

Gandhism in our times



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Gandhism In Our Times Samudra Biswas CIA III, 2ND EPS Regn No 1214415

Christ College Political Ideologies 231 Teacher Sindhuja Iyengar “ On Gandhi:

Don't ever forget, that we were not lead by a saint with his head in clouds, but by a master tactician with his feet on the ground. " • Shashi Tharoor “

I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil. " • Albert Einstein “ You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind. " --

Mahatma Gandhi INTRODUCTION I write this project in spirit of modesty to talk about one of the greatest figures of history and the relevance of his principles in today' s world. The memory of Mahatma Gandhi today, in India is reduced to rituals. His ideals are forgotten and much of what he stood for is remembered only in parts and misunderstood. Many young people brought up on modern ideas wonder what wisdom there is in turning the other cheek if someone strikes you on one cheek. Similarly, there is no place for simplicity in one's life, when everybody is turning towards western life styles and way of thinking. In the care free money oriented attitude that pervades our life today, talk about morals and non-violence certainly seems out of place. If we say that the twentyfirst century is the century of the common man, then we see that Gandhism has even more relevance in this age, and Gandhi will inspire generations of individuals fighting for goodness of the society. According to me Mahatma Gandhi has become all the way more pertinent in the 21st century. It is not an easy task to consider the relevance of Gandhian principles for the contemporary world. But if one accepts the teaching that Satyagraha made Mahatma Gandhi and not the reverse, and

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that it would outlive him, the Gandhian model offers norms and techniques for our age. WHAT IS GANDHISM? Gandhism was the ideology of the Indian national liberation movement led by the national bourgeoisie. Gandhism (or Gandhianism) is a collection of inspirations, principles, beliefs and philosophy of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as Mahatma Gandhi), who was a major political and spiritual leader of India and the Indian Independence Movement. It is a body of ideas and principles that describes the inspiration, vision and the life work of Gandhi. Technically it is behavior associated with Mohandas Gandhi and certain civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., whereby participants compel change through non-violent initiatives.

Gandhi's approach was not just about the non-violent action, it was about eliciting an unjust, violent reaction. It was not about avoiding suffering of the people, but welcoming it. However Gandhi did not approve of 'Gandhism', as Gandhi explained: "There is no such thing as " Gandhism," and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems... The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final. I may change them tomorrow. I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." CONTRIBUTION OF GANDHISM TO THE MODERN WORLD

Gandhi and his principles has made numerous contributions to India, the following are the more significant: i, First, his idea of India as ek-praja or an inclusive nation or one nation. ii, Second, there is his scheme building a non-violent social order in a country rent for centuries by violence originating in caste, gender and religious differences. iii, Third, his approach to solving the problem of India's chronic poverty and his doubts about the suitability of the

nine-teenth century type of industrialization. Fourth, there is his contribution as a writer and thinker, which calls into question the habit of those Indian intellectuals who rely on non-Indian philosophical frameworks for thinking about India. He sets a good example to them by contributing to the creation of the modern Indian political canon, one that does justice to the needs of modern India and to the valid claims of ancient India. Finally, there is his redefinition of the relationship of secular values to spiritual values, which he hopes the civilization of independent India would accept.

PRINCIPLES OF GANDHISM Gandhi's Eleven Principles are the core of his thinking and provide the basis for what today we would call a sustainable society and way of life. If all leaders received a Gandhian education, what a difference it would make to the world! They are:

- Non-violence — Ahimsa
- Truth — Satyagraha
- Fearlessness — Saravatra Bhaya Varjana
- Self-organization or self-rule — Swaraj (Self-regulation means self-knowledge and taking responsibility.)
- Non-stealing — Asteya. Part of this is Non-consumerism — Asangraha. This requires ecological humility; realizing that waste is a sin against nature and that nature's cycle should be followed. It is about having enough.
- Sacred Sex — Brahmacharya
- Physical work — Sharirashram
- Avoidance of bad taste — Aswada.
- Sattva — simplicity
- Rajas — glamorous
- Tamas — depressing
- Respect for all religions — Sarava
- Dharma Samanatva
- Self economy or Local economy — Swadeshi
- decentralization.
- Respect for all beings — Sparsha

Mahatma Gandhi said that seven things will destroy us. Notice that all of them have to do with social and political conditions.

