

Chapter - VI

GANDHI AND HIND SWARAJ : A CRITICAL STUDY

Introduction :

' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule, written by Gandhi as we have studied in our earlier chapters was essentially an attempt to counter the growing school of violence both in India and in South Africa. Gandhi hoped that the message of ' Hind Swaraj ' would be enthroned in the hearts of the people. He sincerely hoped that the doctrine of love preached in this booklet would take the place of brute force and guide the nationalist movement, especially those leaders who were ready to follow any method to win ' Swaraj '. The importance of ' Hind Swaraj ' lies in its message it seeks to convey, and the change it seeks to bring, in the method adopted by the Extremists and revolutionary terrorists. He suggests passive resistance or ' Satyagraha ' as an alternative method to obtain ' Swaraj '. The essence of ' Hind Swaraj ' reflects Gandhis desire to obtain true Home Rule, and not just the substitution of white rule by brown rule. He, in Hind Swaraj, envisages an ideal state

devoid of the evils of modern civilization and its symbols of slavery such as lawyers, doctors, railways, and machinery, but reflecting the ancient civilization of India in all her splendour and glory.

To say the least, ' Hind Swaraj ' is a controversial book because it challenges many basic assumptions. We can recognize the importance of ' Hind Swaraj ' but it is always difficult to agree with Gandhi on all the points he discussed. Hence at first an attempt will be made to study the positive aspects of the book and subsequently the controversial issues will be critically analyzed.

Analysis of the Merits of Hind Swaraj :

Indictment of Modern Civilization :

An important subject matter which merits attention are his views on modern civilization, which could be appreciated to some extent as well as criticized for its one sidedness. In fact the seizure of the book is obviously not to the liking of Gandhi for it further confirms his belief that his action on the part of the British government is promoted by modern civilization. And he thus concludes that it is not the British who rule India but modern

civilization, which has to be overthrown if we have to attain ' Swaraj '. Ironically the book contains not a grain of violence and on the contrary upholds the principles of truth force which is an outstanding trait of Indian civilization. A change in life style attire and possession of wealth are so called emblems of civilization and in fact Gandhi felt that they represent the very emblems of slavery, for to acquire the above, men indulge in a mad race, ultimately leading to their degradation, downfall and ruination.

Modern civilization is geared towards the fulfillment of the acquisitive desires of man, and is not in consonance with the principles of peace, freedom and well being of the individual. Gandhi opined that modern civilization was based on force and exploitation and resulted in the fall of the individual from the spiritual plane to the material plane. Greed exploitation and violence then become the guiding principles of his life. Modern civilization is according to Gandhi irreligious and is far removed from the principles of ethics and morality. It thus resulted in oppression, exploitation and inequality, destroying the peace and happiness of man. Thus the priorities of modern civilization which are wealth power prestige and increase in bodily comforts, in the long run destroy the very essence of his being. One can thus appreciate Gandhis views regarding modern civilization which is a

nine day wonder, which had enslaved India, and the key to ' Swaraj ' lay in its renunciation. Thus, in Gandhi's denunciation of modern civilization, there is a positive aspect in the sense that he correctly understood the evil effects of modern civilisation. Even G.D.H. Cole who admits that he is not a Gandhist, is willing to concede the temporality of modern civilization, and queries, " But to-day who among us has confidence that this Western civilization will survive at all ? It is not ' doomed', but it is threatened and it grows plainer and plainer that it can be saved from destruction only if, it can be quickly and radically transformed from within."¹ Hence Gandhi's critique of Modern civilization is very relevant.

Criticism of the Extremists and Their Methods :

One could also appreciate Gandhi views on the issue regarding the method to be adopted to the obtain ' Swaraj '. Gandhi is critical of the extremists and revolutionaries who are bent upon obtaining ' Swaraj ' through the adoption of violent and revolutionary tactics. He had in ' Hind Swaraj ' strongly condemned the methods adopted by the revolutionaries, which he felt were alien to our ethos and culture. Gandhi felt that India a country which since times immemorial had preached the doctrines of peace and

1) Cole G.D.H. - The Aryan Path, Vol. IX, Sept. 1938. No. 9
p. 429.

