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Class - IXth

Topic - The Creativity Challenge

Gandhi and Value Sustainable Development Goal

On 2nd October, the world will celebrate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Twelve years back, the United Nations Voted to declare the date as "International Day of Non-Violence". When people usually speak about this iconic person, they often highlight him as a great spiritual leader who conceived and pursued the ideology of Satyagraha; he had been a nationalist, anti-colonial leader who paved the way for the independence of this sub-continent. Great personalities such as Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama were inspired by Gandhiji's thought, and ideals. Indeed, our nation non-cooperation movement in March 1971, unleashed by the call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, bears a strong imprint of Gandhian civil disobedience philosophy. But could the Gandhian philosophy, the thoughts that are encapsulated in Satyagraha, survive the test of time? To what extent currently dominant development proposition resonate with Gandhian values and principles?

As is well known is 2015 the global leaders assembled in New York to sign up for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which espouses 17 Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. The 2030 Agenda epitomised a new consensus about a vision of human kind for the next 15 years. To establish the continued relevance of Gandhian development thoughts, it will be interesting to explore how much this agenda is aligned with Gandhian outlook and reinforce each other.

The major aspiration of the 2030 Agenda is captured by the tagline "Leaves No One Behind". Gandhiji viewed that, "Progress of a society should be determined by the state of the most vulnerable and the

weakest one" People, who are further from the frontiers of development, are to be brought up to the level of the other for "real development". He spoke about "the weakest and the most income-poor people. This essentially echoes the concept of "multi-dimension poverty", which stems from not only low-income, but also from life cycle issue, social stigma, locational disadvantages, gender disparity and other similar sources of risks.

The new global agenda has identified the fight against poverty as numero uno of the SDGs. One of the Gandhiji's powerful statements reflects a similar thoughts where he says "Poverty is the worst form of violence," What an extraordinary perspective on poverty which surpasses time for its unique observation.

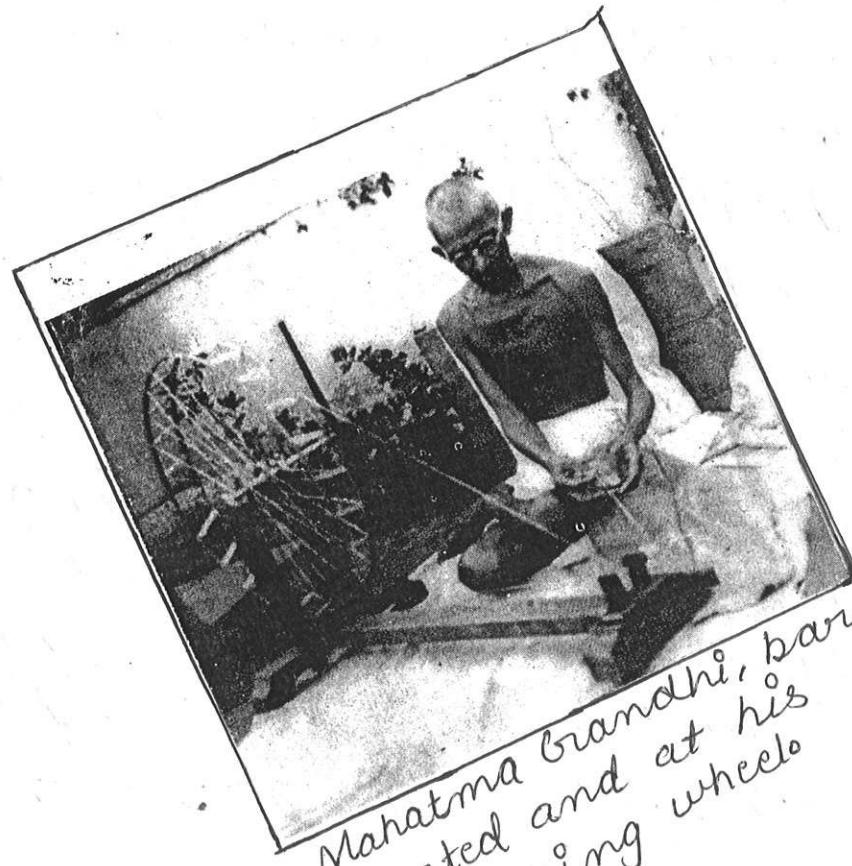
The 2030 Agenda upholds "Universality in development discourse" Gandhi expressed his adherence to universality through his amplitude toward religion or God has no country, no colour, no caste, no creed when asked he said "Yes I am a Hindu,

but I am also a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist and a Jew at the same time". His university universal humanism, however, did not shy away from recognising existing diversity he said, "Diversity is there, because we are not same in all ways. But untouchability or inequality."

The SDGs are distinguished by their emphasis on "Sustainability. This idea of Sustainability figure prominently in Gandhiji teaching as well. He mentioned that, "what we do today is our future." He also said, "we should not look upon the natural resources water, air, land - as inheritance from our forefathers". He considered them to be the "loan by other "next generation."

The 2030 Agenda talks about Transformative change - including changing the way we live produce and consume.

Gandhi was the epitome of personal practice of sustainable consumption and production. He understood that for sustainability of the world, individual responsibility is important - as he has been



Mahatma Gandhi, bare
chested and at his
spinning wheel

also anticipated in SDG's Gandhiji in his unique way mentioned, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." He wanted human beings themselves to be the major change agent in the process. A similar idea is embedded in the SDG's theory of change.

"Human development" has now become the cornerstone of mainstream wisdom. Gandhiji reckoned health as one's biggest wealth, not the gold and silver." He mentioned that to eradicate hunger, people should be ensured with nourishment, i.e healthy food. This pronouncement predates our current realisation that as we eradicate hunger, we need to ensure nutrition particularly for children. At the same time, Mahatma held that education is significant driver of change. For him, education is a life-time phenomenon", "doing away with illiteracy is not necessarily full education". The measure of education for him was the revealed amount of inner goodness or potentials of a person.