

## Corona Virus 19: Looking through the Lens of Gandhi

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### Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was more than just an anti-imperialist and the father of the nation of the largest parliamentary democracy. In addition to his role in the nonviolent struggle, Gandhi made significant contributions in the field of development and welfare. Health and hygiene were one such sector. Gandhi looked at many minute aspects of health and contributed extensively on the theme. COVID-19 is a wake — up call for the whole humanity, especially in India, to revisit Gandhi, his thoughts, views and practices. The relevance of Gandhi and his ideals are back in the spotlight in the wake of the pandemic. The Gandhian principles of Swadeshi, Swachhata, Swaraj and Sarvodaya can be used as valuable inputs for reconstruction of Post — COVID World order. The COVID-19 pandemic has put our economy in shatters. To resurrect from this sad state of affairs, we shall focus on reviving our rural economy through Gandhi's Gram Swaraj. Gandhi's Swadeshi and self — reliance can be viewed as two sides of the same coin which has not lost its relevance in a highly globalised world.

Gandhi once wrote: "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much for you, try the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man (woman) whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him (her). Will he (she) be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him [or her] to a control over his (her) own life and destiny? Then you will find your doubts melting away. In other words, will it lead to swaraj (freedom) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away." [1] Gandhi's talisman still holds relevance even after so many decades. Of all the images we have seen in the last three months from various parts of India, few are as heart-breaking as the sight of thousands of migrants, including women and children, walking in highways for hundreds and thousands of kilometres to reach their villages following the nationwide lockdown on March 25. The mass exodus seems to manifest the rejection of Gandhi's talisman.

In this context, a National Webinar on 'Novel Corona Virus-19: Looking through the Lens of Gandhi' was conducted by Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Decentralisation and Sustainable Development, Centre for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam on 26 June 2020. The seminar began with the inaugural remarks from Mark Lindley [2]. There were six panellists and more than 100 participants.

### **Gandhi as the 'Unique Cultural Advantage' of India.**

Mark Lindley began his inaugural remarks by describing Gandhi as the unique cultural advantage of India. He said that the uniqueness lies in the fact that “no other nation has a founding father as profoundly and wise as you have in him (Gandhi)”. It is quite natural to ask, “What would Gandhi do?”, whenever a crisis emerges as in the case of the current pandemic. Lindley remarked that we have to be Neo — Gandhian these days. However, he also cautioned that “every idea we derive from looking through that precious lens of Gandhi ought to be subjected to our own critical evaluation”. Even Gandhi himself didn't want anyone to follow him blindly. He cited three reasons as indicated below as to why someone should critically evaluate while analysing problems from Gandhi's point of view.

- 1) Since Gandhi was human, he made some mistakes and it would be unintelligent to copy. An example is that Gandhi opposed the use of vaccination. Should that mean that anti-corona virus vaccination has to be categorically ruled out? Gandhi did not believe in followers and instead preferred to call them fellow students, fellow pilgrims, fellow seekers and fellow workers.
- 2) Gandhi would want us to exercise critical judgement. Gandhi told in 1940: “Let Gandhism be destroyed if it stands for error. ... You are (to be) no followers, but fellow students, fellow pilgrims, fellow seekers, fellow workers, and.”
- 3) There may now be circumstances unlike any known to Gandhi. A quick example, obviously relevant to deciding about face masks with regard to population density. The demographics of India or its social and cultural settings today are far different from that of Gandhi's time.

He opined that the pandemic is only the first stage in the whole series of problems and it is just the beginning of so many things to come. In the current situation, we should, especially elderly should focus on How to Die Well? Gandhi once said “The human body is both a 'kurukshestra' and a 'dharmakshetra'. Insofar as it is a dharmakshetra, it is one's duty to keep it in good shape” [3]. He mentioned that some horrible aspects of this pandemic are due to 'co-morbidities', non-communicable as well as communicable, in people who had chosen not to keep their bodies in good shape. He said that a Gandhian 'macro' insight is to be evolved from the pandemic and its consequences are that we mustn't return to the same type of economy as before, nor to the same kind of politics.