non-violence should not go down in history for the use of violence to obtain her freedom. This attitude he felt was not Indian and did not reflect Indianess. Rather through the use of violence Gandhi opined that they were doing nothing more than imitating the west, and in the long run would never achieve lasting results. Gandhi thus said, " If you agree with me, it will be your duty to tell the revolutionaries and everybody else that the freedom they want, or they think they want is not to be obtained by killing people or doing violence, but by setting themselves right, and by becoming and remaining truly Indian. Then the British rulers will be servants and not masters. They will be trustees and not tyrants they will live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India. The future therefore lies not with the British race, but with the Indians themselves, and if they have sufficient self abnegation and abstemiousness, they can make themselves free this very moment."² Gandhi correctly understood the limitation of the politics of moderates and extremists and wanted the Indians to follow new method of politics that would help them win Swaraj without making any compromises.

2) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 295.

Gandhi's Theory of Satyagraha :

The most important contribution of ' Hind Swaraj ' was the development of the theory of Satyagraha. He was constantly faced with the issue of gaining ' Swaraj ' for India. It was his ardent desire to obtain ' Swaraj ' through means best suited to her genius. His political struggle in South Africa to restore the lost pride and dignity of his brethren there, inspired him to launch, ' passive resistance ' later referred to as ' Satyagraha '. Spurred by the initial success of the movement and its powerful impact. Gandhi desired that this technique be adopted by the Indians who were waging a political struggle against the British empire to obtain ' Swaraj '. Opposed as he was to violence Gandhi provided the alternative method of Satyagraha to secure Swaraj ' and hoped it would wean the revolutionaries away from the path of violence.

It was indeed a novel weapon launched in the political arena. The weapon relied upon was love which was bound to melt even the stoniest heart. ' Satyagraha ' aimed at converting the opponent, to make him realize the truth which was elusive. It attacked the evil in the opponent and not the evil doer himself. It was thus a revolutionary measure aimed at fighting injustice and oppression, suffering and humiliation. This was the path

shown by Gandhi to his fellow Indians engaged in the uphill task of freeing India from the clutches of British imperialism. He believed that means play an important role in determining the end and thus advocated ' Satyagraha ' as a moral means to attain a noble end namely ' Swaraj '.

Highlighted The Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy :

In ' Hind Swaraj ' one detects not only Gandhis contempt of the method of violence adopted by the revolutionaries to obtain freedom, but also their desire to model independent India along the British political system, which would imply the adoption of their political institutions and political traditions. The position adopted by Gandhi regarding the import of Parliamentary democracy in India can be admired. Gandhi did not want India to imitate the Western institutional pattern blindly or out of reverence, for he felt that it was based on violence and was exploitative in nature. He criticized the members of parliament as being selfish and hypocritical, each thinking of his own interest. Though the parliament is supposed to be representative of the people, but in reality it is not so, as the interests of the people at large are sacrificed at the altar of a few narrow parochial interests. Parliament is thus described by him as a costly toy which served no purpose. Thus, the true purpose of Parliament which is

the protection and promotion of the interests and welfare of the masses occupies a back seat, while a few power hungry groups usurped and misused the power vested in them, and thus betrayed the faith of the ignorant masses. He thus opined that adoption of Parliamentary institution by independent India would spell ruination for her as it had for England. His analysis of the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy are thus thought provoking.

His Alternative Model of Development :

Having rejected the Western model of nation building Gandhi in ' Hind Swaraj ' provides an alternative model of development which he hoped to provide as a blueprint to the leaders of independent India of the future. ' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule reflects Gandhi's vision of an India of tomorrow, a 'Swaraj ' which would be based on the principles of love, truth force and harmony. It would therefore imply the rule of each individual over himself free from oppression and tyranny of alien rule or control. It would provide the highest amount of freedom to the individual, namely the freedom to use soul-force to right a wrong. He pictured independent India as a participative democracy, where each individual would have a say in the affairs of the country. It is here that one finds his comparison between Italy and India very valid. For he said that Italy though free, her freedom was illusory and

