Praxis of Gandhian Perspectives in the Present Indian and Global Context

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Foreword

Malabika Pande

It is a privilege for me to write the Foreword to the Keynote Address delivered by Siby K. Joseph at the National Seminar on “Ideologies and Perspectives in Indian History” at Banaras Hindu University from March 06 to 07, 2018. The Seminar was organised by the Department of History (Faculty of Social Sciences) of the University. The theme of the First Technical Session of the Seminar was ‘Gandhian Ideology / Perspectives / Praxis’.

In his address, Siby Joseph has skillfully covered the basic principles of Gandhian thought and action, and succeeded in capturing, through lucid narration and analysis, the spirit of the Seminar in all its other thematic Sessions that covered the Ancient, Medieval and Modern Periods of Indian History. In a perceptive manner, he first outlines the challenges and problems confronting India and humanity as a whole today and then explores the solutions from a Gandhian standpoint. It would be most appropriate to quote him from the concluding passage of the oration: “… it is clear that Gandhian perspectives go a long way in addressing many of the issues which we are facing in our country and in different parts of the globe…. But the application of Gandhian ideas calls for a restructuring of the existing socio-economic and political order based on violence and injustice.”

I am firmly of the view that only such an alternative would be sustainable and enduring. I would like to extend all support to Siby Joseph in his efforts to translate Gandhi’s social vision into a framework of action and hope that it becomes a collective endeavour.
Preface

This manuscript was first presented by the author as the Keynote Address at the National Seminar on Ideologies and Perspectives in Indian History, held at Sambodhi Sabhagar, Samta Bhavan, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi on March 6, 2018. This National Seminar was organized by the Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh from March 6 to 7, 2018.

The introductory part of this work, examines the various intellectual and cultural streams that contributed to shaping the course of Indian history from ancient times to the modern period. It looks upon Gandhi as one of the creative minds who largely contributed to the shaping of Indian nation. The main focus of this work is praxis of Gandhian perspectives in the present Indian and global context. It analyses a number of issues, viz. the threats to nationhood and multicultural fabric of India, the religious and cultural divide, issues in the system of governance or democratic polity of India, onslaught of globalization, unbridled exploitation of resources and growth of Naxalism, growing violence and the threat posed by weapons systems, threats to the environment and ecosystem and the sustainability of present pattern of development. It presents the perspectives or ideology of Gandhi as the hope for the survival of humanity.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to a number of persons who contributed to the preparation of the present work. I am grateful to Ram Chandra Pradhan, Senior Member of the teaching faculty, Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha for his suggestions and insights on the broad areas to be covered in this address. I would like to thank the authorities of Banaras Hindu University especially to Jai Kant Tiwary,
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences; Ajay Pratap, Professor and Head, Department of History and Faculty Members of the Department for their kind support and encouragement. My special thanks are due to Malabika Pande, Professor, Department of History and the Chief Organising Secretary of the Seminar for the kind invitation and contributing a brief foreword for the publication. I am thankful to distinguished delegates from different universities of India, faculty members and students of different departments of Banaras Hindu University who participated in the seminar for their useful comments, encouragement and inspiration.

My debts are also due to my elder brother Fr. Joseph K. J. for carefully going the whole manuscript and for his useful insights and suggestions. My special thanks are due to B. K. Harish Kumara, Executive Director, Center for Education Environment and Community, Banugondi, Karnataka for his contribution in the publication and distribution of this work in India. I am grateful to Louis Campana, President, Gandhi International, Carcassonne, France and Christophe Grigri, Gandhi International, Coordinator, Gandhi International, for accepting my proposal of publication and disseminating this publication worldwide through the network of Gandhi International. Last but not least, my thanks are also due to my wife Arunima Maitra and daughter Almitra K.Siby who have always been a source of inspiration, encouragement and unfailing support in my endeavours. I hope this publication will be welcomed by academic community and general readers like my earlier works.

Siby K. Joseph
Praxis of Gandhian Perspectives in the Present Indian and Global Context

Siby K. Joseph

Introduction

I consider it a great privilege and honour bestowed upon me by the organizers for inviting me to participate in the National Seminar on Ideologies and Perspectives in Indian History and to deliver the keynote address of the Seminar and to Chair the first technical session dealing with Gandhian Ideology/Perspectives/Praxis. This Seminar is organized by Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi from March 06 to 07, 2018. In fact, I am really thrilled by the opportunity to address the august audience of this great institution founded by none other than Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on 4th February 1916. It was in the University Extension lectures organised from 5 to 8 February, 1916; Mahatma Gandhi delivered his first public lecture in India after his return from South Africa.

In a sense, this historic speech of Gandhi was a stepping stone or an entry point for him into the political scene of India. Gandhi had the courage and conviction to directly question the dignitaries, who also happened to be the patrons of this University, by pointing out the sharp contrast between the Maharajas who were making a jazzy exhibition of jewellery and expensive dresses, with the millions of poor people in this country who were half naked with hardly any jewellery to wear. Gandhi emphatically said in his lecture: “There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India.” ….. In the course of his lecture, he also pointed out, “it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening
under the shadow of this great college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me.”

When Gandhi continued with his blunt speech, Annie Besant was forced to ask him to stop. After some interruptions Gandhi continued with his speech with the permission of the Chair. But he was forced to end his speech abruptly since most of the Maharajas had walked out of the platform in protest. (See Appendix -1 for the text of Gandhi’s speech).

India got independence from the foreign yoke way back in 1947. However, some of the points highlighted by Gandhi in his lecture are still relevant in India because independent India failed to reduce the wide gap between the ruling elites and the poor people of this country. Therefore, it is befitting at this juncture to talk about Gandhian ideology and its praxis in India and the whole world or the entire humanity. One of the objectives of the seminar is “to explore the various intellectual and cultural streams that have intermingled and overlapped over centuries in shaping the course of Indian History from ancient times to the modern period.” Therefore, it is necessary to look at Gandhian perspectives from the general framework of two factors, both individual and social forces which contributed to the shaping of Indian history.

