and paid services. This vital reform is possible only by wholesale and voluntary co-operation of the people both rich and poor.”<sup>80</sup> He was deeply perturbed by the criminal negligence of sanitary conditions in Indian villages. In spite of having an intense love and binding towards village life which he called the real soul of India, Gandhi could not refrain from characterizing them as ‘dung-heaps.’ He especially included ‘Education in Health and Hygiene’ as one of the programs in the Constructive Work he envisaged for the reconstruction of rural India.

(viii) **Health Diet**—Gandhi believed in transformation of both body and soul and considered control of palate and right food to be mandatory for a pure and virtuous living. It was Henry Salt’s *A Plea for Vegetarianism* that gave a moral as well as scientific support to Gandhi’s diet regime. Gandhi wrote, “A healthy mind in a healthy body is self-evident truth. ... We should eat to live for service of fellow-men not for indulging ourselves.”<sup>81</sup> Gandhi was an active advocate of vegetarian diet and found it to be the key to healthy living. He declared meat to be unsuitable for human digestion. Whole wheat, unpolished

rice, leafy vegetables and seasonal fruits, with a conscious abstention from tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol and opium constituted a salubrious Gandhian diet. In spite of being a resilient vegetarian Gandhi did not condemn or censure the non-vegetarians and forcefully impose vegetarian diet on them. For Gandhi prevention was better than cure and recommended food that would keep the body away from common ailments. Partake of ghee, oil, sweetmeats and other delicacies where millions still do not get two square meals a day was declared equivalent to robbery by Gandhi.<sup>82</sup> He was strongly against consumption of alcohol and said, “The drink habit destroys the soul of man and tends to turn him into a beast.”<sup>83</sup> He wanted his countrymen especially the village poor to include green vegetables and seasonal fruits in their daily diets. For this he implored the rich to eat less in order to make the expensive vegetables and fruits cheaply available to the poor. At one time he even experimented with veganism in which he voluntarily gave up milk and its by-products. However later in view of his depleting health he decided to give up the vow. Gandhi advocated skimmed milk, brown rice, unfired food years ago which the present generations is harping as the blueprint for healthy living.

(ix) **Youth**-Gandhi fostered tenacious faith in the abilities of Indian youth and looked upon them as the lifeline of his political, social and economic reconstruction of India. He wanted the youth to go to the villages and serve as humble servants. In this way they would be “God’s balm for the wounded soul of India.”<sup>84</sup> He wanted them to put their heart and soul into their studies but maintain the purity of mind and heart and persistently seek God’s aid in whatever they do. To the youth claiming to be the fathers of tomorrow, he advised them through the Biblical expression to be like the salt of the nation and adding caution wrote, “If the salt loses its flavor wherewith shall it be salted?”<sup>85</sup> He counseled the youth of average intelligence to get rid of shame attached to manual labor and be ready and contented with mediocre or menial level jobs. Every cog fits in and contributes to the successful functioning of the society therefore there was nothing shameful in being one among many in an ocean of humanity. He wanted them to personify his social reconstruction program and encouraged them to marry widows and untouchables. He wanted the youth to follow the Ashram System of Ancient India and lead a focused and

disciplined life. He wanted them to take lead in all his teachings pertaining to the environment, dietary reforms, moral codes etc.,. He had great hopes on them to carve out the India of his Dreams.

### 3. **Gandhi's Economic Thought**

The British colonial rule had drained India of its economic virility pushing its people towards a state of endless destitution and drudgery. Gandhi after a profound study of the situation had envisaged a detailed program for the economic regeneration of the country which found ready expression in a most simplified manner.

(i) **Swadeshi**-Indian handicrafts had been ruling the international market since ancient times cutting across the limitations of land and time. Indian artisan had proven his skill and ingenuity by drawing in gold from different cultures and people. Post British colonization the Indian masses had been deliberately pushed in deep poverty for the benefit of the imperial power. It happened because the indigenous industries of the country had been destroyed to feed the raw needs of Lancashire. According to Gandhi, it was by producing on its own whatever it required that Indian villages could turn into self-supporting and self-contained units, once again ushering in the era of economic resplendence. He wanted the people to use locally available products and if found less in quality to improve by suggestions but distant or foreign made products to be avoided despite high quality. Gandhian Swadeshi is not limited to economy alone but spills over to matters of language, education, medicine, administrative institutions like revenue and courts and services. Gandhi's insistence on Hindi and other Indian vernaculars, nationalist schools, Nai Talim, Nature Cure therapy, Yoga, Siddha, Village Panchayats etc., ooze of indigenously swadeshi. However, he did say, "Even Swadeshi like any other good thing can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger that must be guarded against."<sup>86</sup> Insisting on a local product or compromising on the quality or any other fault in the product and using coercive methods before the customers makes swadeshi look detrimental and harmful for the nation.

(ii) **Charkha**-For Gandhi, Charkha or the spinning wheel was the most natural, simple,

inexpensive and pragmatic solution to India's economic distress. Nationally, it symbolized India's freedom and prosperity and internationally, it sends the message of self-help and goodwill to the nations of the world. He said, "I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India."<sup>87</sup> For Gandhi, Charkha could be the panacea for the starving millions of India. It could play a significant role in providing primary as well as supplementary employment to both the unemployed and underemployed because the capital required to set up the spinning industry was much less than needed to start a mill therefore Charkha could prove extremely beneficial for the rural poor. For the educated urbane it represented freedom from idol talk and engagement in bread labor He urged the future leaders to create a market for the Khaddar Industry that had lost its popularity in comparison to the finesse and glossy texture of the European mill made cloth. Introduced primarily to stop the drain of wealth from India by weaving our own cloth Charkha soon became the emblem of the nation. The Charkha had been part and parcel of all aspects of agrarian life that had been relegated to oblivion under colonial rule. Gandhi brought it out and transformed it into a weapon in the hands of the guileless Indians to challenge the might of the British Empire.

(iii) **Machines**-Gandhi was fervently against replacing human labor with machines and adding to the unemployed population of the country. He was dead against aping the industrial model of the west which was able to sustain it due to its limited population. However in India he prophesized, the same model would be a definite failure He was against large scale industrialization and mass production. He alleged that machines turn human into mere cogs in the society and hinders the evolution of full-blooded, fully developed individual members of the society. He also blamed the machines for concentrating the production in particular areas creating the need for wide scale distribution further leading to large scale corruption. He said, "When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production indefinitely and at any price disappears....In the absence of mass production machines will not be required."<sup>88</sup> He further said, "Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of

living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India.”<sup>89</sup> Another reason that he disfavored industrialization was that it would open doors for private investment and the demands of capitalism would induce class struggle already adding to the existing divisions in the country. However being a pragmatic preacher he was open to those tools and instruments that saved individual labor and eased human effort. He was in favor of the concept of State owned heavy industries. For Gandhi labor as a way of life owned a unique place in any cultured human family and excessive availability of machines produces lethargy, gives birth to idle thoughts and demeans labor in everyday life.

(iv) **Village Industries**-Villages formed the backbone of Indian economy and so did its numerous industries. The pre-colonial village had been economically self-reliant with its artisans supplying its basic needs as well as selling the surplus to the adjacent city. The British in their bid to supply cheap raw material to their mills and factories deliberately ruined the Indian village industries that had in ancient and medieval times whetted as well as fed the fancies of the urban elite of Europe. Gandhi very well understood that India is primarily a nation of villages. In order to give strength to the enslaved voices of people to rise against the British and later sustain the hard won independence, it needed to be financially self-sufficient. Reviving the rural economy was one of the major objectives of Gandhian constructive program. Few of the industries promoted by Gandhi were hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, production of compost manure and Khadi. Gandhi wanted the villages to stop looking at cities for their requirements but once again become the cradle of growth and nourishment for the urban centers. He wrote, “We should look to the villages for supply of our daily needs”<sup>90</sup> because “if the village perishes India will perish too.”<sup>91</sup> He introduced the ‘Charkha’ as a symbol for economic self-sufficiency for India especially its villages.

(v) **Bread Labor**—Gandhi said, “To be idle is to breach the creed of Ahimsa.”<sup>92</sup> Gandhi laid great stress on the divine law that man must eat his bread by laboring with his own hands thus solving India’s veritable problem of unemployment. According to Gandhi,

everyone needs to spend their idle hours engaged in some productive activity based on manual work this not only gives physical exercise to those with sedentary professions but keeps the mind away from all sinful cravings that seep in, in our hours of idleness. Gandhi wrote, “If all labored for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and leisure for all. Such labor would be highest sacrifice of all.”<sup>93</sup> The concept was inspired by John Ruskin’s *Unto This Last* as well as Tolstoy’s penchant for working with hands. If one eats without labor it is akin to theft. Gandhi wanted to incorporate the concept of scavenging with Bread Labor in India to eradicate the evil of untouchability. In fact he visualized it as a panacea for all the major maladies affecting the country. He said, “If all labored for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry for overpopulation, no disease and no misery. Such labor will be the highest form of sacrifice.”<sup>94</sup> Gandhi had great regard for professions involving manual labor for they selflessly served the society, to the protesting intellectuals he retorted “Intellectual labor is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment.”<sup>95</sup> Spinning the charkha incidentally was the antidote offered by Gandhi for both the rich and the poor, self contained solution to the wealthy and a means of livelihood for the needy.

(vi) **Trusteeship**—Gandhi wrote, “Nature produces enough for our wants from day-to-day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world.”<sup>96</sup> Gandhi wanted the rich of India to outgrow their greed and sense of possession on the wealth around them and start viewing themselves as divinely ordained servants of the society acting as ‘trustees’ of this treasure, holding it out, and spending it for the welfare of their fellow beings.<sup>97</sup> He wrote, “As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefits, then purity enters into his earnings and there is ahimsa in his venture. Moreover, if men’s minds turn towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness.”<sup>98</sup> He advised the rich to spend on their daily requirements and give away the surplus for the society. Gandhi was a pragmatic philosopher with an intrinsic thought process in sync with

Indian philosophy. With such a framework he could not be against the rich and wealthy. Gandhi never bore any ill will or malice towards the rich. He never championed the use of force to coerce the wealth out of them for which he was always on the receiving end of the more proactive Marxists. Gandhi's theory of trusteeship was based on change of heart and spirit of the wealthy. He did not believe in using force against the capitalist and differed from Marxists in this regard. Violence could never be used to create an egalitarian society. It should happen voluntary through actual transformation of the soul. He advised the rich to enjoy the wealth by renouncing it then only economic equality will be set up in India in its truest sense. Again his trusteeship did not limit itself to the rich of the country but politicians as well for according to Gandhi; State was also a trustee of the political power of a nation and cannot use it to fulfill his personal needs. To the charges against the concept being too utopian he answered, "If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. The question is of conviction."<sup>99</sup>

Studying Gandhian thought, we have to remember certain dispositions of Gandhi. First of all, Gandhi was not a system builder in an academic sense. He was not a philosopher, nor was he a sage or theorizer. Almost all his sayings were pouring from the deep recesses of his heart based on feelings and sincere realization of the truth. To those wanting a theorized version of his speeches and writings he wrote, "There is no such thing as 'Gandhism' and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I have tried in my own way to apply the eternal truth to our daily life and problems."<sup>100</sup> Without going into disputes, it can be agreed that he was not committed to any exclusive school of thought. His speech and pen had generally come from responses from particular situation. Gandhi even at the cusp of his life spoke of himself that he had never ceased to grow and therefore, he had been learning from "Experiment and Truth" as he named his autobiography. Thus Gandhi has revised his opinions from time to time though his conceptual framework remained the same. He had not altered from his basics. In spite of Gandhi rejecting any 'ism' in his words and writings, for the scholars of his thoughts and views he does emerge as an advocate of a 'way of life' not only for India but the whole world especially when we chafe

him in context of the present political, social and economic milieu thereby justifying the title of the chapter ‘Gandhi and Gandhism.’

To conclude once again in the words of Rolland, “Gandhi is not only for India a hero of national history whose legendary memory will be enshrined in the millennial epoch...He has inscribed his name among the sages and saints of humanity; We, intellectuals, men of science, men of letters, artists, who belong to the pan humanist confraternity, we offer our fervent homage of love and veneration to our master and brother, Gandhi, who is realizing, in the heart and in action, our ideal of humanity to come.”<sup>101</sup>

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Pour la Résistance Civile  
à l'Inde

Aux yeux des milliers d'hommes qui, à l'heure  
présente, jugent intolérable le maintien de la société  
actuelle, impérialiste et capitaliste, et qui ont résolu  
de la changer, la grande expérience du Satyagraha  
des Indes est l'unique chance qui s'offre au  
monde de réaliser cette transformation sociale, sans  
faire appel à la violence. Si elle échoue, si elle  
est vaincue par la violence de l'Empire Britannique  
qui s'acharne contre les Résistants Civils de l'Inde,  
il ne restera d'autre issue à l'évolution humaine  
qu'à la violence, et ce sera l'Empire Britannique  
même qui en aura le poids. — Ou Gandhi,  
ou Lénine! De toute façon, la justice  
sociale doit s'accomplir. — C'est ce qui nous  
rend plus tranquille encore le spectacle de l'Inde.  
C'est des ventiques. Tous ceux qui ont à cœur  
l'harmonie sociale, l'esprit et le pain de  
l'humanité, vivront à l'Inde, et toutes leurs forces

Car si l'Inde le satyagraha succombait  
dans la bataille, ce serait le Christ même qui  
aurait frappé, un suprême coup et lancé, sur  
la voie. Et cette fois, il ne reviendrait plus.

Romain Rolland

Janvier 1932

Letter to Gandhi by Romain Rolland



**Ancestral Home of Gandhi**



**As a Law Student in England**



**Practicing Law in South Africa**

**Phoenix Settlement**





**Zulu Rebellion-Ambulance Corps**



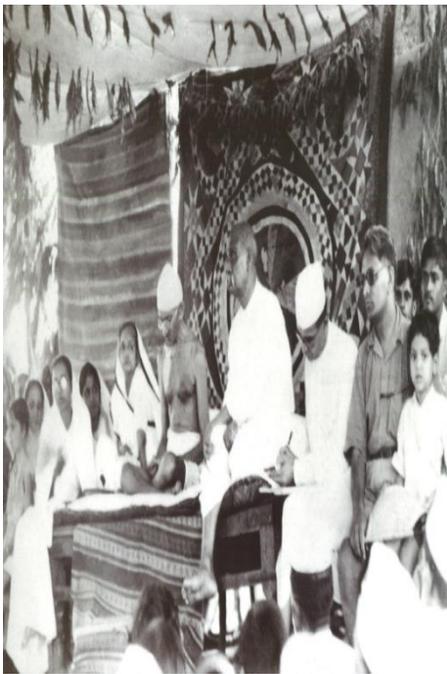
**Mass Certificate Burning**



**Epic March-Miners in South Africa, 1913**



**Mill Workers Strike, Ahemdabad**



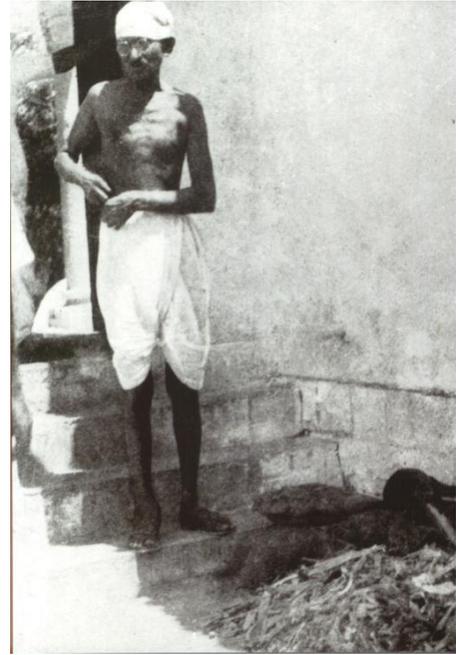
**Bardoli Satyagraha, 1928**



**With women of Mill Workers**



**With Romain Rolland**



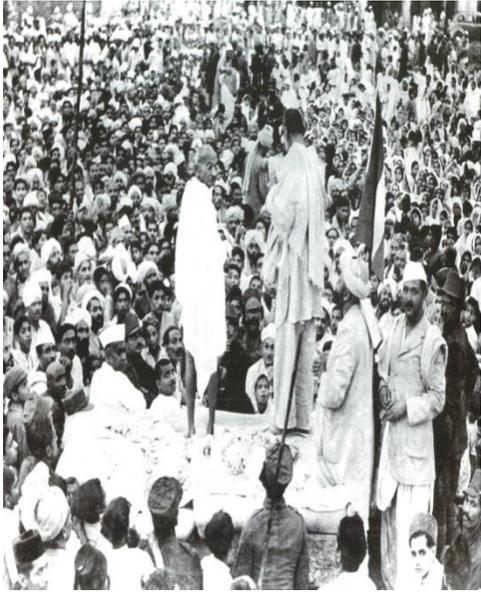
**No job is Mean**



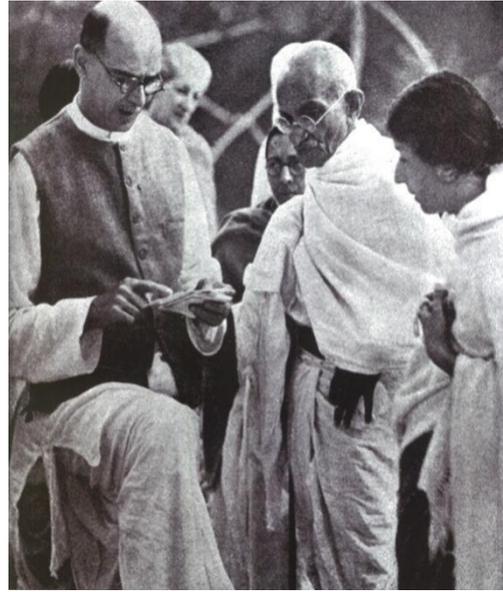
**Fund Collection**



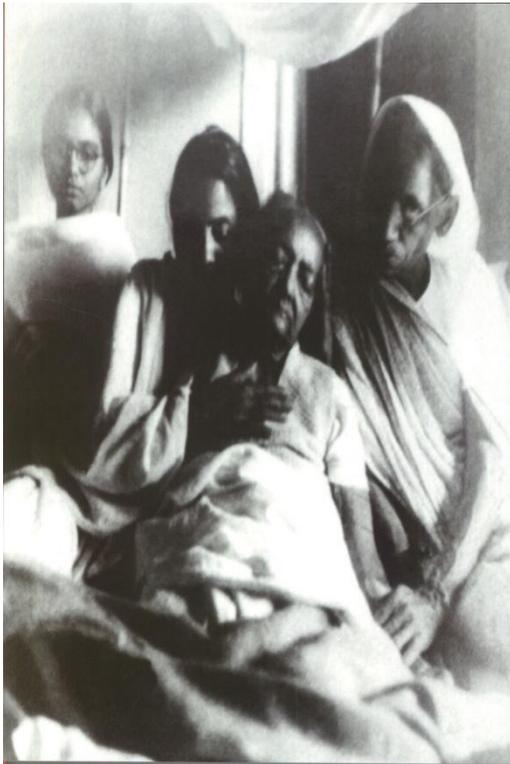
**Gandhiji's Journals**



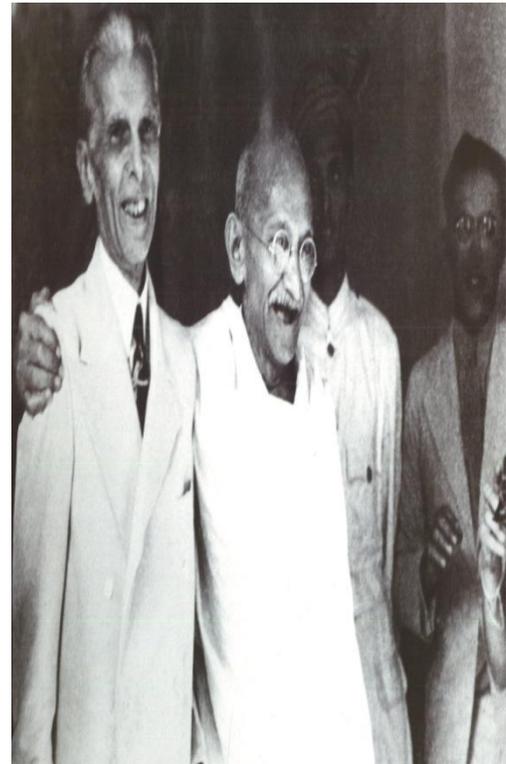
**Peshawar Public Meeting**



**With Mahadev Desai**



**Passing of Kasturba**



**Gandhi-Jinnah Talk**



**Pilgrimage of Peace in riot affected areas**



**Blood Bath of Communal Violence**



**At Mehrauli Urs**



**With Mountbatten Couple**



**Last Prayer, 29.1.1948**



**Last Journey**



**Consigning the Ashes**

## **CHAPTER - 2**

# **Novel: Literary Reflections of a Nation**

## Chapter 2

### Novel: Literary Reflections of a Nation

I write as the spirit moves me at the time of writing. I write to propagate my ideas. The readers can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise...in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and to make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds.

1

Mahatma Gandhi

Every genre of art is a product of certain specific conditions emerging in the society. Poetry, drama, stories, speeches and philosophical discourse are the oldest form of literature. Novel as a literary genre is hardly four hundred years old. It is derived from the Italian 'novella' and the French 'nouvelle' signified as a short fictional story usually involving romance as in lexicographer Samuel Richardson definition of 1755: 'a small tale, generally of love.'<sup>2</sup> Hegel commenting on the social and historical nature of art analyses novel as a modern bourgeoisie epic, its development closely linked to the growth of middle class reading public and capitalism.<sup>3</sup> He saw the novel as a prosaic composition without the supernatural element.<sup>4</sup> Nation States, free market, individualism, industrialization, sea routes, press and end of feudalism led to the writing of novels in Europe in eighteenth century. *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) by John Bunyan and *Robinson Crusoe* (1720) by Daniel Defoe reflect the psyche of the time. The heroes in both the novels are on a quest, one spiritual and the other adventurous. Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) narrated the life history of a woman falling from grace due to the circumstances of her birth as well as nature. Modern critics attribute the rise of novel to the innovative writing practices adopted by Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding in 1740s and 50s. Richardson was certainly the first to bind psychological interest, dramatic complexity and convincing characterization into a whole and to present them with naturalism.<sup>5</sup> Henry

Fielding presented morally mixed characters and wrote in third person narrative. In *Tom Jones* (1749) he criticized feudalism as well as the fallacies that had entered families, society and religion with the main character, an illegitimate orphan symbolizing the condition of Britain at that time that had lost both identity and direction. Richardson created characters that were paragons of emulation and carried on the narrative in form of letters exchanged between characters.<sup>6</sup> *Pamela* (1740) presented the image of the virtuous woman who resists falling into sin and temptation fighting all odds. *Clarissa* (1749) was the story of star crossed lovers whose conflict of personalities was actually part of the larger conflict in the attitude and ethics of the middle class and landed elite.<sup>7</sup> Between 1780s and 1830s the novel gained a kind of cultural legitimacy with the gradual rise in its reading public. The Scottish writer Walter Scott based his novels on wars between rival Scottish clans and gave birth to the genre of Historical novels. *Rob Roy* (1817), *Ivanhoe* (1819) and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) were some of his popular works. Notions of gender and sexuality were changing and women writers emerged who viewed novel as a means to escape male domination. The first professional woman novelist was Aphra Behn the radical, extolled by Virginia Woolf as the woman who earned women the right to speak their minds as back as seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> Her novel *The Fair Jilt* (1688) narrates the life of Miranda treading between virtue and greed. Her *Oroonoko* (1688) is a socio-political comment on African slavery. Sarah Fielding, Francis Sheridan and Charlotte Lennox were the most talented women writers of eighteenth century. In these struggling years many a times they hid their identity from the publishers as well as the readers. Jane Austen played safe and did not digress from the paradigm of the 'polite novel' in all her six most popular works. The women in her novels were impeccable ladies who were virtuous, intelligent and highly sensitive and perceptive to the men in their lives gaining the epithet of master craftswoman in the school of manners for their creator. Austen's more radical work *Lady Susan* was relegated to the background nevertheless few critics have attempted to denude the obscured rebellion in her compositions.<sup>9</sup> A middle class was on the rise and Marxism was making its footholds. The printing press added to the popularity of the novel making it economically available

for the people. New groups of lower middle class people such as shopkeepers and clerks, along with the traditional aristocratic and gentlemanly classes in England and France now formed the new leadership for novels. Thus novel became an open, flexible and incorporative form with varied themes and techniques. Its non-conventional ways appealed to the masses. The novel became the voice of covert resistance through the pen of Charles Dickens illustrating the violence and bloodshed of the French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), the din and crime associated with Industrial Revolution as well as the corrupt practices of government and Church associated institutions in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) and *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Hard Times* (1854). Dickens' works are essentially urban centric dealing with the complexities of city life and its citizens struggle to comprehend it.<sup>10</sup> During the same time Elizabeth Gaskell an upper middle class Victorian wife of a priest wrote *North and South* (1848) on the life and tribulations of the mill workers of Manchester. Her contemporary was Mary Ann Evans who writing under her pen name George Eliot produced novels featuring the mundane life of rural England focussing on characters who have been turned into social outcasts because of being circumstantial victims. *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861) and *Middlemarch* (1871-72) are some of her acclaimed novels. Emile Zola the French novelist and a Nobel laureate ushered in Naturalism notable for its objectivity and detached approach of the writer. His masterpiece *Germinal* (1885) is a realistic account based on an in-depth search by Zola himself of the perils, abuse, resistance associated with the life of coal miners in mid nineteenth century France. In spite of the grim portrayal the novel ends with a ray of hope embedded in the return of spring in the epilogue. An unapologetic portraiture of the life and exploits of Becky Sharp is *Vanity Fair* (1847) by William Makepeace Thackeray. Acclaimed as a novel without a hero the book narrates the 'rags to riches and back to rags' story of an egoistic social climber celebrated as the first bold feminist by many modern critics.<sup>11</sup> The American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne contested the issues of sin, love and legitimacy in colonial America through his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Scientific fiction appeared in form of *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897)

and *War of the Worlds* (1898). Meanwhile novels were being composed in other languages as well. Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Idiot* (1869) to portray a realist picture of socio-political milieu of the latter half of nineteenth century feudal autocratic Tsarist Russia echoing the concepts of nihilism and existentialism. Another Russian novelist is the aristocratic Leo Tolstoy. His works are based on realism giving food for thought to the readers from everyday life situations. His *War and Peace* (1869) is set against the Napoleonic invasions of Russia lucidly portraying the life of different classes of Russian society their struggles, aspirations, morals and values of the time. *Anna Karenina* (1877) is an ill-fated love story of an aristocratic lady trapped in a loveless marriage. Besides debating between the issues of legitimacy and love the novel questions the institution of arrange marriage, the claustrophobic constrictions imposed on the elite women and the hypocrisy prevalent in the landed gentry of imperialist Russia. Joseph Conrad an early modernist wrote against the perils of imperialism and colonialism in the *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and *Lord Jim* (1900). A precursor to D H Lawrence was Thomas Hardy tagged as both Victorian as well as modernist by the critics. His novels *The Mayor of Castor Bridge* (1886), *Tess of d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) have an innate magnetic quality that reveal 'moments of truth' through ordinary life characters and situations showing only half or the quarter view and letting the readers and the critics complete the rest.<sup>12</sup> The writings of D H Lawrence embodying themes ranging from sexual desire, emotional health to industrialization and modernism continue to challenge the academicians in literary field. His novels *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) dealing with incompatibility in marriage, incest, bisexuality and adultery, many a time entangled him in numerous obscenity litigation and tarnished his reputation. In spite of the allegations Lawrence struggled through novel after novel to find a viable way of coping with the modern society and bring out a world order where human potential could be realized amidst love and harmony.<sup>13</sup> The World Wars denuded the worse in human nature and left indelible impression on the psyche of many writers. Earnest Hemmingway the American novelist wrote the semi autobiographical *A Farewell*

*to Arms* (1929) narrating the war experiences of a disillusioned deserter. His *For Whom the Bells Toll* (1940) is based on the struggle for ideology, power and politics in strife-torn Spain during its civil war. Post World War II was an epoch changing event that ended the age of colonialism in a large part of the world due to nationalist movements in many of the Asian-African countries. Due to colonial influence the genre of novel had entered the colonies as well whose hopes and aspirations for freedom of expression got reflected in their writings. Therefore after a brief summary of the rise of novel in the West the next section characteristically deals with the growth of novels in India.

### ***Novel Comes to India***

India has had its indigenous tradition of story-telling. The Indian epics, Jataks, Puranas and Fables constitute the rich repertoire of fiction in India. *Mudra Rakshasa*, *Dashkumarcharit*, *Abhigyanam Shakuntalam*, *Kadambari* etc., narrate the rich Indian literary culture. *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza* is a sample of the Persian and Urdu tradition of 'Kissa-Goi' and 'Dastan.' However these literary compositions could no way be tagged under the category of novels the way we understand the genre today.

The rise of the novel in India as a linear, chronologically streamlined single voice narration could be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. Macaulay's Minute had introduced modern western education in India. The Indian middle class became conditioned towards British narrative models. Besides a large number of English novels were being shipped into India to keep the India born whites rooted with the British tradition. Thus the British hegemony developed a taste for such writings among the Indian readers too. The Indian novel is thus nearly one hundred and fifty years old. The western novel which was itself in a malleable age influenced the Indian novel in its narration and characterization. The early attempts were evidently the translations of popular western compositions. In Tamil there appeared a translation of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Kandukari Veeresalingam attempted a translation of Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* in Telugu with the title *Rajshekhara Charitra* (1878). However these translators could not neglect the cultural concerns of their own community for long and

the indigenous socio-economic milieu did seep in their works. Literary historians cite different dates regarding the origin of Indian novel with both the Bengali and Marathi works contending for the first prize. It was natural for the novel to have made its appearance first in Bengal because of the latter's longer exposure to the colonial rule than the rest of India as its chief city Calcutta was also the political capital of British India. A rudimentary initiative in prose work in Indian languages had already been initiated by Christian missionaries like William Carey and John Gilchrist in early decades of nineteenth century. In 1858 came *Alaler Gharer Dulal* by Tekchand Thakur who wrote under the pen name of Pyarechand Mitra. The storyline was realistic but highly didactic in content. The contemporary reviews compared it to the works of Goldsmith, Fielding and Thackeray because of the apposite usage of wit and spirit.<sup>14</sup> In Marathi came *Yamuna Paryatan* (1857) by Baba Padmanji highlighting the plight of widows. Lakshman Moreshwar Halbe's *Muktamala* (1861) was a didactic romance wherein virtue was rewarded and evil was punished. This was the age of didactic and marvellous. Bankim Chandra wrote the English novel *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) but the novels that got him laud and appreciation were the Bengali *Durgeshnandini* (1865), *Kapal Kundal* (1866) and *Mrinalini* (1869). These novels were inspired by Sir Walter Scott and instead of being historical used historical locales. In spite of being inspired by the western novel they flowed like the Sanskrit romances not losing the indigenous appeal.<sup>15</sup> A sense of nationalism had started appearing and there emerged a desire to revive the glorious past. The Gujarati novel *Karan Ghelo* (1866) by Nanda Shankar Tilijashankar Mehta was charged with regional patriotism. The novel was based on the exploits and achievement of the last Hindu King of Gujarat Karan Vaghela. Gauri Datt penned *Devrani Jethani Ki Kahani* (1870) in Hindi where he eulogized the joint family system and favoured orthodoxy to satisfy the conservative high class reader. Many early novels were authored by Christian missionaries also with the objective of proselytization. The Assamese novels *Phulmani Aru Karuna* and *Kamini Kantar Charita* were written in 1877 with this purpose only. In 1879 came *Piratapa Mutaliyar Carittiram* (1879) in Tamil by Samuel Vedanayakam Pillai an English educated Christian with the didactic theme and Christian

morals. This phase witnessed the production of novels in different parts of India highlighting diverse themes. The Marathi novel *Madhali Stithi* (1885) by Hari Narayan Apte illustrated the influence of westernization on Marathi middle class. The novelists also used the genre to voice the injustice perpetrated by the prevalent social malpractices. *Indulekha* (1889) by O Chandu Menon, a loose adaptation of Benjamin Disraeli's *Henrietta Temple* (1837),<sup>16</sup> was a Malayalam novel that brought social consciousness in the Brahmin dominated Kerala against untouchability and caste prejudices.<sup>17</sup> The reforming zeal was evident in other languages also. *Sarasvatichandra* (1887-1900) penned in four volumes in Gujarati by Govardhanram Tripathi tried to establish parity between traditional norms and notions of modernity. In Urdu came *Umrao Jan Adaa* (1899) by Mirza Ruswa bringing to light the sad demise of the rich artistic culture of Lucknow, the city of Nawabs. The first person narrative of the protagonist and the debate between vice and virtue depict high level of comprehension of the complicated issue.<sup>18</sup> Bhartendu Harishchandra, the father of Hindi Literature contributed a lot to the growth of the language. He used modern media especially reports, editorials and letters to shape public opinion.<sup>19</sup> He encouraged many like Kashinath and Goswami Radhacharanji to write novels. Although his persuasions mostly resulted in translations still it showed his deep concern for the genre. Had he not been into essay writing he surely would have himself composed some jewels for Hindi Literature.<sup>20</sup> In 1882 Lal Srinivas Das wrote *Pariksha Guru* in Hindi. Often termed by many as the first Hindi novel it is sermonic in content and narrates the life of rich middle class traders and their reaction to the socio-economic and educational changes perpetrated under the British colonial rule. The novel had characters that were conscious of the concept of Boycott and Swadeshi and the emerging socio-political scenario around them. It did criticize the blind aping of western lifestyle forcing the protagonist towards bankruptcy.<sup>21</sup> For a long time novel could not emerge as a popular genre due to the prominence enjoyed by essays. *Kadambari's* ornate style impressed the early novelists along with the imaginary in Bengali poems. The contemporary themes and dialogue composition was adopted from the Plays and Drama. All the components required for a perfect novel were ready and a champion was awaited

to take the genre to its full glory. The lacuna was filled by Premchand. With his writings the Hindi novel achieved its zenith.<sup>22</sup> Drawn from various strata of society, Premchand's characters created a community based on democratic values. His novels voiced the pain of men. Poverty, untouchability, corruption, gender discrimination were lucidly illustrated through his characters. Realism entered the genre of Hindi Literature which prior to Premchand focussed mainly on entertainment. He began writing in Urdu and then shifted to Hindi. *Sevasadan*, *Premashram*, *Rangbhoomi* are some of his earlier novels inspired by Gandhi. Novel could not remain aloof from the political scenario of the nation and many political novels were penned. The political novel according to H A L Fisher "concerns itself with man and women engaged in contemporary political life and discussing contemporary political ideas"<sup>23</sup> while Irving Howe declares that "a novel is in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which the political milieu is the dominant setting."<sup>24</sup> As long back as 1882 Bankim Chandra wrote *Anand Math* the political novel based on 1773 Sanyasi rebellion. The novel was an attempt of Hindu nationalists to end the British supported Muslim Nawabship in Bengal. In Urdu appeared *Maidan-i-Amal* (1932) by Premchand inspired by Gandhian movements with the hero working for the public, setting up Ashram, teaching the untouchables and the characters undergoing reform for the best.<sup>25</sup> Rabindranath Tagore's *Ghare Baire* (1916) is a conflict of ideologies between a non-judgemental, passive yet constructive nationalism and a violent symbolic nationalism. Tagore's *Gora* (1910), swings between nationalism and internationalism. It is the story of Gora an anti British Hindu fanatic who is unconscious of his Irish heritage.<sup>26</sup> In twentieth century appeared Sarat Chandra Chatterjee with Bengali novels that made the art of story-telling very popular in the province. He was the constant companion of the underdogs siding with the poor peasant or the Hindu widow. His novels gave space to human frailty and fallibility and urged moral judgements in context to human concerns. Some of his works were *Srikanta* (1917-33), *Parineeta* (1914), *Devdas* and *Charitraheen* (1917). The writings of Devaki Nandan Khatri created a novel-reading public in Hindi. His best-seller, *Chandrakanta* – a romance with dazzling elements of fantasy – is believed to have contributed immensely in popularizing the Hindi

language and the Nagari script among the educated classes of those times though it was apparent that it was written for the 'pleasure of reading'. Indian women novelists also made an appearance with Toru Dutt. She wrote *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden* in English and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers*, written in French. Krupabai Sathyanathan wrote *Kamla: A Story of Hindu Life* (1894) and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (1895) reflecting her sentimental reaction to her family's conversion to Christianity. The protagonists defy and challenge the discriminatory attitude of Hindu traditional norms that force women to lead constricted and stifled lives. Freedom, Liberty and emancipation from all kind of injustice and oppression were advocated by Shivanthi Bai Nikambe in *Ratnabai* a novel with a feminist perspective. Sorabji, a social reformer wrote about the suppressed life of Indian women behind the Purdah in *Sun Babies* (1904) and *Between the Lights* (1908).<sup>27</sup> Rokeya Hossein was a reformer who, after she was widowed, started a girl's school in Calcutta. She wrote a satiric fantasy in English called *Sultana's Dream* (1905) which shows a topsy-turvy world in which women take the place of men. Her novel *Padmarag* also showed the need for women to reform their condition by their own actions. It is not surprising that many men were suspicious of women writing novels or reading them. This suspicion cut across communities; Hannah Mullens, a Christian missionary and the author of *Phulmani O Karunar Bibaran* (1852), reputedly the first prose in Bengali that printed three thousand copies when the book came out, admitted that she read and wrote in secret hidden from the stern eyes of her father and termed her pursuance of books as 'an indulgence from which she felt she took too much pleasure.'<sup>28</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Sailabala Ghoshjaya, a popular novelist, could write only because her husband protected her. Her first novel *Shekh Andu* (1917) depicted the love story between a Muslim driver and his Hindu master's daughter and raised a storm of controversy for the boldness and unconventionality of the theme.<sup>29</sup> Potheri Kunhambu, a 'lower-caste' writer from North Kerala, wrote a novel called *Saraswativijayam* in 1892, mounting a strong attack on caste oppression. This novel shows a young man from an 'untouchable' caste, leaving his village to escape the cruelty of his Brahmin landlord.<sup>30</sup> There were writers like Cornelia Sorabji a lawyer by profession and coming from a

mixed Parsi-Christian heritage wrote *India Calling* (1935) a vivid account of the forced secluded lives women were compelled to lead in India. Although critical of the exploitative Indian customs she did not spare the British too especially the missionaries for their racist attitude. Another trait that distinguishes her from the contemporary writers was her candid criticism of the condescending attitude of Indian politicians including Gandhi which made her an object of censure in literary circles of the time.

The imagined nation of the novel was so powerful that it could inspire actual political movements. Over the course of its history in both the West and India, the novel became the part of the lives of different sections of the people. Developments in print technologies allowed the novel to break out of its small circle of readers and introduce fresh ways of reading. Novels produce a sense of sharing, and promote an understanding of different people, different values and different communities. At the same time they explore how different groups begin to question or reflect upon their own identities.

### **Gandhi in Indian Literature**

Mahatma Gandhi who appeared on the Indian scenario in the first half of the Twentieth century was not only the harbinger of freedom from slavery for the millions of Indians but was such an enigmatic personality whose political, social and economic ideals seeped into every aspect of human consciousness and popular literature being an inherent part of it could not remain bereft of its influence. His ideology found expression in numerous indigenous writings both vernacular and English.

Gandhi is a gift of India to the world. His Spartan lifestyle, strong convictions and commitments are heroic enough to influence any creative artist's mind. He could reach out to the millions who identified themselves with him; be they prince or pauper<sup>31</sup>

### ***An Overview of Gandhi in Indian Vernacular and Folk Literature***

Vernacular or Regional Literature could not remain unaffected by Gandhian ideals especially when Gandhi himself was an ardent advocate of indigenous Indian languages

and believed them to be a strong medium to reach the common people. Starting with Hindi, the significant works are novels like *Rangbhoomi*(1924), *Premashram*(1922) and *Godan*(1936) by Munshi Premchand and *Maila Aanchal*(1956) by Phanishwarnath Renu. Gujarati compositions include *Vishvashanti*(1931) a lyrical narrative by Shri Umashankar Joshi, novels like *Tapasvini* by K M Munshi, *Divya Chaksu* by Ramanlal V Desai and *Udhaar* by Indu Kumar Shaherwala and inspiring poems like ‘Chhello Katoro’ and ‘Antarani Aah!’ by Zhaverchand Meghani. Marathi works are *Kanchan Mrug*(1931) and *Don Dhruv*(1934) by Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar, Kannada literature comprises of novel *Harijanwara*(1939) by Sri Ranga(Adya Rangacarya), *Merevanige*(1948) by Ramaswamy Iyenger Gorur and *Chomen Dudi*(1949) by Shivram Karanth. Similar work in Malayalam is *Bhranthalayam*(1949) by P Kesava Deva, Tamil includes *Athmayin Ragangal*(1970) by N Parthasarthy, Telugu has *Veyipadagalu*(1934) by Vishwanath Satyanarayana, Oriya has *Matira Manisha*(1934) by Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, in Bengali *Jagori*(1945) and *Dhorai Charit Manas*(1951) by Satinath Bhaduri, six Assamese novels of Daiba Chandra Talukdar that are *Dhunwali Kunwali*(1922), *Agneyagiri*(1924), *Bidrohi*(1948), *Apurna*(1932), *Adarshpith* and *Duniya*(1961) and Punjabi novels like *Prem Kahani* by Niranjan Singh.

Folk Literature, ‘Voice of the Marginalized’ was emphatically used by Gandhi to popularize his ideology even in the deep recesses of India which was bereft of any radio, telegraph or print media. Folk songs and dramas composed in nearly all the vernacular languages embodied the spirit of Indian National Movement and inspired ordinary people to oppose their drudged condition. India has had a rich tradition of Folk Literature comprising of folk songs, folk tales, folk plays, ballads, aphorisms, proverbs and riddles. With the aid of numerous volunteers Gandhi successfully seeped in his political, social and economic ideology in ‘Vachans’ and ‘Kirthans’ of Karnataka, ‘Swadeshi Yatras’(Folk Theater) and ‘Bauls’(Religious songs) of Bengal, ‘Nautankis’(Folk Theater) in Awadh, Purvanchal and Bundelkhand, ‘Powada’(Ballads), ‘Tamasha’(Folk Drama) and ‘Ovi-Geet’(Women’s household work songs) in Maharashtra, ‘Ras’ and ‘Naqal’(Folk Drama) and ‘Sakhi’(Stories about the Saints) in Punjab, ‘Nao Khelar’(Boatmen songs)

and 'Nanabaya Geet'(Nursery Songs) in Orissa, 'Bhavai'(Folk Play) and 'Ukhanas'(Riddles) in Gujarat, 'Tottam'(Spiritual songs) and 'Kakkasissi'(Drama) in Kerala, 'Attapattu'(Play song) and Talattu(Cradle songs) in Tamil and 'Mandhiaro'(Women's household chores songs) and 'Vaqiati Baita'(Poems on historical events) in Sindhi language. The list is endless, because the repertoire is rich, and resulted in blazing villages across India, afire with the cry for Swaraj that shook the very base of British Empire in India.

### ***Gandhian Novels in English-Pre Independence Phase***

Indian writing in English was still in an age of infancy when Gandhi breezed in on the Indian scene and captured the fertile imagination of numerous writers of the time who could not refrain themselves from inducting Gandhian ideals in their literary compositions covering both poetry and prose (Fiction and Non-Fiction). As literature reflects the life of its time many of the writers wrote about the nation. The theme of Mahatma was born, got deep-rooted, and became pervasive and strongly impacting. Gandhian self reliant, village based economy, giving up prestigious positions to devote to the greater cause of nationalism, amplifying the creed of Ahimsa, denunciation of modern and western civilization, preferring spiritual growth, anti colonial matters, programmes of national reform like amelioration of women, workers, untouchable, and peasants became the major themes of the fiction of this phase.

The early works worth stating are *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan the Patriot* (1932) by K S Venkatramani. *Murugan* depicts Gandhian social ideals and his village reconstruction program pertaining to end of superstitions while retaining the simple spirituality associated with Hinduism. Venkatramani's novel projects Gandhism as the panacea for the regeneration of millions of villages and reflects author's belief in the efficacy of the ideology. Similarly, *Kandan the Patriot* portrayed the inflow of a new zeal in national movement due to Gandhian ideology.

The writers whose works stand apart and may be termed as the mirrored versions of Gandhian Thought especially in the pre-independence phase are Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R K Narayan. Mulkraj was essentially a Bloomsbury scholar but his stay in Sabarmati in close proximity with Gandhi had awakened the social reformer in him. His *Untouchable* (1935) is the story of Bhakka the honest and diligent sweeper boy who wishes to live with freedom and dignity against the discrimination and humiliation of the upper caste society. His characterization is such that many a times he appears as the embodiment of Gandhi by the novelist. Although the ending in *Untouchable* suggested the scientific invention of another alternative as a panacea for manual scavenging yet its genuine portrayal of Gandhian ideals cannot be doubted. His other works on the plight of the deprived and downtrodden bearing Gandhian ideals are *Coolie* (1936) depicting the exploitation of village laborers migrating to the cities in lure of livelihood and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) illustrating the life of indentured workers in the tea gardens of Assam suffering under the British plantation owners. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*(1938) described the manner and nature in which Gandhi's socio-political program was perceived by rural India. Written in Puranic style it narrates Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement in Kanthapura along with a covert questioning of the chaos generally resulting from such mass movements. R K Narayan penned *Swami and Friends* (1935) the adventures of young Swami in colonial India. The novel is essentially a critique of colonial education failing to generate interest in students. It picks up issues of Khadi, swadeshi and boycott and shows involvement of youngsters in the Gandhian movement. In fact some of Gandhi's childhood experiences regarding school and Christian missionaries belittling of Hindu gods invoking Gandhi's dislike are also portrayed in the novel. In *Bachelor of Arts* (1937) Chandran again protests against colonial education, British distortion of history, the use of violence as a means of protest and gives due importance to the morality in both means and ends. In *The English Teacher* (1945) Narayan blames the English education for uprooting India from its ideological and cultural roots. The protagonist protests against the detrimental effects of English in India.

Conversion to Gandhian ideals was in vogue for many upcoming writers and D F Karaka's *We Never Die* (1944) was written in the same mode. The protagonist Ramchandra does not initially believe in Gandhian Non-Violence but by the end he truly commits himself to peace and communal harmony.<sup>32</sup> In 1944 was published *Motherland* by C N Zutshi, a tribute to Gandhi for bringing light to the plight of millions of Indians suffering under British rule. Foremost amongst the progressive writers was Khwaja Ahmad Abbas who wrote *Tomorrow is Ours* (1943) which condemned both fascism and war as a State policy. The novel is basically a love story between Parvathi and Srikant who resisting their caste and class difference enter the bonds of matrimony. Their marriage goes through turbulence in parallel to the destruction India had to bear due to World War II. The novel is basically Gandhian in spirit especially the end narrating the departure of Indian medics to treat the victims of the war being reminiscent of Gandhi's Ambulance Corps in South Africa. In *Defeat for Death* (1944) Abbas portrays the therapeutic effect of Gandhi and his 21 day fast in 1942 on a Negro boy in Africa. The novel is a testament to the universal appeal of Gandhi's teaching and ideology.

Many of these writers continued to weave novels through their magical looms in post-independence India. Their faith in Gandhian ideals did not flinch but sometimes the new experiences post 1947 would make them question and look for other alternatives as discussed in the next chapter in the thesis.

### ***Gandhian Novels in Hindi Pre-Independence Phase***

Gandhi himself was an ardent advocate of indigenous Indian languages and believed them to be a strong medium to reach the common people. Starting with Hindi, it is imperative to begin with Munshi Premchand (1880-1936), the most outstanding figure of Twentieth Century Hindi Literature. It is accepted in all circles that original Hindi Novel started with Premchand, the writer of the masses and paved the way for social novels. The 'Upanyas Samrat' was galvanized into the foray of social awakening by the Indian National Movement under Gandhi and the effect is quite tangible in his works. The novel *Premashram* (1922) establishes the link between urban and rural India. It also talks about

the concept of 'Ram Rajya' and portrays the spiritual and moralistic ambiance of a fictional 'Ashram' very much on the lines of Gandhian Ashrams. *Rangabhoomi* (1924) is a graphic representation of the pain and plight of the Indian farming community in Pre-Independence India. It condemns industrialization and envisages the Gandhian emancipation to the exploitation. *Karmabhoomi* (1932) in spite of narrating the complexities of human relations and family equations has the Gandhian Satyagraha at the background while weaving in social issues like untouchability and temple entry. Jalpa in *Gaban* (1931) and Sukhda in *Karmabhoomi* are the fictional representation of Gandhian vision for Indian women. Besides Premchand there were other writers who wrote on social issues. Jainendra Kumar had participated in the Gandhian mass movements and is believed to have been inspired from Gandhi as well as Jainism. Gandhi himself picked up the fundamentals of his teachings from Jainism therefore the link is self evident. His novel *Parakh* (1929) highlighted the plight of child widows and advocated widow remarriage through the story of the protagonist Katto. In *Sunita* (1935) we come across Srikant an avid Gandhian whose credulity to truth and nonviolence not only empowers Sunita the female lead but also transforms Hariprasann the antagonist. *Tyagpatra* (1937) is a testimony to Gandhian experiments with Truth. Mrinal refuses to live a lie or compromise on truth. She courageously bears the pressure and contempt of the upper class society till her death. Radhikaraman Prasad Singh was a man much ahead of the times he lived in. His novel *Ram Rahim* (1937) stressed on ameliorating the caste system and promoted communal harmony, the two principles very close to Gandhian values. The novel could very well be declared a treatise on the poisonous process by which the communalists corrupt the simple gullible members of their religious community against people of other religions and sow the seeds of doubt and hatred. Siyaramsharan Gupt was an avid Gandhian in personal life therefore his protagonists too embodied the same. The characters in *Goad* (1932), *Antim Akanksha* (1934) and *Naari* (1937) suffer the pain prescribed in their destiny bereft of any malice or ill will towards the oppressor ultimately leading to transformation of the exploiter thereby illustrating the Gandhian philosophy of love and nonviolence. These novels primarily highlighted caste, class and gender

discrimination targeted by Gandhi in his constructive program during the national movement.<sup>33</sup>Yashpal was essentially a nationalist who brought forth his first novel *Dada Comrade* (1941). The novel was an analytical discourse between Gandhism and Revolutionary methodology covering the years 1929 to 1933. The primary debate in the novel pertains to the question of creating a new society through bloodshed or by going amidst the masses and working for their welfare. The freedom struggle was also a perpetual conflict between traditional and modern, static and dynamic, regressive or progressive. Again the definition of who would be what depends on individual perception. Nevertheless Yashpal with an unprecedented objectivity highlighted the strength and weaknesses of both the Gandhians as well as revolutionaries.

