

Anshuman Behera  
Shailesh Nayak *Editors*

# Gandhi in the Twenty First Century

Ideas and Relevance



 Springer

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# Abbreviations

|        |                                                                 |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| AIHB   | All India Handicrafts Board                                     |
| AISA   | All India Spinners Association                                  |
| AIVIA  | All India Village Industries Association                        |
| CAA    | Citizenship Amendment Act                                       |
| CAPART | Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology |
| CPI    | Maoist-Communist Party of India-Maoist                          |
| CWMG   | Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi                               |
| DPSP   | Directive Principles of State Policy                            |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Production                                       |
| GS     | Gandhian Science                                                |
| HDC    | Handicraft Development Corporation                              |
| IIT    | Indian Institute of Technology                                  |
| INA    | Indian National Army                                            |
| J&K    | Jammu and Kashmir                                               |
| JNU    | Jawaharlal Nehru University                                     |
| KVIC   | Khadi and Village Industries Commission                         |
| LDC    | Less developed countries                                        |
| MNREGA | Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act                   |
| NEP    | National Education Policy                                       |
| NPM    | New Public Management                                           |
| NRC    | National Register of Citizens                                   |
| OBC    | Other Backward Caste                                            |
| PSM    | People's Science Movements                                      |
| PWG    | People's War Group                                              |
| RTE    | Right to Education                                              |
| S&T    | Science and technology                                          |
| SASS   | Swaraj, Antyodaya, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha                     |
| SBM    | Swachh Bharat Mission                                           |
| SDG    | Sustainable Development Goals                                   |
| ST     | Scheduled Tribe                                                 |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Program                              |

|        |                                                                  |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund                                   |
| UN     | United Nations                                                   |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                        |

# **Part I**

## **Introduction**

# Chapter 1

## Gandhi in the Twenty-First Century: Ideas and Relevance



Anshuman Behera and Shailesh Nayak

**Abstract** This is an introductory chapter of this edited volume. This chapter reflects on the relevance of Gandhian ideas in dealing with the contemporary societal challenges. Departing from a body of literature that confines Gandhi and his ideas to a specific time, this chapter holds the view that Gandhian ideas transcend time. Accordingly, the chapter stresses on the critical need for revisiting Gandhi's ideas keeping in mind the challenges that the society is witnessing. To blur the distinction between Gandhi as a philosopher, an activist, and a freedom fighter, this chapter highlights the surplus element in Gandhi in his multiple personality and roles. The first part of the chapter reasons with the need for and importance of revisiting and engaging with Gandhi's ideas. And the second part briefly explains the fourteen critical themes pertaining to Gandhi's ideas around which the book has been compiled.

**Keywords** Gandhi · Relevance of Gandhi's ideas · Surplus philosopher · Ramraj · Bhoodaan · Gramdaan

### Introduction

One of the greatest leaders of his people and of humankind, Mahatma Gandhi was a pacifist who brought social and political change. He lived during the ages of fascist leaders, communist dictators, and the colonial masters. However, his ideas and philosophies concerning the issues of *Swaraj* (freedom and self-rule), empowerment of the lower strata of the social order and women, communal harmony amongst socially divided identities, and the struggle against racial discrimination offered a contrary and the most acceptable socio-political development. It also helped to liberate millions of people in the Asian, African, and American nations. In the Indian

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context, the most important contribution of Gandhi, unlike that of other freedom fighters, is his ability to link the social, political, economic, and cultural issues and discriminations with the larger frame of India's freedom struggle against the British colonial rule. Gandhi's ideas of seeking freedom from the imperial rule make him one of the towering anti-imperial thinkers. His ideas of independence of humankind are state-centric and explicitly political, very much rooted in socio-cultural bases. Gandhi is mostly remembered as the Father of the Nation, rightly so for transforming India from a colony of the British to a nation. His contributions on strengthening and ensuring the autonomy of the 'village republic' in aspects such as economic self-reliance, empowerment of the women, struggle against the social evils of untouchability, and bridging the gaps amongst the religious communities have had substantial and critical implications on Indian society. Gandhi's ideas and philosophies continue to offer solutions to most of the socio-political challenges that humankind witnesses, but at the same time a re-engagement with his ideas with the contemporary issues could open up fresh perspectives. In line with the commemoration of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary across the globe, the major objective of this book is to revisit his ideas on two significant counts: first, the question about the relevance of degree of Gandhi's ideas in the twenty-first century, when the humankind is witnessing rapid changes in every sphere of their lives; and second, the question of whether his ideas offer potential solutions to the multiple challenges faced by human society in the twenty-first century.

