



QUEST IN EDUCATION

VOL. 64

NO. 2

April, 2025

Editorial

**Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement: A Study of
Secondary School Students of Mumbai** 04-17

Dr. Rahul Dandekar & Prof. Dr. Manisha Karne

Gandhi's Concept of *Swadeshi*: A Holistic Approach to Life 18-25

Dr. Siby K. Joseph

Gram Swaraj: Its Relevance in the Present Context 26-44

Dr. Bhaskar Kumar Kakati

Book Review 45-50

by Anna Usha Abraham

Book: *The Founding Mothers: 15 Women Architects of the
Indian Constitution*

Coauthored by Adv. Mary Scaria & Adv. Dr. Shalu Nigam

QUEST IN EDUCATION
The Quarterly Refereed Journal
Publishes articles/papers/reviews/reports
On innovative practices and Research in Education

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Published by

Ms. Nupur Mitra, President

Indian Council of Basic Education,

Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan

Juhu North, Mumbai-400049

Periodicity of Publication

January 1, April 1, July 1, October 1

ISSN: 0048-6434

Annual subscription: Rs. 300/- (India)

\$ 50/- (Outside India)

Papers with author's name and addresses must reach the office 12 weeks before the month in which the publication is due. Papers will be published only after suitable changes are made as per referee's suggestions.

Email: questineducation@gmail.com, vibhuti.np@gmail.com

Editorial

Esteemed Readers,

Season's Greetings. As responsible citizens, all of us are concerned with building responsible citizenry for which along with academic excellence, values and social commitment are extremely important. This issue makes a special effort to focus on scholarly endeavour in this direction.

Dr. Rahul Dandekar & Prof. Dr. Manisha Karne in their primary data based research article on '**Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement: A Study of Secondary School Students of Mumbai**' show that students perception of parental interest in their education plays important motivational factor for their academic excellence.

Prof. Dr. Siby K. Joseph explains basic tenets of Gandhian philosophy and provides a detailed reflection on '**Gandhi's Concept of Swadeshi: A Holistic Approach to Life**'

In India, institutionalization of local self-governance through Panchayati Raj for deepening of democracy and decentralized governance was a dream of Mahatma Gandhi. **Dr. Bhakar Kumar Kakati's** article on "**Gram Swaraj: Its Relevance in the Present Context**" analyses current status of **Village Self Rule** in context of moral and ethical values promoted by Gandhiji.

Anna Usha Abraham's reviewed a co authored book by **Adv. Mary Scaria & Adv. Dr. Shalu Nigam** titled, *The Founding Mothers: 15 Women Architects of the Indian Constitution.*

The scholars and experts are requested to send their original research based articles, case studies and book reviews on contemporary challenges faced by the education sector.

Prof. Vibhuti Patel
Chief Editor

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF MUMBAI

Dr. Rahul Dandekar,

Assistant Professor

Department of Economics

SES's L. S. Raheja College of Arts and Commerce

Prof. Dr. Manisha Karne,

Professor and Director

Mumbai School of Economics and Public Policy

University of Mumbai

Parental involvement is the active interest taken by the parents in every facet of children's academic development which can be specified in terms of time spent for studies, supervision of homework, taking regular updates from child etc. The present study aimed at finding out whether perceived parental involvement of secondary school students differ on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence. It also tries to find out whether there exists any relationship between perceived parental involvement and academic achievement of secondary school students. The sample consisted of 643 secondary school students from various schools of Greater Mumbai. In order to collect data, the researcher prepared parental involvement scale. Validity of the scale was assessed and reliability was established using cronbach's alpha. The results of the present study revealed that there is no significant difference in the perceived parental involvement of secondary schools on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence. Study also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement.

INTRODUCTION

A child's general development and academic achievement depend on parental involvement in their education. A child's motivation, self-esteem, and academic achievement may all be significantly impacted due to parental involvement. Parental involvement in a child's early schooling has been proven to be consistently linked to a child's academic success. Children whose parents are more active in their education have greater academic achievement than children whose parents are less involved in their education.

Researchers suggest that interactions between parents and children have major impacts on the intellectual development of the child, especially stimulating and responsive parental approaches. Those programmes may be designed to improve academic performance by analysing certain child parenting behaviours, like the participation of parents and the mechanics by which these practices impact academic achievement. Although parent participation has been identified as having to do with higher academic achievement, the precise processes by which parent participation influences academic performance in a child are not yet fully known.

From a study done by Topor et al (2010), findings have shown that higher parent engagement is strongly linked to a child's enhanced cognitive perception. The impression of the child's cognitive capacity might be influenced by parental participation. This also brings us to the previously mentioned point of self-esteem. If parental participation influences the way the child perceives their cognitive abilities, this will in turn either increase or decrease their self-esteem, and thus indirectly influencing their academic performance.

Eccles & Harold (1993) also reported that parental involvement is positively associated with academic achievement. A family's lack of involvement can be a result of lack of time, energy, resources, knowledge, and competence as well as a failure to understand. This can lead to their children's poorer academic achievement. It is also important to note that parental involvement, along with several other factors like qualification level, ethnic background, employment status, etc., all come together to influence a child's level as well as quality of academic achievement. Parents have a crucial role in the education system, from offering their children emotional and physical care to ensuring that their education fulfils their needs. Parents play significant role in school system including how they can support their kids and get active in their education.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Haveman and Wolfe (1995) observed that there was a direct relationship between higher parental qualification and higher academic achievement which could have been be a result of either genetic endowment or environmental factors. They identified links between investments in children and children's attainments. They highlighted the potential effects on children of family choices and neighborhood characteristics.

Feinstein and Symons (1997) estimated an education production function in which attainment depends upon parental inputs, peer group inputs and schooling inputs. The study revealed that the greater the qualitative time devoted by parents, the higher is the academic achievement of the students.

Jeynes, W. H. (2003) undertook a meta-analysis of 21 studies as a way to determine the impact of involvement on the academic achievement of minority children by the parents. A statistical analysis was undertaken to determine the overall effects of parental involvement. The results of this study indicated that the impact of parental involvement overall is significant for all the minority groups under study. Parental involvement, as a whole, affected all the academic variables under study by at least two tenths of a standard deviation unit for all the groups. However, certain aspects of parental involvement had a greater impact than did others among some of the races.

Chen, W. W., & Ho, H. Z. (2012) examined how the relation between perceived parental involvement and academic achievement of Taiwanese students' is mediated by student academic beliefs (i.e., beliefs about effort, academic self-concept, and perceived control). The sample of this study consisted of around 468 students from first year in colleges and/or universities in Taiwan. The results of this study indicated that students' academic beliefs mediated the relation between perceived parental involvement and academic achievement.

Rafiq, H. M., Fatima, T., Sohail, M. M., Saleem, M., & Khan, M. A. (2013) explored the effect of parental involvement in the academic achievement of their children. This was conducted in Allam Iqbal Town in Lahore city. The sample of this study consisted of 150 students from the 9th standard of secondary schools, both public and private. After the analysis of the data collected, it was found that parental involvement has significance effect in better academic performance of their children.

Wilder, S. (2014) synthesized the results of nine different meta-analyses that examined the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement. They identified generalizable findings across these studies. The findings of this meta-synthesis indicated that the relationship between academic achievement and parental involvement was positive, irrespective of the how they defined parental involvement or what measure of achievement they used. Results also revealed that this positive relationship was strongest if parental involvement was

defined as “parental expectations” for academic achievement of their children. And it was also seen that this impact of parental involvement was at its weakest when it was defined as “homework assistance”. Lastly, it was observed that the relationship was found to be consistent across different ethnic groups and grade levels. Albeit the strength of that relationship differed based on the type of assessment used to measure the students’ academic achievement.

Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015) executed quantitative synthesis of research in parental involvement and academic achievement, through a meta-analysis on 37 studies. These studies were done in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools and were carried out anywhere between the years 2000 to 2013. The results of this study showed that the parental models most linked to high achievement were those that focused on general supervision of the student’s learning activities. The strongest associations were found when the families had high academic expectations for their children, develop and maintain communication with them about school activities, and help them to develop reading habits.

Crespin-Boucaud, J., & Hotte, R. (2020) studied the impact of parent’s divorce on the investment of their children’s human capital. This was done among primary school students in Senegal. The researchers used sibling’s fixed-effects estimation. This exploited the variations in the age of the siblings at the time of divorce. They compared the children who were old enough, to their younger siblings. The observations showed that younger siblings are more likely than older siblings to have attended a primary school. In all, they noted that divorce did not seem to have any negative consequences of sorts on whether or not their children were enrolled in primary school.

A detailed review of related literature was done in order to find out the theoretical underpinnings of the connection between parental involvement and the academic achievement of the students.

