

AN INTRODUCTION



Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi

Gandhi Smriti, 5 Tees January Marg, New Delhi-110011
Administrative Office: Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi-110002

Ph. 23392710, 23392709, 23011480, 23012843 Fax. 23011480, 23392706
E-mail: 2010gsds@gmail.com, www.gandhismriti.gov.in, www.facebook.com/photounit.gds



Gandhi Smriti, erstwhile Birla House, where Mahatma Gandhi spent last 144 days of his life and fell victim to assassins bullets on January 30, 1948 treasures the memories of various historical events of the pre-independent India. A Martyr's Column stands at the spot where the Father of the Nation was assassinated, commemorating the Martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi as the embodiment of all the sufferings and sacrifices that characterized the long struggle for India's freedom. On display in the museum are photographs, sculptures, paintings, frescoes, inscriptions on rocks and relics pertaining to the years Mahatma Gandhi spent here, etc. The meagre personal effects of Gandhiji too are carefully preserved in the room he lived in, in the corner of the palatial building.

Sprawling Gandhi Darshan came into existence in 1969 to mark the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi and later in 1984, it was merged with Gandhi Smriti. Besides housing one of the largest exhibition on the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi in the world, it functions as an 'Interpretation Centre' where the eternal message of Gandhiji is implemented through various programmes.



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TIME LINE

1869: Born at Porbandar, Kathiawad, son of Karamchand and Putlibai Gandhi.

1883: Married to Kasturbai.

1887: Matriculation examination at Ahmedabad and entered Samaldas College, Bhavnagar, Kathiawad, but found studies difficult.

1891: Sailed from Bombay for England to study Law.

1891: Returned to India after being called to Bar.

1893: Sailed for South Africa to become lawyer for an Indian firm.

1893: Found himself subjected to all kinds of colour discrimination.

1904: Organised Phoenix Settlement near Durban, after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.

1907: Organised Satyagraha against compulsory registration of Asians ("*The Black Act*").

1908: Stood trial for instigating Satyagraha and was sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Johannesburg jail (his first imprisonment).

1909: Returned to South Africa, writing 'Hind Swaraj' en route.

1910: Established 'Tolstoy Farm' near Johannesburg.

1914: Sailed for India.

1915: Secured removal of custom's harassment of passengers at Viramgam.

1915: Established Satyagraha Ashram at Kochrab.

1917: Led successful Satyagraha campaign for rights of peasants on Indigo plantations in Champaran.

1918: Led strike of mill workers at Ahmedabad. Mill owner agreed to arbitration after his three-day fast (his first fast in India).

1918: Led Satyagraha campaign for peasants in Kheda.

1919: Organised nation-wide hartal - suspension of activity for a day - against Rowlatt Bills.

1921: Gave up wearing shirt and cap and resolved to wear only a loin-cloth in

devotion to homespun cotton and simplicity.

1927: No-tax Satyagraha campaign launched at Bardoli, led by Sardar Patel.

1929: Congress session at Lahore declared 'Complete Independence' and a boycott of the legislature and fixed January 26 as National Independence Day. Third all-Indian Satyagraha campaign began.

1930: Set out from Sabarmati with 79 volunteers on historic Salt March, 200 miles to sea at Dandi.

1930: Broke Salt Law by picking up a lump of salt at seashore as whole world watched.

1931: Gandhi-Irwin (Viceroy) Pact signed, which ended Civil Disobedience.

1931: Sailed from Bombay for the second Round Table Conference.

1932: Concluded "epic fast" after British accepted "Yervada Pact".

1936: Set up Sevagram Ashram.

1937: Visited Travancore for removal of untouchability.

1942: Congress passed "Quit India" resolution - the final nation-wide Satyagraha campaign with Gandhi as leader.

1942: Arrested with other Congress leaders and Kasturba and imprisoned in Aga Khan Palace near Poona.