- Wealth Without Work
- Pleasure Without Conscience
- Knowledge Without Character
- Commerce (Business) Without Morality (Ethics)
- Science Without Humanity
- Religion

Without Sacrifice Politics Without Principle Relevance of Gandhian principles in the twenty-first century Sarvodaya is a term meaning 'universal uplift' or 'progress of all'. Gandhian concept of sarvodaya will be very useful for solving the social problems of 21 st century. The concept actually means the 'awakening of all.' It also means the awakening of total human spirit and personality. Gandhi introduced the idea of Sarvodaya to the Indian public when he became involved with the freedom struggle. He asked himself, 'When India becomes free, what kind of a country should it be?' That was when he made his views on Sarvodaya widely known. In short, Gandhi wanted Independent India to have a Sarvodaya Society. The Sarvodaya philosophy does not seek any arithmetic equality. It recognizes stratification in Society, and tries to adjust to it in a spiritual way. In the 21st century India battles with political instability, scams, ethnic and gender violence, it's just the right time to revisit Mahatma Gandhi's vision for an ideal 'Bharat'. Gandhian values may truly be a thing of the past today, and yet there are smaller India's where Bapu's principles of sarvodaya and the construction of a social order based on non-violent people power and the empowerment of rural women, are still being kept alive. 'Sarvodaya' meaning 'universal upliftment' or 'progress of all' reaching the masses and the downtrodden. India today has the unique distinction of having the richest man in the world while at the same time about 30 per cent of its population lives in poverty. To say the least, Gandhism is under severe test in India. Non-violence—Ahimsa: To deal with abuse of power, you confront love of power with the power of love. Simply, it means resisting oppression non-violently through love - non-violence in thoughts, words and deeds. Gandhi got a response from the British, rather than a reaction because of non-violence and the

power of large numbers of people. Problems cannot be solved with the same mindset that created them. Nelson Mandela said in a world full of violence and strife, Mahatma Gandhi's message of peace and non-violence holds the key to human survival in the 21st Century. We need non-violence as a worldview — non-violence towards nature, women, the imposition of factory agriculture and inhuman. As a military super power in Asia, India is definitely not following the teachings of Ahimsa (nonviolence) in dealing with its neighbors, be it Pakistan, Bangladesh (East Pakistan) or China; nor it is practicing nonviolence in dealings with its numerous insurgencies be it in Kashmir, Punjab, central India or in the North Eastern states of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland or Mizoram. Today's campaigns against nuclear power, nuclear weapons, militarism and war are Gandhian (CND, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Peace Pledge Union). Truth — Satyagraha: Lack of truth is a daily issue. In the globalized world, political and corporate leaders mislead the public to achieve their will and are in denial when it goes wrong. Untruth leads to disaster. Truth and integrity are vital for bringing about change non-violently. Pursuit of truth is an open-ended journey requiring respect for all points of view, however hard to articulate. It requires exceptional courage, especially in politics and business organizations. In 21st century Satyagraha will prove to be an important means by which individuals and groups can have an immediate effect government on policies and programs. Individuals and groups can organize the people and draw the attention of the government and masses on issues of terrorism, violence, deteriorating law and order, pollution, malnutrition, poverty etc. to save society. Non-stealing — Asteya. : •It is impossible to conceive of a world at peace when the poorest 60% of humans live on just 6% of the world's