All the studies stated above shows substantial association between parental involvement and academic achievement of the students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE VARIABLES

Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement is operationally defined as the marks that students have got in 10th Standard. (Secondary School Certificate - Maharashtra Board)

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is defined with respect to the active interest taken by the parents in every facet of children's academic development which can be specified in terms of time spent for studies, supervision of homework, taking regular updates from child etc.

OBJECTIVES

1. To compare the perceived parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence.
2. To measure the relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the perceived parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence.
2. There is no significant relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Design of the study comprises of methodology of the study, sampling techniques and tools used in present research.

Methodology of the study

The present study utilized the descriptive research method within the quantitative paradigm. The causal-comparative method was employed to examine differences in perceived parental involvement among secondary school students based on gender, family type, and place of residence. Additionally, the correlation method was used to explore the relationship between the academic

achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement.

Sampling techniques

For this study, a three-stage sampling method was employed, incorporating both stratified random sampling and simple random sampling at different stages. In the first stage, schools were chosen using stratified random sampling, with the strata based on the geographical location of the schools in Mumbai. Mumbai was divided into two strata: Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban. In the second stage, schools from both the city and suburban areas were selected through simple random sampling. In the third stage, students at the matriculation level were chosen using simple random sampling. The final sample consists of 643 students who passed the SSC (Maharashtra board) examination in 2019 from Mumbai.

Tools used in present research

For present research Parental Involvement in Child's Education Scale was prepared by the researcher keeping in mind all the factors depicting active interest of parents in every facet of children's academic development which can be specified in terms of time given for studies, extra coaching etc. This was accomplished by doing a strong literature review. Researcher could not find any scale which was relevant in current time period so it was decided to prepare a fresh parental involvement in child's education scale suitable for the current study. Parental involvement in child's education scale was developed as a 5-point Likert scale. Initially there were 20 statements. All statements were positive. Once the scale was ready it was tested for Content validity to check its suitability and relevance to the purpose of the current study. Content validity was done by calculating Lawshe's content validity ratio. The final version of parental involvement in child's education scale had 19 statements.

After completing the validity procedure, the final version of the tools was examined to evaluate its reliability. Pilot study was conducted in order to establish reliability index for the parental involvement in child's education scale. Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.98. The responses are separately collected for the mother and the father of the student and then for each statement average score is considered as final. Minimum and maximum possible scores of Parental Involvement in Child's Education scale are **19** and **95** respectively. The scale is

designed in such a way that higher is the score more is the parental involvement in child's education and vice versa.

For assessing academic achievement of secondary school students their marks in 10th standard were considered.

DESCRIPTIVE DATA ANALYSIS

For descriptive data analysis mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were calculated.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Parental Involvement of Secondary School Students on the Basis of Gender, Type of Family & Place of Residence

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

Perceived Parental Involvement	Sample Size	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Male	252	75.64	76.00	76.72	13.25	-0.08	2.46
Female	391	76.85	77.00	77.30	14.11	-0.03	0.98
Joint Family	193	77.88	77.50	76.74	12.67	0.09	2.41
Nuclear Family	450	75.73	76.00	76.54	14.20	-0.06	1.17
Slum Area	345	75.58	76.00	76.84	13.81	-0.09	1.49
Upscale Area	298	77.29	77.25	77.17	13.71	0.01	1.51

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

Academic Achievement	Sample Size	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total Sample	643	64.78	65.00	65.44	12.58	-0.05	-0.58

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Testing of Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the perceived parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence. The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is **t test**.

Table 3
Relevant Statistic of the Perceived Parental Involvement of the Secondary School Students on the Basis of Gender, Type of Family and Place of Residence.

**df = N-2 = 643-2 = 641. From t -table, for df 641, t = 1.96 at 0.05 level*

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	L.O.S.
Perceived School Infrastructure	Male	252	75.64	13.25	1.10	NS
	Female	391	76.85	14.11		
	Joint Family	193	77.88	12.67	1.90	NS
	Nuclear Family	450	75.73	14.20		
	Slum Area	345	75.58	13.81	1.57	NS
	Upscale Area	298	77.29	13.71		

All t values are insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in perceived parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of gender, type of family and place of residence. This means that parental involvement in both the male and the female child is more or less similar. Parents' involvement in their child's education should not be limited to the early grades. In reality, child who have parents who are more involved in their education during the secondary years are more likely to stay in school and have clear aspirations for the future. Parents' involvement in and support to their child's education can have a good effect on the child's attitude toward school, classroom behavior, level of motivation, and self-esteem. Knowing these benefits parents show equal level of involvement in both male and female child so that both can develop and progress equally.

There is no significant difference in the parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of type of family. This means that parental involvement in both joint and nuclear family is more or less similar. Parental involvement or engagement can refer to a variety of actions, but it most often describes how parents and other family members support and contribute to their child's education. These efforts can be made outside of the classroom with the goal of enhancing child's learning. Parental involvement or engagement at home might take the form of conversations with child about school, helping them with their homework, and general discussion with them. Parents can get involved at school by attending workshops, parent teacher meetings or going to plays and sporting activities. Such involvement will definitely affect child's education positively and will help them to perform better academically. Both joint and nuclear family wants their children to perform better academically therefore parental involvement in both joint and nuclear family is more or less similar.

There is no significant difference in the parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of place of residence. This means that parental involvement in both upscale and slum areas is more or less similar. Many parents wrongly think that teachers are solely responsible for their child's education, while the evidence strongly favors parental involvement. Students who have involved parents are more likely to have better social skills, better behavior, higher grades and test scores, regular attendance at school, regardless of their background or money. This could be the reason why parental involvement in the child's education is more or less similar in slum and upscale areas because all parents want their child to perform better academically.

Testing of Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement.

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is **Karl Pearson's Coefficients of Correlation (r)**.

Table 6.4
Relevant Statistic of the Relationship between the Academic Achievement
of the Secondary School Students and their Perceived Parental
Involvement

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

Variables	Total Sample	DF	Calculated 'r'	Critical Value at 0.05 L.O.S	Critical Value 'r' at 0.01 L	L.O.S.
Academic Achievement Parental Involvement	Male	250	0.16	0.113	0.148	0.01
	Female	389	0.13	0.098	0.128	0.05
	Total	641	0.14	0.062	0.081	0.01

All the Karl Pearson's coefficients of correlation between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their perceived parental involvement for male, female and total sample are **0.16**, **0.13** and **0.14** respectively. All these 'r's are positive and significant because calculated values of 'r's are greater than the critical values of 'r'. For male students and total sample, it is significant at 0.01 level and for female students it is significant at 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant positive relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their parental involvement. Higher parental involvement in child's education leads to higher academic achievement. Parental involvement involves supporting and contributing to a child's education, often outside the classroom. This can involve discussing school matters, assisting with homework, and participating in extracurricular activities. Active parental involvement can improve a child's attitude, classroom behavior, motivation, self-esteem, and overall academic achievement.

CONCLUSION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference in perceived parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of gender. This means that parental involvement in both the male and the female child is more or less similar. There is no significant difference in the parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis of type of family. This means that parental involvement in both joint and nuclear family is more or less similar. There is no significant difference in the parental involvement of secondary school students on the basis

of place of residence. This means that parental involvement in both upscale and slum areas is more or less similar. There is a significant positive relationship between the academic achievement of secondary school students and their parental involvement. Higher parental involvement in child's education leads to higher academic achievement.

Results of the present study are useful for all the stakeholders of school i.e., students, teachers, Principals, Management representatives, parents and government. School authorities can have active and continuous coordination between all the stakeholders i.e., teachers, parents and students so that students' performance can be periodically assessed, monitored and improved. Home environment is important in influencing student's academic accomplishments, it is strongly suggested that parents be oriented on the value of the home environment in their children's academic achievement. For this, principals and management of schools can organize some orientation programs for the parents. Even government can make it mandatory for the school authorities. This cannot be implemented without active interest and involvement of teachers.

The study highlights the importance of parental involvement in child's education; hence parents should spend more time with their children. Parental involvement in child's education has a substantial impact on their academic accomplishment, it is strongly advised that interaction and communication between parents and teachers be developed for improved student progress. Parents are advised to attend all parent teacher meetings on regular basis. Parents should take active interest in the academics of their child. They should take regular updates from their child. They should talk to their child regarding the constraints and difficulties that they face in class. Accordingly, parents can give proper guidance or intervene by talking to the teachers about their child. By doing this, parents can ensure higher academic returns for their child.