1942: Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's secretary and intimate friend, died in Agha Khan Palace.

1944: Kasturba died in detention at Aga Khan Palace at the age of seventy-four.

1946: Began four-month tour of 49 villages in East Bengal to quell communal rioting over Muslim representation in provisional government.

1947: Began tour of Bihar to lessen Hindu-Muslim tensions.

1947: Fasted and prayed to combat riots in Calcutta, as India was partitioned and granted independence thereafter.

1947: Visited Delhi and environs to stop rioting and visited camps of refugees (Hindus and Sikhs from the Punjab).

1948: Assassinated in 78th year in Birla House by Nathuram Vinayak Godse.





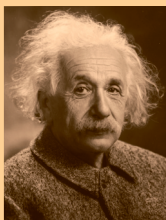
Mahatma Gandhi
(1869-1948)



"Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth."

"A man of wisdom and humility, armed with resolve and inflexible insistency, who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being and thus at all times risen superior."

A. Einstein



Albert Einstein
(Nobel Laureate)



Good Governance and Panchayati Raj



Panchayati Raj Act 1997 envisages the effective participation of the people of the Arunachal Pradesh in the decision making process at the grass root level.

Lack of awareness in implementing the system, the bureaucratic delays, economic reasons and social pressures has made the Act dysfunctional and thus it is more or less cosmetic in most cases.

According to Gandhiji, Panchayats should not be considered as a convenient administrative agency but as a democratic institution for the participation of the people in governance and in the development of the villages.

There is a need to create awareness among the people to be vigilant and concerned for holding of the Gram Sabha sessions at appropriate time that would automatically be followed by good governance at this level. For proper functioning of the Panchayats, power should devolve from the Civil Secretariat from Deputy Commissioners' office and MLAs to the people at the village level in this process, people at the village level will have a say in planning and spending money for their development purposes. They will also be in a position to question and self-evaluate.



Sustainable Development The Gandhian Way



Gandhiji not only gave India its freedom but also gave the world and us a new thought on nonviolence and sustainable living. His teachings and experiments are more valid today than ever before, especially when we are trying to find solutions to worldwide greed, violence and runaway consumptive lifestyle, which are putting a very heavy burden on the world resources.

Gandhiji's greatest contribution to sustainable development was twofold. Firstly, his experiments in simple living and high thinking. He believed that with simple living, the resources of the planet earth can sustain us comfortably and his famous saying that earth provides us enough for our needs but not for our greed is extremely apt today. Secondly, his insistence on all-inclusive growth of the society and hence his focus on rural development.

Every citizen of this earth aspires to a decent lifestyle. Such a lifestyle is possible with much less energy, which will put much less pressure on the earth's resources besides reducing substantially the environmental pollution. However, it can only happen if each one of us become spiritual and follow the Gandhian maxim of 'simple living and high thinking'.

Once our basic needs are satisfied, all of us long for some meaningful existence. It comes from helping other less fortunate people and by giving back something to the society. We can do it by providing right-sized technologies at the right 'price' to the poor. It is a doable goal. What is needed- is the direction and will of political leadership to make the life of poor people better.

In addition, the whole purpose of our existence is the increased personal and societal infrastructure. Personal infrastructure includes our health, happiness and general well-being. By improving our personal 'infrastructure' through spirituality, we become better human beings and it helps in our emotional growth and evolution. By giving back to the society so that its 'infrastructure' increases, we help in humankind's evolution. Both these activities when carried out simultaneously, can give us great joy and satisfaction –a message that Gandhiji gave through his actual work and experiments.

Thus, the mantra of development should be spirituality with high technology. Both these things allow us to reduce our greed for resources and live in harmony with nature – something that Gandhiji preached intuitively all his life.



Sustainable Development and Mutual Coexistence



In Mahatma Gandhi's opinion, in any scheme of development, man should be at the centre. A long term view of development has to be taken, for we owe our debt to prosperity as well. Man has to make a judicious use of natural resources. The ecological balance should not be disturbed. The objective should not be to build the islands of prosperity in the ocean of poverty; but to raise the level of standard of life and to combat poverty.