## **Gandhi in the Twenty-First Century**

Any discussion on Mahatma Gandhi invariably begins, rightfully so, with a certain sense of reverence for his personality and ideas. For a person who patiently believed and followed non-violence, truth, and non-possession, amongst many other noble principles, to fight against the mighty British empire, age-old practices of untouchability and apartheid, and the very popular western-centric modernisation, such reverences are not completely unnatural. Ideally, Mahatma Gandhi, as one of the most revered personalities, should not be diluted with his position as a philosopher, a political activist, a politician, and moreover, a social reformer. Accordingly, in this book the focus is more on Gandhi's ideas and philosophies than on his personality. In its attempt to engage with Gandhi's ideas, the book also explores its relevance in the recent times and in that process, it becomes necessary to juxtapose his ideas with the contemporary challenges. There could be a question here as to why Gandhi and his ideas. As rightly put by Arjun Appadurai on Gandhi, 'no modern leader was as fully a product of his times as committed to changing what these times could be and become' (Appadurai, 2011). Most of Gandhi's ideas on many matters concerning humankind have transcended time. They were constructive in the past, and they seem to be so in the present and, as many believe, they will have same bearing in the future as well. On the relevance of Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the greatest socio-political reformers of India once said: 'As long as there is violence

which threatens the very future of humanity, the relevance of Gandhi would continue. He will remain relevant till the danger of total annihilation of humanity is removed' (1969). Similarly, to many other, Mahatma Gandhi's ideas were ahead of his time. General Douglas McArthur opines the same and said: 'In the evolution of civilisation if it is to survive, all men cannot fail eventually to adopt his belief that the process of mass application of force to resolve continuous issues is fundamentally wrong but contains within itself the germs of self-destruction' (McArthur as cited in Pyarelal, 1958). McArthur was referring to the importance of Gandhi's ideas of non-violence for the survivability and sustainability of the human civilisation.

The relevance of Gandhi's ideas can be better articulated through formulating specific questions on contemporary societal challenges and juxtaposing it with those challenges. In this connection, Terchek (1986) writes: 'Plato is important today not because we want to construct the small polity he envisioned in *The Republic*, but because we want to know what he had to say about justice. By the same token, Rousseau's simple society is not what attracts the modern reader to *The Social Contract*, but rather a concern about legitimacy and civic virtue. In a similar vein, Gandhi needs to be read with the intention of finding what he wanted to accomplish rather than concentrating on some of his suggested institutional solutions.' This book also deals with various aspects of Gandhi other than exploring the relevance of his ideas in resolving these challenges.

