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## UNIT 11 TOWARDS A NEW CIVILISATION

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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*‘Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passion. So doing, we know ourselves... The Gujarati equivalent means ‘good conduct’. If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be.’* **Gandhi in Hind Swaraj (p.61)**

Civilisation, in its broader sense, means culture shared by large part of humanity, across countries and nations and throughout vast span of time. In fact, it consists in the social worthiness of man. Gandhi is inspired by the rich cultural diversity of India and convinced that Indian culture represents the ideal or true civilisation, for it rests on the firm foundation of eternal values of life. Against the technological and materialistic oriented modern western civilisation, Gandhi brings man into the core of the process of civilisation, and in so doing he also reflects on the whole gamut of circumstances and situations that concerns man. He views man as integral entity in whom all dimensions of human existence-economic, moral and spiritual-blend inseparably. Human advancement is possible only when man stands well-integrated into the very fabric of the world. Gandhi’s concept of true civilisation is a value concept to be realised universally. Gandhi’s idea of civilisation is typically indigenous and provides new meaning to it. It is based on religion, and is universal, tolerant, humanistic and inclusive. The religion he proposes is laid down on the foundation of morality. This morality is very much internalised in the principles of truth, non-violence and human dignity. His idea of civilisation is a realisation of one’s self and

freedom. It is the regulation of mind over body. It is spiritualistic rather than materialistic. It has many implications in the contemporary times.

Generally in western philosophy, modernity is based on the cognitive idea of truth as the foundation of a scientific world view. Thus truth is a cognitive and not a moral notion. With truth as a cognitive being replaced by truth as moral and spiritual, Gandhi has turned the modern civilisation on its head. Gandhi's vision of nationhood is one based on decentralised local control, assimilation and tolerance of cultural differences, and above all, nonviolence. He sought a political system founded on *satya* and *ahimsa*, without separation of *dharmic* obligation from political and social organisation. In other words, the philosophical thought of Gandhi has a connection between truth, *swaraj*, the moral vision of the human good, technology and economic development. Gandhi's concern for modern civilisation and *swaraj* expressed itself in his deep interest in the revitalisation of India's villages.

Gandhi was in favour of appropriate technology that is well informed by the moral vision of human good. That vision can be found in dharma, which is rooted in truth itself and discovered by the natural power of the soul. That truth stipulates that the technology that is appropriate for India should meet the needs of the masses of India. He believes that the modern technology does not stipulate this. Historically, it has tended to reward the skilled and the powerful and to marginalise the poor and weak. He wants to modify this trend. He wants a technology for India that would improve the material welfare of all, not just that of the rich and the highly educated, and improve it without undermining the process of self-rule. He is concerned more about what kind of technology that India needs rather India needs technology or not.

### Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Basic foundations of new civilisation
- Gandhi's philosophy of new civilisation based on the principles of *satya* and *ahimsa*

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## 11.2 BASIC FOUNDATIONS OF NEW CIVILISATION

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Gandhi views the western civilisation as predominantly materialistic, destructive, and violent and exploitative. He is critical about the modern western civilisation and the ideologies born out of this phenomenon. He considers this civilisation as the one that is cut off from its roots. He adds new dimension to the civilisation by redefining dharma and relocating it in the Indian context. Gandhi opposes the western notion of rationality and science which is a product of industrial revolution. He equates this kind of rationality with the power of western colonialism. Gandhi develops an elaborate refutation of the colonial 'civilising process.' He redefines rationality and science from Indian point of view, as a victim of western imperialism. As Partha Chatterjee argues, Gandhi counteracts the material/outer domain of western superiority by relocating both national and individual sovereignty in an inner spiritual domain (*Nation and its Fragments*). As Raghavan Iyer rightly observed, Gandhi argues that western civilisation has invented 'the most terrible weapons of destruction....the frightful disputes between labour and capital and the wanton and diabolical cruelty inflicted on innocent dumb, living animals in the name of science' (Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp.288-89). Bhikhu Parekh argues that distinctive human powers such as self-determination, autonomy,

self-knowledge, self-discipline and social cooperation are requirement for any great civilisation. According to Gandhi, all these qualities are threatened by the modern civilisation. The emphasis of the first two is of distinctively modern and Euro-American and they are weak and vulnerable in last three qualities. In fact these qualities are imbibed very much in the European tradition beginning with Greek and Christian philosophers. The modern western society lost its balance and the contemporary culture became unstable and violence-prone. For Gandhi, *Swaraj* is the battle cry for civilisational self-sufficiency. He postulates ahimsa as the high water mark of India's civilisational superiority.

