

Chapter - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Introduction :

In his famous book ' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule Mahatma Gandhi discussed the problem of India's independence in the light of the alternatives available. Gandhi's concern is civilizational because he is looking beyond India's independence. He holds that India with her own unique civilization can chart out her own path to secure Indian Home Rule. She should not imitate others, but try to develop her political philosophy and political institutions in the light of her own civilization.

In this chapter the social and political background of India in the first decade of this century is discussed in order to understand the roots of ' Hind Swaraj '.

India and the East India Company :

India, the land of milk and honey, sages and saints, rich in cultural heritage and possessing one of the oldest civilizations in the world to have survived different barbaric aggressions. But she fell prey to the evils of modern civilization, leading to her subsequent bondage and slavery, resulting in her moral degradation.

The East India Company was established in 1600 for commercial purposes to carry on trade with India. Ironically such was the fate of India, that a handful of traders stayed on and eventually became her rulers. As a result of her misrule it is rightly ^{their} pointed out the condition of India deteriorated under rapidly changing conditions, " Between 1770 and 1900 - 130 years - there were twenty two famines. Millions of people died of starvation and the survivors had not much strength left to resist the evils of foreign domination."¹

The superficial quiet was not to last. Lord Canning who succeeded Lord Dalhousie as Governor General said, " We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand but which growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin."² A prophecy which nearly saw the light of the day, in the outbreak of the revolt of 1857, which is described by nationalist historians as the first was of independence. This revolt which was backed by the Indian peasantry was ruthlessly suppressed and terror was struck in the minds of the people. The immediate results of the 1857 revolt were :

1) The East India Company was dissolved, and Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India and Governor General designated the Viceroy and Governor General. ^{Las}

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- 1) Tendulkar D.G. : Mahatma - Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.I P.2.
2) Manorama Year Book - 1988.

- 2) British army was revamped.
- 3) Paramountcy of the British government was proclaimed.
- 4) The Britishers decided to follow the policy of non-interference in the religious affairs of the Indian people.

Impact of British Rule in India :

The take over of the Indian government by the British government did not eliminate discontent. Fires of discontent had been spreading due to the oppressive policies of the British. A number of repressive policies as the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, the Arms Act, Ilbert Bill were imposed upon agitating masses, clamouring for a change in governmental policy.

* The nationalist movement which culminated in the achievement of Indian independence in 1947, could be attributed to a number of factors. British rule in India brought Indians into intimate contact with European countries. Indians were exposed to the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, which the American War of independence and the French Revolution had glorified. It was also argued that if Germany and Italy could achieve independence, so could India. This created a new spirit among the Indians, to fight for liberty. Thus exposure to Western education and introduction of system of communications, opened the doors to new vistas of knowledge and facilitated the process of unification.

A period of awakening political, social and cultural saw the emergence of reformers who presented a glorious picture of India's past and appealed to the people to revive her ancient glory. The foundation of cultural renaissance was laid by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, founder of the Brahmo Samaj. His work was continued by Debendranath Tagor and Keshab Chandra Sen. The Prathana Samaj was founded in Bombay and the Arya Samaj was founded by Dayanand Saraswati. Vivekanand taught the young Indians self-confidence and self-reliance. These leaders of Indian renaissance not only created an awakening among the people, an awareness of their enslavement but tried to arouse a burning patriotism to (release) ^{met!} the chains of bondage. There were a host of leaders who could be said to have laid the foundation of the fight for freedom. Among these a few are the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, G.K. Gokhale, B.G. Tilak, Pherozshah Menta, D.E. Wacha, Badruddin Tyabji and others. Apart from institutions and persons Indian news papers had a pivotal role to play in the early stages of the struggle for independence. The Hindu in Madras, Kesari and Mahratta in Maharashtra, and Aurita Bazar Patrika in Bengal were authentic sources of information not only moulding public opinion but also infusing in the masses the desire for 'Swaraj' the term first used by Dadabhai Naoroji and later on finding its affirmative declaration in Tilak's bold cry, "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it."

The economic policies followed by the British government were an obstacle to the development of the country. The economic system was adjusted to suit the interests of the English. D. E. Wacha pointed out, that economic conditions of the people deteriorated under British rule, 40 millions of Indians had to be content with one meal a day. Dadabhai in this connection published his famous book " Poverty and Un British Rule in India " highlighting the extent of economic exploitation of Indias economy.