### COVID-19 and Gandhian Self Reliance

John S Moolakkattu [4] spoke about the topic COVID-19 and Gandhian Self Reliance. The topic is a relevant one as the biggest lesson taught by the recent corona virus pandemic is that we should become self — reliant. He began his speech by inter linking Gandhian Self Reliance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent call for Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan [5] also which is one way of getting out of the pandemic situation and allowing the nation to recover on its own. He said that Atma Nirbhar Bharat talks about self-reliance at Pan—Indian level instead of self-reliance at grassroots level advocated by Gandhi. He said that Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is somewhat like 'a liberalisation with nationalist tenure'. It's not swadeshi in all aspects but in some respects [6]. COVID-19 pandemic has led to a situation in which ruptures in production changes that have been created following globalisation.

The pandemic has made health systems and other survival systems in a vulnerable state. He said that local governments were in forefront when it comes to battling the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that if actions of serious nature to tackle the pandemic have been taken at the local level. All over the world, it was the mayors and heads of local governments were in the main battlefield rather than heads of states when it came to the fight against the novel virus. In the wake of COVID-19, there has been a significant call for moving towards achieving self-sufficiency by the nation instead of relying on international markets. He stated that one peculiar feature of COVID-19 is that it has left even advanced nations fend for themselves, a scenario which they have not anticipated and were forced to depend on countries like China, which have gained unprecedented advantage in view of the skewed supply chains. He noted that the theme of self reliance means in simpler terms means doing everything on your own and not depending on others. The notion of self reliance is as old as humanity. Self reliance is a dynamic movement and it should start from the bottom but nowadays when we talk about self-reliance, it is about self-reliance led from the above. He also pointed out Gandhi's view on self-reliance by citing that "Panchayats should equip themselves in such a way as to defend themselves against the whole world".

He talked about the importance and relevance of self-reliance in food production and added that it will prevent any country and any other region from using food as a weapon in such a crisis situation. Self Reliance also ensures that local factors are utilized to the fullest, promotion of local creativity and foster trust in one's own institutions and technology. It also ensures less alienation, helps to maintain ecological balance and ensures horizontal solidarity. It provides a mechanism to prevent manipulation and exploitation by others and reduce dependency. Naturally, self-reliance results in greater autonomy and greater freedom. Regarding the Gandhian notion of self-reliance and sufficiency, he said that Gandhi's notion of Swadeshi is rooted in village life and it envisions an order based on satisfaction of basic needs.

Swadeshi was not just an economic philosophy. Gandhi describes Swadeshi as the "spirit in us which restricts us to the use and services of our immediate, to the exclusion of the more remote." We often have a tendency to look Swadeshi as a nationalist perspective, from a very narrow angle. If there is self-reliance at local level, it doesn't preclude possibility of solidarity with other spatial levels, but this solidarity is independent of power considerations. Regarding health and Swadeshi, he pointed out that though Gandhi was an ardent supporter of naturopathy, on critical occasions, he realized that body may require modern medical interventions.

Regarding the impact of nationwide lockdown on the poorer section of the society, he opined that people were treated as poor objects, particularly migrant workers in the aftermath of the lockdown. Policy makers in India have forgotten Gandhi's Great Talisman that prior to taking a decision, one has to think how it is going to affect the poorest of the poor. He also stated that instead of creating a five trillion-dollar economy, we should look at fundamental needs of the people. He also added that though we have gone far away Gandhi's ideals, by taking certain small steps, we could incorporate the ideals of Gandhi to reduce the rampant effects of capitalization and globalisation to a greater extent.

### **Social Distancing: Corona Crisis and Course Correction**

John Chelladurai [7] talked about social distancing in the time of COVID-19. The panic created by the pandemic has been unprecedented and the whole world has come to a grinding halt. He said the term 'social distancing' is intended well but not suitable for the situation of India. He said that we took social distancing too literally, in much part of the country in such a way that we distanced ourselves from our stranded brothers and sisters including migrant workers. The lockdown has actually killed marginal and micro entrepreneurs, literally killed millions of petty shop owners, hawkers, hoteliers and those relying on tourism industry. He said that though for the time being, it is a dubious situation for the economy. But the national economy will certainly grow and will achieve the dream of 5 trillion-dollar. He also mentioned that Gandhi's Talisman was thrown to the wind in the wake of nation-wide lockdown and the very idea of 'social distancing' needs to be revisited. He added that what we actually needed was 'crowd distancing' and not social distancing. Crowd distancing refer to the aspect that we should not get into crowds. What we needed was neighbourhood distancing. We, as a nation, have been suffering from social distance in various forms which includes distance between the rich and poor, technology and grassroot economy, distance between religious communities, etc. The gap between political power and the subjects need to be gulfed and not widened. Gandhi talked about optimizing the distance between the two. It is no more - no less distance. In this crisis situation, we need to keep distance but not infinite distance. Gandhi's idea of Swadeshi is an attitude to bring about a kind of economic justice between different stakeholders. He said that Gandhi favoured a human phased technology and it is in tune with the economy of the community and in tune with the law of nature.