income. â€– said winner of last year' s Nobel Peace Prize, Bangladeshi banker, Mohammed Yunus. Earth, fire, air and water are sacred elements. It is theft when family farms are destroyed by agribusiness, livelihoods are destroyed by globalization, crafts are destroyed by industrialization and big trawlers over-fish. It is a form of theft when food, seeds, trees and plants are patented. It is called bio-piracy. It is theft when commons like water are privatized, rivers diverted, salinization is caused by excessive irrigation or large amounts of water is taken by drinks companies like Pepsi and Coca Cola. Asteya is a way of consuming only what nature can replenish, having enough, consuming only to meet our vital needs, knowing that other peoples and creatures need to have their share Non-consumerism — Asangraha In the 21st century market based economy and consumerism have caused havoc to the society. To counter this we should adopt the practice of â€– asangraha' or non-consumerism which states that waste is a sin against nature. Consumerism wants everyone to spend — the more we spend, the happier they are because they can rake in huge profits. Consumerism also cause a lot of wastes. Consumerism is theft and causes crime. Brahmacharya or Celibacy : In the 21st century trivialisation and commercialisation of sex, pornography and sexual exploitation have become widespread and it stems from disrespect for the sanctity of sex. Gandhi practiced bharmacharya which means â€–loving sexuality within a healthy human relationship.' In the 21 st century sex trafficking and infidelity is a serious threat which can be reduced if people adopt brahmacharya or sexuality appropriately practised is part of love of God. Sacred sex is based on commitment, responsibility, celebration and joy. Avoidance of bad taste — Aswada. Three Qualities of Life are: Sattva — simple, Rajas — glamorous and Tamas —

depressing. In everything we can see the three qualities. Living in the here and now, having a conversation with nature is Sattvic. Sattvic food is healthy, simple, fresh and local, easy to digest and nutritious. Organic can be Sattvic — not cruel factory farming with large, distant abattoirs and unhappy animals. Meat, produced with cruelty, is Rajasic. A temple or church can be Sattvic or Rajasic. Prisons, the Home Office building, a nuclear bunker, nuclear weapons are Tamasic. All three qualities are present in everything and you can appear one way but in your heart be something else. Power can be Sattvic when it comes from spirit inside; Rajasic when from status or position; Tamasic when power and beliefs are imposed. There is much here for the leaders of the 21st century, so easily corrupted by power, celebrity, wealth and honours. Swaraj: To achieve swaraj one requires swadeshi and to attain swadeshi one has to take to 'bread labour.' Self-organization or self rule — Swaraj. We can learn from nature, which is a self-organising, self-correcting, self-healing and self-managing system. It requires mutuality and reciprocity. The village is the first form of government. We need not 'trickle down' but 'trickle up'. Swadeshi will be the greatest tool for solving the economic problems of the 21st century. Swadeshi means self-reliance in every field. Hence, Swadeshi is a service. In fact, swadeshi may become a part of renaissance in the 21st century. Because it conveys the idea of returning to one's own country to its cultural heritage and serve the need of the next door neighbor. By making of self self-reliant and self-sufficient in every field we can free ourselves from moral degradation, economic exploitation and political subjugation.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN THE FIELD OF TODAY'S EDUCATION In the current scenario, Indian educational system is rated very poor from a global outlook. Low literacy

rates, imbalance in men and women education, condition of public schools, no scope for scientific research and etc. In such a scenario, Gandhi's prescribed way of education should be followed. Gandhi felt that education should not only increase knowledge but also develop culture in heart and hand. Another of Gandhi's interests lay in character building. Education without character building was not education according to him. He considered a strong character as the basic of a good citizen. So the issues of character building through value-based education on the one hand and that of integrating science and technology on the other hand have to go together. Value education in the sense of gaining knowledge of values is not enough but have to be realized and loved by selecting the values which are relevant and best suited to the needs of our country. Gandhi infused in us a hope through his ideals of love, tolerance, truth, nonviolence and service of mankind which are even more relevant today than they were in his own time and they will continue to exercise a lasting influence in our society. Gandhi advocated that the following subjects should be taught at the primary stage: Mother tongue, Arithmetic, Natural Science, Social Science, Geography and History, Manual and Polytechnical Work, Physical Culture, Art and Music and Hindustani. Gandhi laid great emphasis on moral education as well. We notice that there is no mention of English in the subjects for primary schools. Gandhi advocated mother-tongue as the medium of instruction. This is an important point. One of the reasons for the poor quality of scientific research in our country at present is the fact that a foreign language, English, is used as the medium of instruction at college and university levels. Many of the current scientific concepts require deep thought, and are far removed from daily experience. To be able to understand and appreciate these concepts, a

