



# **RKDF UNIVERSITY, BHOPAL**

## **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)**

### **Political Science**

#### **Third Semester**

Course	Category	Subject	Subject Code
<b>B.A.</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Indian Political Thinkers</b>	<b>BA-PS-301</b>
<b>Total Credit: 6</b>		<b>Max.Marks:100 (Internal:40+External:60)</b>	

#### **Course Outcomes (CO):**

**After completing this course student will be able to:**

CO1:-Student will be able to thought of manu and kautillya.

CO2:-Student will be able to explain social and political ideas of Swami Vivekanand Lokmany BalGangadhar Tilak and Shri Arbindo Ghosh.

CO3:- They will be able to explain the key ideas of Mahatma Gandhi Pt.Jawaharlal Nehru V.D. Sawarkar and Dr.Bheem Rao Ambedkar.

CO4:- Student will be able to evaluate the ideas of Ram Manohar Lohiya,Jai Prakash Narayan and Pt.Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

Units	Topic	Duration (In Hours)	Marks
I	<p><b>Manu and Kautilya</b></p> <p><b>I. Manu</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The origin and from of the state.</li> <li>* Saptang philosophy.</li> <li>* Mandala principles and six fold policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Kautilya</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The origin and nature of the State.</li> <li>• The saptanga Doctrine.</li> <li>• The Council of Ministers.</li> <li>• The Mandal Doctrine and the Six fold policy.</li> </ul>	18	20
II	<p><b>Swami Vivekanand ,Arbindo Ghosh and Tilak</b></p> <p><b>I.</b> Swami vivekanand :Views on Nationalism  <b>II.</b> Arbindo Ghosh :Views on Indian Nationalism.  <b>III.</b> Tilak :Social reform,nationalism,Swaraj concept</p>	18	20
III	<p><b>Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar &amp; Sawarkar</b></p> <p><b>I.</b> Gandhi: State truth Non Violence, Swadeshi and Swaraj.  <b>II.</b> Jawaharlal Nehru: Views on Democratic Socialism andinternationalism.  <b>III.</b> Dr.B.R.Ambedkar : Social jutice,role in constitution Framing.  <b>IV.</b> Sawarkar : difrence between Hindutwa ans Hinduism .</p>	18	20
IV	<p><b>Ram Manohar Lohiya and Jai Prakash Narayan &amp;Deen DyalUpadhyay</b></p> <p><b>I.</b> Ram Manohar lohiya : social and political ideas , cocept ofChaukhammbha state,Socialist thought.  <b>II.</b> Jai Prakash Narayan : Sarvodaya,Total revolution and Partysystem.  <b>III.</b> Deen Dayal Upadhyay : integral humanism.</p>	18	20

V	<b>Ontribution of Women Thinkers</b> <b>a. pandita Ramabai</b> <b>b. Savitri Bai Phule</b>	18	20
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# **Self-Study Material (OLD)**

## **Political Thoughts of Manu**

Manu was one of the most original thinkers of Indian political thought. Most of the commentators on ancient Indian thought are of the view that Manu belongs to fourth century B.C. Manusmriti is a storehouse of information on the social, judicial and political life of that period. Manusmriti or Manava dharmasastra is the oldest and well-known smriti. The Manusmriti is the most authoritative work on Hindu Law and presents the normal form of Hindu society and civilisation. It contains social obligations and duties of various castes of individuals in different stages of life. Manusmriti referred to the sacred character of the laws in the four castes and four orders to the ancient customs and duties of the king. Manu made it clear that it was trayi (Three Vedas) that kept the mind steady and firm.

## **Manu on the origin of state**

The theoretical concept of the state, as we now understand it, was non-existent in the past. According to many scholars, people initially lived in a state of nature prior to the origin of an organized state. The state of nature was like a state of war as there was no harmony, peace and goodwill. This period was called the darkest period of human history, a situation that is more or less equal to Hobbesian Leviathan. It is stated in Manusmriti in such a situation of utter lawlessness, people approached Lord Brahma, the creator, to relieve them from torturous life. Thus, the creator gave them the king to maintain law and order and punish the wicked. Thus, according to Manu, and state is not an institution that evolved gradually, but was a sudden creation. In modern times we find that state is sanctioned by the judgement of society, while in ancient times, it was permitted by the judgement of the ruler himself. In the times of Manu and Kautilya the theory of Danda really converted the state into crystallised force. They opined that if the danda was properly inflicted after consideration it made all people happy. Although; we find that the modern states like the ancient states also maintain huge army, have a large array of executive officials and exercise vast powers like ancient state. Manu opined that apart from the divine origin of the state, the need for the state was not out of economic needs but out of evil intentions and uncontrollable habits of mankind.

## **Manu on Kingship**

Manu believed that God created the king to save the people of a region. The King held a divine

position and the people expressed their obedience to him because of his authority. Manu stated that the king appeared in human form and possessed the qualities of God.

### **Qualities of a King**

According to Manu the king is the next best to God and he must have complete control over himself and his senses. He is a divine creation and his purpose is to promote social harmony, peace and welfare. King possesses certain qualities like Indra (God of War), Vaayu (God of Wind), Yama (God of Death), Ravi (God of Sun), Agni (God of Fire), Chandra or Moon, and Wealth. The king was described as an embodiment of eight guardians on earth. A king was expected to control his anger, satisfy the people and govern the state with their consent rather than the use of force. The king must exhibit those qualities that naturally make citizens obey him, and he must function through pleasing manners and intelligence. Manusmriti strongly advocated for a political authority. Manu suggested that though the king derived his authority from God, in practice he should be guided by the brahmanas. The rationale behind it was the assumption that brahmanas possess knowledge and knowledge should rule. Manu prescribed the structure of state in terms of villages, districts and provinces which resembles our present day structure of administration.

### **Council of Ministers**

Manu viewed that the council of ministers were a very important part of a king. King without the council of ministers is like driving a chariot without wheels. The council of ministers were like the arms, eyes, ears of the king. The ideal number of council of ministers should be not more than seven to eight who collectively and individually assist and advise the king to discharge his daily duties. Manu opined that the council of ministers must possess certain essential qualities. They must possess high learning skills, must be men from high caste by birth, good warriors with a sharp understanding of various techniques of warfare and proper comprehension of state system and the like. A minister is said to be an honest mediator between the king and his subjects. The selection of ministers must be through hereditary principle, but the skills and qualities must be put in test before appointment. Manu opined that ministers were generally appointed by the king with advice from his friends and relatives. However, no shudra was allowed to become ministers.

### **Manu on Varna System**

Manu viewed that caste system formed an essential part in ancient Hindu society. Varna system would preserve the social harmony of the society. He viewed that the king came into existence to protect the Varna system and any failure on the part of the ruler would make him unworthy ruler. Manu opined that there is a fourfold categorization of social organization derived from the Vedic 3 hymns. They are Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vyshyas and Shudras. It is widely viewed that these four Varnas represented four different parts of the body of the God. The Brahmanas rise from the head, the Kshatriyas from the arms, the Vyshyas from the

thighs and the Shudras from the feet. The Brahmanas occupy the highest place and they are conceived as the incarnation of the law. The superior place given to the Brahman in the social hierarchy is due to the purity and knowledge. The Kshatriyas were expected to protect the state by their valour, offer sacrifices as well as gifts and protect the people. Manu viewed that a society would be more secure if there is a harmonious relation between the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas. The Vyshyas were involved in trade and business whereas Shudras were only confined to serve the upper three castes. Manu said that the shudras must be barred from all social and sacred learning. The fourfold classification was called the Chaturvarna theory.

### **Saptanga Theory Of Kautilya: Overview**

The term "Saptanga" denotes seven limbs, parts, or components. They work as a unit to form the state, which is described as being "like a chariot made up of seven pieces that are all fitted and in service of one another." In certain ways, the Ancient Greek Political Philosophy elaborates on the Saptanga theory of Kautilya. Kautilya listed and explained seven Angas, Prakritis, or elements to describe "the nature of the State" as a whole.

The Arthashastra is the first Indian work to present the idea that the state is made up of seven basic components. In the Saptanga theory of Kautilya, a system of seven interconnected and interlacing constituent limbs or elements (Angas or Prakriti) are used to explain the state.

With a few adjustments, this Saptanga theory of Kautilya was accepted and can be seen in many later writings, such as the Mahabharata, Puranas, and the Dharmashastras.

The seven components of a state are Svami (the king), Amatya (ministers), Janapada (the territory), Durga (a fortified capital), Kosha (the treasury), Danda (justice or force), and Mitra (ally).

One could evaluate the individual strengths or weaknesses of each member by breaking the state down into its seven fundamental components. This is the approach used in the Saptanga theory of Kautilya. Each of the seven basic components is described by a set of ideal characteristics.

### **Svami**

The Saptanga theory of Kautilya views monarchy as the norm, and all of its teachings are directed at the king. Kautilya believed that the king's fate was intimately correlated with the

population of his domain. The kingdom's subjects would be enthusiastic if the monarch was. On the other hand, if he was lethargic, his subjects would also be indolent and deplete the kingdom's resources. Consequently, Kautilya promoted the idea of a king who was always vigilant, industrious, and wise.

In Ashoka's inscriptions, the king is similar to that described in the Saptanga theory of Kautilya. According to his Minor Rock Edicts, Ashoka chose the title of the raja of Magadha, which is far more modest than the very magnificent titles of later periods like maharaja or maharajadhiraja.

Devanamapiya, or the "beloved of the gods," is the favorite epithet in the inscriptions, implying attempts to claim a divine link. By declaring in the Rock Edicts I and II that "All men are my children," Ashoka also established the framework for a new sort of "paternalistic kingship." He continued to elaborate on his kingly aspirations by promising to ensure the welfare of all .empts

### **Amatya**

The name "Amatya" is used as a collective noun for all senior officials, advisors, and departmental executive heads. They were significant parts of the Saptanga theory of Kautilya. Two different types of consultative bodies are mentioned in the Arthashastra. The mantra-parishad, a small consultation group of Mantrins (ministers), was the first. The other was a larger group known as the Mantri-Parishad, which was composed of all of the department's executive leaders.

Purohita was a crucial member of the Saptanga theory of Kautilya. According to the Saptanga theory of Kautilya, a Purohita should come from a well-known family and have received a complete education in the Vedas, the understanding of divine signs and omens, and the study of politics. By examining the Kautilya-provided salary data, we may also determine the purohit's significance.

The chief minister, the purohit, and the military leader received 48,000 panas each, while the finance minister and the chief collector received 24,000 panas, according to Kautilya. The senior officials were reportedly compensated exceptionally well. Even if his calculations are about correct, it is safe to infer that the higher-ranking members of the administration were

paid exceptionally well, and their wages would have made up a sizable portion of the overall amount of money gathered.

### **Janpada**

This referred to the realm of the empire, a recognized region. The Saptanga theory of Kautilya illustrates the many investments, rewards, and punitive measures employed by the state to enhance its tax income based on agricultural production, which was derived from the Janapada, which was a significant source of money for the king. The Saptanga theory of Kautilya also pays attention to trade routes and port cities and shows how much the king's perception of his own larger domain was influenced by economic considerations.

### **Durga**

Fortified cities are essential to the realm's defense since they guard crucial border areas, act as safe havens in times of invasion, and house the state's main administrative and economic hubs. In the Saptanga theory of Kautilya, an ideal state features a variety of fortifications, each serving a distinct geographic function.

The capital city, which serves as the kingdom's administrative, economic, and military center, is the biggest of the fortifications. According to Kautilya, the fort should be built with mud ramparts and parapets made of brick and stone, and it should be well-stocked with provisions for a siege, including food and other requirements. It's interesting to note how grandiose Pataliputra, the capital of the Magadhan empire, is described in Greek sources.

The Saptanga theory of Kautilya also proposed placing soldiers at strategic points along the fort's approaches. He speaks of a permanent army composed of the infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants as its four main divisions. We can infer from Ashoka's edicts that following the Kalinga war, he tried to practice nonviolence and dedicated himself to dharma-Vijaya rather than fighting. Yet, it is noteworthy that he left the army intact.

### **Danda**

Danda can be taken to mean either force or justice. Dharmasthas (judges) and Pradeshtis are mentioned in the Saptanga theory of Kautilya, which describes the legal system in depth. Fines, amputation of limbs, and even the death penalty were used as sanctions for offenses



and crimes. According to Kautilya, the kind of penalty imposed depended not only on the crime's nature and seriousness but also on the offender's varna. The Saptanga theory of Kautilya reserved lenient penalties for higher varnas for the same offense. For instance, a Kshatriya was required to pay the maximum fine if he had intercourse with a Brahmin woman. A vaishya's entire estate could be seized for the same offense. The worst penalty was set aside for Shudras.

Ashoka's inscriptions state that the municipal Mahamatas was in charge of administering justice.

The edicts demand of the Mahamatas that they be impartial and make sure that no one is imprisoned or punished without solid proof. Ashoka claimed that he had Samata established in judicial procedure in Pillar Edict IV. Other interpretations state that this meant he had established a common law system and eliminated the varna disparities in punishments.

### **Mitra**

This term alludes to political allies or "friends of the realm." The vijigishu, or would-be conqueror, is at the center of Kautilya's polity. The various players surrounding the vijigishu, including the ari (enemy), madhyama (the middle monarch), and udasina, are the focus of the interstate strategy (the indifferent or neutral king). According to the situation, the king might choose from a peace treaty (sandhi) if the enemy was stronger to a vighraha (hostility) if the opponent was weaker, according to a list of policies and strategies provided by Kautilya. Military expeditions and collaborating with the enemy's enemy to launch joint attacks were further alternatives.

To increase trade with the northwestern Hellenistic kingdoms, Ashoka dispatched emissaries there. The Mauryan alliance with the Seleucids, which began with the pact negotiated under Chandragupta, was the most notable of these. There were more diplomatic interactions with succeeding rulers. Several contemporary people with whom Ashoka exchanged missions are also mentioned. His inscriptions refer to the kingdoms of the kings Tulamaya and Alikyashudala as well as the Greek king Amtiyoga. History has assigned these names to Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus, in that order. To propagate the Dhamma and the Buddha's teachings,

Ashoka also sent special ministers on dhamma missions to border areas and neighboring realms.

## **Conclusion**

Yet, Kautilya's description of Angas, or constituents of the state, is a vivid reflection of his conception of "State." He did not define the word "State" in any particular way because he was more of a doer than a theorist. To prevent humanity from descending into a Hobbesian state of nature, he stressed both the internal and external security of the state. Kautilya's deeper knowledge of both the political essence of man and the operation of his political institutions, particularly the state, is vividly expressed in the Saptanga theory of Kautilya.