He pointed out that to be a consumer, one should first become a producer. He elaborated the consumer- producer relationship through the lens of Gandhi. Gandhi envisioned for an economy that brings back the bilateral relationship between producer and consumer, thereby allowing the economic potential, the employment to flow back and forth and in the process both parties survive. It need not be necessarily bilateral; it can be multilateral or circular in which the demand or employment created by the consumer passes through various hands and come back to the producer in equal measure. In India, we have surplus job employment. The Gross Domestic Income (GDI) today is one lakh five thousand rupees per head per annum. That means for 28 crore family, for each family our economy has an income of five and a half lakh rupees. All those who earn the multiples of five and a half lakh rupees occupy that many family jobs. If a person is earning 55 lakh rupees, the person is occupying 10 family jobs and nine more families will not get job or get partial jobs or pittance.

In a liberal economy, everyone has the right to earn unlimited. But under constitutional principle which guarantees justice, equality, opportunity, with the spirit of brother hood we cannot adopt an economic practice that promotes inequitable in its distribution. It distributes opportunities inequality. It doesn't have affirmative spirit. He said that when it comes to economy, we put everyone top and bottom in the same economic circle and asking them to survive. Gandhi said we need to optimize economy by bringing in a technology that is suitable to the people to the comfort of every individual and adopt an economic system that will be comfortably distribute the production possibility equitably and distribute among everyone. He said this is Swadeshi and added that we don't need to produce everything at local level but whatever can be produced at local should be produced at local level. There also with a methodology of ensuring last person being part of the productive process. That is what Swadeshi is. He added that if this manner is not adopted, we would be emulating Market Capital Model. Reducing market capital model to a micro level and put it in local level doesn't make it swadeshi.

He said that Gandhi's optimization was not just about economy but optimized political order, village republic is an optimum model, safe distance model, a distance which no more no less model.

Regarding capital economy in the context of economic policy of India through the lens of Gandhi, he said that capital economy per se is not bad. He said that capital economy has lot of strength and that's why the political regimes have accept edit as the singular economic model in the world. Capitalist economy has fluidity and adaptability and it has great strength. He commented that "We don't have to throw it away" [8]. He added that Gandhi was not suggesting an alternative economic model instead he was suggesting some measures to be kept in mind while laying foundations for a strong economy in India.

### **Relevance of Gandhian Economics and Solidarity Economics at the Time of COVID-19**

Nisha V Nair [9] spoke about the relevance of Gandhian economics and Solidarity economics at the time of COVID-19. The ongoing crisis is one of the most grievous and uncertain ones the human race has ever faced. The globalisation accelerated the speed of COVID-19 pandemic all over the world. It is time to rethink what type of development we need and what we are doing now. She spoke about the impact of COVID-19 on economies, life and the planet as a whole. In the wake of COVID-19, there is a growing need for the urgent healthcare as death toll is rising and stretching the national healthcare system. The COVID-19 resulted in the worst impact on women, migrants, forcefully displaced people, indigenous, people with disabilities, people working in informal economy, marginalized communities, those with employment contracts. The secondary and most significant impact of COVID-19 was on the right to food and nutrition. COVID-19 had positive impact on environment. At the same time, it has a negative impact, that resulted an increase in the number of hazardous wastes.