The Moderates and the Entremists :

It was, however, the founding of the ^{India} Indian National Congress in 1885, on the advise of Sir ^{la} Allen Hume, that the struggle for independence acquired new shape, direction and concrete organizational form. This organization indeed moulded the efforts of different leaders towards the singular goal of Indian independence. It served as a platform not just for the ventilation of grievances but also that of harbouring among the people a sanguine desire for emancipation, from their state of slavery.

Events were on the move, cruising slowly but surely, though not always smoothly. In the course of development there emerged awareness in the minds of the people about national politics. There were two schools of thought (a) Moderates (b) Entremists. The growth of Entremists can be attributed to a

number of factors. The Indian Councils Act of 1892, did not satisfy even the aspirations of the moderates. It was also realized that prayers and petitions, brought forth no results. Tilak was of the opinion that political rights would not be won through persuasion as was hoped, by the moderates, but would have to be fought for.

Growth of National Movement :

The hardships and sufferings of the people was accompanied by the outbreak of the bubonic plague. The administrative operations ruthless and inhuman, embittered the people resulting in the assassination of Mr Rand and Lt. Ayerst, officers incharge of relief operations by the Chapekar brothers.

Revival of Hinduism by Vivekananda, Aurobindo Gosh, Tilak and Annie Besant aimed at infusing and injecting a sense of pride and honour of India's ancient civilization. Exclusion of (intelligensia from the mainstream of administration exasperated them. Indian's self-respect took a beating in South Africa and it was concluded that the treatment meted out to Indian's in South Africa was because of Indias enslavement. The resounding victory of Japan over Russia in 1904-05 inspired our leaders. The final blow to Indias dignity and self-respect was dealt by Lord Curzon, by his decision to partition Bengal. This was the spark that ignited the

fire and set ablaze the trail of patriotic fervour, which in fact heralded the partition of the British empire. In order to drive a wedge in our freedom struggle, Lord Curzon took recourse to the policy of Divide and Rule and decided to partition Bengal.

To quote Tendulkar D. G., " The partition of Bengal had by then, become an accomplished fact and the Swadeshi movement including boycott of British goods had begun in Bengal."³ It was at this session that an inaugural meeting of the new party, the Nationalist or Entremist Party was held by younger delegates. Here " Tilak preached passive resutance and outlined the programme of national reconstruction which was adopted by the new nationalist school and put into practice."⁴ A boycott pledge was drafted by Surendranath Banerjee to abstain from purchase of English made goods. The Swadeshi and boycott movement gained momentum. Patriotic fervour grew to a high pitch and crowds gathered at patriotic meetings, took boycott and ' Swadeshi ' vows and sang ' Bande Mataram '. Government in order to secure its position continued its devious policy of fermenting dissension between the two communi- ties leading to Hindu - Muslim conflagaration. " It was observed that, of the two wives, the Muslim was the favourite."⁵

3) Tendulkar D. G. - Mahatma - Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.I,P.17.

4) Ibid., p. 17.

5) Ibid., p. 18.

* The Congress session of 1906 was held at Calcutta and presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji. In his presidential speech he proclaimed Swaraj as the ideal of India. He said, " Self-government is the only and chief remedy. Be united, persevere and achieve self-government so that the millions, now by perishing by poverty famine and plague and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore, among the greatest and civilized nations of the West."⁶ But the truce between the moderates and the extremists was shortlived.

The Congress session at Surat in 1907, saw a split in the ranks of the party. The Entremists wanted to capture the Congress and make it an instrument of revolutionary action. But they failed to do so and were expelled from the party.

The year 1908, witnessed repression and suppression on the part of the government and renewed resistance on the part of the people. Bombs replaced hartals and convictions became the order of the day. The most important leaders of the extremists Mr. B. G. Tilak was sentenced to six years imprisonment. He was exiled to Burma. Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai went into self-imposed evile. Aurobindo Ghosh was arrested and tried.

6) Tendulkar D. G. - Mahatma - Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. I., p.p. 18-19.

