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## IMPACT OF GANDHIAN THOUGHT AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT OF ODISHA

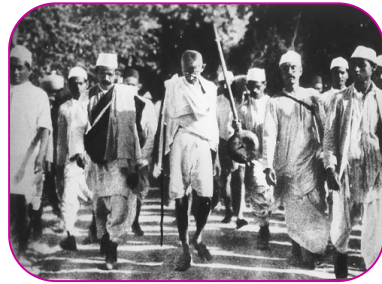
**Dr. Kalyani Sarangi**

Lecturer, GOP College, Gop.

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### ABSTRACT :

*History of humanity witnessed many distinguished philosophers, scientists, poets, saints and statesman for their needed inspiration and strength to wade through Cimmerian darkness of the time. Mahatma Gandhi with the rare distinction of 'Man of the century' was one of them. He was a social reformer, an ethical teacher and a political figure rather than a philosopher in the true sense of the term. He has been described as a prophet, a mystic, a saint, a theologian and a votary of non-*



*violence. Dr Rajendra Prasad said "Gandhiji is dead but Gandhism will live till the stars shine and the oceans roll on." He has been remained as an Icon to wide variety of people like academicians, politicians and social activists. To have the proper understanding of Gandhian thought; we have to understand the central concepts of his thought, theoretical analysis and logical interrelations of these concepts. As long as attempts are not made to bring out his metaphysical presuppositions or the conceptual scheme in clear and logical terms; a proper assessment of his philosophy will not be possible. The central concept of Gandhi's philosophy is non-violence. In this paper, an attempt will be made to examine how the concept of non-violence is central to the Gandhian philosophy and its bearing on socio-politic philosophy.*

**KEYWORDS :** *History of humanity , theologian , socio-politic philosophy.*

### INTRODUCTION :

Gandhi was pre eminently a man of action. He submitted everything to the test of reason and then to the dictates of his "Inner voice' when he wanted to translate an idea into action. This makes him different from other theoretical philosophers who formulate ideas and ideologies. He had seriously thought about life, truth and human relationship in different human situations. His search was for realizing the manifestation of truth in every aspect of life. In his philosophy there is a proper synchronization of thought and action. Leo Tolstoy had pointed out that Gandhi was an exceptional leader with universal message.

**The** concept of "non-violence" has a glorious history of its own. From time immemorial different religions have accepted non-violence as a core ideal. It is considered as a basic requirement of religious practice. Gandhi also treated non-violence as an ethical and spiritual tool

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meant for moral and spiritual growth. But the way Gandhi has interpreted and employed the concept to bring about the social change makes him something special and unique. To have a better understanding to the meaning of the Gandhian concept of nonviolence; we must critically examine the explanations of the concept given in other religions.

The word "Ahimsa" generally understood to mean non-injury, non-hatred, non-killing. It is generally preached and practiced as ethico-religious virtue. However, in Indian tradition the place of nonviolence is much more important than western tradition. Though Ahimsa has been emphasized by Gandhi, yet it is not a concept of recent origin. Gandhi himself said that he has nothing new to teach to the world, because the concept of non-violence is as old as the Vedas. The concept Ahimsa is a dynamic one in the sense that it has been always under constant vigil and investigation. To begin with, we can say that some of the Vedic thinkers treat non-violence in terms of non-injury as a virtue. The Vedic command "Mahimsyat Sarvabhutani"<sup>1</sup> means one should not kill any living being.

In Puranic literature, ahimsa is treated as a duty. "Ahimsa Parma Dharma, ahimsaiva Parama Tapah".<sup>2</sup> However, much importance was given to this concept of Ahimsa in the system of Lord Buddha and Mahavir Jaina. Buddhism emphasized universal compassion and love as ahimsa. In one of the Jataka stories of Buddha, it is mentioned that:

Buddha was sitting & discussing with his disciples. A man came to Buddha and spat on his face. Second time, he did the same thing with Buddha. Buddha was calm and unmoved. When he approached Buddha for the third time, he said what are you doing? You need enough of love. The man ran away. The man came next day with a changed mind. For Buddha, ahimsa is nothing but love and universal compassion.

