

FOREWORD BY THEME EDITOR

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ईशावास्थमिदं सर्वे थत्किंच जगत्थां जगत्
तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम ।

***Isha Vasyamidamsarvam, yet kintyajagatyamjagat
Tena tyaktenabunjitah ma gradahkasyasiddhanam***

As the sun sets in the backdrop of the chirping birds that come home to rest in the trees all around Bapukuti¹, this verse above from the Isha Unpanisad², is sung during evening prayer sitting in the Gandhi Ashram. This practice of reciting old Sanskrit verses together must be as old as the Vedas themselves. Gandhiji explains the meaning and the relevance of these verses beautifully, "All that there is in this Universe, great or small, including the tiniest atom, is pervaded by God...everything that we see is pervaded by the Deity, and from that naturally the other parts of the mantra follow. ... Renounce everything, ...the whole of the Universe... And then, says the rishi, the reward of renunciation is i.e., enjoyment of all you need. But there is a meaning about the word 'enjoy'—you might as well say use, eat, etc.,—but it means that you may not take more than what is necessary for your growth. Therefore, this enjoyment or use is limited by two conditions³.

Every occasion of remembrance of a persona or a phenomenon in history provides us with a way to reflect or reconnect to the ideas, ideals and the values that the persona or phenomena represented. On the occasion of the 150th birth centenary of Gandhi, to have this edition brought out with contribution from diverse authors is yet another reminder and an attempt to reflect and reconnect to the ideas, ideals and values that Gandhiji personified in his life as though, articulation and work.

When the world celebrates Gandhiji, it celebrates perhaps the best practitioner of the highest ideal represented in the verse above. It was not sung merely as a ritual in the ashrams, it was meant to be a reminder, to be held in the culture and a way of life. It is a reminder because the ideal is not alien to ordinary life in this country rather it is the way of life as collectively remembered and articulated in a million small ways in daily culture, the holistic

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ideal as such embellished by the lived life itself. That is why Gandhiji had no reservations in stating that he felt that the Indian civilisation was far superior to that of the modern West. This spiritual nature of the ordinary people⁴ that he believed in and placed his utmost trust in. He juxtaposed this spiritual nature of the life of the ordinary Indians against the the modern 'civilisation' of the West which he held forth as fundamentally flawed. To him, the Western civilisation had neglected the soul, privileged the body, misunderstood the nature and limits of reason and had no appreciation of the individual⁵. For him, means and ends were not divorced of each other, indeed he often didn't place utmost rush towards a goal or an end, because he didn't believe that they came by human effort anyway. According to him, 'The greatest of things in this world are not accomplished through unaided human effort. They come in their own good time. God as His own way of choosing His instruments⁶'. He always maintained that divine energy is what connected him to the ordinary people of this country as he said, "I have no wireless but my thoughts. I am not aware of having reached millions through human agency. In believe from well-grounded experience that if one has full control over his thoughts one has a powerhouse unequalled by any yet devised by all the physical sciences combined...Non-violence cannot be imparted by mere appeal to the intellect its ultimate appeal must be from heart to heart."⁷ Soul Force, as Gandhiji called his movement of passive resistance was thus not a sign of weakness or refusal to take up arms, he opined that the passive resister needed more courage, as he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces⁸. Almost all the Gandhian praxis are derived from these underpinning convictions.

While the social sciences hadn't adequately de-colonised enough to frame these in concepts then, today the Indigenous Knowledge Systems framework can explain the same as its framework or approach. It states that unlike the western scientific processes, the Indigenous knowledge framework does not adopt the observer- observed frame for the study of Nature. The scientists immerse themselves into Nature and study it by becoming one with it. Oneness cannot be achieved by the senses alone because they are naturally compartmentalised. It is achieved with the aid of an advanced application of the mental faculty. In this application the mind of a trained scientist is rendered still and silent. The application requires rigorous training. It is the still, silent, state of mind, empty and free of thought, that is referred to as the oneness state because in this state it naturally experiences oneness and sees fields or whole phenomena ⁹. One can see this with Gandhi, he became one with the ordinary life of the people and it is in their priorities and aspirations, he placed his trust and faith and in doing so invoked and revived the wisdom of the land and its processes. During his time there were no such frameworks, and it found tough opponents in modernists not merely from the West but among expatriate Indians as well¹⁰. There were among the expats many Indians who believed that if not for the British, India would be modernised faster than even Europe, it is in response to their logic and arguments that he wrote Hind Swaraj¹¹ in 1909 (more on that work later). His faith and trust in non-violence too was challenged and continues to be, till date. He saw his role among the practitioners of the soul force as that of a self-appointed general and there he saw himself close to the ordinary people of India and their culture and traditions.