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GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF SWADESHI: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LIFE

Dr. Siby K. Joseph, Director,

Sri Jannalal Bajaj Memorial Library and
Research Centre for Gandhian Studies,
Sevagram Ashram Pratishtan,
Wardha, Maharashtra

Email : directorjbmlrc@gmail.com

This paper explores Gandhi's concept of swadeshi and its manifestations in various aspects of human life, including economic, political, social, religious, educational, and health spheres. While swadeshi as a generic concept covers almost every aspect of human life, this paper limits its scope to these selected areas. We begin by analysing Gandhi's vision of swadeshi.

Introduction

Satyagraha and *swadeshi* are fundamental pillars of Gandhi's philosophy of life. Gandhi believed that human activities form an indivisible whole, transcending compartmentalization into social, economic, political, and religious spheres. His experiments with truth aimed to integrate these aspects of life. The concept of *swadeshi*, often misunderstood as merely an economic doctrine, encompasses all facets of human existence. Gandhi's vision of *swadeshi* is a universal concept, propounded during India's struggle for freedom. He employed *swadeshi* as a means to achieve India's *swaraj*, inspiring non-violent struggles worldwide. *Swaraj* through *swadeshi* is a principle with universal applicability.

Gandhi's Vision of Swadeshi

Gandhi's vision of *Swadeshi* is deeply rooted in his philosophy of life, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all human activities. Gandhi described *swadeshi* as the "law of laws"¹ ingrained in human nature, a universal principle that requires no legislation. Like the laws of nature, *swadeshi* is self-acting, restoring balance when neglected or

disobeyed. This law governs human behaviour, urging individuals to prioritize their immediate surroundings and community. According to Gandhi, *swadeshi* ultimately represents the soul's liberation from earthly bondage. Embracing *swadeshi* means identifying with all creation, recognizing the interconnectedness of life. This unity is achieved by serving one's immediate neighbour, fulfilling one's primary duty. In Gandhi's view, *swadeshi* knows no distinction between one's own and others' interests. Serving the nearest individual is, in fact, serving the universe. Quoting the Gita², Gandhi emphasized the importance of *swadharma*, one's inherent duty, which translates to *swadeshi* when applied to one's immediate environment.³ The law of *swadeshi* dictates that one should only take what is necessary to fulfil family obligations, leaving no room for selfishness or hatred. *Swadeshi* embodies the highest form of altruism and universal service. Gandhi defined *swadeshi* as "the spirit in us which restricts us to the use and services of our immediate surroundings, to the exclusion of the more remote."⁴ This definition encapsulates the essence of his concept. Gandhi believed that by focusing on our immediate neighbours and environment, we can create a more harmonious and self-sufficient community. This approach is not about exclusion, but rather about recognizing the importance of our local context.

Economic Dimension of Swadeshi

Gandhi believed that India's widespread poverty resulted from deviating from the principles of *swadeshi* in economic and industrial life. He advocated for using locally produced goods, supporting neighbouring industries, and strengthening them where necessary. During India's struggle for independence, Gandhi recognized the importance of reviving indigenous industries for economic salvation. He considered *khadi*, or hand spun and handwoven cloth, a crucial aspect of *swadeshi*. *Khadi* fulfilled the service envisioned in *swadeshi*, providing a practical application of the principle. Gandhi asked, "What is the kind of service... the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live?"⁵ He found the answer in universalizing *khadi*, which would enable India's semi-starved population to live. For Gandhi, *khadi* represented the central role of village industries in the Indian economy.⁶ He advocated for

decentralizing production and distribution of essential goods, prioritizing local products even if they were inferior or more expensive. Gandhi warned against making *swadeshi* a fetish, emphasizing that it should not be driven by hatred towards foreigners. Instead, *swadeshi* should be guided by selfless service and *ahimsa* (love).⁷ In a *swadeshi*-based economic order, Gandhi envisioned healthy exchange of products, rather than cutthroat competition. He described this ideal situation: "If we follow the *swadeshi* doctrine, it would be our duty to find neighbours who can supply our wants and teach them to supply what they do not know how to produce... Every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit."⁸ In such an economic system, production, distribution, and consumption would be intertwined, fostering a harmonious and self-sufficient community.

Political dimension of Swadeshi

The political dimension of *Swadeshi* is deeply rooted in Gandhi's vision of self-governance and empowerment of the indigenous institutions. Gandhi pleaded the need for internal governance (*swaraj*) as early as 1909 in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. He advocated for the revival of indigenous institutions and the strengthening of decentralized systems, such as *Panchayati Raj*,⁹ where villages are governed by a Panchayat of five elected members, embodying perfect democracy, individual freedom, and non-violence. Gandhi's vision of village *swaraj* is further outlined through the concept of the oceanic circle,¹⁰ where individuals are at the centre of society, comprising ever-widening circles that promote humility and unity among individuals, rather than a pyramidal structure sustained by the bottom, ultimately creating a harmonious and self-sufficient community where individuals are empowered to participate in governance and decision-making processes.

The Social Dimension of Swadeshi

Gandhi's application of *swadeshi* to the Indian social structure initially led him to accept the *varna* system, with its four-fold division based on duties. He considered all professions equally important and attempted to reform the caste system by eliminating practices he deemed historical accretions. Gandhi vehemently opposed the caste system based on birth and social status, launching a relentless battle against

untouchability. He viewed untouchability as a blot on Hinduism and championed the cause of the marginalized, including Dalits, women, tribals, and lepers. Gandhi believed true *swaraj* could only be achieved by uplifting these deprived sections. His 18-point Constructive Programme, drawn from India's social realities, aimed at social reconstruction through voluntary action. Gandhi's Constructive Programme played a pivotal role in promoting social change, akin to the work of civil society and NGOs. He saw it as a "truthful and non-violent way of winning *Poorna Swaraj*."¹¹

Swadeshi in Religion

Gandhi's concept of *swadeshi* in religion emphasizes adhering to one's ancestral faith, utilizing immediate religious surroundings, and serving one's own religion by purging its defects. This approach involves self-purification, self-realization, and enriching one's faith by drawing from others, while differentiating between true conversion, which is a personal and voluntary process of self-discovery, and proselytization, which he rejected. Gandhi believed that true conversion should be driven by a genuine desire for spiritual growth, rather than coercion or external influence, and that it should not involve renouncing one's ancestral faith, but rather building upon its foundations. His attitude was not of patronising toleration but developing the spirit of fellowship. His veneration for other faiths was the same as that of his own faith. He believed in the fundamental equality of all religions, what he called *Sarvadharmā Samabhava*. By adopting this approach, individuals can help preserve the composite culture of countries like India and promote harmony among followers of various faiths, countering growing communal divisions and religious fundamentalism.

Swadeshi in Education

One of the major areas in which Gandhi applied his *swadeshi* ideal was the field of education. For him education was meant for all-round development of personality and not purely as a means for earning one's livelihood. In *Hind Swaraj* he rejected the British educational system prevailing in India. His primary objection against the British educational system was that it was primarily meant for 'enslaving' the people of India. It was his firm conviction that the prevailing system of

education does not serve the requirements of the country in any form or shape. He believed that education has to be rooted in the culture and traditions of the country. Education through a medium of foreign language puts undue stress upon the nerves of the children and they become foreigners in their own country. They are completely cut off from the realities of life. He placed before the nation an alternative system of education called *Nai Talim* or Basic education. He defined education as follows: "By Education, I mean, an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training."¹²In his scheme the craft was the pivot and centre of all educational activities. Through the medium of craft, he correlated all other subjects to the central craft. It was a self-sufficient and self-supporting system of education meant for children above the age of seven which was meant to be free and compulsory. He placed before the nation alternative institutions like Gujarat Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith and others during the struggle for independence. Later he broadened his concept of basic education and looked upon education as a lifelong process starting from cradle to grave.

Swadeshi in Health Care

Gandhi's approach to healthcare was deeply rooted in the principle of *swadeshi*, emphasizing the importance of living in harmony with nature. He strongly critiqued the modern medical system,¹³ which he believed focused primarily on curing diseases rather than preventing them. Instead, Gandhi advocated for a holistic approach to healthcare, one that prioritized natural cure, self-discipline, and balanced way of living. At the core of Gandhi's healthcare philosophy was the importance of living in accordance with the natural world. He believed that the key to good health lay in the proper use of the five elements: earth, water, air, sunlight, and ether. Gandhi also emphasized the importance of diet, physical exercise, hygiene, and sanitation in maintaining good health. In addition to these physical aspects of healthcare, Gandhi also believed in the importance of spiritual practices in maintaining good health. He experimented with various nature cure methods, including nutrition and spiritual practices like *Ram nam*,

which he believed could purify and protect the body. For Gandhi, *Ram nam* was not just a mantra to be chanted, but a powerful spiritual tool that could bring about physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Overall, Gandhi's approach to healthcare offers a unique and holistic perspective on the importance of living in harmony with nature. His emphasis on natural cure, self-discipline, and balanced living continues to inspire healthcare practitioners and individuals around the world.