Some of these novelists continued their writing in post-independence India as well and kept the flame burning in the forthcoming decades becoming the source of inspiration for future writers.

### ***Post-Independence Indian Scenario***

Before independence the whole of India shared an aim of liberating the country from foreign rule. For this the people were ready to offer their lives. They had big dreams for an independent India and had lot of hopes from the leaders for ameliorating their socio-economic problems. The Indian novelist roped in the same aspirations along with the different ideologies offered by the leaders. The purpose of novel writing was to highlight the people's plight along with a plausible solution. The honeymoon continued in the Nehruvian era as the new Prime Minister reflected many of the ideals the freedom movement was fought on. The Indian Novelists started synthesizing their personal ideology whether Marxist or Gandhian with that of Nehru and attempted a middle path. However with the 60's, there appeared cracks in their dream of perfect India. The Five year plans, Panchsheel and Indo-China war got reflected in the contemporary novels. The Indian politician started showing the same traits as their colonial masters in the past. Feudalism was replaced with Capitalism. The gap between the rich and the poor widened. Corruption, exploitation and rape became rampant. The leaders turned into selfish men

living in greed for money and sex. Amidst all this a new middle class appeared who was exhibitionist in nature, adapted western fashions in the garb of modernity, selfishly practiced a wavering value system and acted complacent on moral criterions. The education system failed to create both jobs as well as morals as a result the value system deteriorated with every passing generation and so was India's faith and regard for Gandhi. The gradual depletion was visible in the content and subject matter of the novels too. The rising doubt, distrust and dissatisfaction got aptly represented in the plots of the novel.<sup>34</sup> Instead of thinking for the society search for personal space and identity surfaced. Journalism the fourth pillar of Indian democracy, the voice of the educated protestor became the mouthpiece for the powerful class. Feminism captured the imagination of writers but sadly the competition was in the field of lasciviousness and sexual wantonness. A distorted version of modern woman appeared. The woman who rejects her family, smokes, drinks, and lacks the basic traits of human adjustment irrespective of gender affiliation was tagged as empowered. The impact was both ways. 1970s the anti-social elements started entering politics. India had been experiencing communal riots right from independence but with the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1991 the divide became unbridgeable. Ram who was part of Indian culture and belonged to both Hindus and Muslims suddenly became the reason of bloodshed across India. Neglect and exploitation gave birth to dissatisfaction resulting in the rise of separatism and finally terrorism in many quarters of the country. Liberalization brought in the culture of metro-cities and with it loneliness, drugs, narcissism, internet loaded with social networking sites came. Levi's, Live-ins and burgers represented the Indian middle class. German Cars, luxury cruise, European holidays, hitherto beyond the dream of middle class became a fad to be showed off before relatives, friends and colleagues. Buying televisions, refrigerators and mobiles every third year tuned into status symbols. Economy of need changed into economy of desire. The Indian value system received a major setback. Spartan Indians turned into materialistic beings. Having adopted 'globalized' lifestyle there emerged an ontological search to hold on to the roots. As a result post-90s through the Indian cinema the middle class became all the more religious not spiritually but ritually. Religious and

caste nuances became rigid. Caste and communal riots became more frequent. Going on pilgrimages is an annual feature ranging from five to seventy year olds and newlywed honeymooners. A stock of god-men appeared who coming from various backgrounds viz., Chartered Accountants to Tonga Driver minted millions under the garb of sowing the way to spiritual inner peace. Ironically their shady pasts and charges of sexual licentious failed to deter their followers who revered them as living gods. There emerged the popular slogan of India Everywhere containing overtures for India becoming a world power in spite of billions languishing in abject hunger and poverty. The Indian novelist instead of comprehending this complicated state of affair and providing a feasible solution after analyzing it critically decided to focus on issues of individualism. Gone were the debate and soulful tussle about being part of the society and contributing towards its growth and development. Self became more important than you. All these developments got reflected in novels, both English and Hindi.

Novel is a mirror of the society, both the past and the present and many a times suggests and warns of the future too. It not only narrates history but those values also that get left out while penning down official histories. According to Nayantara Sehgal, “To be relevant to his culture, a writer’s imagination has to be able to create the men and women and situations of the Indian environment and the Indian reality. If a writer can do this, make people feel with him, stimulate thinking and inspire action because of what he writes, then he is fulfilling his actions.”<sup>35</sup>

### ***Gandhian Novels in English-Post-Independence Phase***

Post-Independence Gandhi and his values continued to influence Indian writers both popular and lesser known. *Conflict* (1947) by Aamir Ali contains criticism of city culture and contemporary education system with the hero Shankar acknowledging the importance of villages as encasing the true soul of India. In 1947 only came *So Many Hungers* by Bhabani Bhattacharya with characters that resembled Gandhi in their thoughts and ideals. *Inquilab* (1949) by K A Abbas, stressed on communal unity with the protagonist Anwar born of Hindu-Muslim parents and symbolizing true India strongly

affirming the efficacy of Non-Violence over anarchy and bloodshed. The novel covers years from 1910-1930 and described the Gandhian movements.<sup>36</sup>

Even in 1950's Gandhi continued to reign the imagination of many writers and his movements were still the subject of several compositions. *In Transit* (1951) by Vinu Chitale narrated the participation of the different generations of a family in Indian independent struggle stretching from the Mutiny of 1857 to Gandhian Non-Cooperation to Civil Disobedience Movement. In *The House of Adhampur* (1956) by Anand Lall the novelist illustrated the transformation of a rich self absorbed landlord into a Gandhian idealist. Even in *Chronicles of Kedaram*(1961) K Nagarjuna portrayed the effect of Gandhian movement on a small town especially his temple entry movement, untouchability and spiritualization of politics. In the same era appeared writers who did not reject Gandhi but searched and suggested a semblance between his idealism and the new path of industrialization that the nascent Indian leadership had chosen who found Gandhian methods too slow paced and tedious. Writers like Bhabani Bhattacharya and Khwaja Ahmad Abbas who continued to write in post-independence India fall in this category. Their works still held on to Gandhian ideals. Gandhi remained a perennial presence in the novels of Bhabani Bhattacharya. In *Music for Mohini* (1952) Bhabani stressed the need to harmonize between the ascetic and aesthetic. *He Who Rides the Tiger* (1954) echoes Gandhian teachings by denouncing caste barriers and superstitions. *A Goddess named Gold* (1960) examined the challenges faced by the new Indian democracy in relevance of Gandhian values. In *Shadows from Ladakh* (1966) an attempt was made to reach a consensus between the steel town and Gandhian Ashram in the backdrop of China War. In *A Dream in Hawaii* (1978) Bhabani lamented the perfunctory status accorded to Gandhi in India whereas in West his teachings continued to have a living presence.<sup>37</sup> In spite of being tagged as a Marxist writer the works of K A Abbas reverberate the same values as Gandhi. *When Night Falls* (1968) illustrate the dilemma of the Indian youth stuck between urbanization and industrialization and gives a gory picture of the emerging slum life in India. *Distant Dreams* (1975) narrates the story of the lost generation of post-independence India. The novel argues against wealth being left in

the hands of the few and propagates Gandhi's Trusteeship. *The Naxalites* (1979) reflects the gradual loss of the author in the pertinence of Gandhian methods because the plot showcases a character bearing Gandhian traits finally taking up violence in frustration to fight injustice. Analogous to this composition by Abbas was *Comrade Kirillov* (1978) ironically written by Raja Rao reflecting the ambiguity of the latter's faith in the efficacy of Gandhi and deliberating Marxism as panacea for India's problem of social inequality. R K Narayan wrote *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955) narrating the transformation of an upper middleclass Sriram to Gandhian ideals along with a glimpse of the emergence of pseudo-gandhians during Mahatma's lifetime itself. Nayantara Sehgal was the niece of Pt. Nehru and closely witnessed the tumultuous times Gandhi preached in. Called as the 'Child of Gandhi's India' her writings contain deep Gandhian connotations both directly and indirectly. Morality and tradition formed the basis of the writings of Nayantara Sehgal. In *A Time to be Happy* (1958) she tries to establish a balance between cottage industry and industrial economy as well as address the linguistic controversy raging in contemporary India. *This Time of Morning* (1963) challenges the iconographic status relegated to Gandhi by humanizing the man as well as his efforts. *Storm in Chandigarh* (1965) illustrated the issue of partition of Punjab and the problem of shared capital between the two states while dealing with the question of extra and pre-marital affair. *Situation in Delhi* (1979) talked about self centered seat taking politicians. *Rich Like Us* (1985) candidly painted the most troubled era of post-independence Indian history-Emergency.<sup>38</sup> *Children of God* (1976) by Rameshwar Rao lament the deplorable condition of Harijans in India even after twenty-five years of India's independence. However the protagonist Lakshmi continues to harbor the hope for Dalit redemption through Gandhian ideals. Anant Gopal Shorey's *Dusk Before Dawn* (1978) highlighted the corroding effects of power and sketched the gradual transformation of an idealist public leader into a power monger politician. In the same line is Arun Joshi categorized as an existentialist novelist. His work is characterized by frustration, disintegration and a sense of alienation that entered the 80s and 90s.<sup>39</sup> His *The Strange Case of Mr. Billy Biswas* (1971) is a satire on modern civilization. Similarly his *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) is a study of modern man's

mental tumult. In the same strain is *The City and the River* (1990) depicting the malpractices of politicians while once again drawing attention to the Gandhian concept of self-discipline where no State is required to govern and guide its' subjects. The criticism of Gandhian ideals had started in the early decades in post-independence India. Though the ridicule first started in the West viz., George Orwell's essay *Reflections on Gandhi* (1949)<sup>40</sup> skeptically decrying the sainthood assigned to Gandhi, imprudently aped by Indian writers. Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) is a partition novel that casts doubt on the potency of Gandhi's Non-Violence. The novel portrays the ideological conflict between the two streams of Ahimsa and Violence and concludes that forced non-violence had never actually taken root among the Indian masses...if it had so there would not have been so much bloodshed during partition.<sup>41</sup> In the Post-Modern Age the criticism became all the more vocal and vehement. Herein personal besmirching of Gandhi was done to discredit his ideology. The post-modern writings appeared on the Indian scene initiated in form of *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie a Diaspora writer of Indian origin. The novel indicated the futility of the Indian independence movement resulting in a complete generation of Indians born with high hopes but living life in defeat and delusion. Closely followed was *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) by Shashi Tharoor a grim parody of Gandhi's ideals portrayed as an ancient sage obsessed with asceticism and his self-version of what is best for the nation.<sup>42</sup> The novel is a history of modern India beginning from Gandhi to Indira Gandhi's return to power wherein Gandhi is subjected to "the most farcical treatment" by Tharoor.<sup>43</sup> The trend continues in *The Mahatma* (1992) by Mukund Rao. The novel retells the story of India's partition where the author debunks Gandhian ideology by representing him as a helpless buffeted person, rejected and dejected standing all alone by himself.

### ***Gandhian Novels in Hindi-Post-Independence Phase***

Most of the early post-independence writings were inspired by Premchand and focused on socio-political themes. A contemporary of Premchand was Chatursen Shastri a prolific writer who in his distinct style wrote two novels in 1958-*Udayast* and *Bagule Ke Pankh*. The First General Elections had taken place and both the novels highlighted the growing corruption among all the politicians irrespective of their ideology with Gandhian values still the best formula for a populated and poverty stricken Nation like India.<sup>44</sup> Another writer that continued the Premchand tradition is Nagarjuna brazenly illustrating the exploited lifestyle of the rural inhabitants of Mithila. *Balchanma* (1952) tells the despicable status of the Depressed Classes bagging the tag of a 'realistic' writing at the same time suggesting possible solutions. It is this quality that makes Nagarjuna a reformative writer. However, later Nagarjuna seems to be shifting side towards communism in the novel *Baba Batesarnath* (1954) where the corrupt Congressmen are defeated with the help of communism.<sup>45</sup> Post 1947 came novels like *Maila Aanchal*(1956) by Phanishwar Nath Renu analyzing and questioning the ideals Gandhi stood for. Dr Prashant Bannerjee seems to embody the Gandhian dream of educated city-bred youngsters voluntarily serving the ignorant and misguided villagers of rural India. The village is plagued with all the socio-economic maladies that disturbed Gandhi along with the post-independence power play of different political parties in India. The fact that socialism was challenging the Gandhian methods of change is reflected through the characters of Baldev and Kalicharan.<sup>46</sup> Gandhian concept of the State and the Individual was roped in Amritlal Nagar's *Boond Aur Samudra* (1956). Rajendra Yadav's *Ukhare Hue Log* (1956) argued for employment freedom for the wife also in order to meet the demands of city life and its needs. Devendra Satyarthi in *Brahmaputra* (1956) portrayed the rural life of Disangmukh village in Assam in both pre and post independence India questioning the futility of the Gandhian Freedom movement as the result was not as per the expectation. Jainendra in *Jaivardhan* (1956)expounds the Gandhian idealism in great detail. The novel portrays the Gandhian ideal of democracy in which a day comes when people become so well trained and self-governed that politicians are not required to

administer a nation and a Stateless society would be created. It should be so because politicians do draw their power from force and violence. Jainendra promotes Gandhian ideal of moralistic politics and his *Muktibodh* (1975) depicts Shri Sahaya the MP who declined to accept Cabinet position to re-establish the moralistic in politics.<sup>47</sup> Vishnu Prabhakar emerged as a Gandhian novelist with his first composition *Nishikant* (1955) the hero vows to wear Khaddar, remove untouchability, promote Hindi and work for Hindu-Muslim unity. In the same year was published *Tat ke Bandhan* enumerating the issues of dowry, rape and abduction of women and how through their efforts and inner strength these evils are ameliorated. Rangeya Raghav in *Seedha Saadha Raasta* (1955) depicted the struggle between social and ideological forces-Marxism, Gandhism, Revolutionary Terrorism and Authoritarianism of the feudal order. Marxism is propagated as the key to bring order in society. A comparison is made between Stalin and Gandhi with the latter being declared irrelevant and irrational.<sup>48</sup> *Bhagan Mandir* (1960) by Anant Gopal Sheware insinuates that power can corrupt even the most conscientious of men. He illustrated how corruption, nepotism, groupies and factionalism entered the early decades of country's independence. *Jhootha-Sach* (1958-60) tagged as a Marxist composition of Yashpal nevertheless is a realistic depiction of the growing disenchantment with the rosy picture the intellectuals and visionaries had envisaged for a British-free India and can be viewed as historical in nature portraying the gradual distancing from Gandhian ideals or rather values on which the movement for independence was led under Gandhi. The novel laments the growing corruption amongst the 'Bourgeoisie' and the exploitation of the poor in collusion with the capitalists.<sup>49</sup> Ramdarash Mishra's novel *Paani ke Prachir* (1961) describes the pre-independence village of Gorakhpur where Neeru an honest truth practicing prototype of Gandhi ultimately picks up weapon to bring the change. It also portrays the seepage of selfish politics in every field of Post-Independence India. School, College, Law Courts, Peasant-Workers Movement are all motivated with political power. Another novel by Mishra, *Jal Tootata Hua* (1969) highlights the baffling years of Indian politics in post-independence era where Panchayati Raj elections the epitome of Gandhian Village Reconstruction reek

with dirty politics, corruption and nepotism.<sup>50</sup> *Sukhta Hua Talaab* (1972) depicts the gradually changing scenario of Indian villages especially the laxity in sexual morals while *Doosra Ghar* (1986) shows the gimmicks used by politicians to get minority votes in India. With *Bees Baras* (1996) Mishra once again returned to rural or regional novel. However, the stage had changed drastically. Globalization has brought development in form of roads and electricity but there is a massive loss of values and self-interest reigns supreme. Secularism was the hallmark of Gandhian values and Rahi Masoom Reza's *Aadha Gaon* (1966) defends and promotes the same. Though never a professed Gandhian, Reza stood for the Ganga-Jamuni Culture of India especially the state of Uttar Pradesh which also happened to be his birth place. Written in Post-Partition India the novel insists on carving out a secular Indian society bereft of the tag names of any community or sect.<sup>51</sup> Shreelal Shukla penned and lamented the lost morals of Indian politicians and voiced the pain through *Raag Darbari* (1968). Ilachandra Joshi is another writer who spun his stories round framework of social norms and morals. His *Rinachakra* (1969) is against atheism as well as fundamentalism. He aspires for a balance between the two. *Apna Morcha* (1972) by Kashinath Singh depicted the student movement explicitly describing the teachers, officers involved in the vicious scenario. *Bhoot Ka Bhavishya* (1973) deals with the emancipation of Harijans and sensitized the reader towards their social responsibility towards the subjects. The gradually changing values in man-woman relationship, the dynamics of marital relations, divorce and its influence on the children became the subject matter of *Aap ka Bunt* (1971) by Mannu Bhandari.<sup>52</sup> *Mahabhoj* (1978), again by the same author depicted the debacle of Indian Democracy in the Emergency Period. In the same strain appears *Meri Teri Uski Baat* (1975) by Yashpal. The novelist is unable to hide the despair and despondency afflicting the Indian middle class in the political, social and economic scenario of Seventies India. The corrupt political scenario had made the struggle against the system ineffectual. The dream had broken and the people had accepted the futility of the same.

Liberalization-Privatization-Globalization appearing in a veiled manner in 1980s emerged without inhibition by 1990s and the same was reflected in literature. Man's life

became mechanical. The poor got crushed while the middle class was stuck like a fly in the web of desire. Accumulation of wealth, race for social status and instant gratification has suppressed all the moral values the India stood for. In this Post-Modern Age where everything came under the gamut of questioning any literary work that reflected a particular ideology was rejected as being propagandist and bereft of pure creativity. A detachment was established between thought and emotion, in simple words; the head and the heart. It was part of a conspiracy to make literature free from any reforming zeal. If literature would not highlight the contemporary political, social, economic and religious scenario, followed by some possible solutions, literature would lose its reformative trait and the exploitative power players will reign free. As such Individualism and Existentialism both had appeared in the Indian literary scene in 70s only yet they became the dominant deliberation in post 1980s. *Raat Ka Reporter* (1989) by Nirmal Verma describes the fear and despair suffered by characters during the emergency period and how it leaves an indelible mark on their lives. Amritlal Nagar's *Karwat* (1985) and *Peedhiyan* (1996) cover the historical period of 1854-1984 highlighting the awakening of the Indian Middle class in post-liberalization India.<sup>53</sup> Previously had come *Nachyo Bahut Gopal* (1978) reliving the Gandhian dream of the rehabilitation and upliftment of the sweepers especially by a voluntary acceptance of the sweeper lifestyle by the high caste or 'Suvarna' heroine. In the 80s came Viveki Rai with his rural novels *Sona Mati* (1983) and *Samar Shesh Hai* (1988). His depiction is so intense and passionate that he is put in the same line as that of Gandhi inspired novelists like Premchand Nagarjuna and Renu. His works portray the naked truth of Landlords still raping the Harijan women and siring illegitimate lines, burning the Dalit villages, the poor displaced and victimized under the garb of insipid government development scheme, engineers and corporate fill their coffers, educational institutions have turned farcical and democracy has dipped its lowest morally.<sup>54</sup> *Doob* (1991) and *Paar* (1994) by Virendra Jain highlight the hardships of the villagers as well as the Tribal when faced with the modern concept of dams and family planning. The pain of losing the homeland in name of development and how it is always the rural India that bears the brunt of such schemes.<sup>55</sup> Depicting the plight of the average

Indian quagmired underneath the economy of desire is the novel *Daud* (2000) by Mamta Kalia. The characters belong to the neo-rich section of the Indian society who oscillate between the traditional and modern, local and global and Spartan and luxurious and are left unsatiated towards the end. In this decade, capitalism entered with full velocity leading to a spurt in population, industries, middle class and cities. People migrated in search of work, from village to town and town to metro-cities. This affected man-woman marital relationship, family relationship and individualism appeared.<sup>56</sup>*Uske Hisse Ki Dhoop* (1975) and *ChitKobra* (1979) by Mridula Garg searched for a personal space for women and questioned the institution of marriage as forced adjustment even though in this attempt instead of equality, human selfishness and non-social attitude became more apparent. A guiltless extramarital affair is portrayed in the second novel. Being attracted towards the forbidden a very basic human instinct is depicted. Marriage turned into a socio-economic contract and pre-marital sex came to be unquestioned if not approved<sup>57</sup> Besides, Mridula had overtly compared and criticized the Gandhi led freedom movement as weak, directionless and failure in context of independent India through her novel *Anitya* (1976). Virtue and monogamy were no more aspired values and the same affected literature also. The bold and open description of lust and sexual scenes in the novels again prove the obscurity of Gandhian values pertaining to marriage in the 80s. In such a scenario, an attempt was made by Vishnu Prabhakar when he wrote *Ardhnarishwar* (1992) a social novel that begot him Sahitya Award. The novel deliberated an ideal society where men and women share equal compatibility and complement each other. The novel also discussed the rising communal tension of Post-Babri India and the Gandhian ideals of finding a peaceful solution. *Awan* (1995) by Chitra Mudgal deals with surrogacy and the concept of leasing the womb for commercial purpose. Fashion Shows are organized to create the market for cosmetics. A woman's body is used both externally and internally. The character of Shantiben Patel is caricatured on Gandhi followers. In this modern world women have become more unsafe and treated as objects in consumerist society.<sup>58</sup>*Jahan Baans Phoolte Hain* (1997) by Shree Prakash Mishra dares to highlight the insurgency issue of the State of Mizoram and with it the general rise in dissatisfaction,

separatism and terrorism afflicting not only North-East but one sixth of India. The novelist without naming Gandhi talks about respecting the traditional ways of living, initiating talks and creating an atmosphere of trust and empathy rather than coercive suppression with the help of armed forces.<sup>59</sup> Another novel that needs mention is *Mujhe Chaand Chahiye* (1993) by Surendra Verma narrating the life of a middle class ambitious but callous heroine who dabbles into exciting erotic experiences both Homo and Hetero drinking alcohol and becoming an unwed mother. The novel changed the definition of an empowered woman reflecting the age of globalization that had come to stay in India.<sup>60</sup> Alka Saraogi's *Kalikatha Via Bypass* (1998) is a profound study of the life of dissatisfaction and desire that the people especially youngsters are leading in post-independence India. When the protagonist son surprises him by giving him the key of Freedom Ford car he is forced to reminisce all those who gave up the life for this elusive freedom.<sup>61</sup> The same tone is reflected in *Idannamum* (1994) by Maitreyi Pushpa. Overambitious, street smart, fashion monger are the adjectives that define the modern youth. There is vehement criticism of modern technology in the novel and the mass movement of the heroine Manda against the consumerist exploitation is Gandhian in character.<sup>62</sup> With the dawn of the new millennium the aftereffects of globalization became more visible. *Ninyaanve* (2000) by Ravindra Verma, *Peeli Cchatriwali Ladki* (2001) by Uday Prakash, *Akhiri Kalam* (2003) by Dudhnath Singh and *Kaala Pahad* (2004) by Bhagwandas Morwal were some of the novels published in post-2000 years giving a preponderant view of the repercussions of LPG India and the loss of Gandhian values.

In Twentieth Century the German scholar Georg Lukacs did a pioneer work on the theory of the rise and nature of novel. He called it "half art" and "as something in the process of becoming."<sup>63</sup> According to him the modern world which the novel attempts to represent is much larger and richer. The men attempting to add meaning to it are solitary and there is no divine presence to guide them. The novelist works on his own to find meaning to life in this new fragmentary world therefore, there is always a sense of incompleteness associated with a novel. Incompleteness is due to the limitations generally associated with

any human endeavor with always a lacuna for a further possibility in the future. Taking the discourse further Ralph Fox writes, “The novel deals with the individual, it is the epic of the struggle of the individual against society, against nature, and it could only develop in a society where the balance between man and society was lost, where man was at war with his fellows or with nature.”<sup>64</sup> Thus the novel explores both, the individual and the society, the private and the collective with their interconnections presented in an aesthetic manner. Paradoxically, although the novel is both written and read in private, it relies upon highly organized society and industry to produce and circulate it.<sup>65</sup> Another expectation assigned to the novel is the moral implications or didactic functions attached to the genre. To quote Dr Johnson, “...In narratives where historical narratives has no place, I cannot discover why there should not be exhibited the most perfect idea of virtue; of virtue not angelical, nor above probability(for what we cannot credit, we shall never imitate), but the highest and purest that humanity can reach, which, exercised in such trials as the various revolutions of things shall bring upon it, may, by conquering some calamities and enduring others, teach us what we may hope, and what we can perform.”<sup>66</sup> Thus the critics since its inception have laid the onus of emphasizing the virtues as a primary concern of this style of literature as it definitely appeals more to the higher instincts of human nature. A situation against which the critics warn the novelists is narrative ambivalence, this occurs when several perspectives merge, creating moral confusion. Avoiding that pitfall and steering the readers towards a didactic discourse is an elemental concern of a novel.

Novel is the most popular genre of modern age. Due to its prevalence, magnitude and multiplicity it is able to present and interpret life-situations holistically. It is closest to human life and that is why Ralph Fox calls it the prose of life as well as the great epic of modern existence. Similarly, Henry James considers it a direct imprint of life and herein lays the essence of its composition. The primary objective of a novel is to study life and values that regulate the code of life. Values add nobility and sublimity to life making it more balanced, organized and meaningful. In this way both values and novels complement each other. Bereft of one another they become ex parte and incomplete and

lose their purpose. All leading philosophers accept these values to be universal and timeless and out of these love and welfare of others reign supreme. Humanity is a new manifestation of the same. 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' forms the soul of this value system wherein all men are brothers and freedom, equality and fraternity constitute the core. It decries discrimination on the basis of race, caste, gender and religion. It promotes equality and freedom for all. It is committed to love, service and sacrifice. This value system becomes a means to human well being. These values however experience transition in their nature and context with the ongoing transformation in the society which get reflected in religion, women, love, sexual desire, marriage, man-woman relations, etc.,. A plethora of novels exist in post-independence era containing the discourse on Gandhi either directly or indirectly. The norms and values have definitely evolved passing through various phases. The transformation in the value system was aptly reflected in the novels. In the words of Bhabani Bhattacharya, "...I hold that a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view. Art is not necessarily for art's sake. Purposeless art and literature which is much in vogue does not appear to me a sound judgment."<sup>67</sup>

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‘*Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proven innocent.*’

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## **CHAPTER - 3**

### **Gandhi in Years of Hope 1947-1964**

## **Chapter 3**

### **Gandhi in Years of Hope 1947-1964**

He entered into the very stuff of our minds and spirits and changed them and moulded them. The Gandhi generation will pass away, but that stuff will remain and will affect each succeeding generation, for it has become a part of India's spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Jawahar Lal Nehru  
First Prime Minister of India

Indian war of independence was fought by people from all caste, class, religion and region with a unified stand. The British left but their legacy was a divided India overflowing with the lava of hatred, jealousy and revenge towards each other. In such a scenario, Gandhi whose had been the only voice of sanity and mutual trust was assassinated. According to many the cremation of his physical remains also burned to ashes the values and teachings he struggled so hard to disseminate amongst his countrymen. In 1950 the nation adopted a new Constitution, a set of guidelines for the rulers as well as the ruled population of India. Through his writings and speeches Gandhi had envisaged a comprehensive political, social and economic program for the reconstruction of India but the Constituent Assembly after much deliberation had adopted only a portion of his philosophy because for many, whose vision was blurred due to the dazzle of the western world Gandhi represented an eccentric entity from India's past. As a result the Indian Constitution was a mixed bag containing some of Gandhi's values that had a common bearing with the socialist Nehru accepted by many as the worthy scion of Gandhi's legacy. Thus, secularism, equality, Non-Violence continued to be the basic work-values for both the Indian State as well as society. Although we had deviated from Gandhi at the outset only yet a semblance of his core values existed albeit on a pedestal far away from reality, still his ideals gave hope to many who had sacrificed their all to attain the hard won freedom. Thus the years from 1947-1964 could be broadly categorized as the period of hope and

achievement and was marked with optimism and confidence. The country had its first election based on universal adult franchise and the Gandhian dream of his country's common men deciding their destiny was fulfilled to an extent. Congress under Nehru's leadership was elected as the first government because the people still saw a reflection of 'Bapu' in its party members. The general elections were conducted in a fair, free, impartial manner which was acknowledged internationally when the first chief election commissioner, Sukumar Sen, was invited by several Asian and African countries as an expert adviser on elections. Gandhi was in favor of peace and non violence and the process of polling which was conducted in a fair and peaceful manner was an indication that the Gandhian values, democratic system and institutions, a legacy of the national movement, were still alive. After 1952, two more elections were held, 1957 and 1962. Congress party continued to be the in the forefront but there existed other parties and ideologies as well which could challenge and override the proposals of the party in power. Nehru in spite of all allegations of dictatorial temperament was always open to debates and discussion which shows that at least the crust of Indian political system did breathe democracy in its true spirit during his time. In Nehru's words Democracy means "a manner of thinking, action, behavior to your neighbor and to your adversary and opponent".<sup>2</sup> Nehru also favored internal Democracy and debate within the congress party and encouraged it to inculcate new social forces and trends. Federalism was religiously practiced and there was no encroaching of the center on state policies. The Indian State carved out the states on linguistic lines in the mainland but had not paid heed to the voices from the North East. The country had already faced partition therefore more separatism could not be encouraged as a result draconian laws pertaining to colonial India were unleashed, consequently Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1955 better known as AFSPA was born.

Since the Constitution had not assigned any State religion Nehru did his best to promote a hard core secular policy amongst his men though there were few who followed a different track. There are government records that a witch hunt to check

the loyalty of the Muslims who stayed back in India was initiated by the Home Ministry. Nehru totally rejected the argument of Pakistan's atrocities on its Non-Muslim citizens as a plea to doubt Muslims and reiterated his government's stand of a secular India and save the country from becoming a Hindu Pakistan. Nehru's stance was totally Gandhian and was made public on the latter's birthday in a letter written in 1949.<sup>3</sup> In a bid to keep State ministers away from religious places Nehru had advised Dr Rajendra Prasad not to attend the inaugural ceremony of the renovated Somnath Temple in Gujarat but the President never the less attended although the content of his speech basically reiterated the Ganga-Jamuni culture of India. However the trend was set for the Men of the State to visit religious places. There were not many who were and still are able to maintain the balance which Dr Prasad was conscious of when he visited a shrine seeped in the history of religious violence. With independence came the issue of Kashmir which became a serious bone of contention between India and Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah had the people's support along with an ambiguous plan for the future of Kashmir, leaders like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee were against Article 370 and amidst all this Nehru could not compromise his stand on secularism and peace along with the promise of safety extended to the minorities in independent India. The matter was taken to the United Nations against the wishes of the radicals and the Line of Control became a veritable entity.

The end of the Second World War ushered in the era of cold war. The world got divided in two blocs the Capitalistic American and the Communist Russian. Nehru due to his socialist leanings could not certainly line in with the Americans but he did not side with the Russians either and along with other countries vying to stay neutral succeeded in forging the Non-Aligned Movement. NAM proved India's stance on world peace and confirmed the State's belief at least in the international scenario in Gandhi's Non-Violence. India's contribution to the Korean War (1950-53) was immensely appreciated in the repatriation of the war refugees. Internally, the Indian Armed Force organized by Nehru was non-political in nature and had accepted the control of the civilians, he was personally against the armed forces intervening in

politics, the size of the force was relatively small, the expenditure on defense forces was also kept low, and India was saved from the danger of militarism. Even the atomic energy that had been used by the West to tilt the world war in their favor was promoted by Nehru for the economic welfare of millions of Indians. Nehru encouraged scientific research and by 1948 the Government of India had set up the Atomic Energy Commission. By 1962 India was already into space research with the setting up of the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR). The true spirit of Nehru's foreign policy may be concluded with the following lines by Wiston Churchill.<sup>4</sup>

“I always admired your ardent wish for peace and the absence of bitterness in your consideration of the antagonisms that had in the past divided us. Yours indeed is a heavy burden and responsibility, shaping the destiny of your many millions of countrymen, and playing your outstanding part in world affairs. I wish you well in your task. Remember “The Light of Asia.”

The quintessence of India's foreign policy in the period under study was definitely Gandhian. India had always looked upon China with admiration due to its resistance to western colonialism and the people's party of China gaining political ascendancy in the region. China had even helped India during its food crises in 1949. In 1954 India recognized China's claim over Tibet and both the countries agreed on the peaceful principles of Panchsheel and the slogan of Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai became popular. But as fate would have it soon the situation started deteriorating with the Dalai Lama taking refuge in India. China started asserting its influence on NEFA and Aksai Chin. Nehru wanted to avoid combat and was on the verge of giving over the barren Aksai Chin to China but the MPs would not accept it. Escalated conditions resulted in the 1962 Indo-China War in which India lost. The war gave a jolt to Nehru's trust in peaceful democracy finally leading to his demise in 1964. As India had decided to accept membership of the commonwealth as a follow up of Gandhian affection for the British despite being responsible for their downfall, Russia was

initially dubious of forging closer ties with India. The situation changed with US military aid to Pakistan and Nehru's Russian visit in 1955. USSR openly supported India on Kashmir issue and Goa's war of liberation. Ideologically the only basic difference between Gandhi and Marx is latter's preference for force and atheism otherwise communism is also against racism, imperialism, discrimination and pro poor. Thus emphasis was laid on being friendly with Soviet Union which continued to be quite affable till the disintegration of the latter in 1991. To reconstruct India's economy Five Year Plans were introduced. The economic reconstruction was socialist in nature with the State owning the means of production, the first plan definitely had agriculture at its core but the focus shifted to industries in the second plan. Nehru had an inordinate love for his mentor and religiously spun cotton on Gandhi's every birthday<sup>5</sup> but did not promote Charkha as a State policy. He considered the factories and industries to be the new temples of India and herein onwards the Gandhian program of village reconstruction suffered a setback and has failed to come back to the right track till date. With Russian aid heavy industries in iron and steel, natural gas and hydro-electrical plants were set up.

Gandhi had a very rational approach towards women issues in India. He openly declared them equal to men but admitted to the biological and temperamental difference between the two. He had great faith in women's capacity for nation building and involved them in his charkha and picketing programs. Independent India formulated many schemes to promote girl education. Nehru quoted Charles Fourier "One could judge the degree of civilization of a country by the social and political position of its women."<sup>6</sup> The enrollment of schools between 1951 and 1961 was doubled for boys and tripled for girls. Nehru was aware that the progress in education was not able paced with development. He wrote to the various chief ministers in 1963 that in spite of his strong desire for the growth of Indian industry, he was convinced that it is better to do without some industrial growth than to do without adequate education at the base.<sup>7</sup> To imbibe Gandhi's vision of village autonomy the Panchayati Raj system was introduced and strengthened in democratic India but due to

bureaucratic dominance it failed to achieve its objective. One of the major allegations against Nehru is his failure to reform the Indian bureaucracy and initiate any ideological reform or program in the Congress party on the lines of stalwart like Gandhi. Although a delayed step was taken during the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1959 wherein cooperative joint farming was proposed but it failed to come into action due to the pressure from rich farmers. Nehru was quite firm in punishing the corrupt officials but he did not carry an organized anti-corruption program and the evil seeped in yet due to some reminiscence of Gandhian values there did exist some honesty and integrity in middle and higher level administrators and the people continued to hope for a better future.

Nehru can be considered an architect of Modern India. He can be described as a democrat, socialist and humanist and was considered as one of the great Indians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Nehru died on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> May 1964. Many allege him for creating the Gandhi-Nehru legacy, a befitting reply to the allegation comes from Ramchandra Guha when he writes “there is no question of Nehru’s attempting to create a dynasty of his own; it would be inconsistent with his character and career.”<sup>8</sup>

### ***Novels in English***

Gandhi was accepted with open arms in pre-independence phase and both scholars and masses declared his methods as essentially Indian and eternal in both form and spirit efficacious enough to act as a beacon of hope and guidance to the human ocean plagued with the perennial struggle between haves and have not.

The attainment of independence heralded a new era of hope, growth and development. The joy of freedom brought in the pain of partition and the unspeakable horror of communal riots. Many got confused because partitioned India was not what they had dreamt of. Seeds of communalism were sown even in the hearts of those who had not been directly affected with partition. Merger of native states brought in drastic changes as the subjects in these states tasted democracy for the first time. Gandhi’s

movement against casteism and untouchability ushered in social equality but soon it dawned on the masses that it was so only theoretically. Nehru had given the call for industrialization which was a direct challenge to the ideology of his political mentor Gandhi who had condemned machines most vehemently. The nation was in flux and stuck between the ideologies of the mentor and his mentee. Nehru's charismatic personality swayed the nation in his favor but Mahatma could not be forgotten and as a result a synthesis was proposed which was a consensus between the two traditions. The nation still wanted to venerate and hold on to Gandhi if not holistically at least partially. The trend was reflected in Indian novel as well wherein the writers continued to manifest the pre-independence traits yet probed more deeply and comprehensively into the social, political, economic, religious, cultural and educational milieu of the Nehru period. The Gandhian trio Anand, Raja Rao and Narayan continued to write while others turning away from politics focused on individualism and social themes of universal kind. Disintegration of joint families, unjust distribution of wealth, rural poverty, industrialization, communalism were depicted through novelists like Kamala Markandeya, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar. Technically the novels were basically 'humanist,' but they did question the traditions of Gandhi yet attempted a negotiation with the western ideals. Many started moving away from Gandhi blaming his inefficacy to stop the partition violence. A sense of disillusionment and loss was quite evident in the youth whose aspirations seem to have been guillotined at the altar of divided freedom.

Lionel Trilling in *The Liberal Imagination* considers the novel to be "a perpetual quest for reality."<sup>9</sup>

Among the post-independence writers in English Bhabani Bhattacharya emerges as an ardent admirer of Gandhi who possessed an empathic understanding of the Mahatma's speeches and writings. He also believed in the didactic accountability of literature and wrote with a social purpose. Poverty, corruption, ignorance, exploitation, greed, sexual perversion formed the core subject of his novels with an

unflinching faith in life and its worthiness. *So Many Hungers* (1947) published two months after India attained freedom is a genuine record of the Bengal famine and Quit India Movement. Bhabani professes a positive view of life in the novel with trust and ethical values being placed above vices and evil. The protagonist Kajoli does not sell herself in the end but decides to sell newspapers instead thus beating both sin and mortal death. Devesh Basu is Gandhian in character and like the latter brims with infinite love for the common man. He succeeds in channelizing the people's energy into constructive work and peaceful agitation just like Gandhi and appears as a prototype of a mini-Gandhi in independent India. Under his inspiration his grandson Rahoul too joins 'Quit India' and gets arrested. *Music for Mohini* (1952) is a struggle between orthodoxy and new ideas. It is the journey of Mohini, the heroine from the unbridled and insouciant lifestyle to a responsible and mature woman in the company of her idealist husband. The novel highlights the absurd superstitious practices prevalent in rural India especially with regard to women. Mohini, Jayadev and other like-minded youngsters struggle hard to discredit them against a rigid orthodox atmosphere. At the same time imitating the western ideals is also not suggested as an alternative. The solution has to be appropriated from the indigenous Indian tradition. The novel is essentially a discourse between the traditional and the modern a bridge between the rural and the urban. Bhabani makes sure that by the end of the novel the old and the new, city life and village life, the old and the young are able to live in harmony with each other. Mohini takes up the cause of educating the illiterate village women and brings fulfillment in her life. Through the joy and fulfilment in Mohini's life the author affirms his faith in the fullness and goodness of life<sup>10</sup> accomplishing the Gandhi dream of the urban youth of India to go to the villages and work as humble servants and change their mode of living. *He Who Rides the Tiger* (1955) is a denunciation of the rigid caste system rampant in the country and Gandhian precepts against this evil custom. When Kalo the blacksmith sends his daughter to school she suffers social ostracism from the high caste students in the class but continues unabated and is proud of her father's profession. The novel

depicts and criticizes the popular practice of offering milk to the Shiva phallus and throwing away the collected milk when numerous people continue to suffer with hunger. Similarly in *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) the minstrel is again like a mini-Gandhi who gives the talisman to the young Meera with an ardent hope and faith on the abilities of the young to make the best of the country's freedom and create magic by finding solution to the political, social and economic maladies plaguing the land for centuries. Freedom is described as the starting point of a road infested with people ready to loot and plunder the god-given gift. The struggle is to fight the exploiters found in every field whether business, politics, religion, bureaucracy in a fearless, patient and a non-violent Gandhian way. A shift can be observed in *Shadows from Ladakh* (1966) written after the Sino-Chinese War. The previous novels focused on the freedom movement and Gandhi's leadership both directly and indirectly but the new novel was replete with a comparative and analytical debate on Gandhi and Nehru's socialism. Gandhigram and Steeltown are portrayed symbolizing the two ways or philosophies of life simply worded as man versus machine or Gandhi and Nehru. Bhabani like a true scholar of Indian History has always attempted an integration of diverse viewpoints and culture. Through the characters of Satyajit and Bhaskar, the novelist has given a detailed comparative discourse on the two ideologies and in the shadow of the Chinese attack i.e., possible attack from powerful industrialized and weapon wielding nations in future has proposed a synthesis of the two, symbolised by love between Bhaskar and Satyajit's daughter Sumita.<sup>11</sup>

Unlike Mulkraj and Rajarao, R K Narayan never participated in any of the Gandhian movement but he did respond to both the high waves as well as ripples created in the Indian milieu due to the coming of Gandhi. In *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) Narayan turned Gandhi into a minor character and in the backdrop of his ideology blossoms the love of Bharti and Sriram. In the narrative, Bharti epitomizes Gandhian concept of Stri-Shakti. Strong, dedicated, focused and a reformer by nature she has a resolute faith on Gandhian principles. It is she who makes a patriot and a man of Sriram and is the corner stone of their marriage.<sup>12</sup> Irony and humor form a veritable

part of Narayan's literature and the novel gives an interesting description of Sriram's attraction for Bharti and his subsequent interest in Gandhi. Although Sriram's engrossment of Gandhi is due to Bharti, over time he does develop a genuine regard for the Mahatma's ideology and we see him spinning, boycotting and participating most enthusiastically in the Quit India Movement. The novel also contains a glimpse of the emergence of pseudo Gandhian in Indian politics as well as a prolonged illustration on Gandhi's love and concern for the Harijans. Similarly in *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) Jagan in spite of being a sweets vendor advocates the Gandhian precept of controlling the palate. He spins the charkha daily and does not possess more than two set of clothes. However there are certain chasms in Jagan's tall claims of being a Gandhian that the humorist in the novelist cannot resist to express. Jagan had to leave regular College because he was failing in exams but he moulds the episode into his joining the non-cooperation as a response to Gandhi's call. Similarly being a businessman he wants to evade tax and does not give sweets to poor children gaping at his display of eatables. However his disenchantment with his son changes him and breaks the last strains binding him to a materialistic life. He hands over the keys of his shop to his cousin and leaves for the abandoned shrine in the forest.<sup>13</sup> Modern western education is critically scathed in both the novels. Jagan wants his son Mali to finish the western education offered in the schools even at the cost of his inter-personal relationship with his son. Sriram too admitted being encouraged into higher education primarily to attain good manners. Spinning and Khadi both get promoted in the novels. There are references to characters like Jagdish who in spite of wearing khadi and associating with Gandhi turn to the cult of bomb and pistol and men like the Municipal Chairman who use Khadi for their political gains, once again reiterating the complexity and dichotomy in practical implementation of Gandhian values. The machinery definitely receives a negative portrayal by the hands of the novelist. Jagan's family breaks up over the issue of investing in the type writer. Gandhian love for poverty ridden villages is vividly portrayed in both the novels. Social evils like untouchability and caste system are dealt in detail in the novels.

Gandhi's residing amidst the Harijans and his insistence on Hindi during public address, have also been stressed in detail. Although the time period shown is pre-independence yet the magic of Gandhi was veritable enough to persuade Narayan to write on him in the two decades after independence.<sup>14</sup>

Mulk Raj Anand had been a Bloomsbury scholar and after a brief stay at Gandhi's Ashram had penned his master piece *Untouchable* which after nineteen rejections finally got published in 1935. The novel elucidates the harsh reality of the humiliating life of the Harijans in colonial India. Nearly thirty years later Anand once again voiced the plight of the community living in the vicinity of Delhi, the capital of free and democratic India. *The Road* (1961) narrates the story of the untouchables of the village Govardhan who are hired to construct a road connecting their village to the city. The caste Hindus of the village refuse to work on equal footing with the Harijans. The end of British rule did not change the social milieu of the country and the Dalits continue to be victims of hate and abuse by the high caste. They are ostracized and discriminated by the high caste Hindus. Dhooli Singh the village headman and an upholder of Gandhian values support them. The feudal class representing the oppressive and exploitative section of the village milieu gives leadership to the anti-Dalit group and burns down the untouchable settlement in retaliation. The government ignorant of the ground reality is in shock and sends in officials to educate the villagers of the law of equality implemented in the new India. With much difficulty the road gets constructed but the protagonist Bhikhu leaves the village for the unknown city to start a new life bereft of caste tags and discrimination. The novel is a testament to the cogency of Gandhi's plea to eradicate untouchability through change of heart instead of laws and Anand through the novel restates the ideology.<sup>15</sup>

The novels of Kamala Markandeya are racked by confusion, violence, economic disparity, and convulsive social and political changes. She presents East and West in her works and attempts to explain the former to the latter. Her heroines cherish relationships and companionship as well as the fulfillment such affiliations provide in

face of cruel social, economic and political upheavals offered in life. At many places Markandeya portrays the conflict between family duty and personal fulfillment.<sup>16</sup>*Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) narrates the sufferings of the peasants in colonial India. Gandhi's warning against industrialization and its role in destroying the socio-economic and familial fabric of Indian villages is clearly reflected in the spirit of the novel.<sup>17</sup> Rukmani and Nathan represent the inner depth and resilience which is so characteristic of the Indian peasant. There is struggle in poverty but an inner solace that makes them fight the odds and challenges in life and be together till the last moment. The opening of a tannery in the village destroys the livelihood of the traditional craftsmen and even ushers in moral corruption pertaining to both sex and money in the otherwise sedentary lifestyle of the countryside. Due to it many are forced to sell their land and move to the city in search for an elusive notion of a better life. However the urban milieu is scheming, crafty and selfish. The writer reiterates the Gandhian belief that true bliss is to be found only in simplicity and rusticity of the village. He said, "The moment you talk to the Indian peasants you will find wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior you will find a deep reservoir of spiritual worthy to be called culture."<sup>18</sup>*Some Inner Fury* (1955) attempts a human bonding beyond racial reservations. It is the love story of Richard and Mira against the backdrop of Quit India movement. Concern for the poor, khaddar, using press as a means to spread nationalist consciousness among the masses gets substantial coverage in the novel. However the baseline of the novel is the Gandhian principle of 'love your enemies' and the percept that humanity is beyond race, class and color. Although Gandhi initiated mass movements against the British yet he never hated them or wished ill-will. The same ethos is presented but with a candid admission of the need for the two nations to meet on equal terms; not as rulers and the ruled but representatives of humankind empathizing and being sensitive to each others pain and need.<sup>19</sup>

In K Nagarajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961) Gandhi did not appear directly in the plot but his influence could be perceived in the background. The novel narrates the

effects of the national movement as witnessed in an Indian town through the eyes of a young Brahmin Gokarna. The narrator Koni is basically an observer of the impact Gandhi's ideology had on the residents of Kedaram. Gandhi's soothing teachings embalm the orphaned and troubled people who find refuge in his Ashram. Due to Gandhi people start employing untouchables and opening the temple doors for the low born. Spinning is taken up by many. The novelist has dedicated only two scenes to Gandhi in the novel, first for canvassing during the election campaign and the other for solving an age old dispute between two prominent Brahmin families in the town. The plot highlights the dowry problem among the educated as back as 1930s where a prospective groom preparing for Civil Services takes high dowry in view of his lucrative career and the comfort and status it would give to his future wife. Politicians like Vanchinath Sastri are portrayed using Gandhi as a means to fulfill their petty ambitions. At the same time are characters like Nirmala, Vasu and Koni's Father who not only venerate Gandhi but try to give a practical overtone to his teachings by working for Dalit upliftment. Writing in sixties Nagarajan revived the nationalistic ethos of pre-independence India to serve as a beacon of hope in post-independence grim reality that was gradually dawning upon the scholars of the time. The ideals of a submerged past gives innovative solutions to deal with the dilemmas and crises.<sup>20</sup> Social progressivism and communal harmony indigenous to Indian culture but rejuvenated in modern India by Gandhi, were revived to serve as a polestar of hope as well as guidance for the free but rapidly changing socio-political scenario in democratic India.