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Rise in Revolutionary Terrorism :

The impact of repression resulted in a spurt of revolutionary activities. An attempted murder of Mr. Kingsford, the judges of Muzzafarpur case by Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chunder resulted in the death of two innocent English women. The Alipore and Gosain murder cases were proof of the determination and strength of the revolutionaries.

Revolutionaries were active not only in Bengal a but in other places as well. V. D. Savarkar and Shyamji Kruhna Varma and Madam Cama directed activities from London and Paris. Savarkar's brother was sentenced to transportation for life. News of heavy sentences, accentuated revolutionary fevour among the youth. One such inspired youth Madanalal Dhingra decided to shed English blood to protest against the inhuman treatment meted out by the British and shot Sir. W. Curzon Wylie. Meanwhile an attempt at the introduction of reforms reforms was made and Morley Minto reforms were introduced in 1909, which provided for greater association of qualified Indians within government in deciding public questions.

The importance of ' Hind Swaraj ' has to be studied against the background of changing political scenario. Mahatma Gandhi wrote his famous book ' Hind Swaraj ' in the year 1908,

when in India, three different political schools - the moderates, the extremists and the terrorists were vying with each other to show the path of independence to the Indian people because India at that time was standing at cross-roads.

A Brief Biographical Outline of Mahatma Gandhi :

Mahatma Gandhi was the product of his turbulent times and his life was shaped by the events that were taking place all over the world. In the following pages we shall discuss the first phase of Gandhi's political life which ended in 1914.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was born on October 2nd, 1869 in Porbandar. His father was a diwan of many kathiawad princely states. The early influences in his life were that of his parents whom he worshipped devoutly. His mother occupied a special place in his heart as she embodied all those qualities which symbolize all that is best in Indian womanhood. It would surprise many to learn, that this young boy once afraid of ghosts would later give to the world the doctrine of fearlessness. He completed his primary education and high school at Rajkot. Later he went on to say, " High Schools were schools for cultural conquest by the English."⁷ If his school life was marked by strength and honesty

7) Payne Robert - The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 41.

of character, his personal life revealed a few chinks in the armour as was revealed by his indulgences in stealing to eat meat, justified on the ground, that it would make him big and strong and give him the courage to drive out the English. Feeling a misfit on the college campus, this period of his life was marked by a void. By a stroke of luck he sailed for England to study law in the year september 1888 and was in England upto the year 1891. In England he tried to acclimatize himself by taking to the English way of life, but later on realized its futility. It was at this point of time that he was exposed to the teachings of the Gita and the Bible. He also read the book ' Light of Asia ' by Edwin Arnold and was duly impressed.

Having returned to India with a Bar at Law degree, his first case was a failure and observing sovereign authority vested in alien hands, he began to believe that India offered him no future. As luck would have it, his services were engaged by Dada Abdulla and company, a trade firm in South Africa. He seized upon this opportunity, little knowing that this was a passage to a land which would have surprises in store and would mould his life. His stay in South Africa from 1893 to 1914, thus became the centre of all his activities - socio, political and philosophical.

It was on his arrival in South Africa that he discovered the inhuman practice of racial discrimination against Indians who were treated in the most diserespectful manner. Gandhi himself, was subjected to this humiliating attitude, when he was singled out in the courtroom for wearing a headgear and asked to remove it, of which he had not the slightest intention and preferred to leave the courtroom. Again, it was at Pietermaritzburg, that he was thrown out bag and baggage, out of a railway compartment by a white who refused to travel in the same compartment with him. Never having been subjected to such humiliation and indignity, on reflection he decided that it would be an act of a coward to retreat and go back to India, an it was at this moment that he decided to stay on in South Africa, to perform two duties (1) for the firm of Dada Abdulla and (2) to root out the disease of colour prejudice, if he could; Mahatma Gandhi later, went on to say that his political mission in life began at that juncture. His protest against the ban on indentured Indians in South Africa was the beginning of his struggle against a government which aimed at wiping out the self-respect of all Indians settled in South Africa. He was able to achieve partial victory in this battle wherein the tax was reduced from £ 25 to £ 3. A defrenchiring bill had also been introduced earlier, which later was, settled by an agreement of not exceeding Indian's already on the list, from excercising their right to vote.