However, he was neither a romantic for tradition nor could put up with customs that were divisive or obscure. He never minced words when he felt that there was a mistake in the tradition that he felt was faulty or falling down from the ideals. For instance, after lecturing on the IshaUpanisad verse above, he invokes the same verses to chide the Maharaja of Travancore on the untouchability being practiced in the province. He says, "For if all that there is in the Universe is pervaded by God, that is to say, if the Brahmin and the Bhangi, ... no matter what caste they belong to—if all these are pervaded by Lord God, in the light of this mantra, there is none that is low, all are absolutely equal, equal because all are the creatures of that Creator. And this is not a philosophical thing to be dished out to Brahmins or Kshatriyas, but it enunciates an eternal truth which admits of no reduction, no dilution. Therefore, the Maharaja himself and the Maharani are not one whit superior to the lowliest being in Travancore. We are all creatures and servants of one God. If the Maharaja is the first among equals, as he is, he is so not by right of overlordship but by right of service¹². Earlier in 1916, he chides the people of Mayavaram for the practice of untouchability in the state immediately after he accepts their rousing welcome¹³. The ordinary people of this country responded to his call, both as an invocation to live up to their legacy as much as to drop off their acquired dross of poor customs. Groups of people and smaller organisations, faith institutions, all rose up and incorporated changes and articulated the same¹⁴. As Louis Fischer pointed out; "Indians became freemen. The body still wore shackles; but the spirit had escaped from prison. Gandhi had turned the key¹⁵". Gandhi learnt and structured his thoughts, ideas, movement, initiatives and articulations from

what he learnt from the ordinary Indians. Indeed, he maintained that he merely gave expression to the thoughts that were dormant within the hearts of the Indian people.

It is critical to understand that while he had placed his action deep in the convictions, spiritual nature and the cultural milieu of the ordinary life in India to fight the British rule, he was also deeply disturbed by the threats that were looming once the nation became free from the colonial rule. Hind Swaraj was written in response to those forces whom he saw as embedded in western thought process and that which could destroy not merely the economy and social fabric, but, also the soul force that he invoked in the people of this land.

Today, in an economically globalised, fast urbanising Nation, the term, 'Rural Development' itself indicates an outdated notion at several levels in India that Gandhiji might have seen as being contentious and contemptuous. Gandhiji famously disagreed with the post-freedom shift towards large scale industries and modernity though he didn't see India escaping this. Western nations, he said, were groaning under the heel of monster-god of materialism. Their moral growth has become stunted, he said, "...I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt if it were made, is foredoomed to failure¹⁶". His measure of growth had the individual in its centre and the moral growth of the individual as the prime indicator. Economic growth came later and the universalisation of the same economic model to suit everyone was something he abhorred. He compared the faulty economic models to dirt and called them hurtful. What might be good for

England and America need not be necessarily good for India¹⁷, he opined. *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1909 is considered one of the most comprehensive critics of modernity written by any persona across the world today and studied by the West and East alike. Gandhi was looking at the modern European structures using the Indian framework and he found that these were founded in injustice, untruth and adharma; and to fight this evil enshrined at the root of modern civilisation, while protecting justice, truth and dharma, the only possible weapon he found was that of Satyagraha, and that weapon is indeed infallible¹⁸. The fundamental arguments between Gandhi and others has always been the ones between evolving tradition and modernity. One of our best Gandhian scholars and former Prime Minister for the Tibetan government in exile, Samdhong Rinponche, explains, "The basic difference is that tradition comes from the Divine, or an enlightened mind. It is an authentic knowledge that comes through an unbroken lineage. No, our blind customs and rituals only need not be Tradition. For example, untouchability is not part of Tradition. This is misuse of Tradition... So, there is something beyond the senses, which is understood and felt. This is something subtle that Tradition recognises and works upon¹⁹".