**Debate on the Role of Individuals and Social forces in the shaping of Indian history**

There is a great debate among historians on the relative roles of individuals and social forces or what Marxists call ‘subjective and objective forces’ in shaping the course of human history. Whereas the Marxists have been underlining the primacy of objective forces in human history, there are other schools which lay greater emphasis on the role of individuals in the process. This question is as old as *Mahabharata* wherein the question has been raised whether the king or the prevailing social conditions have greater say in the evolution of history. *Mahabharata* tries to settle the issue by saying that both of
them have their own roles in the evolution of history. Even among modern historians, the view prevails that both individuals and societal forces have their own roles to play which are difficult to quantify.

**The Role of Saints and Sages in the shaping of Indian history**

When we look at the course of Indian history, we find that a number of eminent individuals, viz. saints and sages have played a pioneering and dominant role in the shaping of Indian history. The vast panorama of Indian history is a witness to the fact that Vedic and Upanishadic *rishis* were the first to lay the foundation of history and culture. They were followed by a number of eminent scholars and interpreters including the puranic *rishis*. All of them did foundational work for Indian culture. Subsequently starting with Adi Shankaracharya, a new group of scholars and thinkers like Ramanujacharya, Vallabhacharya Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and others had their own special contributions to the ever flowing stream of Indian culture. Once again they were followed by medieval saint poets like Kabir, Guru Nanak, Tulsidas, Dadu and others who courageously faced the challenges of their times. They made serious attempts to tune the contours of Indian society to the spirit of their age. The fact of the matter was that they were trying to find a way out from Hindu-Islamic encounter. In the process, they spoke vigorously against the caste system and pleaded for a kind of composite culture based on conciliation between Hindu and Islamic ethos.

**Religious and Political Awakening and the Birth of Indian National Congress**

Later India was faced with the problem of cultural domination as it went down under some of the western colonial powers like Portuguese, Dutch, French and British. This new encounter with Western culture and civilization posed new challenges before India. For a while, it seemed that India lay
prostrate before Western dominance. But 19th century saw a new cultural renaissance in India starting with Raja Ram Mohun Roy followed by Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayanand and others. A number of new cultural movements and organizations like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Mahajan Sabha and others came up trying to find a new reconciliation with the western culture, while retaining the basic Indian ethos. It was Swami Vivekanand, the founder of Ramkrishna Mission, who created a new national stir by participating in the World Conference of Religions in 1893. Subsequently, his work and speeches led to the emergence of not only cultural but also political awakening. It is to be noted that the cultural renaissance also led to the creation of a number of secular organizations which ultimately resulted in the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The Indian National Congress was founded by some of the top elites of the country like Pheroze Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahadev Govind Ranade, W.C. Bonnerjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and others.

Subsequently, the extremist group led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal also played a crucial role in the radicalization of the Congress after the partition of Bengal in 1905. Not only that, inspired by Aurobindo Ghosh of Alipore Conspiracy case, the armed revolutionary group posed a serious challenge to the British colonial rule in the first three decades of the early twentieth century. Among them Khudiram Bose and Bhagat Singh and subsequently Subhash Chandra Bose continue to be our national heroes till date.

**Emergence of Gandhi as the Leader of Indian National Movement**

While these groups of national leaders were making their own contribution to the national movement, M. K. Gandhi was struggling in South Africa. In the course of his struggles,
he had discovered the unique weapon of non-violent resistance viz. *Satyagraha* in 1906 which in the years that followed assumed a universal form. After coming to India in 1915, he was soon to take over the leadership of the national movement by 1920. In between, he had experimented with his newly discovered weapon of satyagraha in Champaran, Kheda, Ahmedabad and at the national Rowlatt Satyagraha. In subsequent years, through his three major national movements, viz. Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement, he not only led India to independence but virtually succeeded in making a new Indian nation despite the partition of the country. In the process, some of his followers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, C. Rajagopalchari, Rajendra Prasad and others have made their own contribution to the national cause.

On the basis of above analysis, it could be reasonably concluded that individuals positively interacting with the social forces have played crucial roles in the entire course of Indian history. In fact, one of the major reasons for the continued relevance of the Indian nation could easily be attributed to these creative individuals. They have always come up with their plans for its renewal giving it not only a new lease of life but a new form in keeping with the challenges of their times. That is one major reason for the survival and continuity of Indian culture and ethos whereas many other nations have fallen by the wayside failing to face upto new challenges. Gandhi has to be seen as one of the creative minds who largely contributed to the shaping of Indian nation and whose ideology that made the struggle for independence a unique one.

**The Praxis of Gandhian Perspectives in the context of Emerging Challenges**

In the above perspective, the praxis of Gandhian ideology could be viewed and assessed in view of the new or emerging challenges that we are facing in our country and
indeed the entire humankind. Here an attempt is made to delineate the challenges before the country and the humankind. Some of the challenges are common to our country and to the entire humanity. Therefore, it is difficult to treat them as watertight compartments. The attempt made here is basically to examine the question whether the Gandhian alternative really fits the bill to find a way out of the present impasse facing India and the world. To put it differently the question is does Gandhian ideology or Gandhian perspectives provide a framework for action to overcome the problems India and humanity is facing today.

**Major Challenges before India**

To start with, the major challenges before our own country could be analyzed and then proceed to ponder over the basic challenges before humanity. It has to be kept in mind that the matters discussed in this section are not arranged in the order of importance.