On coming down to India in 1896, to arrange for his wife and children to join him in Durban, he sought to impress upon the Indian leaders, the miserable condition of the Indians in South Africa, and sought their support and co-operation in this matter. When the Boer war broke out, Gandhi organized the Indian Ambulance Corps. On returning to India, in 1901, he once again failed in his professional career and returned to South Africa, at the call of the Indians. In South Africa, he launched the Indian opinion and having been inspired by Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, founded the Phoenix Settlement, a novel experiment in living the life of simplicity and insistence on dignity of labour.

In 1905 he voiced his protest against the partition of Bengal and in 1906 advocated Home Rule for India.

The modern movement of passive resistance was announced to counter the move of the governments draft law, Asiatic Registration Bill. Since the term passive resistance, did not convey the essence of this struggle he adopted the name to 'Satyagraha' meaning firmness for truth i.e. 'truth - force'. When it was suggested that passive resistance was weapon of the weak Gandhi denied it saying that only persons possessing strength of character and virtue would be able to practice it. It was a weapon to be used in the pursuit of truth. Truth was throughout his life his

main concern. The title of his autobiography " The story of My Experiments with Truth " reveals his quest for truth, not of an abstract nature, but a principle which could be discovered in each and every situation. For this activity he was imprisoned for two months, but released when he agreed to voluntary registration. During his, second stay in jail, he read Thoreau's essay on ' Civil Disobedience ' which left a deep impression on him. During 1909-10 he was greatly influenced by his correspondence with Leo Tolstoy.

Gandhi, sailed for England on the 23rd of June 1909, to educate influential British leaders regarding the woes of Indians in South Africa. En route South Africa he wrote ' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule. In the year 1910. Gandhi established the Tolstoy Farm after being influenced by his work, ' The Kingdom of God is within you.'

His struggle with the government in South Africa continued with the aid of Satyagraha which was finally suspended after a satisfactory agreement was arrived at with general Smuts. Gandhi sailed for India in 1914, after having been successful in his spiritual mission in South Africa.

The first phase in the political life of the Mahatma was over and in 1914, he sailed homeward. During this period, he was trying to solve the problem of the Indians in South Africa as well

as trying to find out the political methods that could be employed to win ' Swaraj ' for India. More important to him was the nature of ' Swaraj '.

' Hind Swaraj ' was not only the product of Gandhi, political experiments in South Africa and his intense personal political experiences, it was influenced by ideas of ancient Indian thinkers Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin.

Ideological Influences on Gandhi :

Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Gokhale :

There are three distinct ideological influences in the political thought of Mahatma Gandhi. They are as follows :

- 1) The influence of ancient Indian philosophy.
- 2) The influence of the ideas of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin.
- 3) The influence of his political guru, Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Mahatma Gandhi, as a philosopher was well rooted in the Indian tradition, because in his childhood he was influenced by Vaishnav ideology and ascetism of the Jain Sadhus. Gandhi drew his sustenance from the Indian tradition and the story of Harishchandra enchanted him because for the sake of truth the great king withstood

all sufferings, Gandhi thought " Why should all not be truthful like Harishchandra ? was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me."⁸

Gandhi held that the Gita taught us selfless action, it taught people to perform action in the spirit of detachment, and also taught one not to suffer injustice. Gandhi's idea of 'Swaraj' and stateless society was drawn from Mahabharata and his alternative polity or Indian Home Rule, was rooted in ancient Indian political tradition that was prevalent in India before the advent of Britishers in India. In this connection it is pertinent to point out that Dr. A. L. Basham has shown that some of the key concepts of Gandhi's ideology rested upon popular Vaishnavism and popular Jainism to an extent which even Gandhi's Autobiography affords very little evidence. Gandhi's predecessors, Tilak and Aurobindo too had infused religious sentiments in their approach to the freedom struggle but Gandhi succeeded in giving it a new orientation and his success rests upon the fact that he succeeded, where his predecessors had failed.⁹

8) Gandhi M. K. : An Autobiography., p. 6.

9) Basham A. L. : Traditional Influences of the thought of Mahatma Gandhi - In R. Kumar Ed. - Essays on Gandhian Politics., p. 51.

Count Leo Tolstoy a Russian nobleman and saint, was another great influence on Gandhis life and thought. His book " The Kingdom of God Is Within You " exerted great influence on Gandhi. Pyerelal says that, Tolstoy's passion for truth and ceaseless striving after perfection enthroned him in Gandhi's heart and was looked upon by Gandhi as his moral and spiritual guide.