Ahimsa is the fundamental ethical virtue of Jaina system. Jaina thinkers lay excessive emphasis on ahimsa. All actions are evaluated strictly in accordance with the standard of ahimsa. As all activities involved violence in some form or other, Jainas allow their followers to engage themselves in the fewest possible activities. For instance, the Jaina monks are found to be tied with masks while inhaling or talking, lest they could harm the life of any organism floating in the air. Jainas practice nonviolence in a very strict sense of the term. They even fear to light the lamp at night with the apprehension that insects and moth may die in the fire. They do not opt for agriculture because in the process of cultivation they may harm bacteria and different forms of worms residing in the soil. It is the extreme form of non-violence. Gandhi says that this extreme application of non-violence of Jainas is based on a wrong assumption. According to him, it is very difficult to observe such type of absolute / extreme form of non-violence by an ordinary person. Jainas believe that one should realize the value of every life as his own. Gandhi realized the value of this core ideal bit by bit and properly utilized it throughout his life.

Gandhi differs from Jaina thinkers and openly recommends killing under certain demanding situations. He says at times taking life may be treated as a duty. We do destroy as much life as we think necessary for sustaining our body. For food we take life, vegetable and for health we kill mosquitoes. By force. doing this we do not think that we are violent. Gandhian doctrine of non-violence differs from both Jainism and Buddhism. Jainism and Buddhism restricted the application of the concept non-violence to the sphere of religion and according to them non-violence is an essential requirement of religious practice. But Gandhi applies this concept to the individual life as a soul-force. He extended the scope of the concept to the economic, social and political sphere. Buddhism and Jainism accepted it as a form of religious practice. Who so ever is a religious person

must practice non-violence. But Gandhi secularized it. Before Gandhi systems like Jainism, Buddhism, Vedanta used this concept in a negative sense signifying the absence of violence. But Gandhi deviated from the popular meaning of ahimsa and maintained its positive implications. Negatively it means non-harmed, non-killing, non-injury and that ahimsa has a positive content over and above the negative meaning. Positively it implies love for others. Ahimsa requires deliberate self-suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong doer. In its positive form Gandhi maintained that ahimsa does have positive content which is much more valuable than its negative meaning. He says:

*"In its negative form it means not injuring any living being whether by body or mind. I may not, therefore, hurt the person or any wrong-doer or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill will .... ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me as I would my wrong doing father or son. This active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness."*<sup>3</sup> This meaning of ahimsa from non-killing to love made Gandhi's position different from Jainism. There is a wide difference between having involved in active love and being satisfied with mere absence of hatredness. No doubt, non-violence stands for certain positive attitudes endowed with love towards other living beings. The negative state of harmlessness and the positive state of love are blended together in his conception of non-violence.

Gandhi holds the conviction "Ahimsa Paramo Dharma".

While following the principle of non-violence, one has to follow the principle of love. Love only gives but never expects. Love can unite an individual even with his opponents, Gandhiji's positive meaning of ahimsa leads to doing something for others without aspiring anything in return. Our greatness does not lie in rarely loving those who love us rather in the fact of loving them who hate us. So, Gandhiji's comprehensive theory of non-violence postulates positive love even for the opponents. Like Buddha, he realizes that enmity only leads to more enmity. Hatred only brings more hatred. But Gandhi's positive meaning of non-violence is much wider than that of 'compassion' of Buddhism.

Gandhi deviates from Buddha and place ahimsa as the common principle for all to work out. It is open to all, that is even common people and householder should practice ahimsa with a faith in ahimsa and right effort, ahimsa can be applied equally by all children, youngmen and women or grown up. Ahimsa is the law of love. It rules the whole world and puts all the conflicting nations into a global family. As ultimate principle of life, 'the law of love' operates wonderfully to get any successful achievement in life. Love presupposes sacrifice, suffering and not enjoyment. Therefore, non-violence in its dynamic aspect means conscious suffering.

Non-violence, for him, is a way of life. It is a soul-force which influences man to move in the righteous path of life. It is a normal state of behaviour for an individual. So, there is nothing wrong or abnormal about it. It is a spiritual force which goads one to move in the path of niskama karma.

Gandhiji's non-violence is not a passive or inactive method, rather an active movement. The seed of non-violence has to be reaped in the mind, but its harvest is made from our behavioural expression and action. That is why non-violence is regarded as a weapon of matchless potency. Gandhiji says non-violence should be the summum bonum of life. One can act against all adversaries if he is non-violent. Just as one learns the art of killing in the training for violence, one has to learn the art of dying on the training for non-violence.