**Threat to Nationhood and Multicultural fabric of India**

While analyzing the major challenges before India, first we have to understand the nature of our nationhood and culture. From time immemorial, the Indian society has been multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic. Despite such a diversity, certain strands of a common cultural unity which it possessed over the course of many centuries have woven the people together and developed a sense of oneness among the people. This ideal of unity never rejected anything just because it was alien to its cultural ethos. On the contrary, it welcomed, accepted and internalized different cultures, traditions and faiths. It has been the birthplace or home of various cultural and religious traditions. That is the reason why Rabindranath Tagore in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech at Stockholm on 26 May, 1921 emphasized this ideal of unity inherent in our culture in the following words: "I do not think it is the spirit of India to reject anything,
reject any race, or any culture. The spirit of India has always proclaimed the ideal of unity. This ideal of unity never rejects anything, any race, or any culture. It comprehends all, and it has been the highest aim of our spiritual exertion to be able to penetrate all things with one soul, to comprehend all things as they are, and not to keep out anything in the whole universe—to comprehend all things with sympathy and love. This is the spirit of India... India is there to unite all human races.”

Tagore further stated: “Because of that reason in India we have not been given the unity of races. Our problem is the race problem which is the problem of all humanity. We have Dravidians, we have Mohammedans, we have Hindoos and all different sects and communities of men in India. Therefore, no superficial bond of political unity can appeal to us, can satisfy us, can ever be real to us. We must go deeper down. We must discover the profound unity, the spiritual unity between the different races. We must go deeper down to the spirit of man and find out the great bond of unity, which is to be found in all human races. And for that we are well equipped. We have inherited the immortal works of our ancestors, those great writers who proclaimed the religion of unity and sympathy, in say: He who sees all beings as himself, who realizes all beings as himself, knows truth.”

The experience of the country during India’s struggle for independence further strengthened this spirit of unity and oneness. The freedom movement literally welded the people of this country politically and emotionally into one single nation preserving its cultural ethos and diversity. However, India encountered various kinds of divisiveness that ultimately caused the partition of the country. The emotional and psychological integration of the nation was a task in itself for the leaders of pre-independent and post-independent India. This is evident from the words of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who happens to be the founder of this University, in his
Practical address in the Lahore session of Indian National Congress in 1909. He said "I have faith in the future of my country. I have no doubt that the policy of the preferential treatment of one community over another and all other obstacles which keep the great communities of India from acting together, will slowly but steadily disappear, and that under the guidance of the benign Providence feelings of patriotism and brotherliness will continue to increase among Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians and Parsees, until they shall flow like a smooth but mighty river welding the people of all communities into a great and united nation, which shall realize a glorious future for India and secure to it a place of honor among the nations of the world." He was very much aware of the pluralistic nature of this country. That is why he rightly pointed out that “India is not a country of the Hindus only. It is a country of the Muslims, the Christians and the Parsees too. The country can gain strength and develop itself only when the people of the different communities in India live in mutual goodwill and harmony.” This realization was very much there in the leaders of post-independent India. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote way back in 1951, “We have always to remember that India is a country with a variety of cultures, habits, customs and ways of living… It is very necessary, I think, for all of us to remember that this wonderful country of ours has infinite variety and there is absolutely no reason why we should try to regiment it after a single pattern. Indeed that is ultimately impossible, because climate and geography, as well as long cultural traditions, come in the way.”

At present, there are many forces operating in this country promoting narrow religious, caste and linguistic sentiments which stand against the very spirit of our nation. All sensitive people are deeply concerned about the growing religious disharmony and growth of regionalism. It is quite unfortunate that with an eye on vote banks, the political parties
are promoting these forces which may ultimately result in the disintegration of India as a nation. The fear and suspicion aroused among certain religious communities in India need immediate redressal otherwise it will go beyond our control. Thus the challenge before us is to preserve the secular, pluralistic and multicultural tradition by building bridges among different religious communities and bringing them into a harmonious whole with a sense of equality, friendship and freedom. The initiative and concerted efforts of building solidarity among various religious communities by Gandhi during the freedom struggle give food for thought and action in this direction.\(^6\)

The Religious and Cultural Divide: A Concern for Humanity

The religious divide is a matter of key concern not only for India but also for the whole world because it adversely affects the normal and tranquil life of people of many countries ultimately resulting in religious fundamentalism and concomitant terrorism. The western society has tried to tackle the menace of fundamentalism by propagating the concept of multiculturalism which attempts to provide space for every religious and cultural group ultimately leading to peaceful co-existence. But scholars like Samuel P. Huntington find little prospect of peaceful co-existence of different religious traditions as he looks at the problem basically from the point of view of Clash of Civilizations.\(^7\) He looks upon these developments as a serious threat to the very identity of America as a nation.\(^8\) Some of these problems are well documented and delineated in the various resolutions of the UN General Assembly and its organs. They could be summarized as follows:

- United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995)
- The proclamation of 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations
- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (4 November 2001)
- UNGA resolutions 59/23 of 2 December 2004 “Promotion of interreligious dialogue”, 60/10 of 6 January 2004 “Promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace”, 60/11 of 6 January 2004 “Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation” and 60/150 of 20 January 2006 “Combating defamation of religions”,

All these proclamations and resolutions clearly represent the concern of humanity to overcome the issue of religious and cultural divide.