Nayantara Sahgal was born in the Nehru family and had been raised in close physical as well as ideological proximity with Gandhi and his nationalist followers. An offspring of a country in transition she was both modern as well as a traditionalist and represented the same synthesis in her protagonists. Nayantara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* (1958) deals with the rural upliftment program and critically discusses the attitude of the upper caste Hindus which is primarily caste oriented and has been described as 'a collection of pot-bellies and bank-balances.'<sup>21</sup> The protagonist Sanad

Shivpal belonging to the western educated Indian elite class bemoans his loss of Indian identity due to his association with the West. His alienation from his countrymen pains him and finally finds solace by joining the Gandhian Satyagraha and indulging in spinning and learning Hindi. He also marries Kusum a non-westernized Indian girl defining the sacrificing stoical Indian womanhood Gandhi vouched for in his speeches and writing, as “the mother, maker and silent leader.”<sup>22</sup> Sanad works for the promotion of Khaddar even though his family business deals with British made cloth. Under the affect of Gandhi he even surrenders his right to inherit the business rejecting his share of the family money. Another character is Maya who in spite of belonging to the elite gentry is shown working for rural development. The author cannot resist herself for the tongue in cheek comment on Kunti Behen the Congress worker who is purposely neglectful regarding her physical appearance because it would make her appear closer to the common people. Sohan Bhai who lost his family is another character dedicated to the cause of the nation due to Gandhian influence. He is among many who found solace in Gandhi and got an appropriate direction to their obscure lives. In *This Time of Morning* (1965) Nayantara Sahgal seeks to present a new India in search of its identity at the crossroad of millenniums old tradition and the nascent taste of modernism. It is about country’s first encounter with freedom and the resultant problems. It not only satirises the politicians but also highlights the lopsided education system of India that stresses on rote memorization and overcrowded classes. Kalyan Sinha questions the validity of non-violence as a political method and rejects it as an exercise in futility. There are many like him who blamed Gandhi for the backwardness of Indians and emasculating the nation. There is Somnath who believes that Congress should give up the Gandhian values post-independence and turn into a plenary political party. The atmosphere of irresponsibility and greed, so rampant in post-independence India, is zealously covered in the novel. Kailas Vrind, a lawyer by profession gave up his practice and becomes an ardent Gandhian. Like a true follower he does not believe in scrapping out morality for expediency or efficiency in politics because for him means

are as important as the end just like Gandhi who compared the means to the seed and end to the tree declaring “We reap exactly as we sow”<sup>23</sup> However Kailas has to face numerous hardships for his ideals and is ousted by those vouching for falsehood and scheming in politics, but his ultimate return, like a phoenix rising back from its ashes, is an indication for continuing the struggle.<sup>24</sup>

There also appeared a collection of literary works that continued to recollect and refer the pre-independence Gandhian movements and their impact on the lives of individuals as well as families belonging to different class and community of Indian society. *In Transit* (1950) by Vinu Chitale recounts the Gandhian period warped between the two world wars. It is an India which is reawakening to the challenges of the twentieth century yet does not wish to break its umbilical cord with traditionalism. It is the story of a Maharashtrian Brahmin family based in Pune who participated in the outbreak of 1857 but had to suffer the oppression and humiliation from the British who had played havoc in suppressing the uprising. The next generation gets actively involved in the Gandhian Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement. The novel narrates the transition the nation’s political, social and economic milieu was passing through as an entity placed between the ancient, traditional, rigid and modern yet indigenous as vouched by Gandhi. These were trying times for middle class joint families especially women. Janaki the protagonist struggles to keep the balance and sanity of the family members unscathed in the turbulence. Girls get education but are escorted to schools, play indoor games and live under the age old redundant customs of child marriage and tonsure. Amidst all this the nation is awakening to a new dawn of independence. The novel is part of the literature written in post-independence India still reminiscent of the freedom movement.<sup>25</sup>

In *Zohra* (1950) by Zeenuth Futehally, a kind of vague adolescent romanticism is combined with Gandhian idealism. Zohra a sensitive girl of an aristocratic Muslim family is married to a Western educated young man but comes under the influence of her brother-in-law who is a Gandhian. The husband is too practical and brusque to

actually have faith and patience for Gandhi's methodology. He is trained in modern medicine and is more impressed by the western industrialism. For a while Zohra fulfills the duties of an ideal wife and mother but her impressionable being is too susceptible for her husband's hard core pragmatism. The younger brother Hamid is an idealist and his sensitivity and ability to empathize with the plight of both the people of India as well as Zohra forms the story line and gets expressed explicitly in the novel. Proximity with Hamid draws Zohra to Gandhi and she becomes a votary of his revolutionary but nonviolent mass movement. On being ridiculed by the husband she vigorously defends the Gandhian method of revolution because it not only highlights the problems of colonial India but offers a solution in form of a constructive program for the regeneration of India. The novel merges the theme of love and patriotism beautifully and showcases the changing social life of elite Muslims in Hyderabad in context of the national movement under the mass leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>26</sup>

The family members of Khwaja Ahmad Abbas were staunch followers of the Congress and were very much under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. He himself belonged to the progressive school of writers and wrote against fascism and communalism while dreaming of a secular and egalitarian India. *Inquilab* (1949) by Ahmad Abbas narrates the story of Anwar whose growing years created in him a natural faith on Gandhian ideals of secularism and ahimsa due to his Father's influence. Anwar is witness to the discriminatory attitude of the British in everyday life as well as the heart rendering and heinous Jalianwala Bagh carnage. His physical meeting with Gandhi reiterated his conviction in the concept of Swaraj and Khadi. He actively partakes in the bonfires and is petrified by the violence and bloodbath of communal riots and pleads Gandhi to stop it. He even gives up his relationship with Salmah for the cause. The pathan movement led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is also described in detail in the novel. The Afghan was a votary of Gandhi and was popularly called the 'Frontier Gandhi.' Thus throughout the 20s and 30s Anwar continues to remain loyal to his values in spite of pressure from the relatives and community to take up the sword like the medieval Muslim invaders and give up the

pro-Hindu Gandhi. Anwar resists and continues to trudge the trouble laden Gandhian path. The novel ends with a shocking revelation regarding Anwar's parentage. He was biologically the son of a Hindu merchant by a prostitute who had been adopted and brought up by a Muslim as a true 'son of India'<sup>27</sup> giving a perfect background to the protagonist just like Kabir the mystic poet of medieval India, by the novelist, an ardent believer of nationalism and socialism himself.

*The Dark Dancer* (1958) by Balachandra Rajan is an evocative account of the Gandhian movement analyzing the potency of non-violence as a means of resistance as well as transformation. Kamala the heroine has devout faith on the ideal of non-violence which gives an innate strength to the weak masses to endure the atrocities of the exploiters. However her England returned husband is not convinced of her idealism and is skeptic about the effectiveness of the virtue. As the plot evolves the husband even leaves Kamala for another woman but her allegiance towards the creed of non-violence remains ardent. Her character epitomizes Gandhi's faith in the creed of nonviolence. He said, "I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success...There is no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself. Permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion."<sup>28</sup> She offers her services to plague affected victims and even dies fighting to save a Muslim girl from being raped. Many including the husband are convinced of the futility of her sacrifice but there are others who feel that her brutal death for the cause of non-violence and secularism will trigger the transformation among those with whom she worked and contribute in creating the India of Gandhi's dreams.<sup>29</sup>

Raja Rao of the Gandhian triumvirate again appears post-independence in a new 'avatar' contemplating a different theme but still laced with Gandhi's spirituality. The autobiographical *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) by Raja Rao follows the 'Puranic' tradition of story-telling. The theme of marriage, love and loyalty is dealt in through the characters of Ramaswamy, Madeline and Savitri. Rama loves his country, is

impressed with its deep philosophy and is often found quoting 'Advaitism.' However he is not able to stay loyal to his wife and falls into infidelity. Ultimately he lets go of both and seeks refuge with a Guru.<sup>30</sup> The novel is in the same style as *Kanthapura* with stories fabricated within each other and flooded with Puranic references and moral teachings reflecting the Gandhian technique of narration. The book is a record of the hero's quest for the knowledge of the self as well as the 'eternal self.' While staying in the west the hero realizes the reality of India. It focuses on both the dissimilarity as well as the essential oneness between the east and the west which is also the core of Indian aka Gandhian philosophical system. The theme of the novel, mistaking the relative for the absolute, the particular for the universal, the unreal for the real and the rope for the serpent is almost metaphysical. The novel stresses the importance of truth being absolute and the only gift offered by India to the world. The protagonist like Gandhi is a 'Karm Yogi' and a believer of both Truth and God.<sup>31</sup>

Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) covers the period from the Gandhian Civil Disobedience Movement to the partition riots in Punjab. The novel portrayed the Indian youth aping the Westerners due to the absence of any basic conviction as well as their anxiety to be modern. Through the characters Gian Talwar and Shafi Usman, Gandhian peaceful methods and violent revolutionary path is discussed and amply debated. Shafi heads a terrorist group that considers Gandhian peace to be a blot on the armed heroic history of India. Malgonkar in the novel exposed the hollow sham of the Indians who claimed to be Non-Violent but indulged in gross killings at the time of partition. Contrary to popular perception, Malgonkar never condemned Gandhian ideology in the novel but criticized the hypocritical people's superficial adherence to it wherein they use the credence of Gandhi to achieve their own niggardly ambitions.<sup>32</sup> He portrayed the inner tension in the freedom movement through the interpersonal relationship between Gian, Debi and Shafi. Gian although professing to be Gandhian indulges in the most violent act of murder and resorts to lying, cheating and betrayal in order to survive the hardships of Andaman. The revolutionary Shafi too betrays his Hindu friends during a police raid

and joins hands with Muslim fundamentalists whereas Debi who had initially entered the freedom movement for a baser personal vendetta gradually starts comprehending the versatility of the creed and converting to the precept of Non-Violence. Debi Dayal even falls in love with a Muslim girl and sacrifices his life while attempting to save her. To sum up the novel traces the failure of both the Gandhian and revolutionary methods in checking the rise of communalism. Again, the stress is on highlighting economics as the actual reason for communal tension rather than religious differences.<sup>33</sup> However in spite of a nonchalant analysis of Gandhian ideals the novel is pro-Gandhian in approach and to an extent lamentation of the loss of true perception of Gandhi by the Indian populace.

### *Novels in Hindi*

Novel is a very powerful medium for the expression and promotion of human values of the age they are composed in. Gandhi had repeatedly declared during the nationalist movement that “India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages.”<sup>34</sup> After 1950 the nation opened up to new vistas and challenges. The imagination of the Indian writers was caught by the large masses living in the villages practicing agriculture and labor and serving the nation through selfless service. In Hindi novels Premchand had already immortalized Surdas, Hori and Gobar the peasant protagonists of pre-independence India. Post-Premchand writers in spite of indulging in individualistic themes did comment and relate to the society with an undercurrent aim of reform and solutions. Agriculture and self reliance in food crop was the main concern of the Indian State therefore in fifties and sixties rural India became the subject of many novels. These were termed as regional or ‘aanchalik’ novels composed primarily in post-independence India and epitomizing the Gandhian slogan of returning to the villages during the Hindi Literary Fest as back as 1935. The agrarian nature of the first five year plan further augmented the genre. The villages started transforming and these novels narrated the good and the bad of these newly

democratic units of India. The average villager was stuck between innocence and shrewdness and so was the plot that mapped the socio-political zeitgeist of the region. *Maila Aanchal* (1954) by Phaneshwar Nath 'Renu' attracted the attention of numerous critics as well as readers and was universally accepted as the prototype for such compositions. Centered round a small settlement Marygunj the novel represents the ordeal of the whole of rural India through the plot, sub-plots, various incidents, episodes as well as characters. The novel is the story of five years of India's independence (1948-52) when new land settlements were being introduced and malaria eradication programs were being launched by the democratically elected government of India. The poverty, ignorance and disease of the village take the story forward. The subplots of Bawandas and Dr Prashant continue the Gandhian strain. Bawandas is a Gandhian who goes to the extent of even sacrificing his life for the Mahatma's ideals. Corruption, falsehood and violence is the order of the day and to many Bawandas's death marks the ending of Gandhian ideals.<sup>35</sup> However it may be seen as the ultimate sacrifice expected for a Gandhian votary to propagate his ideals. Dr Prashant is city bred and represents the optimistic and enthusiastic youth willing to serve the Indian village to revive it to its self-dependent past. Kamala his love interest supports him in his dream of working in the village and his words and determination prove a source of inspiration for the youth.<sup>36</sup> In many ways Dr Prashant represents the idealist youth whom Gandhi expected to return to the village and work for its revival and redemption from the clutches of illiteracy as well as lures of modernism.

A trend similar to the English novel made an appearance in Hindi novels also. The corrupt practices of many Congressmen pushed some of the Gandhian writers towards Marxism. Nagarjuna was basically a progressive socialist writer known for penning a plethora of regional novels. His initial years reflect Gandhian yearnings as was evident in almost all the compositions of the time. However after independence his writings scathingly attack the power monger Congress ministers and regimes. He never criticized Gandhi but did not hesitate to question the corrupt ways of the

politicians of the time who happened to be mostly Congressmen as incidentally Congress was the only popular political party of the time and whoever wanted to enter politics did it through the Congress. In *Ratinath Ki Chachi* (1948), Taracharan is depicted slowly tilting towards the Socialist Party because he could foresee that post-independence version of Gandhian Swaraj created by the pseudo Gandhi Congressmen would actually be profitable only for the feudal, capitalists and the rich, the poor will have no say in it, and their deploring lifestyle would continue to stay so. *Balachnama* (1952) by Nagarjuna is an autobiographical rural/regional novel in narrative form based in Darbhanga, Bihar. He represents millions of honest, hardworking but exploited peasants of India. It is the journey of Balachnama going through different phases of being a shepherd, an ancestral serf, congress volunteer, agricultural laborer and finally a stranded laborer. Exploited by the Zamindar the family including the women of the family suffer under the animalistic tortures of the landed gentry. Driven by desperation he moves to the city of Patna where he meets Congressmen like Phool Babu who lure him into politics and he gets the chance to live in a Congress Ashram and experiences the false faces of the Congressmen. Living there he comprehends the nexus between the politicians and the landed elite. The business class supported the Congress because it hoped to get freedom to establish their own factories with the coming of Swaraj. The exploitative class of pre-independence India has entered politics and now under the garb of public-service they are once again playing the same ruthless role but ironically after being democratically elected.<sup>37</sup>*Nai Paudh* (1953) describe the new ideology of post-independence India. Bisesari is saved from being married to a sixty year old due to the efforts of Digambar Vachaspati who following Gandhian ideals marries the heroin declaring the victory of 'Nai Paudh.' In *Baba Batesarnath* (1954), the tree propagates the Gandhian ideal of Sarvodaya i.e., 'Welfare of All.' Jaikishen expounds the importance of unity citing the example of the sound produced by night-beetles. Gandhi envisioned a new India reconstructed by the youth and Nagarjuna's novel stressed the same. *Varun Ke Bete* (1957) highlights the plight of the fishermen in

post-independence India. Man and nature had been flourishing in close proximity since ages but the influx of modernization changed it all. The Zamindari Abolition Act tempts the landlords to sell away the fishing lake to outsiders. Since generations the local fishermen had been getting the tenancy right in the fresh water lake but in the name of democracy their traditional right was being abrogated. The protest is led by Mohan Manjhi who had hoped that 'Gar-Pokhar' the water-body, where they catch fish and sell will become a modern scientific center for fishery and all the fishermen will become prosperous but instead it is contracted away to outsiders. Their resistance movement reflects the same strains of complaint as that of the future naxalite movement in the country where the non-empathetic and commercialized government schemes pushed the local tribes towards communism initiating an anti-government revolution.<sup>38</sup> In *Kumbhipak* (1960) Bhuvan and Champa both are prostitutes. Publishers get their books passed by supplying girls to the members of the District Board. Champa in the novel laments that now places like Sewa Ashram, Mahila Ashram and Hitkarini Sabha are mere signboards and centres for groupism and selfish politics. The novel is also one of the early attempts by writers to highlight the superficial and shallow formalities of city-life. Empathy and sympathy both are missing in urban psyche. *Hirak Jayanti* (1962) was a sarcastic composition on the corrupt Congress leaders. Raja Rewati Ranjan Pratap Singh is an erstwhile feudal who has donated his factory premises for the workers union. He has also offered land as part of Vinobha's Bhoodan Movement yet was responsible for the missing of two union leaders. Narpat Narayan Singh, a character in the novel overtly declares it legal for politicians who work so hard for public welfare to take money from public fund. Another Devakinandan Prasad who has always been a Congressman leaves it for Socialist Party because he doesn't see his personal profit in the Congress. Businessman Agrawal has been giving funds to all the political parties irrespective of the ideology. He does so to stay in good books of all the political parties as one never knows which party may form the government in future. Gandhi was very much cognizant of the ugly turn Congressmen may take after getting unabated power in

politics and since 1936 had been writing notes and letters to caution the party volunteers from falling into the quagmire of immoral politics.

According to Jainendra, literature is not composed for the sake of composition but to give direction and hope to mankind, by giving a glimpse of reality it helps in carving out the future. The characters of Jainendra are basically revolutionaries who strive to usher in change but are conscious to maintain a soft demeanor in the process. In *Jaivardhan* (1956) Jainendra revives the root values of Indian tradition and Gandhi is at the core of this indigenous value system. The novel declares state, nation etc., as the products of human imagination because the world cannot be divided through map lines. Nationalism transforms humanism towards the neighboring country into animalistic hatred. It questions the very existence of State because State cannot survive without the use of force and gives voice to the Gandhian concept of Stateless society in which citizens need to be trained in self-discipline then only the distance between the ruled and the ruler would be bridged. To quote Gandhi, "Self-government means, continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."<sup>39</sup> Jaivavardhan, the hero is most detached towards political power symbolizing the Indian spirit that never craves for power but believes the universe to be a family. The Gandhian ideals of nonviolence, sarvodaya and non-dualism are veritably present in the novels of Jainendra. The women characters never fall to vices common to their gender and maintain dignity of behavior in keeping with the exalted status given by Gandhi to the women in his lifetime. Jainendra believed suffering for humanity on the lines of Jesus and Gandhi to be the ideal sacrifice. His characters reflect his beliefs and do not hesitate to offer themselves as sacrifice in the 'havan of life.'<sup>40</sup> Country had recently gained independence and the road to salvation was strewn with hurdles. Progressive and socialist writers like Jainendra attempted to prepare and encourage the countrymen to girdle their belts to face the social, political and economic obstructions they would face in the rejuvenation of India.

The victory of the Capitalistic Block in Second World War had influenced most of the State governments to usher in a culture of science and machines making human life more complicated and difficult. Novelists like Amritlal Nagar took this as a challenge and worked hard to use the literary genre to be a reflection as well as a guide to the society. In his first novel *Mahakaal* (1947) millions of starving Indians became the subject that not only included wailing children, mothers and sisters selling their body for food but also selfish landlords and moneylenders. This famine was generated due to man's selfish greed. Through Panchu the novelist holds on to the beacon of hope the inherent human quality that gives us the will to survive.<sup>41</sup> *Boond Aur Samudra* (1956) sketched the Indian middle class lifestyle engulfed in the urban culture of independent India, exploring the relationship between individual aspirations and societal needs. The city where the storyline comes alive represents the Indian society in general. The novel is a reminder to the progressive individual that in his attempts at modernization and fulfilling his particular aspirations the objective of collective growth of the society cannot be neglected. The inhuman practice of mutual exploitation should be given up. Public welfare and spirituality form the core of humanity, bereft of them, humanity will come to an end. Everyone, in his or her individual capacity, need to contribute for the welfare of society, underlining the Gandhian concept of 'Sarvodaya.' In spite of idealistic differences the human bonding in joy and sorrow should not be abandoned. Ideological difference gives birth to the healthy culture of debate and discourse. It should not scrape the core human sentiment of empathy. Besides a general reference to Gandhian ideals the novel does elucidates some other core values too. Nagar insisted on communal unity and attempted to give a concrete form to Gandhian Cooperative through his characters. Raji asserted the need to promote village cottage industry, making women financially independent through Mahila Ashram. Vankanya represents Gandhian values through her character. She is a progressive woman for whom truth and justice constitute life-values. She does not hesitate to implicate her father in pursuance of truth. She becomes the love interest of the rich Sajjan whose

love deepens and concretizes due to Vankanya's self-restraint. Due to her refusal to submit physically to Sajjan and insistence on spiritual aspect of love she embodies Gandhi's take on love. Sajjan is rich but under the influence of Vankanya sets up a trust as per Gandhian trusteeship. The novelist is also deeply perturbed by the pure political aspirations of Gandhian leaders in post-independence decade. There is a vivid description of a general degradation not only in politics at national level but even at homes where the family relations too suffered at the altar of selfishness. *Amrit Aur Vish* (1966) is the narration of the disillusionment of Indians after winning independence. It is the continuation of the previous theme and elucidates the Indian students' movement, Lucknow politics, generation conflict, communal riots etc.,. It criticizes the Congress for conjoining with the Indian bourgeoisie and becoming a party of the opportunistic capitalistic class thereby widening the gulf between the Congress workers and the commoners. Language riots also marked the backdrop of the novel and Gandhian love for Hindi is emphatically stressed in the composition. The problem of communalism is also touched upon by the novelist who emphatically elucidates its birth in cities followed by its expansion towards the countryside. There are strong statements that secularize the interpretation of History as well as logically rationalize riots. The novel accentuates the significance of individualism but reiterates the Gandhian principle of assimilating societal welfare with individualistic contemplation. In spite of incidents of characters committing suicides due to victimization by the corrupt system both the novels end with a hope and determination to overcome despair and liberate the society of the inertia, poison, darkness and injustice. It is these characteristics that give a Gandhian color to the writings of Amritlal Nagar.<sup>42</sup>

Ilachandra Joshi had started his literary journey as a novelist in pre-independence India but his compositions were primarily psychological and dealt with the struggles, dilemmas and conflicts ailing individual lives leading to the growth of frustrations that remain camouflaged to the sufferer himself. However, post-independence he reached a stage where he synthesized both individualism and society and the result

was *Muktipath*(1950). It is the story of a youth who had been active as a revolutionary in British enslaved India but found himself unemployed and gripped in poverty in independent India. The novel highlights the plight of the educated youth and the futility of an education system that fails to generate employment. Gandhi had way back diagnosed the ineptitude of the modern education in imparting vocation based education for India and his prophecy was proving true. The issue of widow remarriage and women empowerment is also touched upon. Sunanda is quite close to the Gandhian version of an enfranchised woman. Ultimately the Gandhian Bread Labor wins over and Rajeev finds emancipation by turning a barren piece of land into a cultivable habitat for the displaced victims of partition. ‘Mukti Nivesh’ is very closely patterned on Gandhian Ashrams and promotes the ideal of community labour and vocational education. The hero’s love for labor makes him ignore the wife. She being intelligent and educated feels neglected and decides in the end to leave the settlement to search for her own path to salvation. This was the age when the country was going through scarcity of grain while large land stretches were lying barren and the masses in general evaded human labor. The novelist attempts to offer solution to the socio-economic maladies plaguing the nation immediately after independence through co-operative farming and human labor.<sup>43</sup> *Jahaz Ka Panchchi* (1956) is a beautiful synthesis of art as well as social responsibility. It is the story of an educated and accomplished youth trying to earn a decent livelihood. The novel highlights the impasse of the educated who due to the ego of having attained higher education degrees do not accept menial jobs as vocation and rather continue to live off the street. The ideological struggle between the congress and the communists also gets reflected in the storyline. The novel takes the reader to different facets of Indian society, the high and the low and the rich and the poor exist abreast of each other yet there is no interaction on humanitarian level. The rich because of self pride suffer inner barrenness while the poor despite lacking basic amenities of life live it to the fullest with grit and determination. The hero’s desire to feel burdened with the presence of money is reminiscent of Gandhian vow of volunteer poverty and abstinence. Despite

illustrating various kinds of maladies and contradictions rampant in the society the novel does end on an optimistic note giving voice to the Gandhian concept of educated youth contributing wholeheartedly to the reconstruction of Indian society.<sup>44</sup>

Udaishankar Bhatt is a versatile writer who primarily penned in humanitarian strain. Believing in purposeful composition he wrote *Sagar, Lehrein aur Manushya* (1956), an illustration of the life of the fishing community living in Varsova. Untouched by the constraints of a civilized world the novel narrates their simple lifestyle painted on the canvas of joy and sorrow. Their value system is indigenously matriarchal and void of any exploitative traditions pertaining to women and according to Gandhi representing “the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.”<sup>45</sup> Proximity to Bombay lures Ratna to the pitfalls of modern education and western definition of development. She desires eternal youth, luxury, and modern amenities of urban life. She demeans the life of her ancestors calling them backward ultimately leaving her lover and community for Bombay. In the city she receives deception and abuse in every relationship she forges, however at the end she does receive stability in life through Dr Pairang. *Lok Parlok* (1958) by the same author is a vivid description of the monetary and sexual corruption that has seeped in centers of pilgrimages in independent India. The village on the Ganges is just like any other pilgrimage site replete with worshipers from every class, offering flowers, coconut and cash. After the offering it is divided between those who administer the temple and only shredded petals of red and stale flowers are left for the gods. At the time of ‘prasad’ dogs and humans make a common line for temple food. Chameli the female protagonist is sexually abused by the Brahmanic Priest, the landlord, the moneylender and many more consequently she is pushed into theft and prostitution. However by the end she repents and understands her folly representing a ray of hope for those in similar circumstances.<sup>46</sup>

Another writer of the era was Upendranath ‘Ashq.’ In 1947 came the autobiographical *Girti Deewarein*, mouthpiece of the poverty and sexual frustration

of lower middle class India. Redundant rituals and beliefs, class differences and capitalist exploitation find expression through the experiences of the hero Chetan in pre-independence India. The novel voices the aggravation of the protagonist both monetary as well as sexual. The novel may be termed as a precursor of the novels expressing similar themes in future years. The attempt is to break the walls and let go of both the inequalities and innate frustrations. The narrative is carried forward through the emotions of ego, love and hatred surging in the life of the hero Chetan. Though written in a very crucial phase of country's political history, the life of the hero remains unaffected by the freedom movement gripping the nation. Chetan attends the 1929 session of the Congress in Lahore but is impassive to the call for Purna Swaraj. He represents that section of India which was so engrossed in their personal life and escapades that they remained unruffled with political happenings around them. Next is *Shahar Mein Ghoomta Hua Aaina* (1963) the second part of the previous novel wherein the stories revolve around the lives and tribulations of different characters living in Chetan's residential colony. Lack of education, culture, money, jobs gives birth to mental illness which is quite popular in the low income group residents. The three goons introduced to the readers in the middle part of the novel are the products of the unfair customs in the society that create ant-social elements. Lala Bansiram is a caricature of the post-independence Gandhi followers who imitate Gandhi physically but are bereft of his thought and values.<sup>47</sup>

Yashpal belongs to the school of writers who compose novels not for pastime but as weapons to fight against social evils and reactionary concepts. In spite of being labeled as a Marxist Yashpal depicts Gandhian ideals of class harmony and change of heart through his characters. In *Jhootha Sach* (1958-60), a saga of thirteen hundred pages Yashpal gave an extremely vivid description of the pain of displacement and the resulting communal hatred as the aftermath of partition. It gives an account of the country's political and social milieu from 1946-58 covering both the pre and post independence period. It starts with the fear and chaos of partition and ends with a shattered and shocking silence generated from the bitter realities of independent India

where intellectuals like Yashpal found themselves helpless and lost.<sup>48</sup> The conscious disintegration of values started immediately after the independence celebrations. Sliding of core moral codes, diplomatic tactics, underhand ways of social reformers, nude processions of Indian feminists, exploitation of hardworking people, exodus of talented youngsters, add to the zeitgeist of the novel.<sup>49</sup> The gradually deteriorating family value system can be witnessed through the lives of Kanak, Sheelo and Tara. Incompatibility and passivity and inconsistency in marital love lead to parting of ways. The marriage of Kanak and Jayadev echo the above condition. However there are characters that keep holding on to the old values. Tara, in spite of being victimized by an abusive husband resists a formal divorce due to her family values but when Somraj continues with his venomous attitude she leaves him. The novel is a saga of India experiencing a transition in its core value system reflected blatantly by the novelist.

Bhagwaticharan Verma had been writing since pre-independence years and his works did reflect the struggles both individual as well as societal during the freedom movement. Post-Independence brought a plethora of issues that seeped in the writings of the sensitive and observant writers. In *Samarth Aur Seema* (1962) Verma has emphatically emphasized the fundamental truth that man is slave to his circumstances still he should attempt a synthesis of his individual needs with the wants of the society and herein lays the Gandhian approach that vouched the same ideology i.e., a fair blending of the individual and the society. Verma is a fatalist as well as a naturalist. He believes in the omnipotence of nature which is beyond all human understanding. Man should live in harmony with nature because if it gets imbalanced then neither science nor technology can save humanity from destruction. It voices the modern age frustration, helplessness and despair that engulfs people from all class and background. The modern man represented by the scientists, engineers, capitalists, journalists, writers, artists and princes come together to reconstruct and modify nature. Under the sway of ego and self pride they reject God and his power and dare to conquer nature but ultimately suffer death and destruction. The novel gives the

message of environment sustainability and admonishes man not to abandon respecting the laws of nature. The novel is also a socio-political fiction and vigorously and sarcastically criticizes the corrupt politician, the shallow system and the flawed planning commissions proudly showcased in post-1947 India while persistently targeting the unrestrained endeavor of communist ideology to engulf Indian political and social system.<sup>50</sup>

Amongst the lesser known works is *Paani Ke Prachir* (1961) by Ramdarash Mishra, the story of the struggle of the people of Pandepurva a village between the rivers Rapti and Gorra in Gorakhpur district which gets flooded in the process of Nehruvian development symbolized by dams and river projects. Besides, it also voices the politicization of schools and colleges, the law courts, Panchayats and elections although it is still the early sixties. The character of Neeru is portrayed as that of a progressive individual who wants nation's freedom yet does not wish to leave the Landlord's job. He attempts a middle path between values and desire but ultimately realizes the infallibility of values and pledges to conscientiously take up the path of Gandhian idealism in spite of being engulfed by lies and fallacies in post-independence India.<sup>51</sup>

Communism had become a veritable ideology in India even before the country's independence. The socio-economic milieu of India was most suitable and vulnerable for the growth of Marxism yet ironically the school of thought could not create a wider base amongst the Indian populace. The reason could be traced in Gandhi's words "Rank atheism could never flourish in India...India could never be without God." Earlier Nagarjuna and Yashpal too had been identified as socialist writers but their tone had not been aimed at discrediting Gandhi. Still the hopeful continued to hope and the writings of Amrit Rai voice the communist aspiration. *Beej* (1955) the first novel of Amrit Rai was reviewed as the veritable mouth piece of Marxist ideology by literary critics. The novel announced Russian communism to be the only panacea to all Indian problems with no hope whatsoever from 'old Gandhi.' Such works did not denounce the Gandhian way because it was still too soon to reject

Gandhi outright however a more subtle path was adopted by declaring him musty and outdated.

The Years of Hope offer us a mixed bag. Gandhi was no more present physically but the men and women who had worked with him, under him, had written to him, attended his gatherings and moreover breathed in his times were still alive. Many works were still reminiscent of the Gandhian freedom movement reminding the readers of the trials and tribulations of the period and symbolizing the love and unity of pre-independence India. Some of the writers in the period under study may have started questioning his ideals especially due to the partition and riots that challenged two of his most asseverated values secularism and non-violence yet the retention of their faith in his intentions stood resilient. The plight of the agrarian community continued to be the popular canvas but issues of urban migration, unemployment, materialistic aspirations of the lower middle class and rise in corruption in politics also got due attention. Marxism was definitely at work due to Nehru's tilt for socialism but the basic nature of Gandhian dream of ending untouchability, women equality, world peace, philanthropy, welfare of all etc., received impetus theoretically although the ground reality was greased with doubt and greed. The government launched numerous schemes to pragmatise Gandhi but his image as well as his philosophy had started blurring and the same got reflected in the writings of the age.

An appropriate conclusion would be the following remarks on Gandhi by Dr Radhakrishnan, "This lonely symbol of a vanishing past is also the prophet of the new world which is struggling to be born. He veraciously represents the conscience of the future man."<sup>52</sup>

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# **CHAPTER - 4**

## **Gandhi in Years of Bafflement**

**1964-1980**

**Chapter 4**

**Gandhi in Years of Bafflement 1964-1980**

A popular State can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed. Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious, will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi

Nehru had refused to name a successor and the decision suffices his claim as a legitimate successor to Gandhian India. Lal Bahadur Shastri was chosen as the next prime minister whose tenure of nineteen months witnessed, the launching of green revolution, setting up the PMO, criticizing the US for bombing North Vietnam and repelling the Pakistani attempt of infiltrating the Kashmir valley. Shastri was Gandhian not only in his attire but also in his acts. Shastri's consent to sign the Tashkent Agreement and with drawl of India from strategic passes in the valley<sup>2</sup> which would have ended all possibility of future attacks echoed the Gandhian penchant for peace over war. Another take on Gandhian 'Ahimsa' was the peace talk between Naga rebels and government of India and Shastri's speech rejecting the suggestion of few right wing MPs to make India a nuclear power. Unfortunately the latter's untimely death renewed the search for a successor. The selfish intentions of the Congress Syndicate led to the election of Nehru's daughter as the Prime Minister.<sup>3</sup> The decision initiated a new era in the History of India and its people. Country had just come out of wars with its two neighbors and was facing inflation, scarcity of food grains, down slide in exports as well as foreign capital. People supported by left and right wing political parties started demonstrating on roads and organizing 'Bandhs' which would often result in violent incidents and use of force by the State. Soon the Mizo revolted under Laldenga where the Indian State for the first time used air strikes on civilian population.<sup>4</sup> Tagged as 'Gungi Gudiya' by Rammanohar Lohiya<sup>5</sup> Mrs Indira Gandhi faced the first anti-cow slaughter agitation, end of parliamentary decorum and loss of mass popularity due to rise in corruption in Congress party members. The election of 1967 proved that the Congress had lost

much of its charisma with the voters. The results introduced the age of coalition governments in India. This change came with its teething troubles one of which was party defection and horse trading. Amidst all the clamor of anti-congressism Mrs Gandhi got the opportunity to strengthen her say within the party as most of the senior members of the Congress syndicate had lost the elections. A major episode was the birth of Naxalite movement in North West Bengal alleging rise in fascism, neo-imperialism and pro feudalism.<sup>6</sup> The movement was supported by China which lost its momentum in post Mao era. While Mrs Gandhi was busy establishing herself within the party as well as outside, rank corruption, black money and hoarding grew rampantly. Gradually Gandhian fears started turning true with politics becoming a haven for people desirous of power and prestige. To clean the image of the party and establish herself as a people's leader like her father the Prime Minister introduced her ten point radical program laced with Nehruvian socialism of nationalization and State orchestrated trade, land reforms and end of princely privileges. Congress party was split and the country went ahead with elections. Mrs. Gandhi portrayed herself as the representative of the poor and middle class and gave the slogan 'Garibi Hatao.'<sup>7</sup> Congress (R) won in majority, the nation had approved of Nehru's daughter. Congress became synonymous of Indira and vice versa. December 1971 added a new dimension to the aura of Mrs Gandhi and she became the veritable embodiment of goddess Durga and Shakti for the Indian masses when the country won the Bangladesh War.<sup>8</sup> Indian armed forces had trained the Bengali insurgents in guerrilla warfare justifying the atrocities of the Pakistani Army and refugee influx in India. The victory whetted the nation's appetite for chauvinism and glory. It seems to have compensated the loss of Pakistan, the defeat by China and the Tashkent agreement. The annexation of Sikkim was another blot on the India of Gandhi's dreams.<sup>9</sup> The event marked a gradual shift from Gandhian non-violence in foreign affairs in turn influencing the national mood which too snugly stopped remembering Gandhi. Was it guilt or a way to rationalize the wrong, we may never reach a consensus. The opening of rural branches by nationalized banks, distribution of surplus land to the landless

and the successful testing of atomic energy in 1974, qualified Indira to ride on boisterously towards the emergency years. Coming to the subaltern narration, the country was on the verge of celebrating twenty-five years of independence yet no change had come at the grass root level. It was as though only the names and skin of the colonial exploitative rulers had changed while the methods of bleeding the people to death had been definitely improvised. In spite of the rise in industrial and agricultural growth the number of poor in the country was growing speedily. Millions still struggled for bread, clothes and shelter. The anger of the people gushed out in form of strikes led by government employees and student leaders against corrupt practices of the bureaucracy as well as politicians. Even the PM's house was not spared of allegations especially the highhanded ways of her son Sanjay Gandhi and the government interfering in appointment of the judiciary. The movement gained momentum under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narain a veteran freedom fighter and a Congressman who had stayed away from accepting post in the cabinet instead devoted to finding a peaceful solution to the tribal secessionists, Kashmir separatists and Chambal dacoits. His 'Total Revolution' aimed to bring about the kind of 'party less democracy' Gandhi had envisaged in his lifetime. The State used lathis and bullets to silence the resistance. Bihar agitation brought the autocratic aspect of Mrs Gandhi's regime. Gujarat elections and the bid of the opposition to 'gherao' her and force her resignation, triggered the Prime Minister to declare emergency. On 26<sup>th</sup> morning June 1975 Mrs Gandhi addressed the nation through All India Radio and informed the people of the development and the reasons for the decision. The dissidents were put in jails and house arrest and the civil liberties of the citizens were suspended. Press was placed under State censorship.<sup>10</sup> To cover up this rape of democracy a twenty point program for economic progress was introduced which was augmented by a five point program by the PMs son Sanjay. He was given a free hand in Delhi where slums were razed down and forced sterilization was imposed on the poor, especially the Dalits and Muslims. The liberty granted to the son sounded the death knell of emergency.<sup>11</sup> Mrs Gandhi had gone too far. She centralized the

Congress structure, paid no heed to the opposition and promoted nepotism over country. International media too criticized the functioning of the government as absolute. In 1977 fresh elections were announced in which the Janata Party won and formed the first ever non Congress government in India. Regrettably the selfish interest of the leaders as well as increased incidences of Dalit attacks led to the downfall of the Janata regime and re-election of Mrs Gandhi in 1980. She won not because of her promise of removing poverty but to give a stable government. The people of India had wistfully realized that their socio-economic problems were too convoluted to be solved but at least a strong government will keep them safe and breathing.

Thus the process of digressing that had started in the previous age was completed in the ensuing years tagged as the years of bafflement in the present study. At the crowning it was clear that all those values that had gone into the making of different political parties in India had become extinct. The pain and plight of the common man was totally forgotten by the politicians. People were treated as cattle to be befooled and used only at the time of elections. In the preceding years there still existed some hope for the redemption of both the politicians as well as the poor but now that too was extinguished with a confounding darkness engulfing all. Due to centuries old philosophical insistence on the tradition of asceticism, fatalism and the intrinsic Indian will to survive, the masses could handle poverty but now the extensive dishonesty, nepotism and coercion took away the very vitality of the people. The dream of recreating India was shattered to the core. Population exploded and unemployment was on rise. Deserving got left out while the worthless enjoyed the fruits of freedom. This new undeserving class shook and shattered the age old value system. Inflation, corruption, casteism, regionalism, communalism as well as individualistic narrowness became rampant everywhere. A plethora of disputes came up that had never been so in the past in a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious country like ours. These were born to feed and divert the vacant minds and hearts of millions of Indians. Minor incidents of ewe teasing and neighborhood brawls turned into

communal riots. The politicians started encasing the insecurity of the minorities. Caste and religion entered the gamut of elections. The heroes suffered and became bereft of any hope, value or faith. Corrupt politicians turned politics into business deals and fought each other for the chair. Lying under oath and committing perjury turned into a profession. Law courts and judiciary became dark spots in the annals of Indian justice system. The value system became contextual. Man lost faith on society, judiciary and religion. Gandhi's Ram Rajya started turning into Ravana Rajya. The phase was marked by a conscious distancing from the Gandhian orbit of thought. If Gandhi could not be obviated by writers, he could at least be obfuscated. If he couldn't be obliterated from the Indian psyche, there was no need to keep him in the foreground of action at least. If he couldn't be lionized, he could at least be projected as being ineffectual. Several works of fiction structured around the Gandhian concepts of life were penned that projected Gandhi's ideology untenable, unctuous or at least being insufficient and out of sync with the times.

Literature especially novel was born for the purpose of reform. It had aimed for moral development and protection of traditional value system. Till 50s the novels suggested solutions for some or the other socio-economic malady afflicting the country. Equality for class and gender were established theoretically but exploitation did not stop. It continued unabated but the means underwent a transformation and became more subtle. By 70s it came to be widely accepted that the values for which the nation's war for independence was fought will never be achieved. The Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi gave the call for removing poverty and suddenly having less money became an object of shame and insult. She surged in with her authoritarianism and became the protagonist for many a work of fiction. The period could be referred as a 'gestation' period for what was to follow.<sup>12</sup> In the age under study individualistic novels dealing with quest for identity, personal agony, marital equations, frustrations and dilemma, termed as psychological and existential became more prevalent. It was definitely safer also given the contemporary political turmoil. State had become more coercive towards literature daring to criticize or question its

policies. Corruption that had existed in certain pockets of government departments as well as professions now became omnipresent. It had now trickled down from power mongers to the plebeian following the downward filtration theory. The country was at loss and in utter chaos.

### ***Novels in English***

Warnings of the west trying to enslave the east through their technical superiority were given by novelists like Kamala Markandeya through their fictional works like *The Coffer Dams* (1969). The bountiful river provides for the simple and scant needs of the tribal and they uphold it in awe. In *Pleasure City* (1982) the backdrop is replaced by a village on the sea shore and narrates the struggle for sustenance. The Gandhian principle of limiting the wants is beautifully expressed in the meager but blissful existence of the tribal and fishing communities. Giving words to his thoughts on the subject Gandhi had said, “Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment.”<sup>13</sup> In spite of a gap of more than a decade both the novels narrate the conflict between the western model of development adopted by India in post-independence and the traditional habitation practices of the indigenous population. In *The Coffers Dam*, Clinton and Mackendrick Co. come with tonnes of equipment to build coffer dams by taming the turbulent river and use the natural resource to boost industrialization in the area. Similarly in *Pleasure City* the Atlas International Development Corporation comes to build a holiday resort offering hospitality services of global standards to promote the tourism sector in India. Although it is not direct colonization yet such practices are intrusive and are an echo of the past when foreign trading companies entered as mercantile traders in the economics of the Indian subcontinent gradually becoming our lords and paramount powers.<sup>14</sup> The novels represent the spurt in State policy in the period under study of leasing out regions rich in natural resources to Multi National Companies to harness the mineral wealth of the country. Although the State

had guaranteed rehabilitation to the affected population but the promises proved false. It was the adoption of such exploitative and deceitful schemes by the democratic government of India that sowed the seed of naxalite movement in the country. In *A Handful of Rice* (1966) the novelist compares the urban milieu to the jungle where there is a struggle against employment, poverty and despair for the rural educated youth migrating to the cities.<sup>15</sup> The novel is a comment on the gradual loss of human and vocational value in the modern education being imparted in independent India. Gandhian warnings against starvation, hunger and non-existence of jobs in villages and the resulting migration unbalancing the employability capability of the urban centers prove proverbial. The novel is also a morality tale. The hero Ravi is incessantly struggling to lead a life stringed with human values of truth and integrity and towards the end comes out successful-the human in him overcomes the animalistic man.

The phase is also marked with the plot of the novel moving from the outward gross realities to inward complexities and psyche of the characters. Anita Desai recorded the dilemma faced by the individuals in the Indian urban set-up. Her novels *Voices in the City* (1965) and *Cry the Peacock* (1963) is concerned with the dissonance and disharmony caused by imbalances in familial ties and marital relationships. While others devoted themselves to the physical metamorphosis of the post-independence society Desai focused on the inner or the psychic aspect of the human existence. Her novels are not political or sociological but expose the labyrinth of human mind. Maya the heroine in *Cry the Peacock* is a demanding wife who suffers with loneliness and ‘a strong streak of neurotic fantasy’<sup>16</sup> and falls into depression to the extent of murdering her husband. The female protagonist represents the idle and redundant lifestyle of the rich Indian house wives tethering towards boredom and depression and the inability of the husbands to read the writing on the wall due to his unabated pursuance of materialistic needs. The situation is definitely worsened by the mercenary attitude of the mother-in-law engaged in social work which has been included to give a glimpse of the slow poison of corruption seeping in the non-

government organizations in the country. Maya represents the abandoned self, the alienated soul desperately searching for an anchor. On a broader gamut the despair and desolation of Maya could be an allegory of the Indian soul defeated and dejected after the Sino-India War. Rationalism has never really worked well with Indian psyche, it always longs for the emotional which could only be furnished by spiritual men like Gandhi. Maya by the end of the novel becomes so alienated that she turns into a mental wreck which could be seen as a premonition for the country as a whole after its estrangement from indigenous Gandhian traditions. *Voices in the City* depicts the corrosive effect of city life on the Indian family along with the changing social values. Both the mother and daughter are victims of ill-matched marriages. The daughter Monisha commits suicide while the mother ends up having an extra-marital affair. The son Nirodh dabbles in numerous vocations but ends up failing in all portraying the defective education system of India.<sup>17</sup> The novels depict the alienation of the modern man. Existentialism is the bane of all isolation. However in *Clear Light of the Day* (1980) the protagonists seem to have realized that life is about accepting things and family life is true bliss and irreplaceable.<sup>18</sup> Bim was brought up in a middle class Hindu family up-keeping a pretentious social status and late night poker parties. Although a 'stream of consciousness' novel the plot does touch upon the outside by means of 1947 communal riots, the exodus of Muslims from Delhi and the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Through Aunt Mira the pain and plight of child brides and widows is explicitly depicted. Raja's desire to pursue Islamic Studies is discouraged by his father. Bim harbors certain past incidents with her family members as grudges in her mindset across the sea of time but approaching the end realizes the oneness of all and forgives everyone under the surge of maternal affection. Forgiveness, sacrifice and maternal affection, the true essence of Indian womanhood as enunciated by Gandhi are beautifully portrayed by Anita Desai in the novel.<sup>19</sup>

In *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) Nayantara Sahgal is concerned with an India which is bewildered in its retreat from Gandhian values. Men like Gyan Singh and Inder, who are sheer opportunists and have a general disdain for humanity are able to draw out a

following while people like Harpal and Vishal who dare to take a stand against injustice, find themselves alone and isolated in the fight. There is a lamentation for the Gandhian era of peace, truth and self-respect where every act was performed overtly under the clear light of the sun. Through the words of Vishal Dubey the novelist laments the end of Gandhian ideals in politics where fearlessness, integrity, transparency reigned supreme. The novel narrates the carving of the state of Haryana from Punjab, the ensuing violence and the dispute for the capital. Simultaneously it also recounts the marital tension between couples due to lack of truthfulness and selfless sacrifice in the relationship. Inder symbolizes the male chauvinist who has no qualms about using violence against women. Saroj recognizing her inner strength finally stands up against the injustice and leaves the husband. The novel propounds the Gandhian principle of taking stand for one's values both at personal and societal level and leading a life without pretense. In each successive novel the retreat from Gandhian ideals in the contemporary political situation seems to be more final. In *The Day in Shadow* (1971) it all boils down to the fact that it is the people in politics who actually want to bury Gandhian liberalism and humanism by tagging it weak and worn-out because it was proving to be a hurdle in their pursuit of absolute power and wealth. Gandhi had cautioned the Congressmen against the lure of personal gain and counselled them to be "selfless, able and incorruptible."<sup>20</sup> In the novel Sumer Singh a member of the ruling party professes socialism superficially but suffers no qualms in harnessing his father's property. In contrast is the ailing Petroleum Minister worrying about the nation even in his hospital bed. The official policy is inclined towards a Soviet alliance and is inconsiderate and unscrupulous towards the country's welfare. The Gandhian attitude is represented through Raj Garg who can foresee the threat to country's democracy and moral values. The need for re-evaluating the reasons for the slackening of Gandhian values in post-independence India is expressed through Raj who feels that people had actually followed Gandhi and not his ideas therefore the need of the hour is to concretize and pragmatize his values. A sad realization is that Gandhi is losing his predominance in the land in his 'janma' as well as 'karma

bhoomi' whereas the West whose cultural ethos he had criticized so vehemently continues to apotheosize him. In *A Situation in Delhi* (1977) Nayantara bemoans the change that the new breed of politicians is seeping into the Indian political system that did not respect the past. She writes, "The rulers who do not understand our history go terribly wrong and even grotesque in judgement and action."<sup>21</sup> The Cabinet ministers in the novel are full of empty talk but have nothing in common with the masses. Their radicalism is sterile and yields no positive result. An attempt is made to usher in change and give a direction to the rudderless youth by improvising the education system but that too fails. The discontented youth join the Marxist inspired naxalite movement which too goes array and disorganized with violence. Rashid the young protagonist is a victim to it. With Priya's love and understanding he does realize the importance of non-violence but is too late to save himself from the jaws of death. The character of young Priya is replete with compassion, courage, understanding, patience, and integrity believing in the Gandhian aphorism of 'Be the Change.' The novel also lampoons the social life of the elites laced with concerts, party, dance, music, gossips, and amorous relationships. The novel succeeds in recreating the leadership vacuum that was generated in Indian politics after the sudden demise of Nehru.<sup>22</sup> The panacea suggested is going back to the roots and draw inspiration from India's rich heritage. The novel reiterates non-violence as the only means to gain allegiance as well as success in any revolution against injustice. Gandhian values have not outlived their utility in fact they are of greater relevance in modern day context. Usman, in the novel represents the Gandhian detachment from power and greed and the ardent pledge towards peaceful coexistence.<sup>23</sup> His character attempts to conceive a Gandhian communism alloyed with chthonic Indian values and tradition rather than blind imitation of the Soviet model. Decentralization and Panchayati Raj are the means to keep Gandhi alive and not mere sycophancy.