Conclusion

Gandhi's philosophy of *swadeshi* is a holistic approach that encompasses every aspect of life, from education and healthcare to social and economic development. By integrating the *swadeshi* spirit into various walks of life, Gandhi demonstrated its potential to transform individuals and society as a whole. His approach was not limited to conceptual ideas; instead, he proposed concrete institutional setups to address various concerns. At the heart of Gandhi's philosophy lies the idea of interconnectedness and oneness among all creations, including sentient and non-sentient beings. This perspective emphasizes the importance of living in harmony with nature and recognizing the intrinsic value of every living being. Unfortunately, independent India failed to fully grasp the revolutionary nature of Gandhi's thoughts, discarding them in the early years of freedom. However, it has become increasingly clear that embracing the Gandhian path is essential for effectively addressing the challenges faced by India and the world. By adopting this approach, individuals and societies can align themselves with the universal law of *Rita*, which emphasizes the importance of living in harmony with nature and recognizing the interconnectedness of all living beings.

Acknowledgement

An earlier version of this paper appeared as a chapter in the book *Continuing Relevance of Swadeshi* edited by the author.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 .M. K. Gandhi, *From Yervada Mandir* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2007) p. 35

2. Gandhi quotes Gita "It is best to die performing one's own duty or Swadharma. Paradharmā, or another's duty, is fraught with danger."² *Ibid.* p. 36.

3. Further Gandhi explains: "What the Gita says with regard to swadharma equally applies to swadeshi also, for swadeshi is swadharma applied to one's immediate environment." *Ibid.* p. 36.

4. R. K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, (ed.), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1996), p. 410.

5. M. K. Gandhi, *From Yeravada Mandir*, op. cit., p. 37.

6. "Khadi is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support khadi in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it. Without it other industries cannot grow. But during my last tour I discovered that, without the revival of other industries, khadi could not make further progress. For villagers to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village must be touched at all points."

M. K. Gandhi *Harijan*, 16-11-1934.

7. "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly, and a negation of the swadeshi spirit. A true votary of swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner: he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshimism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i.e. Love". M. K. Gandhi, *From Yeravada Mandir*, op. cit., p.38

8. R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao (ed.), op. cit., p. 411

9. "The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom.

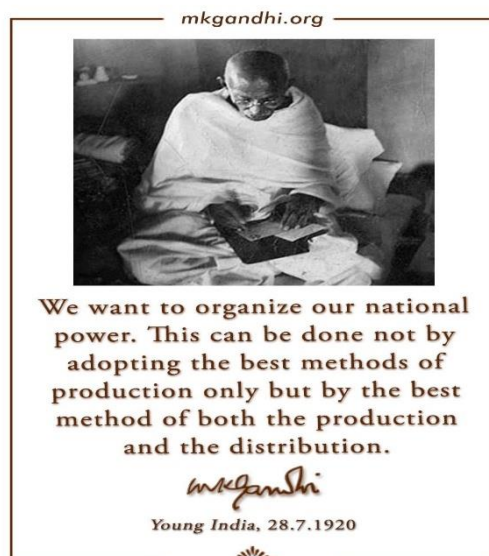
The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world." M. K. Gandhi, *Panchayat Raj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1996) pp. 11-12.

10."In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units." *Ibid.* p. 9.

11. See the foreword written by Gandhi on November 13, 1945. M. K. Gandhi, *Constructive Programme*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2005), p. 3.

12. M. K. Gandhi Harijan, July 31, 1937

13. In *Hind swaraj* Gandhi went even to the extent of describing hospitals as "institutions for propagating sin." M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2004), p. 51



Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal - Gandhi Research Foundation

GRAM SWARAJ: ITS RELEVANCE IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT

Dr. Bhaskar Kumar Kakati, Assistant Professor,
School of Liberal Arts (SoLA)
Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur

Email: bhaskarkumarkakati@gmail.com

Gram Swaraj - an idea of the self-reliant village is a unique concept of rural reconstruction proposed by Mahatma Gandhi much before India's independence that he developed over a period of times. His concept of Gram Swaraj is considered one of the alternative models of rural reconstruction, whose primary focus is on the holistic development of a society where individuals are placed in the economic system's centre. However, Gram Swaraj is considered an ideal development approach, yet Indian planners and policymakers emphasised economic development over an individual's moral and ethical values after independence. On the other hand, with gaining more importance to sustainable development, the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj starts gaining importance as his approach gave importance to the human being's overall development. Accordingly, in this paper, an attempt is made to re-look the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj and its relevance to the present context.

INTRODUCTION

Migration to cities from different parts became one of the significant challenges for the development planner in a country like India in where there is low per capita space availability in cities. A massive migration to urban areas 'further contributes to urban poverty and leads to stress and societal turbulence' (Kalam & Singh, 2011, p. vii). The Census 2011 shows that around 32.33 per cent of total migration migrated to urban areas in India, i.e. 23.13 per cent from rural to urban areas and 73.77 per cent from urban-to-urban areas (Register General of India, 2011). It is estimated that if this continues, then by 2030, India's urban population will likely reach 590 million by 2030 (Ministry of Rural Development, 2011).

So, many rural populations migrated to different urban areas in India every year. Primary reasons for the migration of rural population to urban areas

as per Census 2011 are employment, business, education and marriage. People from rural areas migrate to urban areas because the existing income sources in rural areas such as agriculture cannot address unemployment issues and uplift living standards. There is also lack of modern amenities and services in rural areas which are necessary for decent living in rural areas induces a large percentage of the population from rural areas to migrate to urban areas in search of these services, employment and livelihoods opportunities. Further studies show that many Indian farmers commit suicide every year because of indebtedness, deteriorating economic status, and crop failures (Mohanty, 2005; Mishra, 2006). Therefore, there is a need of bridging the rural-urban divide and make available the modern services and amenities in rural areas along with creating job opportunities and livelihoods for the rural population to address the issue of rural-urban migration hence lead to sustainable development.

In this context, in this paper, an attempt is being made to understand the relevance of Gandhian Concept of *Gram Swaraj* in mitigating different problems of rural areas such as migration, unemployment, access to livelihoods, education and health services. This paper is evaluative and highly dependent on the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and extensive literature review. The paper is organised into five sections. The first section introduces the research problem and methodology adopted for fulfilling the research objectives. In the second section, the researcher highlights the village's concept, as proposed by Gandhi. *Gram Swaraj*'s concept has been discussed in the third section, while in the fourth section, an attempt is made to understand *Gram Swaraj*'s relevance in the present context. Fifth, or in the last section, the researcher is making his concluding remarks.

GANDHI'S IDEAL VILLAGE

The Gandhian development approach's primary target was village as he considered that rebuilding of a nation depends on the reconstruction of rural areas. He, based on his experiences, introduced his economic ideas to reconstruct many rural areas of India. Among them, the experiment of rural reconstruction in Champaran in 1917, Sevagram in 1920, Wardha in 1938 and constructive programmes were the prominent example of such initiative. Moreover, he directly introduced his rural reconstruction ideas and urged his followers and colleagues to focus on rural reconstruction. In one of his letters wrote on 13th November 1945 to first Prime Minister of

Independent India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru he suggested him mental, economic, political and moral development of everyone to have equal right and opportunity. He also asked him to focus on bridging the gap between rural-urban divide.

The village, according to Gandhi, is an ideal place to live. A glimpse of his dream village is reflected in his different writings published in Harijan and Young India and some of the personal letter he wrote to different persons. In one such letter written to Munnalal Shah on 04th April 1941, he depicted his ideal village idea. He dreamed of a village where everyone wears cloth made of own, uses oil of indigenouse oil presses, and eats food produced by own. There would be 100 per cent literate people in his dream village with having harmony among different communities, and there would be no untouchability, free from quarrels and thefts. Therefore, the ideal village what he dreamed would be an independent unit or a complete republic. Accordingly, Gandhi considered that each village should be 'independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus, every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth' (Joshi, 2002, p. 5). Accordingly, his dream village was based on no caste and class 'in which there are no vertical divisions but only horizontal; no high, no low; all service has equal status and carries equal wages; those who have more use their advantage not for themselves but as a trust to serve others who have less; the motivating factor in the choice of vocations is not personal advancement but self-expression and self-realization through the service of society' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 23).

There are many components of Gandhian ideal village. These include revenue generation, village sanitation, village industries, high status of women etc. He considered that to be a complete republic, a village must have sources of revenue generation. So, he said that 'any village can become such a republic today without much interference even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue' (Joshi, 2002, p. 5).