apparent, for it meant the freedom of only a handful, thus Mazzini's dream had remained unfulfilled. To avoid the above crisis Gandhi stood for a decentralized system of government, where the individual would be the focus and he would be adequately equipped to protect his interests. It would be a society based on the principle of non-violence. Such an ideal society would be shorn of modern civilization and would reflect Indian civilization in all her splendour glory and beauty. He envisaged a 'Swaraj' devoid of lawyers doctors, railways and machinery, which he opined were the emblems of modern civilization, 'Hind Swaraj' would be founded on ideal relations between all the religious communities in India. Swadeshi would be patronised in the India of tomorrow with its emphasis on self-reliance. His concept of 'Swaraj' thus resides in the simplicity of the villages. Where power to ensure communal good could be discovered. Gandhi expressed his views as, "I believe that if India, and through India the world is to achieve real freedom, then sooner or later we shall have to go and live in the villages - in huts not in palaces. Millions of people can never live in cities and palaces in comfort and peace. Nor can they do so by killing one onto another that is, by resorting to violence and untruth. I have not the slightest doubt, that but for the pair truth and non-violence mankind will be doomed. We can have

the vision of that truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of the villages. The simplicity resides in the spinning wheel and what is implied by the spinning wheel."³

One can thus appreciate Gandhi's effort to promote man to the centre stage of political life. He tried to draw man into the mainstream of national life. His Swaraj is one in which every individual will be free in the true sense of the term. Important decisions affecting his interests will not be taken by a third party but by himself. He will thus be guided by his purer instincts which will enable him to lead a good and pure life and enable him to contribute his mite to the well being of the community at large. He says, " My ideal village still exists only in my imagination ... In this village of my dreams, the villager will not be dull - he will be all awareness. He will not live like an animal in filth and darkness."⁴

The alternative strategy of development that is put forward by Gandhi may not be very practical or it may be very simplistic but it contains a very thoughtful critique of modern developmental strategy. In the light of the current debate about protection of environment, terrorism, decentralisation and containment of wants, Gandhi's strategy assumes great importance.

3) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi., p.p. 285-286.

4) Ibid., p. 286.

Critical Analysis of Hind Swaraj :

One cannot deny the truth that ' Hind Swaraj ' is indeed a thought provoking treatise and yet contains passages that have become the issue of unabated controversy in the sense that its substance is subject to be comprehended according to one's finer instincts. Some of the views expressed in ' Hind Swaraj ' are subject to severe criticism by even his staunchest followers. In fact Gokhale was so disappointed with the book that he pronounced that Gandhi would himself destroy his work of labour after residing in India for a year. Nehru too rejected ' Hind Swaraj ' which was as pointed out earlier, intended by Gandhi to serve as a blueprint for India's political development.

Gandhi's Denunciation of the Institution of Parliament :

On reading ' Hind Swaraj ' it is easy to comprehend his antipathy towards the parliament and yet it is alleged that the terms he uses to describe it are harsh and not entirely justified. By calling it sterile, he has in fact run down the essence of womanhood, for one could argue, to be sterile and not possess the capacity to conceive is not to be comprehended as demoralizing. It is indeed surprising that Gandhi who held women in such high esteem airs such an opinion.

Besides when Gandhi criticised the Parliament as a prostitute, it is opined that he had failed to notice the fine and subtle distinction between the Parliament as an inanimate institution possessing no life of its own and the Parliamentarians who possess the vices which he attributes to the Parliament. Thus Parliament is only an institutional device which is to be used to further the welfare of the people, while it is parliamentarians, who misuse the institutional device to further their own interests. Thus the shortcomings and deficiencies that he attributes to the parliament should in fact be wholly directed to its members who exploit the institution.

Dichotomy Between Swaraj and Hind Swaraj is not Clear :

Gandhi advocates Home Ruls or ' Swaraj ' based on love, truth force and harmony. He does not advocate the adoption of Western institutions which are based on force and exploitation. He opined, that if everyone ruled himself Swaraj would descend from the heavens, but again each one had to experience this Swaraj for himself. And he further clarified that it was only when each and every individual enjoyed ' Swaraj ' that Home Kule or ' Hind Swaraj ' would be established. His position is thus loud and clear leaving no room for compromises. Yet in an article in Young India, January 1921, he had the following to say, " But I warn the reader against