Economic scholars have struggled with trying to grapple with his ideas of growth and development as it refuses to be contained within the modern economic categories. As one scholar points out, 'Gandhiji considered both the moral and economic aspects of each consequence²⁰'. He had a clear vision of the end goal in 'development' as well and did articulate it in great length. Wherever possible, he even tried to work out the solutions and manifest them in his immediate surrounding as

well. In his ideal, well-ordered society, securing one's livelihood should be and is found to be the easiest thing in the world. Indeed, the test of the orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns; he famously stated ones, but, the absence of starvation among its masses. As Schumacher said, he was clear about which of the people he spoke about²¹. He would have appreciated our current capacity to produce enough to feed all our citizens, however, would have looked down upon the luxurious ways of living and life of the rich and mighty in the land and the levels of inequality. He said, the individual person should have control over the things that are necessary for the sustenance of life. If he cannot have such control the individual cannot survive²². For him there cannot be any harmony between races and nations unless the main cause is removed – exploitation of the weak by the strong. He was not against the industries, but only saw their role as not stealing the weak from the village, but, supporting them, in his state of the future, he saw the industries sub-serve the village and their crafts²³. That did not mean, as often it is mis-understood, that he wanted us to 'go to the past', he also did critic the villages in the harshest of terms, if he saw the village as the ideal living space in the future, it was a pragmatic vision well informed of the choices the modernity brought and which didn't mind borrowing from modernity wherever it felt necessary. As Ashish Nandy writes, Gandhi lived with traditions. His frame was traditional, and he was willing to criticise it... he was even willing to include in it elements of the modernity as critical vectors... he defied the modern frame by opting for an alternate frame; the specifics in his frame were frequently modern²⁴.

In fact, today in the light of several modern validations of the traditional framework in a few

domains such as agriculture, medicine, yoga, metallurgy, architecture, etc., India and Indians need to revisit Gandhian framework of tradition. Dharshan Shankar points out in the context of Ayurveda, "In early 20th century sociological literature, "traditional or indigenous knowledge" has been depicted as backwards unchanging and obsolete²⁵. Modernity, on the other hand, is characterised by attributes like growth, dynamism and change."²⁶ when we create distinct categories to separate the traditional from the modern, then these categories are misleading because they over-lap and lie on a continuum. A very ordinary mind creating something different from the Old is called modern. Novelty, self-gratifying and violence are the basis of modern civilisation. Gandhi called it the satanic civilisation, and this was not said insincerely or irresponsibly²⁷. There is a need to revisit the concepts of 'development' beyond the limited prism of economic and social paradigm alone. The environmental movement in the West since the 1960s had raised this issue and continues to do so, but, in India, the juxtaposing of 'tradition vs. modern' has morphed into 'environment vs. development' often with the same outmoded frameworks of reference and its inherent limitations.

Villages were in the centre of Gandhi's ideal India, it was the centre of culture, economy and governance. Deep ecologists today would agree with his view that truth and non-violence can only be found in the simplicity of the villages²⁸. This apprehension of his has been proven right today as we reconcile with the fact that the violence amongst us is more pronounced in urban pockets and areas rather than villages²⁹. The Indian tradition of dharma is one expression of this truth about human nature; it is a way of life fashioned from the age-old experience of the face-to-face village

community³⁰. The order and stability of the village, its oneness with the forces of nature...have as a first obligation the cherishing and nurturing of life. What we call morality began in the mores, the life-conserving customs, of the village³¹. The life-conserving customs are often structured as social norms, which in the current parlance are called the social security nets. In recent years, such norms have found new manifestations in addressing human suffering as well, as one writer observes, 'The West has undermined this social safety net in the name of unbridled individualism. With the result the West has become state-dependent, and overly. While the State runs on rule of law, society in India runs on the age-old principle of "dharma" that has survived the modern state and its rules. Traditional values are self-policing, but the rule of law needs enforcement³². Other scholars have termed this the life of the ordinary people, it is this natural unity of ordinary life which Gandhi recreates in thought and practice in a world dominated by satanic forces. Ordinary life, in fact, is that continuum which expresses the essence of man without ever being the same. The great traditions of the saints is a tradition of continuous creation and recreation of ordinary life in thought and practice in ever new circumstances. This is the tradition of ever producing the then-contemporary criteria of ordinary life. ...Violations of ordinary life are related to those things that refuse to lend themselves to the criteria of ordinary life³³.