She said that both Gandhian and Solidarity economics encompasses the development ideology. They focused on people centric rather than ethnocentric. Some countries view Solidarity economics as an alternative to development and some view it as a movement. Gandhian economy was on need — based economy and nor greed — based economy. Gandhi gave importance to village economy and economic localisation. She said that in the time of crisis, be it financial or environmental such as floods, earthquake or pandemic, Solidarity and Gandhian economic principles are revived as possible alternative models of development and it is applicable for countries with neo — liberal but with mixed success. Solidarity economic principles have short term existence as it has no transformational potential. Solidarity economic principles are used just as a tool for reviving economy after a shock, it has received. Regarding the similarity between Gandhian Economics and Solidarity Economics, Nisha said there are

two types of Solidarity Economics: the first type of solidarity economics envisages a development model based on localism, villagism and satisfaction of base needs. This one is closer to the Gandhian stream. The next type of solidarity is based on the logic where solidarity can be created within the capitalism and the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is based on this logic. According to a data released by International Labour Organisation (ILO), in the time of COVID-19 pandemic, Solidarity economic institutions (like financial cooperatives and credit unions) are responding decisively at the time of COVID-19.

She said that Gandhian and Solidarity economics challenges the ethical neutrality of mainstream economics and calls for ethical moral and just economy. Instead of a short term we need a long term Gandhian or Solidarity economics sustainable development by virtue of cooperation, solidarity and ethics. COVID-19 calls not only revival of solidarity at global level but also at community level.

### **Rebuilding villages on Gandhian Perspectives in Pandemic Ridden World**

While speaking on rebuilding villages on Gandhian perspectives in pandemic ridden world, Kumar Kalan and Mani [10] said that we have always denied the best teaching given by the best people in the world'. He cited how we conveniently ignored the teachings of great minds like Lord Buddha, who is the first man who tried to shape our minds. After Buddha, Gandhi was the second best man who till the end of his life tried to shape us as a good human being. Today we are trying to find his lens with comfortable words. He said that for Gandhi, 'the economic health of the country is not based on the number of millions we have in our hand but in the absence of starvation and poverty. Gandhi warned us not to follow American model as it is bound to collapse one day. He said that despite 73rd and 74th amendments 'we are pitting village panchayats as tenants and slaves of the state government'.

The Urban areas have become death hole due to COVID-19. The protocol and governance of COVID has infused enormous insecurity in the mind of rural migrant population playing role in building urban economy.

Disconnection with traditional practices, rise of caste and class exploitation, uncertainty about natural calamities like floods, water logging, droughts, political and communal conflicts, lack of immediate work, lack of education to their children and lack of public health systems are posing threats when it comes to rebuilding villages.

He also mentioned the type of opportunities when it comes to rebuilding villages. These are: (i) Government's renewed schemes for rural population like MGNREGS, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana, (ii) revival and strengthening of rural economic practices besides farming, (iii) strengthening public education and health systems in rural areas, and (iv) strengthening rural market. He said to rebuild villages post-COVID era that 'we should campaign for healthy way of living with austerity in the era of pandemic and thereafter as well'. Gandhi treated health as real wealth. Mani said that we should from now on motivate and capacitate the youths to return to agriculture and rural industries. Drastic reduction of consumption pattern and adopt conservation as sustainable living, embracing organic farming, enabling Panchayat Raj as a robust system to local governance and development and to adopt Nai Talim [11] to learn and earn towards a non — violent, non — partisan, self — reliant and harmonious society should also be incorporated while rebuilding the villages.

### **Build Back Better with Nature: A Gandhian Perspective**

Ali Manikfan [12] said that today the world is in a dilemma about controlling the corona virus, which is a creation of our own. He said that if we are ready to follow Gandhi, this grave problem will vanish like salt in water. He described Gandhi as an 'excellent prophet of non-violence, who have left us with many examples from his life which can be very useful in controlling the spread of the current deadly pandemic. He opined that pandemic has put a full stop to the technological advancement which was in progress without any possible stop. He opined that 'we have to think of reorganizing a life with nature eliminating all complications for constructing a better future in the post—COVID era.