## **KAUTILYA:- SAPTANGA THEORY OF STATE**

The word "Saptang" indicates seven limbs, constituents or elements. Together, they constitute the State as an organism, "like a chariot composed of seven parts fitted and subservient to one another". To an extent; the Saptanga theory of State finds elaboration in the Ancient Greek Political Philosophy. For instance: while comparing the State with the human body, Plato had argued that just as a cut in the finger causes pain in the body, similarly injury of one organ creates problems for the other organs of the body politic. Seven Angas, Prakritis, or elements were enumerated and elucidated by Kautilya for describing "the nature of the State" in its totality. As laid down in the first chapter of Arthashastra's Sixth Book, entitled Mandala Yonih, these are:

- Swami (The Sovereign King)- Subscribing to monarchy as the ideal form of state, Kautilya has accorded to the king "the highest place in the body- politic". The Swami is the chief executive head of the state and, is, thus "the consummation of all other elements". The word Swami is derived from the word swayam which refers to self-determining. The Swami, therefore, becomes a living and animate embodiment, which is subjected to be ruled by none, does not follow any external rulings and is liable only to self- imposed restrictions. He is, thus, the symbol of legal and political authority and power. Kautilya gives a comprehensive list of four broad categories of qualities which constitute the ideals of a Swami:
  - (i) Qualities of an inviting nature;
  - (ii) Qualities of intellect and intuition;

- (iii) Qualities of enthusiasm and
- (iv) Qualities of selfrestraint and spirit.
- This categorization of qualities supplements the usual notion of kingship being characterized by coercion and subordination of people. The king was, thus, not to be a despot, exercising power through sheer military force, but was to rule his subjects through affection. Accordingly, the duties and functions that he is called upon to perform are of two types:
  - (i) **Protective Functions-** The king being the natural guardian and savior of his people, Kautilya expects him to perform the following protective functions that he should put down violence and maintain law and order, he should avert dangers and command the army, to redress people's grievances, to punish the wrong- doers and to administer justice impartially and in accordance with the sacred law, evidence, history and enacted law.
  - (ii) **Promotive Functions-** On the other hand, his promotive functions include the following that he should promote the moral and material happiness and welfare of his people, as in their happiness lies his happiness and in their welfare his welfare, to enable them to pursue freely their independent efforts in life, to maintain unity and solidarity, to reward virtue, to promote agriculture, industry and arts, to regulate the means of livelihood, especially of the laborers and artisans and to encourage education and help students. In the exercise of these functions, Kautilya's king was all- powerful. The limits of his authority were imposed by the social and religious customs of his state.
- 2) **Amatya (The Minister)-** In its narrow sense, the term Amatya or Mantrin is used for the minister of the high grade. Kautilya describes an elaborate system of recruitment of the Amatyas and other officials who were to be morally and ethically pure, honest in financial matters and of good character. The Amatyas were expected to be natural born citizens, persons of noble origin, free from all vices, men of infallible memory, friendly nature, wisdom, patience and endurance. The king was expected to appoint only wise men to these offices as they were to be his trusted advisers. These ministers were not only to advise the king whenever their advice was sought; they were also to maintain the secrecy of their deliberations.
- 3) **Janapada (The People and The Territory)-** This unique element of Saptanga is the symbol of State, which stands for a "territorial society". Here, 'Jana' denotes people and 'Pada' is a symbol of territory where these inhabitants permanently reside. D.R. Bhandarkar and R.S. Sharma are of the view that Kautilya's Janapada includes not only

territory but also population. Kautilya prescribes the following requisites of a prosperous Janapada in terms of territory: (i) accommodate and support people; (ii) defend the state against enemies; (iii) find occupation of people; (iv) have manageable neighbours; (v) provide pastures; (vi) have arable land, mines, forest and (vii) provide good internal communication, i.e. rivers, roads, and outlet to sea.

- 4) **Durga (Fortification)**- Kautilya regarded fortification as essential for the defense and protection of the state. He wanted the state to fortify the territories from all sides. He has described four types of fortification which include Audak, Paarvat, Dhannvana and Vana. Of these categories, the first two are used for the protection of the territory and the remaining two are used for the protection of the farmers. These fortifications, thus, would not only protect the people and the capital, but would also be suitable for fighting purposes, i.e. for both defensive and offensive purposes.
- 5) **Kosha (The Treasury)**- The flourishing economy is essential for the existence of the State in all times and circumstances. That is probably why the philosophers of Ancient India looked at treasury as an essential element of the State. Though Kautilya wanted a prosperous treasury, he specifically directed the king to earn the wealth of nation only by legitimate and righteous means and in no way by unfair and immoral means. For the collection of revenues, Kautilya suggested the following legitimate sources: (i) various forms of land tax; (ii) duty levied on the sale of commodities in the market; (iii) tax on imports and exports and (iv) miscellaneous taxes.
- 6) **Danda (The Army or The Force)**- Kautilya accepted a strong and hereditary Kshatriya army, as the most important requisite of the state. He insisted on the hereditary army, as it would not only be skilled, well- contended and obedient to the king's will, but also be free from duplicity. Such an army would serve both the defensive and offensive purposes of the king. Hence, it was obvious for Kautilya to pay great attention to the maintenance and organization of the army. For instance, in Arthashastra, we find him mentioning as many as half a dozen heads of departments namely the incharge of the armory, naval forces, cavalry, elephants, chariots and infantry.
- 7) **Mitra (The Allies)**- Having realized that "political isolation means death", Kautilya proceeded to consider the Mitra or the ally as a vital factor. Kautilya recognizes two kinds of allies, namely Sahaja and Kritrima. The Sahaja or natural ally is the one whose friendship is derived from the times of King's father and grandfather and who is situated close to the territory of the immediately neighboring enemy. On the other hand, the

Kritrima or the acquired ally is the one whose friendship is specially resorted to for the protection of wealth and life. Kautilya, however, preferred an ally who is traditional, permanent, disciplined, and enthusiastic and from whom the possibility of opposition or rebellion is minimum. Conclusion Kautilya's concept of 'State' is, however, vividly reflected in his description of angas or elements of the state. He did not specifically define the term 'State', as he was essentially a man of action, and not a theorist. His concern for and emphasis on the internal and external security of state was to save humanity from a sort of Hobbesian state of nature. The Saptang theory is a vivid manifestation of Kautilya's deeper understanding of not only the political nature of man, but also the functioning of his political institutions, especially the state.

### **Swami Vivekananda and Nationalism**

Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is associated with spiritualism. He linked India's regeneration to her age-old tradition of spiritual goal. He said, "Each nation has a destiny to fulfil, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. Therefore we must have to understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfil, the place it has to occupy in the march of nations, the role which it has to contribute to the harmony of races". His nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism, the two cardinal features of Indian spiritual culture. He taught people to get rid first of self inflicted bondages and resultant miseries.

The nature of his nationalism is not materialistic but purely spiritual, which is considered to be the source of all strength of Indian life. Unlike western nationalism which is secular in nature, Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is based on religion which is life blood of the Indian people. Deep concern for masses, freedom and equality through which one expresses self, spiritual integration of the world on the basis of universal brotherhood and "Karmyoga" a system of ethics to attain freedom both political and spiritual through selfless service make the basis of his nationalism.

His writings and speeches evoked magical effect. His words not only agitated mind of Indians but also enkindled love for the motherland. He established motherland as the only deity to be worshiped in the mind and heart of countrymen.

He galvanized the National Spirit by exposing the British policy of profiteering in complete disregard to the Indian interests. Explaining European colonial plans in Indian perspective, he demoralized British rulers. He popularized the nationalist movement that

swept the country and a new India emerged. As he said, "Let a new India arise out of the peasant's cottage grasping the plough; out of the hearts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from the marts and from the markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from the hills and mountains"

Courage and determination instilled by Swami Vivekananda's speeches and writings in agitating minds and hearts of Indians to face all eventualities against all opposition were nurtured by Aurbindo Ghosh over the generation. This Indian mindset ready for supreme sacrifice provided the launching pad for success of Mahatma Gandhi's freedom movement based on "Ahimsa" and "Satyagrah."

Swami Vivekananda saw the spirituality as point of convergence for all religious forces of diverse India capable of unifying into a national current. Like Vivekananda, Aurbindo Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi also realized that religion and spirituality are in the veins of Indians and worked for India's unification through awakening the force of religion and spirituality.

His speech at Chicago in 1893 established him as the greatest figure in the Parliament of World Religions and India as the Mother of religion. Greeting the youngest of the nations on behalf of "the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of sannyasins, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance" Swami Vivekananda quoted two illustrative passages from the "Shiva mahimna stotram": "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee!" and "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths that in the end lead to Me."

Despite the brevity of his speech, it voiced the spirit and sense of universality of the Parliament. His other speeches too at the Parliament had the common theme of universality, emphasizing religious tolerance

Since the onset of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the world is in turmoil and passing through transition period of a kind. At this hour of human history the message of Swami Vivekananda promoting spiritual integration of the nation and world on the basis of universal brotherhood and goodwill becomes all the more relevant. It has the potential to avert wars ensuring peaceful co-existence of individuals and nations.

## **Sri Aurobindo's vision of Indian Nationalism and Humanity**

Sri Aurobindo, originally known as Aurobindo Ghose (1872 – 1950 ), is regarded as the prophet and father of Indian nationalism. From his early years he was an ardent nationalist. In his view, nationalism was not only a mission, a goal of life, but an end to the pursuit, as vigorously as a religion. With him, nationalism was not a mere political slogan nor a mere intellectual idea but his first passion and religion. In one of his speeches in 1908.

Thus, Aurobindo not only awakened his countrymen to their sacred duty at that juncture, but also imparted a new moral tone to their national movement, ultimately preparing the mind of the country for the forthcoming social revolution. According to Dr Karan Singh “For him, (Sri Aurobindo), India was no mere geographical entity, no mere physical and material land mass, no mere intellectual concept, but a goddess incarnate, a mighty mother who for centuries has cradled and nourished her children and who at that time, was groaning under the yoke of a foreign oppressor – her pride shattered, her glory ground to dust” . Thus India as a nation was eulogized by Sri Aurobindo as the mother, but a mother in chains, and the primary duty of her sons was to win freedom for the Mother, to strive by every possible means to liberate her from her shackles.

Sri Aurobindo was convinced that imitation of Europe was not at all conducive to India's regeneration. In his view, the test of the vitality of the nationalist movement was its non-impertive, non-imitative and non-artificial character. He argued “For a nation which is not attempting to Imprint its personality on such a movement is moving towards self-sterilization and death.” He, therefore, exhorted the Indian people to uphold the Sanatana Dharma which was the essence of their national personality. Sanatana Dharma and Indian Nationalism were therefore co-terminus. In his own words “ I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanathana Dharma, with it, it moves and grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma.... That is nationalism”.

Aurobindo's concept of nationalism opened wider horizons for the national movement. He felt the task before us was not mechanical but moral, not political but spiritual. The aim of the

nationalist movement was not confined to an alteration of the form of government – from a colonial rule to self government – but it embraced a comprehensive programme of nation building. Politics was a part of this programme, but only a part: he said “we should devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but to all of these – our Dharma : it is a spiritual revolution that we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex”. The realization of the spirituality of India could alone make the nation free and great. The European ideal of ‘mechanical’ freedom, on the other hand, concentrated on the outer social and political perfection, which was only half perfection; that, too the lower half. The formula of European politics was therefore insufficient. Aurobindo, therefore insisted that India’s salvation does not lie in the enlargement of Legislative councils, introduction of elective principle, colonial self-government, or the like. His ideal of nationalism itself could not accommodate the Moderates objective of dominion status of India.

Aurobindo aimed at the seizure of political power as a prelude to India’s national regeneration. Once freedom from the foreign yoke was achieved, all other steps in the direction of national regeneration – moral uplift; the industrial and social development and educational reconstruction – would be undertaken successfully. In fact Aurobindo’s concept of Swaraj was something more than political freedom; he said “ Swaraj as a sort of European ideal, political liberty for the sake of political self-assertion, will not awaken India. Swaraj, as the fulfillment of the ancient Life of India under modern conditions, the return of ‘satyayuga’ of national greatness, the resumption by her ( Mother India) of her great role of teacher and guide, self-liberation of the people for the final fulfillment of the Vedantic ideal in politics, this is the true swaraj for India. She cannot do it without taking the management of her own life into her own hands. She must live her own life and not the life of a part or subordinate in a foreign empire”.

Accordingly, Aurobindo envisaged two fold tasks for the realization of nationalism in India. (a) Winning Swaraj for India so as to clean her social and political life from the pollution of European origin; and (b) Return to ‘ our old national individuality’, so that India would play her great role in the redemption of the whole world. National regeneration of India was, for Aurobindo, not the final goal. It was a stepping stone to universal regeneration. The great role that India was to play at this juncture was described by Aurobindo in a brilliant editorial of



Bande Mataram, dated 28-03-1908, entitled ‘ Spirituality and Nationalism’: “ A great light is drawing on the East, a light whose first heralding glimpses are already seen on the horizon. The perfect expression of Hindu spirituality was the signal for the resurgence of the east. Mankind has been long experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has the society or politics helped it to escape from the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, dissatisfaction from which it strives an outlet; for whoever is trying to find one by material means, must inevitably fail. The East alone has some knowledge of the truth, the East alone can teach the West, and the East alone can save the mankind”.

### **Evolution of Human society according to Sri Aurobindo:**

*1) Stage of spontaneity:* at this stage, the forms and activities of community formation, its traditions and customs and institutional setup are the result of natural organic growth. Natural instincts and environmental needs play an important part in its formation. Thus, in this stage of development, natural instincts and religious symbols go together.

*2) Stage of Consciousness:* In the stage of consciousness people become intellectually self conscious and start thinking about life and its problems, with the help of intelligence and creative power. This stage is predominantly psychological and ethical in nature. In this stage intellectuals get importance and come forward as the initiators of the age of reason and revolt or progress and freedom.

*3) The triumph and failure of reason:* In this stage, human beings in collectivity begin to live more deeply and purposefully. Life of human beings at this stage will be governed by a sense of unity, sympathy, spontaneous liberty and the spirit of individual and common existence.

### **Nature of human unity**

Human unity wouldn't be a mechanical unity of establishment, under the iron law of the state or any such kind of mechanical organization. There would be no suppression of Individual life or life of a smaller community. A universal conception of the full life of a smaller community will blossom. An universal conception of full development of potential and

expression of multifaceted diversity would flourish. The future society will be a society of complex oneness, a world society in which the present nations will be intrinsic parts of the whole. The national societies would continue to function as cultural units, but their physical boundaries would have no relevance as they would look beyond them to realize the vision of the unity of mankind.

## **TILAK AND NATIONALISM**

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak a freedom fighter was a visionary of the concept of nationalism. He considered nationalism as a thought making process which cannot be seen but can only be felt. Tilak considered Ramayana and Mahabharata as common similarities within India which could be used for imbibing the concept of Nationalism and common desire of development and well being of the society. The present paper is an attempt to bring out the views of Lokmanya Tilak and nationalism which states that India was never one country ruled under one king or dynasty before British rule. India was divided in many kingdoms and was full of diversity of different religions, languages, regions, scripts, cultures which can help to create a nation. The paper covers various aspects related to culture, Vedas et

“Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it!”, this is the slogan that inculcated a political conscience among Indians regarding self-rule. The slogan was given by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (Lokmanya means the man accepted by the people). Given his contribution, Tilak can be hailed as the first mass leader of the Indian Independence Movement.