A major way the scholars have engaged with Gandhi is as a philosopher and a political theorist. This position is debated though. In some scholars' view, Gandhi is not being acknowledged as a political thinker or a philosopher on par with Plato or Karl Marx (Srivastava, 1968). The logic behind rejecting Gandhi as a philosopher is that unlike Plato or Marx, Gandhi hardly propounded theories and concepts of politics, and so he is not considered as a political theorist. A contrary position to this claim holds the view that Gandhi's ideas are deeply rooted in abstract epistemologies that make him a philosopher. Bilgrami (2003) argues: 'about specific political strategies in specific contexts flowed from ideas that were very remote from politics; instead, they flowed from and were integrated to the most abstract epistemological and methodological commitments.' Arne Naees, a leading Gandhian scholar states: 'Gandhi needs help to enter the history of philosophy and his philosophy has to be extracted from action and speech' (Galtung, 2011). In other words, Gandhi's socio-political actions have deep philosophical foundations. Scholars have observed that in the present scenario there is a subtle but very important shift in Indian politics from philosopher politicians to politicians seeking philosophy from others (Pani & Behera, 2018). In that context, Gandhi would place his philosophy first and actions later. Nonetheless, there could be two important factors that highlight his actions overshadowing the philosophical foundations of his ideas. Firstly, the popular expectation is to situate him as a great man of spirituality and uniqueness; secondly, the intellectuals' interest is to locate him as a nationalist leader with a strikingly effective method of non-violent political actions (Bilgrami, 2002). Moreover, as Bilgrami argues, a sentimental perception of him as a *Mahatma* (a great soul) has substantially outshone the scope of exploring Gandhi as a political thinker. As suggested by Arne Naees, there is a need to extract philosophy from Gandhi's actions. This is evident from

the fact that his ideas, which are morphed often into slogans, have strong philosophical and conceptual foundations. For instance, Gandhi's idea of non-violence offers critical conceptual foundation, and it should not be confined to the usage of mere political actions. The very concept of non-violence, unlike that of violence, hardly has any classification, and it is practised for social and political causes without any condition. Similarly, the idea of *Satyagraha* and those who practise it, the *Satyagrahis*, have universal acceptance and application of the same. The rules prescribed for a *Satyagrahi*, in fact, applies to all those who seek to follow truth and achieve their objectives. Gandhi's insistence on a truthful, non-violent, and peaceful end is an important contribution to mankind. Galtung's (1996) seminal work on 'Peace by Peaceful Means' highlights the philosophical depth of Gandhi's ideas. Accordingly, this book positions Gandhi as a philosopher politician and as a surplus philosopher.

Continuing the discussion, it is also safe to position Gandhi as one of the greatest anti-imperialist thinkers. It is important to broaden the scope of his ideas to understand his struggle against the imperialism. A popular conception limits Gandhi's non-violent struggle for independence against the colonial British until the latter's withdrawal from India's territory. Beyond the territorial aspects of anti-colonial struggles, Gandhi's ideas also offer liberation to humanity from the imperialist conditioning. Gandhi's struggle against imperialism is a result of his anxiety regarding the threats of the modern western civilisation, an offshoot of colonialism. Although much of his anti-imperial struggle was directed against the British rule and was operated in India, the essence of his ideas had significant implications on many colonised countries across the globe. Gandhi's strong criticism on the Western modern civilisation, which continues to have hegemonic influence in most parts of the world, portends the fact that the colonised countries like India, as Bilgrami (2012) argues, will decline in terms of politics and political economy that has characterised a transition in Europe from early to late phase of modernity. Whilst Gandhi was sceptical and highly critical of the western modern civilisation, he also offered an alternate to it. Whilst it is a cliché that Gandhi rejected the Western modernity and its imperial motives, it is unfair to allege Gandhi being against modernity. Gandhi's rejection of Western modern sciences and its values is founded on the premise that the latter flourishes under the aegis of power and unnecessary wealth, which necessarily generates a culture of control and subjugation of others. The effectiveness of anti-imperialist ideas of Gandhi had significant influence on many third world countries, and they continue to be relevant in the present scenario.

As discussed previously, Gandhi's precepts, as a philosopher and social thinker, reflect on his activities in bringing substantial changes in social policy in India. It is safe to root him as one of the most influential social reformers in India. His initiatives for the abolition of apartheid, untouchability, caste discrimination, and women empowerment are some of the most important contributions in reforming social interactions. His fight against untouchability and initiatives for the women empowerment are widely recognized in India; whilst non-violent struggle against racial discrimination, offering a sense of empowerment to the downtrodden, has worldwide acceptance. This is clear from the fact that following Gandhi's assassination, an American Black Women leader expressed: 'A great warm light has been