thinking that I am today aiming at the " Swaraj " described therein I know that India is not ripe for it. It may be an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction, I am individually working for the self rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people."⁵ One thus detects a note of inconsistency whereby Gandhi though personally striving at ' Swaraj ' described in 'Hind Swraj' in his individual capacity works in his corporate capacity to attain Parliamentary Swaraj, which in fact he is not ready to accept in his broad framework of ' Swaraj '. One thus finds it difficult to comprehend the approach of Gandhi towards the attainment of ' Swaraj ' in his individual and corporate capacity. It is indeed astonishing to find him working towards the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj which he held in contempt and disregard. A question which thus arises is, can a public figure like Gandhi, who totally identified himself with the masses at large have a personal preference and yet walk with the masses ? Can a strict line of demarcation be drawn between the two dimensions of approach. It would not be out of place to quote Mr. G.D.H. Cole in this context who opined that though Gandhi is " as near as a man can be to Swaraj in a purely personal sense, he has never solved to his personal satisfaction the other problem

5) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p.p. 5-6.

that of finding terms of collaboration that could span the gulf between man and man, between acting alone and helping others to act in accordance with their lights, which involves acting with them, and as one of them - being at once, one's self and someone else, someone one's self can and must regard, and criticize and attempt to value."⁶

Excessive Reliance on Non-Violence :

Another major criticism levelled against Gandhi ' Hind Swaraj ' is his preaching on the techniques of non-violence. It is a well known fact that the principle of non-violence and love was enunciated by christ and Buddha centuries ago. It had been applied on an individual scale with a large amount of success on small clear cut issues. However the efficacy of non-violence as was hoped by Gandhi to be adopted on a large scale is to be questioned. As Gerald Heard had pointed out, " the world wide and age long interest of Mr. Gandhis experiment lies in the fact that he has attempted to make the method work in what may be called the wholesale or national scale."⁷

6) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 6 (Preface to the New edition)

7) Ibid., p. 6.

The crux of the issue is, Is it possible to trust millions of people with this spiritual weapon of non-violence ? Is non-violence workable on a large scale ? As John Middleton Murray has aptly remarked, " the efficacy of non-violence is quickly exhausted when used as a mere techniques of political pressure - when the question arises. " Is non-violence *fauxte de mieun*, really non-violence at all." The use of the technique of Satyagraha requires the fulfillment of certain conditions which most people in the present world are incapable of fulfilling and in fact tend to abuse Satyagraha for the attainment of purely selfish ends - In this context the weapon of ' Satyagraha ' is used to exert pressure on the opponent to make him concede to their demands. In such instances ' Satyagraha ' loses its moral flavour and becomes a policy of expediency for the achievement of purely narrow selfish interests something which Gandhi abhorred.

It had also been observed that Gandhis philosophy of non-violence is practicable only to a certain extent and cannot be viewed as an universal truth, for all times to come. For it has been pointed out that non-violence as an ideal, on some occasions has to be forsaken for the prevention of an outburst, to contain further catastrophe and to preserve the larger interests of peace. G.D.H. Cole has put the following poser, " Is it so when German



and Italian armies are massacring the Spanish people, when Japanese airmen are slaughtering upon thousands in Chinese cities, when German armies have marched Austria and are threatening to march into Czechoslovakia, when Abyssinia has been bloodily bombed into defeat ... But today, hating war I would rule war to stop these horrors."⁹ Non-violence thus in some instances has to be ruled out to secure the larger interests of peace and security.

Gandhi's Criticism on Machinery, Lawyers,

Doctors and Railways are one sided :

Gandhi's attack on modern civilization, machinery, railways doctors and lawyers has come in for a lot of criticism from several quarters. His views appear to be one dimensional and lopsided. He viewed all machinery as wholly evil, possessing destructive attributes which are morally degrading. Machines, he felt had a degrading and corrupting influence. However as John Middleton Murray had aptly pointed out, " He forgets in the urgency of his vision that the very spinning wheel he loves is also a machine and also unnatural. On his principles it should be abolished."¹⁰

Thus when Gandhi denounced all machinery he failed to draw a distinction between man who possessed evil intentions and misused the machine and the machine itself which was not qualified

9) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p.p. 9-10. (Preface to the New Edition)

10) Ibid., p. 7.

and to which he attributed qualities of evil designs. Prof. Delisle Burns rightly pointed out, " This is a fundamental philosophical error. It implies that we are to regard as morally evil any instrument which may be misused. But even the spinning wheel is a machine and spectacles on the nose are mere mechanisms for bodily eyesight ... Any mechanism may be misused, but if it is, the moral evil is in the man who misuses it, not in the mechanism."¹¹