Village sanitation and village industries were integral parts of Gandhi's dream village. Village sanitation is necessary as it is directly linked with individual mental and physical health and without sound mental and physical health development. His understanding of village sanitation's

importance is reflected in one of the letters he wrote to D.D. Joshi on 01st August 1946. In his letter, he mentioned that 'village sanitation, domestic cleanliness, personal hygiene and health care have the first place and full scope, the underlying idea being that this done there can be no disease'(ibid:22). According to him, each one should be clean from externally and internally. The village of each individual should be free of dirt and dung and foul smells. So, in his village reconstruction programme, village sanitation gets a vital place. Accordingly, he urged the village workers to focus on village sanitation specifically. Therefore, he said, 'the village worker who is ignorant of village sanitation science, who is not a successful scavenger, cannot fit himself for village service' (ibid: 22).

Village industries in the Gandhian ideal village find a vital place because only village industries could cater to unemployment in rural areas. These industries, which include soap-making, matchmaking, hand-grinding, hand-pounding, oil pressing, cattle farming, farming, dairying, khadi, etc., are labour driven with the involvement of less machinery. He considered that urban-centric industries based on big machinery are the source of labour exploitation and only the profit source to their owner. Their objectives are not to solve the problem of unemployment. With the revival of village cottage and small-scale industries would lead to creating employment for mass, leading to an increase in income of rural people.

In Gandhian dream village women got high status. He dreamed of a village where 'there will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age' (Gandhi, 1962, pp. 23-24). Therefore, Gandhi dreamed for a village where all the individual will be free of all diseases, exercise their physical labour, have all connectivity, and all necessities of life such as clean water, food, cloth, sanitation, education, and the house lead to self-reliant. He thus emphasized people's inclusion in decision-making as decision-making only can make a village self-reliant and self-rule or true republic. There would be no exploitation, and each individual will have equal right and opportunity in the Gandhian ideal village. Thus, the four characteristics of Gandhi's ideal village as by Dhuru Thadani (2011) are- access of each individual to healthcare and food production, respect to human actions and natural resources, having a

democratic political, institutional framework and physical and electronic linkages among villages and between rural and urban areas (Thadani, 2011).

GRAM SWARAJ- AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

‘Our village-folk do not get fresh air though they are surrounded by fresh air; they don't get fresh food though they are surrounded by the freshest foods’ (Gandhi, 1962, p. 40). The primary concern of planners and policymakers of a country like India is to provide basic necessities of life to rural folk. Still, most rural people in India do not have access to food, shelter, education and health care despite producing the majority of food products and providing the raw materials for city-based industries. While experiencing these conditions of rural areas, Gandhi considered a need for reconstruction of rural areas to achieve the real goal of India's independence. He considered that independence must begin at the bottom, and economic independence cannot be separated from political independence. Political independence without economic independence has no meaning, and Gram Swaraj-the alternative model of rural reconstruction was the outcome of such under sanding.

Gram means village and Swaraj is a Vedic word means self-restraint and self-rule. So, in simple Gram Swaraj, means achieving self-rule and control by the villages. The concept of Swaraj, according to Gandhi, has two distinct but interrelated concepts such and individual and political. 'At the individual level, Swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing self-reliance' (Gandhi, 1928, p. 772). An individual without conquering the lust within him cannot rule over himself (Patil, 1983) so, it is essential for each human being to learn to 'rule over oneself or attaining the ability of self-rule' (Anjaneyulu, 2003, p. 36). ‘Swaraj’ may, therefore, be rendered as discipline rule from inside’ (Chander, n.d., p. 543). According to Gandhi, the individual is the centre of power (Anjaneyulu, 2003) so it becomes essential for each individual to become self-discipline for attaining the self-government because 'self-government depends entirely upon our internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 17). According to Gandhi, attaining self-discipline will further lead to eliminating all forms of domination which is a vital component of Swaraj. In Gram Swaraj, Gandhi emphasised the individual dimension because

human life is a gift from nature to be used carefully and judiciously. 'A life was destined to be lived decently and worthily' (Behuria, 2015, p. 60). So, he urged for the individual's mental and moral growth and focused on distributing fruit of development equally among the individuals.

Politically, Swaraj implies self-governance in which every individual has self-rule and self-restraint through participation in decision making. Therefore, political adoption of Swaraj means the introduction of a system where the role of the state machinery become less and power lies with people's hand. According to him, a government is considered the best government that governs the least. Accordingly, Gandhi gave more importance to economic relationships between individuals and economic micro-groups, such as village communities where the state has a minor role in the development process.

Gandhian *Gram Swaraj* is based on certain principles such as human beings' supremacy, full employment, equality, *Swadeshi*, trusteeship, self-sufficiency and cooperation, Nai Talim, decentralization. Gram Swaraj is a permanent feature, so he believed that objectives of *Swaraj* would be fulfilled when a village would attain *Swaraj* in all spheres of life such as economic, political, social and cultural. So, the Gandhian *Gram Swaraj* can be described as 'non-exploiting decentralized, simple village economy providing for full employment to each one of its citizens on the basis of voluntary cooperation and working for achieving self-sufficiency in its basic requirements of food, clothing, and other necessities of life' (Upadhyay, n.d., p. 103).

Gram Swaraj cannot be separated from non-violence because it 'is the practical embodiment of non-violence in the spheres of politics, economics and sociology' (Vyas, 1962, p. 8). Gandhi advocated for self-rule and self-control but not to rule others. He was in an opinion that *Swaraj* is only possible when an individual observes truth and non-violence. He said that '*Swaraj* of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 20). So, each individual only can avail freedom when they follow the path of non-violence. Thus, in *Swaraj*, Gandhi gave more importance to the duty of an individual. Only those who perform the duty for the state can avail the right of the citizen. So, 'who

observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves' (ibid:21).

To attained self-rule, a village must be self-sufficient. Gandhi considered that lack of self-sufficiency leads to exploitation of poor in the hand of rich and village in cities' hand (Sharma, 1992). So, the Gandhian philosophy of self-sufficiency was mainly influenced by economic equality. Therefore, to attain *swaraj*, one must self-sufficient in basic necessities such as food, cloth and house. To enhance their income, the rural household must focus on other sources of income along with agriculture. In rural India, village cottage and small-scale industries may fulfil this gap.

Furthermore, traditionally, rural people inherited different craft skills, which can be significant alternative sources for rural people. Thus, Gandhi emphasised on promotion of rural industries. According to Gandhi, it should be remembered that self-sufficiency is not boycotting of other, and it does not mean narrowness. In discussion with Shrikrishnadas Jaju on 10th October 1944, he considered that to be self-sufficient, the village no need to be self-contained. Some products may be collected from others, and some of their products may be sent to others. However, the main thing is that it should not be the village's aim to send their extra produce to cities or far away areas always rather their duties should be to meet the needs of immediate neighbour first before serving the far away areas. So, he said 'our outlook must be that we would serve the village first, then the neighbourhood, then the district and thereafter the province' (Joshi, 2002, p. 6).

A village, according to his concept *Gram Swaraj* should be a self-sufficient unit independent of others but individuals are interdependent of each other. A village would become self-sufficient when the village residents will use the local product and promote rural industries. Use of more local products and promotion of rural industries means an increase in income because of fruitful employment and increased production because of an increase in local demand. So, when the consumers fulfil their requirements from the local produce and local producers, it will directly support the local producers like farmers, artisan, weavers etc., and accordingly, it will develop a natural economic order and harmony at society (Patil, 1983). Use of local products means the use of *Swadeshi*, according to Gandhi. His idea

of *Swadeshi* was influenced by *Swadharna* philosophy of Gita, which means one's fundamental nature. Therefore, *Swadeshi* refers to 'use of all home-made things to exclude foreign things, so such use is necessary for protecting the home industry, more especially those industries without which India will become pauperized. In my opinion, therefore, *Swadeshi* which excludes the use of everything foreign no matter how beneficent it maybe is a narrow interpretation of *Swadeshi*' (Young India 17.02.1926, p. 213). However, his idea of *Swadeshi* never considered the exclusion of everything foreign or boycott movement undertaken through revenge (Prabhu & Rao, 1960). Thus, *Swadeshi* implies preference to the goods made by neighbours over goods made at far-way places. Through the doctrine of *Swadeshi*, he tried to make a nexus of concern for each other between producer and consumer who in the economic exchange process would work jointly by using local resources for the development of local areas so that 'every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 53).