The concentration of human habitats into urban pockets is a process of centralisation that is a corollary to the urban-centric model of growth and development. On Centralisation and People's Participation, Acharya Ramamurthy, an esteemed Gandhian explains, that "although our country is free, our villages ...are but colonies of economic

policy". Centralisation then, far from being the wilful act of any one power hungry politician, has come about as a natural corollary of the industrialisation and agricultural strategies implemented in India³⁴. In her analysis of the development scenario, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, a prominent socialist leader and a close associate of Gandhi, explains that "the basic error was the central concentration of power, direction and execution, over reliance on a single and distant generating power station, failing to bring into play the enormous resources and energies that are local and indigenous, lying within the immediate orbit". She adds that "the process followed are antithetical to growth, progress and strengthening of democratic organisations or climate^{35,36}". The modernists, direct and implicit, in India have often couched their narrative in safeguarding or saving the 'tradition' quickly by adopting the ways of the modern and eventually reverting to the culture of the land. Responding to one such question on the need for the State to be taken over, Ven. Samdhong Rimponche, said, "We are competing with the west by imitating them, borrowing, following their footpath... and there is not one time when the east has done this on equal terms. It is the west that is in the front for this, and the east follows without challenge. To compete on this unequal basis is not the right approach.

What Gandhi asked India was that we should build our own Tradition - the power of dharma and satya and then modernity will be really challenged. Gandhiji's fight in the Indian freedom struggle was very significant because he had this very different nature (framework) which the British didn't have. Fighting fire with fire is what everyone is trying to do today. And not succeeding. Everyone is fighting modernity with modernity. To extinguish fire, an

opposite nature has to be developed, i.e., non-violent power. Imitation of the west will not get us anywhere. Gandhiji's way is that much relevant because of the opposite nature that he recognised and built up. He never compared or competed³⁶.

It cannot be overstated that when we write and recall Gandhi today, we recall this complex framework and ideal in our lives and the uncomfortable questions that it poses to us. The three forces of market-dominant and a market-centred world of governance, environmental destruction with its consequent climate change and the unbridled consumption as a way of life and culture of people pose challenges that threaten the annihilate the human species itself from the planet today. Democracy, Market and Technology have come to dominate our discourse and syntax for addressing all our perils since the past several hundred years and yet between them they have not been able to provide us with the wherewithal to address them adequately enough. All of these dominate the 'rural development' space and many of the articles in this edition have them as their focus. I don't intend to pre-empt them here, but, in drawing the complexity of the framework of Gandhi through several attributes and articulations have tried to provide a base or a backdrop for the same.

The complexity of a Gandhian framework and scholarly articulation to grapple with it is incomplete in presenting the persona and his impact in our contemporary lives today if we were not viewing it alongside how the subject and source of his articulation, the ordinary people of this land respond and view him today. From the interactions of the ordinary people he drew his concepts and

for them he devises their strategies and, in their understanding, interpretation and acceptance of his ideals even today, there is a promise. Here below, are a few such encounters.

“You know the only person who would qualify as a Leader with all these qualities will be Gandhi”, said the farmer leader. It was in the year 2006, we were just over a year since the tsunami had impacted the southeastern coast of Tamilnadu. I had been asked to do a workshop with the community-based institution by an NGO working in the region, particularly promoting sustainable agriculture and traditional ways of doing farming.

It was summer, were sitting in this beautiful mud brick hall sweating together. So, the dialogue with the community institution started with them listing all their “favourite leaders”, many of whom were film stars, cricketers, local politicians, historical figures, even someone’s husband for her. When they finished the listing, I had asked them to list out what made them the leaders? So, the community members started to think about it and came up with various aspects of the personality of the individuals they had called Leaders. As they completed the list, we decided to take summarise the features of “the leader” and took a vote on the various characteristics that they themselves had outlined. Once they had come up with a list of about 15 characteristics, we agreed to restrict the features of leaders to the top 15. Now, we decided to re-examine the leaders that they had original names along with each of these characteristics and understand where does the person they had termed the “leader” stand in the scale of being “the leader”, as we progressed with each of the characteristics, the community members

kept addition and removing names, almost all the names had fallen behind as we reached closer to two-digit in the list and finally when we reached no. 12, there was only one name that remained in the perception of the community, as one of the farmer leaders said when we completed the 15, “you know the only person who would qualify as a leader with all these qualities of a real leader is Gandhi!”. I hadn’t started the day expecting this. It was a pleasant surprise for me as much as an irony. The irony was being called to talk about leadership to these people who seemed to not only have a clear idea of what constitutes to a leader’s character but, also the fact that they are able to provide for a clear way of judging who becomes and unbecomes a leader using the scale they themselves created.