Positive Multiculturalism of Gandhi as an Antidote

To address this issue one can bank upon Gandhi’s approach to religion and its implications for promoting multiculturalism. His vision of Sarva Dharma Samabhava, and his approach which has been described by scholars as positive or constructive multiculturalism provides a blueprint for thought and action. As the leader of the Indian masses, Gandhi in fact recognised, respected and accepted as his own the various religious, secular, and cultural identities of the people of this country. At the same time, his emphasis was on the diverse collective identities of Indians instead of their religious identities. This point has been emphasized by scholars of
eminence like Amartya Sen in the discourse on multiculturalism particularly referring to the stand taken by Gandhi in the Second Round Table Conference in which he refused to present himself as a representative of Hindu community and presented himself as a representative of all sections of the society from the poor to the elite. Such a vision of preserving cultural, ethnic and religious diversities into a broad framework of unity can only save India and humanity from the perils of religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

Issues in the System of Governance or Democratic Polity of India

At the time of independence of the country, India adopted the parliamentary system of governance following the British pattern. Even after many decades of independence, it failed to cater to the needs and aspirations of the country. In the course of time, it became more and more centralized, sometimes showing fascist tendencies making real democracy a mockery. The real power is concentrated in the hands of politicians who make democracy a lucrative business resulting in the rocketing of corruption to unimaginable levels. The electoral process has increasingly become an expensive affair day by day making it accessible only for people supported by political parties and powerful lobbies. In such a scenario, one is reminded of what Gandhi said about the so called representative form of Government including the British parliamentary system in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj*, which he wrote way back in 1909. His critique of parliamentary system turned out to be very true.

Participatory and Decentralized form of Democracy

To curb the menace of corrupt practices associated both with elections and governance and to make democratic polity real Gandhi advocated participatory form of democracy by introducing the concept of oceanic circle in opposition to pyramidal structure of society, placing individual at the centre
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Gandhi considered direct democracy as the best form of governance. He was so convinced that “true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.” He realised that “Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused.” The alternate decentralised polity proposed by Gandhi makes direct democracy at the village level a reality. He used terms like Panchyat Raj and Gram Swaraj to elucidate his idea.

Enunciating the concept of village swaraj Gandhi wrote in Harijan in 1942 “My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village’s first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth…. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community…. The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world.”

Above the village level, the government would be constituted by indirect elections from taluka to the central level. In such a decentralized polity, every kind of corrupt practice
associated both with elections and governance would be minimized if not totally eliminated. Taking into consideration the innumerable problems associated with the present system of governance in India the alternative placed before us by Gandhi is worth pursuing.

**Onslaught of Globalization**

It was in 1991 the Government of India under the pressure of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the giant Multi National Corporations (MNCs) in the guise of New Economic Policy (NEP) had opened up the economy to liberalization, privatization and globalization. It was then looked upon as a means to make the economy more dynamic, strong and progressive. However, the experiences from the field show that Indian economy became more vulnerable than ever. The indigenous market and economy were thrown open to harmful effects of cut throat competition and the popular Indian brands were systematically captured by multinational giants and marketed by them. Almost the whole economy is now corporatized and the government policies are largely in favour of corporate world and multinational companies.

The New Economic Policy resulted in the ever widening and never ending gap between the rich and the poor and inequality has assumed unfathomable levels. It created social unrest, economic and cultural insecurity among poor and marginalised sections of the Indian society. This is true in the case of many third world countries that opened up their economy in the name of globalization under duress and pressure from the western world. It literally resulted in the emergence of a new economic world order accepting political domination and cultural hegemony of the western world.
Swadeshi and Economic Ideas of Gandhi to check the forces of Globalization

The financial meltdown of 2008 and similar crises in the whole world has posed serious questions about the survival of this globalised economic order. This scenario has set in motion a search for viable alternatives to overcome the menace of globalization and that takes one to the door steps of Gandhi’s economic ideas especially concepts like swadeshi. In fact, Gandhi’s concept of swadeshi was not only a way out to check the forces of liberalized, globalised economic order but also a universal principle for the well-being of humanity which has its application in various facets of human life. The need of the hour is nothing but a concerted campaign to spread the message of Swadeshi and Gandhian economic ideas in every nook and corner of the country and to make the people understand the loot of multinationals through advertisement and false propaganda. Only such a mass movement on Swadeshi lines can really reverse the economic order on Gandhian lines.

Unbridled Exploitation of Resources and Growth of Violence or Naxalism

As a corollary to globalization, the unbridled exploitation of natural resources by the multinationals and even by indigenous big business corporate houses has been in operation with new economic policies of various governments which has ruled over this country. In India, historically and traditionally, the tribals were responsible for the balanced utilization of forest and other resources. In a sense, they treated themselves as custodians and real owners of forest and other resources. Still they play a dynamic role in maintaining the real equilibrium of our forests and ecosystem inherent in it. But in recent times, as a result of the policy of privatization, liberalization and globalization these traditional custodians or sons of the soil have been deprived of their access to these resources, the very source of their livelihood. They are merely
looked upon by the corporates and multinationals as a source of cheap labour resulting in gross injustice and exploitation of these communities. Thus these areas have become breeding grounds for violent Naxal movements. Naxals got the social support of people either by choice or by coercion. Earlier this issue was limited to certain pockets of the country but has now become an all India phenomenon affecting almost all States. The massive illiteracy coupled with unemployment in these areas provide a conducive atmosphere for the people to take up arms to solve their problems. The governments look upon this issue purely in terms of a law and order problem and the trail of discontent and resentment goes uninterrupted and assumes gigantic scale making it almost impossible to contain the menace. Now there is a growing realization among sensitive minds and even among certain sections of the government and its various agencies that better and more equitable system of management of natural resources would have to be evolved instead of treating the issue mainly as a law and order one. These points have been highlighted even by the committees set up by the Government of India and other agencies. But regretfully much progress has not been made in this desired direction.