extinguished...his spirit, reached to the stars and sought to win a world without gun or bayonet or blood...As we, mothers of the earth, stand in awesome fear of the roar of the jet planes, the crash of atom bombs, and the unknown horrors of germ warfare, we must turn our eyes in hope to the East, where the sun of the Mahatma blazes' (As cited in Pyarelal, 1958). An important aspect of Gandhi as a social reformer is that he strongly criticized and denied the bad practices in social interactions and did not follow a militant approach to do so. He managed to bring social changes very much within the societal system. Accordingly, he once said, 'it is good to swim in the waters of the tradition, but to sink in them is suicide' (Gandhi, 1925). This position of Gandhi in terms of empowering the women also merits further investigation.

His efforts for women empowerment functioned at three different levels: social, political, and personal. At the personal level, Gandhi, unlike many others, positioned women on an independent platform. In the process, Gandhi envisioned an independent role of women in the society. For Gandhi, women could play paramount roles in the society both as moral guardians and social workers, without competing with men in the sphere of power and politics. He opined that any attempt by women to compete with men in the sphere of power and politics would be 'reversion to barbarity' (Gandhi, 1940). Further, Gandhi also believed in the ability of women to carry out the non-violent struggle against the social evils and the British colonialism simultaneously. Arguably, he is one of the first social thinkers and reformers who identified the unique potential of women to sacrifice and take lead in peacebuilding. What Gandhi prophesized as women's role in peacebuilding has become a truth in the present scenario. In many Indian states, affected by violent conflicts, we have been witnessing the active roles of women in the respective societies in containing violence and bringing peace. Gandhi's position on women's leadership in peacebuilding was founded on the logic that the world had been too long dominated by 'masculine' aggressive qualities, and it was time that 'feminine' qualities came to the fore (Kishwar, 1985). He played a crucial role in mobilising the women in participating in the independence movement. The large-scale participation of women in India's freedom movement had crucial social implications in challenging and breaking down the oppressive practices that had put women in secondary position. As Kishwar (1985) rightly asseverated, 'it is only with Gandhi's emergence as a political leader when he confronted the problem of mass mobilisation, that became aware of women not only in terms of their problems but also as a powerful potential force in society, hitherto overlooked and suppressed'. Moreover, it was Gandhi who realised that the national movement against the British could not succeed without the women's participation in the struggle (Patel, 1988). His contributions, apart from empowering women, in fighting untouchability and caste discrimination establish him as one of the greatest social reformers.

Gandhi completely rejected the social practices of caste based discrimination and untouchability. For him untouchability is a sin. To quote him, 'My fight against untouchability is a fight against impure humanity' (Gandhi as cited in Kumar, 2007). In September 1930, whilst he was imprisoned in Yeravda jail, Gandhi protested the untouchable practices. The impact of this protest led to opening of temples and wells for the *Harijans* (a term used by Gandhi for low caste people). The foundation

of Harijan Sevak Sangh to combat untouchability and the magazine titled *Harijan*, started by Gandhi, were some of the important developments that played vital roles in the struggle against caste discrimination in India. Gandhi adopted a pragmatic intervention in changing the caste interactions in Indian society. He was aware of the subordinate position that forever tied the *Harijans* to superordinate position of the upper caste Hindus (Kumar, 2007). It was this realisation of Gandhi that propelled him to distinguish between what he called as *Varnashrama Dharma* (a prescriptive value necessarily based on hierarchical rigidity) and caste as an existential reality (an arrangement of division of labour without any hierarchy in the society). Accordingly, he found out an indirect rather than a direct attack on the evil practices of caste discrimination. He appealed,

Fight, by all means, the monster that passes for varnashrama today, and you will find me working side by side with you. My varnashrama accommodates many Panchama families with whom I dine with the greatest pleasure to dine with whom is a privilege. My varnashrama refuses to bow the head before the greatest potentate on earth, but my varnashrama compels me to bow down my head in all humility before knowledge, before purity, before every person, where I see God face to face. (Gandhi, 1927).