A wealthy man, Tolstoy a was in a position to enjoy all the pleasures in life, but a change of heart brought about by the Crimean war, changed the course of his life. Influenced by the Bible, he wanted to ensure the moral regeneration of mankind. He renounced all his wealth and took to a life of poverty and lived like a peasant, and practiced the policy of bread labour. The cause of inequalities according to Tolstoy are due to the contrasts of wealth and poverty. The simple idea therefore behind bread labour is, he who does not work has no right to eat, and thus if everyone performed his share of labour, poverty would vanish from the face of this earth. Tolstoy thus stressed upon physical labour to, solve the problem of inequality. It is obvious that this theory of bread labour proupounded by Tolstoy had a significant place in Gandhis philosophy. Gandhi says, " If all laboured for their bread, and no more, then there would be enough food and leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over population no disease, and no such misery as we see around such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice."¹⁰

10) Deshpande M.S. : Light of India a Message of Mahatmaji, p.19.

Gandhi believed that Tolstoy was the embodiment of truth and probably the first to develop the theory of non-violence on systematic lines which drew Gandhi to him. In his autobiography, Gandhi mentions, " Three moderns have left a deep impress on my life and captivated me. Rajchandbhai by his living contact Tolstoy by his book The Kingdom of God is Within You and Ruskins Unto This Last."¹¹

Tolstoy's teachings are rooted in religion, believing that all religions in essence hold soul-force to be superior to brute force, and that evil should be met with good. Gopinath Dhawan rightly says, " Love is at the basis of Tolstoy's principles of non-resistance and non-co-operation."¹² Tolstoy was opposed to violence of all kinds and condemns the state, with its instruments of coercion such as the military, law-courts and police. In the same vein, Gandhi too, repudiates the state. He like Tolstoy opines, " The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soul-less machine it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very enistance."¹³

11) Gandhi M. K. : An Autobiography, p. 75.

12) Dhawan Gopinath : The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi p. 32.

13) Ibid., p. 282.

It is thus easily deduced that Gandhi too a very large extent was influenced by Tolstoy's political philosophy. In fact the Rev. J. J. Doke calls Gandhi a disciple of Tolstoy.¹⁴ Gandhi himself candidly declares that reading, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, "Cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in ahimsa."¹⁵

Gandhi was thus influenced by Tolstoy in a number of ways.

- 1) The book - *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, added a new dimension to his life.
- 2) Gandhi accepted whole heartedly that all men are good and they can be persuaded by a change of heart.
- 3) His opposition to violence is rooted in Tolstoy's idea of non-violence.
- 4) Gandhi accepted Tolstoy's idea, that all existing bodies are based on violence.

One can thus discover striking similarities between the two advocates of non-violence. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi were deeply religious, and believed that God could be realized through love.

14) Dhawan Gopinath : *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 33.

15) *Young India* - III, p. 843.

Their politics was rooted in religion, which preached ethics and morality. Gopinath Dhawan rightly points that, " Both are ever vigilant seekers after truth and uniquely steadfast in its rigorous practice."¹⁶ Both condemn modern civilization as morally degrading, being based on force and exploitation. Just as Tolstoy appreciated the courage and bravery of those fighting against czarist authority but disapproved of their methods to seize power, similarly Gandhi too admired the bravery of the revolutionaries but condemned their violent approach. Again both advocated theory of bread labour and preached simplicity to attain moral growth.

John Ruskin, the English critic and social theorist, whose writings reflect enormous sensitivity and human compassion with a zeal for moral values was another great influence on Gandhi's life.

Ruskin attacked the dehumanizing ethics of modern industrial civilization. He was disillusioned with the impact of the industrial revolution which divided the English society into two classes, and led to degradation deprivation and spread of inequality. It is here, that one is exposed to his ideas of modern civilization and machinery which has caused much human misery and

16) Dhawan Gopinath : The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi,
p. 34.

suffering. Industrial culture has spoilt the beauty of nature and was killing the essence of man, his intrinsic values and poisoning his soul. Ruskin feels the idea of progress was viewed in the light of material progress and greed had replaced love as the guiding factor of mans action. This culture Ruskin argues, has a dehumanizing effect, where spiritual values are a thing of the past.