**Trusteeship for Management of Resources and Wealth**

In the context of the alarming situation prevailing in the country, search for an alternative way of managing the resources is under public discourse among policy makers, various stakeholders of development, media, academics and similar other groups. There is some sort of consensus among them on the issue that the solution to these problems basically lies in an alternative way of managing the societal resources and wealth on trusteeship lines. Therefore, there is an urgent need to relook at Gandhi’s concept of trusteeship. There is an argument among the scholars that the basic purpose of Gandhi’s principle of trusteeship was to overcome the
impending threat of bloody and violent revolution as well as the laying the foundation for a truly non-violent society. From a succinct scrutiny of Gandhi’s concept of trusteeship, it is clear that he was in favour of abrogating the law of inheritance for societal good. He was so revolutionary that he even went to the extent of saying that the land of propertied class could be forcibly taken away by the State for the sake of averting the threat of a violent revolution and a country like India could not afford to pay any sort of compensation to them. He even visualized a State-regulated trusteeship in which an individual would not be free to hold or use his wealth or resources for selfish gratification ignoring the larger interests of the society.

At the same time there are critics who assert that idea of trusteeship of Gandhi was a clever way to essentially protect the capitalist system. This type of argument was prevalent even when Gandhi was alive. Responding to this criticism Gandhi made his position very clear without giving any scope for further debate: ‘I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism, almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced Socialist or even Communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of trusteeship is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it.’

Thus if we really want to overcome the present crisis we have to look afresh at Gandhi’s revolutionary concept of trusteeship. The restructuring on trusteeship lines is a path worth pursuing to overcome the problems associated with the management of wealth and resources.

**Challenges before Humankind**

Some of the challenges discussed in the context of India have similar implications for many countries of the world. However, for the sake of analysis, we are discussing the major challenges before humanity separately. It is true that the
challenges before humanity are a real threat to very existence of mankind and no country can be spared from it. It would be impossible to analyse all the problems confronted by humanity because they are myriad and it is beyond the scope of this presentation. What we discuss here is only illustrative and highlights some areas which need immediate attention in the process of building up of a peaceful society.

**Growing Violence and the Threat of Weapons Systems**

When we look at the present scenario prevailing in the different parts of the globe, it will not be an exaggeration, if we say that the world is in a state of complete turmoil and majority of the countries in the world are affected by large scale violence in their homeland or in the neighboring countries. There is an impending threat of the use of nuclear weapons which may ultimately result in the total annihilation of humanity or possibility of a third world war which nobody wants to happen. The efforts of the world powers under the leadership of USA to check the forces of terrorism after September 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 in the United States have proved completely ineffective to tame the menace of terrorism around the globe. The fifth edition of the *Global Terrorism Index* published in 2017, provides a comprehensive summary of global trends in terrorism covering the last 17 years from the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2016. It shows the increasing spread of terrorism all over the globe. There were 77 countries that experienced deaths from terrorism, which is an increase from 65 the year before. The most disturbing finding is that two thirds of all countries experienced a terrorist attack in 2016. Thus it is clear that the war on terrorism resulted in the mushrooming of terrorist forces in every nook and corner of the world. We can see supporters and sympathizers for these groups in almost every country from the first world to the third world. Thus the threat of ISIS and similar terrorist groups is not limited to areas of their operation.
like Iraq, Syria and so on. It has been proved beyond doubt that the physical annihilation of these forces is almost impossible and alternative ways have to be identified to solve these issues.

**Transformation through a Mental Process and need for the Path of Non-violence**

The idea of transformation of persons or an ideology through a mental process was very much in the minds of the people for a long time. It was very much alive in the creative minds of Buddha and Gandhi. The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declared long back that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."\(^2\)\(^3\) The path of peace and non-violence successfully placed before the world by Gandhi through his lifelong experimentation is a model to emulate. Now there is a worldwide recognition of Gandhi’s alternative path and it is looked upon as an effective way to address the issues of violence, war and even terrorism. It was not a mere coincidence that the United Nations in its 61st General Assembly held on June 15, 2007 declared October 2, birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, as International Non-violence Day. This was basically to acknowledge the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in spreading the message of peace and nonviolence. It is also evident from the wide and diverse co-sponsorship of the Resolution introduced by India in the United Nations.\(^2\)\(^4\) Thus Gandhi’s message of peace stands central in transforming the world from the culture of violence to culture of peace.\(^2\)\(^5\) Johan Galtung, the noted Norwegian peace researcher, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly Plenary at a Round Table Conference on the occasion of the commencement of International Day of Non-violence on October 2, 2007 outlined five approaches of Gandhi which would guide the struggles against imperialism. They are the following: 1. Never fear dialogue. 2. Never fear conflict: More opportunity than danger. 3. Know history or you are doomed to
repeat it (Burke) 4. Image the future or you will never get there 5. While fighting occupation clean up your own house. The non-violent struggles led by Gandhi both in South Africa and India have been a source of inspiration for the non-violent activists all over the world and it was duly acknowledged by them including Nobel laureates. The quest of humanity for non-violence and peace has been evident from the landmark Treaty signed by more than 50 countries on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in New York on the eve of annual opening of the United Nations General Assembly on 20th September 2017. It is to be noted that it was signed despite the non-cooperation from countries, viz. U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea which posses nuclear weapons. It is significant that even a nation that possess nuclear weapons, can join the treaty, so long as it agrees to remove them from operational status immediately and destroy them in accordance with a legally binding, time-bound plan. In addition, it is also required to eliminate its entire nuclear weapon programme, which includes nuclear materials, delivery systems and related facilities. It visualizes that the disputes between two or more nations which come under the treaty must be resolved through dialogue, negotiation and other peaceful means.