Gandhi's civilisation is based on virtues and the dharma. He believes that good society and good way of living is one that follows ethics of virtues. Gandhi's ethical programme replaces the ritualistic, dogmatic and inhuman religion with the traditional virtues of courage, justice, compassion and love. As Gandhi states; '*morality means acquisition of virtues such as fearlessness, truth, chastity, etc. Service is automatically rendered to the country in this process of cultivating morality.*' Gandhi's civilisation goes in tune with dharma. He interprets dharma differently from traditional conceptions of dharma. In view of Gandhi, dharma has no meaning apart from *loksangraha*, the welfare of the whole world. Self-conquest is not just a means to self-realisation as they both must be valued in terms of their contribution to the common good of humanity. The crucial point for Gandhi, as for some traditional Indian philosophical schools, was that dharma must not be taken in a formal sense, as laid down by scripture or by custom, but rather as object of discovery, the self-chosen means of self-discipline of every human being who wishes to qualify as moral agent.

According to Gandhi, there are three chief ingredients of true civilisation based on truth and non-violence. First of these is a quest for truth and non-violent way of living and thinking. The goal of true civilisation is spiritual longing and moral upliftment of man and not the satisfaction of or obsession with external riches and fascinations. Secondly true civilisation is simplicity which naturally follows from the first ingredient and is regarded as the essence of civilisation. Simple living and high thinking is the real motto of Gandhi's life. Simplicity generally means a life based not on luxurious use of things but based on simple wants. Gandhi believed that the true mark of ideal civilisation is not the multiplication but the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone can enable us to attain real happiness and contentment. His essential protest was directed, not against industrialism as such, but against social disruption that may accompany it. The third ingredient of civilisation is the principle of synthesis which has been one of the chief characteristics of Indian culture and which Gandhi so well articulates in his idea of cultural rootednesses or the principle of *swadeshi*. He is well aware that no civilisation can live and flourish in exclusion. Gandhi's principle of synthesis has its own distinctive quality. It is neither eclectic adaptation nor indiscriminate borrowing or copying of any other culture; it meant to assimilate and adopt whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us. This view is well in accord with the Indian spirit of synthesis, that is, the principle of unity in diversity. This is prompted by the philosophy of Vedanta.

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### 11.3 OVERCOMING TRADITION-MODERNITY DICHOTOMY

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The modern world is characterised by universalism, rationalism and secularism. Modernity is opposed to the religious worldview which is traditional. Tradition involves uncritical acceptance of the past which is in the form of dogmas, beliefs and scriptural authorities.

It is argued that, contrary to tradition, modernity brings change in the attitudes, values and orientation of thinking and mental makeup of the individual so as to make him/her rational, secular, liberal, self-conscious and self-confident in a changing world. Reason plays a predominant role to evaluate beliefs, opinions, dogmas, etc. Modernity assumes that scientific thinking should have precedence over emotions and non-rational thought. Modernity also involves changes in the socio-economic and political structures facilitating industrialisation, urbanisation, and democratisation. From the economic point of view, modernity involves reorientation of the social structure bringing about material prosperity through increasing expansion of the productive forces of society and by equitable distribution of wealth. In short, the modern world view is based on empirical and scientific knowledge, and is incompatible with tradition on all important aspects of life. It is argued by many that scientific understanding and domination of nature would secure freedom to man from scarcity and want. Besides, transformation of the individual and control over nature, rational forms of social organisation and modes of thought would bring liberation from the irrationalities of myths, religion, superstition, arbitrary use of power and human frailties. As a result, the universal, eternal and immutable qualities of humanity will be revealed.