Thus Ruskin's philosophy stands against the basic tenets of modern civilization, which is founded on exploitation. Ruskin established the Guild of St. George, its aim being to remove the evils of industrialization and establishment of a social order based on agriculture and manual labour and preached the need to curb desires and avaraciousness.

' Unto This Last ' authored by John Ruskin had a great impact on Gandhi's life. Ruskin had advocated the cause of trusteeship which influenced Gandhi, for according to Ruskin the wealthy should regard themselves as servants of the poor and place their wealth at the service of the community. The argument forwarded is that, if the people were better fed clothed and housed, the state would have a greater authority over them. The central teaching of Ruskins philosophy, from which Gandhi drew the following lessons were :

- 1) " That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
- 2) That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
- 3) That a life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living."¹⁷

These ideas appealed to Gandhi instinctively and he translated them into action in the form of establishing the Phoneix Farm. These ideas were conscientiously implemented by Gandhi in his years to come. He believed in hard work, simplicity and renounced all his wealth for the benefit of the community.

The philosophy of Gandhi and Ruskin both bear close similarity. Both preached simplicity and nobleness of human nature, both aimed to moralize politics, both attempted to restructure the economic model for the good of all. And last but not the least both displayed a distrust for machinery which had enslaved man and pleaded for its renunciation.

Henry David Thoreau, an American writer, and dissenter though ignored in his day, has today become a world, influence.

17) Gandhi M. K. : An Autobiography, p. 250.

His advocacy of ' Civil disobedience ' against an unjust government, influenced the life of Gandhi in his struggle against the injustice meted out by the British authorities. Thoreau wrote a several philosophical essays, the most famous being ' Civil Disobedience in 1849. The core of his teaching is that one's conscience should guide one's actions and that, an unjust law should be disobeyed, if one is ready to accept its consequences. Thus the term civil disobedience was first used by Henry David Thoreau in one of his speeches in 1849. However Gopinath Dhawan informs us that " Gandhiji however did not derive his idea of civil disobedience from the writings of Thoreau. The resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before he got the essay of Thoreau on civil disobedience."¹⁸ Gandhi wrote that he used the term civil disobedience to explain his struggle to the readers and finding the phrase still incomplete adopted the phrase civil resistance. It was this weapon with which Gandhi dared the British and eventually succeeded in humbling it.

Gopinath Dhawan says, " Thoreau's theory may be summed up as the maximum of co-operation with all people and institutions when they lead towards good and non-co-operation when they promote

18) Dhawan Gopinath : The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.,
p. 30.

evil. Unlike Gandhiji however, Thoreau justified not only passive, but also active (violent) resistance to the American Government in the struggle against slavery."¹⁹

While struggling for the rights of Indians in South Africa, Gandhi was in search of an individual a guru, to fill the void in his life. The vacuum was filled by G. K. Gokhale - a saintly figure whose love and devotion for his motherland was unparalleled. Gokhale being a student of history was conscious of the glorious achievements of ancient India. His thoughts centered around the liberty of man by the development and enhancement of his moral and intellectual abilities. This he felt could become a reality through the channelizing of ones energies towards the task of serving the nations. Suffering and simplicity were the hallmarks of his life and the cornerstone of his philosophy. Three important principles adopted by him influenced Gandhi.

- 1) The problem of ends and means.
- 2) Hard work, sacrifice and dedication.
- 3) Spiritualization of politics.

A moderate in approach, he believed in constitutional methods to register protests against injustice and oppression. He

19) Dhawan Gopinath : The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p.p. 30-31.

had faith in British liberalism and like Naoroji hoped that a new English statesmanship would arise. In his budget speech of 1902, he said, " What is needed is that we should be enabled to feel that we have a government national in spirit, though foreign in personnel ... a government which endeavours by all means in its power to further the moral and material interests of the people in India, and outside India."²⁰

Gokhale's approach to contemporary problems was dictated by two key propositions. He believed like Ranade that the British empire in India was a matter of divine dispensation and of immense benefit to India. Being a liberal he believed in harmonious co-operation between the Indians and the English. Secondly, he believed in creating a strong foundation of nationalism, through sacrifice and hard work. Gokhale, made an attempt to incorporate Swaraj, Swadeshi national education and boycott of English goods in his political method.