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thorough knowledge of the language is essential. If science is taught along with the language, it can happen that the teaching of language lags behind that of science, and then the students will tend to memorize the results rather than understand them.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN POLITICS (POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNMENT) IN THE 21ST CENTURY

— The issue of corruption has never gripped the nation like it has done in the past few months with the unending series of scams - 2G spectrum, Commonwealth, Adarsh, black money etc - which have shamed nation and shocked the conscience of the citizens. The Wikileaks expose has further ignited the debate on corruption and paralyses the functioning of the Parliament. People are furious and want solutions to address the issue urgently. However, we must realise that corruption is not the problem - but rather, corruption, nepotism and special interests are the symptoms of a deep-rooted malaise in our government system that is threatening to dismantle and derail the concept of public life and democratic government that our founding fathers envisioned. This is where the principles enunciated by Gandhiji should be used. Gandhi was neither a conscientious objector nor a supporter of violence in politics. He was an experimenter in the development of "war without violence." - In the 21st century, we have seen booth capturing, rigging and etc which perpetuate an unhealthy form of political structure or functioning. Gandhi advocated participative not representative democracy. Instead of a system in which parties fight elections, he favoured voting for people who contribute well and are highly thought of, have the required skills. A system like this would prevent the huge cost of election campaigns that corrupt democracy. Hence, we should adopt participative form of democracy(not just in name only). One of the

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cardinal principles of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy was decentralization of power. There existed too many shortcomings and dangers in a system of centralized authority he believed. Eventually such a system disenfranchises individuals and renders them powerless even helpless. To empower people he thought that an alternate society had to be built where there was no massive concentration of power. With a view to get rid of elites and elitism Gandhi laid tremendous emphasis on village politics. His Ram Rajya, the system of decentralized yet democratic Govt., centered around

•Panchayati Rajya- village assemblies and cottage industries with local control. He firmly believed that massive structural changes were necessary for building a •just society-. Such transformation must include all individuals, groups and communities. The mission was to include people in the management and governance of society and not to exclude them as the centralized systems generally end up doing.

OPPOSITION TO OPPRESSION:

Throughout his life the Mahatma without exception strongly opposed all forms of imperialism, hegemony, dominance, slavery, oppression and discrimination on the basis of caste, color, faith or belief and social categorization. The problems of Governance arise from the issue of " unfettered discretion" - Unfettered Administrative discretion in dealing with Public assets and unfettered administrative discretion in doling out Government contracts and spending with very little oversight and failure/compromise of institutions like Independent Regulators. The solutions for this are obvious - the Government must usher into the government a value for money culture - a culture that reinforces the truth that Government is only a trustee of public money and assets - a principle that Gandhi believed in.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN THE FIELD OF TODAY' S

ECONOMICS Gandhi espoused an economic theory of self-sufficiency and simplicity. He envisioned a more agrarian India upon independence that would focus on meeting the material needs of its citizenry prior to generating wealth and industrializing. Of course also, Gandhi was a "bania" (member of a trading caste). Trading in one form or another did seem to be in his blood. Not only was Gandhi very aware of the world of business, we know that he depended on certain industrialists to support a number of his ventures and, to some extent, himself personally. Economic Development of a country depends on the proper utilization of resources (both human and non-human). India, at the time of her independence, had an economy with a low level of economic and technological development, low per capital income, slow pace of development of economic and social institutions and outdated methods of production techniques. Gandhi wanted to have an ideal society of his own imagination and his economic ideas are a part and parcel of his philosophical and sociological ideas. Fundamentally, Gandhi viewed business as a form of service to the community. Gandhi practiced Self economy or Local economy — Swadeshi. Gandhi saw that industrialisation was sweeping the world. He predicted that it would destroy creativity, diversity, culture, agriculture and replace it with industrial farming. Swadeshi provides an answer to the destructive effects of globalisation that contribute to poverty and debt in countries like India and starvation in Africa. Appropriate scale and markets. It makes sense to have a global market for some things but for others, a regional, national or local market may work best. It means neither small nor large scale but appropriate scale and choosing whatever scale is best for different purposes. It is well known that Gandhi's economic ideas revolved around Swadeshi and Khadi. Khadi is not a piece of cloth. It is a symbol of