The novels of Arun Joshi showcase the rootless and meaningless aspect of human existence that had seeped in the Indian ethos after independence. The biggest bane of this highly urbanized and industrialized life is that it has dehumanized mankind. Life

lost its meaning its purpose and objective. *The Foreigner* (1968) is the story of an Indian of mixed parentage born and raised in the west in search of the 'self.' After numerous escapades pertaining to love and livelihood he returns to India and finds refuge in terrestrial detachment and service to others epitomizing the Gandhian call to the youth in the following words, "I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying the balm for the wounded soul of India."<sup>24</sup> *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) is the story of Bimal a product of upper middle class anglicized upbringing in post-independence India. During his growing years Bimal becomes disillusioned with the so-called sophisticated society of America as well as India. He feels tied up with the stifling system of expectations and phony materialism. He soon starts losing grip on reality and decides to leave the settled society for a tribal living in the lap of nature. When finally found after ten years he is full of vitality and glowing with spiritual self.<sup>25</sup> The novel also gives the message that the primitive life of the noble savage was definitely better than the nuances of modern day civilization. Billy rejects his western education, marriage and a respectable job in the University to gain mental and spiritual peace and tranquillity. He chooses to live in the forest as a 'refugee from civilization.' *The Apprentice* (1974) by Arun Joshi is an exposition of corruption of both an individual and the post-independence Indian society. It is the story of the fall of Ratan Rathor, the son of a Gandhi revolutionary whose father had sacrificed his life during the freedom struggle while the son sanctioned substandard military equipment that led to the country's defeat in Indo-China War. It is not the downfall of an individual but a nation as a whole that has resulted in this degradation.<sup>26</sup> Joshi laments the replacement of British slavery with new slavery of Indian politicians, officials and swindlers. The novel reflecting the true Gandhian strain ends with a ray of hope with the protagonist going through the downfall to understand the true meaning and purpose of life.

The novel *Children of God* (1972) by Shanta Rameshwar Rao narrates the plight of the untouchable downtrodden after three decades of India's independence in spite of the Harijan upliftment programs of Gandhi and the constitutional laws. The novel is a

lamentation of Lachhi the mother of Kitu whose son was killed by the high caste Hindu men for daring to challenge traditions in spite of legal abolition of untouchability in democratic India. The young Kittu is burnt alive because he dared to wear white clothes, enter a temple and break the discriminatory tradition. The novel also portrays the debased and mercenary attitude of the different political parties who do their best to exploit the young boy's death for their political interest. The varied responses prove the hypocrisy rampant in the society. Similarly the press foregoing any kind of sympathy for the bereaved mother too try to get maximum coverage and content for the newspapers. The whole incident sends the mother on a journey to relive those scattered episodes from her past where she had heard and read about Gandhi. As a young girl she had witnessed as well as participated in the Dalit rights movement by Gandhi though she admits many from her community failed to comprehend the significance of it all and passively accepted their fate. In spite of the services rendered by Gandhi for the oppressed community, his stand against reservation and his acceptance of the varna system was misunderstood by many Dalits as well as their leaders due to which in post-independence India Gandhi was neglected by many Dalit groups. The novelist tries hard to defend Gandhi and his constructive program for the emancipation of Dalits in India. Lachi in spite of losing her son to the caste struggle continues to harbor the faith in the enduring value of Gandhian equality and brotherhood.<sup>27</sup>

*Comrade Kirillov* (1976) by Raja Rao mirrors the novelist endogenous debate on the efficacy of Gandhian non-violence and celibacy especially in the seventies when most of the country's intellectuals found themselves disoriented and obscured with the happenings not only within India but also outside. It is the story of a south Indian converting to communism although in his heart he still holds a veritable faith on Mahatma. In his book the protagonist is fiercely against Gandhism declaring non-violence to be a biological lie and Gandhi as the biggest enemy in the Marxian dream of creating a classless society in India. He calls Gandhi a kleptomaniac and an immature adult who bizarrely linked sex with theology. Kirillov through his speeches

and writings professes a disdainful and contemptuous attitude towards him. Time and again he affirms his unflinching faith in communism. However he is not happy at heart and pines for an indigenously Indian philosophical system.<sup>28</sup> Therefore in spite of this attitude the novel at a deeper reflection is actually a criticism and a suitable reply to the surge in communist tendencies in Post-Independence India. Incidentally this slant was also reflected in many of the compositions of the time which strongly discussed and compared the two ideologies. Raja Rao has attempted to highlight the depredations associated with communism in Indian context like chaos and anarchy as was the case in 30s Russia. Padmanabh has a friend S who in spite of starting out as a communist turns to Gandhian values of service in times of war and finally loses his life in rescue operations. This character though small is in contradiction to P metamorphosing from a cynic to the embodiment of unselfish love whereas Kirillov's belief in communism is simply pretensions.<sup>29</sup> Thus Raja Rao in his philosophical journey from *Kanthapura* to *Comrade Kirillov* covering both the pre and post independence periods of Indian independence gets into the metaphysical discourse of Indian essence with Gandhi as its core element. In spite of numerous decades and ups and downs of the efficacy of Gandhian philosophy his faith in the latter as the panacea for India remained the same.

*A Dream in Hawaii* (1978) by Bhabani Bhattacharya is an articulate mouthpiece of the Gandhian views on sexuality and technology and portrays the timeless efficacy of the Mahatma's ideals for the novelist. Philosopher turned Sage, the protagonist Swami Yogananda appears as a mini-Gandhi in seventies India. Like Gandhi he wants to serve mankind, open an Ashram and is an ardent believer in purification through fasting and bread labor. On going to Hawaii he gets the opportunity to study the western society at closer proximity and make a comparative analysis of the same. Swami Yogananda does not mince words to condemn the acute craving of the western world for sexual satiety calling it a means for experiencing thrills that stimulates crimes like rapes, abuse and incest. Societies with high degree of sexual permissiveness suffer with moral laxity that lead to a general degradation of the

nations at large. Similarly the novelist through various characters criticizes the extensive dependence of the western nations on machines and technology. For Swamiji technology should be used only as a means to meet the human need for food and health, anything beyond that is detrimental for both mankind as well as nature. The protagonist also indulges in spiritual and metaphysical discourse on Upanishads and Gita like Gandhi proclaiming the two to be the veritable source for the perfect art of living. Capitalism and mercantilism of the West too gets ridiculed and lampooned by the author whose tone is decidedly anti-materialistic. The novel is essentially a treatise on east-west encounter yet does not hesitate to highlight the Indian weakness for aping the west as well as repressed sexual urges.<sup>30</sup> To a critic the character of the Swami juxtaposed between sexuality and spirituality in seventies India would be a reminiscent of Gandhi struggling till late with his sexual urges. The years in which the novel was composed witnessed a rush of sexual freedom worldwide in form of hippie movement with the east reacting to it in way of god-men promoting free sex as a means of salvation and setting up Ashrams in America. Bhabani's work serves as an antithesis to this surge with Swami Yogananda created as Bhabani's version of Mahatma Gandhi voicing the same precepts but in a more pragmatic manner.

*Dusk Before Dawn* (1978) by Anant Gopal Sheorey an ardent Gandhian and a newspaperman by profession. The novel with autobiographical elements is set in post-independence India after the shameful debacle of emergency had marred the history of democracy in the country. In spite of the autocratic crackdown by the State the novel has an optimistic approach and indomitable faith in the concept of democracy. The episode of emergency had once again proved true Gandhian words when he had advocated that the congress party should dissolve itself after independence otherwise the lure of power would make it digress from its original path of serving the society and being the leading and oldest political party will be responsible for setting up the precedence of corruption in Indian politics. Thus the primary objective of the novelist appears to propagate Gandhian values as well as challenge the delusion that Gandhi and his philosophy has become both obscure as

well as redundant in modern India. It is the story of a journalist Dhananjay who is an avid Gandhian and uses his writing skill to awaken the masses towards true freedom and save them from the path of aberration. Gandhi was very much aware of the perils of journalism, both inward as well as external pressures, but still considered it a selfless means of serving Truth to the society. In the novel Dhananjay comes in contact with the Congress party members and is shocked to witness their corrupt and morally bankrupt lives. The novel vividly describes the way Congress leaders did nothing to stop the entry of 'goondas' in the party simply to establish its monopoly in Indian politics. Dhananjay has infinite faith on the Gandhian method of transforming the soul of the exploiter and treads the path of peace and dialogue in spite of the hardships and humiliation. Better sense prevails and the chief minister sends a representative for talk however the proposal is against his values and he declines to accept them. Dhananjay continues his struggle for the right cause in spite of the antagonist atmosphere with an unflinching faith on the efficacy of Gandhian values to build a new India based on Gandhi's 'Ram Rajya.'<sup>31</sup>

### ***Novels in Hindi***

Kamleshwar as a writer wanted to represent the struggles and despair of the subjugated and the vanquished. The disillusionment of the lower middle class in the late 60s and 70s constituted the crux of his writings. Influenced by Marxism his novels gave word to the voiceless sections of the society. An unflinching faith on life amidst rank corruption, desire, pseudo-reforms became the subject matter of his novels. *Samudra Mein Khoya hua Aadmi* (1965) successfully portrays the disparity that had spread across all aspects of Indian life. The main plot of the novel is the story of the breakdown and scattering of the lower middle class. Always suffering with insecurity and ambiguity, the lower middle class disintegrates under the glitter of mechanized civilization of the cities. The truth of the age has been portrayed in a very comprehensive manner in the novel. The crowd, chaos, loneliness, freakiness, suffocation, dampness, struggle, absurdity, changing social, family and personal

relations, insecurity and futility of city life also gets represented. This novel is symbolic in which the dwelling place is represented by the ship while the sea epitomizes the society. The theme coincides with the Gandhian theory of individual and the society. The Mahatma believed in individualistic rights and freedom of the people but since individuals do not exist in isolation and make up the society they need to synthesize their aspirations for the common good aimed at the welfare of all. In *Wahi Baat* (1972) the novelist through the tug of will between an ambitious husband and his repressed wife has explained the significance of inner joy over external happiness. The novel overlaps the personal as well as social values of the time both vertically and horizontally. Prashant a city bred Chief Engineer prepares the blueprint of a dam sitting inside his office. His work keeps him busy and the wife feels bored and neglected. The Assistant Engineer is a tribal Nakul who faces the glitches in implementing the plan. The State policies fail due to ignorance and faulty planning and the rural get displaced without the promised compensation. There is a subtle hint to the roots of naxalite movement in tribal areas of India. Meanwhile the wife leaves Prashant who becomes too engrossed to start a side business and marries Nakul but after some time the same limitations mar their marriage also. Ultimately it is Prashant's counselling that saves the marriage. For Gandhi marriage was a sacred sacrament where woman is to be treated as an equal and companion of man with equal rights of liberty and freedom.<sup>32</sup> The novel however kaleidoscopes the changing value system of India and cautions the readers of the new scenario.<sup>33</sup>

*Kaali Aandhi* (1974) by Kamleshwar is an important composition as a political novel. It presents three ideological discourses for its readers. First is making the common man aware of the rampant corruption, debauchery, opportunism, deception, fraud, hooliganism, grandiosity, hollowness, cheating and manoeuvring that has become part of the Indian political system. Second is to depict the way by which the desire for personal success and ambition turns an individual into an irresponsible, heartless entity shattered both externally and internally. The third is to apprise the reader of the perversions that have entered Indian womanhood under the plea of freedom. The

novelist has tried to expose the root of these problems and offer a feasible solution as well. The true Gandhians are suffering dismissal and disregard due to extensive filth and corruption in politics. Politicians are spreading the venom of caste, religion, region, language and communalism amidst the masses and profiteering out of their ignorance and innocence. Still dissatisfied these power mongers do not hesitate to exploit their own parents, siblings, spouses and children along with natural calamities like floods, famines, epidemics as well as the tears and the dreams of the common man. Gandhi had admonished the ministers years back for copying the mercenary attitude of the British and exhibiting this kind of behavior. He wrote, “You have worn on your head a crown of thorns. The seat of power is a nasty thing. You have to remain ever wakeful on that seat. You have to be more nonviolent, more humble and more forbearing...Do not fall prey to the lure of wealth. You are there to serve the villages and the poor.”<sup>34</sup> Malti, the protagonist in the novel does the same and falls prey to the power and wealth associated with politics. Being intelligent and confident she gets a break in politics and in the course of achieving great height she manipulates and neglects her own husband and child. Her husband who bears the Gandhian traits of honesty and self-respect suffers because of her insensitivity. The novel is a lucid depiction of the disillusioned and baffled status of Indian populace in the selected period of Indian history.<sup>35</sup> *Agaami Ateet* (1976) by the same author narrates how the protagonist Kamal Bose under the pressure of capitalism and feudalism forgets his love and promises in pursuance of high profile contacts, fame, money and ambition. When he looks back after twenty five years he only sees dim memories, destruction and repentance. Money conquers love, power loom replaces hand loom and creates unemployment, allopath substituted traditional medicine and many lost their livelihood. Chanda’s daughter ultimately lands up in a brothel because Kamal was selfishly ambitious and putting aside all human matters had joined the blind race for success and money. In the end he is left with only tears and guilt. *Registan* another work of Kamleshwar highlights the blatant deception that the true Gandhians had to experience after independence. The cowards took over the

reign of the country. There was fear and terror everywhere. Crushed under inflation and corruption the future appears very bleak. The novel is a tribute to men like Vishwanath who had sacrificed their youth to spread the teachings of Gandhi and popularize Hindi in south India so as to bind the nation linguistically. Unfortunately, post independence this dream of Gandhi was shattered and the same people who had accepted Hindi rejected it making way for English and once again taking away the voice of the marginalized poor. In such a situation the Gandhian veterans felt cheated and dejected. Vishwanath goes to the market to buy Gandhi's photograph but finds it with great difficulty. The changed attitude of the people worries him. The future of the lost nation troubles his thought process. The novel also has a sub plot of a Muslim who becomes a victim of State politics of both India and Pakistan, ultimately losing his sanity in the turmoil. Thus, Kamleshwar through his writings has contributed immensely in connecting Hindi literature with the plight of the common man and at this juncture his writings meet with the Gandhian way of life aiming assiduously at the welfare of all.<sup>36</sup>

*Rituchakra* (1967) by Ilachandra Joshi is laced with the Gandhian call of 'back to nature.' Independent India's love for modernism led to clash of old and new values. The practice of involving the parents in the marriage sacrament is rejected under the garb of modernism. In their desire of self appeasement the new generation is trying to tamper with the laws of nature giving birth to innumerable frustrations and problems. They are bounded in artificial, unnatural relations and have totally separated themselves from the laws of nature. The novelist through the composition has raised his voice against the ideology of realism declaring it unfit for Indian social milieu. He blames the intellectuals for promoting this school of thought which leaves detrimental impression on half-baked young minds. As such most of the characters in the novel suffer with unfulfilled sexual desires. This was in a way manifestation of the ideology of 'free sex' rampant in west at the time. There is also a strong reference to the rise in political corruption in the nation and freedom fighters like Pratibha express the futility of all the passion and sacrifice they offered in the wake of such moral

degradation. *Bhoot ka Bhavishya* (1973) highlights the plight of Harijans in 70s India. Bhootnath the hero was born in a low caste family of tanners and has been experiencing social ostracism of untouchability since childhood. However his education was sponsored and he was able to finish his education in a university. He got married but left his family and started living like a ghost in an old abandoned house. The novelist petitions for a change in the social attitude towards the untouchable. The novel contains a veritable warning for the perpetrators of this heinous practice and warns them of nature taking the course of life in its hands and ending their existence if they are unable to crush their ego.<sup>37</sup>

*Raag Darbari* (1968) by Shreelal Shukla depicts corruption at all levels in the country using sharp wit and satire. The action area is a village Shivpal Gunj which actually represents the whole of India. The village samples the development that took place in India after independence. The novel attempts to understand the politics, government and bureaucracy of free India along with its by-products. The government launched many schemes and programs to end monopoly but in reality the social evil has become stronger. There are people who try to stop corruption but their voice is too weak. The politician Vaidyaji uses henchmen to get votes in his favor. School Inspector is also corrupt as well as the Principal. It is people like these only who bring in the new government schemes on education. Similarly during Panchayat elections incompetent people are elected simply because they are the favorite of the powerful members. Even an ordinary citizen feels free to breach laws, social as well as government by flaunting his ownership right under the garb of democracy. There is a vivid description of the unhygienic conditions thriving in Indian villages, a trait that had been lambasted many a times by Gandhi in his speeches and writings. He made it an integral part of his constructive program and wrote "Divorce between intelligence and labor has resulted in criminal negligence of the villages. And so instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the land, we have dung heaps...A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us."<sup>38</sup> The filthy late running Indian trains, scholars doing PhD due to unemployment, rampant corruption in the transportation

department, women defecating in the open disturb the finer sensibilities of the readers. The novelist reiterates, not to compare and impose the structure of European villages on rural India and use half-truths like objectivity, reliability, scientific angle etc., in literature. Written in an ironic tone the novel mocks the individual, country, situation and sometimes an institution. The novel is a blatant narration of life in post-independence Indian village. Intellectuals, education policy, schools, college politics, police, assembly, constitution, law, intellectuals, democracy-all become subjects of scorn and ridicule by the novelist. The novel laments the inaction of the urban intellectual who starts the struggle ideologically but being cowardly exit the scene at the time of real action and struggle. Gandhian condemnation of rural sanitation, superstition along with a desire for the urban youth to revamp the villages under their leadership has been visualized in the novel.<sup>39</sup>

*Jal Tootata Hua* (1969) by Ramdarash Mishra highlights the plight of the Indian villages whose hope of socio-economic and political freedom in post-independence India was destroyed by the rampant corruption, poverty and conspiracies. The village is a sample of Indian society classified and casteist. The coming of Panchayati elections brought in the code of diplomacy and immorality. The old feudal class of landlords and moneylenders fight elections and dirty the politics for their selfish gains. Characters like Satish, Jagapatiya and Kunj try hard to make the people understand the true meaning of democracy. The school teacher is poor and only concerned with his transfer. The period marks the hopelessness and downfall in the Indian education system. Same is the case with the socialist leader who in spite of his education and oratory skills sides with the corrupt and power mongers. Politicians, police and bureaucrats, all eat up the system leaving the poor lost and baffled with the hard gained independence. Caste system and untouchability continued unabated with the constitution as a dumb witness to this scenario. Love across caste created havoc whereas the prostitutes in the low caste earned lucratively through regular visits of their high caste clients. By the end of twenty years the futility of the freedom struggle had started dawning on the people. No change came in their troubled lives.

Previously they were looted by the British whereas now it's their own who exploit them. In fact the degree has increased and this realization is more shocking and painful.<sup>40</sup> The preceding description bears testimony to the shattering of Gandhi's Dream for his nation.

Bhagwati Charan Verma is not a doctrinaire and does not espouse a particular ideology. Like a social scientist he explores the problems and brings them within the mental spectrum of the reader. His writings give birth to questions and make the people realize and think over the issue. In the discourse Verma explores all the possibilities accepting some while rejecting others. If he laughs and mocks at one aspect, with equal enthusiasm he admires and accepts the other facets. The same holds true for his attitude towards Gandhi. If he laughs at some explanation he also admires the underlying philosophy. In *Sabhein Nachyavat Ram Gosain* (1970) the novelist presents the foreplay between human intelligence, emotions and destiny. To be truly successful a balanced between intelligence and morally laced emotions are a prerequisite. Through the characters of Radheyshyam, Jabar Singh and Ramlochan the attributes of the three are represented. Through his intelligence Radhey becomes a successful industrialist but he misuses it and indulges in connery, deception and bribery and is ultimately destroyed. Jabar Singh, member of the feudal class enters politics and deceiving his mentor becomes a powerful minister in the government. Being too emotional and sensitive Ramlochan is a misfit and incapable of surviving in the deceitful world. It is only with the right ingredient of intelligence and emotions that destiny favours the individual. *Prashna Aur Marichika* (1976) is an autobiographical composition and covers the period between 1947 and 1963. According to the novelist human life sustains itself through questions. The most important of these questions is the purpose of human life. The novel is a comment on the deteriorating political and social values in post-independence India. Rise in corruption, lure of posts and entry of women in politics are veraciously depicted in the story. The novel also has a Hindu-Muslim love angle inviting wrath from both the communities which reflects the rise in communalism. Episodes of extra-marital love

are also handled objectively. The hollow morality of the rich and the upper middle class is also showcased. The independence appears fraudulent in view of rampant corruption and immorality. Post-independence raises a plethora of questions as well as apparitions which draw people towards its illusionary images. Like Gandhi the novel truthfully narrates the grim reality and advises to seek solutions armed with the values of truth and nonviolence.

*Dharti Dhan Na Apna* (1972) by Jagdish Chandra Mathur was the first novel to illustrate the plight of Harijans in post-independence India. The plot is based in a village called 'Ghodewaha' in Punjab and is a social document of the wants and humiliation borne by the low caste tanners. Years have not changed the nature of relationship between the master and slave, the high caste and the low born. The caste differences between them slowly transform into class struggle in a semi-feudalistic order. The tanners work hard throughout the year and still get beaten up while there is nobody to take their side. The women are either seduced or raped and there is a class of illegitimate children born of such incidences. The communist leader as well as the Christian priest who claim to be the ideological saviors of the low caste are mere spectators and go to extremes to gain the most from the situation. The communist attempt to turn the tanner's boycott into a nationwide movement and the priest encourages conversion. Class and caste discrimination is at its zenith. Amidst all this is a love story of Kali and Gyano, unfortunately the lovers are doomed, Gyano dies and Kali leaves the village. The common man lives in pity and fear. Only land and might are respected, while the fault always lies with the weak.<sup>41</sup> The independence years could not usher in social justice and human dignity and end the nexus between feudalism and capitalism. The novel highlights the contribution and partnership of a common man in the community which is basically a Gandhian precept. The tanners refuse to submit to forced labour in spite of hunger and poverty and are even joined in by some of the liberal high castes. The high caste is strongly united in its bid to exploit the poor and forgetting their individual differences unanimously boycott the

Harijans. The resistance of the tanners is a reminiscent of Gandhi's movement for the problems had not mellowed down even after independence.

*Lohe Ke Pankh* (1976) by Himanshu Srivastava is the story of a low caste tanner, his exploitation by the Landlord and later his pitiable plight as a laborer in the city. The novel was a refreshing change from the individualistic sexually frustrated story lines of the times and narrated the lives of hardworking poor of India who appeared to have been sidelined by the writers in keeping with the 'Garibi Hatao' slogan of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The plot highlights the animalistic caste system, untochability, feudal serfdom and utter poverty of Seventies rural India. It illustrates the migration of the marginalized groups to the cities in search of better life. There the reader is taken into the world of factories, offices of the labor unions and labor slums to witness the rise of class consciousness amongst the characters. True to its age the novel also voices the corrupt facets of all the political parties. The third decade of independence had totally shattered the dreams that had been envisioned during the freedom struggle and left the scholars and social thinkers baffled and lost regarding the future.<sup>42</sup>*Nadi Phir Bah Chali* (1976) by Himanshu Srivastava is a graphic description of the poverty, credulity, illiteracy, exploitation of rural Bihar. The characteristic traits of Parbatiya bring her very close to Gandhi's image of ideal woman. From birth she struggles and continues to do so even in marriage but ultimately joins the peasant movement and decides to dedicate herself for the society. Even her death due to lathi charge is akin to the suffering womanhood during Gandhian civil disobedience. The writer also points to the ongoing prostitution in city centers where the middle class desirous for the finer things in life do not hesitate to use their daughters for prostitution. The husband repents and seeks forgiveness at Parbatiya's death-bed signifying the possibility of hope. There is enough satire against the corrupt congress government which had proved its impotence after independence. Parbatiya and Mangilal's movement is like a river of hope and change that will take the nation towards its right goal.<sup>43</sup>

Through *Nachyo Bahut Gopal* (1978) Amritlal Nagar revived the subject of untouchability that had got suppressed under the layers of individualism and the middle class concerns of seventies India. The novelist remained committed to the Gandhian cause of untouchables and resided amongst the manual scavengers in order to sketch out the character of Nirguna. Gandhi had an infinite love for the untouchables and christened them as Harijan or children of God. He felt so much in debt due to their service of scavenging the society that he openly expressed his desire to be born as one of them in his next life. Like Gandhi the novelist too rejected any 'Dharma' that propagated such a discriminating practice. He discouraged writers from becoming associated with any particular political party because it restricted the writers' freedom of expression.<sup>44</sup> Nirguna spends her whole life resisting the practice of untouchability. In spite of being born in the Brahmin community Nirgun marries a Harijan and works worse than a sweeper, opens a school in the low caste colony, educates her children and guides them to excellent careers as officers. Raped in teenage and married to a man elder than her Father, Nirgunia decided to elope with the sweeper boy out of her choice. The troubles in her life had made her realize the futility of caste system and the degraded status of women irrespective of the 'varna' of their birth. The novel also voices Gandhi's stand against conversion to Christianity by the Harijans to escape social ostracism. Starting out as a lusty young woman, candidly admitting her sexual hunger Nirgunia succeeds and overcomes the physical lust for love and marital fidelity. Besides the novel has subplots that reveal the plight of marginalization suffered by women cutting across caste and class in the society.<sup>45</sup>

Feminist wave in Hindi writing led to the emergence of women writers like Mannu Bhandari and the sister duo Manjula Bhagat and Mridula Garg. Through *Aapka Bunty* (1971) and *Mahabhoj* (1978) Mannu Bhandari drew attention to the two most prominent aspects of the 'baffling years' i.e. the modern Indian woman split up between the self and society, her needs as a woman and her duty as a mother and the rampant corruption in Indian politics. *Aapka Bunty* is the story of Shakun a modern educated career oriented woman whose marriage has suffered due to her ambitious

streak as well as the patriarchal ego of her husband. She has a son Bunty whom she loves but often uses him sadistically as a bait to intimidate her estranged husband. Her divorce and sexual needs induce her to accept the marriage proposal from Dr Joshi a widower with two children. The son Bunty is the victim of the marital discord of his parents. His ontological search and craving for the familiar faces and family he was born into leaves detrimental effect on his child psyche and personality. The physical proximity of his mother with a man who is not his father fills him with fear and guilt and he decides to shift with his father's family. There too the second mother and the step sibling make him feel like an outsider. Feeling a sense of abandonment by his parents he turns into a rebel. Ultimately due to discipline issues the father decides to send him to a hostel. Bunty's story voiced the plight of children of divorced middle class couples of modern India where selfdom, individualistic ego of both the sexes started threatening the sanctity of the institution of marriage and rearing rebellious, self absorbed and frustrated children as future citizens of the country. A Gandhian annotation becomes a necessity at this juncture who said, "the procreation of children has to be undertaken with a full sense of responsibility...giving intelligent, healthy and well brought up children to the country is surely rendering a service."<sup>46</sup> *Mahabhoj* or 'the great feast' is a political novel exposing the cruel and crafty face of Indian politicians, bureaucrats as well as the press of the nation after thirty years of independence. It is election time in Uttar Pradesh the state that sends maximum number of MPs to the Indian Parliament. A Harijan settlement had been set to fire consuming dozens of innocent lives. Bisesar a rebellious youth has evidence to implicate the accused and bring justice to the victims. However the perpetrators of the crime attempt to suppress the resistance and succeed in killing Bisesar. The fight for justice is continued by his associate Binda but he too is put behind bars. Ultimately it is a police officer from the bureaucratic class who carries on the struggle of the Dalits against the opportunistic forces of power, position, government, opposition, media and bureaucracy.<sup>47</sup> The novel is a vociferous testament of the loss of the fundamental principles of truth and nonviolence

perpetrated by Gandhi in Indian politics and public affairs during the national movement.

Manjula focussed on the women of lower strata of the society while the sister Mridula highlighted the frustrations of her educated middle class protagonists. *Anaro* (1976) by Manjula Bhagat manifests the struggles of a woman Anaro who is a domestic worker for middle class families. She is hardworking, strong willed and does not submit to the pressures and hurdles of poverty. She battles life like a soldier maintaining her womanliness. She represents the core Indian values and wishes her alcoholic unfaithful husband to love her and wants her daughter to be married with the same middle class fanfare as her employees. The novel through Anaro sketches the plight of the rural population migrating to cities in search of livelihood in 70s India. It is a vivid portrayal of abject poverty that had started deepening in India due to the failure of the economic policies of independent India giving birth to the 'Jhuggi' culture that continues to be a bane of shame for the countries city landscape.<sup>48</sup> The plot celebrates the virtue of hard labor and the indomitable human will to survive against all odds.

*Uske Hisse Ki Dhoop* (1975) by Mridula Garg created ripples amongst the readers. It was the story of Manisha who leaves her husband Jiten to marry her lover. The new husband fails to accept her literary creativity and she goes back to the first husband and realizes her misunderstanding. His liberalism had appeared apathy to her. Her need for an authoritarian possessive love had driven her to Madhukar. However she soon realizes the foolishness of this step and returns to Jiten knowing very well that he will always give precedence to work than relationships. Back with Jiten she ultimately realizes that the state of fulfillment she is aspiring for in her relationship with the two men will not come through love but by her own actions and decides to spend her life in writing. In the novel she seems to be lost in a maze where she fails to be satisfied with both kinds of love and fails both Jiten and Madhukar. However, nowhere in the novel she appears guilty for breaking the societal norms and

experimenting with the institution of marriage in her elusive search for true love. The same theme of questioning the institution of marriage can be witnessed in *Chittkobra* (1976) by the same author. The novel portrays the story of Manu who appears to be happily married and settled with two children. However it is only a pretense because the couple are together but only as a duty and not out of love. Manu meets Richard while practicing for a play and falls in love. Richard is also married with three children. They even differ in their race, ethnicity, religious beliefs and country. They find completion in each other physically, mentally and spiritually. They find fulfilment of a lifetime in five days they spend with each other. In spite of recognizing each other as true soul mates they do not wish to end the irrespective marriages. The novel most candidly expresses the human tendency to desire the forbidden and both the characters understand this and part ways deciding to meet each other after thirty years.<sup>49</sup> The baffling years befuddled the very foundation of time-honoured and deep rooted institution like marriage. The feminist wave, the sexual revolution of the west born hippie culture left its indelible impression on the psyche of the educated middle class readers and extramarital affairs and pre-marital sex became acceptable as the denouement of unfulfilled carnal wants and desires. Amidst this bacchanal atmosphere a reference to Gandhi's views on marriage appears most proverbial. He accepted marriage as a "natural thing in life" and advised the husband and wife to "lead a life of self-restraint" acting as "trustees for the moral welfare of future generations."<sup>50</sup>

Mridula Garg emerged as one of the few women writers in Hindi in the period under study to compose and expose the political contradictions of post Nehru era in India. *Vanshaj* (1975) is an extended debate on the role of Indian bureaucrats before and after independence. It was due to their loyalty and services that the British could rule with so much ease for two hundred years in India. They accepted the transformation from foreign rule to self rule because it was legitimate and logical but were apprehensive about their own status in independent India. The character of Judge Shukla reflects the same insecurity. This class continued implementing the British

laws with more fervor and using lathis and bullets became the guardians of democratic India. Shukla's reaction to Gandhi's assassination gives us a glimpse of writer's own attitude towards Gandhi. Gandhian loin cloth, travelling third class, bearing lathi charge and burning mill cloth appeared cowardly and childish to the character. However, in spite of not agreeing with Gandhian methodology Shukla had no doubt about the authenticity of the Mahatma himself. The entry of criminals in politics and specially the political party claiming to be the legitimate successor of Gandhi shocked and horrified the writers of the time and made them openly question and castigate Gandhi's ideology. *Anitya* (1979) is a more gritty discourse on Indian politics and intellectual revolution. The novel is a new exposition on the revolutionary phase of Indian national movement and a strong excoriation of Gandhi's movement. The straying and the morbid state of Indian democracy motivated the writer to explore the efficacy of Gandhian ideology. Going back in time Gandhi is questioned for not including the peasant issue of non-payment of revenue as well as apathy towards the death verdict of Bhagat Singh. This inaction of Gandhi is painted as betrayal of both the masses as well as revolutionaries. The novel challenges and nullifies some of the customary misunderstandings related to Bhagat Singh. Quoting his Jail Diary the novelist highlights Bhagat Singh's socialist vision for the peasants and workers of independent India. He confirmed the futility of bomb and pistol which are to be used only in extreme conditions and instead advocates the practice of accord and compromise in politics. The novelist considers the young demise of Bhagat Singh detrimental for India because it clogged and diverted the flow of the freedom movement. India could have attained independence much early, partition could have been averted, youth would have been less uncertain and freedom would have had a concrete meaning. For the writer, the Khadi clad Congress politicians are bigger terrorists than Bhagat Singh and his friends. She even brazenly decries the elite streak of nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai demanding a Punjabi Cook in jail whereas the common prisoners in Andaman were being harnessed as bullocks to extract oil. Those pseudo-Gandhians who became State witness in 1942

joined the cabinet after independence. Many like Avijit whose life turned failure digressed due to their misplaced faith in Gandhian ideals. The tone of the novel is aggressively against Gandhi's teachings in keeping with the intellectual and moral turmoil the nation was going through due to rampant corruption in Indian politics.<sup>51</sup>

Novel should say what has not been said. To bring to light what is hidden, whatever, that can be felt at the margin should be brought in the realm of conscienceness. Novel should talk about existence in general, human existence in particular and move on to the neighbourhood and the world. The age of sixties and seventies was full of pandemonium not only for the nation politically but for the individuals as well. A growing influence of western modernism, urbanism and industrialization led to migration to cities by both the middle class and rural unemployed, leading to the rise in crime and socio-economic exploitation of both. The villages called the soul of India by Gandhi turned into epicentres of corruption and exploitation. Institutions espoused by Gandhi like Panchayati Raj became the hub of power mongers killing the very spirit behind which it was revived by the Mahatma. Insipid government schemes based on western development model led to displacement of indigenous population in different regions of the country giving rise to violent resistance movements. Atrocities against the depressed classes continued despite stringent laws. Institutions like family and marriage came under investigation. Philosophy of Freud and Marx influenced the women writers of both English and Hindi. The female consciousness towards sex, moral norms, love, culture and traditions underwent a major change and she joined men in their race towards moral degradation as dissuaded by Gandhi, "woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running the race with men. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man."<sup>52</sup> Some writers commented on the societal milieu others focused on existentialism. Search for identity or the elusive 'self' emerged as a standard theme in English writing while the plight of rural India continued to be scrutinized by Hindi novelists. Issues of Untouchability and Dalit exploitation in democratic India were analyzed in both English and Hindi with

understated references to Gandhi. In all Gandhi as a thinker was relegated to the background but his values kept on seeping in the writings of even those who declared him expendable. To the baffled psyche of the Indian masses Gandhi was forgotten but a covert regard for him remained which would be surreptitiously turned into hatred in the age of globalization. An appropriate closure to the chapter would be the following lines by Mrs Indira Gandhi on the Mahatma in the Centenary volume published by the Gandhi Peace Foundation on 100 years of Gandhi's birth,

“...Gandhiji differed from his forerunners on the national scene in that he rejected the politics of the elite and found the key to mass action. He was a leader, closely in tune with the mass mind, interpreting it and at the same time moulding it. He was the crest of the wave but they, the people, were the wave itself...”<sup>53</sup>

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# **CHAPTER - 5**

## **Gandhi in Years of Globalization 1980-2000**

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Gandhi measured progress in terms of human happiness. He endorsed neither the utilitarian view of the greatest good of the greatest number nor the modern view of an

affluent society in which material development is the sole criterion of progress. He wanted a social order which would secure the greatest good of all i.e. SARVODAYA. He wanted a society in which every man would have equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop. He wanted a simple society in which economic progress and social justice would go together. He wanted us to control the pleasures of the senses because sensual pleasures have no known bounds.<sup>1</sup>

Morarji Desai

1980 elections brought out the squalid reality of Indian politics. Previously elections were fought on issues and ideology but now it was simply fought on giving a stable government.<sup>2</sup> In the starting of her tenure Mrs Gandhi was letting Sanjay officiate the decisions but destiny had other plans and Sanjay died in a plane crash. The PM pulled in her second son Rajiv and set the trend for dynastic politics. This was also the period which witnessed a new surge in violent ethnic and regional insurgency in different parts of the country. The Harijan laborers in Bihar revolted with the help of naxalites while the tribals of Jharkhand demanded statehood. The decade was marked with private caste armies of the Brahmins, Rajputs and Kayastha of Bihar organizing massacres and setting fire to the Naxalite(Maoist) led agricultural laborers and poor peasants in connivance with the State machinery.<sup>3</sup> The Nagas revived their separatist demand under Muivah and attacked the armed forces which triggered a phase of allegations of human rights violations against the defense personnel.<sup>4</sup> N T Ramarao harnessed the Andhra ethnicity to launch his career in politics. AASU (All Assam Students Union) was primarily against non-Assamese and orchestrated the massacre of nearly hundred Bengali Muslims. In Punjab the Khalistan separatist movement was catching fire under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Many leading journalists and policemen became the victims of Sikh extremism. The target of Sikh fury was the Hindu who became the object of selective killings. The government called in the army to launch 'Operation Blue Star' in 1984 to oust the Sikh separatists under Bhindranwale from the 'Akal Takht.' Nearly five hundred terrorists were killed

but the incident turned the community against the government.<sup>5</sup> In Andhra and Kashmir the Congress used its governors to change the state governments. On 31 October the Prime Minister was gunned down by her own Sikh bodyguards. The result was the Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi where more than a thousand innocent Sikhs were killed in retaliation of the assassination. According to observers the violent mobs were led by Congressmen. By no means demeaning her contribution to the Bangladesh War and pro-poor programs, Mrs Gandhi left both the Congress and India bereft of any democratic character. In her later years she had used both to push her personal gains. Gandhian stress on 'means' was abandoned for the attainment of 'ends.' It is difficult to absolve her from the charge of harboring sycophancy and anti-social elements in politics. A month later the innocent people of Bhopal paid through their lives for the decision of opening of market doors for foreign firms. In the wee hours of the morning two thousand people died and many became ill for life due to an accidental leakage of a toxic gas in an American pesticide firm. The death and despair was soon overshadowed by the euphoria of general elections. Congress was projected as the only party that could stop the break-up of the country. Since socio-economic reform was beyond the gamut of any political party, unity of the country was conjectured as a more colossal calamity. Memory of partition was still alive and the people brought back the Congress to power. Rajiv Gandhi signed a peace accord with Akali Dal, Mizo National Front and his government persuaded the Assamese rebels to contest elections. After the 'Blue Star' fiasco dialogue with dissenters became the State policy. The young PM with his clean image and the company of his 'computer boys,'<sup>6</sup> were riding high on popularity. The Shah Bano case turned Rajiv into a politician worried for his vote bank. Following closely was the order from a District Judge in Ayodhya to open the locks of the Ram temple inside the Babri Masjid. Many claim the verdict was piloted by Rajiv to satisfy the Hindu fundamentalist in view of the Shah Bano case. The decision triggered the Hindu militant movement and the dream of Pan-Hinduism was born which has been escalating ever since. The prequel of liberalization came with the financial budget of 1985 wherein State control was cut

down in trade, import, licensing and company assets. The budget gave impetus to private businesses. The sale of consumer durables ranging from refrigerator to cars shot up. A nexus emerged between businessmen and politicians that existed previously too but was never so close. Quoting Indraneil Banerjee, “The distance between Gandhi (Mahatma) and Gandhi (Rajiv) is a vast traverse...The dhoti is out, so is the walking stick, wooden sandals and travelling in third class compartments. Gucci shoes, Cartier sunglasses, bullet-proof vests, Mercedes Benz cars and state helicopters are in. Indian politics no longer smells of sweat, nor is it particularly clean or colorless – it reeks of aftershave.”<sup>7</sup> Amidst the rising middle class, the tribal and farmers of rural India continued to die of hunger and disease. The rigged state elections of Jammu & Kashmir turned the demand of autonomy into separation and support from Pakistan and full-fledged militancy in the valley. Another ignominious chapter was the Indian intervention in Sri Lankan civil war seen as an attempt at military leadership in the region. India was definitely leaving the Gandhian path of regional peace and disarmament by testing a series of long distance missiles in the period. India was also buying more and more arms from outside and one such deal over the Bofors gun cast aspersions on the PM also as one of the recipient of the commission. The charge shattered his honest image before the masses and was responsible for his losing elections in 1989. The new government under VP Singh implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission that gave 27 percent reservation to OBC (Other Backward Castes) in government jobs. The decision started a spree of self-immolation protests by upper caste students and closing down of educational institutions. Meanwhile the carnage continued in Bihar with the caste divide turning deep and gory. The bloodbath between naxalite ‘Lal Sena’ and landowning ‘Ranbir Sena’ persisted unabated. Unfortunately this was what Gandhi had feared when he had rejected the course of reservation and stressed on transformation of the high caste from within on the issue of Dalits. Another episode was the infamous ‘Rath Yatra’ by L K Advani a hardliner from BJP to create mass support and frenzy for the mandir issue and increase the party’s vote bank.<sup>8</sup> The arrest

of 'kar sevaks' led to the downfall of VP Singh. Rajiv was assassinated while canvassing for his party by LTTE militants. The sympathy wave voted back Congress to power with Narsimha Rao as the PM. The finance minister of the new regime Manmohan Singh completed what was started by the computer boys of Rajiv and ushered in LPG-Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization in lieu of money from the World Bank. The 'license-permit-quota-raj' ended and Multi National Companies entered the different sectors of Indian economy. On 6 December 1992 a mob of 'kar sevaks' taking law in their hands and overriding the court verdict demolished the Babri Masjid in the name of Ram. The event provoked a series of communal riots not only in different parts of India but even across the border in Bangladesh as depicted in the novel 'Lajja' by Taslima Nasreen. The Ram of India no more remained the same hero cheered by Christians and Muslims during the telecast of the TV show Ramayana but now he was the sole property of the Hindus for whom lot of blood was being shed. The event so deeply polarized the country along communal lines that till date the gaps have not been filled. In 1998 BJP reaped the reward and came to power with Atal Behari Vajpayee as the new PM. He gave the green signal for the nuclear testing and in the same year the India of Gandhi's dreams became a nuclear power. In spite of the nuclear tests, Vajpayee being a man of poetry possessed the ability to empathize as well as a humane temperament. He took initiative to organize a friendly bus journey to meet the Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif giving hope to many who dreamt of amicable relations between the two nations and winning the epithet of "a sincere peacemaker" by the Pakistani masses.<sup>9</sup> Three months later the Kargil war started due to Pakistani infiltration and occupation of the Indian territories. The Indian soldiers retrieved the lost regions although losing many young lives in the process. In 2002 the Godhra riots in Gandhi's homeland again marred the secular structure of India. The country had entered the new millennium with anarchy, chaos and disorder.

Politics has a direct impact on society whether it is the ancient period or modern. Political values remain constant whereas only the structure of politics changes viz., monarchy or democracy. Wherever there is rule and power, selfishness, corruption,

immorality and greed seeps in and the masses suffer dismissal and neglect. The general perception that the exploitation of India's poor will end with the British rule finally perished with the advent of eighties. The government had methodically crushed people's hope and aspirations for food, clothing and shelter. Numerous futile schemes of development aped from the Western growth models not only failed to produce the desired result but brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy. The forewarnings must have appeared at the outset but were ignored by the policy makers. This apathy led to the need for international loan and opening of the Indian market for global companies in 1991.

Globalization is another term for the second phase of slavery India is experiencing which ironically reappeared in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Irrespective of geographical and administrative boundaries it has brought in the 'Bazaar Culture' across the globe. Economic liberalization is disrupting the smooth and steady flow of everyday life. It has sucked in the youth into the quagmire of raw desire and immorality. In this age humanity and values have no say, only profit matters. Man is treated like a commodity to be exploited and discarded. Unfortunately the governments who ushered in liberalization used media and even academicians to eulogize the merits of this profit-centric system. New definitions of development were introduced that resulted in the rise in GDP but less employment opportunities in the regular sector. The unskilled or semi-skilled were the worst affected. Emphasis was given on growth models that ushered in new ramifications for the already crushed marginalized groups. To open new vistas for the rapidly investing MNCs the State took on the responsibility to suppress insurgency with added vigour. Stringent laws that had been in use sparingly in the past were imposed with utmost fervor in regions voicing disagreement with the State. Numerous hurried military operations were galvanized to bring instant curbing of dissent that left no hiatus for dialogue. To distract the people a very sanguine image was created that webbed a superficial structure lacking the base for fundamental growth. This magical world blinded the people from perceiving the truth creating a pseudo atmosphere where

even the Indian intelligentsia got lost in a maze of quantitative data and reports showing financial growth whereas in reality the poor have become more poor and the rich have moved up the financial ladder post-liberalization. Science and technical progress often gives birth to suffocation, boredom and disappointment. Mankind found itself at an ideological conflict. When humanity loses faith on each other then literature too shows signs of straying. This new age has ushered in a state of disillusionment as well as disenchantment for mankind. The changing life situation is forcing us to rethink the nature of all human relationships. These new relationships challenge the efficacy of our traditional value system. Man inflicted with self-love started cracking up internally and weakening down with the pain of smashed hopes. At such a juncture new life values were designed to meet the situation. Man no more wishes to struggle against difficult situations. His life is like a spare part of a machine. In spite of having attained all materialistic facilities humankind lacks spiritual peace. After 1980 instead of visualizing one's own image in national development majority got into the race of individual advancement following whatever way appearing suitable to them. Disintegration, separatism, selfishness and the suffocating atmosphere has made the average Indian lose faith in his culture and values.

In the era of Globalization many novelist forsook direct political comments but were indirectly involved in the larger perspective. Although the new world was varied, many-hued, occasionally profound, and often exciting the socio-political domain did seep in. In the previous age there was a conflict between human life situations and values but in the age of LPG a solution was offered to end this perennial conflict resulting in the alteration of the very core of values. The old social values appeared as hurdles in this fast paced life of high strung sensibilities wherein sex, love, marriage, freedom, etc., constitute an intrinsic part. As a result a new set of values were formulated and propagated that subtly eliminated the traditional value system of India which Gandhi had vouched for in his ideology. Still attempts were made by novelists both English and Hindi to revive some of the core principles.

Two trends of novel writing could be observed. The first was struggling to show the reality of the rapidly changing society under the impact of globalization. The second trend was busy presenting the literary art blinded by the flashy lights of globalization and bereft of any realism.

### ***Novels in English***

*Midnight's Children* (1980) by Salman Rushdie narrates the story of post-independence India in the allegory of Saleem Sinai the protagonist. Born with lot of hope and ambition in Nehru's India he gradually becomes disillusioned losing hope altogether. The imposing of emergency by Indira Gandhi coincides with the birth of Adam Sinai the disease ridden hopeless child of Saleem. The muteness of Adam is an allegory of the restriction on freedom of speech imposed on Indian people. Slums as well as male potency were in danger. Fascism became the face of democracy wrenched with immense sacrifice from the British. Country lost all hope and languished in dismay and despair.<sup>10</sup> The age was characterized by marked hopelessness and stunted growth. Indira is India and India is Indira became the slogan of the day. Rushdie refers to the period as a 'six hundred and thirty five day long midnight.' Mrs Gandhi is portrayed as a villainess who undid her father's contribution in the making of new India. Hers is the reign of regression, darkness and lack of optimism. Although written in 80s the novel lucidly depicts the state of desolation and depression the nation had to go through during emergency. The mass sterilization of *Midnight's Children* represents the whole country. Indira Gandhi had been like a grandchild for Gandhi and her metamorphosis into a saboteger of democracy was deeply shocking. Emergency shook the very roots of Indian democracy and the Gandhian dream of Stateless society.<sup>11</sup> *Shame* (1983) also looks into the politics and the relationship of the individual and history but this time with respect to the other half of India i.e., Pakistan. The shameless sins assigned to Pakistan are the same as happening in India or for that matter any other Asiatic nation. India at the eve of independence appears as a 'tired old land' whose children indulge

in loose living, disrespect for elders, rigged elections, gluttony, extramarital sex, maltreatment of women, smuggling, extortion and killing. The novel is essentially a lamentation and reassertion of the old indigenous value system that characterized the ancient land of India.<sup>12</sup>

*The Great Indian Novel* (1989) by Shashi Tharoor is a literary concoction of Indian myth and history. The character on target is definitely Gandhi caricatured as the mythical Bhishma and christened as Ganga. Gandhi's physical appearance and attire is ridiculed in the Churchillian manner. His adherence to naturopathy, fasting and celibacy are mocked to the hilt. Even his caste is not spared. His creed of non-violence is declared delusional. His love for 'Truth' is impugned. His devotion towards the poor and exploited and his nonviolent struggle for their rights is catechized. He is depicted as a sinister imposter working in collusion with the rich under the garb of asceticism exploiting the Indian credence for spirituality to gain mass following. Gandhian salt march that evoked the women of the country in great numbers to join the Indian national movement and had episodes like the Dharasana protest considered the hallmark of Indian soul force is compared to a dramatic crowd drawing road show by the author. The saving grace of Tharoor's work is his not blaming Gandhi for the partition and depicted his plight and heartbreak over the communal riots. Critics term it his 'sly civility' by which he remains a step back from total condemnation. The interpretation is singular and does not represent the majority whole and the subaltern remains voiceless.<sup>13</sup> The writer fails to understand that the inability of the people to understand the true spirit of nonviolence cannot be used as a means to doubt the expediency of the doctrine. The work is post-modern and zealously follows the tradition of deconstruction associated with the ideology. However under the influence of the strain it sadly overlooks the contribution of Gandhi in not only preparing a holistic program for the freedom from colonial slavery but political and socio-economic reconstruction of the country as a whole. Besides, there are numerous exigencies at play when a writer writes for the English readership in India as well as abroad.