Dr. Ashok Chousalkar points out, " Gokhale's ideas on constitutional agitation were quite flexible and he included in it a wide variety of techniques but he did not favour violent methods, that involved use of physical force and complete disregard of the constituted authority because his was essentially pressure politics

20) Verma V. P. : Modern Indian Political Thought., Gokhale's first budget speech in the Imperial Legislative Council delivered on 26th March 1902.

and by following different methods of protest and pressure by public opinion, he wanted to force the existing government to concede the demands of the people. He made it clear that what was constitutional need not be expedient and wise because the agitation was launched to realise certain higher and noble goals and they should not be compromised for short term goals."²¹

Gokhale established the servants of India society in 1908, to ensure the nations progress and to spiritualize public life. He aimed at enhancing the moral character of the people. The way to progress and freedom was through dedication suffering and self - sacrifice, and strength of moral characters. There were qualities which he personified in every activity of his life.

Meeting Gokhale for the first time in 1896, Gandhi wrote " After meeting Tilak, next I met Gokhale. He gave me an affectionate welcome and his manner immediately won my heart. With him too this was my first meeting and yet it seemed as though we were renewing an old friendship Sir Pheroza Shah had seemed to me like the Himalayas, the Lokmanya like the ocean. But Gokhale was as the Ganges, we could have a refreshing bath in the holy waters. The Himalaya was unscaleable, and one could not easily launch forth on the sea, but the Ganges invited one to its bosom."²²

21) Dr. Chousalkar A. S. : Indian Idea of Political Resistance. p.20.

22) Ibid., p. 20.

The relationship shared by the two outstanding soliders was one marked by co-operation, faith and mutual understanding. Gandhi had acknowledged Gokhale as his ' political guru '. In fact Gandhi's patriotism which rises above the physical becomes spiritual and humanistic and this duality of approach is largely a influence of Gokhale, Gokhale, being a moderate, appealed to Gandhi's innermost. His views on the need to spiritualize public life struck at the very roots of his soul, and he worked ceaselessly to instill and implement these principles in the Indian National Congress and the national movement for freedom.

Hind Swaraj Introduced :

En route South Africa, Gandhi produced one of his finest workes entitled ' Hind Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule written within a period of nine days, though one would not dare to pass it off as a nine day wonder, for its impact was not only felt during that period but its basic thesis holds good even today. Of all his books, Gandhi admits that he appreciated ' Hind Swaraj ' as one of his finer attempts to present before the masses a blueprint for the book as being hopelessly out of date, and Gokhale pronounced it as the work of a fool and prohesised that Gandhi would destroy it, after he had spent a year in India.

' Hind Swaraj ' was written in the year 1908, in the form of a dialouge between the Editor, Gandhi and the reader who is essentially modelled on the Extremists. He wrote this book to clarify the concept of Indian Home Rule because one of the great revolutionaries, Shyamji Krishna Varma established Indian Home Rule society at London in 1905 and established India house, This was the centre of Indian radical political activity.²³

In Hind Swaraj Mahatma Gandhi tried to show to new path to India. Though engaged in a political struggle in South Africa, his mind was alert to the different political movements taking place in India. Hind Swaraj was written in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa. He says, " Their bravery impressed me, but I felt that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for Indians ills, and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection."²⁴

Gandhi was not satisfied with the movements launched by the moderates, entremests and terrorist revolutionaries, because he thought that all of them were missing the central point of

23) Kelkar N. C. : Introduction to Savarkars biography in Gajlelya Prasthavana., p. 313.

24) Gandhi M. K. : Hind Swaraj., p. 15.

political resistance | Gandhi not only questioned their methods he also questioned their ideology of nationalism which glorified power and prestige and had great admiration for Western science, nation state and consequent violence. His concern was unhistorical because he did not want Indians to be replace Britishers without changing their policies and programmes.

In ' Hind Swaraj ' or ' Indian Home Rule ' Gandhi draws the picture of a future India, the India of tomorrow which he hoped to establish a free India reflecting her ancient glory and pristine purity.