Gandhi's ideas are also reflected in the total value shift in production, consumption, habits and political systems. It places more emphasis on moral responsibility of the individual at the personal, social, national and universal level.

Gandhi believed in Sarvodaya and therefore, the welfare of all was the basis of his thinking; hence, his community centred approach towards sustainability emphasized on 'betterment of human life' and 'ensuring fulfilment of basic needs of all human needs'. Welfare of the human beings being the ultimate goal by avoiding all sorts of exploitations, Gandhi felt that human dignity needs to be established.

Gandhi was an economist of masses and an environmentalist without any structured model. Although he did not give structured model of environmental conservation and sustainable development, interlinking all his thoughts together, we get his logically built up environmentally sustainable development model.



Echoes of Gandhism in Arunachal Pradesh



Arunachal Pradesh became the 25th State of the Union of India on February 20th, 1987.

It is an ethnic state inhabited by colourful tribal people of diverse culture and lifestyle. They have their own unique culture and traditions. They also have customary laws and a time tested dispute resolution mechanism.

There are unwritten rules for administration of tribal villages. However, the customs and traditions are almost compatible with the modern concepts of jurisprudence. This is well illustrated in the utterances of the leaders of the councils of different communities in their traditional speeches, which they recite at the beginning of their meeting. *We find echoes of Gandhism in these utterances.*

Villagers and brethrens! let us strengthen our customs and our council, let us improve our relations, let us make the laws straight and equal for all, let our laws be uniform, let our customs be the same for all, let us be guided by the reason and see that justice is done and the compromise reaches that is acceptable to both parties. We have come together for a council meeting and let us speak in one voice and decide our verdict.

Besides, many organizations, both government and non-government, are working towards the social development and welfare of the people along Gandhian lines.



Be the change you want to see in the world.

A man of words and action, who always believed in leading by example, Gandhi was not just a great political and spiritual leader, he was also a thinker and one of the first who thought on the lines of sustainable development. His teachings of simple living and high thinking and considerable portions of his writings reveals his thought process in the direction of sustainable development.

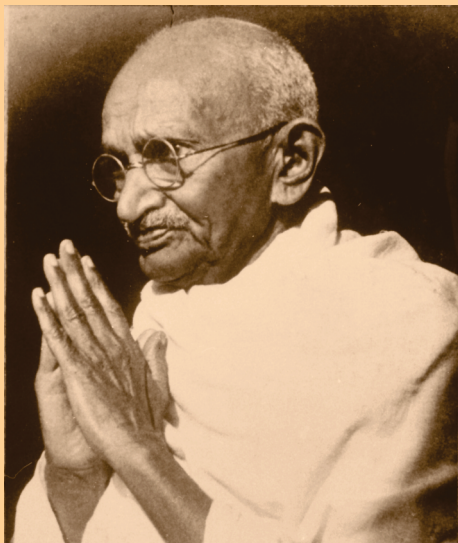
“God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like a locusts.”

Excerpts like the above are vividly illustrated in Gandhi's writings highlighting his thoughts on development, politics and governance. A practitioner of non-violence and truth, Gandhi lived modestly in a self-sufficient residential community, wore traditional Indian dress, woven with yarn he-hand spun on a charkha. He ate simple vegetarian food, and undertook long fast as means of both self-purification and social protest.

Almost a century ago in 1909, Gandhi had already envisioned the insatiable and unending pursuit of material pleasure and prosperity in the Western society as a threat to the Planet and its resources. In his writings compiled in the “Hind Swaraj”, Gandhi not only warned the western society of the ill-effects their lifestyle may bring, but also appealed to his countrymen not be trapped by the thought of material gains.