It is argued by some thinkers that there is a dichotomous opposition between tradition and modernity. Modernity is considered to be the anti-thesis to tradition. But many scholars, for different reasons, contested the view that there is any dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Also some nationalist thinkers questioned the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. They attempted to construct the idea of modernity differently. They challenged the hitherto dominant perspectives on modernity. Nationalist thinkers argued that modernity, which is equated with industrialisation, scientific and technological advancement was limited to western countries. The so-called modernity suited colonial interests at the expense of the colonised. Keeping this view in mind, the rationale of modernity, which was put forward by western colonial countries, was questioned. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* contested the above view. We can see in the thought of Gandhi a blend of tradition and modernity. He tried to integrate new patterns of thought and action on traditional culture. He attempted a merger of three levels of Indian social system, viz., social stratification, culture and polity into a pattern so that the break down of Indian tradition could be averted. Gandhi's critique of western civilisation was critique of modernity and his central argument is that no enduring alternative can be pursued unless that alternative negotiated to the skills, capacities and wisdom of people.

For Gandhi, tradition was not a repository inviolable norm but a place of considerable criticism, change and development. As Thomas Pantham rightly observed, '*Gandhi's project is one of overcoming modernism without regressing to traditionalism. In his approach, there is a merging of the reconstruction of Indian tradition and reconstruction of western modernity*'. He finds that tradition is sound when it celebrates the dignity of all persons and provides the moral materials for the good life and the good community. Gandhi seeks to democratise tradition in the most basic sense.

Gandhi sees western modernity addressing a person's interests or wealth (*artha*) and desires (*kama*), but ignoring questions about person's responsibilities in the wider world (*dharma*). As rationality is the hallmark of modernity, the increased productivity and technological innovations are the emblems of modernisation. Gandhi finds that many of the apparent successes of modernity are not real successes at all because many of their purported benefits come at terrible costs. As against the greediness of modern material civilisation, Gandhi posed the Indian, in which the tendency is 'to elevate the moral being. If culture is the way people conduct their life activities, then its primary quality is morality.

Instead of the greedy pursuit of material good, which he thought characterized, the modern civilisation, a civilisation like the quintessential Indian would 'point out man the path of duty', by pursuing us attaining' mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing we know ourselves.' This must be the reason why Gandhi tended to invest so much in tradition. Tradition, or rather the purified tradition, seems to be, for him, the cure for modern civilisation.

Science and technology of the west which have shaken the spiritual foundations of human civilisation are pursuing an amoral goal. Modern has been associated with material progress and the consequent loss of human values. Gandhi's critique of modernity is based on the pursuit of truth and non-violence. A spiritually enlightened human society will be far more non-violent and wedded to truth than any civilisation. The foundation of this new society will lie in our total dedication to truth and non-violence.

However, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* is not a rejection of the liberating elements of modernity: civil liberties, religious tolerance, equality and poverty alleviation. Rather his efforts could be interpreted as an attempt to integrate these positive elements with a liberating reinterpretation of tradition, even as some see him as radical and others as reactionary. With his critique from within the tradition, Gandhi becomes the great synthesiser of contraries, if not of contradictions, within and across traditions. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi equates modernism with sensual self-gratification and condemns it primarily for this reason. The modern world view of west not only alienates us from nature, but also alienates our desires from any moral end. The teleology of the ancients, that which gave their life its ultimate meaning and purpose, has been eliminated in modernism.

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## 11.4 UNIVERSAL RELIGION: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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Religion is central to Gandhi's idea of Civilisation. He defines religion in his own way. He projects the true Indian religion (Hindu religion) as universal in appeal and most tolerant, value-oriented and non-violent. Gandhi's interest was to recover the values of a traditional Hindu civilisation that represented genuine pluralism. Further he believed that all religions are equal and all are to be tolerated. According to Bhikhu Parekh, Gandhi's Hinduism had a secularized content but a spiritual form and was at once both secular and non-secular (Bhikhu Parekh, 1995, p.109)

Religion, for Gandhi, signifies spiritual commitment which is total but intensely personal, and which pervades every aspect of life. He had firm belief in the fundamental unity of life. He rejected any distinction between public and private, between secular and sacred, and ultimately between politics and religion. The principle of unity in diversity is one of the key components of his philosophy. He argues for assimilation of all cultures in the religion. In that sense, his reading of religion is universal in character rather than sectarian. It opens for a dialogue. As Rudolf observed, Gandhi wanted all cultures to be enriched by each other without losing their identity. But such cultural assimilation was opposed by political revivalists and religious nationalists. Yet for Gandhi, open and understanding dialogue must precede, not follow, a free and adoptive assimilation. Thus, an enriched diversity would then contribute to a more invigorated pluralism and an enhanced unity. This was precisely Gandhi's understanding of Indian culture and civilisation (Rudolf, Economic and Political Weekly, 1999, p.1500)