Upamanyu Chatterjee a civil servant by profession brought the concerns of the anglicized urban Indian youth in the genre of English novels in India. In *English August: An Indian Story* (1988) Agastya Sen belongs to the hybrid westernized section of the society who has had a carefree schooling and College and without much hassling gets selected in the most prestigious bureaucratic class of India. His first posting as an IAS trainee is in a godforsaken town of Madna where despite his nonchalant attitude, his addiction for drugs and sex, he succeeds in picking up the nutty-gritty of administration and on his final posting proves his extraordinary ability by solving the water issue in the area. Gradually he starts developing interest in his work and soon metamorphoses into a responsible government official. The novel could be tagged as a coming of age story of an elite urban youth in the semi-rural milieu of the other 'India.' Many a times critical in tone Chatterjee reprimands his hero for his casual attitude towards the plight of the poor initially. His concern for the marginalized appears quite similar to Gandhi and is a perfect post-colonial critique on the growth model the Indian State has been implementing since decades. In fact the Agastya who had entered Madna was definitely a Macaulay prototype but the one who left epitomized Gandhian servant of God.<sup>14</sup>*The Last Burden* (1993) kaleidoscopes the changing ethos of middle class Indian families in the last decade of the twentieth century. The family values have deteriorated, marriages are shams, filial bonds are selfish, the only reason the unit is close knit is to assist in the rearing of grandchildren and paying for the kitchen. An interesting comparison is between Jamun and Gandhi where former's lascivious behavior reminded Kasturi of Gandhi's desire to be with his wife while neglecting his sick father. Religious fanaticism also becomes visible when Burfi wishes to marry a Christian woman. The novel basically analysis's the institution of marriage and family in an age of consumerism, greed and self-indulgence. *The Mammaries of a Welfare State* (2000) published in the new millennium is an exposition of the functioning of the Indian State at the dawn of a new century. The picture is definitely grim but laced with satire at the bureaucratic machinery of the country. It is a ventilation of the element of anger, violence and

terrorism that exists in the deep recesses of every subaltern subjected to exploitation in independent India. The novel exposes the sham of Indian democracy whose welfare programs abuse, deceive, uproot and ultimately destroy the tribal under the garb of integrating them to the mainstream and antithetical to Gandhian vision of Indian democracy where “the weakest would have the same opportunity as the strongest.”<sup>15</sup> The exigencies of globalization and the lure of transnational capital compel the policy makers to adopt pro-capitalist development schemes wherein the rights of the rural poor and indigenous get encroached and violated forcing them in turn to take up violence.<sup>16</sup>

*The Last Labyrinth* (1981) by Arun Joshi is written in the same strain as his previous works. It narrates the ambivalent pursuits of Som Bhaskar oscillating between the spiritual and scientific. He runs after both wealth and women, enters marriage, retreats to the mountains but the enigma persists. The struggle is between the hunger of the soul and the desires of the senses. His attraction to both the sensuous Anuradha and the spiritual Geeta places him in an entangled situation. Deluding death Som ultimately returns to Geeta symbolizing the age old Indian traditions and staircase to spirituality beyond all reason and doubt.<sup>17</sup> Arun Joshi's *The City and the River* (1990) is about an anguished man's quest for survival and search for a viable alternative amidst materialism, corruption, cynicism, alienation and dwindling spiritual faith. It contains echoes of the Indian emergency. On one hand are hermits, yajnas, sacrifice, helicopters, spying and inquisition while on the other are people who struggle against the corrupt politicians, businessmen, police and armed chiefs. Men's ambition and ego lead to his consequential suffering. The high and middle class living in brick houses lead false and farcical lives but the poor boat-men living in mud houses lead a truthful authentic existence.<sup>18</sup> The City represents State terrorism while the river symbolizes the eternal flow of life. Using fiction and satire the novel narrates the rise of Mrs. Indira Gandhi with the support of her son who perpetrated numerous atrocities like forced sterilization and displacement of the common man under the garb of emergency. What makes the novel different from its predecessors is its

realization that the vicious circle of State attempting to prove its hold on the masses and the latter resisting it through rebellion is unending in nature. The story of the creation of a State asserting its power on the subaltern and then destroying it is as old as the hills. It has always been like this and it will continue to be so. The novel is an ironic remembering of Gandhian concurrence with Thoreau that that government is best which governs least and envisages a stateless democracy.<sup>19</sup>

*Rich Like Us* (1985) by Nayantara Sahgal is primarily concerned with the decline of moral values in public life and the breaking of family values. It deals with the period of emergency in post-independence India and tightening of control. It is a choral criticism of accumulating power in one hand and endangering the very spirit of democracy. It is a blatant illustration of the autocratic atrocities perpetrated on the people in the name of 'emergency.' The gates of economy had started opening for the MNCs who had not been enthusiastically welcomed in the past. Rural lands were allotted and local people evacuated. The country was again being looted in all possible ways. Vasectomy was performed randomly, slums grazed by bulldozers and crime lords reigned in the capital of world's biggest democracy. Hypocrisy was at its zenith with the corrupt ministers comparing the period with Gandhian movements. Gandhi's speeches were being misinterpreted and caricatured to serve the needs of the corrupt officials. The novel reckons the decline in moral values in public life, leading to break-up of family values and the other way round and ultimately society will be the real casualty.<sup>20</sup>

*The God of Small Things* (1997) is an autobiographical composition which won the Booker Prize for the author. It is a family saga of elite landed gentry in post-independence Kerala evolving against the backdrop of casteism and Marxism in state politics. Velutha the communist trade union leader is an untouchable whose ancestors converted to Christianity to escape social taboos. However in spite of the doctrines of a democratic State as well as egalitarian Christianity the community has to bear discrimination in the society. The character sketch of Velutha is quite close to the Gandhian ideal of bread labor and skill based vocation. Velutha is quick to learn and

his craftsmanship as a carpenter as well as knack for handling machines and gadgets is generously admired by all to the extent that he is appointed in-charge of the maintenance of the factory. He is aware of his basic rights as a worker and takes lead in organizing a protest march to assert the same to his fellowmen. He falls in love with a high caste divorced woman and when implicated in a false case by her family stays quiet so that she and her children do not suffer. On being physically tortured and beaten by the police he does not react in spite of being physically capable of doing so. In such a scenario he emerges epitomizing Gandhian virtues of courage, patience, loyalty and dedication for a social cause.<sup>21</sup> The novel in spite of its writer being tagged as anti-Gandhi due to her later speeches and interviews does endorse the Mahatma's views on untouchables and her description of Velutha as the dark quintessential hero reminds us of Gandhi's desire to be reborn as an untouchable.

Shashi Deshpande is another woman novelist who brought out the perplexed state of the educated Indian woman in constitutionally egalitarian India. Although conscious of their rights and competencies the middle class woman finds herself stuck in the dichotomy between being an individual with a plethora of life opportunities wide open before her and her traditional role of a daughter, wife and mother. *The Dark Holds no Terror* (1980) *Roots and Shadows* (1983) and *That Long Silence* (1989), the protagonist Sarita, Indu and Jaya struggle for identity in context of modern Indian society. It is their journey of self discovery, of understanding their personality, digging up hidden potential and repressed talents to carve a niche for themselves in both family and society. Although many critics like AK Awasthi declare these women as anxious, ambitious, confused, thoughtless and runaway recluse<sup>22</sup> representing the general dilemma of Liberalized India, however towards the end all three come out with a synthesis between their individual aspirations as well as societal norms they are part of. The spirit is Gandhian though there is no mention of the same. Yet the pattern of discovery and then girdling oneself to encounter the challenges in treading the balanced path is definitely Gandhian. Saru had been a subject of gender discrimination and 'unwantedness' in her childhood. Her rebellious

attitude made her marry a low caste teacher while she herself studied medicine. The husband initially supportive soon turns demonic due to her economic independence. Her predicament is same as any middle class woman in LPG India balancing career and family. Presence of alternatives make the women question their traditional roles which otherwise would have been passively accepted by them. Visiting her native village and introspection she overcomes the fears locked in the deep recesses of her memories. Spending time at her parental home she tries to see her dead mother in a positive light and rejecting escape as a solution she readies herself to accept and face the challenges of life. Indu too is rebellious of traditional societal norms but goes a step ahead than Saru. Her streak for selfhood and intellectual independence is too verbose wherein she feels trapped in a love marriage and even rejects motherhood. To assert her sexual freedom she has an extramarital affair with Naren and refuses to accept it as adultery. However approaching the end she comes out of the illusions of asserting herself she had been chasing blindly and understand and accept the importance of roots that is tradition and rules that bind and guide a society. Herein she epitomizes the Gandhian woman, confident, truthful as well as responsible. An honest individual she is ready to fulfill her role in marriage, career as well as her extended family. Jaya too has a middle class upbringing as well as an arrange marriage as per the common caste norms. It is later on at maturity and as a columnist she perceives the superficiality in both her marriage and writing and struggles hard to change. Ultimately she has a fallout with her husband where she voices her plight. The husband leaves baffled and she too walks out. However at the end both she as well as the husband understand her need to be an individual amidst the rules of both marriage and work and is at peace with herself.<sup>23</sup> In *Small Remedies* (2000) Shashi Deshpande deals with the issue of identity pertaining to women from middle class background. The canvas is colored with a pantheon of female characters from varied religious and caste background struggling to carve a niche. Primarily it deals with the question of motherhood and the associated traditional bonds and sensitivities it ushers in. The women in the novel especially Savitri Bai is ready to give up the existence of

her daughter in order to portray her one sided devotion for her vocation of music. The attitude confounds Madhu and on a larger scale depicts the image of the career conscious Indian woman stuck in dichotomy between her profession and motherhood in the age of globalization.<sup>24</sup> This was the dilemma in the life of Indian women Gandhi talked about when he suggested a family life for the majority of women and a life solely dedicated to society and nation for the exceptionally talented.<sup>25</sup>

Post-Independence India has been on an unending search for women's identity and the pace increased with globalization where monetary as well as ontology concerns contributed to the quest. Different perspectives emerged, the globalized woman was stuck between playing traditional roles while chasing her dreams on an international panorama. Individualism had already made an appearance in the previous decades but now it was made free from all guilt and remorse. This new feminism was totally based on materialism which even determined the choice of motherhood. *Socialite Evenings* (1989) by Shobha De showcases the marriage of Karuna and her friends. The reasons behind her decision to marry and then end it, find a job, keep the child are all flimsy and bereft of any ethical value. Adultery is justified on the basis of incompatibility or lack of time and acceptable in modern day marriages based on mutual comforts and luxury taken as intrinsic part of marriage contract.<sup>26</sup> This new Indian woman is free, frank, fearless, uninhibited and deals on a tit for tat basis with men. However the degenerate practices they enter into and mindless imitation of the western model bereft of any purpose or moral grounds creates a situation worse than the traditional oppression they are fighting against. Imitating men in matters of sexual liberation does not make a woman feminist.<sup>27</sup> Gandhi had cautioned women of this tendency long ago. Although he had to bear the brunt of being charged with patriarchy by the fiery feminists of the time he did not alter his views. *Starry Nights* (1991) narrates the journey of Asha Rani a small town girl to Bollywood. In her desire to attain stardom the protagonist does not hesitate to use sex as bargain and soon reaches her goal. The novelist has justified the behavior by citing abusive incidents from her past due to which she has turned misandrous but the argument is

not strong enough. Her affair with a married man, her lesbian attraction to Linda, her failed suicide attempt, her exploitation by the press prove a complete absence of any moral order whatsoever in the world of showbiz.<sup>28</sup> Shobha De's *Sisters* (1992) portrays the metamorphosis of women as silent sufferers in to hard core rebels adopting extreme forms such as sexual promiscuity as a means to assert themselves. Mikki the young protagonist in spite of being educated and US returned chooses the institution of marriage and tries hard to balance the two but the patriarchal attitude of the husband cajoles her from the traditional role and she fights back to regain her business and succeeds. At the same time is her sister Alisha who is flirtatious and indulges in physical relationships simply to humiliate the elder sibling.<sup>29</sup> *Sultry Days* (1994) by Shobha De portrays the superficial fallacies thriving in upper class society of 90s India soaked in glitter and luxury but is hollow and deeply fragmented internally. The admission of a working class intellectual to the super-exclusive 'highness' club merely for diversion of the rich shows the shallow reasons behind class mobility in India something that Gandhi had expressed years back when he condemned reservations stressing on internal transformation and voluntary acceptance of lower class by the upper class.<sup>30</sup>

The concept of New India coincides with heterodoxy and BPOs. BPO include call centers, film dubbing, business process analysis to IT support work for some of the big global corporate. A whole new class of writers appeared basing their narratives on the angst of young, English speaking immigrants to urban centers. *One Night @the Call Centre* (2004) by Chetan Bhagat is tagged as a pioneer novel in the genre of call-center literature in India. The first call center in India was set up in Gurgaon in 1998. The call center culture is peculiar to LPG India. Introduced to provide cheap workforce to MNCs customer care services, call centers ushered in a consumerist culture in India. The call centers provided earning ability to senior school pass outs possessing a fair flare for English, giving them a chance to leave their two and three tier towns, doing night shifts, popularizing the cab culture and an unbridled opportunity to mingle with the opposite sex in a traditional India proved lethally

attractive to the urban youth of nineties. *Piece of Cake* (2004) by Swati Kaushal narrates the lifestyle of a twenty nine year old corporate manager Minal a product of consumerist India. The otherwise grim, competitive, strenuous and exploited life of youngsters especially women employed in the corporate is portrayed in an extremely comic manner while fully justifying her spats with her traditional khadi clad mother. Being a modern woman she has no qualms in associating with four men at a time in search for the perfect partner. Humor has been purposely used to garb the lust for an elusive love amidst materialism and consumerism. *Neti Neti: Not This Not This* (2009) by Anjum Hasan is the story of Sophie Das who comes from Shillong to work in the cosmopolitan Bangalore to work in a call centre. Free from all family and societal inhibitions she gets her own flat, has a boyfriend, takes drugs and lives close to a shopping mall a living necessity for young Indians. After living this utopian dream she soon realizes the emptiness behind this self-centered narcissist lifestyle. The novelist tries hard to narrate a sincere portrayal of the dilemma of the too liberated and too lost life of the brave middle class youth of India. In the same strain is *Call Me Dan* (2010) by Anish Trivedi. Employed in a call center adjusting his waking hours in sync with UK and US timings is a middle class Gujarati Hindu who has a dual identity with even the personality traits changing as per the name. For his family he is Gautam during the day and metamorphoses into Dan as per the anglophonic demands of his call center western customers of nights. While being Dan he is confident, sleek and more fashion conscious whereas Gautam is more simple and resigned. He even gets into a relationship with a catholic girl who insists on marriage which Dan resists due to the availability of choices in women he works with. This is the queerness of liberalization, choices and more choices giving vent to desires and gradual elimination of gratification.<sup>31</sup> In such a culture Gandhi could not survive. His values of limiting wants and needs could ruin the crux of this new India. Therefore it became imperative to forget him. However he did come up again and rising out of the deep recesses therefore forgetting him was not enough. A more eroding method need to be

adopted. The century was ending and so would end whatever scarce regard the nation had for Gandhi albeit a forgotten one.

### *Novels in Hindi*

Being bereft of values became the latest trend. The novelist carried this valueless modernism to the villages. The hunger for food got replaced with sexual hunger. The subject matter revolves around sex, violence, blind opposition, disregard for religion, duty and history and suicidal tendency. Post 80s Indian society became bereft of values therefore the writers also did not have any value to write upon. We lost touch with our ancient traditions that had been revived and showcased into the twentieth century by Gandhi. The writers simply aped the western writers without testing the validity of the values in Indian context. Most of the heroes were dwarfs, impotent and cowards. They lacked the ability of self-struggle and wielding wooden swords rebelled aimlessly. The novel lost its original purpose of suggesting reforms pertaining to different issues plaguing the society. Promiscuity became the synonym for freedom. Globalization had set in opening new job opportunities in the cities. The Indian Education Policy had always stressed on quantitative education rather than qualitative. Village boys after getting education started moving to the cities in search of work. Having studied in schools and colleges they were ashamed to follow their parent's rural professions. Rich became more rich and poor more poor. Some suffered with obesity while millions continued to die of hunger. Hoarding and Black Marketing became popular. Farmer suicides became rampant. Western born judiciary ate up the earnings of the poor in lengthy court proceedings. Police emerged as goons in uniforms and became the most shameful blotch in the history of independent India. Instead of controlling crime it created more criminals. Innocent got caught in its vicious functioning. Welfare of the individual became important than the society. Capitalism and mass production in factories and industries reduced the interdependence of the members of the society widening the gap and creating the concept of personal space, choice and life. Literature could not remain untouched by

these new developments. People started living in both fantasy and frustration. The nation wanted progress bereft of tradition but such attempt was weak and temporary.

Viveki Rai brought in *Sona Mati* (1981) the story of an obscure village Mahuwari in the state of Uttar Pradesh passing through the chaos and confusion associated with the biggest and the only right attained by the rural poor in India, the right to vote during elections. The tragedy of the Indian voter after thirty years of democracy is that there is no better choice of either the political ideology or the candidate before the voter. Lying, cheating, thievery and false promises define Indian elections. Bereft of basic amenities of life as well as conscience and discretion to comprehend the scenario the voter participates in the drill. Politics defines the relationship between the individual, society and nation. But when politics digresses from its objective of welfare of all, better known as the Gandhian Sarvodaya, then it becomes selfish, false, inhuman and immoral.<sup>32</sup> Consumerism has entered the rural milieu and corrupted the very soul of the villages. The hero Ramrup finds himself alone and isolated against the catastrophic changes that have transformed the very face of simple, illiterate, poor but righteous and ethically strong villages of India. *Samar Shesh Hai* (1988) by the same author also laments the loss of the indigenous village culture and the shattering of the Gandhian dream of 'Ram Rajya' into 'Ravana Rajya.' The shelter homes and ashrams are no more centers of honor and holiness but have been transformed into means of smuggling and lechery. Through the character of Santoshi Pandit armoured with humor as well as satire the novelist succeeds in wording out his message to the readers.<sup>33</sup>

*Sukha Bargad* (1986) by Manzoor Ahatesham is the narration of the pathetic crash of the ideological Indian dream envisaged after independence in a span of two to three decades. Abbu is liberal, belongs to the previous generation that had participated in the freedom movement, is against religious extremism but the children Sohail and Rashida experience a different course. The story is narrated through Rashida where Sohail in the initial phase is the idealistic Muslim youngster but gradually transforms

into a hardliner. The loss of his Hindu love interest sends him in a state of shock and he becomes conscious of the second grade status relegated to Muslims in India. The novel voices the effect that political events of a nation have on its ordinary citizens, especially minorities. Partition, Indo-Pak War, Nehru's death, Bangladesh, emergency all affected the commoners. The breakdown of Sohail and the breakup of Rashida and Vijay are a proof of this. In fact Rashida's decision to marry the Pakistani Hamid is affected by the hanging of Bhutto by General Zia. The novel is a reminiscence of past values and narrates the downfall and degradation of a complete generation. It also narrates the confusion of the educated Muslims in India. Their religiosity cannot turn them into hard core communists nor are they comfortable as religious bigots. The novel, highlights the detrimental transformation of orthodox Hindus or Muslims into radical extremists. The tree is used as an allegorical figure in the novel symbolizing the happy and relaxed age of communal harmony in spite of the yoke of slavery. Independence gradually changed the scenario and the tree started dying. The novel is a plea of the people who forgetting all differences desire to live in accord with each other and want to save the core values of the cohesive nation against the onslaught of politics and mercantilism. Personifying the Greek hero Laocoon who maintained the dignified and sedentary smile even after being bitten by poisonous snakes, some of these characters remain rooted to the values.<sup>34</sup>

*Doob* (1991) by Virendra Jain narrates the plight of the people of Bundelkhand marred by the curse of development. The novel exposes the dual facade of the society, State, religion, culture, bares the contradictions, identifies the true face of both the terror and the terrorist by giving voice to the exploited, deluded and scared and silent people in the hope of ushering in change and establishing equality in the society. The people of the village are given a false hope that the construction of Dam on the banks of river Betwa will bring prosperity in their lives but in reality it is part of a well organized nexus aimed at befooling the people and stuffing the pockets of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. Land of the poor is confiscated in lieu of minimal compensation. Many migrate to the cities the others remain waiting for their share.

Suddenly the walls of the dam crack open and the village and adjacent fields are submerged in tonnes of water. 'Cheelgadi' or airplane is used as a symbol of State exploitation in the novel. Media acts as a handmaid to the State. It represents the inherited colonial mindset bent on the misuse of resources for its own benefit. The State too suffers with anomalies and keeps on changing its policies. To counter charges of environmental degradation the State decides to establish an animal reserve instead of dam. The peasant dreams are crushed under the garb of modernism and economic development. The plot also brings to light the underhand ways adopted by governments to control the low caste population by vasectomy. The novel reads as a reiteration of Gandhian model of growth based on indigenous traditional ways where manmade dams, artificial methods of contraception or sterilization and modern machines were discouraged. Gandhi envisaged a rural model of vocation based education, charkha, swadeshi, sanitation and hygiene where the village will become self-reliant. The blind imitation of West and our characteristic corruption destroyed the villages. The novel is a defense of rural India bereft of any modern amenities yet self-sufficient. The writer appears a strong opponent of modern models of growth and lampoons development that ravages the homes and havens of people. He blames progress for taking away peace from villages. City offers the lure of becoming a big man and many opportunists leave in search for a better future. However, for characters like Mate village represents stability and roots. The novel is predominantly against urbanization and has a negative connotation towards electricity, dams and roads.<sup>35</sup>

In 1992 came *Ardhnarishwar* by Vishnu Prabhakar voicing the age old Gandhian precept that "fundamentally man and woman are one. The soul in both is the same. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other."<sup>36</sup> The novel explores the issues of religion, communalism, caste system, marriage, divorce, rape, abuse etc through the Gandhian lens. The novelist under the influence of Gandhi had participated in the freedom struggle and coming to the 90s felt an intense desire to pen down Gandhian values for the millennium generation in narrative form.

Although writing since 1955 with titles like *Nishikant*(1955),*Tat ke Bandhan* (1955), *Darpan ka Vyakti* (1968) and *Koi To* (1982) Prabhakar had been highlighting social problems but *Ardhnarishwar* was definitely more vocal and lucid than the rest begetting the Sahitya Award for the novelist. Through the character of Sumita the pseudo middle class morals pertaining to rape are challenged in the novel. Herself a victim of rape the protagonist decides to interview women victims of the same fate who due to societal norms suffer with guilt in spite of being the prey in this heinous crime. Sumita by offering a catharsis to these women attempts to find a solution to the complex phenomenon. The women Pammi, Rajkali and Shalini belong to different age, profession and social class yet their trauma is the same.

*Mujhe Chand Chahiye* (1993) by Surendra Verma excited the middle class readers with new erotic experiences portrayed in the novel. The heroine rechristens herself as part of an independent identity she creates for herself. She hails from an ordinary service class background with a Father who was a primary school Sanskrit teacher and wore a Gandhian cap, dhoti and slippers. Her desire to excel in dramatics is encouraged by her teacher with whom her mentoring has lesbian undercurrents although later she has a heterosexual relationship with a man also and even bears his child in spite of being unmarried. The hollowness of people hailing Gandhian ideals is revealed when the Father in spite of condemning the wayward daughter falls for her money and the comfort it offers. Although criticized by critics for titillating the middle class sexual fantasy the novel is a vivid and unapologetic description of the moral degradation and loss of Gandhian values the Indian society went through in the Liberalization era.<sup>37</sup> According to some critics the novel written immediately after the introduction of LPG policy was a eulogy of the grandeur, wealth and opulence associated with the branded lifestyle. The novelist unlike his predecessor did not generalize sari, cars or cigarettes and liquor but named the variety of expensive brands available in each commodity like Kanjeevaram, Toyota, Dunhill, Johnny Walker etc., Description worth analyzing is that of Rajdhani Trains operated as luxury trains by Indian railways. The novel served as an appetizer to salivate the

Spartan Indian life towards that of splendor and magnificence. The approach of the plot is quite melodramatic. The heroine changing her name in class tenth itself, her admission in the school of drama, debut in Bombay cinema and further entry in Hollywood wherein she is not only a brilliant actress but gives directorial tips as well, bringing kudos to the nation. The way Varsha gets impressed by the upper middle class administrative household of Harsha shows her preference for superficial life, her rebellion towards the placid acceptance of life by her household women fails to impress in light of the derogatory and inhumane attitude she harbors towards these non-ambitious average women. The novel is an apt description of the changing values of LPG India.<sup>38</sup>

*Nishkavach* (1995) by Rajee Seth continues in the same strain and portrays two women who wish to live life on their own terms. Neera right from childhood lives in her own world where her parents and her doting brother do not exist. In her teenage she develops an infatuation towards her brother's friend and even consumes the relationship sexually. She gradually grows into a possessive self-willed woman extremely conscious of her physical beauty. On becoming a mother she bluntly refuses to feed the child as it would mar her figure and looks. However, she has to suffer because of it and has to get her breast operated. She is a classic example of the mindset afflicting middle class women in the age of globalization where narcissism and conceit reign supreme. The other character in the novel is Martha whose feminism consists of misandry and using men as an amenity. She pulls out the male protagonist from the slums, gets him a job, sells his jackets but uses him to satisfy her sexual needs. The man cannot touch her without her consent. Similarly the decision to abort the conceived foetus lies with Martha herself. On knowing the gender of the aborted foetus she feels all the more complacent to have ended a male life, the exploiters of women.<sup>39</sup> Globalization has deeply affected the average Indian mentality. The deeply rooted raw sexual craving, kept restraint as a hallmark of any civilized society with a past as ancient as India, oozed out on the surface in the Indian middle class in the nineties. The same got represented in many literary compositions of the

time often in a defensive tone brandishing the cause of feminism while other times criticizing and hinting a divine retribution for such sexual debauchery.

*Idannammam* (1994) by Maitreyi Pushpa illustrates the struggle for land and liberty that women in rural India have to go through even after four decades of nation's independence. It is the story of Manda, whose family becomes the victim of land dispute and she has to spend her growing years in hiding along with her surviving grandmother. Feudalism continues to be the way of life in the Indian heartland in the 90s. On growing up Manda initiates a peasant movement in her village against the land mafia. Interestingly, by the closure of Twentieth Century we again find writers raising the issue of peasant movement in their novels. At such a juncture it becomes difficult to bypass Gandhi, the first leader to bring economic issues in Indian national movement and a similarity between Manda and Gandhian mass agitation can be observed by the readers. However, there is a difference between the two. Gandhi was averse to violence of any kind but Manda though not perpetrating violence is not bounded by any moral obligation against its usage. The shift in attitude is the testimony to the reconstruction of Gandhian ideals that can be visualized in recent times. Woman and traditions, independence and peasants, man and machine, democracy, cooperatives, rural development and the gradual disfigurement of Indian villages find a platform for discourse in the novel.<sup>40</sup>

In the contemporary context of privatization a novel that candidly describes the issues engulfing labor resistance movement does deserve a special mention. *Awan* (1995) by Chitra Mudgal narrates the resistance of two doubly marginalized sections of the society, women and laborers. The tone of the novel is bereft of any sermonic undertones and does not hesitate to reveal the internal conflicts and selfish interests inherent in the movements and provide a platform for analyzing the reasons behind their ineffectual working in the 80s and 90s. The protagonists involved with the labor struggle all suffer with human flaws. The leader Anna Sahib in spite of being an excellent orator fails to instill confidence among the laborers rather making them

dependent on him to voice their need. His distorted sexual attraction towards Namita a girl old enough to be his daughter again makes us question his credibility. Vimla Tai who publically denounces the use of alcohol in the labor class herself is addicted to it in the solitude of her home. Pawar the young Dalit leader suffers with over-ambition and a kind of inferiority complex that inhibits the full expression of his abilities. Namita's lower middle class background hinders the normalisation of her friendship with girls from moneyed families and she falls into the trap laid by Anjana Vaswani. Here she is bedazzled by the love and luxury bestowed upon her by the rich Sanjay Kanoi and starts weaving dreams of living permanently in this land of pleasure and comfort. The dream gets shattered with the miscarriage and the true face of the rich comes before her. She had been lured in to serve as a surrogate mother to Sanjay's baby. It was her virgin womb that had appealed to him. The novelist brings forth the way a woman is still regarded as a physical body and nothing more by the male dominated society. Herein the discourse moves to another plane of women's narcissism and egoism that make women not apprehend beyond their physicality and play into the patriarchal society. In spite of the exploitation faced by women of all sections the novelist continuing her balanced strain ends with a ray of hope and the view that life ends when dreams die, dreams should never dry-up, they should continue to flow and flourish. Middle class women and poor have been the worst sufferers in the age of globalization. Luxurious and branded lifestyle, high-raised apartments, five star hotels and expensive liquor has inculcated an animalistic consumerist culture governed by pleasure principle. Without mentioning Gandhi the novelist propagates the values and ideology associated with Bapu and brings to light the ugly sketch of the age of 'desire' India has ventured into globalization.<sup>41</sup>

*Kalikatha Via Bypass* (1998) by Alka Saraogi is penned in form of a diary narrating incidents from the life of Kishore the seventy year old protagonist who has been a witness to the country's freedom movement. It is the fiftieth year of independence and the people have lost all hope of self respect and dignity. Society especially the youth has become selfish, short-sighted and insensitive with infinite wants and

desires. A young girl in the novel commits suicide because her Father is not letting her wear 'Ghagra Choli' like Madhuri Dixit. Kishore's son gifts him the key for 'Freedom Ford' car on the Independence Day as part of the 'surprise culture' promoted by the 'Youngistan.' Kishore is sad and thinks if only a key could get you freedom then what was the need for so many people to sacrifice their lives for the freedom struggle. The novel is a lucid portrayal of the gradually rising narcissist culture among the new generation of Indians.<sup>42</sup>

Many novels were composed to highlight the adverse effects of the inhumane traits of the global foreign culture on the Indian Value System. *Ninyaanve* (2000) by Ravindra Verma portrays the rise of consumerist culture in India. The novel portrays the different struggles of an individual in both colonial and post-colonial India. The protagonist Ram Dayal went to jail numerous times while participating in the National Movement. He had dreamt of a socialist India but had to witness the disintegration of both his family and country. The novelist features the artificial and consumerist lifestyle of globalized India through the son Hari. The Father continues with his old unpretentious ways but the son finds it humiliating in light of his new rich life. Thugs and extreme communalism became the order of the day. Keeping Agra as the epicenter the novel illustrates the Emergency period and takes the reader through the gradual transformation of a Spartan India to a horrendously materialistic India. Sadly, most of the people are blind to it and those who understand can only be mute and helpless observers. The nation digressed from the idealistic path in search of an elusive freedom. However the writer does not lose hope and the novel ends on a sanguine note for the future at the turn of the century.<sup>43</sup>

*Peeli Chatriwali Ladki* (2001) by Uday Prakash is essentially a love story of a couple marred with caste, values and consumerist culture of globalized India. The novel touches upon the various domains of Indian life affected by the deluge of Globalization. It criticizes the new set up wherein the State, police, army and market work in cohesion to feed the greed, gluttony, lechery of the rich and famous of the

world. The age marks the deconstructive criticism of age old time efficacious philosophy and ideology. Philosophy that talked of restraint i.e., less of wealth, food, violence, sex, sleep, dance etc.,. The new ideology of uninhibited lifestyle propagates itself through the power of capital and Information Technology. It wants to explore unrestraint freedom throughout the world across boundaries and borders under the garb of globalization. It eyes everything in the world for consumption. The rich eat till food starts spilling from their plates to be consumed by millions of poor as leftover but healthy and organically produced food. Similarly they indulge in Viagra pumped sex corrupting the girls sexually who are again later legitimized by millions of poor youth of third world countries as legally wedded wives. Under the hypnotic magnetism of this new ideology people have started forgetting Premchand, Gandhi and Tagore and instead books penned with ‘rags to riches’ storyline have become bestsellers. The powerful business class of India acting as agents of international bodies pressurize the governments to privatize power, food and health. They insist for disinvestment, selling the shares of public sector units and end of subsidy. This new mentality objectifies women who are at the same time deluded into being the consumers themselves however, in reality it is impossible to establish the identity of exploiter as well as victim because the roles may be reversed in many cases. The capitalist modernity resulted in subverting the subjectivity. The novel laments the abandoning of movements and collectivism in the middle class due to obsession with luxury and pleasure. The novel celebrates the simple life of the tribal living close to nature, and self reliant with a glorious past of colonial resistance.<sup>44</sup>

*Akhiri Kalaam* (2003) by Dudhnath Singh is based on the demolition of Babri Masjid by the ‘Kar Sevaks’ in Ayodhya on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992. It voices the agony of the intellectuals who feel smothered before the immoral consortium of politics, money and animalistic behavior. It also proclaims faith in humanity which since millenniums has been overcoming such hurdles and believes that the present barbarism will also fade away. The novel narrates the conceptual and moral challenge put up by an octogenarian against the communal frenzy that happened in Ayodhya from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>

December. Acharyaji alias Prof Tatsat Pandeya is 83 and armed with secularism and critical outlook continues to struggle against the communal flow. His ability to see beyond what is visible, troubles him and his concern for a happy future is a ray of hope for India. Staying quiet and unconcerned with what is happening gives leverage to the aggressor. Although a Marxist the values for which he is struggling are inherently indigenous henceforth Gandhian. The novel also reflects the gap between the theory and practice of communist parties which becomes the reason for their inefficacious performance in India. There are characters like Jameel Miyan who become victims of this communal politics and lose their mental balance while the sane migrated to a safer place. There is an ironic aspect to Acharyaji's family life, his only grandson is a school dropout and sells spare parts and has no respect for books. Acharyaji's University is a hot bed of caste and communalism and it affects his promotion as well. At the invitation of his student he starts on a protest march to Ayodhya which has been compared by critics with the Gandhian march for Civil Disobedience. The only difference is that Gandhi had the whole nation with him whereas Acharyaji is alone and this comprises his last message. The novel satirises the commercialization of religion, religion becoming the haven for goons and criminals and the misuse of the name of 'Ram' for power and politics by the inclusion of characters like Swami Achetanand and Lahantak Baba. The novel warns of the gradual rise of fascism in the country and its detrimental consequences. Unfortunately the intellectual elite also behave like double-faced Janus with its confused, unclear stand and utter selfishness. It also highlights the slow death of the culture of 'disagreement' and the 'God Market' that has come to prevail in cities like Ayodhya. The protagonist is a propagator of human values but his methodology is not humane. He criticizes Tulsidas of being a hurdle between true knowledge and blind faith and independence that has turned us into 'Free Slaves.' However due to his bluntness he fails to reach to the masses and invites attack. It is here that the Gandhian ability of appealing to the hearts of the masses proves peerless. Gandhi had turned religion which is actually 'common sense' of the people into 'good sense' and

won mass support. Gandhi remains an active entity in the novel finding regular references. In fact the local communist leader Ramdin Misra, at a juncture even compares his lifestyle to Gandhi. The novel kaleidoscopes the journey of Indian politics rising from Gandhi's Swarajya to Nehru's Socialist Democracy, Nationalist Socialism of the seventies to Casteist Socialism of the eighties, finally finding contentment in communalism in the nineties.<sup>45</sup>

The new millennium further revealed the detrimental effects of Globalization that had hitherto been hidden under the garb of development. To escape the onslaught of religion, politics and market, the scholars often take refuge in literature and *Kala Pahad* (2004) by Bhagwandas Morwal is one such composition. Although published after the period under study i.e., 2000 its content reflects the pain and dilemma of the marginalized and neglected section of the society who became the mute sufferers in this game of power and politics. Incidentally many writers too have joined the political brigade of these power mongers and owing to the comfort and are quiet on the issue. The novel also brings to light the trend of ganging up of castes on communal issues. The moment religious matters come up differences of suvarna, backwards and dalits obliterate and everyone joins in the Hindu bandwagon. The novel is a kaleidoscope of the Gangi-Jamuni culture of Mewat and is a critic on the changes that are happening in India in the name of development and destroying the blended fabric of the nation. Through the characters of Salemi, Chotelal and Maniram the indomitable human will to survive the odds and continue the traditional value system has been presented. The novel also exposes the sense of insecurity that minority has from majority as well as the doubt regarding the loyalty of the former towards the nation. An atmosphere is created time and again that it is the police and the army alone that are providing security to the Hindus who are always under threat from the neighbouring Muslims in India, this in turn leads to abject glorification and idolisation of the two institutions. In this regard the humane angle of neighbourhood is forgotten, police may come late but it is the Muslim in the vicinity who is the first soother and consoler. Reactionary Islam and Hinduism are both running a parallel

race with revolutionary Islam and Hindus. Interestingly the characters are dalits but there is no dalit discourse as such. Salemi dies in the struggle but hope survives because his thoughts, views and ideals continue to breathe. Patriotism, social reformation or growth and development, nothing can be achieved through the path of divided faith. Not only literature but politics too needs human sensitivity and that connects the novel to the Gandhian insistence on merging religion and morality with politics which unfortunately got distorted in present day times.<sup>46</sup>

The dawn of the new millennium ushered in new gadgets, technology and luxury goods along with the nation's bid to become a super power both technically and militarily amidst squalling poverty. The two decades preceding 2000 had prepared the ground for the complete abandonment of indigenous Indian values. This was also the age of Post-Modern literature in both English and Hindi. The English works deconstructed and questioned the age old values and tradition behind the mask of modernism whereas the Hindi grilled the merits associated with new age globalization and its ramifications for the millions of poor in India. Some of the works especially in English lampooned and made fun of Gandhi while others without being phonic about him or his aphorisms established the flow of their narrative on the values proliferated by him. His views on casteism as well as womanhood transpired in the two most popular themes with the writers of the time women and Dalits. The Hindi novels broached subjects like Muslim insecurity, labor movement-its growth as well as faults, destruction of rural India, the new consumerist definition of freedom and rise of communalism in the country post-Babri Masjid episode. Discourse on Sexual liberty became more choral with issues of bisexuality and lesbianism entering the domain of both English and Hindi writing. Gandhi could have no place in a caste as well as communally polarized India, testing nuclear power to deter its neighbors, distorting family values under the plea of feminist freedom and displacing the poor to boost the country's economy led by politicians stinking of moral and monetary corruption. Gandhi was therefore caricatured and projected as a failure so that both the man and most significantly his values lose allegiance even in the deep recesses of

the Indian soul. This was a premonition of the deep antipathy that people will develop in the next millennium for the man who had got them their cherished freedom.

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# **CHAPTER - 6**

## **Reviewing Gandhian Values in Twenty-First Century India**

### **Chapter 6**

#### **Reviewing Gandhian Values in Twenty-First Century India**

“He was right he knew he was right, we all knew he was right. The man who killed him knew he was right. However long the follies of the violent continue, they but prove that Gandhi was right...Resist to the very end, he said, but without

violence....Of violence the world is sick...Oh, India, dare to be worthy of your Gandhi!”<sup>1</sup>

Pearl S Buck  
American writer

The fact is you cannot both be a conquering nation and a benevolent nation at the same time.<sup>2</sup>The opening of a Center for Gandhian Studies on 16th May 2015 in Fudan University, Shanghai, China, and the MoU signed by Niger to open a convention centre<sup>3</sup> in 2018 are few instances that reiterate the status of Gandhi as a global icon. The rest of the world may still be soaking in and studying Gandhian values, but in India, his ideals have been put on the shelf under the influence of pseudo-globalization fogging the nation in the post-liberalization twenty first century. In such a dismal state of affairs, it becomes imperative to study the surreptitious digressing of the nation’s political as well as social life from core Gandhian indigenous and Indian values. The chapter describes the gradual metamorphosis of the inherently non-aggressive Spartan Indian State into an ‘Armed State’ wedded to consumerist values belying the high ideals upheld by Gandhi. The process of discarding Gandhi received abutment from two determinants; the vanward was of course ‘globalization’ while the shellfire was provided by the plethora of anti-Gandhi biographies penned by both foreign and Indian authors to tarnish the man as well as the values he stood for.

### **Economics of Globalization in the New Millennium**

In 1991, the Indian State flagged off a new economic policy (NEP) for the country that opened the portals of Indian market to Global Multinational Companies. The MNCs not only sold their products, but used the skilled as well as unskilled Indian workforce to set up manufacturing units in the country. The novel approach not only transformed the economic sector of the country, but also changed the character of

Indian polity and society. Although introduced in the last decade of the twentieth century the aftermath of this new age globalization became more visible in the new millennium.

The concept of Globalization is as old as human history. Tentatively it dates back to 2,00,000 BCE when early man started migrating out of Africa in search of better living prospects like food, water and shelter. In the age of ancient civilizations evidences of external trade and cultural exchange between Indus and Mesopotamia as well as others have been unearthed. Later Roman gold was draining into China and India in return of orient luxuries. The Industrial Revolution of eighteenth century ushered in imperialism, mercantilism and colonialism. Commercial interdependence created a global economy connecting England and France with their colonies spread across Asia and Africa. World War II sounded the death knell of colonialism but the era of cold war created numerous political and economic groups that vehemently favored free trade and open economies. The disintegration of USSR ushered in the new age globalization characterized by liberalization and privatization.<sup>4</sup> Globalization could be defined as “The integration of political, economic and cultural activities of geographically and/or nationally separated peoples.”<sup>5</sup> Globalization interconnects countries in every sphere of existence ranging from economic to ecological, world trade to weapons of mass destruction and exchange of ideas, goods, information and technology. It has shrunk the world into a global village. On a philosophical plane it coincides with the ancient Indian adage of “Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam” i.e. ‘the whole world is a family.’ However, when it becomes a means of profit, exploitation and loot by the capitalist rich countries, it shows a purely material aspect bereft of any global humane consciousness. In such a scenario globalization becomes a tool to establish the hegemony of western life model and denigrates the national/local culture<sup>6</sup> with the motto, ‘Let the ‘unflat world’ be molded into the image of the flat (western) world and we should see an age of prosperity and happiness around us.’ This face of materialistic globalism flourishes on the carcass of national socio-economic needs and indigenous culture and values. Unfortunately it is this consumerist, self centered

globalism, without any individual or collective consciousness, that has established itself in India and eating away its indigenous vitality and values.

Advocated by many as the rebirth of dreams, LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) did deliver the goods statistically to claim its status as the harbinger of a new resurgent India. India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita rose from 302.65 USD in 1985 to 1595.7 USD by 2014.<sup>7</sup> The Central Government's fiscal deficit, which was at 8.13 percent of GDP in 1986-87, has been brought down to half at 4 percent by 2015.<sup>8</sup> Unemployment Rate, lingering at an average of 7.32 percent between 1983 and 2013 came down to record 4.90 percent in 2013.<sup>9</sup> Lastly, the most touted, Annual Percentage Growth Rate of GDP, reported 4.8 in 1986 has risen to 7.4 in 2015.<sup>10</sup> The staggering numbers are sufficient to dampen any reservations the Indian masses may harbor against liberalization. Yet the bubble gets bursted after a careful study of these developments. As per UNDP (United Nations Development Program),<sup>11</sup> 55.28 percent of India's population is still living in poverty(Multi-dimensional Poverty Index),<sup>12</sup> employment to population ratio is 60.8 percent and the most effectual indicator of development, Human Development Index measuring the average achievement of 187 countries of the world in three basic dimensions- a long and healthy life, education level and a decent standard of living, continues to rank India between low and medium level development countries. India's HDI value in 1980 was .369. It rose from .431 in 1990 to .527 in 2005 and reached an unimpressive .586 by 2013. To top it all is the unabashed bar for BPL (Below Poverty Line) accepted by the Indian State since 2005 to determine the number of citizens falling under this category. As per the Tendulkar Committee<sup>13</sup> the poverty line fixed in rural areas is Rs 27 per day while in urban areas it has been raised to Rs 33 per day. Thus the Tendulkar Plan brought 270 million Indians under BPL category in accordance with census 2011. However, as per Rangarajan Committee recommendations nearly 363 million Indians would fall in BPL if Rs 32 per day in rural areas and Rs 47 per day in cities is adopted as the criterion. Such revelations compel us to study the synonymous relationship between growth and development<sup>14</sup>

and calls for an in depth conceptual debate on the subject. After a brief overview of LPG the next step is analyzing its impact against the Gandhian values on the socio-economic and political ambience of twenty first century India. Due to the wide gamut of the subject certain specific aspects from the socio-political milieu of the country have been chosen for the discourse.

### **Gandhian ‘Swadeshi’ versus FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)**

Interestingly Gandhian swadeshi merges with the spirit of entrepreneurship. However it supports localized or regionalized entrepreneurship. The rise of indigenous businesses or ‘Start-Ups’ availing native resources, both men and material, generating products as well as employment for the local population is definitely putting Swadeshi to action. Gandhi was not a communist and would never hamper the spirit of free enterprise per se it was Indian. Internal liberalization had already taken place in 80s but the entry of MNCs had not been permitted. This was done in 1991 where many sectors of the economy were opened for both domestic and international players. It was herein that globalization went against the Gandhian swadeshi. The domestic businesses started digressing towards the concept of pure profit imitating their international counterparts and having no qualms on capitalizing on the nation’s human and mineral resources. The Transnational Capital and technology has been projected as creating a positive balance of payment and creating employment in the country. However a guileless analysis shows the perils of technology in an overpopulated nation suffering with the challenge of unemployment. According to an ILO (International Labor Organization) report the number of unemployed persons in India are expected to rise from 18.3 million in 2017 to 18.6 million in 2018 and 18.9 by 2019.<sup>15</sup> As of now the Indian State has opened majority of sectors for 100 percent FDI with prohibition majorly in Railways and Atomic energy. The sectors granted automated entry with 100 percent FDI are vegetable cultivation and animal husbandry which still constitute populous sectors of employment as well as primary source of nutritional mineral rich food in India. Mining in metal and non-metal ores, coal, petroleum exploring and refining, non news broadcasting, telecom and even defense

industries have been opened for FDI with capping ranging from 49 to 100 percent with either automatic or approval route.<sup>16</sup> With lower labor and production cost, surging population and the rising spending capacity of the middle class, the profit margin is fatter in India as compared to the global stage. In fact the Indian extension of the global brands fare better than the mother firm because of the profitable milieu. The profit margin of Hindustan Unilever was 14%, while for the parent Unilever it was limited to 10%, similarly the local units of consumer goods companies like Nestle, Procter & Gamble and Colgate post higher margins than their parent units.<sup>17</sup> The tax that these companies pay to the Indian State is much less as compared to the profits they generate. The economy has become completely dependent on foreign capital and investment. The prices of essential commodities are controlled by the foreign firms draining out the money of the middle class in high priced consumer goods and services. In this vicious cycle the poor get totally neglected. The traditional crafts in rural India are dying or losing their traditional patterns to suit the global market. It appears to be the second phase of slavery. The IT industry producing software after software to reduce manual file keeping has lessened the strength of office staff ending job avenues for the mediocre achievers amongst the educated in India. It appears to be the second phase of slavery. When Gandhi promoted Swadeshi he basically meant espousing the non-machine handicraft based indigenous industries. Gandhi considered the use of large scale machinery to be a sin of modern civilization especially in a populous country like India. He wrote, “The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking. If the machinery craze grows in our country it will become an unhappy land.”<sup>18</sup> Incidentally Gandhi’s words have become prophetic. LPG is an age of machines and industries. A recent report published by Azim Premji University has established a negative correlation between economic growth and employment. The report has declared the economic reform process to be resulting in jobless growth.<sup>19</sup> FDI has badly hit the concept of Swadeshi and deteriorated the condition of workers in the country. According to the ILO report 77 percent of active Indian workforce will

be falling in the category of ‘vulnerable employment’ by 2019. Also in another report titled ‘Labour without Liberty –Female Migrant Workers in Bangalore’s Garment Industry’ published by Indian Garment Labor Union, the India Committee of Netherlands and Clean Clothes Campaign, the female workers employed in high value international fashion brands like Benetton, H&M, Levi’s etc are lured into the city with false promises and then made to work under pressure at low wages epitomizing the concept of modern day slavery.<sup>20</sup> It was against this kind of slavery that Gandhi had championed the cause of Swadeshi. Sadly the Gandhian swadeshi has been made obsolete in the twenty-first century and has been distorted and misrepresented purposely to serve the selfish ends of the international capital. It’s not that the votary of swadeshi hates the universe but has definitely more concern for the immediate neighbor and will go to the extent of consciously rejecting quality goods to promote the low quality local goods because he or she considers it an important duty to do so as a well wishing concerned member of the society. At the same time Gandhi clarified that swadeshi is not fetish in spirit. If a commodity or article cannot be manufactured locally then Swadeshi will not oppose foreign made good. Gandhi said, “A true votary of Swadeshi will never harbor ill will towards the foreigner...Swadeshi is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service and love.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Gandhian ‘Ahimsa’ versus AFSPA and Armament**

Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (6-4-1921): “If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She will cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion. I cling to India like a child to its mother’s breast because I feel she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspirations. When that faith is gone, I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian.”