Non-violence is a moral resistance to evil and injustice. Further, it is not only the moral weapon of an individual but also for the mass against social, political and economic evils pervading over nation and the world. It is a dynamic process involving continuous and deliberate effort. The practice of non-violence is a moral revolution. Without strain and self-suffering the entity of non-violence can't be thought of. It is rightly said that non-violence is the ceaseless activity of a crusader against every form of oppression and injustice.

Gandhi emphasized that non-violence cannot be preached rather it has to be practiced. When one practices non-violence, he knows and realizes the true value of it. By that one can bring heaven on earth. So there is no such thing as the 'other' for those who follow the principle of non-violence. It has the potency to bring miracles in family and other social affairs. But non-violence can be practiced by a person with humility, generosity and gentleness. Non-violence is the power of God-head within us and it is by the grace of God that one can love even to his enemy.

Truth and non-violence are closely related to each other. According to Gandhiji, non-violence is the only means of the realization of truth. Non-violence presupposes Truth and Truth is the basis of Non-violence.

Gandhiji's doctrine of Truth and Non-violence has a direct relation with his philosophy of End and Means. Non-violence is embedded in truth and truth is embedded in non-violence. The pursuit of ahimsa is inevitably bound to truth. Gandhi states, "*Truth come naturally to me. Ahimsa I acquired after a struggle.*"<sup>4</sup>

Ahimsa is an arch value. It is a progressive ideology. It is the law of human race. But Non-violence is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force. Man is basically non-violent in nature as brutality is the normal tendency of an animal. "Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of brute".<sup>5</sup> It does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the god of love. It is the core of a stable and a harmonious society. According to Amrta Chandra Suri, all moral practices is comprehended by ahimsa. Ahimsa is a duty because every being has a right to live. He who is free from fear and enmity knowing that all beings love their lived and like him abstains from himsa. It is the foundation of the practice of harmlessness.

Ahimsa can be practiced by everybody irrespective of caste, creed, colour, age, sex and religion. When ahimsa is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not to isolated acts.

Ahimsa has a unique status of its own. It is the very basis of Indian Society. Ahimsa is one of the cardinal virtues bolstering up human existence in the Society.

### Non-violence in Socio-Political Sphere

The entire political thinking of Gandhi rests on Satyagraha. The concept of Satyagraha and its practice in socio political front constitute the essence of Gandhi's philosophy. Perhaps it is his unique contribution as it opens a new political culture of social activism. It is a new technique of opposing or resisting injustice. Whatever degrades human relationship or anything that is evil, unjust or untrue in social life need to be opposed? But the method of resistance should be non-violent with adherence to Truth and Justice. This way of resisting injustice with a view to altering unjust social relationship without harming anyone is called Satyagraha. It is thus a technique of direct action against injustice with firm commitment to Truth.

Satyagraha is a compound Sanskrit word consisting of two words 'Satya' and 'Agraha' meaning thereby truth and adherence respectively. Thus literally Satyagraha means clinging to

Truth or insistence on Truth. Since truth in its ethical sense connotes Justice Satyagraha means firm commitment to Justice. The term 'Satyagraha' was coined by Gandhi in South Africa. While organizing the Indians in South Africa to oppose racial discrimination in a nonviolent way his movement was called 'Passive Resistance', Later on he realized that his movement is actually different from passive resistance. Passive Resistance is understood as the method of the weak in the political field. He wanted a suitable name to his new technique of resistance and gave an advertisement in the magazine "Indian Opinion" for suggestion. Out of different suggestions the word 'Sadagraha' signifying 'firmness in a good cause' appealed him. But Gandhi was not wholly satisfied with it. He said *"I liked the word, but it did not fully represent the whole idea. I wished it to connote. I therefore corrected it to 'Satyagraha' engenders .... And therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement 'Satyagraha'. That is to say the force which is born of Truth & Love or Non-violence."*<sup>6</sup> After a little modification he named it as Satyagraha. According to Gandhi, Satyagraha stands as a method to carry the spirit of devotion to Truth in spite of endless suffering without any retaliation. The power of the method lies in ahimsa or love. *"Satyagraha demands absolutely non-violence"*.<sup>7</sup>

Satyagraha as a method presupposes ends and means to have an organic relationship. One of the most important conditions of application of satyagraha is that it must have appropriate means. If one intends to achieve justice, one cannot adopt unjust means.