Mahatma Gandhi called him ‘The Maker of Modern India’ or as British colonial authorities called him ‘the father of Indian unrest’, testifies his legacy and contribution to Indian society and freedom struggle.

As a philosopher-politician, his contribution is immense as he is said to be a pioneer of ideas of swaraj and swadeshi and used culture, education and the media.

### **Contribution of Bal Gangadhar Tilak**

- Igniting Patriotism: Ruthless suppression of the revolt of 1857 by the British and its aftermath, had created disillusionment and darkness regarding self-rule, that continued for many decades.

- This is when Tilak began to quicken the growth of nationalist consciousness with the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- He ignited patriotic consciousness among the masses during one of the most difficult periods in the freedom struggle
- Switching to Extremism Phase: The founding of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 was aided by the British, under the narrative of safety-value theory.
  - As a followup to that, the voice of INC was weak and subdued. Early leadership of INC was mainly focused on 3Ps: Prayer, Petition and Protest.
  - Along with two other congress leaders, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal (popularly known as Lal, Bal and Pal), he started the extremist phase of INC, which focused on mass mobilisation of masses.
- Trisutri Program: Tilak gave trisutri or three-point programme for national awakening – Swaraj, Swadeshi and Nationalist Education based on vernacular.
  - This helped the realisation of self-pride and activism in a nation that was culturally suppressed by the British under the narrative of Whiteman’s burden.
  - For the cultivation of an enlightened mind, he used the media in the form of two newspapers, Kesari and Maratha, and national education through Deccan Education Society, an institute he established.
- Swadeshi Movement: Tilak started the Swadeshi movement (1905), which was not just about boycotting British goods, but his larger objective was promoting indigenous entrepreneurship.
  - Tilak wanted to promote manufacturing in India. To that end, Tilak started collecting funds for a corpus, known as Paisa Fund.
  - This can be termed as reminiscent of the Make in India Program, in present times.
- Broader Vision of Swaraj: For him, Swaraj or Home Rule meant the rule of, and the rule for, the common people of India. However, he also had a blueprint of an

independent India in mind.

- For him, swaraj was also linked to swa-bhasha and swa-bhusha, i.e. mother tongue and indigenous attire.
- Perhaps, he was the first national leader who envisioned the formation of linguistic states.
- Laying Foundation for Gandhian way of Mass Movement: Tilak's two arrests by the British in (1897 and 1908) galvanised workers, peasants, professionals and youth in an unprecedented manner.
  - His formula for preparing the ground for political activism through culture, education and media was so powerful that later on Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar and others adopted this path.
  - Also, he prepared a fertile ground for swaraj through his home-rule movement.
- Cultural Revival: Tilak's campaign against the British colonial rule was also anchored on reclaiming Indian heritage and culture.
  - In 1896, he famously initiated the 'sarvajanik Ganesh visarjan utsav' in Bombay, in which the masses of people came out to worship and then immerse idols of Ganesha in the sea.
  - This religious drive served the political purpose of mass mobilisation.
  - Though it is seen as a communal move by many historians, his writings reflected that his call for public celebration of these festivals was not meant to rouse sentiments against any other community.
  - Its sole purpose was cultural self-assertion of his people then living the yoke of foreign rule.

## **Conclusion**

Today, when we talk about Atmanirbhar Bharat, the legacy of Tilak is carried forward. Reviving the spirit of economic nationalism for indigenously manufactured goods and

striving for social integration through culture (Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat) are the features of Tilak's strategy and they continue to be relevant even today as we observe his 100<sup>th</sup> death anniversary.

## **Gandhian Ideologies**

- Gandhian ideology is the set of religious and social ideas adopted and developed by Mahatma Gandhi, first during his period in South Africa from 1893 to 1914, and later in India.
- Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral and religious, it is also traditional and modern, simple and complex. It embodies numerous Western influences to which Gandhiji was exposed, but is rooted in ancient Indian culture harnessing universal moral & religious principles.
- The philosophy exists on several planes - the spiritual or religious, moral, political, economic, social, individual and collective.
  - The spiritual or religious element, and God, are at its core.
  - Human nature is regarded as fundamentally virtuous.
  - All individuals are believed to be capable of high moral development, and of reform.
- Gandhian ideology emphasises not on idealism, but on practical idealism.
- Gandhian philosophy is a double-edged weapon. Its objective is to transform the individual and society simultaneously, in accordance with the principles of truth and non-violence.
- Gandhiji developed these ideologies from various inspirational sources vis **Bhagvad Geeta**, Jainism, Buddhism, Bible, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Tolstoy, John Ruskin among others.
  - Tolstoy's book 'The Kingdom of God is within you' had a deep influence on Mahatma Gandhi.
  - Gandhiji paraphrased Ruskin's book 'Unto this Last' as 'Sarvodaya'.

- These ideas have been further developed by later "Gandhians", most notably, in India by, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan and outside of India by Martin Luther King Jr. and others.

### **Major Gandhian Ideologies**

- **Truth and nonviolence:** They are the twin cardinal principles of Gandhian thoughts.
  - For Gandhi ji, truth is the relative truth of truthfulness in word and deed, and the absolute truth - the ultimate reality. This ultimate truth is God (as God is also Truth) and morality - the moral laws and code - its basis.
  - Nonviolence, far from meaning mere peacefulness or the absence of overt violence, is understood by Mahatma Gandhi to denote active love - the pole opposite of violence, in every sense. Nonviolence or love is regarded as the highest law of humankind.
- **Satyagraha:** Gandhi ji called his overall method of nonviolent action Satyagraha. It means the exercise of the purest soul-force against all injustice, oppression and exploitation.
  - It is a method of securing rights by personal suffering and not inflicting injury on others.
  - The origin of Satyagraha can be found in the Upanishads, and in the teachings of Buddha, Mahavira and a number of other other greats including Tolstoy and Ruskin.
- **Sarvodaya-** Sarvodaya is a term meaning 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress of All'. The term was first coined by Gandhi ji as the title of his translation of John Ruskin's tract on political economy, "Unto This Last".
- **Swaraj-** Although the word swaraj means self-rule, Gandhi ji gave it the content of an integral revolution that encompasses all spheres of life.
  - For Gandhi ji, swaraj of people meant the sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of individuals and so he clarified that for him swaraj meant freedom for the meanest

of his countrymen. And in its fullest sense, swaraj is much more than freedom from all restraints, it is self-rule, self-restraint and could be equated with moksha or salvation.

- **Trusteeship-** Trusteeship is a **socio-economic philosophy** that was propounded by Gandhi ji.
  - It provides a means by which the wealthy people would be the trustees of trusts that looked after the welfare of the people in general.
  - This principle reflects Gandhi ji's spiritual development, which he owed partly to his deep involvement with and the study of theosophical literature and the Bhagavad Gita.
- **Swadeshi** The word swadeshi derives from Sanskrit and is a conjunction of two Sanskrit words. 'Swa' means self or own and 'desh' means country. So swadesh means one's own country. Swadeshi, the adjectival form, means of one's own country, but can be loosely translated in most contexts as self-sufficiency.
  - Swadeshi is the focus on acting within and from one's own community, both politically and economically.
  - It is the interdependence of community and self-sufficiency.
  - Gandhi ji believed this would lead to independence (swaraj), as British control of India was rooted in control of her indigenous industries. Swadeshi was the key to the independence of India, and was represented by the charkha or the spinning wheel, the "center of the solar system" of Mahatma Gandhi's **constructive program**.

### **Relevance in Today's Context**

- The ideals of truth and nonviolence, which underpin the whole philosophy, are relevant to all humankind, and are considered as universal by the Gandhians.
- More than ever before, Mahatma Gandhi's teachings are valid today, when people are trying to find solutions to the rampant greed, widespread violence, and runaway consumptive style of living.

- The Gandhian technique of mobilising people has been successfully employed by many oppressed societies around the world under the leadership of people like **Martin Luther King in the United States, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar**, which is an eloquent testimony to the continuing relevance of Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Dalai Lama said**, "We have a big war going on today between world peace and world war, between the force of mind and force of materialism, between democracy and totalitarianism." It is precisely to fight these big wars that the Gandhian philosophy needed in contemporary times.

*In my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things." -Barack Obama*

#### Conclusion

- Gandhian ideologies shaped the creation of institutions and practices where the **voice** and perspective of everyone can be articulated, tested and transformed.
  - According to him, democracy provided the weak with the same chance as the strong.
- Functioning on the basis of voluntary cooperation and dignified & peaceful co-existence was replicated in several other modern democracies. Also, his emphasis on political tolerance and religious pluralism holds relevance in contemporary Indian politics.
- Truth, nonviolence, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha and their significance constitute Gandhian philosophy and are the four pillars of Gandhian thought.

## **Gandhi's vision of Swadeshi**

### **Introduction**

Satyagraha and swadeshi are fundamental in Gandhi's philosophy of life. According to Gandhi, the whole gamut of man's activities constitutes an indivisible whole. Life cannot be segregated into watertight compartments like social, economic, political, religious and so on.



So the ideas and concepts he developed in the course of his relentless experiments with truth was an attempt to integrate the various aspects of life. The concept of swadeshi was not an exception. It was not merely an economic doctrine. In fact the concept of swadeshi covered all aspects of the human life. Gandhi's vision of swadeshi is a universal concept even though he propounded it in the context of India's struggle for freedom. He used swadeshi as a means to achieve India's swaraj. India's struggle for freedom was a source of inspiration for many non-violent struggles in different parts of the globe. Swaraj through swadeshi is a principle of universal application and it can be emulated by people in their struggle for freedom. It was one of the eleven vows Gandhi prescribed for a satyagraha way of life. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand Gandhi's concept of swadeshi and its manifestation in important facets of human life. Swadeshi as a generic concept covers almost every aspect of human life, all his ideas, concepts, methods and programmes. However, the scope of the present paper has been limited to areas such as economic, political, social, religious, and educational and health. Firstly, we will analyse Gandhi's vision of swadeshi.

### **Gandhi's vision of Swadeshi**

Gandhi described swadeshi as 'law of laws'<sup>1</sup> ingrained in the basic nature of human being. It is a universal law. Like nature's law it needs no enacting. It is self-acting one. When one neglects or disobeys it due to ignorance or other reasons, the law takes its own course to restore to the original position like the laws of nature. The necessity for the inclusion of swadeshi as a vow is due to the fact that the people have forgotten this law; to use Gandhi's own words, the law is sunk into oblivion. A person by temperament following this law need not follow it as a vow, that is, a rare thing. According to Gandhi swadeshi in its ultimate and spiritual sense stands for the final emancipation of the soul from her earthly bondage. Therefore, a votary of swadeshi has to identify oneself with the entire creation in the ultimate quest to emancipate the soul from the physical body, as it stands in the way of realising oneness with all life. This identification is possible only by performing the primary duty, that is, the service of one's immediate neighbour. In outward appearance, it may look as exclusion or disservice to others, i.e., the rest of humanity. Pure service can never result in disservice to the far away person. In swadeshi there is no distinction between one's own and other people. With the temptation of serving the whole world, if one fails to perform the duty towards the immediate neighbours, it is a clear violation of the very principle of swadeshi. The very first

step of serving the world starts with the immediate neighbour. Service to the nearest individual is service to the Universe. According to Gandhi, swadharma in Gita interpreted in terms of one's physical environment gives us the Law of Swadeshi. Gandhi quotes Gita "It is best to die performing one's own duty or Swadharma. Paradharmā, or another's duty, is fraught with danger."<sup>2</sup> Further Gandhi explains: "What the Gita says with regard to swadharma equally applies to swadeshi also, for swadeshi is swadharma applied to one's immediate environment."<sup>3</sup> The law of swadeshi demands that one should not take more than required to discharge the legitimate obligations towards the family. In swadeshi there is no space for selfishness and hatred. It is the highest form of altruism and acme of universal service in the Gandhian scheme. In the light of the above understanding and after much thinking and reflection, Gandhi defined swadeshi as the "spirit in us which restricts us to the use and services of our immediate, to the exclusion of the more remote."<sup>4</sup> This definition is perhaps the best explanation of his concept.

### **Economic dimension of Swadeshi**

Let us first look at the implications of swadeshi in the field of economics. Gandhi was convinced that the deep poverty prevailing among masses was mainly due to the ruinous departure from the path of swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. Gandhi advocated that one who follows the spirit of swadeshi should use only things that are produced by our immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient, and strengthen them in areas where they are found deficient. During the time of India's struggle for independence Gandhi realised that the economic salvation of India consists in encouraging and reviving indigenous industries. Gandhi found khadi as the necessary and most important corollary of the principle of swadeshi in its practical application to society. Khadi fulfils the kind of service envisaged in swadeshi. Gandhi himself asked the question: "What is the kind of service... the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live?"<sup>5</sup> He found the answer, that it was universalising khadi or spinning wheel which fulfill these conditions. For him, khadi is the Sun of the village solar system. The various industries are the planets which can support khadi. Khadi mentality means decentralisation of production and distribution of the necessities of life. Gandhi advocated the concept of swadeshi in the spirit of universal love and service. A votary of swadeshi will give preference to local products even if they are of inferior grade or dearer in price than things manufactured elsewhere and try to remedy the

defects of local manufacturers. Gandhi warned the votary of swadeshi against making it a fetish. "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly, and a negation of the swadeshi spirit. A true votary of swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner: he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i.e. Love".<sup>6</sup> In the swadeshi economic order there will be healthy exchange of products and not cut-throat competition through the play of market forces. Gandhi explains this ideal situation in the following words: "If we follow the swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible."<sup>7</sup> In such an economic system there will be an organic relationship between production, distribution and consumption.

### **Political dimension of Swadeshi**

The application of swadeshi in politics calls for the revival of the indigenous institutions and strengthening them to overcome some of its defects. Gandhi pleaded the need for internal governance (swaraj) as early as 1909 in his noted booklet *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. He wanted to empower the people through political self governance. His vision of decentralized political system was Panchayati Raj by which the innumerable villages of India were governed. He succinctly describes it as follows: "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."<sup>8</sup> Gandhi further outlined his vision of village swaraj by introducing the concept of oceanic circle in opposition to pyramidal structure of society, placing individual at the centre of the society. "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."<sup>9</sup>

### **Social dimension of Swadeshi**

Applying the spirit of swadeshi in the context of Indian social structure, Gandhi initially accepted the institution of Varna associated with it. He welcomed the four-fold division of the society purely based on duties performed by different sections of people. Gandhi considered all professions as equally important. He made an earnest attempt to overcome the defects of the caste system by discarding certain obnoxious practices which he considered as historical accretion, which was not the integral part of original system. He vehemently opposed the prevailing caste system based on birth and the social status attached to it. That was the reason why he launched one of the most relentless battles against the curse of untouchability which was a part and parcel of the caste system in India. Gandhi looked at the scourge of untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. He was so much convinced that he did not even hesitate to take up cudgels on the behalf of untouchables against the upper caste Hindu orthodoxy. In the process so much animosity was created among orthodox upper caste and several attempts were made to eliminate him. Unmindful of the risks involved, he stuck to the position till the end of his life. He totally identified with the untouchables and their uplift became his primary concern. Similarly he was deeply concerned about the problems and plight of the vulnerable sections of the society viz., Dalits , women, tribals, lepers and so on. He believed that true swaraj can be attained only by uplifting these deprived sections of the society. Gandhi included the uplift of these sections in his 18 point Constructive Programme. It was primarily drawn taking into account the social realities of our country. Gandhi's Constructive Programme aimed at reconstruction of society through voluntary and participatory social action. In a sense the constructive work plays the role of civil society/NGOs. Gandhi looked upon Constructive Programme as a 'truthful and nonviolent way of winning Poorna Swaraj'.<sup>10</sup>

### **Swadeshi in Religion**

To follow the spirit of Gandhi's swadeshi in the field of religion one has to restrict to the ancestral religion. It calls for the use of one's immediate religious surroundings. It is the duty of a person to serve one's own religion by purging its defects, if necessary, in order to purify

and keep it pure. There is no need to renounce one's religion because of imperfections in it and embrace another. On the contrary one should try to enrich one's own religion by drawing the best from other religions. However Gandhi was not against true conversion and he differentiated it from proselytization. According to Gandhi conversion in the sense of self purification, self realisation is the crying need of the hour. His attitude was not of patronising toleration but developing the spirit of fellowship. His veneration for other faiths was the same as that of his own faith. He believed in the fundamental equality of all religions, what he called Sarvadharmā Samābhava. Gandhi's swadeshi approach to religion has great significance in the context of growing communal divide and religious fundamentalism in India and other parts of the globe. This approach is essential to promote harmony among the followers of various faiths and preserving the composite culture of a country like India.