GANDHI'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

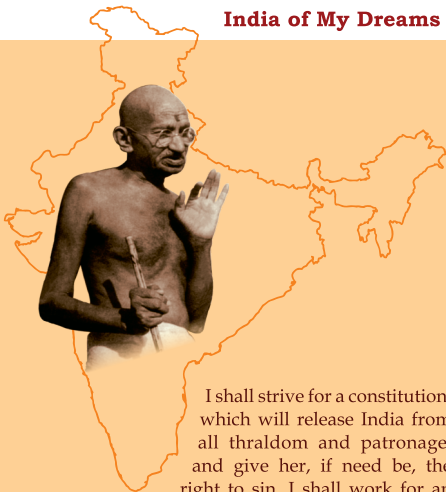


"I have not the slightest doubt that but for the pair - Truth and Non-violence - mankind will be doomed. It does not frighten me at all that the world seems to be going in the opposite direction. For the matter of that, when the moth approaches its doom, it whirls round faster and faster till it is burnt up. It is possible that India will not be able to escape this moth-like circling. It is my duty to try, till my last breath, to save India, and through it the world, from such a fate."

M.K. Gandhi



India of My Dreams



I shall strive for a constitution, which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams. ...I shall be satisfied with nothing less.

M.K. Gandhi





Gandhi: A Vision for a New World Order

Gandhi spent his whole life searching for answers to the problems associated with his world-order. Since Gandhi's time, many people have been searching for a new world-order that would make peace the top priority, non-violence the path, truth the end, and tolerance among religions the goal. They find themselves inspired by the teachings of Gandhi and desire a closer walk with his perception of the truth. Through his teachings, the world is able to share in his abundant spirituality and dynamic philosophy. His concern for humanity is evident in his belief that all people are equal, all important, regardless of class, caste, race, religion, or sex.

On January 30, 1948, Mohandas K. Gandhi died as the result of violence. A young assassin's bullet ended the life of a man who had dedicated himself to ending acts of violence. Although violence may have ended the life of Gandhi, it has far from killed Gandhism. For those who search for peace, the philosophy of Gandhi continues to have much to offer. Gandhi reminds us that, "...they might kill me but they cannot kill Gandhism. If Truth can be killed, Gandhism can be killed. If non-violence can be killed Gandhism can be killed. For what is Gandhism but winning swaraj [self-government in the sense both of political national independence and personal self-mastery] by means of truth and non-violence?"



CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME ITS MEANING AND PLACE



Mahatma Gandhi symbolized the eternal soul of India. Through the "Constructive Programme" he set an agenda for a revolution in India and subsequently for the entire mankind. Through this programme he presented a fairly comprehensive vision of the kind of society he had in his mind. It was the blue-print for inner change in the individual,

which would subsequently bring about social change. It was a process in which individual change and social change run parallel to each other, a simultaneous process and not independent of each other. Through the 'Constructive Programme' Gandhiji was preparing the masses for the post independence India. The seed of this vision was sown early in his life when he came in contact with the views of John Ruskin, through the book 'Unto this Last'. To actualise this ideal into practice requires the reconstruction of the entire social order. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. Social change must be evolutionary and not violent or disruptive. Social institutions are "the visible expression of moral values that mould the minds of individuals."

The Constructive Programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of "poorna swaraj" or complete independence by truthful and non-violent means. *Believe me that swaraj will be delayed in proportion to our failure and half-heartedness in carrying out the different items of the Constructive Programme. It is impossible to attain swaraj non-violently unless there is self-purification. This requires faith in the following items:*

1. Communal Unity
2. Removal of Untouchability
3. Prohibition
4. Khadi
5. Other Village Industries
6. Village Sanitation
7. Basic Education
8. Adult Education
9. Emancipation of Women
10. Education in Health & Hygiene
11. Provincial Languages
12. National Languages
13. Economic Equality
14. Peasants
15. Labour
16. Tribals
17. Leprosy Patients
18. Students.