Since its inception the Indian union has had to hear the dissenting voices of autonomy, statehood and separatism hailing from different part of the country. As seen earlier

the base policy of the State has been dialogue and peace missions albeit sometimes marred with use of arms also. However, post-liberalization, India hardened its anti-insurgency policy. Not only that, it even started augmenting its defense forces by buying the latest from the global arms market. Kashmir and North East were the first casualty to the cause of promoting 'LPG' in India. The discord dates back to the year of independence, but now the State wanted a quick disposal of the problem. The rapidity and magnitude with which the global business giants were investing in the country the Indian State had to give up its former policy of peace talks and dialogue with the insurgents groups and resort to military action. In 1990 AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) was imposed for the first time in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir. The states of the North-East, especially Assam had been the first to bear the brunt of AFSPA in 1958; however, the onset of economic liberalization with India's 'Look East Policy'<sup>22</sup> resulted in a fresh wave of its imposition in the whole region.<sup>23</sup> Besides employing AFSPA the State conducted major armed operations like 'Bajrang,' 'Rhino' and 'Bluebird,' aiming at total annihilation of the anti-state sections in the region. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act grants special prosecution rights to the officers posted in 'disturbed areas.' The Kashmir Valley is still occupied by more than half a million troops and nearly the same number is doing so in the North-East under AFSPA. Over the years both the regions have had innumerable cases of torture, rape, custodial and summary killings reported against the Indian State by the civil society and human rights groups. Such incidents create doubt among the local population towards the intention of the State. Since 1990, many lives have been lost,<sup>24</sup> the number of insurgent groups has gone up<sup>25</sup> and civilian population has suffered at the hands of both the insurgents as well as the State. Amidst such chaos the sixteen year hunger strike of Irom Sharmila, demanding withdrawal of the draconian AFSPA is a veritable example of holding on to the voice of peace even in an aggressively antagonistic atmosphere and coaxing us to remember Gandhi who said, "Democracy and violence can hardly go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian

or if they are to become truly democratic they must become courageously non-violent.”<sup>26</sup> Continuing in the same strain Gandhi wrote, “Repression has never worked. I challenge anybody to point to me a single episode in either ancient or modern history, which proves that repression has even once achieved the end to which it has been directed. The English failed in America.....(it) failed in South Africa after the Boer War, it failed in Ireland yesterday....it will fail in India tomorrow. If repression succeeds in anything, it is in advertising the cause of the enemy.”<sup>27</sup> Globalization has put the Indian State under pressure to do away with its ‘soft’ image in order to create a disciplined ambience for the transnational investment. In doing so India’s image internationally has suffered irrevocably in its human rights record. Its ‘carrot and stick’ policy in both Kashmir and North-East has yielded no concrete result; the insurgents continue their ‘cat and mouse’ game persistently gaining support with the civilians as well as international observers,<sup>28</sup> attesting the above quoted words of Gandhi.

Due to liberalization India has also forsaken the policy of peace, nonviolence and disarmament it had been following since independence. The change came in late 80s with India importing armaments worth 12,235 million USD (UNDP 1994: 58) between the years 1988-1992. Our defense budget has been steadily on the rise. It was Rs 235 Billion in 1994 and it rose to Rs 412 Billion in 1999,<sup>29</sup> and further to Rs 2.29 Trillion in 2014-15.<sup>30</sup> Since then India has been topping the world rankings for weapon imports, organizing vigorous air and naval exercises with USA and Israel. The reasons cited are quite common and reminiscent of the ones given by European countries at the onset of world war, like threat from neighboring countries or using armament as a deterrent to war. In 1998 renouncing its stand on global nuclear disarmament India became a nuclear power. The decision called in economic sanctions and trade embargo by US and its allies but the government survived it<sup>31</sup> by ushering in a second wave of reforms. With the goal of attracting 10 Billion USD annually in FDI, foreign exchange controls were removed, insurance industry was opened to foreign investment, internet services were privatized and tariffs were cut

down. India has been world's top arms buyer consecutively for the last three years i.e., 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-2015 leaving behind China.<sup>32</sup> The cap for foreign investment limit in the domestic defense industry is 49 percent without seeking government approval.<sup>33</sup> India is wooed by global arms firms from Britain, France and USA to secure billion dollar deals. In defense matters the Indian State is now desirous to export defense equipments to the world. The orient known to give philosophical meditations and peaceful ideology to the world wants to sell arms in this age of globalization.<sup>34</sup> A country where millions are still languishing around the poverty line with a below average annual HDI value an annual defense budget of billions appears to be foolhardy. As per Global Peace Index 2015, 342 Billion USD, i.e., 4.7 percent of India's GDP in 2014 was spent by India to contain violence.<sup>35</sup> There does seem to exist an entangled relationship between this race for armament and economic liberalization. Opening doors for foreign investment is turning India into an armed State. Could it be reparation for our lost masculinity, when we allow the outsiders to exploit our men and material for their enormous profit? Interestingly, India's relationship with its neighbors has not improved rather it appears to be deteriorating on many issues. The country has been ranked 136 out of 163 countries by Global Peace Index 2018<sup>36</sup> India has been using military aid to suppress internal dissent instead of lending ear to the grievances and making feasible concessions.

Since antiquity, East has been known for its peaceful and magnanimous demeanor against aggression and it is the same indigenous Indian spirit that was invoked by Gandhi when he wrote, "The Rishis who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized the uselessness and taught a weary world that the way to salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence."<sup>37</sup> Gandhi was utterly against India imitating the West, especially in its gluttony for power and armament. He prophesized the momentary victory India might gain by following this path but simultaneously predicted rise in problems due to militarization. He visualized a lot of potential in

India and wanted it to set a lesson to the world. He said: “I am only hoping and praying that....there will rise a new and robust India-not warlike, basely imitating the west in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best the west has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of aching world.....”<sup>38</sup>

### **Gandhian ‘Aparigraha’ versus Levis and Live-ins**

Gandhi said (*Young India* 23-2-1921): “Our civilization, our culture, our swaraj depend not on multiplying our wants-self indulgence, but upon restricting our wants-self denial. That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest level.”

International brands in clothes, cars, electronic goods, gadgets, foods and satellite television entered Indian market whetting the materialistic lust of the otherwise Spartan Indians. According to KPMG-Assocham Study by the end of 2018 the Indian luxury market has been estimated to be 30 Billion USD. The luxury goods market will expand five fold in next three years and the number of millionaires is expected to multiply three times in five years. Due to the high purchasing power of the upper class tier II and III cities the Indian market is a huge opportunity for foreign luxury players.<sup>39</sup> The luxury goods sector includes products like apparel, accessories, home decor, pens, watches, wines and spirits, jewelry, and services such as fine dining, concierge services, travel, hotels, spa-assets as fine arts, yachts and automobiles.<sup>40</sup> The change could be viewed most drastically in the country’s small towns and the villages out-skirting these towns. These rural and semi-rural settlements got exposed to a myriad of experiences worldwide. This wave of liberalization did give some relief to the claustrophobic atmosphere but for the majority, the transition was superficial and frivolous. The Indian countryside still bereft of basic amenities like water, electricity, roads, sewerage and civic-safety became stuffed with international brands of drinks, eatables and mobiles. In 2003 Coca Cola introduced the tagline ‘thanda matlab Coca Cola’ in order to rope in villages still struggling to get clean drinking.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, by introducing ‘Aloo Tikki Burger’ and ‘Chicken Maharaja

Mac' McDonalds adapted itself to the Indian palate.<sup>42</sup> According to a report published by Euromonitor International the restaurant market in India will double from 2013 to 2021 because the rising number of millennial in India prefer to eat outside than home cook food with Chinese and latin American cuisines topping their preferences.<sup>43</sup> Aaron Allen and Associates, Global Restaurant Consultants has declared the Indian food service industry as one of the fastest growing in the world whose worth will reach 126 Billion USD by 2020 in spite of demonetization and GST(Goods and Services Tax).<sup>44</sup> A major chunk of this market is ruled by global players like McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Domino's, Subway and Barista. However domestic players are also there like Nirula, Coffee Day Group, Haldiram, etc.<sup>45</sup> A joint study by ASSOCHAM and EY has reported that by the end of 2015, 40 percent of the children were undernourished whereas urban India is suffering with the challenge of over nutrition. According to the study India is ranked as the third most obese nation of the world after US and China and is called the diabetes capital of the world, with about 69.2 million people living with it as per the 2015 data by W.H.O. During the years 2005-15, there was a considerable increase in the percentage of overweight/obese Indian men rising from 9% to 19% and overweight/obese Indian women from 13% to 21%.<sup>46</sup> Amidst all this disparity India's rich are riding high. In 2007 there were only 36 Indians featuring in Forbes Billionaire List, and by 2017 the number grew to a whopping 101 with Mukesh Ambani the chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), getting the highest-rank among the Indians in the list, at No. 33 with a net worth of 23.2 Billion USD.<sup>47</sup> Stuck in the bedlam, the middle-class lured by consumerism was the worst affected. The greater availability of consumer goods created 'desire' amongst the low income groups. LPG has transformed the Indian economy of need into an economy of desire. The rise in inflation and the inability of the low income groups to possess the 'desired' commodities not only widened the gap between the 'haves and have-nots'<sup>48</sup> but also generated high levels of frustration leading to rise in crime in the society. Exposed to the western culture of sexual promiscuity the young generation readily lapped up the trend. Live-ins and pre or

extra-marital sex was no more to be shunned or tagged amoral. As per HT-MaRS youth survey published in Hindustan Times on Sep 3, 2015, an unprecedented 61 percent believed that premarital sex is no longer a taboo, but did not refrain from voicing their preference for virgins as marriage partners proving their dubious attitude on the subject. On an average 49 percent were in relationships; while 45 percent in Chandigarh and 41 percent in Delhi openly admitted they cheated on their partners. According to Mumbai-based sexologist Deepak Jumani, “Embarking on a relationship does not mean youngsters have marriage on mind. Whether it is one night stand, a casual relationship or a live-in, commitment does not have to be on the agenda.”<sup>49</sup> The revelation is a shock in a land known for traditional values like frugality, idealism, dharma, karma, transcendentalism, vegetarianism, religious tolerance and ahimsa. Techno-savvy dating practices, free love, sexually transmitted diseases, international cuisines, pizzas and burgers, Gucci and Armani stores is the new India of twenty first century.

Unfortunately, Globalization has convinced India to reject the Gandhian concept of controlling the wants, pertaining to food, possessions and sex. For Gandhi, food was to be taken only to keep the body alive and functioning and not at all to please the palate. Similarly, he discouraged acquiring worldly possessions and advocated a spirit of contentment and voluntary poverty. He said, “The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need, and which are therefore neglected and wasted, while millions are starved to death for want of sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want.”<sup>50</sup> Gandhi considered the sexual energy as a portent power capable of doing wonders if used for the betterment of mankind. He was against wasting it in satisfying fleeting and momentary pleasures. For Gandhi, it was a gift of God to be used only for procreation. Gandhi was a votary of ‘Brahmacharya’ or Chastity as an ideal way of life. However, Gandhi’s definition of Brahmacharya was not limited to physical lust but a general reign in over all sense organs. According to him it was to be observed in thought, word and deed. The ears, the eyes and touch, all need to be trained to do so. India’s fall into the abyss of desire,

when hunger, poverty, physical and sexual crime against women, children, dalits and other marginalized sections are on the rise calls forth an appeal to the observance of Brahmacharya if not in its literal form but at least in a restrained way as a panacea to the afore stated maladies.

### **Gandhian ‘Sarva Dharma Samabhava’ versus Caste and Communalism**

Writing in *Young India* (25-9-1924) Gandhi said: “I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction, but they have the same source.”

Ironically, the twenty-first century India is more zealous in guarding and practicing the vagaries and nuances of their communities than any other time in the past and is therefore more religious and caste conscious than before. There exists a strong link between liberalization and the suffusion of such psycho-social bearing. Globalization exposed the Indians to such novel experiences, that the very roots of Indian cultural ethos were rattled. The spartanly simple lifestyle of pre-90s was swept away and under the intoxication of materialism, the average Indian readily submitted to the forbidden impulses and desires in everyday life. This metamorphosis tormented the Indian conscience which felt guilty over its mesmerization with foreign influences. This realization resulted in an ontological search for identity that led to a guilt ridden aggressive tilt towards religious fanaticism and caste loyalties and peculiarities and an indigenous binding to one’s culture and identity.<sup>51</sup> The transformation is most nonsensical and paradoxical because adherence to such idiosyncrasies should have ended due to the liberal western ideals accompanying liberalization, yet caste and religion have come to matter more for the ‘Global Indian.’ Researchers attribute the trend to a global phenomenon that could be traced in other neoliberal nations of the world. In India it materialized in a spurt in pilgrimages as well as a boom in the god-men industry. The 2013 flash floods of Kedarnath due to overflow of pilgrims to the sight is a veritable example of the ritual turning into a fad with the believers. In spite of the recent spree of cases of sexual assault and corruption pending against the god-

men there has been no lessening in their popular appeal among the masses and their public meetings are thronged by devotees from different sections of the society. The country has experienced a mushrooming of religious sites also, for e.g. in Delhi alone the number of registered religious building rose from 560 in 1980 to 2000 in 1997, and this figure does not include the unregistered, unaccounted and encroached structures.<sup>52</sup> An interesting observation is that this rise in religious fervor can be seen in all sections of the Indian community. A 2007 State of the Nation Survey done by CNN-IBN, claimed that 38 percent of Indian Muslims, 47 percent of Indian Christians, 33 percent of Sikhs and 27 percent of Hindus have become more religious in the past five years.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, this religious fetish is totally ritualistic and based on blind faith and bereft of any reason or logic. Such religiosity only results in rigidity and fanaticism.

India being a nation of many caste, classes and religions has always had linguistic, communal and caste differences. However, post-liberalization and especially after the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and Mandal Commission recommendations, communal and caste issues got flared up in India, the embers of which continue to simmer till date. Although dubbed by many as a diversion strategy of the Indian Government to distract the critiques of liberalization,<sup>54</sup> the episode has created major cracks in the cohesive social fabric of the country spawning an environment of doubt and suspicion between the leading religious communities of the country. This distrust has helped the fundamentalist and terrorist outfits of each community to gain sympathizers and followers amongst the civil population. Gandhi laid the onus of safeguarding the minority on the shoulders of the majority. In a prayer speech dated 22-9-1947 during the days of Delhi riots he clearly stated, “Surely it is cowardly on the part of the majority to kill or banish the minority for fear that they will all be traitors. Scrupulous regard for the right of the minorities well becomes a majority. Disregard of them makes of a majority a laughing stock. Robust faith in oneself and brave trust of the opponent, so-called or real, is the best safeguard.”<sup>55</sup> The culture of mob lynching perpetrated by vigilante groups merely on the doubt of cow trade or

beef consumption is a sad reminder of the above discussed wedge which does not seem to be bridging up. Interestingly Gandhi had a very pragmatic and lucid approach towards the subject. He said, “The Panchayats should see to cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the milk yield. Our cattle had become a burden on the land for want of care. It was gross ignorance to blame the Muslims for cow slaughter. Gandhiji held that it was the Hindus who kill the cattle by inches through ill-treatment. Slow death by torture was far worse than outright killing.”<sup>56</sup>

In such a dismal scenario, a brief overview of Gandhian egalitarian values becomes de rigueur. For Gandhi, “God could not be found in temples or idols, or places of worship built by man’s hands, nor could He be found by abstinence. God could be found only through love, not earthly but divine.”<sup>57</sup> Gandhi had an unflinching faith in the basic unity and co-existence of the two major religious communities of India. He blamed the British for the divide and held that he had “not a shadow of doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.”<sup>58</sup> As providence would have it, he did not live to see his conviction blasted in twenty-first century India. Gandhi was a man of religion. An *India Today* Exclusive Poll conducted by global market research agency Synovate, claimed 86 percent of young India to be deeply religious.<sup>59</sup> Logically the contemporary fad for the gods in India should coincide with Gandhian religiosity, but sadly it does not. For Gandhi, religion was a means to understand the ‘How’ and ‘Why’ of life. He vouched the wisdom behind religious traditions yet at the same time was very much conscious of the clammy hold of such rituals on religion. He never took part in any of the traditional religious rituals and his prayers contained texts from all the religions of the world.<sup>60</sup> Untouchability, which still thrives in post-liberalization India, was declared a disgraceful blot on Hinduism by Gandhi. Unfortunately, manual scavenging continues to be practiced in many parts of techno-savvy India. Gandhi was not at all apprehensive about rejecting the scriptures if they promulgated the vicious custom. According to him, such texts served no useful purpose and kept a large section of the human race suppressed. At the same time Gandhi rejected caste-based reservation

because he felt it would alienate the already ostracized low castes and hamper their smooth synthesis with the caste Hindus. He also feared that it will give birth to an indelible antipathy between them. As with other Gandhian sayings, this too has proved prophetic. India was never so caste conscious as it is in the twenty-first century India. The situation has worsened with the politicians playing the caste card. At this juncture, Indian society stands divided, both vertically and horizontally and once again we need to draw inspiration from Gandhi to face the challenges of the globalized world.

LPG ushered in a host of new experiences for the nation, not only economically but socio-politically as well. It brought India out of its reclusiveness to play an active role in global affairs; unfortunately in order to adopt the homogeneity of the global culture, the heterogeneous composition of its polity, society and culture suffered. The open market did give 'choice' to the consumer but also created 'chaos and confusion' leading to frustration among the majority because the State could not bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Social networking sites that could have played the same role of molding public opinion as nationalist newspapers in colonial India, became a gallery for narcissist 'Selfies' and Private affairs. Moreover this bold and brazen India is also audaciously religious and caste conscious, further complicating the situation. 'Liberalization' could have truly liberated India from all its maladies if implemented in tune with the indigenous characteristics of the country's polity, society and economy and that could have been possible only with the Gandhian model falling between ultra-modernism of the west and irrational fetish obsession of the traditional east. Gandhi understood the difference between economic and real progress. For him the real progress was based on moral values like truth, love and nonviolence whereas economic advancement was limited to material growth. He was not against materialism but only if it had been acquired within the perimeter of morality. However material progress above a given minimum would surely be in conflict with moral progress.<sup>61</sup>Gandhi comprehended the Indian spirit like no one else.

His critical traditionalism was timelessly efficacious for the nation and would have definitely delivered India of its troubles. Unfortunately, it was not to be so, as a result one-sixth of India remains afflicted with insurgency, its borders continue to be vulnerable, farmers are persistently committing suicides, parents are still selling their children and rape and abuse of women and children goes on unabashedly.<sup>62</sup>

The twenty-first century globalized Indian youth comprising nearly sixty percent of the country's population, views Gandhi, the 'Father of the Nation,' as a mere watermark on the Indian paper-notes, in photographs hanging in the backdrop of every corrupt Government official, subject of passivity and ridicule in Indian cinema, as quotable quotes during school debates and elocutions, speeches of politicians and finally in relation to the nomenclature of roads, circles and insipid government schemes. Gandhi stopped existing or mattering for India under the deluge of globalization but there was another process at work that clandestinely contributed to his ideological demise in the land of his birth. The next part of the chapter deals with the contribution of the literati in putting the finishing touch to the second death of Gandhi.

### **Gandhi and his Critics in the New Millennium**

Lately, the trend of criticizing and lampooning Gandhi is rampantly emerging in Indian Literature, which not only targets his political, social and economic ideology but also episodes and events pertaining to his personal life. These compositions serve a dual purpose they not only turn the modern day Indian opinion against Gandhi but also cajole it towards readily accepting the new MNC culture surging in the country after liberalization. The values of the new LPG India have already been chafed against the indigenous Gandhian values in the first part of the chapter and have been found deeply wanting on the criterion. The second part aims to establish the role of anti-Gandhi literature in nailing the last nail to the coffin containing his ideals and bury it so deep that it may never be unearthed. Such a feat, if it may be called so, will definitely remove all kind of ideological hurdles that may come up due to Gandhi, in the smooth spread of material aspect of globalization.

### **Pre-Liberalization Era**

Gandhi had become the subject of overt criticism during his lifetime itself. His means, methods and ideology were questioned by many of the contemporary scholars. Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi's earliest admirer and foremost critic, questioned Gandhi's advocacy of the Indian Varna System in an essay titled *The Shudra Habit* (1927) and the play *Tasher Desh* (1933)<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Ambedkar in his speech *Annihilation of Caste: With A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi* (1937) challenged Gandhi on his views on casteism in India. Closely followed is *Reflections on Gandhi* (1949), by George Orwell, an essay written posthumously, skeptically decrying the sainthood assigned to the Mahatma.<sup>64</sup> Gandhi in turn most magnanimously accepted the chafing of his thoughts and writings. He answered his critics by writing in his periodicals, *Young India* and *Harijan*. The dawn of independence amplified the questioning and doubting. Writers like Rajarao and R K Narayan, who in their previous works had eulogized Gandhi now deliberated a parallel option to Gandhian nationalism as well as high lightened the hypocrite pseudo-gandhians mushrooming in post-independence India. The trend continued in the four decades preceding Liberalization. Manohar Malgaonkar, Nayantara Sehgal, Bhabani Bhattacharya and many more continued to write on and refer Gandhi but simultaneously urged their readers for a deeper analysis and review of his teachings in context of the changing times. However, the Diaspora writers of English, during this period treated Gandhi in a comparatively harsh manner. The travelogues of V S Naipaul (*India: An area of darkness, India: A Wounded Civilization and India: A Million Mutinies Now*) written during a period of twenty-five years (1964-90) termed Gandhi 'a colonial product' bereft of any capability of understanding the true spirit of India, and belittled him by questioning the timeless efficacy of his ideology.<sup>65</sup> Approaching the 80s, the writings became all the more critical and demeaning in their tone. *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie, a Diaspora writer of Indian origin ushered in the age of post-modern writings in India. Through the character of Salim Sinai the novel narrates the events of Indian history from the time of independence to the declaration of emergency.

Rushdie promoted liberal-capitalist model for India and dispensed with Gandhi even ignoring his contribution to the national movement and erasing him from the history of India.<sup>66</sup> *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) by Shashi Tharoor is a grim parodical portrayal of Gandhi's ideals where he is caricatured as an ancient sage obsessed with asceticism and his socio-political utopian dream for India.<sup>67</sup>

### **Post-Liberalization Era**

In 1991 India the Indian markets was flooded with latest goods ranging from cars to clothes luring the modestly living Indian middle class into a lifestyle of ease and luxury. Gandhi had died but his ideological life was still alive in Pre-Liberalization India but the LPG dither the faith of the traditional middle class in the indigenous value system of India. In such a scenario Gandhian ideals of frugality, peace and communal harmony took a back seat and a very shallow and materialistic definition of globalism was adopted. Over the years an overspill of such biographies, novels, essays and articles appeared in the Indian literary scene that overtly disparaged Gandhi by high lightening the fallacies of his personal life, and blaming him for all of India's contemporary problems. It appears as though the primary objective of such compositions is to make the successive generation of Indians oblivious of Gandhi firstly by bypassing his role in Indian freedom struggle, secondly by juxtaposing him against other leaders of the period and initiating debate over their respective contribution and lastly the most underhand tool adopted by any scholar to defame an idol i.e. judging him on his personal struggles and sufferings. Thus with great planning and plotting an extremely flawed and culpable picture of Gandhi was created before the young readers of India for whom the man became a burden to be borne from the country's past. Gurcharan Das in his book *India Unbound* (2000), welcomed the new liberal India with open arms declaring the Gandhian program of village reconstruction to be a failure and blaming him for misunderstanding history and deluding the people with his impractical solutions to country's problems.<sup>68</sup> Similarly Rushdie in his article *Mohandas Gandhi* (1998) written for *The Times* magazine accused him for country's partition, impairing the Dalit movement and

burdening the masses with his dietic and sexual eccentricities. V S Naipaul continued to indict Gandhi for causing irreparable loss to the country due to his anti-modern stance in his two fictions *Half a Life* (2001) and its sequel *Magic Seeds* (2004). Although vernacular literature, except for few extremist works like Veer Savarkar's *Gandhi Gondhal* (1925) had not been too abrasive on Gandhi, the transformation came in 80s when Pradeep Dalvi wrote *Me Nathuram Godse Boltoy* (1989) in Marathi. The play was full of scorn and ridicule for Gandhi and represented Godse's perception of Gandhism as well as his justification for killing Gandhi. Immediately after its release the Government of India banned the theatrical presentation of the play which was able to have its premiere only in 1997. Why was the ban lifted? Had the Indian audience suddenly attained the level of sensibility and maturity required for comprehending and critically appreciating such litigious literature? Ajit Dalvi wrote *Gandhi Virudh Gandhi* (1995) in Marathi, Feroze Abbas Khan translated it into English as *Mahatma versus Gandhi* (1997) and was eventually adapted into a movie *Gandhi, My Father* in 2007. Ajit's play was originally based on a Gujarati work by Dinkar Joshi. The play was based on the troubled relationship between Gandhi and his eldest son Harilal. In 1988 the Gujarati play had hardly drawn any readership but in post-liberalization India it was declared a resounding success.<sup>69</sup> Similar works drawing attention to Gandhi's failure as a Father were *Gandhi's Lost Jewel: Harilal* (2001) by Nilam Parikh and *Gandhi's Prisoner? The Life of Gandhi's Son Manilal* (2003) by Uma Dhupelia Mesthrie. Gandhi's experiments with Brahmacharya also became a popular subject of writing and discussion. Gandhi was an enigmatic personality and drew in people from both the sexes in his inner circle. Books, analyzing and scrutinizing his relationship with women living in his Ashram also became popular with the readers. Sudhir Kakar's *Mira and Mahatma* (2005) is a peep into the complicated rapport that Madeline Slade aka Mira Behn shared with Gandhi, her mentor and ideal.<sup>70</sup> Nowhere did the writer mention any physical angle to Mira's love for Gandhi but the work did create ripples amongst its plebian readership. Long back in 1953 Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhi's secretary in his later years had insinuated

in *My Days with Gandhi* that he was sharing bed with young women to test his vow of celibacy. The book hardly received any notice for this astounding revelation, however, post-liberalization, the above mentioned episode gripped the imagination of both Indian and foreign authors. *Mahatma Gandhi* (1991) by Shankar Ghose, *Gandhi in His Times and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas* (2003) by David Hardiman and *Gandhi's Experiments with Truth: Essential Writings by and about Mahatma Gandhi* (2006) by Richard L Johnson, are some of the books which are quite vocal about the subject. In fact, the sexual episode finds mention even in books like *India's Foreign Relations: 1947-2007* (2011) by Jayanta Kumar Ray, analyzing India's foreign policy through the prism of partition as well as the mindset of Indian leadership responsible for the decision. Whereas, an objective debate on the role of Indian leadership during partition was definitely an ingenious attempt but dragging in the private lives of the same, smells of prejudice.<sup>71</sup> In a work discussing India's foreign relations with its neighboring countries the purpose of including Gandhi's sexual antics is ambiguous reeks of a covert agenda of distracting the Indian populace away from Gandhi's core value of amity and harmony. Globalization has also made Gandhian biographies of foreign authors more accessible to Indian readers who unfortunately without reading formulate a general perception of the content only through the reviews. The best example of this malpractice is the book *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His struggles with India* (2011) by Joseph Lelyveld. The biography, beside other issues also lingered on the close soulful relationship between Gandhi and Kallenbach, his German-Jewish friend from South Africa. Few of the reviews for the book published after its release, highlighted the insinuating homosexuality between the two friends on the part of the author who later had to defend his work through newspapers and media.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the damage had been done perpetrating another allegation against Gandhi in the Indian mindset.

Does this current craze of censoring Gandhi at every turn, resonate with the new Globalized Indian culture? Is it a tool to make the rising Indian middle class more comfortable in this new materialistic life? A life based on desire, consumerism,

branded clothes, cars and casual sex. Would high lightening Gandhi's personal failures weaken the credibility of the ideals of Brahmacharya and Non-Possession perpetrated by him and make the Indians feel less guilty in reveling in their new 'avatar'? India, since 2012 has been topping the charts for the largest growing luxury goods market in the world. Repeatedly citing the last days of Gandhi spent in the comforts of the Birla House lessens the Indian guilt for acquiring and investing more and more in real estate. Similarly projecting Gandhi's obsession with Brahmacharya and the resulting sex experiments, gives us free reign to pursue our own perverted and lascivious sexual cravings. Again, the pro-liberalization propaganda has been done so meticulously that the majority of Indians see it as the sole panacea for all ailments ailing India. In such a pseudo-ecstatic state, India appears to have turned deaf to any ideology that poses challenges and problems to the smooth functioning and benefits offered by MNCs flooding Indian market, and Gandhism being such, has been set as the target to be destroyed by the advocates of liberalization and globalization. To achieve this, literature, whether indigenous, Diaspora or even foreign was used as a tool to disparage Gandhi. The situation needs serious review especially in the Indian context where the readers are still in a state of mental evolution and maturity. However, the objective has been partially achieved and the efforts have borne the expected fruits. The Indian mindset has become so skeptical and doubtful that it blames Gandhi for all the maladies afflicting the country.<sup>73</sup> Gandhi is castigated as a backward looking reactionary whereas a profound reading of his work prove him beyond doubt as a 'critical traditionalist.' A reading of the comments section on the internet bears witness to the degree of empathy enjoyed by Gandhi. Such anti-Gandhi overtures are primarily unofficial and can't be quoted statistically. The only bearing that twenty first century India wishes to remember is Gandhi as an environmentalist and his emphasis on cleanliness. The moral values Gandhi vouched for all his life even through his death have all been obliterated. To the majority of young India Gandhi has become an illusion, a mythical entity bereft of any pragmatic value and veracity, sadly, proving true and timeless the words spoken on Gandhi by Albert

Einstein on the former's seventy-fifth birthday,

“A leader of his people; a politician whose success rests not upon craft, not mastery of the technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter, who has always scorned the use of force; a man of wisdom and humility who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot...Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.”<sup>74</sup>

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# Epilogue

## Epilogue

“The discovery – or - rediscovery of Man as the central figure in the human drama is the whole purpose of literature and writing.” The lines quoted from ‘My Literary Creed’ by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and published in *Indian Literature* 1979 are translucent enough to give an inkling to the course of the present discourse

Before 1947, getting independence was our main objective. The nation was blessed with men like Gandhi who had led the national movement on altruistic lines

inculcating a set of human values indigenous in origin yet tested and accepted on the criterion of logic attributing the epithet 'critical traditional' for Gandhi. Gandhi had envisioned a socio-political paradigm for the economic regeneration of India which he had dreamed would be implemented with full vigor in independent India. Post-Independence we failed to achieve what we had dreamed. Our post-independence journey had started on the right note but somewhere we lost the way. The conscious discard of Gandhian values was a slow process at least in the first two phases under study. The third phase was marked with fast action, quick remedies and international pressure for western hegemonization. Herein numerous factors contributed to the quick and final dumping of Gandhi which have been discussed at length under the heading 'Gandhi in the Twenty-First Century.' Starting with the fifth decade itself feudalism got replaced with capitalism. Gradually values stopped having significance for us. Everything became transitory. Values became flexible and thus lost their innate trait. They became changeable with time and context. Inside our homes we were traditional, orthodox and rigid but outside we talked about women emancipation. This contradiction, artificiality and dualism resulted in loss of values. Man became more and more directionless, faithless, selfish and depressed. Everything was being calculated on the basis of monetary value; money became synonymous for respect, marital love got based on money, education came with money and jobs were bought. If anyone did not have money, than he or she were tagged as liabilities, a burden on the State surviving on the taxpayer's money. The situation continues unabated as we enter the seventieth year of our independence. All values have been engulfed by 'Artha.' It is as though those who don't have 'artha' actually have no meaning or existence for the society or the State. Presently we find ourselves in a maze that further perplexes us with figures that have no connection whatsoever with reality or defunct policies that add more lawlessness and corruption to the society. Aimless human behavior, dwindling economy, demonic expansion of cities and ruptured relationships is the legacy we would be passing on to the future generations. Our vision has blurred and we are today much more divided than what we were before

independence. Our guide and mentor who could have helped us sail through the unchartered waters after independence was murdered before our ship could set sail. Since then we have experienced only loss at every juncture. The basic objective of politics is public welfare while rising above class and caste but the desire for power has made the politicians exploit people and fight amongst themselves. Nepotism and communalism both breed problems for a vast multiethnic country like India. After 1947 our productivity and income have increased but the rupee has gone down in value so much that we have become more helpless. Development schemes appear like spiders web and big dams and industries are being established with loans from international bodies. Once again we are in debt to MNCs and on our way to another type of slavery. Socially we appear suffering with boils, handicapped and crying in pain against the rampant partiality. We had burgeoned on the path of social reform in pre-independence India but its progress got deviated and today we find ourselves huddled in a corner. Unplanned urbanization, culture of call girls and escorts and homosexuality are all destroying the dignity of marital life. After centuries of suppression and silent resignation in sexual field, the educated woman, particularly the educated working women, started voicing their grievances but not to bring about a moral transformation in man rather to get equal freedom of treading the same bohemian path as him, laced with selfishness, impatience and debauchery. Novels are narratives that mirror the polity, society, economy and values of the time. The gradual loss of Gandhian values and the emergence of new self centred selfish culture with mamonic values became the subject matter of these contemporary compositions in both English and Hindi. The study highlights the continuation, questioning, criticism as well as abandonment of Gandhian values as reflected in the post independence novels. The ensuing observations for the purpose of analysis have been divided into following sub-headings

***Memoirs of Gandhi's India***

Gandhi had been a significant figure in the pre-independence India. His movement had inspired many a literary works in the years preceding 1947. The trend continued to remember and relive the Non-Cooperation or Civil Disobedience movement and even partition in 50s and 60s. The prominent writers who followed the line were Vinu Chitale, Zeenuth Fatehally, Ahmad Abbas, Balachandra Rajan and K Nagarajan. These novelists illustrated the impact of Gandhi on individuals and families representing the different linguistic, regional and religious communities of India during the freedom struggle. Bhabani Bhattacharya debuted with Gandhi's Quit India while R K Narayan depicted the varied shades and manners in which Gandhi left his imprint on young and old of pre '47 India. Another name following a similar path is Bhagwati Charan Verma whose early novels although composed in 50s were a memento of the nationalist phase. Yashpal and Manohar Malgonkar too dealt with the same period but had a questioning attitude towards Gandhi and compared it with other contemporary ideology of the time i.e. the communists and the revolutionaries. They did interrogate the Gandhian means and methodology and casted doubt over its practicality by referring to the plethora of pseudo Gandhians. They blamed its failure in form of partition violence on the inability of the people to understand the spirit behind the ideology of nonviolence rather than any weakness in the ideology itself. As to why these writers were still delving into the past was because they wanted the sacrifices as well as values of the freedom struggle to remain afresh in the minds of the people especially the future generation and hoped that the new India would be a reflection of the same. Thus in spite of the digressing in the 'years of hope' Gandhi was ideologically still alive for India.

### *Post-Independence Scenario*

#### **Demoralization of Politics**

The national movement led by Gandhi was essentially against feudalism because it did not give freedom of speech and imposed many restrictions on independent thought process. It was a nexus between Brahmins and feudals that gave a distorted

version of religion and suppressed mankind. After independence, capitalistic feudalism joined hands with politics. Together they left no field or region untouched. Those professing honesty and morality were pushed to the brink of insanity and death while the corrupt enjoyed life. Nayantara Sahgal's novels dig into both, the women issues as well as moral corruption of Indian politics. Interestingly she is the only writer covering all the three phases of the study. Raised in the Gandhian milieu her politicians get abrasively scraped against the Mahatma's moral norms. She laments the loss of the age of accountability and transparency in Indian politics. Jainendra gives the ideal Gandhian politician completely detached from the lure of power. The loudest criticism came from Amrit Lal Nagar whose novels represented an earnest discourse on the situation and condemned the capitalist exploitation of the poor in post-independence India. According to the novelist the politicians and capitalists are conspiring to keep opinionated literature away from the society to prevent any kind of revolution. The scholars are busy in shallow ideological debates doing nothing on ground. A similar opinion is voiced by Bhagwati Charan Verma whose novels compel the reader to react to the socio-political problem raised in the novel without siding with a particular ideology. Kamleshwar showcased the selfishly destructive temperament of politicians not hesitating to exploit their own family for the sake of political gains. Arun Joshi and Upamanyu Chatterjee writing in English in 70s, 80s and the 90s have also lamented this loss of Gandhian morality and values from politics as well as State policies. Even after several years the State remains ignorant and deaf to the needs and wants of its people playing 'the role of the Englishmen even in their absence.'

### **Rural India**

Gandhian dream of a rurally resurgent India compelled Hindi writers like Phaneshwar Nath 'Renu,' and Nagarjun, and Bhabani, amongst the English writers, to compose on the village life in post-independence India. All highlighted the poverty, ignorance and backwardness of the countryside. Another feature they hinted at was the appearance

of craftiness in the otherwise gullible lifestyle of villagers due to the influence of modernism, corporate and corrupt politics. Being the novels of the first phase they had the educated urban youth forsaking the city comfort to serve the village as envisioned by Gandhi. Shree Lal Shukla criticized the western model of rural development adopted by the Indian State. Ramdarash Mishra too writes on rural themes and states the plight of the villages after industrialization as well as modern political institutions. Viveki Rai lamented the end of the age of innocence for Indian villages and the cult of elections turning it into Ravana Rajya instead of Ram Rajya. Writing in 90s Maitreyi Pushpa through her heroine Manda narrates a peasant movement against the land mafia containing Gandhian characteristics.

### **Industrialization and Environment**

Nehru's insistence on industrialization made writers like Bhabani attempted a synthesis between Gandhi's rural nonviolent swadeshi and urban mechanization. Kamala Markandeya too charged the factories for corrupting the village life, a foreboding already expressed by Gandhi during his life time. Markandeya in spite of being an English novelist has always been sensitive to the plight of the rural poor a tendency majorly observed in Hindi writers. Her novels highlight the disturbing and destructive changes that occur in the placid countryside when State sponsored insipid development projects are imposed on the people and lands are contracted out to Multi National Corporations ushering in a second phase of western slavery. For Arun Joshi industrialization has dehumanized mankind. Through the character of Billy the novelist feels nostalgic for the noble savage and expresses the urge to return to the indigenous tribal lifestyle forsaking the artificial mechanized lifestyle of the modern world. The Hindi novelists like Virendra Jain writing on the curse of development afflicting the Indian villages since independence used the symbol of 'Cheelgadi' or aeroplane as the means of State exploitation like dams and vasectomy and destroying the ecological balance of the countryside.

### **In search of the 'self'**

Independence ushered in a torrent of new experiences where the Indian psyche especially the educated upper middle class got implicated in searching the self. Such works also portrayed the perennial debate over the culture of the East and the West. Bhabani through Mohini and 'Renu' through Dr Prashant had already highlighted the Gandhian dream of city youth settling down in villages. These characters discover the key to happiness and decide to work for the regeneration of rural India. Ilachandra Joshi upheld the 'self' that merges its needs with that of society. Continuing the puranic tradition of storytelling Raja Rao gave an autobiographical novel reminiscent of Gandhi's self discovery. Similar labyrinth can be noticed in the novels of English novelists like Arun Joshi and Upamanyu Chatterjee. In fact Agastya's discovery of the self and transformation into a selfless public servant is quite close to as envisaged by Gandhi. Arun Joshi's Ratan Rathore and Upamanyu Chatterjee's Agastya, representative of a young politician and bureaucrat, the two classes accused for corrupt practices in Indian State, convert to the Gandhian values of selfless service. Searching the self appeared as a popular theme for feminist writings also which many times resulted in moral digressing of the bourgeoisie heroines. At the same time writers like Vishnu Prabhakar projected the Gandhian feminism with his writings as late as 90s.

### **Women, Marriage and Family**

Gandhi had advocated equal rights for women and agitated for the removal of the social evils hampering her growth as an individual. He was a feminist in the truest sense who did not want women to compete with men but understand their worth for what they are. Nayantara Sahgal advocates the moral in her feminism. Her heroines are intelligent sensitive women who struggle for their rights but lose neither their integrity nor honor in the process. The approach definitely subsumes of Gandhian ideal of Indian womanhood. Anita Desai recorded the dilemma of the urban women chasing a mirage made up of some delusional western individualism and traditional

family roles. However at the culmination, the novelist ultimately guides the eager feminists towards sacrifice and motherhood as the true essence of Indian womanhood. Shashi Deshpande writing in the age of globalization worded the dichotomy of the educated woman stuck between career and family. Her heroines suffer moral lapses in their search of the ontological self but ultimately repent and realize the importance of offering the self for the society. More or less identical path is chosen by the wayward protagonists of the Hindi novelist Mridula Garg.

### **Sexual Liberty**

Gandhi's definition of love and marital morality was same for both men and women and condemned the patriarchal yardstick. For Gandhi woman epitomizes 'Ahimsa' and nonviolence can only be practiced through absolute love. Love has the power to bear affliction and all kinds of hardships. The purpose of love is to establish spiritual unity to attain collective well-being. It was his calling that brought out thousands of women from household constraints to participate in the national movement. This functional experiment of Gandhi augmented many age old traditions with new logics while rejecting others with equal certainty. Till the first half of twentieth century this socially approved love was accepted albeit without understanding the affinity between the two by the Indian middle class. A change came in late 60s and 70s due to a trend started worldwide which spilled over to India too. This new rendering of love raised the component share of sexual gratification and compatibility in marriage. Patience and sacrifice took a back seat. Mutual sacrifice was replaced by reciprocation of wants and needs. This new consciousness in collusion of modern feminism started threatening the salubrious institution of marriage and got reflected in both Hindi and English novels with equal aplomb. The heroines of Shashi Deshpande and Mridula Garg fumbled and committed adultery but returned to the original partners. The protagonists of Shobha De, Karuna and Mikki, and Varsha Vashishtha of Surendra Verma or Neera of Rajee Seth on the other hand indulge in unapologetic sexual licentiousness for whom marriage, family, motherhood have no connotation.

Pre and extra-marital sex is considered a basic bodily requirement with no moral compunctions.

### **Consumerism**

The lure of the materialistic world attracts the young especially from the rural tradition towards the cities. Tempted by these evils the women get exploited and fall into prostitution. The novels of Uday Shankar Bhatt tread the same line. The autobiographical writings of Upendranath Ashq too depict the sexual and monetary frustrations but from the city perspective. The new consumerist culture has made both the home and workplace unsafe for women. Her existence and honour is in danger everywhere. Earlier she was exploited at home now she is abused publically. Her beauty and body is in demand everywhere. Everything reeks of carnality. The capitalist culture can go to any extent to enjoy this pleasure. Surendra Verma writing immediately after the introduction of LPG promoted a lifestyle laced with high end national and international brands in commodities like clothes, cars and cigarettes to bolster a consumerist culture. The novel of Alka Saraogi is a blunt portrayal of the culture of cars and revealing dresses rampant amidst the youth of India. Ravindra Verma and Uday Prakash too represent the same. The novel of Chitra Mudgal handles the morally debatable subject of surrogacy emerging as a monetary backed alternative of the arrogant rich to continue the bloodline. Again selflessness is missing from the leaders of the labor movement. They too have opted for the materialistic angle while professing Marx. Interestingly all the mentioned names belong to the Hindi writing. Amongst the English writers Raja Rao, Bhabani foray into the subject while the most conspicuous voice is definitely Arun Joshi who rejects the commercialism of modern world.

### **Urbanization and the City Culture**

State advocated industrialization gave birth to city culture in the sixties. Cities represent plethora of materialistic goods and dearth of natural elements. The course of

urban development gives the authentic picture of the values of that civilization. If that path is paved with corruption, greed, crime, poverty, exploitation then that civilization needs to halt its digression and ponder upon the lost value system. Literature too bore the after-effects of urbanization. In keeping with the comfort of publishers, interest of the readers and paucity of time in this mechanical lifestyle the writers started producing 'Novellas' from the seventies. Although excruciatingly sensitive to the keen sensibilities of urban India it cut short on the plot and analysis. The novels of Kamleshwar, portray the urbanization of 60s and 70s and the issues of migration, livelihood, isolation, chasm, ego, identity, dissatisfaction, superficiality, sexual freedom, individualism, heterogeneity, transiency, anonymity etc, in Indian cities. The growing influence of cities changed the traditional value system. Social contradictions developed new sensibilities among the writers. Besides the external or societal conflict, internal psychological struggles also started perturbing them. Social values give order to the society. They form the spinal cord giving identity as well as amour to the culture of that society and contribute to the development of individual personalities. The need for livelihood gives birth to urban slums and the writing of Manjula Bhagat focuses on the same. There is a continuous race for success in which human sensitivity is non-existent. Simultaneously, the villages were also being urbanized by providing them with city amenities like electricity and roads. These roads ended the isolation of the villages and infiltrated them with symbols of modernism which along with its achievements also brought in those elements that had already corroded the cities.

### **Casteism and Untouchability**

The Indian constitution abolished untouchability but failed to transform the hearts of the high caste. Mulk Raj Anand as early as 1961 re-voiced the Gandhian perspective against the social evil. His previous works had already condemned the system but even after independence he realized his pen will have to continue the fight. Shanta Rameshwar Rao writing in 70s depicted the same caste taboos and discrimination

existing in theoretically egalitarian India. In the same strain is Arundhati Roy who won the Booker for her realistic portrayal of the hardships of Velutha the Dalit protagonist in her novel. Ilchandra Joshi too recorded the plight of the low caste by using wit and satire to write on the subject. The unabated exploitation and humiliation of the tanners in independent India and the selfish attempts of prozelytization as well as the communists gets duly reflected by Hindi novelists like Himanshu Srivastava and Jagdish Chandra. Mannu Bhandari in spite of being a woman novelist daringly dealt with the concerns of the crimes perpetrated and protected by the politicians on Dalit communities and habitations.

### **Communalism**

India gained freedom at the altar of communalism. Gandhi was assassinated for defending secularism. The nation became independent promising a secular State to its minorities. The issue of communalization of Indian society had been simmering since partition and did find space in the literary compositions earlier also but has surfaced more vociferously in the decade preceding the new millennium. Manzur Ehatasham beautifully narrated the insecurities of the Muslim minority in India after independence. Having faith in the hard core secularism of the Indian State many upper class Muslims had stayed back. It is their gradual transformation from secular Muslims to religious fanatic Muslims that forms the subject matter of the writing. Dudhnath Singh chronicled the demolition of Babri Masjid which dug a deep trench in the religiously harmonious fabric of India and polarized the nation on communal lines. Bhagwandas Morwal writing in the new millennium voiced the rise of castism as well as communalism in the twenty-first century Mewat in the vicinity of the Indian capital. By this time some members of both the police and army had started wearing religious colors up their sleeves thereby giving up their secular structure. Neighbourhood trust and camaraderie has been sacrificed at the altar of communalism and casteism. Still hope sustains because even if the good are eliminated their ideology continues to live.

## **Gandhi and the Novels-Comparative Analysis between English and Hindi**

The purpose of writing is to depict social reality and then usher in the change for the welfare of all. Ralph Fox the author of *The Novel and the People* (1948: 145) writes, “The revolutionary task of literature today is....to bring the creative writer to face with his only “important task, that of winning the knowledge of truth, of reality.... (he) must always engage in a terrible and revolutionary battle with reality, revolutionary because he must seek to change hell, a conflict of gods dethroned and gods ascendant, a fight for the soul of man.”

Contemporary social system is based on profit. Wherever art could be advantageous the system gives it asylum. Cinema, opera, belle are such art forms that help the capitalist in minting money. Value based literature will always have less patrons. The reading population in majority is not able to comprehend its deep message and the life of such writers is generally seeped in struggle. On the other hand shallow, heady and incendiary literature caters to the baser instincts of the readers and pushes them towards moral as well as intellectual degradation.

Indian English Fiction is itself a localized urban, upper middle class phenomenon in its production and consumption and it is popularized and practiced by a pocket of College and University academics whereas Hindi has definitely more readers being spoken demographically by forty percent of India. A comparative study of the two in dealing with Gandhian values as reflected in their respective novels was indeed a challenging feat. Many argue that Indian Literature in English can hardly be taken as an instrument for social change as it is not the language of the majority subjects. In fact it is rather considered to be an ally of the elite group that tries to impose the exploitative discourse. After reading the novels of Salman Rushdie and Shashi Tharoor selected for the present study the allegations appear validated to some extent. Using exclusion and sarcasm the two prominent writers do express a veritable disregard for Gandhi and his values. Although Manohar Malgonkar among the English writers had done it earlier yet the use of sarcasm pushes Gandhi towards a

trivial status to be mocked especially by the English educated reader and ultimately rejected out of his consciousness. Amongst the Hindi writers Amrit Rai had clearly projected Gandhism as obsolete and proposed communism as an alternative. Writing in the eighth decade Mridula Garg had emphatically blamed Gandhi for the hanging of Bhagat Singh and overriding public opinion. Putting aside these aspersions and wearing the lens of objectivity the study did reveal a plethora of English writers in all the three phases under study roping in Gandhian ideals directly or indirectly. Reflecting the nation's disposition towards Gandhi in the Years of Hope (1947-64) some of the novelists idealized, the others questioned and compared still professing an underlying regard for the man. Rural India and rise in corruption remained the concern for both English and Hindi novelists. The Years of Bafflement (1964-80) confused the people of every class, caste and community. The engulfing chaos pushed towards individualism and the characters became important than the values which seemed to be fast diminishing. However at a deeper introspection the values inherent in the society only make up the characters thus even in such compositions the values remained intact as discussed under the various sub headings stated afore. The influx of foreign capital, deteriorating family values due to the conflict between the self and the society, the isolation and frustrations of city culture and the end of morality in politics were the themes for both English and Hindi writers. Lastly came the Years of Globalization (1980-2000) ushering in foreign capital and culture. Gandhi was ignored and lampooned by the English writers yet there were some who still clung to the age old values and lamented the loss of values under the glare of globalization. However it was the Hindi novelist who continued to write for the pain, plight, suffering and exploitation of the rural India and dared to criticize and condemn globalization. The tone of the English novelists was definitely mellow as compared to the Hindi writers on the issue of globalization. In fact some of the new millennium writings even supported the new bohemian narcissist culture of globalization. Why was it so? Was it because the English readers are to be found primarily amongst the pro-globalization section of the society? Also, do the English novelists wish to cater

to international readers also? Are the Hindi writers more exposed to the detrimental aspect of globalization especially for the poor of India due to their affinity with Hindi the language of forty percent India and one of the prominent indigenous languages suitable to be called the people's language? The rhetoric is significant, containing the answer to the discrepancy, visible to the one daring enough to see the truth and express it. Due to the limitations associated with any research work the new millennium writings could not be explored much but leaving food for thought for future research enthusiasts.