A few years later, one of the social and philanthropy related clubs had invited me for an event where they were giving away something novel to a Government Corporation school in the city of Chennai. They were giving away an ‘integrity shop’, basically a concept of a shop that will have all the needs of the students in the school. The shop, however, will not have anyone owning it and instead there will be a box kept and the students are expected to be truthful and pay only whatever is to be remitted towards ‘purchase’. This ‘shop’ was being inaugurated and I was called to be a chief guest and a speaker to motivate the children to be truthful. I started by asking the children to name persons whom they thought were cheats in society, as per their knowledge. They named, ‘lawyer’, ‘doctor’ and ‘policemen’!! I was quite surprised and had to ask the students more and got given examples as to why they cited these entities to be the biggest cheats. Once they convinced me of their reasoning, I

mentioned that whatever they said was not new to me and that someone had already mentioned the same almost 100 years before. I asked them to guess who could have said this. A girl who was in the 5th grade put up her hand and when I asked her said, she responded more as a question to me, "Gandhi?" I asked her whether she had read Gandhi, to which she replied that she hadn't. When I asked her further as to why then did she think Gandhi would have said this? She replied as a matter of fact, "anyone who could have said something so true in the last 100 years could have only been Gandhi!!". This was a child who had not read or been exposed to Gandhi, and who was stating it out of an understanding that she has arrived on her own.

In the year 2015, I was invited to teach an elective paper called "Contemporary Gandhi" to the students of B.Tech., near Chennai. Along with a couple of friends, I designed and delivered a 4-month long programme on Gandhi, and tried something different. We didn't 'teach' anything and instead just created several dialogues on contemporary subjects with the students and asked them to debate the same and at the end of the debate, brought in any aspect of Gandhi's life or work that was relevant to their thought and conclusion. Many times, we didn't utter the name of Gandhi at all and just used the class for the students to do their own experiments with truth. Hailing from the middle class and upper-middle-class urban backgrounds, many of the students like their contemporaries across the country had the same indifferent attitude towards Gandhi or for that matter anything to do with history of India or culture or spirituality. Their assignment towards the end of the semester was to go out and make a recording on their mobile phone cameras interview

with someone whom they considered 'ordinary' on their life and as a second part of the assignment had to ask these people whom they were interviewing, what was their idea of Gandhi!

The students were happy to do an assignment that got them to move around outside the campus and could get them to use their skills in recording with their mobile devices, some of the videos were rather professionally made in their presentation with captions and neat editing. Before they made their presentation, we had requested them to also state their own mindset before and after they shot the videos towards the person whom they were interviewing. The students interviewed the cleaner ladies who worked in their hostels, the auto drivers in the vicinity of the institute, the watchman at the gate, the farmer in the nearby village, etc., Presenting these interviews, many of the students confessed that their experience was very humbling. They confessed their own lack of knowledge about the life of these people around them and some of the narratives were really insightful for the students to deepen their own knowledge and understanding of the larger realities of the society around them. They confessed that many of their own idea of 'hardship in life' was negligible in front of the hardships that were faced by some of the people they had interviewed. One of the most striking images was that of a watchman on the gate of the institute who said that the institute was built on the farmland that his family-owned and now he does this job to make the ends meet for his family. This was a big moment of insight for the students. As a corollary to this was the uniform reverence with which the ordinary people interviewed held, Gandhi. There was no political rhetoric, no insinuation, no sense of 'political correctness', even when the students

pointed out the various popular theories around who people should hate Gandhi, the response was almost uniformly, "but, it was difficult times, he must have struggled a lot to even achieve this much, it must have been difficult and lonely", there was an empathy to the struggles that he must have undergone as the ordinary people related to the struggle to their own without pretending to justify or defend whatever fallacy was pointed out to them by the students. In their empathetic words, they were rephrasing the words of another Gandhian with enormous compassion, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who when he had visited India several decades after Gandhi's demise was asked, if he felt betrayed by Gandhi in Partition, Badshah Khan had famously replied, he was alone, he was isolated, he tried, how much could he do?