### **Swadeshi in Education**

One of the major areas in which Gandhi applied his swadeshi ideal was the field of education. For him education was meant for all-round development of personality and not purely as a means for earning one's livelihood. In Hind Swaraj he rejected the British educational system prevailing in India. His primary objection against British educational system was that it was primarily meant for 'enslaving' the people of India. It was his firm conviction that the prevailing system of education does not serve the requirements of the country in any form or shape. He believed that education has to be rooted in the culture and traditions of the country. Education through a medium of foreign language put undue stress upon the nerves of the children and they become foreigners in their own country. They are completely cut off from the realities of life. He placed before the nation an alternative system of education called Nai Talim or Basic education. He defined education as follows: "By Education, I mean, an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training."<sup>11</sup> In his scheme the craft was the pivot and centre of all educational activities. Through the medium of craft he correlated all other subjects to the central craft. It was a self sufficient and self supporting system of education meant for children above the age of seven which was meant to be free and compulsory. He placed before the nation alternative institutions like Gujarat Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith and others during the struggle for

independence. Later he broadened his concept of basic education and looked upon education as a lifelong process starting from cradle to grave.

### **Swadeshi in Health Care**

Gandhi's prescription for health was an application of principle of swadeshi .i.e. to live according to the laws of nature. He strongly opposed the modern medical system in his seminal work Hind swaraj. He went even to the extent of describing hospitals as "institutions for propagating sin."<sup>12</sup> He rejected the modern medical system primarily on the ground that it is purely curative and not preventive. He advocated a new system of medical care wherein one follows the laws of nature with regard to diet, physical exercise, hygiene and sanitation and a new life style based on self restraint. He advocated the system of nature cure to prevent the diseases rather than finding a purely drug based cure for them. In this he underlined the centrality of proper use of earth, water, air sunlight and ether. He primarily emphasised a holistic approach to health care where it will primarily be governed by disciplined way of life. It is also notable that health care was one of his passions since his South African days. He experimented with different kinds of nature cure including the inexpensive and nutritious food which people could easily avail. Not only that, he was instrumental in establishing a nature cure centre at Urulikanchan near Pune and even started practicing nature cure. In fact during the last years of life a new dimension to nature cure practice was added in the form of Ram nam. It must be made clear that for him Ram nam was not like an ordinary mantra to be chanted. It was a part of his spiritual sadhana based on his firm belief that a man with total internal purity would not fall sick or even he would require no medicine other than Ram nam. Here Ram stands for one of the names of God and one can freely choose any other name of God which appeals to him. That was the reason he refused to take medicine in the fag end of his life including the Noakhali mission. Ram nam was nothing but a spiritual means for self purification thereby eliminating all possibilities of illness by keeping the body pure.

### ***Conclusion***

It is obvious from the above analysis that swadeshi is key for basic understanding of the edifice of Gandhi's philosophy of life. He successfully demonstrated that the swadeshi spirit could be integrated in every walk of our national life. What is more, he did not stop only at conceptual level of swadeshi. He suggested concrete institutional set up in most of the areas of his concern. As stated earlier for Gandhi life was holistic and indivisible and hence he presented an integrated plan covering virtually all aspects of human life. And that is the most

distinctive nature of his thought which could really become a guiding principle for human resurgence. In fact he went beyond it and underlines the oneness of entire creations including the sentient and non-sentient beings. It is real pity that independent India failed to grasp the revolutionary nature of his thought and discarded them in the very initial years of freedom. Now it is more than clear that sooner or later, India, even the world, would have to take to Gandhian path to meet the challenges effectively. If not, it will be totally going against the law of universe which aeons ago ours ancestors called rita.

### **Nehru's views on Socialism**

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was well-known as a political actiirist. But his contribution to Modem Indian Political Thought is as significant as his political activities. During the past phase of Indian nationalist movement, his status as its leader was only next to that of Mahatma Gandhi. When India became independent in 1947, he became its Prime Minister and until his death in 1964, he occupied that position. And for a long time, he was also the Foreign Minister. He was also an historian. He wrote an excellent autobiography while he dealt, among other matters, with the record of British rule in India, and the survey of the Indian nationalist movement. Before India became free, he spoke and wrote at length on various problems facing India and the world. Even after he had become the Prime Minister, he continued to speak on the problems facing free India and the nuclear world. He also corresponded with eminent writers and statesmen. From the written and verbal responses he made to them and from the explanations he made to defend and elaborate his ideas, his views on political thought in general and on nationalism and social revolution in particular emerged. Nehru was influenced by Marxist thinking. He had a good grasp of Marxist Literature. Marxist philosophy gave a new orientation to his thinking. He acquired clarity in understanding on the Indian Society. He states "The Marxian philosophy appeals to me in a broad sense and helps me to understand the process of history." Nehru's socialist thinking had an other dimension. His visit to Russia helped him to understand the dynamics'of the socialist economy. He could have a comparative view of the western capitalism as well as the soviet society. Lenin's contribution to Russian Revolution "produced a powerful effect" on him. The way Lenin applied Marxism in - a backward society like Russia and brought a total transformation created high regard for Lenin in Nehru's mind. Henceforth, Nehru tried to look at India's problems from a different angle. Nehru states, "Our problems in India today are the same as those that faced Russia sow years ago and they can be solved in the same

manner in which Russians solved theirs. We should draw a lesson from the USSR in the way of industrialisation and education of our people."

One of the main exponents of Democratic Socialism was the former Indian Prime Minister Nehru. He argued that Democratic Socialism could mitigate the evils of all the third world countries.

In simple terms, Democratic Socialism as an ideology is an extension of the liberal propagation of democracy altered to suit the needs of all the countries of the world. It is an ideology that believes that the economy and the society should function democratically to meet the needs of the whole community.

The ideology believes that democracy and socialism are one and indivisible, there cannot be a true democracy without a true socialism, and there cannot be a true socialism without a true democracy. The two come together in equality, social justice, fair share for all and an irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power to workers and their families.

Democratic socialism supports, social and economic justice and opposes the exploitation of workers—the actual producers of wealth. Democratic socialists work within the organized political parties and preservation of the pluralistic character of the society. The newly emerging social and economic factors transformed the character and role of the state in the changed post-industrial context.

A doctrine that propagates an ideology for the sake of change rather than underpinning of democratic socialist principles aims at a more just and equitable distribution of wealth and promotes social justice too. It also enlightens on the need to secure participatory democracy, which is also another version of political democracy extended within the ideology of democratic socialism.

Nehru emphasized on free and fair elections where the suffrage for the citizens is a must, for example, the goal of democratic socialism also encompasses the issues pertaining to nationalization of means of production. They also include steps like raising the minimum wage, securing a national health plan and demanding passage of legislations for the workers to strike.



The ideology throws light on the institutional reforms that should be put forward for realizing this ideology. This could mean converting the capitalistic mode of production into a better order by replacing it through a series of legislations.

The principle of equitable distribution of wealth could also mean raising the economic standard or mitigating the sufferings of the masses. The ideological reconstruction takes place by giving equal rights to citizens, irrespective of sex, language, religion, wealth or education. It must be a conscious national solidarity that includes an active political process and the vast mass of the peasantry.

## **VIEW ON INTERNATIONALISM**

It was mostly due to the contribution of the Nehru that INC began to grow international minded and started taking interest in the world event in the early 1920s. It was largely at the insistence of Nehru that the INC develop the foreign policy based on the elimination of political and economical imperialism and the concept of free nation. He realize that the Indian struggle for freedom was a part of global struggle and its strategy should be such which would fit with the global development. He said that the nation should maintain a reasonable balance between nationalism and internationalism.

## **INDIAN POLITICAL THINKER DR. BR AMBEDKAR**

### **Introduction**

- Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was one of the main architects of the Indian Constitution.
- He was a very well known political leader, philosopher, writer, economist, scholar and a social reformer who dedicated his life to eradicating untouchability and other social inequality in India.
- He was born on 14 April 1891 in Madhya Pradesh in Hindu Mahar Caste. He had to face severe discriminations from every corner of the society as the Mahar caste was viewed as "untouchable" by the upper class.

### **Main Architect of Indian Constitution**

- Babasaheb Ambedkar's legal expertise and knowledge of the Constitution of different countries was very helpful in the framing of the constitution. He became chairman of

the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and played an important role in framing the Indian Constitution.

- Among others, his most important contributions were in areas of fundamental rights, strong central government and protection of minorities.
  - Article 32 guarantees judicial protection to the Fundamental Rights which makes them meaningful. For him, Article 32 was the most important article of the constitution and thus, he referred to it "soul of the Constitution and very heart of it".
  - He supported a strong central government. He was afraid that Casteism is more powerful at the local and provincial levels, and the government at this level might not protect the interest of lower caste under pressure of upper caste. Since the National government is less influenced by these pressures, they will ensure protection to lower caste.
  - He was also afraid that the minority which is the most vulnerable group in the nation may convert into political minorities too. So democratic rule of 'One man one vote' is not sufficient and the minority should be guaranteed a share in power. He was against 'Majoritarianism Syndrome' and provided many safeguards in the Constitution for the minorities.
- Indian constitution is the lengthiest constitution in the world because various administrative details have been included. Babasaheb defended it saying that we have created a democratic political structure in a traditional society. If all details are not included, future leaders may misuse the Constitution without technically violating it. Such safeguards are necessary. This shows that he was aware of the practical difficulties which India will face once the Constitution would have been implemented.

### **Constitutional Morality**

- In Babasaheb Ambedkar's perspective, Constitutional morality would mean effective coordination between conflicting interests of different people and administrative cooperation.

- It will help to resolve the conflict amicably without any confrontation amongst the various groups working for the realization of their ends at any cost.
- According to him, for India, where society is divided on the basis of caste, religion, language, and other factors, a common moral compass is needed, and the Constitution can play the role of that compass.

### **Democracy**

- He had complete faith in democracy. While dictatorship may produce quick results, it can not be a valid form of government. Democracy is superior as it enhances liberty. He supported the parliamentary form of democracy, which aligns with other national leaders.
- He emphasized 'democracy as a way of life', i.e. democracy not only in the political sphere but also in the personal, social and economic sphere.
- For him, democracy must bring a drastic change in social conditions of society, otherwise the spirit of political democracy i.e. 'one man and one vote' would be missing. Democratic government can arise only from a democratic society, so as long as caste hurdles exist in Indian society, real democracy can not operate. So he focused on the spirit of fraternity and equality as the base of democracy to bring out social democracy.
- Along with the social dimension, Ambedkar focused on the economic dimension also. While he was influenced by liberalism and parliamentary democracy, he also found the limitation of them. As per him, parliamentary democracy ignored social and economic inequality. It only focused on liberty while true democracy must bring both liberty and equality.

### **Social Reforms**

- Babasaheb had devoted his life to remove untouchability. He believed that the progress of the nation would not be realized without the removal of untouchability, which means the abolition of the caste system in totality. He studied Hindu philosophical traditions and made a critical assessment of them.
- For him, Untouchability is the slavery of the entire Hindu society. While Untouchables are enslaved by Caste Hindus, Caste Hindus themselves live under slavery of religious

sculptures. So the emancipation of the untouchables leads to the emancipation of the whole Hindu society.

### **Priority to Social Reform:**

- He believed that Economic and Political issues must be resolved only after achieving the goal of social justice. If political emancipation precedes social emancipation, it will lead to the rule of upper-caste Hindu, and atrocities on Lower Caste.
- The idea that economic progress will lead to social justice is ill-founded as Casteism is an expression of the Mental Slavery of Hindus. So for social reform, Casteism has to do away with.
- Social reforms consisted of family reform and religious reforms. Family reforms included removal of practices like child marriage etc. He strongly supports the empowerment of women. He supports women's rights of property which he resolved through Hindu Code Bill.

### **On Caste:**

- The caste system has made Hindu society stagnant which creates hurdles in integration with outsiders. Even internally, Hindu society fails to satisfy the test of a homogeneous society, as it is just a conglomeration of different castes. The caste system does not allow lower castes to prosper which led to moral degradation. Battle for the removal of untouchability becomes the battle for human rights and justice.

- In 1923, he set up the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association)', which was devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden.
- The temple entry movement launched by Dr. Ambedkar in 1930 at Kalaram temple, Nasik is another landmark in the struggle for human rights and social justice.
- Dr. Ambedkar attended all the three Round Table Conferences (1930-32) in London and each time, forcefully projected his views in the interest of the 'untouchable'.

- In 1932, Gandhi ji protested Communal Award of a separate electorate by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. This resulted in the Poona Pact wherein Gandhi ji ended his fast and Babasaheb dropped his demand for a separate electorate. Instead, a certain number of seats were reserved specifically for the 'Depressed Class'.
- In 1936, Babasaheb Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party.
- In 1939, during the Second World War, he called upon Indians to join the Army in large numbers to defeat Nazism, which he said, was another name for Fascism.
- On October 14, 1956 he embraced Buddhism along with many of his followers. The same year he completed his last writing 'Buddha and His Dharma'.
- In 1990, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, was bestowed with Bharat Ratna.
- The period from 14<sup>th</sup> April 1990 - 14<sup>th</sup> April 1991 was observed as 'Year of Social Justice' in the memory of Babasaheb.
- Dr. Ambedkar Foundation was established by the Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on March 24, 1992 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
  - The main objective of the foundation is to oversee the implementation of programmes and activities for furthering the ideology and message of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar among the masses in India as well as abroad.
- Few important works of Dr. Ambedkar: Mook Nayak (weekly) 1920; Janta (weekly) 1930; The Annihilation of Caste 1936; The Untouchables 1948; Buddha Or Karl Marx 1956, etc.