### **To Conclude**

Literary theorists like George A Panichas in *The Politics of the Twentieth Century Novelists* (1874: 31) have openly voiced their opinion against bringing ideology in literature, "When ideology invades literature, it is claimed it introduces an extreme individualism of views and no clear rules regarding the limitations of a literary work. Ideology personalizes art; and the artist, as Eliot once wrote about Lawrence, becomes a propagandist, a "promoter of personality," a "seeker of myths." An alternate viewpoint on the subject comes from the Hindi novelist Amrit Lal Nagar who alleged the politicians and capitalists of conspiring to keep opinionated literature away from the society to prevent any kind of revolution. The scholars get busy in shallow ideological debates doing nothing on ground. Therefore Amritlal Nagar advises the writer to avoid extremes and follow the middle path. Literature has to give direction to the society but refrain from sycophancy then only would it be able to serve its true purpose.



# Summary

## Summary

Twentieth century could veritably be treated as an epoch century in the annals of Indian history. The economically exploitative British rule was at its zenith and the national movement lacked mass support. Gandhi appeared epitomizing the Vaishnav 'avatarvad' so quintessential to Indian culture and heritage and rewrote the destiny of the nation through his speeches and writings. His values and ideology left an indelible mark not only on the laity but also on the literati of India. During his lifetime Gandhi as well as his movements became a popular subject for writers of both English and Hindi in pre-independence India. Hardly six months into independence, and Gandhi

was shot dead. The violent riots associated with partition posed a question mark on the efficacy of Gandhi's nonviolence. The people who claimed to have followed Gandhi had done so without understanding the true essence of his teachings was proved at the time of communal killings and ultimately his own assassination. Still Gandhi continued to live ideologically in the land of his birth albeit his image as well as adherence to his values underwent a major change in the mindsets of the masses at large and in turn got mirrored in the novels of the time. The objective of the research was to study the essence and anatomy of Gandhian values existing in post-independence India with special reference to Indian novel, both English and Hindi. The scope of the study covered Gandhi's political, social, economic and religious thoughts as viewed by post-independence India covering the years 1947 to 2000 and divided into three periods for analytical ease. The selection of English and Hindi was done to add a comparative angle to the study. English is basically a legacy of the colonial era majorly spoken and read by Indians bearing an ingenious empathy for the western culture. Some of these English speakers are vehement critics also but the number is very less. Hindi is definitely the most popular vernacular having what it takes to express the Indian spirit, ethos and pulse most proficiently. Although Gandhi was not against English but he too favored Hindi as a possible lingua franca for

independent India. In spite of this afore-stated previous notion the research was pursued with an extremely objective and unprejudiced attitude. The thesis demanded a descriptive reading of Gandhi as well as the novels penned in the period selected for study along with an overview of political, social and economic history of post 1947 India. The chapters divided in the three periods have attempted to study Gandhian reflections envisaged in the plots and characters portrayed in the chosen literary works and juxtapose them against the Indian political and social scenario of the period under study respectively. Since the axis of the research is Gandhian values, the thesis did not limit itself to any particular author of English or Hindi but selected novels on the basis of their proximity with Gandhian ideals spread across the period of study.

Gandhi was such an enigmatic personality whose political, social and economic ideals seeped into every aspect of human consciousness and popular literature being an inherent part of it could not remain bereft of its influence and found its expression in the numerous genres of literature, covering both, fiction and non-fiction writings. Novel, in spite of being blamed as a fictitious composition has always been a rich and respected genre of literature in terms of echoing both the overt as well as covert ethos and values of any contemporary period. The thesis through the genre of Novel has highlighted India's leanings and loyalties towards their liberator's ideology in field of politics, society, religion and economy, over a period of fifty years, 1947-2000. In order to make the attempt more analytical the period has been divided in three phases-Years of Hope (1947-1964), Years of Bafflement (1964-1980) and Years of Globalization (1980-2000). The three periods demarcate the changes the nation experienced in terms of its political, social and economic bearings towards Gandhian values. Again, the inclusion of two set of linguistic literature, English, catering to the cosmopolitan elite across India and Hindi, representing the most popular vernacular literature of India has added a comparative value to the work. The purpose of the exercise was to analyze the reflections simultaneously in both the languages and highlight the similarities and differences therein.

The following is a brief summary of the chapter composition of the thesis.

### **1. Gandhi and Gandhism**

The chapter gives a brief bio-sketch of Gandhi covering the various phases of his life as well as a glimpse into his political, social and economic ideology. His birth on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1868 at Porbandar, school experiences in Rajkot, experiments in westernization and pursuance of Law in Britain, working as a Barrister in South Africa where he suffered racism and decided to take up Satyagraha to resist the oppression of the white government, setting up farms and community living, return to India, transforming the elite Indian National Movement into a mass movement,

evolving a program for socio-economic reconstruction of Indian villages and envisioning the India of his dreams. An indisputable champion of truth, nonviolence and world peace, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is undoubtedly a veritable philosophy by himself. His thoughts, words and deeds, though born as a natural reaction to circumstances around him, cover a wide gamut of subjects ranging from Swaraj, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, Secularism, Satyagraha, Non-Violence, Charkha, Trusteeship, Harijans, Panchayati Raj, Bread Labour, Women, Youth, Education, Health and Hygiene. His ideology did not develop in isolation but was an amalgamation of numerous direct as well as indirect experiences he has had right from his birth. Be it the religiosity of his mother, Indian mythological characters of Shraavan Kumar and Harishchandra, Karma theory of Bhagwat Gita, pragmatic yet intellectual bearings of Upanishads, Bhakti and Secularism of Meera and Kabir, Equality and Brotherhood from Islam, Love and Forgiveness from Christianity and writings of western philosophers like John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy and Henry Thoreau, played a pivotal role in moulding and giving the final shape to his philosophy. It is the same thought process that in later years reflected itself in the literary compositions of the numerous writers of indigenous Indian Literature.

## **2. Novel: Literary Reflections of a Nation**

The chapter traces the birth of novel as a literary genre in the West and its subsequent arrival in India as a consequence of colonial rule. It also describes its adoption as a means of expression by the Indian literati in different regional languages including Hindi and English. The topics of such writing varied from domestic to public, mythology to history and magic to thrillers. Political and social awakening and decrying of social evils were also popular with the writers. The dawn of twentieth century witnessed the emergence of Gandhi as an epochal mass leader, reviving and disseminating the indigenous value system chafed against the criterion of science and logic thereby befitting the epithet 'critical traditionalist' for himself.

The enigma of Mahatma was so charismatic that the man as well as his values inspired numerous writers in both English and Hindi in pre-independence phase to pen novels on Gandhi. For such novelist social welfare was a prominent theme with either Gandhi himself or the protagonist depicted as mini Gandhi generally appearing as an essential character. The trend continued post independence as well. The second half of the chapter is essentially a glimpse of the titles and the novelists of post-independence India that delved into Gandhi and his ideology both positively as well as critically. There is also mention of the novels that completely let go or abandoned Gandhi in view of the influx of western culture and concepts as well as the general collapse or dissolution of the indigenous value system in Indian polity, society and economy.

### **3. Gandhi in years of hope viewed through Indian Novel English and Hindi: 1947-1964**

This would cover the years immediately after the country attained independence, also termed as the Nehruvian Era by many historians. The country had embarked on centrally controlled Five-Year Development Plans for providing water, electricity, roads, education, and modernizing India through urbanization, dams and heavy industries. Gandhi had already been assassinated but we were still holding on to his values in many ways, viz., secularism, egalitarianism, peaceful foreign policy, though the agricultural sector, the backbone of Gandhian reconstruction formula had been abandoned for industrialization. The afore-stated transformations echoed themselves in Indian novels, both English and Hindi. Some writers continued to write on pre-independence phase reminiscent of Gandhi's movements, few could read the writings on the wall and remembered Gandhi's ways in wake of the rise in corruption and selfishness in society while others experimented and evaluated the alternative also like Marxism and armed revolutions. The English novels reflecting Gandhian values of the period are *In Transit*(1951) by Vinu Chitale, *Inquilab*(1955) by K A Abbas, *Chronicles of Kedaram*(1960) by K Nagarjuna, *Some Inner Fury*(1955) by Kamala

Markandeya, *Waiting for Mahatma*(1956), *A Time to be Happy* (1963) by Nayantara Sehgal, *A Bend in the Ganges*(1964) by Manohar Malgonkar, *So Many Hungers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952), *Shadows from Ladakh* (1966) by Bhabani Bhattacharya while the Hindi novels include *Udayast* (1958), *Bagule ke Pankh* (1958) and *Amarbel* (1960) by Chatursen Shastri, *Maila Anchal*(1954) by Phaneshwarnath Renu, *Boond aur Samudra*(1956) by Amritlal Nagar, *Jaivardhan*(1956) by Janendra Kumar, *Varun ke Bete* by Nagarjuna, *Pani ke Prachir* (1961)by Ramdarash Mishra, *Samartha aur Seema*(1962) by Bhagwaticharan Verma, to name a few. Incidentally the trend in both the English and Hindi novels was more or less same, focusing on social welfare and a synthesis between the self and the society. Some of the novels published posts 1964 have also been taken because their ethos primarily belonged to the years of hope.

#### **4. Gandhi in Years of Bafflement viewed through Indian Novel English and Hindi: 1964-1980**

The Indo-China War (1962) had broken the bubble and India started wavering from the path of non-aggressive foreign policy. The following years witnessed a massive erosion of our indigenous moral values. Power hungry politicians, rigid bureaucracy, Red-tapism, bribery and corruption seeping at every level of governance jolted the nation from its reverie of the earlier phase. The Bangladesh War, Emergency, Nuclear Tests and the steady rise of militancy in Punjab, all added to the furore. The fogged and hazed scenario reflected itself in literature which also became an overt means of criticizing government policies. The important novels that empathized and analyzed the loss of Gandhian i.e., core Indian values due to the adoption of a materialistic growth model in urban as well as rural India were *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1975) by Arun Joshi, *This Time of Morning*(1968), *Storm in Chandigarh*(1969) and *A Situation in Delhi*(1977) by Nayantara Sehgal and *The Coffin Dams* (1969) by Kamala Markandeya. The Hindi novels of the period are *Samudra Mein Khoya Hua Aadmi* (1965), *Kaali Aandhi* (1974), *Agami Ateet* (1976) by Kamleshwar, *Raag Darbari*(1968) by Shreelal Shukla, *Rituchakra*(1969) by

Ilachandra Joshi, *Sabhi Nachawat Ram Gosain*(1970) by Bhagwaticharan Verma etc.,. The loss of indigenous value system from the nation saw some of the writers tilting towards the western individualism as well as feminism. Sadly the new feminism instead of demanding an amendment in selfish male chauvinism itself started claiming equality in terms of sexual licentiousness thereby destroying the whole moral fabric of Indian society. *Cry the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965) by Anita Desai, *Aapka Bunty* (1971) by Mannu Bhandari, *Uske hisse ki Dhoop* (1975) and *Chitkobra* (1976) by Mridula Garg are some of the novels portraying the disposition of these new age women. However the point to be noted is that in spite of this vouching for feminist individualism the protagonists do ultimately find solace in synthesizing their personal needs with family and children.

#### **5. Gandhi in Years of Globalization viewed through Indian Novel English and Hindi: 1980-2000**

Winds of change had started blowing during the rule of Rajeev Gandhi. The new Prime minister ushered in the age of computerization and prepared the soil for the 1991 Liberalization Privatization and Globalization. The country wanted to compete in the global arena. Nation's portals were opened for Multinational Companies and the people experienced a deluge of branded clothes, cars, electronic goods and gadgets, satellite television, transforming the nation's economy from that of 'need' to 'desire.' Pre-marital and extra-marital amorous interludes became commonly accepted not only in metropolitan cities but in small towns and cities. The new 'freedom' was bereft of any responsibility and the Indian youth became resplendently lost in the quagmire of 'Globalization.' Politically, the State took strong steps to curb insurgency, India became a nuclear power and the partisan evil of caste and communalism became all the more vicious. India pragmatically severed all ties with Gandhi, though theoretically he continued to be quoted during debates, elocutions and speeches of politicians. Some of the popular writers especially those having an innate affinity with the west either neglected or mocked Gandhi. Salman Rushdie and Shashi Tharoor are prominent among them. *English August: An Indian Story* (1988)

and *The Last Burden* (1993) by Upamanyu Chatterjee and *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) and *The City and the River* (1990) by Arun Joshi still lamented the loss of Indian value system. *Socialite Evenings* (1989) by Shobha De and *Mujhe Chaand Chahiye*(1993) by Surendra Verma represent the bohemian-bisexual-materialistic woman of globalized India completely uprooted from the Indian ethos and value system. Interestingly amidst such sycophancy for globalization some Hindi novelists did dare to criticize the detrimental effects of the western hegemonic model of globalization responsible for widening the chasm between the haves and have not in India and destruction of the rural economy and the Gandhian dream of a self reliant morally sound India.

## **6. Reviewing Gandhian Values in Twenty-First Century India**

The last chapter is essentially food for thought for future research. It describes the gradual metamorphosis of the inherently non-aggressive Spartan Indian State into an 'Armed State' wedded to consumerist values belying the high ideals upheld by Gandhi in twenty-first century. The process of discarding Gandhi received abutment from two determinants; the vanward was of course 'globalization' while the shellfire was provided by the plethora of anti-Gandhi biographies penned by both foreign and Indian authors to tarnish the man as well as the values he stood for. Globalization has brought in second phase of slavery with MNCs deciding the State attitude of dealing with insurgency. Levi's, Live in and burgers, burgeoned on this economy of desire rather than need. The literary tone became too mocking and unashamedly abusive. An overspill of such biographies, novels, essays and articles appeared largely in the ambit of English Literature that went to great lengths to disparage Gandhi and ignore his amazing contribution towards India's freedom movement and the indigenously superb programs he formulated for the social and economic salvation of India whose relevance in keeping with the Indian scenario is timeless even today. These literary works judge him on his personal struggles and sufferings thus portraying an

extremely flawed and culpable picture of Gandhi, leaving strong influence on the impressionable minds of the young readers of India.

### To Conclude

The world awakes everyday to new dreams, desires and discoveries, along with a painful realization that issues like political unrest, economic inequality and social discrimination continue to plague human life, cajoling us consciously to the timeless efficacy of Gandhian social, economic and political thought. Unfortunately even after seventy years of India's independence, the country continues to suffer incessantly with more or less the same maladies that it did in the years Mahatma Gandhi lived and preached, in fact on many fronts the problems have become all the more complicated and enigmatic. In such a dismal scenario a review of Gandhian ideology through popular works of Indian literature comes as a fresh breadth of relief and revelation for the present generation Indians, deliberately fed and saturated hitherto, with undaunted criticism and censuring of the Father of the Nation, for all their maladies.

The thesis reverts back to the Gandhian values, presently relegated to the background in the din and dazzle of modern day world. The work highlights literature as a genre for studying historical changes affecting the nation with regard to its political, social and economic life especially pertaining to the basic philosophy of the man responsible for liberating millions of Indians from colonial rule. The transformations and alterations suffered in the themes and spirit of the novels reflecting Gandhian values over a span of fifty years and divided into three periods for the convenience of critical analysis was a challenging feat, while comparing the affectations in both English and Hindi certainly added to the exploratory value of the work making it an interesting source of study for future research.



# **APPENDIX A:**

## **Letters Related to Gandhi**

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### **(A) List of Letters Related to Gandhi**

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1. Gandhi's letter to DG Tendulkar approving the manuscript of *Mahatma*:  
*Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – Volume 1* 1951 Mahatma in 8

Volumes.

2. A Letter addressed to Mr. S.A. Brelvi written in both Devanagari and Urdu scripts by Gandhi, Sevagram, July 24, 1945.
3. A page from a Muslim religious book copied by Gandhi.
4. Gandhi's letter to Rabindranath Tagore
5. Gandhi's letter in Urdu to Zora Ansari, dated Wardha, September 21, 1936
6. Pages from the manuscript of Hind Swaraj; lower half of the second page written with left hand
7. Gandhi's letter to Gokhale, dated December 3, 1906
8. A Leaf from Gandhi's diary
9. Manuscript of Gandhi's notes and articles for Young India, dated March 10, 1920, and March 31, 1920

2-1-48  
N.D

My dear Tendulkar,

Here are the  
addresses which I  
was able to correct  
between yesterday  
& this morning under  
severe stress. I have  
removed all inverted  
commas commencing  
with each paragraph.  
I hope you will under-  
stand all the corrections  
& that I have not been  
too late.

D.G. Tendulkar  
407, Kalbadevi Rd  
Bombay

Yours  
Bapu

Gandhi's Letter to DG Tendulkar approving the manuscript of *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – Volume 1 1951 Mahatma in 8 Volumes*



Dear Gurus,

I have just received  
your letter of 5th inst.  
and I will go to Belgium  
on the very date you  
will have the opening  
ceremony. I would most  
certainly have come  
not only for the cer-  
emony but also to see  
you and Santiniketan  
which I have not  
seen now for years. So  
it is I shall be with  
you in spirit when  
Jawaharlal will be  
performing the cere-  
mony. May the Chinese  
Hall be a symbol

of living contact  
between China & India.

The letter you wrote  
to me over that money  
- any misunderstanding  
lies in my pocket - as  
a treasure. It brought  
tears of joy to my eyes.  
It was so worthy of  
you.

With love & respects

Satyajit

Wardha

9-4-37

Yours

M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi's Letter to Rabindranath Tagore

پیارا اور بے شک زور  
 تمہارے نکاح پر میرے دل میں  
 آسکتا ہوں، لیکن میرا دل  
 تو تمہارے ساتھ ہو گیا ہے  
 تم دونوں کے لئے میری  
 دعا ہے اس آرزو کے ساتھ، خدا  
 تم دونوں کو ہم دیرانہ  
 اور دونوں کو خوش رکھے۔  
 بابو کا دعا  
 جگدس  
 وردھا  
 ۲۶ ۹ ۳۶

Gandhi's Letter in Urdu to Zora Ansari, Dated Wardha, September 21, 1936



UNION CASTLE LINE

R.M.S. "BRITON"



3 <sup>12</sup>/<sub>06</sub>

Dear Prof Gokhale,

I am on way  
back to Ft Burg. I  
write to you from  
Borobay London. Sir  
Mankrupi suggests  
that there should be  
in India a separate  
South Africa British  
Indian Committee in  
the same way as  
in London. By this  
time you probably

Gandhi's Letter to Gokhale, Dated December 3, 1906

17 Tuesday

માનસર શુક્ર ૮ મંજ

ગાંધીજી, ગાંધીજીને  
 આજે ૨૧૫૨ મુલ  
 ૪૩૨૧૧૧ ૨૧૧૨૨  
 મુલ ૩૨૧૧૧  
 ગાંધીજી ૫૨૨૧૧  
 ૨૧૧. ૫૨૧૧૧  
 ૨૧૧ ૨૧૧૧૧ ૨૧૧૧  
 ૩૨૧૧૧૧ ૨૧૧૧  
 ૫૨૧૧ ૨૧૧૧

Ticket to Phoenix 1-17-1

A Leaf from Gandhi's diary



**APPENDIX B:**  
**English Novelists**

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## (B) List of English Novelists

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1. Anant Gopal Sheorey
2. Anita Desai
3. Anjum Hasan
4. Arun Joshi
5. Arundhati Roy
6. Balachandra Rajan
7. Bhabani Bhattacharya
8. Chetan Bhagat
9. K. Nagarajan
10. Kamala Markandaya
11. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas
12. Manohar Malgonkar
13. Mulk Raj Anand
14. Nayantara Sahgal
15. R.K. Narayan
16. Raja Rao
17. Salman Rushdie
18. Shanta Rameshwar Rao
19. Shashi Deshpande
20. Shashi Tharoor
21. Shobha De
22. Swati Kaushal
23. Upmanyu Chatterjee
24. Vinu Chitale
25. Zeenuth Futehally

## English Novelists

**Anant Gopal Sheorey (b. 1911)** was basically a Gandhian, the Marathi writer activist who composed socio-political novels. For several years he worked as the editor of Nagpur Times and even received the Gandhi Award. *Volcano* (1956), *Dusk Before Dawn* (1978) are some of his acclaimed works.

**Anita Desai (b. 1937)** is an Indian novelist and a professor of humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Being a writer, she has been short-listed for the Booker prize three times. She also received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *In Custody* (1984), *The Zigzag Way* (2004), etc.,

**Anjum Hasan (b. 1950)** is an Indian novelist, short story writer, poet and editor. She was born in Shillong, Meghalaya and currently lives in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. Her first book was the collection of poems *Street on the Hill*, Published by Sahitya Akademi in 2006. She also got The Hindu best fiction award in 2010 for her novel titled, *Neti*. She is currently Books editor for the Caravan.

**Arun Joshi (1939-1993)** was an Indian writer whose novels have characters that are urban and English speaking upper middle class. He is also known for his novels *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) and *The Apprentice* (1974). He also had won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1981. His other notable works were *The Foreigner* (1968), *The City and the River* (1991) and *The Apprentice* (1971) etc.

**Arundhati Roy (b. 1961)** for her novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997), won the Man Booker prize for fiction in 1997 and the work became the biggest selling book. Being a political activist, she is also involved in Human rights and environmental causes. Her notable work include, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), *The End of Imagination* (1998) etc.

**Balachandra Rajan(1920-2009)** was an Indian diplomat and a scholar of poetry and poems. Rajan particularly focussed on the poetry of John Milton. He was a member of the Indian Foreign Service and even served the UNICEF and UNESCO. Rajan's two novels include *The Dark Dancer* and *Too Long in the West*.

**Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906-1988)** was born in Bhagalpur in British India. He was an Indian writer who wrote social and realist fiction in English. Highly influenced by Gandhi and Tagore, Bhabani was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his contribution to literature. His major works include, *Gandhi the Writer* (1969), *Socio-Political Currents in Bengal: A Nineteenth Century Perspective* (1980) etc.

**Chetan Bhagat (b. 1973)** is an Indian author, columnist, screenwriter, television personality and motivational speaker. His novels are about young urban middle class Indians. He also writes for columns about youth, career development and current affairs for The Times of India and Danik Bhaskar. The New York Times has cited Bhagat as “the biggest selling English language novelist in India's history”.

**K Nagarajan (1893-1986)** born and raised in British occupied South, he wrote in thirties and forties and definitely showed Gandhian influence in his compositions. Such works stirred the nationalist leanings of the masses and to a great extent contributed to the freedom movement.. *Athavar House* (1937), *Cold Rice* (1945) and *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961) are few of his published compositions.

**Kamala Markandaya(1924-2004)** was a native of Mysore, India and was a graduate from Madras University. After India gained Independence, she moved to Britain. She is known for writing about culture clash between urban and rural societies. She published her several short stories in the Indian newspapers. Her works include, *Nectar in a sieve* (1955), *Silence of Desire* (1960) etc.

**Khwaja Ahmad Abbas(1914-1987)** was an Indian film director, screenwriter, novelist, and journalist who wrote in Urdu, Hindi and English languages. He is considered as one of the pioneers of Indian parallel or neo-realistic cinema, he is also

very much known for writing the best films of Raj Kapoor. He has been awarded four National Film Awards in India. His major works are *A Report to Gandhi* (1944), *The Naxalites* (1979) etc.

**Manohar Malgonkar (1913-2010)** was born in Belgaum District in Karnataka. He was an Indian author of both fiction and nonfiction in the English language. Besides penning socio-political novels he also wrote biographies and historical books. He had also joined the army and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Maratha Light Infantry. His major works include *The Sea Hawk: Life and Battles of Kanhoji Angrey* (1959), *Distant Drum* (1960) etc.

**Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004)**, born in Peshawar was famous for the depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. Anand's novels and short stories are admired worldwide and have acquired the status of classic works in modern Indian English literature. His major works include *Untouchable* (1935), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), *The Big Heart* (1945) etc

**Nayantara Sahgal(b. 1927)** belongs to the Nehru - Gandhi family. She is a journalist and a novelist whose fiction presents the personal crises of India's elite amid settings of political upheaval. In 1986, she was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel, *Rich Like Us* (1985). Her notable works include, *A Voice for Freedom* (1977) etc.

**R.K Narayan(1906-2001)** was born in Madras and was originally called Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswamihe. His literary works are set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. Along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao he was a leading author of early Indian literature in English. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of India's parliament. His notable works include *Swami and his Friends* (1935), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1961) etc.

**Raja Rao(1908-2006)** was born in Hasan, in the princely state of Mysore (now in Karnataka, in south India), whose works are deeply rooted in metaphysics. The novel

which established him as one of the finest Indian prose stylists was *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), it also made him win the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964. His major works include *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Chessmaster and his moves* (1988) etc.

**Salman Rushdie (b. 1947)** is British Indian novelist and essayist. He had won the Booker prize in 1981 for his novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981). In 1983, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In *The Times*, he has been ranked thirteen among the 50 greatest British writers since 1945. His major works include *Grimus* (1975), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) etc.

**Shanta Rameshwar Rao (b. 1924)** wrote myths, legends, folk tales, short stories, and picture books for children. Rameshwar Rao has retold tales from Indian scriptures and reworked folk tales and myths. *Seethu* (1980), *In Worship of Shiva* (1986), *Matsya: The Magical Fish* (2008) etc., are some of her published works.

**Shashi Deshpande**, (b. 1958) was born in Karnataka, to a famous Kannada dramatist and writer. She is an award winning Indian novelist. She has been a student of Economics, Law and journalism. She also worked as a journalist for the magazine "Onlooker". In 1978, her first-collection of short stories was published. Her first novel, "The Dark Hold no Terror" was published in 1980. Her other notable works are *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *Small Remedies* (2000) etc.

**Shashi Tharoor (b. 1956)** is a writer, politician and is currently serving as a Member of the Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, since, 2009. His works of fiction and non-fiction are centred on India and its history, culture, film, politics, society, foreign policy etc. His great works include *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *Nehru: The invention of India* (2003) etc.

**Shobha De (b. 1948)** is best known for her depiction of sex and socialites in her works of fiction, for which she got the title the "Jackie Collins of India". She started her career as a model and worked along with Zeenat Aman. She also began a career in Journalism in 1970, it was this time when she founded and edited three

magazines – Stardust, Society and Celebrity. She became a freelance writer and a columnist for several newspapers and magazines.

**Swati Kaushal**, born and raised in Delhi, is also the author of five bestselling novels, *Piece of Cake* (2004), *A Girl like Me* (2008), *Drop Dead* (2012), *Lethal Spice* (2014) and *A few Good Friends* (2017). She was nominated to the L'OREAL WOMEN of Worth Award in the literature category. Her stories are based on her personal experiences.

**Upamanyu Chatterjee (b. 1959)** is an Indian civil servant who currently serves as Joint Secretary of the Government of India on the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board. He is an Indian administrative service officer from Maharashtra 1983 batch. He is also a published author, and is best known for his novel, *English August* (1988). His major works include *The Last Burden* (1993), *Weight Loss* (2006) etc.

**Venu Chitale (1912-1995)** born in Kolhapur, she worked as a talks broadcaster and assistant to George Orwell in BBC. In London she also became involved with the India League and forged a close relationship with Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru's sister. She returned to India in 1950 and married Prof T. G. Khare. The novel *In Transit* (1951) is her most notable work illustrating the Indian freedom struggle.

**Zeenuth Futehally (1904-1992)** grew up in Hyderabad in a Muslim family of high social standing. Fond of writing from a very young age, an early marriage took her to Japan, where Zohra was conceived. She primarily wrote against patriarchal domination and *Zohra* (1951) was her only novel in English. She was closely associated to E M Forster Zeenuth Futehally lived most of her life in Mumbai with her husband, son, and two daughters.

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Hindi Novelists**

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## (C) List of Hindi Novelists

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1. Alka Saraogi
2. Amrit Rai
3. Amritlal Nagar
4. Bhagwan Das Morwal
5. Bhagwati Charan Verma
6. Chitra Mudgal
7. Dudhnath Singh
8. Himanshu Srivastava
9. Ilachandra Joshi
10. Jagdish Chandra Mathur
11. Jainendra Kumar
12. Kamleshwar
13. Maitreyi Pushpa
14. Manjul Bhagat
15. Mannu Bhandari
16. Manzoor Ahtesham
17. Mridula Garg
18. Nagarjun
19. Phaneshwar Nath
20. Ramdarash Mishra
21. Ravindra Verma
22. Shreelal Shukla
23. Surendra Verma
24. Udaishankar Bhatt
25. Udai Prakash
26. Upendranath
27. Vishnu Prabhakar
28. Viveki Rai
29. Yashpal

## Hindi Novelists

**Alka Saraogi (b. 1960)** was born in Calcutta in a family of Marwari origin. She writes about Marwaris settled in Bengal and the cultural exchange between the two communities. Her novel *Kalikatha via Bypass* (1998) won the Sahitya Akademi Award. Her other notable works include *Shesh Kadambari* (2002), *Ek Break ke Baad* (2008) etc.,.

**Amrit Rai (1921-1996)** was born in Varanasi, UP and was prolific in both Hindi and Urdu. He belonged to the Progressive School of writers and edited many journals and magazines. He became more popular as a Biographer and Translator and received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his biography *Kalam Ka Sipahi* (1962) on his father Premchand. His other compositions include *Nagphani ka Desh*, *Hathi ke Daant*, etc.,.

**Amritlal Nagar (1916-1990)** came from Agra and had borne lathi charge during Simon Go Back agitation. He started his career as a Drama Producer in All India Radio but later left it to write as a free lancer. He was a story writer, dramatist, playwright and novelist. He also wrote memoirs, children literature and did translation work. *Shatranj Ke Mohre*(1959), *Manas Ka Hans*(1973), *Karvat* (1985), etc.,. He was a recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award, Soviet Land Nehru Award, Bharat Bharati Samman and Premchand Award.

**Bhagwandas Morwal (b. 1960)** belongs to the region of Mewat in Haryana. He primarily writes on caste and communal issues. He has been bestowed Dr Ambedkar Award and Jankavi Meher Singh Samman from the Haryana Government. *Babul Tera Des Mein*(2004), *Narak Masiha* (2014)are some of his critically acclaimed works.

**Bhagwati Charan Verma (1903-1981)** was born in Uttar Pradesh and an alumnus of Allahabad University. He won accolades from the literary critics for his historical novel *Chitrlekha*. He was nominated for the Rajya Sabha and was bestowed Sahitya Akademi and Padma Bhushan from the Indian government for his writings. He wrote

poems, reviews and essays. *Bhoole Bisre Chitra* (1961), *Tedhe Mede Raaste* (1946) and *Rekha* (1964) are some of his literary compositions.

**Chitra Mudgal (b. 1944)** born in Chennai but raised in UP she came from an upper middle class background. She was awarded the Vyas Samman, Sahitya Bhushan and Sahitya Akademi Award for her writings. She has worked in close proximity with Datta Samant the leader of the labour movement in Bombay. Many of her stories like have been dramatized on Doordarshan. *Ek Zameen Apni* (1990) is considered to be a vocal feminist work of the author. She was awarded the 2018 Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel on transgenders titled *Post Box Number 203 Naala Sopara*.

**Dudhnath Singh (1936-2018)** belongs to Balia in UP and worked as a Professor in University of Allahabad. He has established himself as a literary critic and has been awarded the Bharatendu Samman, Sahitya Bhushan Samman, etc., for his works. *Sapaat Chehrewala Aadmi* and *Nishkasan* (2002) have been his notable publications.

**Himanshu Srivastava (1934-1996)** was born in a remote village in Bihar and started writing and publishing stories from High School. He was also involved in composing radio plays like *Umar Khayyam* aired on AIR. He has penned nearly twenty novels and *Naya Insaan* (1953), *Raat Pagal Ho Gayi* (1952) and *Nai Subah ki Dhoop* are some of his acclaimed works.

**Ilachandra Joshi (1903-1982)** belonged to Amorha, Uttarakhand and had an upper middle class upbringing. He was more into psychological writing before independence but later penned novels on socio-political themes. He wrote essays and reviews and even edited magazines. Being a linguist he was well versed in Hindi, Sanskrit, Bangla, English and French. His acclaimed works include *Ghrinamayi* (1929), *Subah Ke Bhoole* and *Gypsy*.

**Jagdish Chandra Mathur (1917-1978)** born in Khurja, UP he became famous as a playwright with his composition *Konark* (1951). Being an ICS officer he served in the All India Radio and was one of the founder members of Sangeet Natak Akademi.

*Bhor ka Tara* (1946) *O Mere Sapne* (1950) and *Pehla Raja* (1970) are some of his published works.

**Jainendra Kumar (1905-1988)** was born in Uttar Pradesh and studied in Kashi University. He had participated in Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement and was close to Premchand. He was an excellent story writer and was also into journalism. He had been bestowed the Sahitya Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan. Some of his noteworthy compositions are *Parakh* (1929), *Sunita* (1935), *Tyagpatra* (1937) etc.,

**Kamleshwar (1932-2007)** belonged to Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh and was part of the 'Nai Kahani' movement. He had worked as a TV journalist in Bombay and edited numerous journals and magazine. He also served as Director for Doordarshan. Many of his novels were turned into movie scripts. He was bestowed Sahitya Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan for his literary contribution.

**Maitreyi Pushpa (b. 1944)** hails from Aligarh and has penned ten novels along with numerous short story collections. Her writing reflects the basic ethos of both Brij and Bundelkhand regions. Her articles get regularly published in newspapers. She has received Sahitya Kriti Samman, Premchand Award, Sarojini Naidu Award and many more. *Chaak* (2004) and *Alma Kabutri* (2000) are some of her literary acclaimed novels.

**Manjul Bhagat (1936-1998)** belonged to a Marwari family settled in Calcutta and has eight novels and eight story collections to her credit. Her writing has a universal appeal and has been translated in many foreign languages. Her accolades include the Sahitya Samman by the Hindi Akademi. Although her forte was essentially story writing but she delved into the genre of novels also. *Toota Hua Indradhanush* (1976), *Khatul* (1983), *Ladies Club* (1976), are some of the novels penned by her.

**Mannu Bhandari (b. 1931)** comes from Madhya Pradesh and is a pioneer in 'Nai Kahani' movement along with Kamleshwar. Her writings voices women issues as well as contemporary socio-political concerns. She has been awarded the Vyas

Samman and numerous other awards for her short stories, plays and children's literature. Her composition *Yahi Sacch Hai* was adapted into the movie 'Rajnigandha' a masterpiece of parallel cinema.

**Manzoor Ahtesham (b. 1948)** was born in Bhopal and is an alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University. He has five novels to his credit and has translated many of his own compositions into English. He has been awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India. *Basharat Manzil* (2004), *Kuch Din Aur* (1976) are some of his acclaimed works.

**Mridula Garg (b. 1938)** was born in Calcutta and was the younger sister of Manjul Bhagat. She wrote many plays, essays, short stories and novels many of which she herself translated into English. She is an active columnist and environmentalist and has served academically in numerous international universities. She has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award and Vyas Samman for her literary contributions.

**Nagarjun (1911-1998)** whose birth name was Vaidyanath Mishra came from the Maithili region of Bihar. He wrote essays and novels. His poems won him the epithet 'Jan Kavi' He had converted to Buddhism and was actively involved in the post-independence peasant movement. He participated in the JP Movement and was jailed during emergency. He was a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. *Jamaniya Ka Baba* (1967) and *Garibdas* are some of his popular works.

**Phaneshwar Nath 'Renu' (1921-1977)** hailed from Bihar and belonged to the socialist ideology. As a student he had participated in Gandhi's Quit India Movement. After independence he focussed on the regeneration of rural India and wrote the 'aanchalik' novels. Later he took part in the JP Movement and as a protest against Mrs Indira Gandhi's emergency he returned the 'Padma Shree.' His prominent works include *Parati Parikatha* (1957), *Kitne Chaurahe* (1966), etc.,.The critically acclaimed Hindi movie *Teesri Kasam* was based on Renu's *Mare Gaye Gulfam*.

**Ramdarash Mishra (b. 1924)** was born in Gorakhpur and has been penning many novels, short stories, essays and memoirs. He is immensely appreciated for his poetic compositions by critics. He has also been the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award. *Apne Log, Sahachar hai Samay* (1991), *Aam ke Patte* (2004)etc., are some of his popular works.

**Ravindra Verma (b. 1936)** was born in Jhansi and is the brother of Surendra Verma. He started his career by writing stories for magazines and moved on to compose poems and short stories. Many of his writings have been translated into English. *Ek Doobte Jahaz ki Antarkatha* (2016) *Gatha Shekhchilli* (1981) are some of his published works

**Shreelal Shukla (1925-2011)** was born in Lucknow, UP and served as an officer in the Indian Administrative Services. Ample use of humour and satire is his forte in writing. Rural India generally forms the backdrop to his literary work. He has been awarded Sahitya Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan for his writings. *Sooni Ghati ka Suraj* (1987), *Aadmi ka Zeher and Bishrampur ka Sant* (1998)are some of his noted publications.

**Surendra Verma (b. 1941)** was born in Jhansi, Bundelkhan and became popular through his play *Surya ki Antim Kiran Se Surya Ki Pehli Kiran Tak* (1972). He had had a long association with National School of Drama and has been awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Theatre, Vyas Samman and Sahitya Akademi Award. *Anthwan Sarg* (1976), *Qaid-e-Hayat* (1983) and *Do Murdon Ke Liye Guldasta* (2000).

**Udaishankar Bhatt (1898-1969)** was born in Etawah in Uttar Pradesh. His Father was a Sanskrit scholar and had participated in the freedom movement. He studied in Benaras Hindu University and earned fame as a playwright and novelist. He worked as a correspondent for Akashwani for number of years. Later he got associated with

National College, Lahore and taught revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Sukhdeva. *Raka*, *Manasi* and *Naya Samaj* are some of his well known works.

**Uday Prakash (b. 1952)** was born in Madhya Pradesh and has been an active poet, journalist and translator. He was quite enthusiastic about politics in his youth but later lost interest. He had won the Sahitya Akademi Award but returned it to the government recently in protest of the assassination of Kalburgi the Kannada writer.

**Upendranath 'Ashq' (1910-1996)** belonged to Jalandhar, Punjab and wrote in both Urdu and Hindi. He edited quite a few journals and newspapers and was even associated with the All India Radio. He was the proud recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Theatre. *Sitaron ke Khel* (1937), *Girti Deewarein* (1947), *Garm Raakh* (1952) and *Dachi* are some of his acclaimed works.

**Vishnu Prabhakar (1912-2009)** was born in Miranpur, UP and got recognition as a novelist, writer, journalist, essayist, poet etc,. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India for his contribution in the field of literature. He even wrote stories for children *Dhalti Raat* (1951), *Tat ke Bandhan* (1955) and *Awara Masiha* (1974) are few of his published compositions.

**Viveki Rai (1924-2016)** was born in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh and composed in both Hindi and Bhojpuri. He wrote numerous novels, essays and short stories. He has been awarded the Yash Bharati Samman, Mahatma Gandhi Samman, Premchand Award, Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan Award and many more for his contribution to literature. *Shweta Patra* (1979) and *Circus* (2005) are some of his popular works.

**Yashpal (1903-1976)** was born in Ferozepur Punjab. Belonging to socialist ideology he had been an active associate of the revolutionaries and was quite close to Bhagat Singh and Sukhdeva. He had been part of the Lahore Conspiracy Case and had even served jail for it. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan for his contribution to literature. His works include *Desh ka Bhavishya* (1960), *Meri Teri Uski Baat* (1974), etc,.

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### **Other Resources**

#### **1. Journals**

- (a) Aajkal, Yojana, Kurukshetra-Publication Division
- (b) Asian Survey
- (c) Economic and Political Weekly- Archives
- (d) Gandhi Jyoti, Bhagalpur University, Bihar
- (e) Gandhi Marg, Gandhi peace Foundation, New Delhi
- (f) Gandhian Perspective, Varanasi
- (g) Indian Literature, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi
- (h) Journal of Peace Research, Sage Publications
- (i) Samkalin Sahitya, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi
- (j) Social Scientist
- (k) Sociological Bulletin
- (l) The Journal of Asian Studies

#### **2. Newspapers**

- (a) Deccan Herald
- (b) Hindustan Times
- (c) The Economic Times

- (d) The Hindu
- (e) The Times of India
- (f) The Telegraph

### **3. Libraries**

- (a) Banasthali Vidyapeeth
- (b) Digitized Books of National Library, Kolkatta
- (c) Gandhi Ashram, Sabarmati
- (d) Gandhi Public Library, Ajmer
- (e) Gandhian Study Centre Library, Vardhman Mahavir Open University, Kota
- (f) Government Arts Girls' College, Kota
- (g) Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahemedabad
- (h) Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha
- (i) Jain Vishwa Bharati University, Ladnun
- (j) M.D.S. University, Ajmer
- (k) National Gandhi Museum and Library, New Delhi
- (l) Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
- (m) S P C Government College, Ajmer
- (n) Sahitya Akademi Library, New Delhi

# **Published Research Papers**

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## List of Published Research Papers

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1. Dass, Persis Latika, **“Introducing Formal Moral Education in Indian Schools: Gandhian Ashram Observances for Inculcating National Character”** *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 38 No. 3 & 4 Oct-Dec 2016 & Jan-Mar 2017, pp. 377-394 (ISSN 00164437) UGC No. 41961.
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## Introducing Formal Moral Education in Indian Schools: Gandhian Ashram Observances for Inculcating National Character

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### ABSTRACT

*Right from ancient times, moral education has been a part of academics, the essence of which has been emphatically secular and veritably bereft of any religious bearings. In the twentieth century, too many countries adopted moral education in their school curriculum, accepting it as part of the State duty. Singapore, a former British Asian colony adopted moral education as a formal subject in its school system in 1992 and has been successfully running the programme and topping world rankings in Human Development Index and corruption free countries. The National Curriculum Framework implemented in India since 1975 and continuing till date as NCF 2005 has been incessantly stressing on peace and sensitivity towards others as one of its basic objectives, but has refrained from introducing formal moral education in school curriculum. The result has been a steady rise in corruption, coercion, conflict and communalization even after almost seventy years of independence. The paper attempts to suggest adoption of moral education as a formal discipline in school curricula in order to instil and strengthen the moral fabric of Indian national character. However, this moral education needs to be secular in nature because India is a multi-religious society, thus zeroing on Gandhian Values as the core content for the subject appears the most plausible solution due to the secular and universal nature of his principles. Formal adoption of Gandhian Ashram Observances, envisaged for the inmates of his Sabarmati Ashram, in school curriculum would not only open up the portals of an indigenously comprehensive yet universally adaptable 'way of life' for the X-Generation Indians, but give boost to the flagrantly flagging ideals of truth, honesty, ahimsa, secularism,*

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**Key words:** Need, Moral Education, Schools, Gandhian Values, National Character

#### Historical Context of Moral Education

'PROTAGORAS'<sup>1</sup> COMPOSED BY Plato in ancient Greece describes a debate between Socrates and Protagoras over the teaching of virtue or 'arete,' a term meaning moral goodness and human greatness. Protagoras believed that virtue could be taught, while Socrates negated the possibility, yet at the same time declaring all virtue as basically 'knowledge,' thereby covertly creating a possibility for its scholarship in formal education. Socrates was a renowned philosopher and teacher of classical Greece while Protagoras was a member of the 'Sophists' commonly called the 'moral entrepreneurs' roaming around the ancient world in the fifth and fourth century BC attempting to establish educational practices. Similarly, Confucius in early China (sixth century BC) compiled a set of rules for conduct based on moral principles to be inducted in everyday life leading to the establishment of a disciplined and stable society. His 'Analects of Confucius'<sup>2</sup> openly declares that virtues are not acquired innately but developed through teaching and training, 'By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.'<sup>3</sup> Confucius' moral education aimed at nurturing a superior being 'Junzi' characterized by superiority of mind, virtues, ideals and morals. To cultivate such a noble entity, a formal instruction in sincerity, benevolence, filial piety, righteousness, integrity, forgiveness and courage needs to be imparted, resulting in the inculcation of benevolence, the paramount virtue termed 'Ren' by Confucius. Benevolence is expressed through behaviour called 'etiquette' or 'Li' in Confucian Philosophy; person with 'Li' would be modest, gentle, elegant, respectful and virtuous, befitting to carve a welfare society. Thus, 'Ren' and 'Li' form the core of Confucian moral education.

Closer home, Emperor Ashoka (304BC-232BC) of the Mauryan Dynasty attempted the same when he elucidated a code of moral conduct christened 'Dhamma' emphasizing harmony especially in unequal relationships like parents and children, kinsmen and friends, teachers and pupils, employers and employees, besides propagating general values viz., non-injury to animals and humans, forgiveness, piety and adhering to the truth. Ashoka's Dhamma was essentially a code of ethical behaviour having parallels with Buddhism, but never

equated publically by its perpetrator. In fact, the Greek and Aramic inscriptions use 'eusebeia' for 'Dhamma' meaning 'virtue' in Greek.<sup>4</sup> Dhamma for Ashoka was 'good' in accordance with the established customs. It never meant religion but "what it behoves a man of right feeling to do"<sup>5</sup> and different from both ritual and theology. Thus, it was a universal code based on social ethics and accommodation of diverse views. Centuries ago Ashoka understood the need for inculcating moral values in his subjects and accordingly not only composed certain 'do's and don'ts' for the moral augmentation of his people but made serious efforts to propagate it. 'Dhamma' was inscribed in 'Prakrit' or the vernacular language, on rock and pillar edicts installed across the length and breadth of the empire and placed at such places where they could be read and imbibed by people from all walks of life. Furthermore, the emperor created a separate administrative department for the purpose and appointed special officers designated 'Dhammamahamatts' with the exclusive duty of spreading and popularizing the precepts of 'Dhamma' amidst the common people. The steps may appear intruding to the modern concept of democratic liberty and bordering over to 'moral policing' but both the objective and methodology adopted by Ashoka were suggestive in nature and lack evidence of any coercion. However, propagation of 'Dhamma' was officially accepted as a State duty and part of public welfare.

#### **Nature, Scope and Attributes of Moral Education**

The above deliberations were proof to the fact that the nature, scope and attributes of moral education have been the subject of debate and discussion ever since man first cradled in the throes of civilization. The process continued in the modern period as well eliciting varied ways of defining and characterizing what constituted 'Moral Education.' For Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), "Moral training must form a part of education. Child's disposition must be so trained that he shall choose none but good ends—children should learn from their youth to detest vice; not merely on the ground that God has forbidden it, but because vice is detestable in itself."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, for John Dewey (1859-1952), the purpose of education "is to see that the greatest possible number of ideas acquired by children and youth are acquired in such a way that they become moving ideas, motive forces in the guidance of conduct;" this responsibility "makes the moral purpose universal and dominant in all instruction—whatever the topic."<sup>7</sup> Coming to a more credulous elucidation, Barry Sugarman (1973) defines the morally educated person as

someone who has concern for other people such that their feelings, wants and interests count with one another and are not overridden for the sake of one's own goals....the morally educated person, when thinking about what to do in an unfamiliar situation or in passing judgment on action taken, thinks in terms of universalistic moral principles based on concern for the rights of other people as well as himself.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, to quote Horace from *Epistles 1.1*, "to flee vice is the beginning of virtue, and the beginning of wisdom is to have got rid of folly" however, the most obvious problem with morality is that there is no consensus among people about what behaviour is ethically acceptable and what is not. One culture finds stoning adulterers to death morally shocking, others find it morally incumbent, similarly within a family circle some may approve abortion while others may not, thereby complicating the possibility of reaching a consensus. In Indian context, some ethnic groups practicing same religion prohibit marriage within the village community, while others consider marrying one's niece as a moral obligation. This brings us to the need for evolving certain ground rules regarding desirable values shared by all, pertaining to one's nationality and culture — in simple words, common values with which all members of a heterogeneous society could identify with and agree to. An ideal sum up would be to quote William K Frankena (1970) who regards morality as

Standards or guidelines that govern human cooperation-in particular how rights, duties and benefits are to be allocated. Given that people live together and that their activities affect each other, morality provides guidelines and rationales for how each person's activities should affect the other's welfare. The guidelines are not fashioned to serve any one person's interest but are constructed with consideration for each individual's intrinsic values....morality at least in principle deals with sharable values because moralities are proposals for a system of mutual coordination of activities and cooperation among people.<sup>9</sup>

#### **An Overview of Formal Moral Education in Singapore School Curriculum**

Many countries throughout the world adopted formal moral education in their school curriculum with the intention of inculcating certain shared values amongst its citizens aimed at their own welfare as well as the country at large. Singapore, did the same, and has been taken as a source of reference in the paper to emphasize the need of formal moral education in school curriculum. Singapore attained freedom from colonial rule in 1965 and burgeoned on the path of unprecedented

growth and development. Since then it has never looked back and excelled in its socio-economic set up against many Asian giants. Its leaders had a clear vision before them when they set sail to this unchartered territory. In order to have a developed and globally vibrant Singapore, its citizens had to be morally upright with a clear understanding between dos and don'ts. Dr. Goh Keng Swee, who served as the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore (1980-84) and the man responsible for ushering in formal moral education, though in religious form, in Singapore Schools, unequivocally declared, "Without morality and a sense of public duty that does not put self always first, Singapore could decline."<sup>10</sup> In Singapore the privately owned Christian missionary schools had already been imparting Christian moral values to its students. Inspired by them, as well as believing that religion helps inculcate morality, the Government of Singapore in 1982 declared religious knowledge as a compulsory subject in school curriculum. The students could choose from Bible Studies, Islamic Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Confucian Ethics, Hindu Studies and Sikh Studies. However, the implementation of this 'mixed bag' created rift in the religious and racial harmony of Singapore. Therefore, in 1992 religious education was replaced by Civic and Moral Education. The CME<sup>11</sup> focussed on developing the moral well-being of the pupils by 'helping them acquire and live by the values that guide them to make appropriate choices and determine their behaviour and attitude towards themselves, others and environment, so that the child develops into a morally upright, caring and responsible individual and citizen.' The CME syllabus focussed on six core values — Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Care, Resilience and Harmony, to be inculcated at both the primary and secondary levels. These core values represented the tenets that constituted shared national identity aimed at inculcating Singapore's National Character. Different teaching approaches were to be adopted for nurturing the selected values, ranging from Cognitive Development to Action learning, among others. Community Involvement Program consisting of six hours per academic year developed 'volunteerism.' The medium of instruction was to be the mother tongue, that is, Malay, Chinese or Tamil as these three constitute the leading ethnic groups in Singapore. Assessment was Formative — continuous and on day-to-day basis 'providing enough opportunities to involve and guide pupils in the discussion of complex and challenging issues.' At the secondary level, the stress was on strengthening what has been done at the primary level. The ultimate objective is to take the students at a higher 'self' guided by moral knowing, moral feeling and finally the apex of human existence — moral action. The Civic and Moral Education resulted in placing

Singapore among the top ten countries of the world in UNDP's Human Development Index. As per HDI 2014<sup>12</sup> world rankings Singapore was at the ninth position, and the only Asian country to make it to the top ten. HDI evaluation is based on the educational, health and income levels of the member countries. The Corruption Perceptive Index 2015 prepared by Transparency International<sup>13</sup> and quoted by World Democracy Audit 2015<sup>14</sup> assessed Singapore as the eighth least corrupt country scoring 85, only six mark less than Denmark which came first, while the Economists Safe Index 2015<sup>15</sup> declared Singapore as the second safest city in the world. In 2014, Ministry of Education in Singapore brought a new framework in the Moral Education syllabus and replaced the Civic and Moral Education with Character and Citizenship Education.<sup>16</sup> It continues to exist as an independent subject placing the six core values at the centre while enveloping them in concentric circles pertaining to Social and Emotional Competencies and further with skills related to Citizenship Competencies. The CCE hopes to inculcate civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills among the students befitting them for the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. However, the new framework has reduced the gamut of formal moral education, serving it not in a distinct platter but synthesizing it with other skills like cyber wellness, communication skills, globalization, career guidance, sex education etc., while making parents key partners in the new set up. There have been voices both in favour and against the change, the result of which is too early to decipher.