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decentralization of production and distribution. It stands for a non-violent lifestyle. The application of the principle of decentralization leads to a life of simplicity in which there is hardly any scope of amassing unnecessary goods of the market. This checks the exploitation of natural resources and helps in maintaining the delicate balance or equilibrium of nature. What applies to Khadi equally applies to kutir udyog and gramodyog products. It is argued that khadi and the spinning wheel are still practical and economically viable if only we give them a fair chance. An additional argument which is advanced is that khadi can help us to recover several hundred thousand hectares as urgently needed fertile land to grow food. The mills require long and medium staple cotton which need more fertile land, irrigation and chemicals. On the other hand short-staple cotton needed for the charkha can be obtained on less fertile land some of which is not under cultivation at present and there is no need for agri-chemicals. Hence we can see how adoption of khadi in the age of globalization can help us to recover several hundred thousand hectares which can be used to grow food. Firstly, thanks to heavy importing, a good bit of manufacturing has had to close down, leaving hundreds of thousands unemployed. In Gujarat, which used to hum with manufacturing, hundreds of factories have closed down. And this has not only thrown factory workers on to the streets, but also left truck operators etc., who moved the industrial products, high and dry. There are more serious problems, caused by a strong shift to the so-called market-oriented economy. The current globalisation mantra is all about securing profit for a few, namely the shareholders. Co-operation, he argued, not competition, is the natural state of mankind. The same is true for our economic system. Intrinsic to this belief is a concern about 'command-and-

control' business models that rely on, and exacerbate, distortions of power. Greed by a few individuals, excessive remuneration, abuse of corporate power are theft. Global sourcing that involves exploitation of poor workers and displacement of local workers in order to cut costs is theft. Gandhi says accumulation and over-consumption are stealing from God. Gandhi believed in the principle of asteya or non-stealing which is a way of consuming only what nature can replenish, having enough, consuming only to meet our vital needs, knowing that other peoples and creatures need to have their share, so I only take my share. •Living simply, so that others may live, a way of generosity. –In simple words not stealing the needs of our future generation by over-consumption or wastage of resources. If such principles are adopted, there would be no over-utilisation of resources. Thanks to heavy brain-washing, there is a mindset amongst most educated people that there is no alternative to a consumerist economy, globalisation and all that. Firstly, the forces that promote consumerism want everyone to spend — the more we spend, the happier they are because they can rake in huge profits. Next, consumerism leads to a lot of waste. Right now, the job of dismantling old ships, old computers, old mobile phones etc., is being quietly dumped on the so called Third World , and leading to a lot of pollution there. Gandhism followed the policy of Non-consumerism — Asanagraha. Part of this is ecological humility and realizing that waste is a sin against nature and that nature's cycle should be followed. Greed has become a creed, a new religion! Consumerism is theft and causes crime. The overall progress of the entire economy depends on the balanced development of all the regions. In India there exists a huge regional disparity. In relative terms some states are advanced economically and some other states are backward. Even within a