Ravinder Kumar identified the potential of creative political community in Gandhi's thought. India is marked for its diversity in terms of caste, religion, language and region. Gandhi

managed to derive a romantic political community which embraces many caste groups and religions into a common shared tradition. The structure of Indian society, as understood by Gandhi, is characterised by social groups with diverging instead of converging social loyalties. But it was possible, Gandhi argued, to devise a focus of loyalty that could knit such social groups into a creative political society. The nationalist movement he launched against British has operated on this loyalty principle.

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## 11.5 TRUTH IS GOD

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Gandhi equates truth with God keeping in view the primacy of truth as an ontological category. He says that Truth is God, rather than God is Truth. Gandhi's concepts of *satya* and *ahimsa* are the core values of his social and political philosophy. Indeed, Gandhi's idea of new civilisation ultimately stands on these values. He developed his own vision of radical transformation of existing social order and political system based on these two principles. As Raghavan Iyer explains, 'his concept of *satya*, with *ahimsa* as the means, determined his doctrine of *satyagraha* or active resistance to authority, while the concept of *ahimsa*, with *satya* as the common end, enabled him to formulate his doctrine of *sarvodaya* or non-violent socialism.' Gandhi challenged the conventional notions of authority, law and obligation by appealing to his conception of dharma and self-suffering. He believes that *satya* and *ahimsa* alone can secure an enduring basis for social consensus and political loyalty. There is no external authority that can claim a higher status than *satya* either in religious or in political arena. There is also no political or social sanction that can be assigned a legitimacy superior to *ahimsa*. Gandhi visualised the new civilisation based on the idea of universal harmony in nature. The new social order could be provided only by the collective pursuit of truth and the general acceptance of nonviolence. Gandhi condemned the values and structures of modern civilisation as a system of untruth and coercion, injustice and mutual exploitation and looks for new method and legitimising principles. The doctrine of *Satyagraha* was an attempt to raise the deliberate suffering of a man of outraged conscience to a moral sanction that compels respect and secures result. Gandhi equates Truth with God or Self and Self-realisation is the ultimate goal of human life. In his own words, "To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word, for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly." The ideas of truth-based religion and truth-based metaphysics dominate Gandhi's philosophy. The formulation of Truth as the God has its own implications. By claiming this, Truth has a spiritual dimension in addition to the moral dimension. Truth is a metaphysical category as it characterises the fundamental nature of reality. And, Truth is the Absolute Reality which is the source of all existence. Further, Gandhi acknowledges that God is all things to all men, which enables him to support the *dvaita* and *vishishtadvaita* positions as well as maintaining his own preference for *advaita*. Gandhi envisages the idealist view of human culture and civilisation. According to this view, universe has not only a casual but also a moral order that life has a value and meaning.

### 11.5.1 Satya

Gandhi regards *satya* as the highest value. It is identical with dharma or the moral law. According to him, the real test for civilisation is that which stands for truth. His notion

of truth is different from conventional categories of western philosophy. Gandhi's epistemology is rooted in 'truth in action', a concept that locates truth in the facts and circumstance of a particular situation. Truth has to be understood in relation to tradition which determines one's way of life. As Akeel Bilgrami says, 'Truth for Gandhi is not a cognitive notion at all. It is an experiential notion. It is not propositions purporting to describe the world of which truth is predicated, it is only our own moral experience which is capable of being true. This was of utmost importance for him. It is what an end underlies his opposition to the enlightenment, despite the undeniably enlightenment elements in his thought including his humanism and the concern that our moral judgments be relevant to all people' (Akeel Bilgrami, Gandhi, The Philosopher, Economic and Political Weekly, September 27, 2003, p.4164).