An important aspect of Gandhi's fight against the vile practices of untouchability is to integrate it with the national movement. Such ideas on social reformation demonstrate his stature as a politician and political activist. His politics is based on his own philosophical grounds. Gandhi's stance on larger welfarism of people, his ideas of *Swaraj*, democracy, and the role of political leaders in a democracy are some of his notable contributions to politics. We will now discuss Gandhi's political views on *Swaraj* and democracy. The main objective of delving into these aspects is to contextualize Gandhi as a politician and political thinker.

Gandhi's views on *Swaraj*, arguably, portrays his political ideas the most. Affirming the aspects of larger good of people Gandhi says: 'By *Swaraj*, I mean the welfare of the whole people and if I could secure it at the hands of English, I should bow down my head to them' (Tendulkar, 1951). This position of Gandhi might create some misunderstanding: if greater welfare of people is guaranteed, the agency who governs the people matter very little. Here the confusion is regarding the primacy of good governance, for welfarism without ensuring that a legitimate agency governs the people, could potentially dilute the very essence of *Swaraj*. To address this confusion, putting Gandhi's perspective on *Swaraj* in a larger context is necessary. In a broader context beyond welfarism, Gandhi's *Swaraj* is equivalent to his idea of *Ramraj*.<sup>1</sup> In Gandhi's *Ramraj*, the moral authority and the political power are the basic foundations of the sovereignty of the people (Gandhi, 1931). The idea of a *Swaraj* can be put into various integrated perspectives. The social factor in *Swaraj* talks of an experience where the individual and the collective of

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<sup>1</sup> Gandhi defined his understanding of *Ramraj* during Indian National Congress (INC) session in Faizpore, 1936. He mentioned that: 'By this I do not mean a mere imitation of the British House of Commons or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have systems suited to our genius. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as *Ramraj*, that is sovereignty of the people based on moral authority' (cited in Pandey, 1988).

the people learn to rule themselves. One of the features of *Swaraj* is the combination of the individual and the collective of the people where the *Swaraj* of one individual does not conflict with the *Swaraj* of the other. To put it differently, they complement each other. In this regard, Gandhi emphasizes: ‘it is *Swaraj*, where we learn to rule ourselves...the *Swaraj* that I wish to picture is such that, after once we realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such *Swaraj* should be experienced by each one for himself’ (Gandhi, 1969). *Swaraj*, for Gandhi, is an ideal society, a state of ‘enlightened anarchy’ where social life becomes perfect as to be self-regulated (Pandey, 1988). Accordingly, for Gandhi, a perfect social life can be achieved through enabling the social communities in terms of making them self-sufficient in governance and economy. Gandhi would prescribe such interactions towards perfect social life at the village levels. The smaller units of societies, self-reliant villages, should possess economic independence to achieve *Swaraj*. According to Gandhi, an economically self-sufficient society is necessarily a culture in which every individual knows what they want and knows that no one should desire anything that others cannot have without equal labour (Khosal & Khosal, 1973). Gandhi’s Hind *Swaraj* (1909) detailed his ideas of *Swaraj*. Gandhi, in general, was highly critical, if not rejective, of the parliamentary form of democracy as advocated by the modern Western civilisation. In one of his most scathing attacks, he declared the parliament as a ‘prostitute and sterile woman’ (Gandhi, 1969). His alternative views on a meaningful democracy very much integrated it with total freedom of people. According to him, democracy is ‘freeing man from political and social enslavement and economic exploitation’ (Gandhi, 1969) and is not merely confined to governance mechanism. Rather, it is a system that ensures abolition of all forms of exploitations. A critical investigation of Gandhi’s position reveals that his insistence on the non-violent nature of the state and its legitimacy, opposition to the ethos of capitalism and principles of utilitarianism steered his ideas on democracy (Pantham, 1983). The role of democracy, as desired by Gandhi, is to devise a government that secures freedom of individuals without any scope for subjugation, promotes individual integrity, and non-violence (Terchek, 1986). Moreover, the legitimacy of that democratic system is decided by the extent to which a governance mechanism effectively endorses the ‘greatest good for all.’ As Pantham (1986) rightly expressed, ‘Gandhi believed that capitalist ethos and utilitarian principles militate against participatory and substantive democracy. He realized that ‘this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor’ is ‘the age of democracy’ and that ‘the states that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent’ (Ibid).