### **Decongestant(s) for Mitigation of Pandemics: A Gandhian Perspective**

N Narayana Swamy [13] spoke about the 'Decongestant(s) for Mitigation of Pandemics: A Gandhian Perspective'. He said that the COVID-19 global pandemic is a catastrophe both for human life, society and economics. The pandemic does not exhibit any discrimination and spread to all continents. The virus does not differentiate between rich and poor, literate and illiterate, haves and have not's, powerful and powerless, men and women, young and old, rulers or ruled. It is all pervasive. The deadly virus has made an impact on all aspects of life of humankind. Gandhi gave huge importance to health, hygiene and sanitation. Healthy practices advocated by Gandhi for the well-being and health of the people and the community enjoy huge significance in the time of COVID-19. Gandhi in 'Key to Health' mentions certain tips include avoid blowing of noses, avoid spitting, keep nails, ears, nose clean, breathing exercises, regular walking, massaging, steam bath, herbal bath, drink lemon water, etc. and the same are quite relevant to keep virus at bay in addition to his views on keeping away from alcohol and tobacco, and practice of sun bath, drinking boiled water, consumption of vegetables and fruits and following a balanced diet. The diet prescribed by Gandhi is enriched with vitamins and minerals and it is helpful to boost the immunity. Most of the health practices Gandhi advocated decades back are being recommended by the doctors today. The healthy diet practices preached Gandhi should become a way of life to every citizen of the country not only during the pandemic but also in the future. The speaker opined that children in our country right from a young age should be taught the health tips of Gandhi and it should be practiced even in schools. He talked about the possibility of COVID-19 being reoccurring either in the form of pandemic, endemic and syndemic.

The speaker noted that one of the main reasons for the failure of preventing the spread of virus, despite the lockdown and enforcement of discipline was due to congestion in cities and towns. Cities are overpopulated and overcrowded. Congestion has accelerated the spread of COVID-19. We need to rediscover, revisit and re—evaluate the ideas and principles of Gandhi to create a best model of development in the post—COVID era. A synthesis of Gandhian and Kalam Models could be incorporated to solve the decongestion. He highlighted that an alternative model that minimises migration is available in the works of Mahatma Gandhi and APJ Abdul Kalam [14].

In the wake of pandemic, various scholars have been contemplating the Gandhian model of rural centric self-reliant and a decentralized political system is at village level. His was not a model of a closed economy and a village economy perpetuating itself at the lower levels of income, but one in which local populations could be employed locally but with rising incomes and higher productivity.

He referred to A P J Abdul Kalam as a neo—Gandhian, who proposed a model called Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA). Kalam’s vision was to develop rural India through a cluster development system where 50 — 100 villages with mutual markets could be horizontally or vertically integrated PURA complexes [15]. The economic model proposed by Gandhi and Kalam have some common features which included decentralization of economic activities, promotion of livelihood activities, well-being of the rural community, minimising the migration and associated problems, minimising urbanisation, reduce urban and rural divide. He said that going back to Gandhi and his constructive programme holds importance very much in the wake of COVID-19. Regarding Nai Talim, he opined that our education should be experience-based education and it should be 50 per cent education in classroom and remaining 50 per cent should be spent in the community.

### **Gandhi Mattered more Today and Tomorrow than ever in the Past**

K Gireesan [16] was the moderator of the Webinar and commented that “Gandhi mattered more today and tomorrow, than ever in the past”. Though we all have seen the lens of Gandhi in post cards, postal envelopes, letter heads of government officials, etc., it became more popular and familiar with the launch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Clean India Campaign. This campaign used the lens of Gandhi to primarily to look around at cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation. He mentioned that through the webinar titled ‘Novel Corona Virus-19: Looking through the Lens of Gandhi, ‘we are using the lens of Gandhi, with a different function and to convey different message’. According to him, this webinar is an opportunity to evaluate how far we have aligned with Gandhi in the domain of health. He commented that Gandhi was the nonviolent political mover and shaker, who freed the greatest colony from the greatest empire in history, inscribing his key place in the history of anti imperialism. Gandhi looked at many minute aspects of health and contributed extensively towards better health and hygiene. He mentioned that Gandhiji’s ideas have a marked influence in the health, hygiene and sanitation. This is not only because of the general influence of Gandhiji’s ideas on the masses of the people, but because he was naturally trying to put the same into practice as far as possible. He viewed that Gandhi was not a theorist in health but as an avid practitioner of health.

He also mentioned that there is an absence of synthesis between western economics and Gandhian economics in India. He tried to give an overview of the relationship among Gross Domestic Product and GDP rankings, Human Development Index (HDI), Sustainable Development Index (SDI) and Democracy Index quoting from relevant reports and tried to find relevance to these aspects to the webinar. He opined that contemporary governments give the first importance to GDP than HDI and SDI and it should be relooked. The moderator suggested that primary importance should be given to SDI, followed by HDI and GDP. All these things should be put together in a vibrant frame of democracy.