In 2017, the prominent Dalit leader had called on me at the Sustainable Livelihood Institute³⁷. The elderly gentleman had worked all his life as a grassroots dalit land right worker and had a lot of experience and insights in working with land rights for the most oppressed community. He had earlier attended the seed festival that was organised by the Institute and had sought a meeting to discuss the potential to have his team of workers to come for training on sustainable agriculture practices in our institute. We agreed on some of the scopes for joint work and decided to visit his centre in neighbouring district. We had a very good visit to his centre and had an interaction with the workers and community members alike, after lunch, we were leaving and as I went up to him to take leave, he commented, "I have heard you are a Gandhian, you know, I come from a dalit political background, like many people of my age, I too have spoken from podiums against

Gandhi, I disagree with him on several levels till date. But the more I get older, the more I realise, on economy, we should have heeded the old man, it would have been better for us all!". I had not spoken of Gandhi with him or his people till then at any point in time.

Every journey of truth starts with the right question. Framing of questions remains one of the fundamental challenges of our times. Truth was once an absolute, when Gandhi talks of his "experiments with Truth", he was not talking of his truth against other person's truth, for him there was one absolute "truth" towards which he was travelling and he practised his life in complete adherence to whatever he considered being true at that point of time in his life. If it was seen as being inconsistent, he suggested that people consider whatever he had said or done later as he was sure he had progressed further towards the absolute truth and not regressed in any way. Today, "truth" is largely seen as an attribute, perhaps desirable one, among the several others to whatever information we possess. Even the desirability of truth is often in question when we see speed of information transmission through social media can create myths out of insinuations and implications with neither an iota of factual reality. When a very large number of people have accepted such a myth to be true, very little can be shifted or changed subsequently when the truth emerges. In last few years a new form of profession is gaining popularity, particularly among the media houses called the 'fact-checking', these professionals are primarily validating the truth behind the reporting of their own colleagues in the media apart from the politicians and public figures. One can today digest news as it is or for an additional cost after

'fact-checking'. Truth from an absolute has become a service with commercial value in the market. The absolute Truth of Gandhi towards which he deemed every person is journeying in their life, is currently discarded as a choice in the market space.

It is in this context, my experience of Truth in the individual lives of the ordinary people of this land often gets articulated as moments of great insight. For lack of better terms, the ordinary people in this country call that truth within themselves as 'Gandhi' or whenever they achieve such a moment of insight, they feel, 'this is what he must have felt/been like'. The four anecdotes that I have cited above come with no qualifiers and without any exaggerations. These are the way I encounter Gandhi today in the current world. When a farming leader or a child or a dalit leader or an ordinary worker think of him, they don't get into the polemics of political ideology or rhetoric. They are not even aware of the current narratives on Gandhi, instead, they turn the light on themselves and their truth and in articulating their truth as a lived experience within themselves, they also reflect on him, it is as though they are projecting their own struggle on his and they see moments of him reflect in their work whenever they feel a deep sense of having arrived at truth that otherwise is elusive. Many of them don't need to have 'fact-checking' beyond their own experience and perception, their truth is their own and as they progress from lower truth to higher truth, they see a process, a path and journey. And in this journey, they see the footprints of Gandhi. They see the struggles, the stumbles, the difficulties, limitations and weaknesses. They are not judging him based on these, they just are happy that he was there in the journey ahead of them. In fact, in this path, time stands still, there is nothing ahead or behind. It is all

current and contemporary. Indeed the adoption of many of the terms from his lexicon (not necessarily that which he coined as much as those that he borrowed from the ordinary people of this country for his struggle), continue to remain the road signs in other struggles of today, as it were, giving them energy and life.