' Hind Swaraj ' can be treated as a document, which is more of a moral treatise than a political one. It aims at appealing not the intellect but to awaken the spirit. It is an effort intended to awaken the masses to the need to obtain ' Swaraj ', through peaceful and non-violent means. In this booklet, he traces the cause of India's enslavement and arrives at the conclusion that, the English have not taken India, but she has been presented to them on a sliver platter. The British are thus in India, not because of their strength but because of our weakness. A group of Englishman came as traders and stayed on as rulers, and it was the Indians who were responsible for this role adopted by the British.

Tempted by the gold offered they fell prey to evil temptations. Gandhi thus opines that we lost our freedom because of our greed, disunity and infighting among ourselves.

Gandhiji draws a very distressing picture of the conditions of India, his first complaint being that India had become highly irreligious, and Indian had turned away from God. According to him railways, doctors and lawyers had impoverished the country and if we do not give up the above in time he opines it will spell ruin for us.

Gandhi proceeds to draw our attention to the truth, that modern civilization which has eaten into the vitals of the English nation is bound to destroy India. He goes on to say, " The British government in Indian constitutes a struggle between the modern civilization which is the kingdom of satan and the ancient civilization which is the kingdom of God. The one is God of war and the other is God of Love."²⁵ He thus holds modern civilization to be a curse responsible for the degradation of man.

Having thus given us a picture of the causes which have led to own enslavement, Gandhi then proceeds to highlight the method through which India could become free and establish 'Swaraj',

25) The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 272.

Gandhi warned those who were hoping to drive out the English through violence for he says that violence breeds violence and force can never achieve lasting peace. Gandhi gives the ' Mantra ' of passive resistance. " Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a single thing which is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul force " ²⁶ explains Gandhi. He further adds, " If man only will realise that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no mans tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self rule or home rule." ²⁷

Finally he went on to describe his concept of ' Swaraj ' which to many seems to be an ideal a utopia, having no roots in reality, a kind of an ideal structure, some what like a dream, and remaining a dream.

Having rejected the Western model of nation building, his concept of ' Swaraj ' is totally unique and for Gandhi the term ' Swaraj ' has a definite meaning and significance. ' Swaraj ' meaning self rule. He says, " It is ' Swaraj ' when we learn to rule ourselves. It is therefore in the palm of our hands. Do not

26) Gandhi M. K. : Hind Swaraj., p. 71.

27) Ibid., p. 72.

consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. There is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise. But such 'Swaraj' has to be experienced by each one for himself."²⁸

Purpose and Method of Study :

The topic chosen for M.Phil thesis is ' Gandhi and Hind Swaraj '. The choice of this particular subject for dissertation needs no justification for Gandhi is a universal figure with a universal message. 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 ' Satyagraha ', love force or truth force. This doctrine was embraced by the masses of India and played a crucial role in throwing off the yoke of colonialism.

The purpose of this study is to analyze Gandhi's views on the prevailing political scenario during the early years of this century. While Gandhi was away in South Africa, the struggle for independence was gathering momentum. There were several groups formed during that period and divided opinion prevailed over the

28) Gandhi M. K. : Hind Swaraj., p. 59.

issue of the method to be adopted to obtain ' Swaraj ', each group professing the superiority of its method over that of others. There were the constitutionalists the extremists and the revolutionaries each proposing their own line of action. An element of unity and co-ordination of approach to the issue of independence was lacking. It is this background against which Gandhis views on the struggle for independence are explored, especially the alternative method he provides in order to obtain ' Swaraj '. The popular opinion prevailing among many individuals was that once India freed herself from the clutches of British imperialism, they would be at liberty to chalk out this future course of development along the lines of the English political system. It mainly meant in essence, emulating British ways, their traditions and institutions and thus subconsciously becoming instruments for the continuation and perpetuation of tyranny and injustice under the garb of political institutions reflecting the will of the people. This study also intends to understand Gandhis views on Indian Home Rule and his vision of a free and independent India, which are indeed unique and inspiring where one detects a note of contempt for British political institutions which he opines are emblems of slavery.

The method of study is a textual analysis of Gandhis text ' Hind Swaraj ' written in 1908, in the light of the then prevailing situation in ' India and the problems faced by the country. An

attempt has been made to put toward Gandhis view point in a systematic and coherent manner. In the last chapter his views are critically analyzed. For that purpose many authoritative interpretations of Gandhis political thought are consulted. Thus form the second hand sources.