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state some districts are more backward than the rest. In West Bengal, for example, the northern part of the state popularly known as 'North Bengal' comprising six districts are relatively backward than the 'South Bengal' districts in terms of productivity in agriculture, industry, educational development, health facilities, etc. Even within the South Bengal region of West Bengal state there are some districts like Purulia, Bankura etc. which are underdeveloped if we compare them with some districts like Burdwan, and Hugly. In this context Gandhian economics, is relevant which supports the attainment of self-sufficiency level of industrialisation or uniform economic pattern for each region. The Gandhian economics is of the view that every man should increase his personal income and standard of living by exploiting the existing natural and human resources fully ecofriendly. In line with Gandhi's dream of expanding village industries, industrial policy resolutions of 1948, 1956 and 1977 have offered a special favour for the development of small scale and village industries. The village and small-scale industries have been playing an important role in Indian economy in terms of employment generation and poverty alleviation. The Gandhian view of self-sufficient village economy is also relevant in the context of reducing poverty and unemployment in rural India. Gandhi is in favour of the self-sufficient village economy where the villages will be the independent economic units. Money Gandhi believed currencies should be created, not by banks, but by communities and government: Local, National and International. Money is a means of exchange and should be subservient. Instead, it dominates and people are enslaved by debt. Speculation in money markets and the stock exchanges causes damaging instability for enterprises, their stakeholders, savings and retirement pensions. Making a

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few people super rich without creating real wealth damages the rest of humanity. The harm cannot be undone by setting up charitable foundations. For example, the campaigns of the New Economics Foundation, Local Works, the Soil Garden Organic, Slow City, Slow Food and LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems) and Transition Towns are Swadeshi. Under this principle, whatever is made or produced locally is produced first and foremost for people of that locality. The primary motivation of business and entrepreneurs must be not to damage society or the environment but to serve the community by meeting needs, rather than creating wants. The local community should be a microcosm of the macro world. For example, development of "genuine progress indicators", such as the Gross National Happiness index in Bhutan or the New Economics Foundation's Happiness Index, to the Voluntary Simplicity Movement in the US and the Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture in India are very Gandhian ideas.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN THE FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY Modernisation plays an important part in the 21st century. The lust for greener pastures, the greed for 'privacy' and the so-called modern lifestyles pushed this generation in the back seat. The silver generation does not fit into the décor of the modern homes. Gandhi was not against technology. Appropriate technology is an important concept - technology that serves rather than harms human beings. So, mechanical things such as cars cannot be made locally. According to Gandhi, technology should aid, not replace human hands. This means technology for service, not greed, with gratitude and humility towards nature. The aim of new technology should not be increased power, ego gratification, excessive profit and consumption. Change should not be for change's sake or to create obsolescence. More

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and faster and faster change may mean more rapid destruction of the planet. It is often said that Gandhi was against machines, industrialisation and all that. It is true he started off like that and it is equally true that he was always uncomfortable where machines were concerned. However, over the years, he reluctantly conceded that machines id have a place but within limits. This is how he expressed this idea once: “ Mechanisation is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required, as is the case in India. ” Why was Gandhi so distrustful of machines? There were many reasons, one of them being that they tend to produce unemployment. “ I do visualise electricity, ship building, iron works, machine making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. Hitherto, industrialisation has been so planned as to destroy the village and village handicrafts. In the State of the future, it will sub serve the villages and their crafts.” Another reason why Gandhi was concerned about machines was that they tend to produce a monopoly that worsens the state of the poor. In India, we have been working on problems of world wide interest, both in science and technology. We have spent lot of money on super-conductivity, nuclear energy, space research, and etc without much tangible results. According to Gandhi, belief in scientific solutions like nuclear power represents an arrogant and blinkered view of the natural world of which we are part. Genetic engineering, terminator seed technology and patenting of life forms shows a desire to dominate natural processes. There are innumerable problems crying for solution, which concern the common man: water distribution and utilization, safer and comfortable public transport (three wheelers and cycle rickshaws), pollution, proper roads, use of wind power, and etc. But hardly any attention is being

paid to these at present. All that we have to do, if we are interested in the welfare of our people, is to seriously heed Gandhi's Talisman: " I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen. Ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away. "

RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT OR ECOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Rapid industrialization and globalisation in many countries has greatly increased pollution. Vehicle exhaust, coal burning and smoke from factories form small particles in the air that cause serious health damage. Another reason for environmental pollution and degradation is over utilisation of renewable resources. The use of firewood — the use of most renewable resource is driven by expanding population. Very few people know that Gandhi was an environmentalist too. Gandhi experimented with and wrote a great deal about simple living in harmony with the environment. Naess , a famous ecologist, explains that Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realisation, non-violence and what sometimes has been called biospherical egalitarianism.' Moreover, Gandhi's utopia is one of the few that shows ecological balance, and today his rejection of the Western World's material abundance and waste is accepted by the progressives of the ecological movements of 21st century. Gandhi has placed certain questions before humanity and showed the direction in which humanity should move forward. His seminal work Hind Swaraj is severe condemnation of western

industrial civilization which is one of the major causes of environmental degradation. Village sanitation was an important item of his Constructive Programme. Our villages and cities have turned into heaps of dirt and disease due to lack of proper sanitation facilities. By promoting the village sanitation and research in the field Gandhi wanted to make our villages pollution free. We should adopt this in order to make our cities and villages more clean and hygienic. We should adopt Gandhi's concept of bread labour which has also deep ecological implications and sustainability. Every able bodied citizen must devote time and energy for manual labour and ensure sanitation. The real importance of Gandhi as an environmentalist lies not in his vision and his right understanding of man-nature relationship. He made honest efforts to translate his percepts in actual life. Even before he became an internationally known leader and a Mahatma, he patterned his person life and that of a small community on these ideals. He kept on telling people and giving demonstration on health, hygiene and sanitation. Hardly any political leader of his stature in the world had ever devoted so much of time and energy on these problems with so much sincerity and dedication. Gandhian principles should be advocated in the 21st century in order to protect the degrading environment. We should stress on his theory of man-nature relationship. The increasing number of slums in India (for example Dharavi) is creating unhygienic conditions for sustaining life. Environmentalists of today give scholarly lectures and write research papers and books on the subject. There are also activist environmentalists no doubt. But we can easily discern in them the motives to be prominent and cash it for political purposes. Gandhi tried to carry the message to the mass through the life he himself led. This is what made him an environmentalist with a difference. GANDHISM

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INSPIRES WORLD LEADERS Gandhiji's methods of peaceful and non-violent agitation secured India's freedom from British rule. His methods worked admirably within the parameters of a democratic society. That is why Gandhian ideas of 'passive resistance' (called 'satyagraha' or action for truth, that is, for justice) have been successfully used in South Africa, the USA and Zimbabwe. Gandhian methods helped to secure rights for Afro-Americans in the USA. Gandhi's methods were emulated by Martin Luther King Jnr in the Civil Rights movement in the USA. During his famous speech, 'We have a dream' on Capitol Hill, King and his supporters around him wore white Gandhi caps. People were reminded of that speech during the Atlanta Olympic Games when images of Gandhi were prominently displayed. Nelson Mandela is often described as the South African Gandhi. Mandela was greatly inspired by Gandhi and his works against racial segregation in South Africa. Although they never met, Gandhi and Mandela are often mentioned together as giants of 20th-century anti-colonialism struggle. Thich Nhat Kanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist leader takes great inspiration from Gandhi's action which stresses on the process more than the end. Nhat said, " I think we may fail in our attempt to do things, yet we may succeed in correct action when the action is authentically non violent, based on understanding, based on love." That is Gandhism. President Barack Obama openly professes his admiration for Gandhi. He told students at the Wakefield High School in Arlington in 2009 that Gandhi represents the power of change through ethics, and how to use morality to foster change. Obama pointed out to the students that Gandhi made people realise that they had power within themselves and that that power needed to be used to help others, and not to oppress them. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese leader under house arrest,