**Threats to the Environment and Ecosystem and pattern of Development**

Global warming, melting of ice at Polar Regions, climate change and gradual disappearance of glaciers and similar catastrophic developments present the gravest challenges before the world today. All these problems are mainly due to the pattern of development followed by most of the developed or developing countries of the world. The prospects of reduction in emission of greenhouse gases and improvement of ecosystem look bleak mainly due to the unbridled growth strategy of the present model of development.
The ever growing concern over environmental issues has been echoing in the various earth summits and conferences on environment and sustainable development from time to time. The United Nations concern for protection of environment and sustainable development is evident from the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,28 the World Summit on Sustainable Development,29 the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,30 the Beijing Platform for Action31 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.32

Finally to chalk out Sustainable Development Goals, on the occasion of 70th anniversary of the United Nations, a summit of world leaders was held at New York in September 2015. It adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals33 (SDGs) endorsed by 193 Member States of the UN. The UN Secretary General’s remarks at the Summit for the adoption of development agenda clearly indicated the new global goals of UN and the paradigm shift in the approach to peace and development. Ban ki-moon said “We have reached a defining moment in human history. The people of the world have asked us to shine a light on a future of promise and opportunity. Member States have responded with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ... It is a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world. It is an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms. An agenda for the planet, our common home. An agenda for shared prosperity, peace and partnership. It conveys the urgency of climate action. It is rooted in gender equality and respect for the rights of all. Above all, it pledges to leave no one behind.”34 The resolution named "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda" adopted on September 25, 2015 placed before all countries of the world a target to achieve these goals over a period of 15 years. It aims to end poverty and hunger, protect the ecosystem and ensure peace and prosperity for the future generations. It is
based on the assumption that the existing pattern of
development could be reoriented towards achieving the desired
goals. It aims at reducing the existing inequalities within and
among the countries and not to eliminate it totally or create a
system in which chances of future inequality does not arise at
all.

The decentralized economic order visualized by Gandhi
was a farsighted one and it would definitely go beyond the
goals of the present Sustainable Development goals. Gandhian
economic ideas provide a model of sustainable economic order
which takes care of the issues associated with environment and
eco-system. It provides scope for the mass employment or full
employment with optimal utilization of human resources, rules
out any scope for inequality and injustice, builds up a
community life in which human beings could fulfill the basic
necessities and enjoy a degree of happiness. In such a scenario
one could pursue high moral and spiritual values and goals of
life. The goal of economics is not merely to achieve economic
growth but to achieve a higher level of human development or
happiness in life.

Gandhi: Hope for the Survival of Humanity

The search for a new equilibrium between man and
nature and a sustainable model of development keeping the
relationship between man and nature on an even keel takes one
to the holistic vision and the new art of living Gandhi
propagated and practiced in his life time.\textsuperscript{35} It is true that Gandhi
was not an environmentalist or a development economist. But it
is interesting to note that Arne Naess, who coined the term
‘deep ecology’\textsuperscript{36} has acknowledged the indebtedness to Gandhi
in the formulation n of this term.\textsuperscript{37} The Earth Charter signed in
2000 completely adheres to Gandhi’s vision of environment
and sustainability.\textsuperscript{38}
Many environmentalists and persons working on sustainable development acknowledge their debt to Gandhi in understanding the problem from a holistic perspective and the interconnected nature of all forms of life on earth. His approach was not a piece meal one. It was an integrated one covering all facets of human life. He looks upon life as an indivisible whole. The deep rooted eco-consciousness in his philosophy of life reflected in Gandhi’s speeches and writings make him a prophet for the survival of humanity. The most significant aspect of his ideas is that he put them into practice.

Conclusion

From the above analysis it is clear that Gandhian perspectives go a long way in addressing many of the issues which we are facing in our country and in different parts of the globe. It provides a framework for thought and action in desired directions. But the application of Gandhian ideas calls for a restructuring of the existing socio-economic and political order based on violence and injustice. Just tinkering with the existing system will be nothing but paying lip service to Gandhi and his ideals and allowing the existing system to continue as it is. What is needed is a total transformation of the existing system towards a more humane and sustainable one. That only can save the humanity from the current peril.

This university has a unique place in the history of this country and it is quite appropriate that in this Seminar we are discussing about the praxis of Gandhian perspectives in the current world. The discussion on the praxis of Gandhian ideology will be a mere academic exercise if not translated into action. It is not an easy task but it is not an impossible one. For that all of us should work together and already a beginning has been made by this university using this seminar as a forum to deliberate and place before the country an alternative which is sustainable and enduring.
Notes and References


2. Rabindranath Tagore: The Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, at Stockholm on 26 May, 1921. He was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. However, he was unable to travel to Stockholm due to the impending war and distance. Every laureate is supposed to deliver a lecture but, in Tagore’s case, it was delivered eight years later. See The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. 5. Essays, (New Delhi : Atlantic, 2007)p.8.


4. http://www.bhu.ac.in/


8. Ibid. See also Samuel P. Huntington, Who are we? The Challenge to America’s National Identity (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001).

9. The “rapprochement of cultures” implies that international security and social inclusion cannot be attained sustainably without a commitment to such principles as human dignity, conviviality and solidarity which are the corner stones of human coexistence, in all faiths and secular ideologies.

Gandhi in his address to the Federal Structure Committee meeting of the said Conference held on September 15, 1931, said, “I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress….. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain: Allan Octavius Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsis, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognize as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians—I might say all the religions, sects, creeds—represented upon it more or less fully ….Above all, the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb, semi starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages….” This address was nothing but a reassertion of Gandhi’s multicultural approach to Indian politics and society. Elaborating on the same theme at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference on December 1, 1931, he went a step further by stating that “I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85per cent of the population of India, that is to say, the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further; that the Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasize that claim. All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organization; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal.”

13. Gandhi wrote “The Mother of Parliament is like a sterile woman and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. The parliament has not yet, of its own accord, done a single good thing. Hence I have compared it to a sterile woman. The natural condition of the Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time.” He further stated “Parliament is without a real master. Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady but is buffeted about like a prostitute. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party.” M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 2004), pp. 27-29. However in late thirties he conceded that he would not have used these harsh words like prostitute and sterile women out of his respect for the women folk, if he was writing *Hind Swaraj* afresh.

14. “In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.” See M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* edited by Anthony J.Parel, (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 189.