Gandhi’s concern for the poorest of the poor in a non-violent democracy is mirrored in his views on economic issues. The foundation of Gandhi’s desire for economic welfare of people centres on satisfying basic needs. In his words, ‘a certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above that level, it becomes a hindrance instead of help. Therefore, the idea of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. The satisfaction of one’s narrow self, must meet at a certain point, a dead stop, before it degenerates

into physical and intellectual voluptuousness' (Gandhi, 1936). From this assertion of Gandhi, it can be interpreted that the pursuit of abundant wealth would lead to unhealthy competition in the society, and it has an impact on disturbing the social harmony. The role of a self-sufficient village as an economic hub is very crucial for Gandhi to ensure the basic needs of people. The concept of *Swadeshi* and interdependence between the neighbourhoods to exchange goods, Gandhi proposed, could be a sustainable model for economic security in India. Such views of Gandhi seem to be in a contrary position against the model that favoured establishment of large-scale industries which post-independent India eventually followed for economic development. Gandhi never supported the establishment of large-scale industries, but he did not protest the initiatives either. As a matter of fact, Gandhi certainly remonstrated the social disruption that the large-scale industrialisation might cause (Rivett, 1959). From this position one can derive that his views on economic welfare of the people are greatly integrated with social harmony. In his opposition against industrialisation, he emphasized on finding jobs for humans first than for the machines. He regarded development from a people's point of view. Gandhi knew that any economic initiative leading to profit-making leads to accumulation of wealth in few hands and that would eventually result in social disharmony. To minimise the risk of accumulation of wealth and economic inequality, Gandhi's ideas of trusteeship limit the rich holding the property as trustees. Gandhi's ideas on trusteeship and its relevance in the contemporary societies are discussed in chapter of this book. Further, to reduce the risk of profit-making and economic inequality, Gandhi objected to the idea of allocation of all productive resources based on capital values.

Apart from the economic issues, the relevance of Gandhian thoughts on the question of relationship of the rural people to their land in India is important. As Narayan (1969) once highlighted, *Gramdan* (change from private ownership to community ownership) and *Bhoodan* (voluntary donation of land rights to the landless by the private landowner) can be considered as some of the most radical reformations India witnessed as a part of peaceful exchange of land rights in India. Contestably, in post-independent India, more land has been distributed to the landless through the acts of voluntary donations (Bhoodan) than through any land related legislations. Similarly, no political party in India has such radical, yet peaceful, land legislation plans as compared to the Gandhian ideas discussed here. Gandhi contributed in two pivotal ways by favouring economic development through a self-sufficient village as the hub of economic activities: first, it offered a common villager several economic activities to be engaged with; second, it entitled the villagers with the responsibilities along with series of disciplines (Rivett, 1959) that guided them on the path of spiritual purity.

It is important to analyse the relevance of Gandhian ideas in the twenty-first century in relation to the multiple aspects discussed earlier. It may well be argued that the twenty-first century offers more challenges than solutions. As we witness more economic progress based on higher rates of Gross Domestic Production (GDP) and proliferation of industrialisation and urbanisation, there is also a social disharmony as an outcome of factors like growing economic inequality, land alienation and dispossession, large-scale displacements, poverty, internal conflicts induced by

assertion of identities and, perennial migration from rural to urban centres in search of livelihood. Though the respective state machineries take concrete steps to minimise the risks involved with the challenges mentioned above and many others, it will be an exaggeration to conclude that they have been successful in their endeavours. With this background, the book attempts to bring in Gandhi and his ideas to examine their relevance in encountering these challenges in the twenty-first century. This book adopts a multidisciplinary approach to understand Gandhi in addressing specific contemporary societal issues. The concerns highlighted in the book through fifteen distinct, interrelated chapters offer solutions to some of the societal challenges through the prism of Gandhian thought process. The next section introduces the major themes of Gandhian ideas and beliefs pertaining to the contemporary challenges as discussed in the book.