Gandhi never distinguished economics from moral and ethical value. 'Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful' (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 253). Accordingly, Gandhi's economic philosophy was aimed at 'serving humanity' rather than accumulating economic wealth. He considered that fruit of development and production should be equally distributed among all the stakeholders. However, it is a common feature that in the production process, profit generally goes to a few hands despite many not massively benefited stakeholders involved with the generation of these profits. So, the owners of the mode of production cannot accumulate wealth without the poor's support. This is the basis for his trusteeship concept, one of the integral parts of *Gram Swaraj* of Gandhi. Trusteeship according to Gandhi is 'an organisational structure under which production could be organised, instead of large industrial houses where economic power was concentrated in the hands of a few and was inherently exploitative' (Mathur, 2012, p. 70). Thus, according to trusteeship, all the firm's assets must be used for society's welfare by keeping aside a few portions of the profit for the firm's owner as livelihoods.

Another integral part of Gandhian *Gram Swaraj* is *Nai Talim*. It is a craft-based education system where learners are being taught practical skills,

emphasising spiritual, cultural and social development. He realised that learners' spirit could not be trained only through books; instead, it is necessary to introduce the learners with the human environment's practical concept. Handicraft was found to be the most accessible component of this process as a skill of which inherited from generation to generation. Further, he considered that 'handicrafts are to be taught, not merely for productive works, but for developing the intellect of the pupils' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 90). This method of training rural youth and children he developed from Tolstoy Farm's idea (Patil, 1983). He dreamed for such education which can develop both body and mind of the individual. Pertaining vocational training means giving training to groups of people of different socio-economic background means eradicating untouchability prevails at the society as such education can pertain to all in under one roof.

'In public policy framework decentralisation is mostly appreciated as an effective tool for efficient governance and service delivery' (Gopika, 2020, p. 160). Gandhi believed decentralisation of power to the individual through village panchayat as central of his economic development was individual. Accordingly, the Village *Swaraj* 'as conceived by Gandhiji is not the resurrection of the old village panchayats but the fresh formation of independent village units of *Swaraj* in the context of the present-day world. So, in Village *Swaraj*, he mainly focused on decentralising political power to individuals to have a direct voice in decision making. So, he dreamed of decentralised political power where each individual would be the architect of their own government.

Thus, in *Gram Swaraj*, Gandhi focused on the holistic development of individual objectives to attain happiness and harmony at the society. In Gram *Swaraj*'s concept, he thus emphasised economic development and social, cultural and political development of the human being. The principles *Gram Swaraj* can be summarised as follows.

- India lives in its villages, not in cities.
- Rural Reconstruction is based on the non-exploitation of rural areas.
- Moral and ethical values are vital than materialistic gain.
- *Sarvodaya* - the welfare of all
- Promotion and use of Swadeshi products
- Village industrialisation through small scale & cottage industries.
- Each individual must perform their duty towards the state.

- Decision making should be lies in people's hand.
- Bottom-up Planning Process

RELEVANCE OF VILLAGE SWARAJ IN PRESENT DAYS

'There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilisation and the city civilisation are totally different things. One depends on machinery and industrialisation, and the other on handicrafts' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 35).

'The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen— the city-dwellers. They produce food and go hungry. They produce milk, and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful' (ibid:36).

In the above two statements of MK Gandhi is given, which are interrelated. It is clear from his statement that rural and urban areas are identically different, and there is a massive gap between these two areas. Further, despite the producer of different food products, the rural areas being exploited by the urban areas. The primary reason for the exploitation of rural areas by the urban areas lies in production mode. To achieve more economic benefit, the city-based industries, mass production have been increasing day by day, and the owner of the mode of production being the owner, appropriate majority of the profit, left a few sections to others. So, there is an uneven distribution of income in such kind of production process.

After the World War-II, the majority of nations focuses on peace, development and freedom. However, soon they realised that economic development on which they are focusing is vital for human development but not at the cost of environmental degradation. With the importance of preserving the environment and accelerating economic growth, the post-World War period started to focus on sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development as development that meets the need of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their needs (WCED, 1987). Thus, the primary focus of sustainable development is the optimum utilisation of local resources and knowledge, conservation of the environment and social equality.

The modern economy which is rooted 'in self-indulgence, multiplicity of wants and divorce of ethics from economics are large-scale mechanised, centralised, complicated organisations' (Vyas, 1962, p. 11) lead to 'unemployment, under-employment, pauperism, exploitation, a mad race for capturing markets and conquering lands for raw materials. Competitions, conflicts and class wars corrode the social fabric' (ibid: 11-12). So the real economic problem of the world is wealth instead the real economic crisis is 'dying of the rivers, depletion of groundwater, the disappearance of glaciers, flow of the waste material into the seas, hole in the ozone layer, emission of excess carbon dioxide, methane and other acids in the air which are destroying the very foundation of the earth' (Bhatt, 2012, p. 1). Today we are suffering from major environmental problems evolved due to materialistic economic gain, which aims to gather more economic development and wealth on the cost of destruction of natural resources and environment. However, 'material gains are not sufficient measures or preservers of human well-being' (Gibson, 2001). Thus, today's global economy is in a severe crisis state based on the market economy.

In the context of India, the country suffers lots of challenges. According to the Human Development Report (HRD) 2019, India is the home of around 28 per cent poor among the total poor of the globe. It means out of 1.3 billion poor in India 364 million poor people live. Accordingly, India ranks at 129 places among 189 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2019). According to the same report, India's poor do not have access to health services, education, technology, and climate. The primary reason for having more poor in India is the unequal distribution of wealth and power (Jitendra, 2019). Another primary concern for rural India is the sanitation. According to census 2011, around 67.3 per cent of rural households in India do not have access to toilets. 'India continues to have the largest number of people in the world defecating in the open' (Garg & Raut, 2015, p. 1). So, rural India, occupied by poverty, no access to basic necessities and sanitation. These challenges are also complemented by other challenges like the migration of people to urban areas, lack of infrastructure and unemployment.

In India, the majority of rural people depends on agriculture for survival. However, the condition of Indian agriculture is not up to the mark. Growth of the agriculture sector has been fluctuating: it increased from -0.2 per cent

in 2014-15 to 6.3 per cent in 2016-17, and then declined to 2.9 per cent in 2018-19. Gross fixed capital formation in agriculture has decreased from 17.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 15.2 per cent in 2017-18. The contribution of agriculture to the GVA has decreased from 15 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.4 per cent in 2018-19. The decline was mainly due to a decrease in the share of GVA of crops from 9.2 per cent in 2015-16 to 8.7 per cent in 2017-18 (Economic Survey, 2019). At present in India, one farmer can only support one non-agriculture people, whereas, in the United States of America, one farmer can support 58 non-agriculture people, and this ratio is 23 in the European Union case. Further, in India, every cubic metre of water consumed produces only 300 gm of crops, whereas the same amount of water can produce 1,300 gm of crops in the USA. This is a common phenomenon for the majority of underdeveloped and developing nations of the world (Kalam & Singh, 2011).

Another major challenge of development planner and policymaker related to agriculture is that India has to grow agriculture at the rate of 4 per cent per annum to meet India's needs and provide real employment to rural youth (ibid). However, it is not an easy task. Along with structural problems of agriculture, a country like India is also suffering from another problem. The educated youth are not interested in taking agriculture as a profession.¹ The NSS 59th Round report also found the same result. As per this report, around 40 per cent of the farmers did not like to continue with agriculture, and about 27 per cent were reluctant to continue because of non-viability (NSSO, 2005). So, planner and policymakers have to tackle two type of challenges- first to develop the infrastructure and secondly make agriculture lubricating for the educated youth. In simple words, they have to address two challenges, such as increasing productivity and creating employment.

The subsidy, which is one of the major components of India's different rural livelihoods programmes², cannot uplift rural areas' condition. It is one of the major factors of low development. Subsidy in any scheme is only a relief measure but not the permanent solution to a problem (Kalam & Pillai, 2004). So, there is a need for an alternative development model for the reconstruction of rural areas. The problem of rural areas needs to address immediately as 'holistic and real development can be achieved by only combining the rural areas into the mainstream of development, because rural development is a symbol of holistic development' (Sharma, 2019, p. 151). Moreover, rural areas' development is also critical for human

development as most people live in rural areas. In this context, an attempt is being made in this unit to understand the relevance of Gandhian *Gram Swaraj* in reconstructing the rural areas.

As discussed above, *Gram Swaraj* was based on moral values; in fact, moral values find more importance over the accumulation of wealth. Moreover, he 'counterposed a vision of a radically decentralised economic order, wherein the key area of production was at the village level, oriented towards the fulfilment of basic human needs and utilising indigenous resources' (Rigby, 1997, p. 382). Thus, the primary focus of Gandhian *Gram Swaraj* was the empowerment of the individual through meaningful employment. So, while focusing on *Swadeshi*, he did not ask each village to produce all the items rather his emphasis was on working on core competency to tackle unemployment.