Satya as a method is a mean for establishing truth in its purest form. The requisite qualification of a true satyagrahi is that, he should be consciously and willingly ready to undergo self-suffering for the cause of humanity. It also pre-supposes a desire to overcome *"evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa."*<sup>8</sup>

Gandhi also recommends some moral vows to be observed by every Satyagrahi. These five vows are, Satya, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Asteya and Aparigraha. A satyagrahi must accept truth and non-violence as the highest ideals of life and never to resort to any deed that will be violative of them. A true Satyagrahi must practice brahmacharya that is must have control over his passion. It pre-supposes self-discipline, self-control and self-purification. Asteya literally means non-stealing but in the Gandhian framework it means not possessing things disproportionate to one's material requirements. This is somewhat similar to aparigraha or non-possession. That is without giving up lust for possession one cannot renounce selfishness. As long as one remains selfish he cannot be a Satyagrahi. These ideals have been propounded in Jainism and the Yoga system of Indian philosophy. Gandhi accepted these ideals for a satyagrahi in strict conformity with the supreme values laid down in Indian philosophy and culture. Besides these moral ideals he also takes fearlessness as another prerequisite for a satyagrahi. Unless a satyagrahi buries all his cowardice and overcomes his fear he cannot be a satyagrahi. Since a satyagrahi wants to remove all injustice and to transform relationships he should turn into an impersonal force or moral power. For that the moral vows along with fearlessness are indispensable.

Besides the absolute moral vows Gandhi lays down some practical code of conduct for a Satyagrahi. A satyagrahi would never ill treat or disrespect the opponent but would show him utmost respect. He will only oppose the practice, policy or the law that incorporates injustice in social relationships. He will appeal the opponent to touch his heart so that he will feel the injustice of his action. He will express no anger rather suffer the anger of the opponent. He will be prepared to suffer even physical assault on him, if so happens, without any retaliation. He may be arrested but would never surrender voluntarily. He will not submit to an order for rear of punishment. To

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quote Gandhi "*I see that Satyagraha is assured of divine help and that in testing a Satyagrahi, the creator imposes on him at every step as much burden as he can bear.*"<sup>9</sup>

Civil disobedience is another practical method of Satyagrah. It means the breach of the unjust statutory enactment of the Governmental authority. Gandhi took this idea from David Thoreau, the American naturalist, but made extensive application of it in the course of India's freedom struggle. He used it as disobedience of a law or an authority for a just cause. In case of a revolution or rebellion there may be disobedience but that is not to be identified with civil disobedience. The basic motive behind civil resistance is a well-defined moral principle and its method is non-violent. It can be practiced with great caution to avoid any outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Further civil disobedience may be offensive or defensive. Offensive disobedience includes disregards for the statutory enactment of the state and, so to say, a nonviolent revolt against the administration. But defensive civil resistance includes peaceful demonstrations, public meetings, rallies and publishing views ventilating the unjust policies of the Government etc.

Another significant feature of Satyagraha movement is non-cooperation. Non-cooperation mainly means the withdrawal of cooperation from all evil practices in society as well as of the Government. The very purpose behind non-cooperation is not to extend co-operation to an unjust authority which is exploitative. The basic idea behind non-cooperation is that all social relations, political or otherwise, rest on the co-operation of the parties involved. If the party which is exploited or suppressed withdraws its support the relationship between the two will collapse. Gandhi's non-cooperation movement against the British Government consisted many practical measures like surrender of titles, refusal to attend Government sponsored functions, withdrawals of students from Government run educational institutions, boycott of Government courts etc. In doing so he is not discarding the legal system of administration but giving priority to the moral sense over the legal sense. In case of a conflict between the legal duty and moral responsibility, he gives preference to the latter.

Gandhiji used civil disobedience and non-cooperation as two branches of Satyagraha. For him, these two methods are to be launched to resist evil in a non-violent way. Satyagraha for Gandhi is such a wider theory which can accommodate all these as its branches.

Gandhi wanted to use 'Satyagraha' to generate a proper public opinion for bringing about a desirable socio-political change. Gandhi felt that it would be a misnomer if Satyagraha and passive resistance will be used in the synonymous way. Therefore, he preferred to make a clear cut distinction between the two. Satyagraha is a method of strong which makes one stronger and stronger every day. On the other hand, passive resistance is used as a weapon of the weak. In fact the strength of Satyagraha depends on satyagrahi's firm faith on the ultimate victory of 'Satya' & 'Ahimsa'. "*A Satyagrahi depends only on truth and his capacity to suffer for truth.*"<sup>10</sup> Satyagraha being the method of non-violence can never be suppressed or over powered by any other method. It is a fact that Satyagraha pre-supposes that it is necessary to love one's opponent where as passive resistance does not rule out the possibility of violence. A passive resister abstains from using arms against others not out of love but dies to the circumstantial disadvantages of using arms. On the contrary, Satyagraha necessarily impels non-violence in thought, word and deed. In essence one can say that the doctrine of passive resistance is not based on the principle of ahimsa. "*While passive resistance does not carry love for the opponent Satyagraha does carry love for everybody. Satyagraha does not include ill-will towards anybody. Any individual whether weak or strong can*