## Themes of the Book

With an aim to revisit Gandhi's ideas and its relevance in the twenty-first century, the essays collected in this volume are placed under four major themes. The subsequent section following the introduction chapter is on making sense with Gandhi's ideas and thoughts on 'democracy, development and governance'. Considering the critical developments that we witness on the functioning of democracies in terms of rising inter-group conflicts and shrinking authorities of the state as the corporate bodies are increasingly influencing the decision making, and, moreover, the desire for sustainable development, as outlined by the United Nations (UN), interrogating the issues related to democracy, development, and governance through the prism of Gandhian thoughts offers interesting and alternative perspectives.

The first essay in this section titled 'Gandhi, Oceanic Circle and Participatory Democracy' takes the stand that Gandhi's thoughts on democracy are not merely relevant in a post-colonial nation. This essay highlights Gandhi's criticism of the Western civilisation for reproducing alienating self and its subjugated nature. Criticising its relevance for the West and the craze for Western technologies in ex-colonies, Gandhi would argue for self-rule or Swaraj for both East and West. He pleads for reconstruction of democracy from within the self and its relations with community. He adopts a concept of oceanic circle which presupposes flow of democratic power from within and from below in 'ever widening circles'. It begins with numerous primary (village) communities. Oceanic circle also assumes multiple Sangam communities existing with *Bhaichara* (brotherhood) tradition horizontally. The concept refers to communities existing in widening and horizontal relations. His idea of Swaraj is realizable through several paths: *Antyodaya*, *Sarvodaya*, *Satyagraha*, and so on. His idea of village communities is reformative idea, not an empirical concept. It is to be reconstituted via social reformation of existing village communities to ensure development of all. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* critically hinges on the method of dialogue. Without dialogue and without respect for *Anekantavad*, a true *Satyagraha* cannot be ensured. All these are different aspects of Gandhi's participatory democracy.

The next essay is on the theme of ‘Sustainable Development Goals in Gandhi’s Thought Perspective. The idea of sustainable development, as desired in contemporary times, whilst matches with the Gandhian vision of development, it also departs from each other on many counts. For Gandhi, development aimed at finding peace and harmony with self, with others and with nature. There could be a possibility that the rational and material world of the day would dub the Gandhian concept as bordering over spirituality and hence of restricted relevance to humanity at large. By doing so would reflect failure to see practical wisdom in it for sustainable human development that has become humanity’s most recent concern. The importance of localized nature of economy and social development, as prescribed by Gandhi could be critical guiding force towards sustainable developments. Accordingly, the essay gets into the seventeen specific goals of the UN document and juxtaposes them with Gandhi’s ideas to identify the convergences and divergences.

The ‘Ethics of Gandhi’s politics’ is the central theme of the next essay. This essay argues that a concern for justice constituted the ethics of Gandhi’s politics. Differing the Liberal accounts of justice (whether they emphasized utility or rights) has rested upon the idea that justice is primarily a function of a consent-based state authority. Such liberal accounts accept the rule of law through third party justice and an abstract equality before the law. On the contrary, Gandhi argues that justice as a virtue of social institutions rested upon an *ahimsanat* individual sense of deference to the *other*—whether major- or minor-oppressed or colonizing oppressor. In this context this essay refers to the concepts—*swabhava ramrajya swaraj* and *tapasya*—that Gandhi employed to resolve conflicts with hostile others. On a historical side it is interesting to recall that it was Rabindranath Tagore who had first recognized the significance of *tapasya* or self-imposed pain/austerity in Gandhian ethics when he described Gandhi as ‘*the great tapasvi*’.