Gandhi considered that every individual has an equal right irrespective of race, colour, creed. Therefore, through his concept *Swaraj*, he ignores all form of inequality. He said 'the *Swaraj* of my dream is the poor man's *Swaraj*' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 19). Economic equality is the pre-condition for *Sarvodaya*, which focuses on uplift and welfare of all. Economic equality is only possible when all able body gets an equal chance to work and employment. Sustainable work is demand-driven but not made available from top. Demand-driven work is based on local knowledge, resource and skill. So, Gandhi brings economic equality among the people, mainly focusing on the village's local core competency. Accordingly, he focuses on development based on production for not earning profit instead of for use. According to him, production should be made 'to satisfy basic needs, organised along cooperative lines, providing work for unemployed villagers using appropriate technology in cottage and small-scale industries' (Rigby, 1997, p. 408).

Generally, many of his economic concepts have been misunderstood. He was not against modern industrialisation but was only against mechanisation. He considered that machinery has its own place but using machinery should not be allowing the economy to displace human labour. According to him, there is a need for mechanical innovation that does not displace considerable labour but provides employment avenue for human labour. Therefore, he welcomed the strategists, directly linked with the improvement of village cottage industries which could provide full and real

employment to artisans of rural areas. So, it is rightly said that 'full employment is more desirable than increased production combined with unemployment' (Prof. Galbraith, as cited by (Narayan, 1962, p. 3). Accordingly, 'use of machinery is lawful, which subserves the interest of all' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 31).

As the Gandhian concept of *Gram Swaraj* was based on moral and ethical values, it also focuses on individual rights and duties to the state. According to Gandhi, individuals' rights and duties are regulated by the principle of interdependence and reciprocity. Accordingly, he believed that everyone has a moral responsibility towards the village. He considered that everyone must educate themselves towards rural areas. So, he said, 'I am not asking the city-dwellers to go to and live in the villages. But I am asking them to render unto the villagers what is due to them' (Joshi, 2002, p. 34). So, it would be the duty for the city dweller to change their mentality towards the village, and they have to 'learn the art of living after the manner of villagers' (Gandhi, 1962, p. 40). So, according to him, Village *Swaraj* is not attained in a short time; instead, it requires the whole outlook of individual, basically the town dwellers towards the rural areas. Moreover, it is also necessary for rural people to believe in their self-power.

CONCLUSION

The major problem with the present economic system is the untrue economic system based on exploitation leading to the destruction of natural economic order and harmony. In this context, the Gandhian model of *Gram Swaraj* may be relevant because it focuses on self-sufficiency and self-reliant through economic development and encompassed moral and ethical values. Primarily his *Gram Swaraj* is an alternative model for serving humanity. Unfortunately, his rural reconstruction model was considered out-of-date and out-of-touch with modernised projects' introduction by the successive Indian government after his death (Rigby, 1997). However, with the increasing different development challenges in rural India, it became relevant for the policymaker. Introduction of different programmes such as Community Development Programme (CDP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and introduction of *Panchayati Raj* institutions was influenced by his approach of *Gram Swaraj* (Sharma, 2019). Therefore, the rural reconstruction approach of Gandhi

through *Gram Swaraj* can be considered as one of the alternative development approaches (Rigby, 1997; Dube, 1988; Sachs, 1980)

Gandhi was not a professional economist, yet his economic philosophy has influenced many economists such as J C Kumarappa, J K Mehta, Shriman Narayan E F Schumacher etc. The industrialisation has led to massive economic growth but whether it is enough to make people happy. The Gandhian approach thus focuses on the development of happiness among the people. So, the Gandhian village Swaraj mainly focuses on radical decentralisation of economic order to fulfil the human needs and generate employment by utilising the local resources. To achieve this, his model recognised the importance of natural resources and the dignity of human labour.

Although it is not possible to replicate the Gandhian village *swaraj* to rural reconstruction as his proposed at the present context, it does not mean that the *Gram Swaraj* principle proposed by Gandhi does not have relevance in the present context. His principles, such as bridging the rural-urban divide, creating employment, concern for the environment, etc., have great importance in the present context, which can be utilised to make different policies of development. Therefore, *Gram Swaraj* 'working in full swing will provide a model for the world to copy. It will then be a gift of India to the world' (Vyas, 1962, p. 14).

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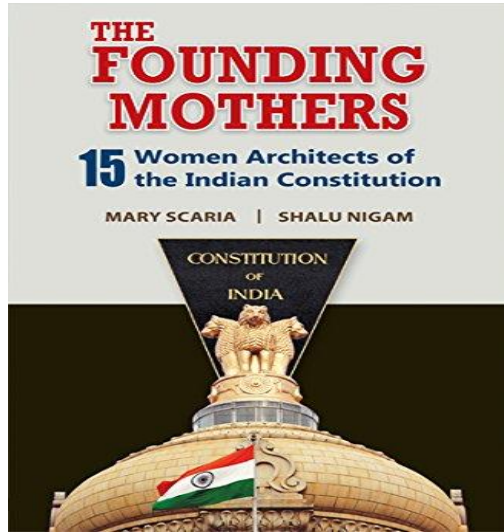
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- 1. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam highlighted this issue at Indian Institute of Management, Shillong in 2013. He to a reply to a student's question said that agriculture is still the profession of illiterate people. Young educated generation are not interested in taking

agriculture as a profession, one of the major concerns for a country like India.

- 2. Almost all the significant livelihoods programmes of India such as Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) etc., has components like subsidy, interest subvention etc.

BOOK REVIEW

BY MS. ANNA USHA ABRAHAM



Adv (Sr) Mary Scaria and Adv (Dr) Shalu Nigam (2016) *The Founding Mothers: 15 Women Architects of the Indian Constitution*, Media House, Delhi, ISBN 978 -93 -7495 -636 -6, Price Rs 595 / USD 25, pp. 384.

Introduction

“The Founding Mothers” profiles 15 women who were members of the Constituent Assembly that framed the Indian Constitution. Their profiles highlight their backgrounds, contributions to the freedom movement, and specific roles and speeches in the Constituent Assembly debates, reflecting their views on fundamental rights, social justice, women's equality, legal system and the structure of the new Indian state. The book emphasizes their collective efforts in shaping a democratic, secular, and inclusive Constitution for India.

The first part of the book is a short introduction to each woman member of the Constituent Assembly arranged in alphabetical order. The second part reproduces selected speeches showcasing their intellect and

commitment to building a strong, free and progressive nation. The third part shares some important facts about the drafting of the Constitution and also lists the members of the various sub-committees. Many quotes and situations are repetitive throughout the book.

Socioeconomic and Geographical Background of the Founding Mothers

The women members came from different backgrounds. There were lawyers, educationalists, political activists and social workers. There were women from royal families and those who belonged to the Dalit and other scheduled caste communities. All of them were leaders in their own right, were active participants in the political arena and had been jailed at some time or another during the freedom struggle.

Surprisingly, these strong women's rights activists did not advocate the reservation of seats based on sex. They insisted that women did not want any special status but wanted to be treated as equals. As the authors say, "No one ever thought that the women of this Nation will not enjoy the equality enshrined in the Constitution in letter and spirit". Ms Renuka Ray in her speech called reservation "an insult to our intelligence and capacity".

Contribution of the Founding Mothers towards Freedom Movement

It was not a lack of foresight or exposure to the Indian reality that made these stalwarts of the women's movement respond in such a manner. But perhaps having fought and achieved freedom from British rule after such a prolonged struggle and personal sacrifices, they believed women too would be free from social bondage at the stroke of midnight! Would life have been different had these leaders insisted on the reservation of seats for women in parliament and all government establishments? A quick run-through of the background and intellect of the "Founding Mothers" perhaps will help before any conclusion.

Ammu Swaminathan – Born in Kerala in 1894, she was married at the young age of 13. A social worker and Political activist, she expressed her disappointment that the Constitution was voluminous.

An advocate of Freedom with Responsibility, she felt a pocket volume, accessible to the masses in a language people can understand would have been more apt. To her, the constitution rested on 2 pillars – the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy.

Annie Mascarene – Born in Kerala in 1902 she was a leader of the Travancore State of People’s movement for independence and integration with the Indian State. She was elected to the 1st Loksabha as an independent candidate from Thiruvananthapuram. She famously said, “I am a believer in politics as nothing but ethics writ large”. She believed in the right balance of power between the centre and the provinces although she agreed that , “no nation, no empire had survived in the world without a strong centralisation of power.

Begum Quidisia Aizaz Rasul – Born in 1908 to a princely family in Uttar Pradesh, she was married to the Nawaab who belonged to the princely family of Oudh. She was the only Muslim woman in the Constituent Assembly. She advocated for the autonomy of Ministers from Party affiliations. She wanted civil liberties preserved in the Constitution and not be easy for the legislature to take them away. She was against reservations for minorities in Parliament but wanted reservations in the Services. She wanted India to join the Commonwealth as according to her it was the greatest factor working towards world peace.