For Gandhi, truth did not lie in history, nor did science have any privileged access to it. Truth was moral: unified, unchanging, and transcendental. It was not an object of critical inquiry or philosophical speculation. It could only be found in the experience of one's own life, by the unflinching practice of moral living. Gandhi's concept of truth is to undermine the external authority and to reaffirm the moral autonomy of the individual. Truth qualifies to be a moral law as it shows how moral values are possible at all. The presupposition of truth as the fundamental moral principle makes it into a moral law in the sense that truth prevails as the principle of good life in the world. Gandhi's realisation of the truth is the practice of non-violence brought to a high level of self-consciousness through self-practice. Truth is the sovereign principle, the ultimate dharma from which springs all virtues. For Gandhi non-violence is the only means to realise truth; non-violence is the highest virtue to be observed by man. Gandhi rationally justifies non-violence as a supreme reality, value or duty.

### 11.5.2 Ahimsa

Non-violence had always been the founding principle of Gandhian spirituality and bedrock of his political philosophy. It was through an assimilation of various concepts and philosophical tenets that Gandhi derived his own understanding of non-violence. Jainism and Buddhism were the most important influences behind his theory of non-violence. These religions preached non-violence as the basic principle of existence. Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Non-violence is the greatest force man has been endowed with and his strongest weapon. Gandhi considers violence is antithetical to democracy, because social system based on the former cannot provide for or protect the weak. Ahimsa is a functional good on the way to absolute truth. For Gandhi, ahimsa was the expression of the deepest love for all humans, including one's opponents; this non-violence included not only a lack of physical harm to them, but also a lack of hatred or ill-will towards them. The first principle of non-violence is the non-compliance with everything that is humiliating. Belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome by love. Human dignity is best preserved only through love and not by destruction. In India, ahimsa was essential to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in different ways. It was regarded as equivalent to *dharma* or moral law. *Ahimsa requires deliberate self suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong doer... In its primitive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity* (Raghavan Iyer, The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.180).

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## 11.6 SWARAJ

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Gandhi's notion of civilisation is very much linked up to his struggle for independence of India through Satyagraha. Complete independence through truth and non-violence means the independence of every unit, be it a humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour and creed. This independence is never exclusive. Real swaraj is self-rule or self-control. Swaraj would harmonise rights and duties, head and heart, individual and community, faith and reason, economic development and spiritual progress, religious commitment and religious pluralism, self-realisation and political action. He brings together philosophical discourse and popular culture in enlightened renewal and social reform. Gandhi interpreted '*swaraj*' as self-rule, i.e. also self-control exercised by the individual. For Gandhi, individual is the focus of the nation and interpreting the nation as essentially consisting of individuals who feel that they belong to it. Further by emphasising the spiritual unity of all individuals, Gandhi could presuppose an immanent solidarity which was much stronger than abstractly conceived national sovereignty. This spiritual unity and self-control is attained by right action, restraint and discipline. Self-control can be attained only if there is complete freedom from all passions such as anger, hatred and selfishness which may arouse violent action that leads the self into bondage.

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## 11.7 SARVODAYA

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*Sarvodaya* stands for human society in which the freedom of each individual is recognised and man is not treated either as a machine or any assemblage of matter. The *Sarvodaya* society is based on pure justice where each man is recognised as equal and where there is no hierarchy of equals and unequals. Further, Gandhi's *Sarvodaya* keeps craft civilisation alive and works as an ideal of self-sufficiency. Decentralisation is an important aspect of *sarvodaya* and paves way for freedom. Gandhi argues for *sarva dharma samabhava*, which is inclusive of every religion rather than being sectarian and fundamentalist.

Sarvodaya implies the welfare of all, not associated with the utilitarian philosophy of maximum welfare for maximum people. It rejects the utilitarian principle of greatest good of the greatest possible number. It lays emphasis on sacrifice and social harmony. Gandhi charges that the west takes too narrow a view of happiness. The price of industrialism in non-economic terms was too high. He did not regard large-scale enterprise as the means to India's economic salvation; when it was needed, he wanted it to be owned or controlled by the state. He is not against economic progress, machine or market. The village was to be self-sufficient as regards basic needs. Gandhi's essential insight was that the Indian village has power of recuperation; his programme was to help that process and not to hinder it. Gandhi's new civilisation is concerned about the ills of industrialisation and argues in favour of self-sustained village economy.