He commented that Gandhi held one of the most anarchist beliefs on the ‘very idea of state’ and his views on democracy was that of a system that delivers beyond acts, rules, guidelines, circulars, etc. In his closing remarks, he mentioned that ‘Gandhi became alive amongst us today through these active and vibrant discussions’.

## Concluding Remarks

T M Joseph [17] gave the concluding remarks. He viewed that the webinar focused on managing COVID-19 crisis with Gandhian values. All the panellists have agreed on one point that the globalisation is not the way to combat the spreading of virus. What is happening across the globe today is the reiteration of the idea that localisation is the only effective remedy for combating the ill-effects of globalisation. The pandemic showed that globalisation has failed to ensure the sustenance of human life, whatever facilities and comforts offered by globalisation have now crumbled like a pack of cards. International movement of persons and goods have been disrupted. Everybody is now confined to his or her own local space finding satisfaction with whatever goods and items available to them locally. Vast majority of people in the country are jobless. Nobody ever imagined a situation in which the country will pass through this kind of a trauma in the human history ever. But Gandhi had visualized this situation earlier and that's why he proposed the idea of village republic — a self-reliant village or Gram Swaraj.

Gandhi dreamt of a village situation in which everyone is engaged in some cottage industry or other. Everyone would have engaged himself/ herself in agriculture, animal husbandry or small-scale industries. No one could be left unemployed, no one could be left hungry, and common property managed by everyone under mutual trust. Gandhi taught us that nature has given everything to satisfy our needs but not for our greed. The makers of Independent India have rejected the Talisman of Gandhi and now we are actually paying the price for that rejection. Global pandemic is a god given opportunity for us to return to our past glory. We should practice Gandhi's motto — 'simple living and high thinking'. Gandhi emphasises 'we should not go after money matters'. The entire world is witnessing the fact that Gandhi is all the more relevant now especially in the post—COVID world.

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- [1] M.K. Gandhi (1958). The Last Phase, Vol.II, p65.
- [2] Professor of Eminence at the Mahatma Gandhi Mission University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra. He was born in Washington DC in 1937. He has written more than a dozen scholarly books, four of them about Gandhi and notable Gandhians (including JC Kumarappa) and more than a hundred articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- [3] See, Gandhi wrote the statement in a letter addressed to his nephew, Narayandas Gandhi on 3 March 1937. It is available in the Collected Works of Gandhi, Vol. 64, pp414.
- [4] Professor, Department of International Relations & Politics, Central University, Kasaragod, Kerala and the editor of Gandhi Marg, New Delhi.
- [5] Gireesan. K. and Chathukulam Jos (2020), "From Self -reliant Villages to a Self —reliant India ", Mainstream, Vol.LVIII, No.27.
- [6] Moolakkattu argues that Atma Nirbhar Bharat aims to strengthen the internal economy without renouncing capitalism
- [7] Dean of Studies, Gandhi Research Foundation, Jalgaon, Maharashtra.
- [8] Chelladurai's proposition on capitalist economy per se is not bad and therefore do not throw it away needs serious analysis under the theoretical perspective of Gandhian political economy.
- [9] Assistant Editor, Gandhi Marg, New Delhi.
- [10] Founder, Peaceful Society, Goa. During his college days, Kumar Kalan and Mani was active in the JP's 'Total Revolution Movement' in Bihar.
- [11] Gandhi has developed and practiced a philosophy of education called Nai Talim which focused on all round development of humans and making them responsible citizens. However, the concept has several layers of meaning.
- [12] Professor by Practice, Gandhi Chair on Decentralization and Sustainable Development attached at Centre for Rural Management (CRM) in Kottayam (Kerala), was born in Minicoy Island (Lakshadweep) in 1938.
- [13] Former Professor, Department of Extension, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram. Tamil Nadu.
- [14] Former President of India (from 25 July 2002-to 25 July, 2007) who was a technocrat with Gandhian principles.
- [15] The economic model by Kalam proposes that a village would be linked through 'four connectivity' - physical, electronic, knowledge, and economic. The goal was to provide income and quality of life opportunities to all within PURA complex.
- [16] Associate Professor and Head, Centre for Policy and Action Research, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu.
- [17] Hon. Professor, Prof. BS Bhargava Chair on Decentralized Governance and Development attached at Centre for Rural Management (CRM) Kottayam (Kerala) & Principal, Mount Carmel College, Karukadom, Kothamangalam, Ernakulam (Kerala).