### **Methods Adopted to Remove Untouchability**

- Creating self-respect among untouchables by removing the myth of inherent pollution that has influenced their minds.
- Education:

- For Babasaheb, knowledge is a liberating force. One of the reasons for the degradation of untouchables was that they were denied the advantages of education. He criticized the British for not doing enough for the education of the lower caste. He insisted on secular education to instill values of liberty and equality among the students.

Economic progress:

- He wanted untouchables to free themselves from the bondage of the village community and traditional jobs. He wanted them to achieve new skills and start a new profession and move to cities to take advantage of industrialization. He described villages as 'a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness, and communalism'.

Political strength:

- He wanted untouchables to organize themselves politically. With political power, untouchables would be able to protect, safeguard and introduce new emancipatory policies.

- **Conversion:**

- When he realized that Hinduism is not able to mend its ways, he adopted Buddhism and asked his followers to do the same. For him, Buddhism was based on humanism and believed in the spirit of equality and fraternity.
- “I’m reborn, rejecting the religion of my birth. I discard the religion which discriminates between a man and a man and which treats me as an inferior”.

- So at the social level, education; at the material level, new means of livelihood; at political level, political organization; and the spiritual level, self-assertion, and conversion constituted an overall program of the removal of untouchability.

## Relevance of Ambedkar in Present Times

- Caste-based inequality in India still persists. While Dalits have acquired a political identity through reservation and forming their own political parties, they lack behind in social dimensions (health and education) and economic dimension.
- There has been a rise of communal polarization and communalization of politics. It is necessary that Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality must supersede religious morality to avoid permanent damage to the Indian Constitution.

## Conclusion

- According to historian R.C Guha, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a unique example of success even in most adverse situations. Today India is facing many socio-economic challenges such as casteism, communalism, separatism, gender inequality, etc. We need to find the Ambedkar's spirit within us, so that we can pull ourselves from these challenges.

### Role in India's Independence Movement

Ambedkar's role in the independence struggle was complex. Unlike the dominant political discourse that focused on persuading the British to cede greater power to Indians, and to eventually leave India, Ambedkar's interventions and advocacy centred more around the protection and furtherance of Dalit rights. As a result, he often clashed with the Indian National Congress.

He worked towards putting in place political safeguards for untouchables, the first of which was his presentation to the Southborough Committee that was preparing the Government of India Act 1919. By the time of the Round Table Conferences in the early 1930s, he had become the preeminent leader of the Dalit community.

Here, he argued fervently for separate electorates for the 'backward classes', believing that this was necessary to transform them into a solid political interest group. But M.K. Gandhi felt that this would splinter the Hindu community, going on a fast unto death to reverse the British acceptance of Ambedkar's demands. Consequently, Ambedkar had to give in under the Poona Pact of 1932, giving up separate electorates in exchange for reserved seats in provincial assemblies.

Ambedkar also played a key role in social movements that fought for the rights of Dalits. In 1924, he founded the '*Bahishkrit Hitakarani Sabha*' for the social upliftment of the 'depressed classes' with the motto: "Educate, Agitate, Organise". In 1927, a Depressed Classes Conference was organised at Mahad, located in Raigad district. Here, Ambedkar led a historic protest that culminated in a large group of Dalits drinking water from a public tank, breaking repressive social and physical norms that had existed for centuries.

A few months later, he organised a public burning of the *Manusmriti* at the same place. This ancient Hindu law book was the most well known among several such scriptures which placed cruel social and legal constraints on the 'untouchables'. The burning was a strong statement against the centuries old discrimination and repression faced by the Dalits.

Ambedkar was also a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative Council from 1926-34. He founded the Independent Labour Party of India in 1936 after the Government of India Act 1935 introduced responsible government at the provincial level. The party was able to win 15 of the 17 seats it contested in the Bombay Assembly elections of 1937. He then founded the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 as a popular political front for the Dalits.

### **Contribution to Constitution Making**

The Indian Constitution and its drafting process are often seen as synonymous with Ambedkar. He is often referred to as the father of the Indian Constitution, and is probably the most well-known of all Constituent Assembly members.

Ambedkar became a key figure in India's constitution-making process due to the offices he held and his interventions and speeches in the Assembly. He was the Chairman of the Assembly's most crucial committee – the Drafting Committee and a member of other important Committees. As its Chairman, he had to defend the Draft Constitution which the Committee prepared, and therefore intervened in nearly every debate.

On behalf of the Scheduled Caste Federation party, Ambedkar wrote and submitted States and Minorities to the Constituent Assembly's Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights. A mini-Constitution in itself, States and Minorities framed strong constitutional protection for the Scheduled Caste community.



Ambedkar's interventions and speeches, on various aspects of the Constitution, were insightful, well-reasoned and scrupulously researched. This won him the support and respect of other members of the Assembly, who appreciated his leadership of the constitution-making project.

### **Later Contributions**

Ambedkar was appointed as the first Law Minister of independent India in 1947. His most important intervention in this role was in the attempt to pass the Hindu Code Bill, to reform Hindu personal laws that dictated matters like marriage, divorce, succession and adoption. The Bill faced intense criticism from both within Parliament and outside. Ultimately the Government relented and withdrew the Bill, forcing Ambedkar to resign in frustration in 1951.

As a Scheduled Caste Federation party candidate, Ambedkar contested in India's first general elections in 1952 from Bombay North Central constituency. The elections, dubbed as 'the biggest experiment in democracy in human history' by Sukumar Sen (then Election Commissioner) saw Ambedkar finish fourth in the race – an unknown candidate from the Congress party took home the seat. Despite his loss in the Lok Sabha elections, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha.

In 1956, Ambedkar along with 3,65,000 supporters converted to Buddhism, after having devoted several years to studying the religion. Ambedkar's re-invention of Buddhism in the language of social justice is popularly referred to as Dalit Buddhist movement, Navayana, or Neo-Buddhism.

In the later years of his life, his health worsened, and he passed away on 6 December 1956 in his sleep at his home in Delhi. His birth date is celebrated as 'Ambedkar Jayanti' in the form of a public holiday. He was posthumously given the Bharat Ratna in 1991.

### **Ideas of Dr. Ambedkar on Social Justice**

Ambedkar's vision of social justice promotes the *liberty, equality, and brotherhood* of all humans. As a rationalist and humanist, he condemned any form of hypocrisy, injustice, or exploitation of man by man in the guise of religion. He advocated for a religion founded on

universal moral principles that may be applied to all times, places, and races. It must follow reason and be founded on the fundamental principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

He saw the caste system as the root cause of Hinduism's problems. According to him, the *varna system* is the primary cause of all inequity, as well as the source of caste and untouchability. Ambedkar advocated for a social system in which a man's rank is determined by his merit and achievements, and no one is noble or untouchable because of his or her birth.

He argued for preferential treatment of the country's disadvantaged and economically exploited citizens. The Indian Constitution, drafted under his supervision, has clauses ensuring *justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity* for all residents. It also includes many measures that ensure preferential treatment for the oppressed in a variety of industries. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution declares untouchability eradicated.

In his speech to the Constituent Assembly for the approval of the Constitution, Ambedkar stated: "I have completed my work; I wish there should be a sunrise even tomorrow. The new Bharat has got political freedom, but it is yet to raise the sun of social and economic liberty".

### **Dr B.R. Ambedkar's Efforts for Social Justice**

He dedicated his life to the pursuit of social justice and the empowerment of marginalised communities in India. His efforts for social justice were transformative and laid the foundation for the empowerment and emancipation of marginalised communities in India. His legacy continues to inspire movements for equality, social justice, and human rights worldwide.

**Here are some key efforts and contributions he made towards this cause:**

- ***Campaign Against Untouchability***
  - Ambedkar had been called to testify before the *Southborough Committee*, which was drafting the *Government of India Act 1919*. During this hearing, he advocated for separate electorates and reservations for untouchables and other religious groups.
  - While practising law in the Bombay High Court, he attempted to educate and uplift untouchables. His first organised effort was to establish the central

institution “**Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha**”, which aimed to promote education, socioeconomic progress, and the welfare of “**outcastes**,” also known as depressed classes at the time.

- He founded several journals to advocate for Dalit rights, including *Mook Nayak*, *Bahishkrit Bharat*, and *Equality Janta*.

### **Drafting of the Constitution**

- As the chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Dr Ambedkar played a crucial role in framing the Constitution of India.
- He ensured that the Constitution included provisions for fundamental rights, abolition of untouchability, and affirmative action to uplift socially disadvantaged groups.

### **Temple Entry Movement**

- Ambedkar led movements to secure the rights of Dalits to enter Hindu temples, which were often barred to them due to caste-based discrimination.
- His efforts aimed at challenging traditional caste hierarchies and promoting social equality.
- He led hundreds of followers in burning copies of *Manusmriti*. Thus, Ambedkarites and Dalits commemorate *Manusmriti Dahan Din* (Manusmriti Burning Day) every year on December 25.

### **▪ Labour Rights and Economic Reforms**

- Ambedkar championed labour rights and advocated for economic reforms to improve the socio-economic conditions of marginalised communities.
- He emphasised the need for land reforms and economic empowerment to address caste-based inequalities.

### **Reservation Policy**

- Ambedkar was instrumental in introducing reservation policies in education and government jobs to ensure representation and opportunities for Dalits and other backward classes.
- Dr. Ambedkar's advocacy for reservation policies aimed at providing opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups continues to be relevant. These policies aimed to mitigate historical injustices and provide avenues for social mobility.

### **Conversion to Buddhism**

- In 1956, Ambedkar led a mass conversion of Dalits to Buddhism as a symbolic rejection of the caste system and Hindu social hierarchy.
- This movement highlighted his vision for social equality and religious freedom.

### **Dr. Ambedkar's Concept of Social Justice - Relevance in the Present Scenario**

Dr. BR Ambedkar concept of social justice remains highly relevant in the present scenario for several reasons:

- **Empowerment of Marginalised Communities:** He advocated for the education and empowerment of marginalised communities like Dalits, Adivasis, and other backward classes. His focus on education as a tool for empowerment is crucial in addressing socio-economic disparities.
- **Inclusion and Diversity:** He emphasised the importance of inclusive development that encompasses the aspirations of all sections of society. In today's diverse world, his vision calls for policies and practices that embrace diversity and promote social inclusion.
- **Human Rights and Dignity:** His emphasis on fundamental rights and human dignity is crucial in the context of contemporary challenges such as social exclusion, violence against marginalised groups, and violations of basic rights.
- **Intersectionality:** Dr. Ambedkar's approach to social justice recognises the intersectionality of identities and inequalities. His ideas inspire a holistic approach to addressing multiple forms of discrimination based on caste, gender, religion, and economic status.

- **Global Relevance:** His struggle against social injustice and his advocacy for democratic values resonate globally. His ideas on social justice contribute to broader discussions on human rights, equality, and inclusive development worldwide.

## **Conclusion**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's concept of social justice provides a foundational framework for addressing contemporary socio-economic and political challenges. Embracing his vision entails commitment to equality, dignity, and empowerment for all individuals, ensuring that his legacy continues to guide efforts towards a more just and inclusive society.

**Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** occupies a unique position in the modern Indian social and political ideology. The uniqueness of his ideology lay in the fact that he visualized a path through a maze of mystical and speculative theories, and the beliefs of the Hindu scriptures that dominated the Indian scene. His ideology upheld rationalism and the liberation of Man. Ambedkar was the builder of modern India. He fought relentlessly to build a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He endeavored to build a new social order, based on social emancipation and economic prosperity. He was a pragmatist to the core. He believed that in the absence of economic and social justice, political freedom would not bring out social solidarity. He held that the first step towards the attainment of social solidarity and nation-building was the liquidation of the four-fold classification of Varnas as advocated in the Hindu scriptures. He upheld the rights of man and constitutional remedies for enforcing them. He cherished the goal of an ideal democracy and just society. Dr. Ambedkar ideology is meant to promote social change by eradicating all types of exploitation and oppression.

## **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia**

- Indian politician and activist who was a prominent figure in socialist politics and in the movement towards Indian independence.
- Much of his career was devoted to combating injustice through the development of a distinctly Indian version of socialism.
- Socialism refers to a set of political ideas that emerged as a response to the inequalities present in, and reproduced by, the industrial capitalist economy.

▪ Lohia's Idea of Socialism:

- Lohia identified five kinds of inequalities that need to be fought against simultaneously: inequality between man and woman, inequality based on skin colour, caste-based inequality, colonial rule of some countries over others, and economic inequality.
- For him struggle against these five inequalities constituted five revolutions. He added two more revolutions to this list: revolution for civil liberties against unjust encroachments on private life and revolution for non-violence, for renunciation of weapons in favour of Satyagraha. These were the seven revolutions or Sapta Kranti which for Lohia was the ideal of socialism.

▪ **Education:**

- Bachelor's degree (1929) from the University of Calcutta and a doctorate (1932) from the University of Berlin, where he studied economics and politics.

▪ **Pre-Independence**

Role:

- In 1934, he became actively involved in the Congress Socialist Party (CSP), founded that year as a left-wing group within the Indian National Congress.
- A vehement opponent of Indian participation on the side of Great Britain in World War II (1939-45), he was arrested for anti-British remarks in 1939 and again in 1940.
- With the emergence in 1942 of the Quit India movement—a campaign initiated by Mahatma Gandhi to urge the withdrawal of British authorities from India—Lohia and other CSP leaders (such as Jaya Prakash Narayan) mobilized support from the underground. For such resistance activities, he was jailed again in 1944–46.

**Post Independence Role:**

- Lohia and other CSP members left the Congress in 1948.

- He became a member of the Praja Socialist Party upon its formation in 1952 and served as general secretary for a brief period, but internal conflicts led to his resignation in 1955.
- He established a new Socialist Party (1955), for which he became chairman as well as the editor of its journal, Mankind.
  - He advocated for various socio-political reforms in his capacity as party leader, including the abolition of the caste system, stronger protection of civil liberties, etc.
- In 1963, Lohia was elected to the Lok Sabha, where he was noted for his sharp criticism of government policies.
- Some of his works include: ‘Wheel of History’, ‘Marx, Gandhi and Socialism’, ‘Guilty Men of India’s Partition’, etc.

### **Ideating Democracy**

To Lohia democracy was not merely a system of government. Instead of focusing on its functional aspects he wanted to realize the substantial meaning of democracy where people themselves are the masters of their destiny, being the repository of all powers. Only in a free, fair and equal atmosphere an individual can attain all round development. To him democracy was a great equalizing force, a guarantee for decentralized socio-economic and political order. He was anguished against the proclivity of consolidation in government and industry which brings over impoverishment and lopsided advancement. To quote him, “...the greatest single quality of democracy in the present age is decentralization and its meaning must be fixed both in terms of defined political power belonging to small units of direct democracy and economic arrangements and technology that would give the working man greater understanding of control over productive process.”<sup>4</sup> Though he was a die-hard supporter of democracy, which empowers masses by dialogue and discussion, he was averse to Western liberal democracy because of its ‘elitist’ character. <sup>5</sup> The democracy in the West was/is based on the principle of individualism. It professes uninterrupted development of capitalism, mass production and profit. Thus consolidating power in the hands of the rich, leaving the majority unattended and

deprived politically as well as economically. The neglected majority loses their political and economic freedom and becomes only a 'cog' in a machine before the formidable might of a corporate world.