In fact Gandhi by insisting that machinery is a product of modern civilization had corrupted man and had enslaved him denied him the quality of rationality and attribute of freedom, for if machine a creation of man, controlled man, man in turn had become its slave and was thus deprived of his freedom of choice. Thus Gandhi maintained that it was not the British who controlled India, but modern civilization with its paraphernalia such as machinery. He had ignored as John Middleton Murray pointed out that machinery " does nevertheless offer an immense and universal liberation from human drudgery."¹²

One can quote Jawaharlal Nehru at this juncture when he aptly summed up the quotation regarding the significance of machinery, "... modern machinery, is good in itself, had been and is being misused in many ways, Instead of lightening the burden of work of

11) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 7 (Preface to the New Edition)

12) Murray M. J. - The Aryan Path Issue, Vol. IX, Sept. 1938. No. 9., p. 439.

the masses, it has often made their lot even worse than before. Instead of bringing happiness and comfort to millions of people as it should it has brought misery to many, it has placed so much power in the hands of governments that they can slaughter millions in their wars. But the fault lies not in machinery but in the misuse of it. If the big machinery were controlled not by irresponsible persons who want to make money for themselves out of it, but on behalf of and for the good of the people generally, there would be a tremendous difference."¹³

Gandhi has countered the criticism regarding his views on machinery and justified them, on the ground that machinery is misused in the sense that it is used to exploit rather than aid society. Machinery is used by a few to ride on the backs of millions. It is greed which is the motivating factor behind machinery to which he is opposed to and not to machinery itself. According to Gandhi, machinery is good and is justified if it aims at the achievement of common good. However the moment it is used for the purpose of exploitation and amassing of wealth, it loses its utility as an instrument to promote general welfare. This Gandhi felt was an indication which should signal the renunciation of machinery. Thus the moment a particular piece of machinery acted as a

13) Nehru Jawaharlal - Glimpses of world History., p.p. 108-109.

hinderance and obstacle to spiritual progress and moral regeneration, it should be renounced. Replying to a question whether he was against all machinery Gandhi answered. " How can I be when I know that this body is a most delicate piece of machinery. 'The spinning wheel, is a machine ... what I object to is the craze for machinery as such. The craze for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on ' saving labour ' till thousands are without work and thrown in the open streets to die of starvation, I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind but for all. I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all."¹⁴ He further added, " ideally, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation and seek the absolute liberation of the soul-from that point of view, I would reject all machinery but machines will remain because like the body they are inevitable. The body itself, I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism, but if it is a hinderance to the highest flight of the soul, it has to be rejected."¹⁵

However a counter argument levelled is, if the individual is considered to possess spiritual strength or soul-force, is it not possible for him to sue this force in the constructive and

14) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p.p. 7-8.

15) Ibid., p. 9.

positive use of machinery for the benefit of the community at large. As John Middliston Murray had rightly pointed out, " does not Gandhi's own belief in the ' gospel of love ' compel him also to believe that love can control even the machine to the purposes of love ?"¹⁶ Does not the individual possess adequate moral strength to use the machine beneficently ? Thus should not this moral fervour be inspiring to the community of individuals and urge them to use machinery for communal ends.

And finally one could also express a little surprise over his views on lawyers, doctors and railways. He is rather harsh on lawyers and held them to be responsible for perpetuating British rule in India and sucking the blood of the poor and fermenting quarrels to boost their professions. But Gandhi in his haste forgets that so long as man possesses the instinct to quarrel, his greed for wealth and lack of temperament to compromise, lawyers will continue to hold sway. Again in the same vein Gandhi criticises the profession of doctors who take to the profession not due to humanitarian considerations but in order to make a fast buck. He thus opined, " Some times, I think that quacks are better than highly qualified doctors."¹⁷ But it is argued that quacks are practitioners who play upon the ignorance of the masses and are

16) Murray M. J, - The Aryan Path Issue, Vol. IX, Sept. 1938.
No. 9, p. 439.

17) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 53.

themselves guilty of the crime of ignorance. Thus, what is their justification, in practicing ? Apart from this their practice is not grounded on moral and ethical principles which alone become a ground for criticism. Gandhi's criticism of the modern medical system and doctors is one-sided because he fails to understand their contribution.