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*resort to Satyagraha when he feels injustice being practiced. Further there is no employment of physical force or teasing the opponent in any way; but passive resistance is not completely free from it. "Satyagraha is the law of love, the way of love for all."*<sup>11</sup>

Satyagrahi sometimes confused with civil disobedience. Gandhi can be blamed for this confusion as he used these words loosely and interchangeably for several times. However, a thorough study of these two methods reveals the fundamental difference. The term civil disobedience was first introduced by an American thinker H.D. Thoreau. This idea of civil disobedience was based on the principle that individual is superior to any institution. The presence of conscience makes a man, man first and subject latter on. Conscience about the Tightness of the laws is unchangeable and superior to the state / institution / authority. For Gandhi the presence of conscience is no other than the presence of eternal moral law in the individual. The voice of conscience becomes a matter of duty for man. The doctrine of Satyagraha is deeply rooted in such a kind of notion of conscience. The most significant implication of this concept is that Satyagraha does not remain confined to only political field as is the case with civil disobedience. It extends to all human activities.

Satyagraha can also be extended to international spheres. Any conflict between two countries can be peacefully settled in some international forums. It is heartening that man's moral consciousness had been widened and an international mind is fast developing. This is a positive indication in the direction of non-violent resolution of conflict.

Thus Gandhi is of firm conviction that any conflict or crisis, whatever may be its nature or dimension, can be resolved by the method of Satyagraha. Starting from the individual to the national sphere it can be an effective measure to solve any human problem. It is the infallible technique to get the society rid of any injustice. Thus it can be the most formidable means of social control.

Further, some social problems are so deep rooted with economic and cultural importance that they cannot be uprooted by a simple act of Satyagraha. Gandhi himself had organized a number of individual or group Satyagraha against untouchability and communalism. A man of his charisma and image even could not solve this problem fully by bringing in moral changes in the attitude of the orthodox diehards. The idea of national satyagraha, i.e. defence through satyagraha is not a practically feasible proposition. Theoretically it is possible to have an army of non-violent resisters but no Government seems to take initiative in this direction, so its possibility even in future is very much doubtful. Even if that becomes a possibility still it will not serve any purpose since use of sophisticated ammunition has made modern warfare a long-distance war-fare.

Satyagraha can be one of the techniques along with others to achieve the proposed goal, but to think it to be the only means of social control is an overestimation. The generalization that Satyagraha is the only means of social control is not founded on objective truth but on emotional belief.

There can be experiments on Satyagraha to counteract man's growing art of destruction so as to effect a moral transformation of humanity. Gandhi thus by introducing the doctrine of Satyagraha in the political thought not only intellectually enriched but also showed the way of bridging the age old conflicts of politics and ethics.

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### Non-violence In Socio-Economic sphere

Gandhiji was interested in establishing a society which is based upon economic upliftment, technological progress, moral, spiritual and intellectual development. He was dreaming of a social life which was free from all sorts of injustice, exploitation and inequality. Social justice for equality among all can be brought out by the development of human personality, which is chiefly regulated by two basic principles of truth and nonviolence. He tried his best to mobilize the non-violent strength in human mind to bring a positive change in society through his constructive programme of boycott of foreign goods and encourage the mass to go for indigeneous products.

Gandhian conception of economic progress consists in attaining social justice and moral values. In Gandhi, we find a comprehensive conception of Freedom. To him, freedom is a process of growth in quest of coherent moral purposes and actions. In Gandhi's scheme of freedom, true Swaraj is spiritual scheme of freedom. True Swaraj is spiritual moral freedom, Satyagraha is political freedom and Swadeshi is Economic freedom.