### **Functional Dynamics of Indian Democracy**

India after independence under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, went for the West ministerial model of democracy based on liberal capitalist ethos. To Lohia, the model best suited to the rich, affluent, well-educated and harmonious society of the West. In a society like India where there was wide spread poverty, lop sided development, illiteracy and was more over caste divided, democracy had little meaning to the masses. Perseverance of large scale inequality has been a stumbling block to the general folk in arranging their basic necessity of food, shelter, education, etc. Similarly prevalence of wide-reaching illiteracy forbid man to employ its rationale on substantial issues that command their lives. In such a predicament general masses are more likely to be swayed by popular, populist and momentary propaganda of political parties like "Garibi Hatao" and "Achhe Din Aane Wale Hain" at the time of election than think judiciously regarding their good. Policy making process has been under the influence of rich business houses at the cost of neglecting poor and marginalized sections of the society. Moreover, representative democracy has been monopolized by the corporate houses who fund the elections. As a result candidates after winning the election instead of speaking on behalf of wider groups become the spokesperson of their parties and big business houses in the legislative assemblies and deliberative bodies.

### **Chaukhambha Model of Democracy**

As democracy was loaded with a tendency of over-centralization, being a government of the rich and aristocrat, Lohia was skeptic regarding its functioning in post independent India. However it was the only system, capable enough to represent the diverse socio- economic and political rigidities prevailing in India. Indeed, Lohia had a tremendous appreciation for democracy as a system of government because of its "contemplative and accommodative" tributes. To put it differently, "West Ministerial Model" of democracy was not a kind of "shoe which fits all size", to make it comfortable to particular and complex socio-economics conditions rampant in Third World in general and in India in particular, Lohia advocated for



repair and overhaul of the democracy. To him democracy has to be adaptive in such a manner as to be not only a warrantor of certain civil and political rights of the people but be a harbinger of such socio-economic surrounding where no one is deprived of his basic necessities of life. Indeed, Lohia aspired for such a framework of democracy which shed off its elitist character and work for the upliftment of deprived section of society. In so far as the structure of government is concerned, Lohia's laudable attributes seems to be his model of four pillars of state. Lohia termed his model of decentralization as 'Chaukhamba Model' (Char Khamba- Four Pillar State) in which authority would be dispersed in villages, districts, provinces and center. Each pillar having equal respect and authority. Lohia wanted that the pillars must be in sync with each other and function in harmony, none outpacing the other. Only then the common men and women living in small groups in villages could taste the fruit of democracy. Only those functions should rest at the center which is of national significance, necessary to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation. Thus, Lohia recommended for a decentralized democratic model for the country. A model in which common citizenry will always be at loggerhead with unjust and insensitive policies of the government. As a true Gandhian, he advocated for the 'permanent civil disobedience' which would act as an everlasting remedy against any sort of injustice. Thus, considering village, mandal (district) province and center as the four pillars of decentralized system of government, Lohia unconventionally sought to dovetail the lower levels like village and mandal with the police and welfare functions. However, later, reiterating his support for the idea of world government, he argued for the creation of the 'fifth pillar' also which would be in the form of the world government. Being a witness of partition and sudden eruption of violence on religious line, Lohia argued for addressing the issue of religion and politics prudently in free India. Any hasty and reckless amalgamation of the two inescapably trigger religious bigotry between different groups endangering the very foundation of a nation. Hence, Lohia.

advocated for right placing of the ideas of religion and politics in order to build substantive political structure. Thus, Lohia thought process was all-encompassing, covering a wide range of problems of the political processes and institutions in the country. Lohia was a critique of the Westminster Model since it was elitist in nature. However, he was an ardent champion of its deliberative quality as it provides an opportunity for dialogue and discussion. A real democracy could be one which is participatory, provides fair and equal chance to each and every citizen. An active, aware and enlightened citizenship is a storehouse of a true democracy. To make democracy viable to all and sundry, according to Lohia there was a

need to adapt it to the phenomenal socio-economic status of India. There was an urgent need to combine political independence with economic independence to incorporate freedom with the need to provide nourishment to all. To Lohia freedom and equality are complimentary and can be realized within the fabric of social democracy. It is here one can acknowledge Gandhian imprint upon Lohia. He sought to amalgamate his model of democracy on the principle of Gandhism and socialism, a system where political power will be diffused and the economy decentralized. Following Gandhi, Lohia believed that a true non-violent and free society can be realized when people are governed the least, where political power is decentralized. While centralization leads to subjugation, decentralization provides ample opportunity for the development of individual potential. All other functions must be defused among other three pillars- the provinces, districts and villages following the spirit of equality and mutual respect. Lohia's four pillar state was not merely executive and legislative arrangements where central organs formulate policy and legislate whereas the district and the village organs are left only with execution. It was rather a way of life, structured in such a way which provides opportunity to the community as a whole to be a partner in every sphere of human activity, for instance, production, ownership, legislation, administration, planning, education and the like. The sovereign power was so diffused and decentralized in Lohia's design of state, common people became the master of their destiny, the ruler instead of being the ruled. In order to dispel the fear of skeptics and to realize his model of four pillar state, he enunciated a blue print for its realization. Under the Jurisdiction of central government, according to Lohia only those subjects may be placed which are of national significance and require decision making at national level such as defense, foreign affairs, railways, heavy industries, civil aviation and so on. All other subjects which are of provincial nature and have local consequences particularly administration of law and order must be under the jurisdiction of the districts and villages. Under Lohia structure of state, an utmost importance was assigned to the districts and villages. By owning and managing the small unit textile industry of tomorrow and by determining the management and arrangement of agriculture both in terms of proportion of capital and labour utilized, the districts and villages become a vital unit of governance. Lohia opines that rising issues of factionalism and regionalism may be answered only by involving social collectivity in the decision making. The notion of such a state, however, did not encapsulate the carbon copy of a self-sustained village but of the 'intelligent and vital village'. Under such a framework of the state, every section of the society would live judiciously and make an effort for the harmonious living. Lohia was in consonance with positive liberals that democracy gains substance only along with economic

freedom. Political decentralization must be adapted to the peculiar socio-economic condition of India. In a country where majority was poor and deprived, political democracy could be worthy of masses once they are liberated from their subsistence. So, he laid emphasis on abundant production and effective distribution.

### **POLITICAL THOUGHT OF LOHIA**

As an academically trained intellectual, Lohia always looked at the things in a perspective. Indeed, it may be argued that the freshness and plausibility of the political thought<sup>6</sup> of Lohia owed much of its substance to his context-driven analysis of the various issues and ideologies. Hence, before setting on to explore the dominant ideological frameworks and their suitability for the Indian circumstances, he tried to analyse the dynamics of civilisational transformations taking place at various points of time in history. He appeared convinced in the veracity of cyclical theory of history in so far as it helped in explaining the numerous ups and downs in the long history of a country or a civilisation such as India. Moreover, applying the canons of the cyclical theory of history, Lohia went on to modify the theory of dialectical materialism of Marx by emphasising that the element of intellectual consciousness plays equally, if not more, significant role in shaping the broad contours of a particular historical event and phase along with the economic factors. He, therefore, stressed the need for evolving a new intellectual format in which the factor of spirit or intellectual consciousness, articulated through the general aims of society, could be combined with the factor of matter or economic aims, expressed through the modes of production, might be visualised in an autonomous relationship in order to give an incisive understanding of history (see Lohia 1955).

### **SOCIAL THOUGHTS OF LOHIA**

The analytical incisiveness of Lohia's intellectual pursuits naturally led him to examine the social problems of India and suggest probable solutions to such problems. Analysing the Indian social structure, he asserted that universal male domination and the obnoxious caste system happen to be the two greatest evils of the Indian society. He attributed the prevalence of poverty to these two factors and called on the youth to become the bearer of a social revolution in the country. At the heart of such a revolution, he argued, lay the notions of 'constructive militancy' and 'militant construction'. While constructive militancy stood for positive channelisation of the vigour and zeal of the youths, the idea of militant construction

meant the radical nature of the constructive programmes to be carried out by the people. Thus, his assessment of the problems and suggestions of the solutions to such problems prove the radicalism of his thought and actions. Providing a macro analytical framework to the problem of caste in India, Lohia emphasised the inherent tussle between the forces perpetuating caste and the forces bent on introducing class perspective in the society. In such a conflict, while the idea of caste represent the evil forces of conservatism, primordial affinities and inertia, the notion of class becomes the beholder of the virtues of dynamism and social mobilisation in society. However, Lohia avers that this confrontation between the two remains almost unending owing to the fact that two sets of forces keep on changing sides leading to castes fragmenting into classes and classes occasionally metamorphosing into castes (Lohia 1955: 51). Such a seeming duality between the castes and classes did not seem plausible for Lohia and he kept on looking for ways and means to rid India of the inherent evils in her social structure. Lohia, therefore, came with the idea of 'seven revolutions' or saptakranti to infuse a new sense of dynamism and vigour in the Indian social system (Pandey and Mishra 2002). These seven revolutions are to be materialised in the form of: equality between man and women; struggle against political, economic and spiritual inequality based on skin colour; removal of inequality between backward and high castes based on traditions, and special opportunity for the backwards; measures against foreign enslavement in different forms; economic equality by way of planned production and removal of capitalism; measures against unjust encroachments on private life; and non-proliferation of weapons in conjunction with reliance on satyagraha. The most significant aspect of the seven revolutions of Lohia appears to be the reflection of his utmost desire to bring about the greatest degree of socioeconomic equality amongst the people. More importantly, the idea of equality to Lohia did not consist of only material equality in terms of equitable distribution of economic resources but also consisted of a higher degree of spiritual equality coming from the innate feeling of the individuals that they are equal like others in society (Lohia 1963: 236). Amongst the other aspects of his social thought, his continuous emphasis on Hindi language being made, as far as possible, the language of masses remains significant. Interestingly, Lohia himself was well-versed with a number of foreign languages such as German and English. Indeed, it appeared in consonance with Lohia's indelible passion for indigenous and native aspects of life being given preponderance in comparison to imported or imposed values and institutions drawn from an alien ambience. Hence, Lohia seemed quite pained at finding reluctance on the part of the government to give an impetus to Hindi as the mother tongue of the people. Lohia vehemently argued for the progressive

replacement of English by Hindi as the official language in the country. Moreover, he averred that the ethos of democracy could not be delved deep in the hearts of the people unless Hindi becomes the language of administrative and judicial systems in India. In sum, thus, Lohia's social thoughts reflected his deep sense of critical understanding of the problems of Indian social structure and a bunch of plausible solutions to overcome such problems.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Jayaprakash Narayan**

The germs of the concept of Total Revolution lie deeply embedded in Gandhi's teachings to which Jayaprakash Narayan, the leader of Total Revolution turned as a result of his disillusionment with what might be called "conventional wisdom of revolution and conventional technique" of change. Infact, Total Revolution is a further extension of Gandhi's thought on socio-economic problems and technique of change in the context of contemporary social, economic and political reality. The journey of Jayaprakash Narayan from Marxism to Gandhism resulted in Total Revolution. Unconventionality was most pronounced in Gandhi's thinking on social and economic arrangement of the society giving him a distinctive revolutionary character. Through Total Revolution, Jayaprakash Narayan tried to build upon it with a greater emphasis on specific components of the whole concept. Jayaprakash Narayan's Total Revolution is a grand vision of individual, state and society. Behind this vision lies an understanding of our entire experience of more than two hundred years of industrial development. It is based upon Gandhi's basic postulates and it envisages non-violent methods of changing society with non-violent techniques. Total Revolution is an all-enveloping process of change in the individual as well as in the society. The primary emphasis is on moral values, decentralisation of economic and political power and insistence on non-violent means to achieve good ends. Aims and Objectives After reading this Unit, you would be able understand

The concept, component and dynamics of change of Total Revolution.

The mode of action that propelled the movement.

## CONCEPT OF TOTAL REVOLUTION

To understand the word Total Revolution, we have to first of all understand the word “revolution”. Revolution as a concept has been defined in a number of ways. George Saweyer, Pettee, Samuel P. Huntington, Sigmund Neumann and Thomas S. Kuhn define revolution as value change. By value change is meant a change in the dominant value of the community at a particular point of time in its temporal dimension. 68 Non-Violent Movements after Gandhi The most common definitions of revolution have laid emphasis on a structural and institutional transformation in the existing social relationship and institutional bases of the society. The theorists of structural change envisage that a revolution replaces one social structure by another. In a narrow sense (or Marxian tradition) it is specially related to the changes in the economic structure of the society. Economic structure is interpreted to mean the structure of property relations. So a change in social structure is basically a change in the component of the ownership of property. In a broader sense, a change in social structure does mean not only a change in the property relations, i.e., the economic structure of society but also in other aspects of the social structure. Wilbert E. More defined revolution in terms of institutional change. He perceives revolution as a type of change which “engages a considerable portion of the population and results in change in the structure of government”. The other definitions of revolution include change in the leadership (elite) component of the government, changes brought about by legal/constitutional means, and finally violent acts. This analysis clearly spells out that any one dimension of change may mean a revolutionary change – be it a change in the dominant values of the community or its social structure, institutional, leadership or elite component, or legal or violent change. Total Revolution is a further extension of the Gandhian approach to social change. Social change in the Gandhian paradigm is a very comprehensive and inclusive term. According to Gandhi, a partial change in any one component of the social matrix is likely to produce disequilibrium in society. Society, therefore, will tend to move towards a state of constant instability. In order to ensure that the social organisation maintains a steady and dynamic homeostatic state, an all-round change is needed. By an all-round change Gandhi did not mean only a change in the social framework but also a qualitative change in the behavioural-attitudinal-valuational and psyche texture of the individual. Gandhi, like Hegel, believed that revolution begins in the minds of men. But Gandhi enlarged the Hegelian concept. Gandhi’s primary emphasis was that an individual wanting to change the society must first of all change himself. Gandhi’s revolution was evolutionary and a process of purification. Gandhi’s approach was not limited to a