Gandhi's criticism of railways as being responsible for famines and bubonic plague are also rather far fetched. Market conditions which determine the cost of a commodity caused the farmers to sell their grain at the dearest price. Railways are thus only a mechanism used for the transport and thus to blame this piece of machinery for causing plagues and other evil effects is rather fantastic, coming from a man like Gandhi, who is a level-headed and clear thinker. Since it is pointed out that man motivated by greed, caused him to take such measures. Thus defects in men cause these deformities and the modern institutions need to be blamed for it.

Uncritical Adulation of India's Past
and her ancient civilization :

Gandhi says, " The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means " good conduct, " and adds " If this definition be correct then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn

from anybody else, and this is as it should be "¹⁸. Delisle Burns however points out that Gandhi has lost sight of the distinction between good intentions and right actions; and says, " It is common place, at least in the Western tradition, that a man may be " good " in so far as he has good intentions, but his actions may be wrong or evil. The inquisitor who burnt heretics in the middle ages, no doubt had the best of intentions, but he could have learnt something from somebody else about right action."¹⁹

Gandhi in ' Hind Swaraj ' pleads for the renunciation of modern civilization and seeks to turn back the clock to the pre-modern civilization age, uncorrupted and free from unlimited desires. His vision of ' Hind Swaraj ' is one based on an idyllic village community, based on the principles of peace, love harmony and co-operation, all which are manifested in our ancient civilization. He opined that Indian civilization is one of the oldest in the world, glorious and magnificent and ought to be the guiding light for generations to come. One can thus detect a note of uncritical adulation of Indian civilization which is one dimensional and tells only half the truth. For if, in ancient India, ideal communities did exist, which had as their basis love and truth harmony and co-operation, how then, does one explain the downfall

18) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 55.

19) Burns D. - The Aryan Path., Vol. IX, Sept. 1938. No. 9, p. 434.

of this community and its eventual sacrifice at the altar of modern civilization. G.D.H. Cole points out that Gandhis blind and uncritical adulation of Indias past allows him to pass child marriage and child widows and sacrifice of sheep and goats in the name of religion, as defects of Indian civilization and not its essence. In the some vein he argues out his case for Nation civilization and says " I say that the horrors in Spain and Abyssinia, the perpetual fear that hangs over us, the destitution in the midst of potential plenty - even the money grubbing that we have allowed to become the master of our lives are defects, grave defects, of our Western civilization, but are not of its very essence, however much appearances may seem to-day to make against this defence."²⁰ Thus it is rightly pointed out that his views on Indian civilization and the ideal conditions existing in ancient Indian villages were a figment of his imagination and because of this, " Hind Swaraj " to many appears to be far removed from ground realities. Secondly, Gandhi did not take into account the evils of caste system and untouchability and the subjection and degradation of Women which was also a part of Indian civilisation. Thus, his attitude was uncritical.

20) Cole G.D.H. - The Aryan Path., Vol. IX, Sept. 1938. No. 9.
p. 430.

Conclusion :

This chapter mainly, dealt with a critical analysis of Gandhis work ' Hind Swaraj '. It was observed that his views on modern civilization and machinery are valid to a certain extent, while his views on passive resistance provide a glimmer of hope to the disillusioned masses, and hold good even today, and will no doubt have a significant role to play in the shaping of the future of humanity. On the other hand it was also observed that the extreme position adopted by him regarding parliamentary swaraj, machinery, doctors and lawyers are indeed difficult to whole heartedly accept, at times appearing to be biased. It was also observed that his adulation of Indias past is based on blind love and to a certain extent a play of his imagination. But yet one cannot make an attempt to overlook the significance of ' Hind Swaraj ' and the message it offers. As Miss Irene Rathoone called Hind Swaraj, " an enormously powerful book " and " forced by its tremendous honesty to search my own honesty. I would implore people to read it."²¹

21) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 12. (Preface to the New Edition.)