The dominant narratives of the historical persona that Gandhi doesn't treat him greatly today. But, that is a sign of the times we live in rather than the fault of the Mahatma, from the most prominent writer of our times to the senile academician well past his prime, every one of them have their personal critic on Gandhi. Indeed, among the intellectual Indians (and among several western authors) there seems to be a badge to wear as to which aspect of Gandhi they will critic. It is the amount of writing that he himself has done that forms bulk of the material used by his critics, in opening up his life for such inspection, he was inviting these criticisms as much as contributing to the careers of scholars for generations. There have not been many world leaders in the past 500 years who have written as intensely and whose works have been as rigorously preserved as that of Gandhi. Much of the credit should go to the dedicated team of members that put together the amazing collection in 100 volumes that we call the "Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi" today.

I will end this section with my own personal influence of Gandhi, Shri. Dharampal. Dharampal was then amazing Gandhian historian who refused to do history for scholarship or for pleasure. He did history for discovering the truth of Indian people, to uncover the falsehoods that had been spread through the McCauley form of education and which

he wanted to debunk. Like many of the Gandhian generation workers of the 1950s, he had dedicated to work among village communities. But, found his calling in a strange set of coincidences. He encountered the the India Office Records in London a treasure trove of information, particularly the early colonial and pre-colonial narratives by the British travellers, explorers, early merchants, army men, conscious Britishmen writing to their families, records meticulously kept by the British record office that told the story of the society of times and of people that were far different from what the post-Independence Indians read about themselves, fed as they were by scholars who got their degrees and doctorates from adopted Western narratives of India and its people rather than British records. Even the world view of the Indians was put down by such mainstream narratives of the Indian history and it was Dharampal among several scholars that discovered literally many facts of Indian life as narrated by early British and brought it to light. Working with Dharampal in the last 6 years of his life, living with him, travelling with him, long walks in the Himalayas, in Malaysia, in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Sevgram mainly, the talk would turn to Gandhi eventually and he would narrate in his own style the various anecdotes and insights from the way of life that the Gandhians lived and aspired for India. In one of the best encounters, Dharampal asked a scholar with deep political leanings, "so, tell me sir, what is so great about India?"; the academician kept silent not wanting to venture out any idea or view lest the same be found to be not regarded important or dismissed off as insignificant, Dharampal, proceeded to answer himself, "the greatness of this country is that the ordinary people of this country have figured out that everything in nature is connected and they have built their

life around this understanding". This perhaps was the core of his understanding about the ordinary people I think and I daresay did Gandhi before him. And Dharampal also used to say this about Gandhi, "he had immense faith in the capacity of ordinary Indians, that was his uniqueness", the capacity to have immense faith in the ordinary people of this land, in their ethos, in their voluntary adherence, in their capacity to discern what is right and what is wrong, in their practice of dharma, in their ability to work with the greatest of philosophers, live among some of the most creative artistic architecture and arts around them, living in a land as ancient in its history as the oldest parts of the world, conversing in some of the oldest languages of the world and yet being simple enough to listen with respect to people who come from societies and cultures that have none of these tell them, "you are backward, you are illiterate, not developed" is both alluring and annoying.

This is the challenge of 'development' in India today. How does one remind the ordinary citizens of the rich legacy that has several dimensions of what today holds currency as 'sustainable solutions' while all around them, the global market-driven media promote the opposite view of life? How can the rigour of modern frameworks be used skilfully to interpret the traditional frames of reference that Gandhi tapped into, in every sphere of human activity, how does one evaluate these without falling into the traps of evaluation frameworks, how does one influence policy and programme creation through these kind of knowledge, how does that translate into actionable items, what are the kinds of institutions that need to be created to support and sustain these knowledges, what is the nature and function of such future institution. These may

be some of the questions that need to be addressed by anyone seriously engaged with Development science today. This volume of the JRD and the several rich articles that we find here have within them some of the sutras that can perhaps provide a glimpse of the solution.

I wish to place on record my gratitude to each one of the authors for their responding to several emails, troubling phone calls and text messages and indulging my questions at times. The end product they have delivered is truly worthy of their effort and is a true representation of their own work and convictions.