change in individual's lifestyle, thought-structure, and behaviour-pattern only. Thus, together with a revolution in the individual, society must also change. It spans the entire continuum along which values as well as social and institutional structures are ranged. The emphasis is on each one of the elements constituting the continuum. Gandhi talked of changing the society, he conceived of far-reaching and novel changes in the entire social organisation which consisted of the economy, polity, technique of production, personnel system of both the polity and economy, and, above all, the means to be adopted for effecting the change. Total Revolution, as a concept, was put forward by Jayaprakash Narayan (at times referred to as JP) in the wake of Bihar Movement in Patna on June 5, 1974. In a public meeting at Gandhi Maidan, Jayaprakash Narayan declared that the struggle was not going to be limited to securing the demands of the students, including the resignation of the Minister and the dissolution of the Assembly in Bihar, but would aim at bringing about a Total Revolution or Sampurna Kranti, which alone could solve the urgent problems of the country and usher in a new society. Actually, it was Karl Marx who had first used this term in the book 'The Poverty of Philosophy (1847)' in which he wrote: "... meanwhile, the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class, a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a Total Revolution". Total Revolution signifies a radical transformation not merely of our material conditions but also of the moral character of the individuals. The idea was implicit in many of Gandhi's writings and speeches. Vinoba expanded the idea further. As early as 1951, he declared: "My aim is to bring about a three-fold revolution. First, I want a change in people's hearts; secondly, I want to create a change in their lives; and thirdly, I want to change the social structure. In the sixties he spoke in this vein frequently enough to warrant the use of Towards Total Revolution as the title of a book containing his speeches, published in 1968. At least once he also used the term 'Total Revolution'. It has been aptly observed in a recent study that JP's movement for Total Revolution was a 'continuation of the preceding movement for non-violent revolution through Bhoodan and Gramdan'. JP himself justified it remarking on one occasion: "There is hardly any difference between Sarvodaya and Total Revolution. If there is any, then Sarvodaya is the goal and Total Revolution the means. Total Revolution is basic change in all aspects of life. There cannot be Sarvodaya without this". Without using the term Total Revolution JP himself had been emphasising since the midforties, if not earlier, the need for a social revolution which would not merely bring about a change in the structure of society, but also an improvement in the character of the individuals comprising it. After he joined the Bhoodan movement in the fifties he laid particular stress on it. In course of an article

published in 1969 he also used the term 'Total Revolution' to describe the objective of the Sarvodaya movement in India. Referring to the Bhoodan and Gramdan programmes he observed: "Gandhi's non-violence was not just a plea for law and order, or a cover for the status quo, but a revolutionary philosophy. It is, indeed, a philosophy of a Total Revolution, because it embraces personal and social ethics and values of life as much as economic, political and social institutions and processes". It is, however, a fact that the term 'Total Revolution' became a recurrent theme of JP's speeches and writings only since 1974 and it is only since then that it has taken its place in Indian political discourse. Following Gandhi, JP recognised the necessity of change in the individual, the individual who takes upon himself the task of changing society. "One of the unstated implications of satyagraha would be", JP says in his prison Diary, "a self-change, that is to say, those wanting a change must also change themselves before launching any kind of action". In this lies the whole philosophy of JP's Total Revolution. During his "democratic socialist" days, JP had reached the conclusion that no revolution worth the name was possible unless the practitioners of revolution themselves underwent a change in their individual being. Thus the cornerstone of revolution was the changed individual who in turn worked for change in the socio-economic structure of the society. JP's faith in the change of the individual as the pre-condition for change in the society was a Gandhian approach. Like Gandhi, JP also stressed that individual change cannot be regarded as the be-all and end-all. On the other hand, it is the morally transformed individuals who would activate the process of change. To put it differently, societal change is not to wait until all individuals in the society change. On the contrary, the transformed individual and the social framework are to interact so that it can lead to an all-round change. A process of simultaneous change is therefore the sine qua non of a society expecting a revolution. JP conceived of a revolutionary in terms of not only commitment to the cause of revolution but also his own lifestyle and attitudinal structure. He was, no doubt, a 'professional' revolutionary, but in him both profession and practice (vichar and aachar) Total Revolution 69 70 Non-Violent Movements after Gandhi found a happy blending. He practised what he preached and preached what he practised. Ideas were, therefore, constantly being tested in the crucible of practice, and practice in turn leads to a modification of ideas. JP's concept of revolution is very comprehensive like that of Gandhi's. It consists of a wide spectrum of variables. It is non-conformist in so far as it departs from the usual meanings attached to revolution.



## **THE COMPONENT OF TOTAL REVOLUTION**

There are seven components of Total Revolution – social, economic, political, cultural, ideological, intellectual, educational, and spiritual. These numbers may be increased or decreased. JP himself thought that the cultural revolution could include educational and ideological. Similarly, social revolution, according to him, in the Marxian sense can cover economic and political revolutions and even more than that. He also thinks that each of the seven categories can be further split up into sub-categories. For proper analysis these seven components may be rearranged in the following manner: (a) cultural, which includes spiritual – moral, ideological, intellectual, and educational; (b) social-economic; and (c) political.

**Cultural:** JP used the term culture in a very comprehensive sense. It connotes individual and group behaviour. At a purely personal or group level, cultural revolution invokes a change in the moral values held by the individual or the group. In any debate of moral values, therefore, ends and means must enter. It is in regard to the ends – means problem that JP, following Gandhi, has been very insistent. As far back as 1950, JP declared: “We eschew the unclean and unscrupulous methods that the communists follow”. Writing on yet another occasion in 1951, he said: “The first aspect of Gandhism that must interest the socialist is its moral and ethical basis, its insistence on values. Russian or Stalinist interpretation of socialist philosophy has reduced it to a Crass Machiavellian code of conduct utterly devoid of any sense of right or wrong, good or evil. The end justifies the means, and when the end is power – personal or group power – there is no limit to the depth to which the means will sink to secure the objectives. A change in regard to the ends – means relationship both in the individual and group life is bound to produce a corresponding change in the belief system, that is, the ideology of either the individual or the group. A new ideological revolution, therefore, is bound to ensure if the organic relationship between ends and means is accepted. As a natural corollary to this, an intellectual revolution cannot be avoided; for the entire ends-and-means approach in the context of Gandhian thought must give a new outlook to the individual or the group to view things around them. And this is what JP means by intellectual revolution. The most important variable in the cultural change is education. According to JP, education must be a powerful element of social change and it should be closely linked to national development. It should be biased in favour of the masses rather than in favour of the upper classes. It must create a new kind of awareness among the submerged and weaker

sections of our society, so that they feel fully integrated with the society. He had suggested the following changes in the present system: (i) One-third to one-half of the working time in all educational institutions at all stages should be devoted to active participation in the programmes of social service and national development. (ii) A large part of non-formal education should be introduced in the system. Part-time education and correspondence courses must be expanded at the secondary and university stages. (iii) A large part of our budget on education benefits the upper classes with the result that the masses are left out. Such an imbalance must be corrected if social justice is to be the objective of our educational policies, with this end in view, three programmes must be given top priority, namely (i) adult education; (ii) a non-formal education of less than six hours a week to all out-of-school youths in the age-group of 15-26; and lastly (iii) universalisation of elementary education for all children. Turning to secondary education, JP's scheme envisaged a thorough change in the system. First, higher institutions should not be permitted to proliferate leading to a fall in the standards. Secondly, strict criteria should be laid down regarding recognition, affiliation, and financial assistance to be given to the institutions of higher education. Thirdly, adequate fees should be charged in these institutions while making allowance for liberal grant of free studentships and scholarships to deserving candidates. Fourthly, the emphasis in higher education should be on quality rather than quantity. Fifthly, the entire slant of education should be towards vocationalisation and diversion of students into work at various stages. And, lastly but most importantly, degrees must be delinked from employment. JP's recommendations seek to lay the foundation of a more viable, meaningful, and purposeful system of education.

Social-Economical: As JP stated, 'social' in the Marxian sense also includes 'economic'. A social revolution, therefore, is basically an economic revolution in the Marxian formulation. Marx's use of the term was justified in the European context. In the Indian context, the term 'social' has a distinctive character. Due to caste divisions, a whole panoply of rituals, hierarchy, modes of inter-caste communication, sense of pollution, marriage norms and practices, social distance, and informal rules of behaviour have grown over thousands of years. JP did not overlook the fact that there lies a thin boundary line between a caste and an economic class. Yet he also recognised the social reality underlying the caste configuration in society. And that reality is that caste is quite an autonomous factor, independent of its economic moorings. The task of Total Revolution in this sense is iconoclastic. It has to break the caste barriers. And, in order to do so, Total Revolution must evolve new norms and practices replacing those based on caste. Inter-caste dining, abolition of dowry system, archaic marriage rules and regulations – all must enter the area of Total

Revolution. It is in this sense that the social content of Total Revolution assumes quite an independent dimension. But Total Revolution must go hand in hand with economic revolution. JP only carried Gandhi's thinking further to embrace every detail of economic life. 'Economic relationship', JP recorded in his Prison Diary, "includes technological, industrial, and agricultural revolutions, accompanied by a radical change in the pattern of ownership and management". The industrial-technological structure of the economy has two major facets, namely (i) the ownership pattern, and (ii) the size of technology. The model of industrial-technological development that he has in mind consists of a number of elements. They are (a) diversified ownership pattern of the self-employed individual, groups of families, registered cooperatives, gram sabhas, block samitis, zilla parishads and only in the end, the state (b) labour – intensive small techniques linked largely with agriculture in place of capital intensive technology with the provision that, where the latter becomes inevitable, it should be placed under State ownership. Such large-scale industries are conceived only as Total Revolution 71 72 Non-Violent Movements after Gandhi feeders to small units so that they do not devour the former as has happened in the wake of technological revolution. In the sphere of agriculture, JP's thinking was very specific. The present agrarian structure, even after different States have passed land-ceiling legislation, remains as unevenly balanced as ever. Except in Kerala and West Bengal, no significant change in the structure of ownership has taken place. JP agitated for "land to the tillers". The primary emphasis in regard to land reform, therefore, is on the ownership of land by those who cultivate it, adequate wages for the landless, poor, and effective implementation of existing laws relating to ceiling, eviction, share-cropping, and homestead land. If the existing laws had been implemented, a new ethos in the countryside would have been created. But it is exactly in relation to putting the laws into operation that all governments of whatever ideological variety, have failed. Political: In the sphere of political revolution JP follows Gandhi. Gandhi visualised power rising from the grassroots and reaching the top which remained nothing more than a coordinating body. Such a view of polity was different from those in practice either in democratic systems or the communist countries. In other words, if power was shared among different echelons of the social structure starting from, say, the village upward, the danger of centralisation could very well be avoided. Centralisation, either of political or of economic power, was what Gandhi dreaded most. He, therefore, laid emphasis on decentralisation. JP followed the same line of thinking in his approach to the reconstitution of power from the base. His thinking on polity in the present context had two distinctive features. Firstly, he raised substantive issues in regard to the whole polity as is prevalent today; and secondly, pending the reorganisation of

the polity along his substantive formulations, he advocated reform in the present political system. His vision of a partyless democracy, reorganisation of the power structure from below, institution of an altogether different mode of election to the new representative bodies and other suggestions fall under the first. In the second category, he visualised reforms in the parliamentary system. In plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity, JP rejected the western model of democracy on the ground that it did not give full scope to the people to participate in the management of their affairs and is based on an atomised view of society, the state being an inorganic sum of individuals. In its place he pleaded for a model of democracy, based on an integrated concept of society and providing the fullest possible scope to the individual to participate in the management of his affairs, without the intermediation of political parties. The latter, according to JP, functioned without any control over them by the people or even by their own numbers and were the source of many evils. It was not, however, the party system that was the main culprit, but parliamentary democracy, which lay at its back and which could not work without it. In the context of Total Revolution, the following points need to be stressed. First, JP's approach to the reordering of political power is significant. This led him to conceive of a polity in which the effective levels of power are controlled by people. In order that such a control is possible, he advocates the creation of formal structures at village, block and district levels. Most of the power, in his scheme, rests with these structures. The structures are governments at their respective levels in the sense that they are independent in their sphere of operation and yet interdependent in relation to other tiers. It was this approach to decentralisation of power that led him to support the panchayati raj system. He believed that it was perfectly feasible to incorporate the different tiers below the State level into the constitutional framework by a bold stroke of amendment, thereby making it a part of the structure of the entire polity. In such a polity, a viable structure is one in which participation of the largest number in the decision-making process is guaranteed. JP made a radical departure from the practice of the panchayati raj. He pleaded for units which would be administratively viable while guaranteeing the participation of the people. This, in essence, meant a process of regrouping from the village upward so that an optimum size crystallises at the respective levels. Secondly, JP has in the past made far-reaching and comprehensive recommendations with a view to reforming the present system of election. He was the first to suggest that in order to prevent defections, which became the order of the day, effective legislative steps should be taken. JP also raised the issue of the corrupting role of money in the entire electoral process. Reform of the electoral system has been one of the very persistent demands which JP went on making on the political system.

There are other aspects like the use of administrative machinery, the ways and means of conducting a free and fair election, and a civil code of conduct among political parties about which JP has provided wide-ranging guidelines. JP has drawn our attention to the control of the legislators. He suggested that there should be a clause in our Constitution for the recall of the legislators, that is, the constituents must be vested with the power to recall a member if he does not carry out his duties.

## **PANDITA RAMABAI**

### **Pioneer of Indian Feminism**

Pandita Ramabai's distinction as a pioneer of Indian Feminism can be illustrated by her academic writings and institutional pursuits for protecting women's rights and their emancipation. The bedrock of feminist consciousness in Pandita Ramabai can be traced to her erudite scholarship and upbringing in a liberal and progressive environment which saved her from living in a strictly regulated society governed by stringent gender roles that forced women to live in wifedom and motherhood. Her felt experience of discrimination against women and the plight of widows further intensified her zeal of engaging in the task of social reform.

### **Independent Stance on Religion**

Attracted to less asymmetrical gender relations, Pandita Ramabai converted to Christianity during her visit to England, but she remained selective in accepting the elements of her new religious doctrine. Ramabai got intrigued by the liberal and progressive outlook of Christian missionaries. Ramabai received immense financial aid, volunteer work, and spiritual sustenance from Christian missionaries to sustain her institutions in India.

Pandita Ramabai's act of religious conversion created widespread resentment among upper-caste Hindus. On her return to India, she proactively engaged in the rehabilitation of widows against the wishes of their menfolk. Upholding the rights of widows wasn't acceptable to a considerably large section of Hindu Brahmins.

Meera Kosambi mentioned that her conversion needs to be understood within the patriarchal framework of 19th-century India. She converted to Christianity at a time when she was going through the darkest period of her life owing to no emotional support and social unacceptance.

While receiving immense spiritual and financial support from the Christian community on the other hand.

Ramabai also had to pay a heavy price for this, she was socially marginalised and excluded from the history of western India.

Simultaneously, she became the target of criticism from Anglicans. Although international Christian missionaries became a support system for Pandita Ramabai to sustain her institutions in India, she was not turned into a blind follower of Christianity. Like-minded Ramabai opposed church authorities for imposing their dogma and discipline. Her reply to a fellow Christian testifies to her independent stance on the new religion-

“I am, it is true, a member of the church of Christ but I am not bound to accept every word that falls down from the lips of priests or bishops...I have great efforts freed myself from the yoke of the Indian priestly tribe, so I am not at present willing to place myself under another similar yoke.”

The other conflict with the church was centred on wearing a crucifix which was alien to Indian culture. She asserted indigenous culture that made her insist that the crucifix should bear an inscription in Sanskrit not in Latin. Thus, Christian missionaries wanted to groom and train Ramabai as an instrument to serve their own purposes but she asserted her independence.

## **Quest for Gender Reforms**

Pandita Ramabai's strong desire to ensure gender justice is reflected in her leadership role played before The Hunter Education Commission appointed by the British government in 1882. In her testimony before the Commission, Ramabai demanded the appointment of women teachers for schools. In addition, she demanded the training of women doctors, there should be more women in the medical field to save those women who couldn't consult male physicians. In this effort, Ramabai raised the voice for oppressed Indian women- widows, deserted women and sexually exploited women.