Economic freedom means, freedom from material want. Poverty is the main obstacle to the individual happiness and freedom. There is inter-relation between individual happiness and material freedom. Possession of material goods is the natural right of the individual. But the conception of economic freedom is not based on force, violence, exploitation or accumulation. It is purely moral and altruistic. It is the wish of Gandhi that everyone must fulfill his basic economic needs of life by following Varnashrama Dharma, which is an eternal law. Willfully an individual should follow the lawful occupation of his forefather and has to devote his time and talent to serve his neighbours in the society. The society needs the services of lawyer or doctor, even as it needs the services of carpenter and the shoemaker. Each man's skill and knowledge is an ornament to himself and also to society. Aim of Gandhi was to rebuild and strengthen our village economic life only in order to free India from economical troubles. Self-sufficient and interdependent village units are the main pillars of our Socio-economic structure. In village, we find that different people have different talents. Some are more talented and some are less. So, economic inequalities are bound to follow. But when equal opportunities are provided to each individual in accordance with their talent, economic inequalities can be decreased. A self-dependent man is not a burden to a village or society. When all villages are economically free, then India will enjoy real economic freedom.

For the interest of rural Indian people, Gandhi has recommended the concept of Swadeshi by which the socio-economic structure of society can be strengthened.

Literally, the term Swadeshi means: "One's Own Country". Swadeshi is a fundamental concept in Gandhian thought. Gandhi says "*Swadeshi is that Spirit which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the remote.*"<sup>12</sup>

Swadeshi means the use of only those articles which are produced by one's immediate neighbourhood.

According to Gandhi it is absurd to think that one can serve the nation by neglecting his own family. Only by serving our families we can serve our nation and mankind. Swadeshi doctrine implies law of love and humanity. But it is not right to fulfill the unlawful demands of the family through the earning made by causing injury to others.

Swadeshi does not mean serving distant people at the lost of the nearest. It does not also mean one will love his neighbour and hate foreigners.

Apprehending this Gandhi says :



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A true votary of Swadeshi should never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner; he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshimism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa.<sup>13</sup>

Gandhiji noticed that due to the departure from the Swadeshi Principles in the economic sphere, there is poverty in Indian masses. The spirit of Swadeshi is a remedial measure by which the individual helps himself and help his neighbours in their needs. By this every Indian village will become an autonomous unit. A follower of true Swadeshi should live without the things which are not produced in India.

Gandhi observes: "*Any article in Swadeshi, if it sub-serves the interest of the millions, even though the capital and talent are foreign but under effective Indian control*"<sup>14</sup>. Gandhi believes that the economic good of all lies in practicing the principles of Swadeshi.

To consume the native goods is a service to the neighbours, this service frees a man from hatred and envy against one another. It encourages love between one another and promotes eternal unity and peace. If the basic needs of an individual are satisfied then the individual will be free from his economical burdens. A man should enjoy minimum material things in accordance with his needs. A discontented man is a slave to his wants. Therefore according to Gandhi, the ideal of plain living and high thinking helps a man economically free.

The involvement of women in Swadeshi was necessary for certain pragmatic reasons. Gandhi knew that "*the Swadeshi vow, too, cannot be kept fully if women do not help. Men alone will be able to do nothing in the matter. They have no control over the children, than is the woman's sphere. To look after children to dress them is the mother's duty and therefore, it is necessary that women should be fired with the spirit of Swadeshi. So long as that does not happen men will not be in a position to take the Vow.*"<sup>15</sup>

Gandhi's distinctive contribution to non-violence is that he applied it rigorously in the secular realm and extended the scope of non-violent action to cover the political, economic and social regeneration. It is a working law of life. He says

*"I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life individual, social, political, national and international."*<sup>16</sup>

This twin aspect of non-violence spreads like a wild fire and affects both poor and rich, urban and village people and educated and uneducated. Odisha and the people of Odisha like Nabakrishna Choudhury, Arnapruna Maharana, Malati Choudhury, Kuntala kumari Sabat and others made themselves actively involved in the national struggle for freedom.

The critics would criticise that the Gandhian Thought is of no pragmatic value at the present time. The present society is facing the threat of fundamentalism, terrorism, naxalism and outburst of different forms of violence. Each and every country is facing such situations. People, by and large, are living with uncertainty, insecurity and with risk to their lives. It is a clear indication of an unhealthy society. Social injustice, economic exploitation and political instability lead to multiple forms of social maladies. The effective remedy of this kind of situation is not violence but non-violence only. A non-violent socio-political economic order is the only way out. It is a supreme weapon of conquest not of today but of tomorrow. Let all ills be met by the highest form of non-violence.

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