#### **Need for Formal Moral Education in India**

After an overview of the need, structure and benefits of formal moral education in Singapore a critical appraisal of the same in Indian scenario becomes evident. India, like Singapore had been a British Colony and suffered the same setbacks and exploitation. However, it did attain independence much early than Singapore thereby, becoming master of its destiny in 1947 itself. Keeping aside the disparity in size and population, many would term Indian democracy much stronger and liberal than Singapore. As per the Freedom House Annual Survey<sup>17</sup> of 150 countries and quoted in World Audit, India's Democracy Ranking in 2014 is fifty-one while that of Singapore is seventy-three. In spite of the lead in experience and civil liberties, even after sixty-nine years of independence, India is ranked one hundred and thirty-five by Human Development Index 2014, twentieth most violent place in the world and ranked one hundred and forty-three out of one hundred and sixty-two countries by Global Peace Index 2015<sup>18</sup> and assigned seventy-sixth position for the year 2015 in the corruption rankings by

Transparency International.<sup>19</sup> Besides, crime against Women, Children, Dalits, Tribals, People with Disability, Minorities (Religious and Linguistic) are on the rise. In spite of possessing world's most brilliant and comprehensive Constitution, the State in India has failed to deliver the goods. This brings us to the next important issue. Is it the sole responsibility of the State to bring on the change? The answer lies in the following words of Kant, "By whom, is the better condition of the world to be brought about? By rulers, or by their subjects, it is by the latter who shall so improve themselves that they meet half way the measures for their good which the government might establish."<sup>20</sup> And how does one improve oneself, by imbibing the best inherent in education? And who decides the constituents of education, the State itself, as per the need of its subjects? In Indian context that need has been primarily literacy, which is still beyond the reach of sizeable parts of the population. This insistence on literacy has made our policy makers forego the need and importance of formal moral education. They failed to comprehend its value, especially for the first generation learners who had no avenue to absorb the 'moralistic' ideas. Their families toiling hard to meet two square meals a day could not be expected to harness the 'inherent good' in them. Similarly, the rising, new and ambitious Indian middle class, busy churning their lives to make 'more money' too lack the requisite time and patience to sit and instil moral values amongst their children. Religion as such has been a moral failure in India registering its presence only in terms of riots born of suspicion and ill-will between different communities. The 'moral' in religion is shrouded in greed for power and money, thereby, leaving the majority wobbling like lost sheep. In such a dismal scenario it is the duty of the State to impart moral education through school curriculum.

Indian educationists right from S. Radhakrishnan to Sri Prakasa Committee (Committee on Religious and Moral Instructions) 1959, emphasized the importance of imparting moral education oriented towards the unity and integration of the pluralistic nature of Indian nation, however, it was the Indian Education Commission (Kothari Commission) 1964-66, that suggested direct moral instruction in the school programme. In Volume 2 Chapter VIII '*Education Social, Moral and Spiritual Values*' 8.96 the members recommended: "that one or two periods a week should be set aside in the school time table for instruction in moral and spiritual values." In spite of the lucid advice, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), that carries the onus of publishing National Curriculum Framework, which includes preparing the syllabi, textbooks and teaching practices within school education programmes in India, and having given the

country its four NCFs, that is, 1975, 1988, 2000 and the currently implemented 2005, still refrains from adopting a formal moral education programme. Though, the details of the document available for public perusal at the NCERT official website lucidly state: 'sensitivity to others well-being and feelings' as one of the broad aims of education and in the main features of the curriculum, one of the national concerns mentioned is 'concerns and issues pertaining to environment, peace oriented values and sensitivity towards gender parity and towards SC, STs and minorities' but rejects a separate imparting of these values. Thus, NCF 2005 stresses on moral values, not as an exclusive subject, but as an intrinsic part of each subject, to be amalgamated with the basic characteristics of the discipline, for example, secularism in History and investigative temper, curiosity and concern for life and environment with science. Such kind of arrangement already existed in Singapore still it felt the need to introduce formal moral education as a separate subject in the school curriculum. The Civic and Moral Education running in schools since 1992 has already nurtured a complete generation of citizens raised on formal moral education catering to the Singaporean National Character and consistently contributing to the leaps and bounds the country has achieved in all walks of life. Whereas in Indian context we are still fumbling with issues of corruption, coercion, conflict and communalisation arising from dearth of food, water, medicines, electricity, employment, literacy and basic infrastructure. It is not that Indian schools are completely bereft of any moral education, nearly all of the Christian missionary schools and many other privately owned schools do teach 'moral education' as a subject, but it is not part of formal assessment and, therefore, treated as an appendix by the teachers as well as students. Again the share of private schools as compared to government and local body schools both at the primary and secondary level is quite less. As per the data made public by Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India 2011-12,<sup>21</sup> 85.1 per cent schools are under government set up at primary level, whereas at upper primary level the share is at 70.5 per cent, reconfirming the need to reform the NCF and induct formal moral education in school curricula. It is then only that the first principle envisaged in our National Policy on Education (1986 and modified in 1992) would be fulfilled, "Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenge of time."<sup>22</sup>

**Gandhian Framework for Moral Education for Inculcating Indian National Character**

Before venturing on the course for framing the basic structure for  
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formal moral education in India, primarily designed from Gandhian values, it is essential to recount Gandhi's own views on moral education and ethics. Gandhi was essentially a man of religion and thereby associated morality as a means to realize God. God for him represented the moral force in every aspect of human life. In fact, in his early writings on education, he declared ethics and religion to be at par, and to be made an integral part of Indian system of education. In *Hind Swaraj* (1908), on being questioned on the content of education ideally suited to the Indian context, he emphatically declared, "Religious that is ethical education will occupy the first place," because he knew India will never be godless and atheism can never flourish in this land. For Gandhi, all religions were same, different paths to the same God and professing common human values; therefore, he had accordingly included religious education as part of his Ashram curriculum evolved and practiced in South Africa (Phoenix and Tolstoy), as well as India (Kochrab and Sabarmati). Moreover, in '*Ashram Observances in Action*' compiled by Valji Govindji Desai in 1955 and based on Gandhi's letters to Sabarmati inmates between the years 1930-32, he overtly stated, "Religious education is indispensable and the child should get it by watching the teacher's conduct and by hearing him talk about it."<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, a few years earlier he had even suggested a curriculum for religious instruction including "a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own."<sup>24</sup> This would inculcate appreciation and respect for religions other than their own in the minds and souls of the students and spread religious harmony in a multi-religious country like India. However, with time his views changed, which was a common occurrence with this researcher of truth. All his anthologized writings contain a declaration that he made in *Harijan* 29-4-33 addressed to his readers. "In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, and therefore, when anybody finds inconsistency between any two writings of mine, he would do well to choose the latter of the two on the same subject." Accordingly, his fundamentals of Basic Education, compiled in 1937 targeting children between the age group seven to fourteen and published in *Harijan* 2-11-47, he emphatically rejected the scope for religious education, "In this, there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics will have full scope." Continuing the same strain in *Harijan* 23-3-47, he wrote, "I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education ....Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State." In later years Gandhi

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had stopped equating religion with ethics and had advised the State to stay away from religious education, yet at the same time declaring ethical education as its moral duty. Possibly, the rise of communalism in the later phase of the Indian National Movement characterized by the rise of sectarian political parties and bodies in both the Hindu and Muslim communities had forced him to make this transition. Without doubt, he was a visionary, a man much ahead of his times and had read the writing on the wall that envisaged the need for secular moral education in India.

While attempting a moral framework for Indian schools a brief justification for selecting Gandhi as its basis is imperative. India is a cradle of numerous religions, languages, customs and rituals. Every village has its own good and a blurred code of what is permissible and what is not ranging from food, clothing, marriage and occupation. In such a scenario, agreeing to a moral code shared by all entities aiming at cultivating a national character, becomes an onerous task. At such a juncture, Gandhian values veritably come to our rescue, his ideals and principles are such to which every Indian irrespective of caste, class, gender, religion and ethnicity can identify with. Though, post-independence, we have not only turned our back to Gandhian ideals and principles but sadistically relished dissecting his personal fallacies in books as well as our drawing rooms, still, in the deep recesses of our minds and souls, we do know that his words and morals represent a timeless efficacy that is unchallengeable. Even after seven decades of his death, he still represents the zenith of Indian polity, society, economy and spirituality, reflecting both, the indigenous as well as universal, idealistic as well as pragmatic, thereby, making our choice of Gandhi for the subject a rationale one.

Our primary concern in compiling a Gandhian framework is zeroing on certain common moral precepts that would assist the students in enriching the moral fabric of their everyday life, as well rearing them into responsible citizens. The Ashram Observances envisaged by Gandhi, originally penned down in Gujarati and later translated in English by Valji Govindji Desai under the title '*From Yervada Mandir*' and published in 1932, appear the most appropriate choice for moral values to be adopted in Indian school system in the present day scenario. The following observances may be embraced.<sup>25</sup>

1. Truth – For Gandhi '*Satya*' is God and the sole purpose of this otherwise futile life. 'Truth is God and God is Truth.' Truth for Gandhi has a comprehensive meaning. Truth is to be practiced in thought, word and deed. It involves '*tapas*' self-suffering, bordering on death. In practice of Truth there is no place for cowardice, it is a perpetual

process that seeps into every aspect of human life, whether it is, working, drinking, eating or playing. Sadly, lying, cheating and bribery has become an intrinsic part of everyday life in India. As per a study titled 'Bribery and Corruption: Ground Reality in India' conducted by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst and Young,<sup>26</sup> India lost Rs 36,400 Crore (USD 5.92 billion) between October 2011 and September 2012 due to major scams, including the Commonwealth Games Scandal. Therein lays an urgent need to rectify the situation and no better ideal than the man whose candid confessions on theft to adultery continue to confound the sceptics.

2. Non-violence and Love – *Ahimsa* is the means to reach the 'Truth.' Love is the material expression of '*Ahimsa*' and often used in concert with the latter. Love and Truth are the faces of the same coin. A person cannot be true if he does not love all God's creation. Love transcends all animal instincts and is never biased. It is boundless like an ocean. Like Truth, *Ahimsa* too has a wider expression. It is hurt by evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs. Incidentally, Amnesty International Annual Report 2015-16 on India quotes over 47,000 crimes against members of Scheduled Castes and more than 11,000 crimes against Scheduled Tribes in the year 2014.<sup>27</sup> Of late, violence has become too common and rampant in India. Neighbourly squabbles to 'road rage' have become the order of the day. Patience is taken as cowardliness, being soft is something to be shunned and aggression to be adopted not only as part of personality but even in national matters. It is time to revert to the age old Indian tradition of '*Ahimsa*' and Peace propagated most voraciously by Gandhi and inculcate in the heart and soul of India's future citizens.

3. Brahmacharya or Chastity – This too like other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed. It would be foolish to control the body but nurture evil thoughts. It includes control of all organs not just the lust. By giving in to lust a lot of vital energy is lost which if channelized in right direction could yield tremendous results. India's National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) reported rise in the incidents of rape of children below 18 years in the country since 2012. According to NCRB data, there were a total of 8,541 cases of such nature registered in 2012, 12,363 in 2013, 13,766 in 2014 and 10,364 in 2015.<sup>28</sup> Parenthetically, these are the reported cases, whereas in a closed society like India, many ground reported cases are hushed within the quarters of family and community. Gandhi's insistence on 'Brahmacharya' may appear impractical and even ridiculous to many but even a partial adoption of this observance may prove Herculean

in nurturing respect, dignity and compassion towards women and children in the characteristic traits of the young generation.

4. Control of the Palate – Observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate. Food has to be taken only in quantities limited to the needs of the body and to keep it going. True happiness is impossible without true health and true health is impossible without a rigid control of the palate. In a country like India, where many sleep with empty bellies every night, controlling the palate would certainly serve to cut down the cost and spare more food for the impoverished. As per Food and Agriculture Organization, an agency of the United Nations, India, between the years 2014-16 had 15.2 per cent of its population undernourished, bringing the total number to 194.6 million.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, according to a report published in *Times of India*, dated January 15, 2012,<sup>30</sup> in spite of claiming to be burgeoning towards the status of a superpower, India still has nearly 44 per cent of its under five children underweight and 7 per cent die before they reach five years. Mushrooming of expensive fast-food joints and the foul smell and sight of wasting food at wedding reception grounds in modern day India, is a dire reminder of the gluttony right from childhood necessitating the habit of controlling the palate, not only for the welfare of one's own body, but fellow countrymen at large.

5. Non-Stealing – Every one of us is consciously or unconsciously guilty of theft. It is thievery not only to take things belonging to others, but also if we take something believing it nobody's property. Things found on the roadside belong to the ruler or the local authority. Observance of non-stealing goes much farther. It is theft to take something if we have no real need of it. We multiply our wants and make thieves of ourselves. Bothering about things to be acquired in future also amounts to thievery. As stated before, Corruption Perceptive Index 2015 ranked India at 76/168 countries with a score of 38/100. Previously, Global Corruption Barometer 2013 reported corruption and bribery as part of every private and public institution in India, ranging from political parties to media, judiciary, police and even education.<sup>31</sup>

6. Non-Possession or Poverty – Desire to possess has given rise to inequalities and miseries. The rich have things they do not need and are neglected and wasted, while millions starve to death. If each retained what was truly required, contentment would prevail. Civilization consists not in the multiplication but in deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. Interestingly, post-liberalization middle-class India frolicking in luxurious cravings and desire, is in dire need of this particular value. A KPMG-Assocham Study says the Indian

luxury market grew at a brisk 30 per cent in 2012 and will stand at 14 Billion USD by 2016. The luxury goods sector includes products like apparel, accessories, home decor, pens, watches, wines and spirits and jewellery, and services such as fine dining, concierge services, travel, hotels, spa-assets as fine arts, yachts and automobiles.<sup>32</sup> In a land where millions continue to live below poverty line, the urge to soak in extravagance needs to be reigned in and the spartan lifestyle which India seem to have lost somewhere in the frenzy of globalization, is to be reared back through school education system.

7. Fearlessness – Fearlessness is indispensable for the growth of other noble qualities, because Truth and Love cannot be practiced without fearlessness. One must be free of fear; fear of disease, bodily injury, death, dispossession, reputation and so on, in order to pursue Truth. For a votary of *Ahimsa*, fearlessness doesn't amount to the usage of weapon but steadfastness to truth and non-violence. As discussed earlier, what is required is an inherent courage to be sowed from the early school years, a courage that is both confident and compassionate, surviving boldly without the crutch of any weapon, raising its voice against any injustice, remaining firm, irrespective of the perpetrator and consorting only with the lucid unadulterated truth.

8. Removal of Untouchability – Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth. Generally, this is pertaining to the low castes in India, but it does spill over into religion and community, and hence its removal would break down barriers between men. Till date, a big chunk of Dalits in India are into manual scavenging and treated as pariah by many. National Council for Applied Economic Research, New Delhi and University of Maryland conducted a survey covering 42,000 households across India in 2014 and reported untouchability in the sense of not allowing a low caste to enter their kitchen or touch their dishes exist among 30 per cent of Hindus, with Brahmins amounting to 52 per cent engaged in such practices.<sup>33</sup> This proves the need for implanting this value in the tender psyches so that from the initial stage itself they let go of this inhuman practice, fraternize with the Dalits, redress their grievances and love them as their own selves.

9. Bread Labour – To live, man must work. Even if his occupation is intellectual in nature, he must indulge in physical labour pertaining to his daily chores. If all laboured for their bread, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. This would also replace dignity in labour that seems to be lost to the human civilization in the age of machines and technology, besides providing a healthy source of physical exercise to our otherwise sedate lifestyle. According to a study published in the noted journal *Lancet*, in a country where 270

million still live below poverty line, junk food, alcohol and sedentary lifestyle is making one out of every man and woman of India obese and overweight.<sup>34</sup> Thus, as per the report, India is home to 15 per cent of world's obese people because of pursuing an internet and technology-laced lazy and stagnant lifestyle. A life given to physical labour was respected and espoused by Gandhi even for those indulging in scholarly pursuits and it is the same that should be lodged in the school curriculum for moral education.

10. Communal Unity – We need not tolerate each other's faith because the term has a derogatory connotation but entertain the same respect and regard for the religion of others as we accord to our own. We must be also aware of the weaknesses of our own faith and look at all with an equal eye. True knowledge of religion frees us from fanaticism and transcends us to spiritual insight. Communal violence is on the rise and alarming to the secular fabric of the country. According to records with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, there have been 630 communal incidents till October 2015, with the public lynching of a Muslim man in Dadri near the nation's capital in September, under suspicion of having consumed beef, being the most overt representation of the depth of religious polarization the country has reached.<sup>35</sup> Schools need to come to the forefront equipped with moral education curricula to exterminate the vermin of communal prejudice and stereotypes rooted in the nucleus of the young minds by their very own family and friends and nurture respect and understanding towards each others' faith.

11. Swadeshi – Here the implication of *swadeshi* goes much beyond the economical. A votary of *swadeshi* would, in his utmost ability, dedicate first to the well-being of his family, neighbourhood, community and country at large, but all within the gamut of morality and not causing harm to anyone. On the economic front, he would give preference to the local manufacturers, even if they are of an inferior grade, but would not turn the practice into a fetish, rejecting the foreign product, even when one's country is not capable of producing it. 'Swadeshism' is not a cult of hatred but a doctrine of selfless service. Recently, many attempts are being made by the Government of India to promote *swadeshi* products in the country especially 'Khadi' the indigenously spun homemade cloth and product of the Gandhian *charkha*. It has been announced that the crew members of Air India — official aircraft of the Indian President and Prime Minister, would be wearing Khadi uniforms<sup>36</sup> and it may become mandatory for government employees to wear Khadi on atleast one day of the week. Such attempts may usher in the change in attitude but perennial transition would come only when the youngsters

understand the socio-economical essence of such indigenous products right from school days.

The above may not be an exhaustive or a perfect list of core values to be inculcated amongst school students to foster national character and meet the demands of the twenty-first century India, yet it comes quite close to lessening the banes of India that have been plaguing it for centuries and hindering its march to growth and development. The values need to be introduced in a basic form at the primary level by adopting an Action Approach, a Narrative Approach (role play and stories) or a Consideration Approach based on empathy, and taking the students to higher stage of moral development, focussing on social and universal perspective, with the same core values, at the secondary level. As discussed earlier, Singapore model between the years 1992 to 2014 could be adopted. Medium of instruction should be the first language, which would definitely differ across the length and breadth of India. For the English medium students, a switch to English in moral education should be made only at the secondary level. Formative Assessment as part of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation should be adopted so that the subject may not be neglected at any cost. Since it would be made part of the formal syllabi and textbooks prepared by the NCERT, its implementation should be mandatory with sanctions for non-compliance.

#### **Conclusion**

The arguments and suggestions given in the paper may appear utopian to many, but then, dreaming and aspiring for a better world is basic to human nature. What would life be without dreams and hope? Gigantic feats are achieved by the lethal combination of dream and work. Presently, India is at an impasse, at one end are the modish amenities of a lifestyle driven by desire. Business tycoons from rags to riches storyline are the role models for the youngsters exposed to both the best and worst of the modern world. Mobiles and Levis have reached rural India. India is one of the leading consumers of petrol globally. On the other side, farmers are still committing suicides because of debt trap, landless labourers are selling their children into human trafficking, Dalit groomers are not allowed to sit on horseback, child marriage, Devdasi System, Dowry and rape continue to make headlines. Roads are still splurged with potholes, and drains, either overflow or get clogged. Government formulates plans for development, but they get stuck at the implementation level. It is as if there are two India's, unfortunately, neither of it is true. In such a dismal scenario a serious review of the root cause and possible solution becomes necessary. The problem may not always lie with 'others' but

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with one's own 'self.' The corrupt politician or 'babu' is not a separate entity having been born and raised in a distinct social environment, but one of us only. It is high time that we indulge in self-introspection and initiate a system of formal moral education in Indian schools and propagate and promote Gandhian values for inculcating the true national character.

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## Gandhian 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava' and Indian Secularism

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### ABSTRACT

*Gandhian secularism of 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava' is distinct from the western concept of secularism advocating total separation of state from religion. Though he was deeply religious, he was against any proposal for a state religion even if the whole population of India had professed the same religion. Gandhi understood that it was impossible for western secularism to take root here. He therefore advocated a religious policy based on mutual respect, understanding and dialogue between different religions as the only key to secularism in multi-religious India. According to him, it would mellow down the prejudices, dissolve the misconceptions and end the stereotypes regarding members of other religions right from childhood.*

**Key words:** Secularism, Gandhi, India, Multi-Religious, Inter-Religious Education, Prejudice

### Western Concept of Secularism: East meets West

THE DICTIONARY OF the Social Sciences edited by Julius Gould and Williams L. Kolb (1964) and compiled under the auspices of 'The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization' offers two definitions for the term 'secular.' According to the first definition, "In its most universal usage in social science the term refers to the worldly, the civil or the non-religious, as distinguished from the spiritual and the ecclesiastical. The secular is that which is not dedicated to religious ends and uses."<sup>1</sup> The description perfectly fits the popular western concept of secularism where state and religion are considered to be at loggerheads, functioning independently in

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their respective spheres with no space or possibility of overlapping. The second definition in the dictionary widens the scope of the term and according to it, "...the secular is not synonymous with the profane, unholy, infidel, godless, irreligious, heretical, unhallowed, faithless or any similar terms. It subsumes them, but...includes a great deal more...."<sup>2</sup> In this sense, "culture is secular when its acceptance is based on rational and utilitarian considerations rather than on reverence and veneration." This particular elucidation concurs more importance to rationalism and utilitarianism as chief constituents of secularism than it being anti-religious thereby bringing it quite close to the following statement by George Jacob Holyoake, the pioneer philosopher credited with coining the term secular, "Secularism is a form of opinion which concerns itself only with questions, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life itself. It is clear that the existence of deity and the actuality of another life are questions excluded from secularism, which exacts no denial of deity or immortality from members of secularist societies....Atheism may be a personal tenet but it cannot be a secularist tenet, from which secularism and atheism are separate."<sup>3</sup> The above stated exposition is quite vocal in shattering the mythical animosity between secularism and religion. Thus, Holyoake's secularism was not against religion but emphasized more upon the temporal rather than life after death, in brief, a non-religious philosophy that focussed on human well being and the materialistic means of achieving it. The absence of rigidity in Holyoake's secularism makes it receptive to religion too, if the latter becomes a source for human peace and harmony. It is this deliberation that coincides the western secularism with Gandhian secularism, paving the way for the nuptial between the 'secular' and the 'religious.'

#### **Gandhi: 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava'**

Gandhi was a man of religion. For him human life was incomplete without an "immovable belief in a Living Law in obedience to which the whole universe moves."<sup>4</sup> All his life's endeavours, social, political, religious, were aimed at abiding by this omnipotent 'Law' personified as 'God' in popular imagination. As to the attributes of this magnanimous and all pervading power, he said: "God is Truth and Love. God is fearlessness, God is the source of Light and Life, and yet above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheist of the atheist. For in His boundless love, God permits the atheist to live."<sup>5</sup> However, his religion was never formal or customary and confined within the religion of his birth, but a "religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which, ever purifies. It is the

permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the Soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.<sup>66</sup> Having realized the universal and democratic nature of God, Gandhi developed an uncompromising belief in the fundamental unity underlying the outward diversity of the different religions of the world. He wrote: "The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of Christians and the *Ishwar* of Hindus...All worship the same Spirit but as all forms do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations and He being the Indweller, All-powerful and Omniscient, knows our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our hearts."<sup>67</sup> Gandhi understood the intricately woven national fabric of India, where men of varied cults and sects interacted with each other at every socio-economic level, generating an inherent need for peaceful cohabitation. In keeping with this scenario he advised, "The need of the moment is not One Religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity...Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same Soul living under a variety of crusts."<sup>68</sup> He wanted his countrymen to stay away from fanaticism and thrive under the spiritual insight of tolerance by reading the scriptures of the different Faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths. He said: "True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between Faith and Faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other Faiths will impart to us a true understanding of our own...The only possible rule of conduct in any civilized society is, therefore, mutual toleration."<sup>69</sup> Gandhian 'toleration' signified neither sufferance nor condescension but sprang from his positive recognition of all the great religions of the world. Being a pragmatic, he wrote: "The golden rule of conduct is mutual toleration seeing that we will never think all alike and we shall see Truth in fragments from different angles of vision"<sup>70</sup> and being "tainted by the imperfect handling of imperfect men,"<sup>71</sup> religions will always be subject to right and wrong or good and evil, hence the necessity of 'tolerance,' which by its disposition does not indulge in any such debate.

Gandhi preached what he practiced. Having been born in a religious household, Gandhi was familiar with the ritualistic aspect of 'Vaishnavism,' visiting the *Haveli*, memorizing *Rama Raksha*, reading the *Ramayana* and occasional recitation of the *Bhagavat* by a local priest. However, his first brush with serious philosophical religion came in England, where the 'Theosophists' introduced him to the English

translation of 'Gita' titled 'The Song Celestial' by Sir Edwin Arnold. It is at the encouragement of his non-Hindu friends that Gandhi read the 'Gita,' the core book of the religion of his birth. The experience stimulated the desire to read books on other religions as well. He was greatly impressed with the 'Sermon on the Mount' and with an innate urge to search for a common discourse, compared it with the 'Gita.' Books on Islam made him appreciate the austerity and brotherhood ingrained in its followers. Thus, it was the reading of these varied religious canons and heart rendering discussions with his friends that made him a staunch believer in the ideology of 'secularism' formally professed as Gandhian 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava.' Though, Gandhi advised reading different religious scriptures to the adults he knew "...if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children: and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless, idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that Peace and Love."<sup>12</sup> The British education system was based on the popular western concept of secularism and did not include religious education in its curriculum. Gandhi was dissatisfied with the existing system and wanted to evolve a scheme based on his experiences and experiments that would best serve the needs of the future citizens of a multi-religious India. Gandhi was extremely perceptive of the true nature of India, cradle to many of the leading religions of the world. On being questioned about his views on religious education he declared, "India will never be godless. 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."<sup>13</sup> This realization of the lack of virtuosity of the priestly class drove him to suggest a curriculum for the study of religions in school education. His programme for religious education was published in article form in his periodical *Young India* in 1928 and is so comprehensive in its content that it may be regarded as a blueprint for a future endeavour of the same kind in present day India. He wrote:

A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose, the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. .... There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying

all great religions, and that is that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions...This study of other religions besides one's own will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of that universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths.'

Let no one even for a moment entertain the fear that a reverent study of other religions is likely to weaken or shake one's faith in one's own...Study and appreciation of other religions need not cause a weakening of that regard; it should mean extension of that regard to other religions.

In this respect religion stands on the same footing as culture. Just as preservation of one's culture does not mean contempt for that of others, but acquires assimilation of the best that there may be in all the other cultures, even so should be the case with religion<sup>14</sup>

When Gandhi wrote the above for public reading, he had already attempted the same on the young girls and boys living under his tutelage at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa and as per his claim the experiment was not fruitless. The children were saved from the infection of intolerance, and learnt to view one another's religions and customs with large hearted charity. They learnt how to live together like blood-brothers. Defending his venture he further said: "And from what little I know about the later activities of some of the children on Tolstoy Farm, I am certain that the education which they received there has not been in vain. Even if imperfect, it was a thoughtful and religious experiment."<sup>15</sup>

To quote Ramchandra Guha, a social historian and an Indian biographer of Gandhi, "Gandhi encouraged inter-religious dialogue, so that individuals could see their faith in the critical reflections of another. One of his notable innovations was the inter-faith prayer meeting, where texts of different religions were read and sung to a mixed audience."<sup>16</sup> To add to Guha, before Gandhi, Raja Rammohan Roy, the Father of Indian renaissance and the founder of Brahma Samaj, too had done the same during the meetings of the 'Samaj' with its 'Bhadralok' Bengali members exposed to modern western education as back as nineteenth century, but what makes Gandhi unique is, he attempted the same with a heterogeneous group of illiterate Indians belonging to different castes, classes, creeds and genders.

#### **Secularism in Post-Independence India: A Shattered Dream**

Post-Independence India, emerging from the ashes of partition, adopted 'secularism' as one of the pillars to bolster and guide its

political and social functioning. The forefathers envisioned that "the nation is above and apart from religion; religious belief is a matter of private faith; and this secular spirit will bring into being the nation as a viable, homogenous, generous, governable entity."<sup>17</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister and the supposed scion of Gandhian legacy in India was wholeheartedly dedicated to the ideology, though his version had more of western shade than what his mentor had envisioned for India. In such a scenario, the Indian Constitution came closest to Gandhian 'Sarva Dharma Sambhava,' when in spite of rejecting the concept of state religion, it gave the citizens of India freedom to practice and propagate faith of their choice. Coming back to the man who controlled India's destiny from 1947 to 1964, and vouched as a staunch uncompromising 'secular' by both his admirers and critics, Nehru tried his best to channelize the Indian imagination away from common religion by christening the newly built industries and dams as future temples of India. He is even believed to have asked the first president of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad not to attend the inauguration of the renovated Somnath Temple in Gujarat, for he thought that public officials should never publically associate with faiths and shrines.<sup>18</sup> However, many social historians blame him to have lacked any 'clear doctrinal plan of action' like Lenin and Kemal, and gave 'for a time, an illusion of permanence.'<sup>19</sup> The fifties were not bereft of communal riots but the incidents were sporadic with few casualties. 1961 witnessed the Jabalpur riots with 108 deaths in a single incident, forcing Nehru to form the National Integration Council. Over the years, the riots continued unabated (1969-Ahmedabad; Ranchi-Hatia, 1971-Bhiwandi, etc.),<sup>20</sup> becoming more intense, and engulfing medium sized towns, touted as bastions of orthodoxy and conservatism along with being hot beds of communal propaganda. According to Kuldeep Nayar, till November 1980 nearly 5000 cases of communal violence had been recorded, with Muslims leading the casualty in both death and loss of property.<sup>21</sup> Mrs. Indira Gandhi, like her father, did nurture socialist leanings in her initial years, but the exigency of politics made her woo certain communities, especially in the post-emergency period because of the government programme of forced sterilization resulting in police firing at Muslim crowd in Turkman Gate, Delhi and Muzzafarnagar district.<sup>22</sup> According to Mushirul Hasan, "The last phase of Indira Gandhi era witnessed an unprecedented spurt in religious fervour and marked polarisation of Indian society on communal and sectarian lines."<sup>23</sup> From 1980 to 1982, Biharsharif, Godhara, Ahmedabad, Pune Solapur, Meerut, Baroda, burned with communal frenzy due to the mushrooming of numerous religious militant organizations. Operation Blue Star, followed by the

assassination of Mrs Gandhi and the resulting Anti-Sikh Riots (1984) in Delhi shocked the nation. During Rajeev Gandhi's tenure the Governments' appeasement policy towards different religious groups opened up a Pandora's Box, evil effects of which can still be felt. Reversing the Supreme Court judgement in Shah Bano Case under duress from few orthodox Muslims as well as opening up the locks for Ram worship at the disputed Babri Masjid site, proved the hazy and elusive nature of secularism followed by Indian State. The December, 1992 demolition of Babri Masjid by 1.5 lakh Hindu followers, is considered a watershed moment in the history of Indian secularism. The incident was succeeded by such violent riots across India (1992-1681 killed, 10,417 wounded; 1993-952 killed, 2989 wounded)<sup>24</sup> that their repercussion were reported across the border as well.<sup>25</sup> Demolition had to be followed by construction, thus, in the wake of such attempts, came the February 2002 incident at Godhra and the Ahmedabad riots, in which 2000 Muslims lost their lives. Social Scientists claim that Post-Godhra, till date, many incidents of communal conflagration had been reported, but none, of the intensity and magnitude as the former. In present times, it is more of mob lynching that seem suitable to the fundamentalists, involving less bloodshed yet generating enough terror to give nightmares to the secular minded. Globalization has spawned an innate need for ontology tilting the average Indian more towards the ritualistic nuances of his caste and religion. Physically harming the other community has taken a backseat in the wake of Multi-National Companies entering the Indian economy. Nowadays a planned segregation of the target community is more on the cards. Majority and minority, both, suffer with unfound insecurities. The former overcome it by overtly criticizing the culture and lifestyle of the minority along with theoretically supporting its own fundamentalist groups. The minorities, in view of their numerical disadvantage, show a marked preference for the 'ghetto living,' and having lost faith on the state's ability to protect them, many a times join ranks with the terrorist outfits from both within and outside the nation. In this bedlam may be added the overseas members of both the groups funding and fuelling the coffers of the fundamentalist militant organizations respectively.

Unfortunately, after more than a decade in the twenty-first century, India still stands divided, in fact the gap has never appeared so unbridgeable, it has simply come down to 'we' and 'they,' with hatred spewing against each other at social networking sites, talks of the 'Ganga-Jamuni' Indian culture appearing like mirage at the far end. The dismal scenario coerces us to ponder upon the nature and efficacy of 'secularism' adopted by Post-Gandhi Indian leadership to guide

the nation. Indian secularism, instead of forging amity and harmony between the Hindu majority and Muslim minority, has turned out to be an instrument of hatred and tension. Charged with favouritism towards minority and interference in religious rituals of the majority, it has become the object of farce and ridicule in contemporary India. Scholars of communal history of India cite numerous theories to explain the occurrence of communal riots ranging from reasons as common as elopement, eve-teasing to the different communities vying for the same land, professional rivalry, struggle for resources and market, conversions, music before mosques, cow slaughter and many a times systematically engineered also. Economic competition, whether for natural resources or market monopoly, between the majority and minority will continue because it is a natural process and would be same even in a homogenous society, in fact, the present day Globalization, proclaimed as means to economic development and easing communal tension by a significant section of Indian intelligentsia, may further add to the antagonism. International brands will hit the already wobbling vocation of the Indian artisans mostly belonging to the Muslim community, while create cut throat competition for MNC's middle and lower level jobs among the educated in both the communities. Still it is inevitable, but what really disappoints is that most of the scholars deliberating the issue, miss the root cause behind such prejudice and distrust that ignite minor squabbles into full flared riots as well as false propaganda regarding each others' religious rituals and customs, done purposely by sectarian groups transforming harmless peace loving people into excited blood mongers. Herein again, Gandhi could come to the rescue, with his panacea of religious education and dialogue, offered and practiced hundred years ago to make the 'religious' Indians empathise with each others' faith.

#### **Religious Education: Road to Salvation**

"Cultural diversity is something to be enjoyed. It is not a problem. The problem is ignorance. It is ignorance that provides the fuel of fear, prejudice and hate."

*Terry Davis, Secy. General of the Council of Europe.  
First Forum of Alliance of Civilizations, Madrid, 15-16 January 2008*

#### **Historical Legacy**

The rest of the world may be waking lately to the virtues of Intercultural exchange and dialogue, but the ancients of India had already done so more than a millennium ago. Emperor Ashok carried the legacy of liberal religion in his bloodline, his father, Bindusar was a practicing Hindu, his grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya was a Jain,

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while he himself pursued Buddhism. Incidentally, he was also the ruler of the first empire of India with cosmopolitan ingredients of race, creed, caste and religion. Not only did he insist on a moral code of living that he had envisaged from Buddhism, but he also advised and made efforts towards encouraging his subjects to study and know about each other's faith way back in third century BC. The inscriptions on his Rock Edicts stand witness to his ideology of religious forbearance. Edict Twelve states, "Contact between religions is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desire that all should be well learned in the good doctrines of other religions."<sup>26</sup> Seven hundred years later the Guptas, a dynasty associated with revival of Hinduism and bearing the titles like '*Param Bhagwats*' sponsored generously towards the embellishment of Buddhist Stupas and Vihars. Moving further to eleventh century AD, we come across *Tehqiq-i-Hind* by Al Biruni the Muslim scholar who accompanied Mahmood Ghazni in his Indian invasion. The book is a treatise on Brahmanical Hinduism, wherein Al Biruni has described the philosophy, custom and culture of the religion on the basis of a compassionate study and discussion with the Brahmin scholars of the time. In fact, Biruni has even empathized with the pagan practice of idol worship in spite of being a strong Islamic iconoclast himself.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, medieval history gave us Akbar, the most liberal, and visionary of all the monarchs of the period, and dedicated to the ethos of secularism. Akbar had been a practicing Muslim in the early phase of his life, but with time he comprehended the veracity of all the faiths. This conviction made him invite men of religion at his *Ibadatkhana* in Fatehpur Sikri for an Inter-Faith dialogue and debate and later evolve a separate sect, interweaving the basic tenets of all the religions, called *Din-i-Ilahi*. Thus, the spirit and urge to promote secular interfaith studies dates back to antiquity in India. Gandhi understood and revered this propensity of the Indian psyche and advised the continuation of the same by his countrymen.

#### *Endeavours in the Past*

Many argue that till 1928 Gandhi had been vociferously demanding inclusion of religious education in school curriculum but the 'Wardha Scheme' that came in 1938 to guide the Congress ministers in framing the educational policy in their states, did not contain any mention of religious education. It was not that Gandhi had given up on the efficacy of religious education in Indian context but it was the prevailing conditions and pressures of the time that made him sideline the scheme. He said: "We have left the religious teaching from Wardha

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Scheme of education because we are afraid that the religions as they are practiced today may lead to conflict rather than unity. But on the other hand, I hold the truth that is common to all religions and should be taught through words or through books."<sup>28</sup> Besides, the final draft of the scheme placed before the Congress in April 1928 was not solely penned by Gandhi but debated and deliberated upon in an open house in October 1937 at Wardha by educationists, Congress leaders, ministers and workers, and critically appraised by the Zakir Hussain Committee in December 1937. The rise of communal parties and the British policy of harvesting on religious differences worked as political exigencies on the wording of the fundamental document by the Zakir Hussain Committee. The Committee vaguely limited Gandhian advocacy of religious education as "mutual respect for world religions" to be achieved as one of the aims of teaching social studies.<sup>29</sup> Prior to independence, the Central Advisory Board of Education (1946) had stated religious education to be the business of home and the community of the student concerned. The declaration was in keeping with the policy of religious neutrality followed by the British in India. However, immediately after independence came the Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, which formidably denounced leaving spiritual education in the hands of family and community because it may increase "criminal bigotry, intolerance and selfishness."<sup>30</sup> As per the needs of the multi-religious Indian society the Commission recommended:<sup>31</sup>

(1) All educational institutions start work with a few minutes for silent meditation,

(2) In the first year of the Degree course lives of the great religious leaders like Gautama the Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Mohammad, Kabir, Nanak, Gandhi, be taught,

(3) In the second year some selections of a universal character from the Scriptures of the world be studied,

(4) In the third year, the central problems of the philosophy of religion be considered.

For schools it advised reading stories illustrating great moral and religious principles, while at the college level it suggested establishing a Department for Comparative Religions.<sup>32</sup> The recommendations were forthright in promoting the cause of religious education but in 1950 came the Indian Constitution ushering in Article 28(1) and (2) stating that no 'religious instruction' shall be provided in any educational institutions wholly maintained out of state funds and that no person attending such institutions shall be required to take part in any religious

instruction without his consent, functioning as a major deterrent to the votaries of religious education. Post-Independence, the Secondary Education Commission (1953) did accept that education nurtures open-minded tolerant citizens but did not include religious education in its programme.<sup>33</sup> Still the embers were not doused and in 1959 the Central Advisory Board of Education appointed the Committee on Religious and Moral Instructions popularly known as Sri Prakasa Committee. The committee impugned the family and community for stressing more on ceremonial aspect of religion and advocated a general study of different religions at school and college level. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) echoed the recommendations of the Sri Prakasa Committee, favouring setting up of Departments in Comparative Religion at Universities but cautioned against fermentation of sectarian traits in the literature prepared for the purpose.<sup>34</sup> It could be argued that most of the committees recommended a compulsory and detailed study of religions at degree level, yet they all suggested a basic initiation in the field at school level also. Since then the succeeding National Curriculum Frameworks - 1975, 1988, 2000, 2005, offering guidelines to prepare curriculum for school education in India, included religious tolerance, peace and communal harmony in their principles and objectives but refrained from offering any concrete programme to attain them.

#### *Removing the Barrier*

In the wake of the above stated attempts it becomes mandatory to review the meaning of the clauses in the Indian Constitution barricading religious education in Indian schools. To quote a judgement by the Supreme Court of India, given by Justice D. M. Dharmadhikari on 12 September 2002, in a Public Interest Litigation filed against the government, charged with saffronization of education, he said:

A distinction has been made between imparting 'religious instructions' that is teaching of rituals, observances, customs and traditions and other non-essential observances or modes of worship in religions and teaching of philosophy of religions with more emphasis on study of essential moral and spiritual thoughts contained in various religions. There is a thin dividing line between imparting 'religious instruction' and 'study of religions.' Special care has to be taken of avoiding possibility of imparting 'religious instructions' in the name of 'religious education' or 'study of religions'...The experiment is delicate and difficult but if undertaken sincerely and in good faith for creating peace and harmony in the society, is not to be thwarted on the ground that it is against the concept of secularism as narrowly understood to mean neutrality of state towards all religions and bereft of positive approach towards all religion.<sup>35</sup>

To augment his argument in favour of religious education he further wrote:

The study of religious pluralism can be articulated in generally acceptable way and such attempt has to be made particularly in India which time and again has suffered due to religious conflict and communal harmony. What is needed in the education is that the children of this country should acknowledge the vast range complexity of differences apparent in the phenomenology of religion while at the same time they should understand the major streams of religious experience and thought as embodying different awareness of the one ultimate reality.<sup>36</sup>

Irrespective of the fact whether the allegations of saffronization were valid or not, the line of reasoning offered by Justice Dharmadhikari in reinterpreting Article 28(i) and (ii), pragmatically supports Gandhian plea for religious education. Continuing in the same strain is Rafiq Zakaria, author of *Indian Muslims-Where have they gone wrong?* in which, he quotes an article by Tarun Vijay, editor of the RSS organ 'Panchjanya,' (*Know Thy Neighbour*, Asian Age, 17-11- 2003), wherein he urged both Hindus and Muslims to shed old prejudices and understand each others' sentiments. Stating the reason behind such biases Tarun wrote: "This is because Hindus have hardly tried to know the Muslim mind. We have spent centuries together and yet either have been strangers or enemies. We seldom read their books or the biographies of the Prophet or the history of their growth. We either hated them or tried to patronize them in a secular manner that widened the distance by inches and metres...Hindus should read more and more about Islam, the life of Prophet Mohammad and the Quran, taking care that the books come from authentic sources." The extract, is one of the most candid portrayals of an average majority mind ignorant of the religious culture of the minority. After citing Tarun Vijay, Zakaria urged the Muslims also to do the same. He exhorted them to get acquainted with the spiritual treasures of Hinduism, understand their spirit and inner meanings, appreciate the deeper significance of their epics and shed their prejudices borne out of centuries of misunderstanding. Such a mixing and mingling at intellectual level would help to make both the communities live and let live a union of hearts.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Attempting the Possible*

For globalization to be a veritable success the world needs people bereft of any cultural prejudice, possible only through an empathetic study of each others' culture and religion. The school is a multi-cultural melting pot which constitutes a unique laboratory for learning to live together and it is in keeping with this notion that in 2007 the world

teachers organizations meeting at their Congress in Berlin expressed support for teaching about religions and their history without discrimination as an indispensable element of general culture, intercultural dialogue and citizenship education.<sup>38</sup> When Europe, a predominantly homogenous society can deliberate upon developing a curriculum imparting religious education for its schools, it becomes obligatory for India, a land where gods and traditions change with every village, to do so. After a lengthy deliberation on the efficacy of religious education in India, it becomes veritable, to add to the content and text of such education. Following the Gandhian ideal of including the basic tenets of each religion should definitely constitute the core curriculum as proposed by many scholars referred earlier in the paper, but a brief description of each other's dogmas and rituals is also necessary. The reason being that due to India's rich religious legacy, the Indian psyche is subconsciously aware of the principled unity of all creeds; however, it is the difference in dogmas and ritual, accompanied with ignorance regarding their own as well as others, that forms the crux of misunderstanding and friction among the believers of different religions. To state lucidly, many Hindus feel baffled when their close Muslim or Christian friends do not visit temples whereas they in spite of being devout Hindus suffer no qualm in offering prayers at both 'Dargah' and Church. Such behaviour in the absence of 'dialogue' takes a sectarian colour and mars the harmony in age old relations. If these Hindu brethren had known the history of Christianity and Islam, contributing to their 'monotheism' and strictures against idol worship, along with the fact that 'Upanishads' the highest philosophical literature of Brahmanical Hinduism is predominantly monotheistic, the result would not be so detrimental. Again it needs to be understood that just as certain eating habits have to be observed during 'Pratushan' in Jainism or 'Navratras' in Hinduism, similarly offering animal sacrifice is mandatory during 'Baqr Eid' by followers of Islam. The arguments offered here are for the ritualistic followers of these religions, which are definitely in majority in all the communities, and not for the cerebral followers constituting a miniscule minority and often relegated to the margins by their co-religionists. Also many votaries of ritualistic religion do not even comprehend the nuances about their own faith, let alone others. For example, many followers of 'Vaishnavism' in North India do not know that 'Maha Prasad' offered at 'Shaktya' temples is the meat of the animal sacrifice done as mandatory ritual to please the 'goddess,' or that unlike the vegetarian Brahmins of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, the Brahmins of Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Odisha are predominantly non-vegetarians with fish constituting a mandatory

dish in their 'Shraadh' cuisine. Similarly, Christian and Islamic followers need to be empathetically taught that the Hindu urge for idol worship is quite close to their preference for pictures of 'Kaaba' and 'Jesus' hung on their home walls in spite of strong rejection of idol worship in their respective religions. Again a basic course in history of religions would make the plebeian religionists of all communities know that since time immemorial, victors around the world, irrespective of the peaceful tenets of their faiths have been desecrating and rebuilding the places of worship of the vanquished simply to crush their confidence and self-respect, even if both professed the same religion with minor sectarian differences, and India being no exception also suffered the same. The suggested content may not appeal to the theoreticians but the curriculum is to be aimed for the masses suffering and harbouring age old prejudices born out of ignorance regarding the ritualistic aspect of each other's religion. The textbooks as recommended by Gandhi have to be based on the writings of the votaries of the respective faiths to avoid any kind of distortion or misrepresentation; otherwise the result may prove more detrimental and chaotic than the present state of affairs. Thus, a balanced inclusion of theological tenets as well as elucidation of ritualistic tradition, with the State taking an active interest in the field, would definitely end the impasse secularism has reached in India and forge the nation towards the true spirit of 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava' envisioned by the 'Father of the Nation.'

To conclude, the article is basically an attempt to chafe Indian secularism with Gandhian concept of 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava.' It aims to present a holistic picture of Gandhian secularism that is not simply rhetorical but pragmatic enough to offer solutions. It also endeavours to high light the partial and faulty adoption of Gandhian secularism by Indian State demeaning the concept into a blatant farce, perceived with dislike by the majority and doubt by the minority. The article primarily focuses on Gandhian suggestion for religious education in schools in India and offers arguments in favour of the scheme along with a succinct suggestion at the end on the content of the curriculum for the same.

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