20. *Harijan*, 16-12-1939.

21. The Global Terrorism Index is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) and is based on data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Data for the GTD is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); a Department of Homeland Security Centre of Excellence led by the University of Maryland. The GTD is considered to be the most comprehensive global dataset on terrorist activity and has now codified over 170,000 terrorist incidents. The copy of the Global Terrorism Index-2017 is available on the website http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf


24. It was cosponsored by 142 countries.


Johan Galtung, Gandhi and the struggle against imperialism
Five points at the UN on October 2, 2007


28. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. It is also known as Earth summit. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development outlined the fundamental principles on which nations can base their future decisions and policies, considering the environmental implications of socio-economic development. Agenda 21 was an outcome of the Earth Summit. This historic document was a roadmap towards attaining sustainability by integrating local, national, and global action.

http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/RIO_E.PDF

29. The World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 ten years after the first earth summit with the goal of improving lives as well as preserving earth's resources and to reaffirm the commitment towards sustainable development. It is also known as Rio +10. The Summit aimed at “improving people’s lives and conserving the natural resources in a world that is growing in population, with ever-increasing demands for food, water, shelter, sanitation, energy, health services and economic security”

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/wssd

30. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt from 5-13 September 1994 changed the world’s approach to population and development issues. It provided a new vision about the relationships between population, development and individual well-being.

31. The Beijing Platform for Action was the result of Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. It placed the agenda for women’s empowerment and emphasised the need for a transformed partnership based on equality between women and men as a pre-condition for people centered sustainable development.

32. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development popularly known as Rio+20 was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. It renewed the commitment of UN to ensure an “economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations” https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20

33. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations are the following:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development


36. Deep ecology is a philosophy of nature which demands deepening of our love for natural world and its empowerment and protection along with identification of human being with nature. Arne Naess points out that-'Our ecological ideas are not enough to protect the earth, we need ecological identity, ecological self’.


Appendix-1

Speech of M.K.Gandhi at Banaras Hindu University, 1916

I wish to tender my humble apology for the long delay that took place before I was able to reach this place. And you will readily accept the apology when I tell you that I am not responsible for the delay nor is any human agency responsible for it. The fact is that I am like animal on show, and my keepers in their over kindness always manage to neglect a necessary chapter in this life, and, that is, pure accident. In this case, they did not provide for the series of accidents that happened to us-to me, keepers, and my carriers. Hence this delay.

Friends, under the influence of the matchless eloquence of Mrs. Besant who has just sat down, pray, do not believe that our University has become a finished product, and that all the young men who are to come to the University, that has yet to rise and come into existence, have also come and returned from it finished citizens of a great empire. Do not go away with any such impression, and if you, the student world to which my remarks are supposed to be addressed this evening, consider for one moment that the spiritual life, for which this country is noted and for which this country has no rival, can be transmitted through the lip, pray, believe me, you are wrong. You will never be able merely through the lip, to give the message that India, I hope, will one day deliver to the world. I myself have been fed up with speeches and lectures. I except the lectures that have been delivered here during the last two days from this category, because they are necessary. But I do venture to suggest to you that we have now reached almost the end of our resources in speech-making; it is not enough that our ears are feasted, that our eyes are feasted, but it is necessary that our hearts have got to be touched and that our hands and feet have got to be moved.
We have been told during the last two days how necessary it is, if we are to retain our hold upon the simplicity of Indian character, that our hands and feet should move in unison with our hearts. But this is only by way of preface. I wanted to say it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me. I know that if I was appointed an examiner, to examine all those who have been attending during these two days this series of lectures, most of those who might be examined upon these lectures would fail. And why? Because they have not been touched.

I was present at the sessions of the great Congress in the month of December. There was a much vaster audience, and will you believe me when I tell you that the only speeches that touched the huge audience in Bombay were the speeches that were delivered in Hindustani? In Bombay, mind you, not in Banaras where everybody speaks Hindi. But between the vernaculars of the Bombay Presidency on the one hand and Hindi on the other, no such great dividing line exists as there does between English and the sister language of India; and the Congress audience was better able to follow the speakers in Hindi. I am hoping that this University will see to it that the youths who come to it will receive their instruction through the medium of their vernaculars. Our languages the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India? Why this handicap on the nation? Just consider for one moment what an equal race our lads have to run with every English lad.

I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English
language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the numbers of students turned out by our schools and colleges, and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is that we have no initiative. How can we have any, if we are to devote the precious years of our life to the mastery of a foreign tongue? We fail in this attempt also. Was it possible for any speaker yesterday and today to impress his audience as was possible for Mr. Higginbotham? It was not the fault of the previous speakers that they could not engage the audience. They had more than substance enough for us in their addresses. But their addresses could not go home to us. I have heard it said that after all it is English educated India which is leading and which is doing all the things for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving during the past fifty years education through our vernaculars, what should we have today? We should have today a free India, we should have our educated men, not as if they were foreigners in their own land but speaking to the heart of the nation; they would be working amongst the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during these fifty years would be a heritage for the nation. Today even our wives are not the sharers in our best thought. Look at Professor Bose and Professor Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common property of the masses?

Let us now turn to another subject.

The Congress has passed a resolution about self-government, and I have no doubt that the All-India Congress Committee and the Muslim League will do their duty and come forward with some tangible suggestions. But I, for one, must frankly confess that I am not so much interested in what they
will be able to produce as I am interested in anything that the student world is going to produce or the masses are going to produce. No paper contribution will ever give us self-government. No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government. It is only our conduct that will fit for us it. And how are we trying to govern ourselves?