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As I sit to finish these last paras, I reflect on the past few months of this journey and wish to place on record my gratitude to the following

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NOTES

1. Bapu-kuti, is the mud house where Gandhi lived and worked in Sevagram Ashram near Wardha in Maharashtra. This small structure even today stands in the same way it was during his time and the same prayer is sung till date at the same hour.
2. Isha Upanishad is normally placed as the first among the ten principle upanisads as commented upon by Adi Sankara, the Unpanisad is also the shortest one.
3. Speech at Haripad, January 17, 1937. CWMG, Vol. 70, pg.303.
4. The late Gandhian historian Sri. Dharampal once rephrased this Gandhian view, as the way of Indian life thus, "that which is great about this country is that the ordinary people of this country have understood that all things in life are connected and they have built their life around this understanding" - Dharampal, private conversations, recorded by the Author and published by Samanvaya.
5. Bikhu Parekh, Gandhi 1997.
6. B.G.Tendulkar, Abdul Gaffar Khan Faith is a Battle, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1967, Pg. 291.
7. 'Brahmacharya'(unpublished) notebook of Chimanlal Shah, Sevagram, 1938, first quoted in Quin tessential Gandhi, Samanvaya, Chennai, 2005.
8. Hind Swaraj, 1909.
9. Dharshan Shankar, The Trans-disciplinary Challenge of Introducing Indigenous Knowledge into the Modern University System, FRLHT, Bengaluru.
10. As documented by Anthony J Parel, Gandhi: Hind Swaraj and other writings, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
11. Hind Swaraj is considered the foundational text by most Gandhian scholars, was written when Gandhi was returning from London to South Africa in a ship the Kildonian Castle, in 1909.
12. Speech at Haripad, January 17, 1937. CWMG, Vol. 70, pg.303.
13. Speech at Mayavaram, May 1st 1915, WMG Vol 14., pg. 428.
14. In fact, in 1932 September 25th a historic assemblage of the Hindus in Bombay resolved: ...that it shall be the duty of all Hindu leaders to secure, by every legitimate and peaceful means, an early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called untouchables classes, including the bar in respect of admission to temples as reported in Harijan, published at the top of most of the issues in 1933.
15. Louis Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, 1965.
16. Lecture at the Muir College, Allahabad, December 22, 1916.
17. Ibid.

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18. Pg.5, Editor's Forward to Hind Swaraj, republished by Centre for Policy Studies, 2011.
 19. Swaraj talk, by Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Samanvaya, Chennai 2005.
 20. Economic Thinking of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in the light of modern theory of economic development, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2013.
 21. E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful.
 22. Gandhiji, October 5th, 1945.
 23. Sevagram, January 23rd 1940.
 24. Ashish Nandy, Cultural Fames for Social Intervention: A Personal Credo, Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XI. No. 4., Oct 1984.
 25. Lewis H. Morgan, "Ancient Society or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress. From Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization", New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1907.
 26. Haverkort B., Hooft, K. van 't and Hiemstra, W. (2002) Ancient roots new shoots, endogenous development in practice, Zed books, London.
 27. Samdhong Rinpoche, Lecture on the launch of the Hind Swaraj Centenary, published in Let's Talk Swaraj, Samanvaya, Chennai 2007.
 28. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945.
 29. Several recent reports to this effect have been published including the National Crime Records Bureau, here is an article that analyses the trend and proves that the violence against women, for instance is higher in urban areas than in rural areas by academics of the Azim Premji University, Bengaluru - <https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/pdf/Urban-Rural-Incidence-of-Rape-in-India.pdf>.
 30. Gandhi – His Gift of the Fight, by J. Patel and M. Sykes, Other India Press, 1987 p. 197.
 31. The City in History, Lewis Mumford, as quoted in 3 above.
 32. And yet 'we' are less civilised than 'them', S Gurumurthy, 6th September, 2005, Indian Express.
 33. Excerpts from the Preface to the Book "Gandhi's Challenge to Modern Science", Sunil Sahasrabud hey, OIB, 2004.
 34. Our Revolution: Towards 2000 AD, Acharya Ramamurti, 1986.
 35. "Where Central Planning Went Wrong" Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Mainstream, March 15, 1987.
 36. Ven. Samdhong Rimpoche, Lecture on Hind Swaraj, organised by Samanvaya 2005 published in Let's talk Swaraj, Samanvaya, 2007.
 37. Sustainable Livelihood Institute was co-founded by the author and he remained the Director of this Institute between 2015 till 2019. More about the institute at tnavsl.in.