Her speech on two resolutions of gender reform in the Congress Convention held in Bombay in 1889 also substantiates her endeavours towards attaining gender equality. Ramabai spoke on two resolutions- one related to marriage and the other on the shaving of the head of the

widow. These resolutions weren't only passed with a massive majority, but she literally wonderstruck everyone sitting there.

## Contemporary Relevance

It is due to the untiring efforts of Pandita Ramabai, we could move from 'emancipation from' to 'attainment of' in the journey of protecting women's rights and their empowerment. Because of social reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who struggled throughout their life to abolish various social evils- support for widow remarriage, Sati Pratha, women's denial of education, we are striving today, to attain increasing participation of women in decision-making bodies, leadership positions, income-generating activities, sports, defence, media.

The idea of Ramabai to build women's institutions was carried forward to post-independent India in the form of creating Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and Self-Help Groups. Her institution Mukti Mission still continues in Maharashtra and actively working in the form of a humanitarian organization to provide education, training, and dignified life to thousands of destitute women and children irrespective of their background.

## In the end

Pandita Ramabai's distinction as the protagonist of women's rights comprises her personality and the deeds that are *what she was* and *what she did* throughout her life for women's emancipation. It is noteworthy that due to several constraints such as lack of funds, no family support, and social resistance, Ramabai remained determined in her vision and mission to work for uplifting women.

## Savitri Bai Phule

- Savitri Bai Phule was the social reformer of the 19th century who worked in the field of women education.

### Personal Life

- Savitribai Phule was born on **3 January 1831** at Naigaon in Maharashtra's Satara district.

- She was the eldest daughter of Lakshmi and Khandoji Neveshe Patil, both of whom belonged to the Mali community, now an Other Backward Caste (OBC).
- **At the age of 9, she was married to 13-year-old Jyotirao Phule.**
- Jyotirao Phule, better known as Jyotiba, was also a social reformer who worked in the field of women education. **Jyotirao educated Savitribai at home after their marriage.**
- Savitribai Phule died on **10 March 1897**, while caring for a patient in the clinic she had opened for the treatment of those affected by the bubonic plague.

#### Social Endeavors and Its Impact

- In the 19th century, public education was limited and there were only a few missionary schools which were “open to all”. In this period, Jyotiba, at the age of 21, and Savitri, 17, **opened a school for women in 1848.**
  - It was the country’s **first school for women started by Indians.**
- She also took teacher’s training course at an institute run by an American missionary in Ahmednagar and in Pune’s Normal School.
- She then started teaching girls in Pune’s Maharwada.
- **By the end of 1851, the Phules were running three schools in Pune with around 150 girl students.** The teaching methods at their schools were believed to be better than government schools and soon the number of girls enrolled in Phule’s schools outnumbered that of the boys in government schools.
- In 1849, Jyotiba and Savitri Bai left their family home as their acts were considered against the society by their family.
  - They stayed with the family of a friend, Usman Sheikh, where Savitribai met Fatima Begum Sheikh.
  - Fatima Sheikh along with Savitribai went to the Normal School and they both graduated together. She was the first Muslim woman teacher of India.
- **In the 1850s**, the Phule couple initiated two educational trusts—**the Native Female School, Pune and The Society for Promoting the Education of Mahars, Mangs and Etceteras**—which came to have many schools under them.



- She published **Kavya Phule in 1854** and **Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar in 1892**. In her poem, **Go, Get Education**, she urges the oppressed communities to get an education and break free from the chains of oppression.
- In **1852**, Savitribai started the **Mahila Seva Mandal** to raise awareness about women's rights. Savitribai called for a women's gathering where members from all castes were welcome and everybody was expected to sit on the same mattress.
- She simultaneously **campaigns against child marriage, while supporting widow remarriage**.
- In **1863**, they started a **home for the prevention of infanticide in their own house, for the safety of pregnant, exploited Brahman widows and to nurture their children**.
- In **1890**, **Jyotirao passed away**. Defying all social norms, she lit his funeral pyre.
- After Jyotiba's death in 1890, Savitribai carried forward the work of the organization Satya Shodhak Samaj and also chaired the annual session held at Saswad in 1893.
- She initiated the first **Satyashodhak marriage—a marriage without a dowry, Brahmin priests or Brahminical rituals in 1873**. Her adopted son, Yashwant, too, had a Satyashodhak inter-caste marriage.
- Her achievements were diverse and numerous, but they had a singular effect—posing a brave and pioneering challenge to the caste system and patriarchy.

### **Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers Society)**

- It was founded by **Jyotirao Phule in 1873 in Pune**.
- Satya shodhak samaj was founded with a purpose to **give education to the lower castes**, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and made them aware of the exploiting tradition of society.

# **Savitribai Phule: Pioneer Of Education**

## **Education Background**

Savitribai's education started after she married Jyotirao Phule. He started educating her along with his cousin Sagunabai Shirsagar at their home. So, Savitribai's primary education was taken care of by her husband.

She was then educated by two of Jyotirao's friends Sakharam Yeshwant Paranjpe and Keshav Shivram Bhavalkar. She went on to pursue her teacher training at an American missionary school in Ahmednagar. She also pursued a course at Pune's Normal School.

## **Family Background**

Savitribai's family was also a believer in age-old practices such as child marriage. They were steeped in casteism and the traditional systems. The reforms she brought later in her life were all due to the education she received after her marriage to Jyotirao Phule.

Being from such a backward class gave her the experience and sensibility of the oppressed in a biased society. This was crucial to the formulation of her ideas about social reform and the upliftment of women.

## **Contribution to Education**

After completing her teaching training, Savitribai Phule, along with Jyotirao's cousin Sagunabai, began to teach girl students in Pune. At a time when educating girls was unthinkable, Savitribai initiated a movement that enabled women to stand out in society as equals.

Between 1848 and 1851, Jyotirao, Sagunabai and Savitribai opened three schools for girls. Together, the three schools had a hundred and fifty students. It was the first time in the history of the country that education of women was taken up as a cause.

When they started teaching girls, Jyotirao's father, whose home they were living in, asked them to leave because their work was not understood or appreciated by his family. In fact, what they were doing was considered sinful by the community. They began living in the

home of Usman Sheikh, a friend of Jyotirao's. Here they met Fatima Begum Sheikh, who was the first Muslim woman teacher in India. In 1849, Savitribai and Fatima Sheikh started a school in the Sheikh's residence.

### **Her Impact on Society**

Savitribai initiated the notion of women's education in India. She has been popularly called the 'Crusader of Gender Justice.' Along with her husband Jyotirao, Savitribai established two educational trusts. One was called the Native Female School of Pune, and the other was The Society for Promoting the Education of Mahars, Mangs and Etceteras.

She and husband Jyotirao taught at a total of 18 schools. That was the spread of her impact. In an era when there were no female teachers and no girl students, Savitribai revolutionised the system of education and paved the way for women's education. Any information on Savitribai Phule will lead to details of her work in these sectors.

### **Volunteering Roles Social Reforms**

Not only did Savitribai Phule focus her efforts in the area of women's education, but also that of education among all castes. People considered to be of lower castes were usually treated with indifference and not offered any scope for education or even a place in society. The endeavours of Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule brought about a significant change in that belief system in India.

The other reforms they emphasised were child marriage and widow remarriage. They started a campaign against these age-old practices and established a home for widows and abandoned babies. She also opposed the practice of 'Sati.'

Savitribai started a women's shelter that she named the Home for Prevention of Infanticide. This was a safe haven for Brahmin women to deliver their children, instead of aborting them.

Jyotirao and Savitribai also opened a centre for rape victims to safely deliver their babies. This institute housed pregnant victims and was called the 'Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha' or Child-Killing Prohibition Home.

## **Legacy of Savitri Phule Jayanti**

Savitribai's works include publications of her poems and letters. In 1854, her poetic work titled 'Kavya Phule' was published. Then, in 1892, another work titled 'Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar' came out.

In a poem titled 'Go, Get Education', she urges women to acquire an education in order to free themselves from the pains of subjugation.

Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule adopted a son Yashwant, for whom she chose to have an inter-caste marriage.

Savitribai's death is an epic tale in itself. In order to save a youth inflicted by the bubonic plague, she herself caught the disease and died. Before she did, though, she managed to carry him on her back to the clinic that Yashwant had opened on the outskirts of Pune to treat plague patients.

She is often recognised along with BR Ambedkar and Annabhau Sathe as an idol for the backward classes in India. In 1998, the Government of India released a postage stamp in her honour.

In Savitribai's honour, the Pune University was renamed the Savitribai Phule Pune University in 2015. On her birthday every year, January 3rd, girls' schools in Pune celebrate 'Balika Din' or the Girl Child Day.

## **Conclusion**

The life and pursuits of Savitribai Phule are inspirational to many people. Her efforts in the areas of women's education, ending class discrimination as well as abolishing age-old practices of child marriage, Sati, dowry and child infanticide transformed the way society viewed women and their role in society.

One of the biggest examples of her reformist views was her lighting the funeral pyre of her own husband. She went against social norms that demanded only a son or male relative to light the flame. She went against that tenet and performed the ritual herself.

## **SAVITRIBAI PHULE: THE LADY WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA**

A leading social reformer Savitribai Phule is hailed for her contribution in the field of education. Savitribai was a crusader for women empowerment as she broke all stereotypes and spent her life promoting the noble cause of women's education. The deprived of India's exclusion was made to be a slave for thousands of years. Savitribai Phule has made education the biggest weapon of freedom from slavery.

Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule were a formidable team, their ultimate aim the unity of all oppressed communities. They were the first in modern India to launch a full-blown attack on the Brahminic casteist framework of society. In time they also included Adivasis and Muslims, and fought hard for their emancipation as well.

Savitribai was the means through which Jyotirao realised his vision. She, a woman who had seen poverty, caste discrimination and life without education, was the perfect role model for her students. It was because of her powerful influence as a teacher that one of her Bahujan students, eleven-year-old Muktabai, wrote a powerful essay that was published in Dyanodaya, a popular Bombay-based newspaper. She wrote, "Formerly, we were buried alive in the foundations of buildings... we were not allowed to read and write...God has bestowed on us the rule of the British and our grievances are redressed. Nobody harasses us now. Nobody hangs us. Nobody buries us alive..."

Another student, a boy named Mahadu Waghole, wrote about the relationship between Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule: "If she saw tattered clothes on the body of poor women, she would give them saris from her own house. Due to this, their expenses rose. Tatya (Jyotirao) would sometimes say to her, one should not spend so much. To this, she would smile and ask, what do we have to take with us when we die? Tatya would sit quietly for some time after this as he had no response to the question. They loved each other immensely." Even though the Phules were constantly engaged in making others' lives better, Savitribai took great care of Jyotirao Phule's health and personally cooked all his meals.

Their relationship was based on respect for each other's individual identities, which is why it survived the toughest of times, particularly their failure to conceive a child. Jyotirao was under a lot of pressure from his family to remarry for the sake of an offspring but he stayed committed to Savitribai. He wrote: "If a pair has no child, it would be unkind to charge a woman with barrenness. It might be the husband who was unproductive. In that case if a

woman went in for a second husband how would her husband take it? Would he not feel insulted and humiliated? It is a cruel practice for a man to marry a second time because he had no issues from his wife.” These were radical thoughts for that time.

Much later, the Phules adopted a son and raised him as their own. Jyotirao had rescued and brought home a young Brahmin widow who was pregnant and contemplating suicide. She bore a son whom the Phules adopted and named Yashwant.

Savitribai respected Jyotirao not just as a husband but also as her teacher. He had given her a new lease of life, armed her with an education and helped her stand on her own feet. This is why in her letters to Jyotirao, she addresses him thus: “The Embodiment of Truth, My Lord Jyotirao, Savitribai salutes you!” The letters provide a glimpse into her belief in their mission to educate oppressed communities. In one letter, Savitribai responds to one of her brothers who admonished her for defying caste and religious norms: “The lack of learning is nothing but gross bestiality. It is the acquisition of knowledge that gives the Brahmins their superior status...my husband is a god-like man. He is beyond comparison in this world, nobody can equal him. He confronts the Brahmins and fights with them for teaching the untouchables because he believes that they are human beings like others and they should live as dignified humans. For this they must be educated. I also teach them for the same reason.”

More than Jyotirao, his wife deserves praise. No matter how much we praise her, it would not be enough. How can one describe her stature? She cooperated with her husband completely and along with him, faced all the trials and tribulations that came their way.”

While education was their main aim, the Phules also engaged with several other charitable efforts. A young Brahmin widow working as a cook in the house of Jyotirao Phule’s friend was raped by a neighborhood shastri. The widow, Kashibai, became pregnant and the shastri refused to take responsibility. When all efforts to abort the baby failed, she gave birth to a son. Afraid of the social stigma attached to conceiving outside of wedlock, she killed the baby. The police filed a case against Kashibai and she was later sentenced to life imprisonment in the Andaman Islands. Saddened by this, the Phules set up a home for the welfare of unwed mothers and their children. They advertised the facility by distributing rather provocatively worded pamphlets in Pune’s Brahmin colonies. This earned them the ire of a lot of Brahmins but also saved the lives of many pregnant widows at a time when upper-caste Hindu widows were not allowed to remarry and were shunned by society. Apart from

this, the Phules had established a night school for peasants and workers a few years previously, which had also done surprisingly well; many workers from oppressed communities were admitted.

Savitribai was a revolutionary on par with her husband, spearheading many progressive movements in her individual capacity. She started the Mahila Seva Mandal, which worked for the awareness of women's rights, and rigorously campaigned against the dehumanisation of widows and advocated widow remarriage. She also spoke against infanticide and opened a rehabilitation centre for illegitimate children. Savitribai also organised a successful barbers' strike denouncing the inhumane practice of shaving widows' heads. She also never shied from bringing her reformations to her own home: she opened the water tank in their house to the "untouchables". This symbolic act challenged notions of purity and pollution inherent to the caste system.

When Jyotirao Phule passed away in November 1890, Yashwant objected to Jyotirao Phule's cousin lighting his funeral pyre, arguing that this right belonged to the heir to Jyotirao Phule's property. Accordingly, it was Savitribai who led Jyotirao Phule's last journey, walking ahead of the procession. She lit the pyre, an act that invites censure even today. In nineteenth-century India, this was probably the first time a woman had performed death rites.

As an ode to Jyotirao's exemplary life, Savitribai wrote his biography in verse, titled *Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar* or *The Ocean of Pure Gems*. She also edited and published four of Jyotirao's speeches on Indian history. Savitribai continued to carry forward the vision she had shared with Jyotirao. She took over the leadership of the *Satyashodhak Samaj* and was elected president.

Savitribai's life reads like an endlessly inspiring storybook; the stuff of legend. She was the only woman leader of 19th-century India who understood the intersectionality of patriarchy and caste and fought hard against it. Known as *Kaku* (paternal aunt) by all her students, Savitribai was a loving but fiercely revolutionary soul who transformed many lives.