Gandhi has a utopian idea of nation-state, idealised as Ramarajya. Rama is a hero of the Hindu mythological scripture *Ramayana*. Gandhi used symbols of particular Hindu culture as a strategy to mobilise people by giving altogether a different meaning. His use of symbols specific to a distinct culture is pragmatic, not essentialist. He uses Rama not as a king of Ramayana or an incarnation of Vishnu, but the name simply means 'purity of conduct' and the 'search for truth'. He talked of Ramarajya, where the 'moral authority' is the basic foundation of the sovereignty of people. He suggests that the content of the democratic state is expressed by the term Ramarajya, which he explains as follows:

'Ramarajya' is the kingdom of Righteousness. By Ramarajya I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by 'Ramarajya' divine raj, the kingdom of God....the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy.'

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## 11.8 CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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Gandhi's criticism of western mediated modern civilisation has a significant relevance in contemporary times. He is the source of inspiration for many contemporary struggles all over the world. He stands as a symbol of non-violent protest against colonialism and imperialism. He provides alternative model of development through the local self-governance. Against the liberal theory of possessive and abstract individualism, he argues in favour of reflexive individualism. His notion of individual is located in the social and cultural context. The individual has source in religion. For him, religion acts as a moral community. He developed his theory of politics on moral autonomy of individual rather than abstract individual. Gandhi was neither an uncritical traditionalist nor a dogmatic opponent of all aspects of modernity. The way he drew upon tradition in formulating his worldview was creative and owed much to his exposure to western values and institutions. Gandhi's philosophy helps in mediating the liberal and communitarian political theories of the West.

In the era of globalisation, the market economy is commanding nations and establishing the authority of the developed nations over the world. In this context, Gandhi's development philosophy is often recalled by the political and social movements of different parts of the world. As Ronald J. Terchek interprets, Gandhi warns about the globalisation of the modernised economy because of its economic effects, accompanied with globalisation of culture. He continually celebrates the diversity he sees in India and fears that such globalisation is reducing what is distinctive and fostering what is uniform. Local cultures are crucial to Gandhi's project because he sees each providing a concrete, not abstract sense of identity and meaning apart from productivity and consumption. Gandhi's philosophy seems to be an anti-state and anti-market; anti-state because he wants a real transfer of power from the state which is 'soulless machinery' to small local communities, typically villages having more human face. It is anti-market as it recommends production to be organised, as far as practicable, with locally available labour and resources for the satisfaction of local needs. The market-oriented competitive economy is often dominated by big business that looks for profit and exploits the labour. Gandhi's model of decentralisation is more radical as it starts from the roots, the basic units of society where individuals live face-to-face with one another. Decentralisation of political power is the key principle. He pleads for humanising the technology for its appropriate use. As Ramachandra Guha observed, Gandhi's philosophical critique of modern civilisation has profound implications for the way we live and relate to environment. Gandhi's philosophy is a leading force for the struggles of ecological movements. For the peace movements against the war and dominance, Gandhi's philosophy always commands respect all over the world.

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## 11.9 SUMMARY

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Gandhi's 'new civilisation' has evolved from his conception of man, society and the notion of good. He views man as integral entity in whom all dimensions of human existence-economic, moral and spiritual-blend inseparably. Gandhi's notion of good is spiritually progressive rather than materialistic. His idea of welfare or sarvodaya is a composite of material, moral and spiritual welfare, not just material welfare. Gandhi foresees the

consequences-social and ecological of industrialisation and urbanisation on which the very idea of western modernity is based. He offers an alternative model of development. Gandhi maintained that machines must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. Technology must be appropriate for the local needs and livelihoods of the people. It must be humanised and contribute to the equitable development and progress of humanity rather than generating inequalities, dominance, power and violence. Precisely, Gandhi wants a technology which is labour-intensive in nature for producing necessities of life. He believes that real progress means moral progress and the progress in economy and technology must be subservient to moral progress. In conclusion, Gandhi's concept of true civilisation is a value concept to be realised universally. As a value, civilisation is identical with 'good culture' based on equality, integrity, synthesis of science and spirituality and *sarvodaya*. It is the blossoming of the universal law of love. Gandhi aimed at a new non-violent global community within the reach of human capacity. Truth and non-violence are two fundamental key principles in realising his concept of the new civilisation.

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### 11.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. What are the basic features of Gandhi's new civilisation?
  2. How does Gandhi overcome the dichotomy of tradition and modernity?
  3. Critically analyse Gandhi's formulation of 'Truth is God'.
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## UNIT 12 SARVODAYA

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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*“I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much for you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubt and yourself melting away”.*