Recalling Gandhi and his thoughts in the contemporary context is important to examine the need for inclusive and holistic governance and public policy. The market-led governance and public policy paradigm have limited the scope for autonomy and universalism, for instance, ‘*Swaraj*’ and ‘*Sarvodaya*’—in governance and public policy. The Gandhian paradigm of development provides an appropriate context to examine the ills of the dominant paradigm of neo-liberal inspired market-led rational choice approach on governance and public policy. On the issues of public policy and governance, the next essay discusses the context, meaning, and issues associated with ‘good governance’ emerging out of the Washington Consensus for the developing societies as the dominant paradigm of governance and development. Contrary to this backdrop, this essay argues that the Gandhian paradigm of governance provides an appropriate alternative to the dominant paradigm of governance and public policy for inclusive and sustainable development.

Talking about democracy and development of individuals the issues of values (read ethics and morality) and play a vital role. On the theme of Gandhi’s philosophy on values and education, the next section of the book has three essays. The first essay in this section is on ‘Making of a Man: A Reading of Gandhi’s Philosophy in twenty-first century’. Humanity in twenty-first century is faced with several challenges which are, arguably, deeply rooted in human attitude and aspirations grounded on a materialistic

view of life. A thoughtful reading of Gandhi's philosophical thoughts offers some help in overcoming this challenge. This essay discusses the flaw in materialistic conceptualization and celebration of man as a super functional entity. On the contrary, Gandhi conceptualizes the notion of human not merely a combination of mind and body, but rather having a spiritual element as an integrating metaphysical principle that cannot be reduced to the materiality of life. To comprehend this integral existence of human life, we need to reflect deeply into Gandhi's experiments and engagements that unfold truth following the path of non-violence. Gandhi's commitment to truth and non-violence, the essay argues, has epistemic power to awaken the humanity to a realm of self-knowledge leading towards in making a man that a flourishing civilization need.

The next essay under this theme is titled 'Between Fact and Value: Locating Gandhian Science'. From the writings of Gandhi, this essay investigates the nature and representation of science in modern India. The problem posed by Gandhian Science (GS)—the quandary between not an 'unmixed' admirer of science and not a 'sentimental' proponent of tradition—lies at the heart of current debates about what science means for the non-West. Outlining a concept of GS, the paper explores its potential role in advancing the ideas of postcolonial science more generally. There are four broad strands to this argument. First, Gandhian science is not only a philosophical and literary vocation but also everyone's practice without the dichotomy of expert and the layperson. Second, Gandhian science emphasizes upon data collection to understand reality without being content with impressionistic contents/management. Third, GS sought to contest Western presumptions of a monopoly over science and to ground the anti-vivisectionist approach through the indigenous systems of medicine in India's cultural traditions. Fourth, GS presented social responsibility of science which was not just concerned with fact alone, but in the creation of meanings (value) in all activities in terms of reconciling science and ethics.

The last essay of this section reflects upon the Gandhian principles of 'Education for an un-alienated life'. As overarching social transformations are underway, one can find an increasingly palpable sense of the extent and intensity of 'alienation' as a psychological and social phenomenon involving the perceived loss or the 'problematic separation' of 'self' from 'itself' or 'other'. The essay contends that Gandhi's ideas on education are worth revisiting at this juncture to find out if we live any answer to this crisis. Whilst the current policy impetus is focused on equitable, inclusive, affordable, flexible, and quality education, it is reckoned that the Gandhi's ideas of basic education and '*nai talim*' can be revived to influence the spontaneous concern for education in its varied forms in such a way that we 'learn to know', 'learn to do', 'learn to live together', and 'learn to be' for realizing the ideal of un-alienated life, without getting into the trap of the never-ending inherent contradictions between the central ideals of the western political enlightenment such as liberty, equality, and rights.

Considering the urgency involved, the next section of the book is on the theme of 'environment and public health'. Of the three essays in this section, 'Resolving Environmental Crises: A Gandhian Approach' reasons with Gandhian ideas to offer possible resolutions for the environmental crises. The essay argues that, for Gandhi,