C O N C L U S I O N

' Hind Swaraj ' is one of the most important books written by Mahatma Gandhi who tried to put forward his own ideas on Indian politics. He argued that instead of emulating the West, India should try to chart out her own path of development which was appropriate to her genius. In ' Hind Swaraj ' his approach is humanistic compassionate and rooted in the comprehensive philosophy of love harmony and co-operation. In a world dominated by the ideology of war conflict and violence, Gandhi's philosophy provides a breath of fresh air. His greatest gift to humanity is the gospel of passive resistance or ' Satyagraha ' as he preferred to call it later. In the present study an attempt is made to critically study the main ideas of Mahatma Gandhi in the light of its relevance.

In the introductory chapter, the political scenario of the first decade was briefly surveyed in order to enable him us to comprehend the basic philosophy which prompted Gandhi to pen ' Hind Swaraj '. It was Lenin who argued that, " Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism." One could find a justification of this statement in the hegemonistic activities of the great powers

manifested in the colonies which they had established in different parts of the globe. British rule in India is an instance of the above, her aggrandisement at the cost of India was largely a product of the industrial revolution. British rule in India, was despotic tyrannical and oppressive the aim being to wipe out the last vestiges of self-respect possessed by the emaciated masses, and to cow them into submission. But Britain the in pride of her power, forgot the fact that India, with a civilization as old as the hills, would never give in and though she seemed to cave in her collapse was always temporary, only to rise once again like the phoenix from the ashes. Not to be toned down, India witnessed a cultural awakening prior to political awareness. Leaders such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati Vivekananda and a host of others lit the lamp of awareness and cultural renaissance. The Indian National Congress played an important role in spear heading the movement for independence. A sense of unity and identity was created among the masses and the Congress was successful in activating the people towards the ideal of 'Swaraj'. Unfortunately there was a split in the ranks of the Congress in the year 1907, which resulted in the formation of two groups within the party, the moderates and the extremists. Both professed the goal of 'Swaraj' but differed in their methods to attain it, the former believing in constitutional agitation while the latter emphasizing firm

measures like ' Swadeshi ', boycott of foreign goods and in the last resort advocated ' Passive Resistance '. There was also a group of revolutionary terrorists who upheld the principles of violence and terror to wrest power from the British. It was this background against which Gandhi's text ' Hind Swaraj ' has been introduced with a view to analyzing its contents in the light of the changing political scenario in India. Along with a brief biography of Gandhi upto the year 1914, the ideological influences i.e. the influence of moderates, traditional Hindu philosophy, Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin is also discussed.

In the second chapter, Gandhis views on contemporary Indian politics has been analysed, Gandhi appreciates the role played by the Congress in instilling unity and awareness among the masses, but is critical of the methods adopted by some groups to attain ' Swaraj '. Expressing the view that violence is alien to our culture and can never achieve lasting results, he appreciates their patriotism but feels that they are misguided. He lambasts those groups who want to free India through violence, thus making this holy land unholy. On the other hand though he acknowledges the sincerity of the moderates, he feels that their faith in British rule as being indispensable would make Britishers conceited. He also criticises their method of petitioning which he terms as

derogatory and prefers to have anarchy under Home Rule than orderly foreign rule. He thus expresses the sincere hope that the two groups of the Congress should join their forces to secure 'Swaraj'.

In the third chapter, Gandhis views on the evil effects of modern civilization and his appreciation of Indian civilization are discussed. Gandhi holds modern civilization to be responsible for India enslavement. Allured by the sight of gold, and unable to resist its temptations and blinded by its glitter, the Indians Gandhi concluded threw themselves at the feet of the British. Machinery a by product of modern civilization had destroyed the self-sufficiency of the Indians. Thus Gandhi concluded that it was not the British who ruled India, but it was modern civilization that controlled the people. He further enlightened us, that renunciation of modern civilization and acceptance of Indian civilization held the key to 'Swaraj'. Gandhi is opposed to modern civilization as well as its political institutions like parliamentary democracy. He holds the view that British Parliament is not a mother of parliament but it is like a sterile women. He does not approve of modern democracy based on the principle of rule of majority.

In the fourth chapter Gandhis doctrine of Passive Resistance or 'Satyagraha' is analyzed. In 'Hind Swaraj' he preaches the message of passive resistance or satyagraha. He

hopes to provide an alternative method to the issue of gaining ' Swaraj '. Opposed as he was to the use of brute force and violence as a means to win ' Swaraj ', he advocated the mantra of ' Satyagraha ', to secure to noble end of ' Swaraj '. Gandhi felt that ' Satyagraha ' is love force was a weapon of the strong and virtuous and was bound to win the opponent however wilful and strongheaded. He also compares satyagraha with the theory of passive resistance and holds the former superior.