Dakshayani Velayudhan was born in Kerala in the year 1912. She was the first Dalit woman to graduate in India in the year 1935. However, she resigned from her job as a teacher due to institutionalised discrimination and joined politics. She advocated for a declaration in the Constitution making untouchability unlawful. However, she strongly opposed separate electorates and reservations for Dalits.

Durgabai Deshmukh was born in Andhra Pradesh in the year 1909. She was the first women member of the Planning Commission and Founder and Chairperson of the Central Social Welfare Board. She led a crusade against illiteracy, ignorance, social injustice against women by establishing several institutions in the field of Health General Education and Nutrition. She advocated for laws for the protection of Children and Youth from exploitation and abandonment. Durgabai’s

suggestions in the Constituent Assembly included the method of appointing judges in the provincial courts, independence of the judiciary etc.. She mooted the idea of family courts.

Hansa Mehta was born in Gujarat in the year 1897. As President of the All India Women's Conference in 1945, she proposed a Charter for Women's Rights. However, she was opposed to reservations for minorities with the exception of Scheduled Castes. She wanted a uniform Civil code. She has been credited for changing the words in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from all men are created equal to all human beings are created equal.

Kamala Chaudhri – Born in 1908 in Uttar Pradesh was elected the senior vice president of the All India Congress Committee. Although a member of the Constituent Assembly, the authors could not give her year of death or even reproduce any of her speeches. When the issue of the daughter's share in the father's property in Hindu law was being discussed she admonished those who said it was a Western culture for women to ask for their share in their father's property by reminding them of the ancient literature and folk songs that abound in the sentiment of the girl requesting for her share in the house she grew up in when being offered dowry and other material goods by the men folk.

Leela Roy – Born in Bengal in 1900, Leela Roy was a radical Leftist and close associate of Subhash Chandra Bose. Her speeches too have not been added to the book. She was an elected member of the Constituent Assembly. She started a women's monthly magazine, Jayashree, which was the first magazine edited and managed by women and also wholly contributed to by women writers. After the Partition she left Dhaka and moved to Kolkata where she continued her work for the promotion of girls education.

Malatidevi Choudhury – Born in 1904 in Kolkata she was fondly called Numa. Her speeches are not part of the second part of the book. She was at the forefront of the struggles of the oppressed people of Orissa. She was the Co-founder of the Congress Socialist Party of India. She wanted to not only free India from the British rule but also free peasants and labourers from the exploitation of landlords and capitalists. She was a Gandhian Sarvodaya revolutionary and voiced

her protest against repressions by the Police, Bureaucracy, Landlords and Business Corporations.

Purnima Banerjee – Born in 1911, she was the Secretary of the Indian National Congress in Allahabad. She recommended that the curriculum in schools should be in the control of the government and should be of such a nature that it broadened the minds rather than create exclusiveness. She spoke on various subjects including humane treatment and timely trial of detainees, progressive taxation system, abolition of zamindari and capitalism. She also advocated for a maintenance allowance for the family if the main breadwinner was jailed. She also wanted the state to control key industries and mineral resources.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was born in Uttar Pradesh in the year 1889. She was the first woman to be appointed to the advisory board for education (she resigned in 1942), was a strong champion of female education and advocated for free and compulsory education. She was also the first Health minister of India and a member of the advisory committee responsible for drafting Fundamental Rights. She Co founded the All India Women's Conference in 1927 and in the year 1934 went to live in Gandhiji's Ashram. A selection of her speeches too are missing from the compilation.

Renuka Ray – Born in 1904 was a champion of women's rights and inheritance rights to parental property. Although she argued for a uniform personal law code and believed that the position of Indian women was one of the most iniquitous in the world, she was against the reservation of seats for women. She wanted 15 to 20% of the national income to be used for nation-building services. She emphasised the importance of good education by linking higher production in industries to better standards in the education and health of the workers. She wanted budget planning for education.

Sarojini Naidu was born in 1879 in Andhra Pradesh. She studied at King's College, London and later Cambridge University. She was the first Governor of the United Province of Agra and Oudh. She was the first woman to become the President of the Congress in 1925. She was the President of the National Women's Conference for many years and

trained many volunteers who took up women's cause. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, she stood for the concerns of the Tribals of India. She felt the time had come for no sex consciousness of separation in the service of the country.

Sucheta Kripalani – Born in 1908 in Haryana holds the distinction of being the first woman chief Minister of India. A firm administrator, she was elected to the Constituent Assembly and was part of the sub-committee that laid down the charter for the Constitution of India. She was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and 1957 and was Minister for small scale industries. She was of the opinion that a free society would not demand conformity from creative writers.

Vijaylakshmi Pandit was born in 1900 in Uttar Pradesh. She emphasised the obligations of every citizen. She held a worldview and was the first woman to be elected the President of the United Nations General Assembly. She urged for complete freedom for the individual and guaranteed social, economic, and cultural justice to every legitimate Group. She urged India to rise and help all those countries who were striving for freedom in the World.

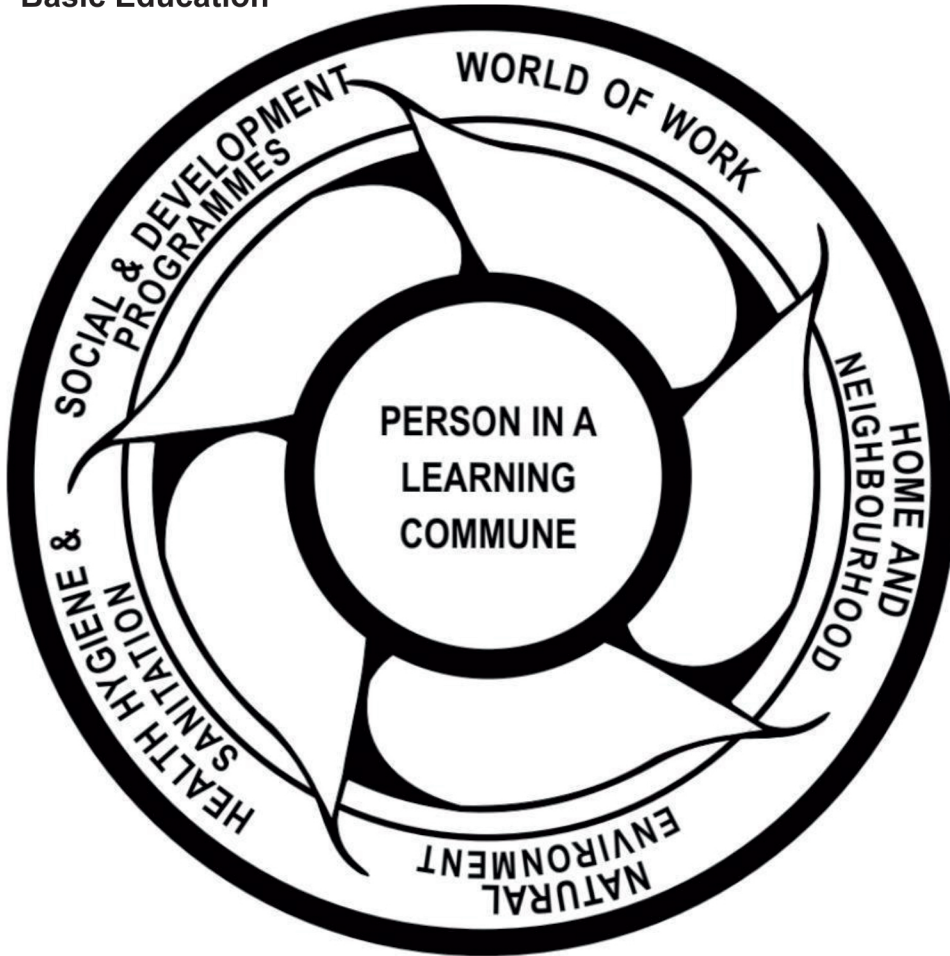
This inspirational and well researched volume with important historical evidences throws light on visionary women freedom fighters whose contribution largely remains hidden from MALE-STREAM HISTORY. This book a MUST for all school and university libraries as teachers and students must read and reflect, learn and replicate models of nation-building promoted by them.

GANDHI SHIKSHAN BHAVAN

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- c. Curriculum provides for self-directed learning and
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Printed at : Mayur Xerox & Stationers, M: 9326137783, Email : mayurxerox49@gmail.com
and Published by Smt. Nupur Mitra
for Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan & Indian Council of Basic Education, Juhu (North), Mumbai - 400 049
Ph. : (022) 26200589 Fax : (022) 26706277. E-mail : questineducation@gmail.com