derives great deal of inspiration from Gandhi. From Gandhi she learnt that for a doctrine of peace and reconciliation to be translated into practice, one absolute condition needed is fearlessness. From Dalai Lama to Desmond Tutu and from Martin Luther King to Nelson Mandela, all were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, all in their own different ways. Three Success stories of Gandhism in the 21st century Today, the path and means used by Mahatma Gandhi have become more relevant not just in India, but elsewhere too where people have been suppressed or injustice has been institutionalised. The Jasmine Revolution is an example of Gandhian path at work. The Jasmine revolution that started in December-January 2011 in Tunisia was a peoples' movement that helped end the autocratic rule of president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 15. The revolution was ignited by the self-immolation of vegetable vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, when he was humiliated by a woman constable on December 17. Though, self-immolation is not within the tenets of Gandhian principles, the outrage against social injustice got a new spark. What were the people of Tunisia fighting for? Unemployment, food inflation, corruption, lack of freedom of speech and poor living conditions. All issues concerning common people for whom Gandhi raised his voice. The movement soon spread to Egypt and other Middle East nations. US President Barack Obama recalled how the revolution in Egypt that threw out a defiant Hosni Mubarak had the seeds of Mahatma Gandhi's tryst with truth and justice. When Mubarak was forced to step down, Obama recalled the non-violent methods of Mahatma Gandhi as he praised the people of Egypt for their peaceful protests. To call Anna Hazare the 21st-century Gandhi, as some have started doing, is pure hyperbole, but many would see a similarity in their methods – in particular, in their resorting to fasts to achieve their

objectives. This, however, is erroneous. Indeed, the fact that so many people consider Anna Hazare's method to be similar to Gandhiji's only indicates how little contemporary India remembers or understands Gandhiji. Gandhi died in 1948 and after him the politics of civil disobedience and the fast as a political weapon died down in India. The movement, a peoples movement has again been revived by Anna Hazare on the issue of corruption. He has like Gandhi galvanized millions of Indians on the issue of corruption and forced the Indian parliament to take notice of him and his demands.

Parliament has done India proud, by agreeing with Hazare and the leader has called off his fast. There is a good chance that an anti corruption law will now be a reality sooner than later. But the battle ahead is long and hard and it will require Anna to carry on from where he has left. In the bargain after 64 years it appears that the mantle of Gandhi has fallen on Anna Hazare. Iran's opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi reportedly moved close to Gandhian rhetoric and cautioned Iranian protesters to resist the temptation toward violence: "I, as a mourner, invite the people to self-restraint. The country belongs to you. The revolution and the government are your inheritances. Objecting to lies and cheating is your right. Be hopeful in exercising your rights and do not allow those, who try to instill fear in you to dissuade you, to make you angry. Continue to avoid violence in your protests and treat the disproportionate actions of the security forces as broken hearted parents would their children." The dynamic in Iran has fit Gandhiji's understanding of human psychology. When millions peacefully protested in Iran, the government fell directly into the Gandhian trap, brutally murdering some protesters. By drawing the government into violent -and public -- misbehavior, the protesters drew the state into a downward spiral in which

the leaders progressively eroded their own authority through their own actions. In Iran, the regime that started with one crisis of legitimacy (the election) now has a second one (the killing of citizens). This will draw more protesters to the streets, which will probably draw more violent reaction, further undercutting the government's standing. Nothing would make him happier than if it turned out to be millions of Muslims who gave birth to 21st-century Gandhism. (Report published on the wall street journal titled „ In Iran, Gandhism Comes of Age”dated JULY 10 2009) CONCLUSION India is a very violent society and violence is used widely in our society, by people and administration alike to achieve desired results. So it is a mockery of making Gandhi the father of the nation when the weaker section and powerless is beaten up daily at home, work and streets.. Gandhi knit the 'ethnic museum' of India into a modern nation from a motley crowd of ethnic and linguistic identities who had lost their courage to stand up and fight for justice. He infused courage into the people to discover themselves and shed fears. In this process he became the voice of the voiceless and a slave nation suddenly found its utterances and he thus molded a new generation of freedom loving people who were not afraid of torture, jails or death. He also offered a credible non-violent alternative and in a way he was challenging all those who scoffed at him and paved the way for a new civilization to emerge. It is for us to draw our lesson and shape our destiny. Do we have the courage? That is the big question staring at each of us as we enter the new millennium. The main cause of worry today is intolerance and hatred leading to violence and it is here the values of Gandhi need to be adhered to with more passion. He is relevant not yesterday or today but forever!! I would like to conclude with a tribute to Gandhi that Albert Einstein gave: "

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Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth". REFERENCES 1. The

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