I want to think audibly this evening. I do not want to make a speech and if you find me this evening speaking without reserve, pray, consider that you are only sharing the thoughts of a man who allows himself to think audibly, and if you think that I seem to transgress the limits that courtesy imposes upon me, pardon me for the liberty I may be taking. I visited the Vishwanath temple last evening, and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me. If a stranger dropped from above on to this great temple, and he had to consider what we as Hindus were, would he not be justified in condemning us? Is not this great temple a reflection of our own character? I speak feelingly, as a Hindu. Is it right that the lanes of our sacred temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be? Shall our temples be abodes of holiness, cleanliness and peace as soon as the English have retired from India, either of their own pleasure or by compulsion, bag and baggage?

I entirely agree with the President of the Congress that before we think of self-government, we shall have to do the necessary plodding. In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. But we are a people unused to city life. But if we want city life, we cannot reproduce the easy-going hamlet life. It is not comforting to think that people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed
building spitting upon them. I do a great deal of railway traveling. I observe the difficulty of third-class passengers. But the railway administration is by no means to blame for all their hard lot. We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective of the thoughts that it is often used as sleeping space. We do not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment. The so-called better class passengers over we their less fortunate brethren. Among them I have seen the student world also; sometimes they behave no better. They can speak English and they have worn Norfolk jackets and, therefore, claim the right to force their way in and command seating accommodation.

I have turned the searchlight all over, and as you have given me the privilege of speaking to you, I am laying my heart bare. Surely we must set these things right in our progress towards self-government. I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharaja who presided yesterday over our deliberations spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy? Certain it a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery, which made a splendid feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noble men the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to these noble men, “There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India.” I am sure it is not the desire of the King-Emperor or Lord Hardinge that in order to show the truest loyalty to our King-Emperor, it is necessary for us to ransack our jewellery boxes and to appear bedecked from top to toe. I would undertake, at the peril of my life, to bring to you a message from King George himself that he excepts nothing of the kind.
Sir, whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once, and say, “Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists.” Over seventy-five per cent of the population are agriculturists and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitous language, that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us, if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.

Now, last but not the least, it is my bounden duty to refer to what agitated our minds during these two or three days. All of us have had many anxious moments while the Viceroy was going through the streets of Banaras. There were detectives stationed in many places. We were horrified. We asked ourselves, “Why this distrust?” Is it not better that even Lord Hardinge should die than live a living death? But a representative of a mighty sovereign may not. He might find it necessary to impose these detectives on us? We may foam, we may fret, we may resent, but let us not forget that India of today in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I myself am an anarchist, but of another type. But there is a class of anarchists amongst us, and if I was able to reach this class, I would say to them that their anarchism has no room in India, if India is to conqueror. It is a sign of fear. If we trust and fear God, we shall have to fear no one, not the Maharajas, not the Viceroy, not the detectives, not even King George.

I honour the anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him—is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death? I deny it. There
is no warrant for such methods in any scriptures. If I found it necessary for the salvation of India that the English should retire, that they should be driven out, I would not hesitate to declare that they would have to go, and I hope I would be prepared to die in defence of that belief. That would, in my opinion, be an honourable death. The bomb-thrower creates secret plots, is afraid to come out into the open, and when caught pays the penalty of misdirected zeal.

I have been told, “Had we not done this, had some people not thrown bombs, we should never have gained what we have got with reference to the partition movement.” (Mrs. Besant : ‘Please stop it.’) This was what I said in Bengal when Mr. Lyon presided at the meeting. I think what I am saying is necessary. If I am told to stop I shall obey. (Turning to the Chairman) I await your orders. If you consider that by my speaking as I am, I am not serving the country and the empire I shall certainly stop. (Cries of ‘Go on.’) (The Chairman : ‘Please, explain your object.’) I am simply. . . (another interruption). My friends, please do not resent this interruption. If Mrs. Besant this evening suggests that I should stop, she does so because she loves India so well, and she considers that I am erring in thinking audibly before you young men. But even so, I simply say this, that I want to purge India of this atmosphere of suspicion on either side, if we are to reach our goal; we should have an empire which is to be based upon mutual love and mutual trust. Is it not better that we talk under the shadow of this college than that we should be talking irresponsibly in our homes? I consider that it is much better that we talk these things openly. I have done so with excellent results before now. I know that there is nothing that the students do not know. I am, therefore, turning the searchlight towards ourselves. I hold the name of my country so dear to me that I exchange these thoughts with you, and submit to you that there is no room for anarchism in India. Let us frankly and openly say whatever we
want to say our rulers, and face the consequences if what we have to say does not please them. But let us not abuse.

I was talking the other day to a member of the much-abused Civil Service. I have not very much in common with the members of that Service, but I could not help admiring the manner in which he was speaking to me. He said: “Mr. Gandhi, do you for one moment suppose that all we, Civil Servants, are a bad lot, that we want to oppress the people whom we have come to govern?” “No,” I said. “Then if you get an opportunity put in a word for the much-abused Civil Service.” And I am here to put in that word. Yes, many members of the Indian Civil Service are most decidedly overbearing; they are tyrannical, at times thoughtless. Many other adjectives may be used. I grant all these things and I grant also that after having lived in India for a certain number of years some of them become somewhat degraded. But what does that signify? They were gentlemen before they came here, and if they have lost some of the moral fibre, it is a reflection upon ourselves.

Just think out for yourselves, if a man who was good yesterday has become bad after having come in contact with me, is he responsible that he has deteriorated or am I? The atmosphere of sycophancy and falsity that surrounds them on their coming to India demoralizes them, as it would many of us. It is well to take the blame sometimes. If we are to receive self-government, we shall have to take it. We shall never be granted self-government. Look at the history of the British Empire and the British nation; freedom loving as it is, it will not be a party to give freedom to a people who will not take it themselves. Learn your lesson if you wish to from the Boer War. Those who were enemies of that empire only a few years ago have now become friends.

(At this point there was an interruption and a movement on the platform to leave. The speech, therefore, ended here abruptly.)