In the fifth chapter Gandhis views on ' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule has been analyzed. His concept of ' Swaraj ' and his vision of Indias tomorrow has been explored. Gandhi expressed the opinion that his concept of ' Swaraj ' was self-rule and when each individual ruled over himself, ' Swaraj ' would descend from the heavens, and therefore its attainment was in the hands, of each and every individual. The vision of ' Hind Swaraj ' is broad and all encompassing so as to even cover within its fold those Englishmen who are prepared to sacrifice their all for the achievement of aims and aspirations of the people of India. ' Hind Swaraj ' to Gandhi, therefore does not mean the replacement of white tyranny by brown tyranny. ' Hind Swaraj ' or the India of tomorrow would reflect the aims and aspirations of each and every individual. Indian Home Rule would

be the rule of each and every individual. It would be the rule by all and for all, reflecting a decentralization of power. Doctors, Lawyers, and Machinery as far as possible would not find a place in the India of tomorrow, since they are the very emblems of slavery and modern civilization. The focal point of Gandhi's 'Swaraj' in the individual and his freedom., Gandhi asserted that the 'Charka' or spinning wheel would lead to freedom, this ideal of 'Swaraj' was therefore founded on the principles of peace, love mutual co-operation and harmony.

In the final chapter, Gandhi's views expressed in 'Hind Swaraj' were critically analyzed measuring both the pros and cons. It was observed that his criticism of the extremists and revolutionary terrorists, modern civilization and passive resistance have been acclaimed by many. He advised the extremists and terrorists to renounce brute force and adopt passive resistance as a method to obtain 'Swaraj'. Again he pleaded for the renunciation of modern civilization and acceptance of Indian civilization which is inspiring. On the other hand his views on parliamentary Swaraj, doctors, lawyers, machinery and railways are one dimensional and lopsided. He criticised the parliament as a toy in the hands of the rulers, and down the class of lawyers and doctors, machinery too is not spared and is held responsible for enslaving man.

However, it was concluded that Gandhi's little text ' Hind Swaraj ' presents convictions which were held dear by Gandhi.

Concluding Remarks ::

It must be pointed out that ' Hind Swaraj ' was not the end of it all, but marked the beginning of a new era of thoughts which Gandhi hoped would usher in a new age of freedom, love harmony and co-operation. Gandhis vision of India of the morrow is unique and inspiring. He pictured a state of affairs where each individual would be really free in the true sense of the term, where love would reign supreme over the forces of evil design and hatred. It is the concept of Ram Rajya which would manifest all the noble ideals which King Ram personified. It is a 'Swaraj' which would be a decentralized one, which would be devoid of the evils of modern civilization and which in fact reflect the pristine purity of Indian civilization. One must not forget that this utopia of ' Swaraj ' which Gandhi talked about was possible only through the adoption of the doctrine of ' Satyagraha '. Herein lies the beauty of the text ' Hind Swaraj ', which preached a message not just to the Indians but to humanity at large. The weapon of love was to be adopted by all in their struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression. It is thus a universal message

with universal scope. Importance of Gandhian methods is brought to bold relief in the recent non-violent mass of upsurge against different types of oppressive tyrannies in socialist countries as well as in several third world countries.

One could also appreciate Gandhis efforts towards the rejuvenation of Indian civilization which seemed to fade into oblivion with the onset of modern civilization. In an age, which worships power and money, Gandhi dared to preach the doctrine of simplicity and moral virtousness. The text ' Hind Swaraj ' thus is an attempt to strengthen our roots for in that lay the secret of ' Swaraj '.

It is true that Gandhis denunciation of modern civilization is one sided but one cannot escape from the fact that modern civilization has given birth to dangerous consumerism and competition which need to be curbed if we want to keep the ecology of the world safe for future generations. Also, he always laid emphasis on the purity of means and efficacy of noble ends and in todays world these ideas are important because we must know the moral cost involved in our development strategy.

Thus ' Hind Swaraj ' is an extremely relevant book that makes us aware about many things that are taking place around us.