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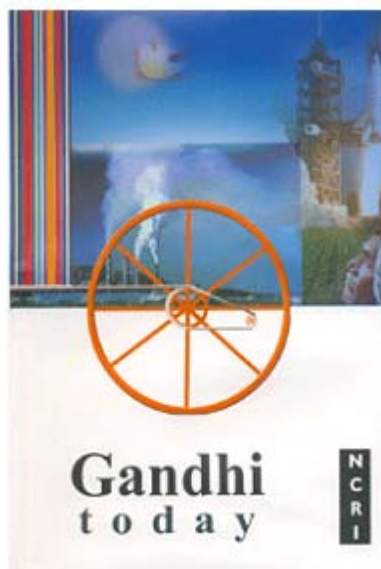
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About the book:

Humanity has been benefited by eternal sources or inspiration that motivate humans in various forms, Visible and invisible. Since times immemorial human generations across the world have great personalities, whose daunting efforts changed the way people think, believe and behave. In rejuvenating the human spirit in reestablishing confidence, great people have always have left indelible imprints, and Gandhi was certainly one of them. He was a gentle colossus. His life itself was a message, a message of eternal value to humanity. Any society is more than the arithmetic sum of its human beings, the human and progressive achievements of persons like Gandhi catalyse the collective efforts and help the larger aggregates to work towards the progress of their immediate communities, the nation and humanity at large.

BOOK REVIEWS:

1. **Dr. Jai Narain Sharma, Professor & Hon. Director, Gandhi Bhawan, Department of Gandhian Studies Panjab University, Chandigarh**

Civilization is based on a dream. Its codes and conventions, its way of life and habits of mind are poised on a dream. When the dream prevails, civilization advances; when the dream fails, civilization goes down. When life becomes cluttered with things, when the vanities and follies of the world overtake us, when we see all around the murderous interplay of destructive forces and unnatural strivings, when we fail to see any purpose in it all, it is time we probe the human situation and find out what is wrong with it. Though we have been warned by the last war that our civilization is fragile and will break down if the present trend of human cupidity wedded to scientific genius is not checked, we seem to be confused and hesitant about the need to change the direction in which human history has been moving. When a prophet soul who is not enslaved by his environment, who is filled with compassion for suffering humanity, calls upon us to turn our backs on the present world with its conflicts and competitions, class distinctions and wars and seek the upward path, narrow and difficult, the human in us comes alive and responds. To a world lost in error and beset by the illusions of time, Gandhi announces the values of the timeless principles of the truth of God and love of fellow-men as the only basis for establishing right human relationships. In his life and message, we see the dream of civilization come true. Centuries have gone to his making and his roots are established in the ages.

The greatest fact in the story of man on earth is not his material achievement, the empires he has built and broken, but the growth of his soul from age to age in its search for truth and goodness. Those who take part in this adventure of the soul, secure an enduring place in the history of human culture. Time has discredited heroes as easily as it has forgotten everyone else; but the saints remain. The greatness of Gandhi is more in his holy living than in his heroic struggles, in his

insistence on the creative power of the soul and its life-giving quality at a time when the destructive forces seem to be in the ascendant.

All this have been discussed in the volume under review Gandhi's Today edited by Dr. S.V. Prabhath, Chairman, National Council of Rural Institutes, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, Hyderabad. The volume contains 48 articles written by different scholars and statesmen from India and Abroad. Prominent among them are Gene Sharp, Vandana Shiva, Ela Gandhi, S.N. Saho and an host of scholars and academicians.

The work has been divided into 8 parts. 6 articles on the Relevance of Gandhi have been included in part 1. The main theme of these articles are that when humanity is groaning under the crushing burden of a number of miseries and struggling with the nightmare of a terrifying future, the course indicated by the unerring fingers should come as a solace to all those who seek happiness, real prosperity, peace and good will for all. In part 2 'Gandhian Modern of Development' 7 articles have been included. The crux is that the goals of Gandhian economic system are quite different from ones the country has been pursuing since independence. Therefore, plans for economic development such as one envisaging a seven per cent of eight per cent rate of growth, which are some times presented as Gandhian alternatives, I am afraid must be outside the framework of the Gandhian Economic System taken seriously. My submission is that the Gandhian path is not an alternative path of reaching the same goals of economic development which the country is pursuing. It is a path leading to an alternative goal of human life and existence. The Gandhian alternative is Sarvodaya, a classless society based on destruction of the class but not on the destruction of the individuals who constitute the classes, a system of production that does not fail to make use of science and technology for creating an economy of abundance but does not in the process either kill individual initiative of freedom for development nor create a psychology of ceaseless striving for more and more of material goods, a system of distribution that will ensure a reasonable minimum income for all and, while not aiming at a universal equality of an arithmetical kind, will nevertheless ensure that all private property or talent beyond the minimum will be used as a trust for the public good and not for individual aggrandizement, a social order where all will work but there is no inequality either in status or in opportunity for any individual, and a political system where change is the result of persuasion, differences are resolved by discussion, and conflicts by love and recognition of mutuality of interest.

Environment and Sustainable Development is the theme of the part 3 which includes 6 articles. Gandhiji envisioned sustainable development that was attainable through a humane way of living and participation of all the members of the society. Where decentralization would lead to responsible role playing by all and human needs are answered without disturbing the harmony that we have with the nature. His words can save environment, safeguard traditional energy treasure.

Part 4 deals with Hind Swaraj Non-violence and Peace. 9 articles have been included in this section dealing with vital themes. All great minds are subject to endless interpretations, reinterpretations, except temporarily, when their immediate followers or detractors put a lid on them. To revalidate Gandhi by suggesting that Hind Swaraj was his blueprint of India's Social reconstructions for all the times to come is nothing but putting a lid. Gandhian thought and practices should meet the requirements of a changing society with new forces and new question of life. Hence, it will be unGandhian to confine Gandhi to Hind Swaraj only. For a proper and objective understanding of the Mahatma and his philosophy we should look beyond Hind Swaraj.

In part 5 & 6 Gandhi's power principles and his ideas on education, health have been discussed respectively. 10 articles are there in this part. Here the focus is on how Gandhi viewed political power, what is its role in society: can it be used non-violently: can be element of coercion be removed from it in accordance with Gandhi's view of non-violent moral power; what was its nature when Gandhi gained political power? Did he succeed in eliminating coercive element in his exercise of power? Generally it is assumed that political power flows from top to bottom but Gandhi tried to put the whole process in the reverse gear and generated power from below. To what extent he had been successful in his attempt? It is a matter of great interest to any student of political behavior that while Gandhi was suspicious of the possible abuses of political power and advocated complete decentralization of it, he himself exercised immense political powers. Was it in accord with his suspicion of power? Was there any dichotomy between his theory and practice?

Articles dealing with children, women, youth and his world view have been included in the last two parts. From an erring, faltering, stumbling youth, Gandhi rose to the eminence of being called 'a moral genius' by no less a person than the celebrated British philosopher C. E. M. Joad. The eminence he achieved not by accident or luck or good fortune but by a determined and steady effort at self-discipline. His outer life and actions were but the reflection of this inner struggle to hold fast to truth, to truthful living and to achieve good ends only through good, virtuous, non-violent means.

Dr. S.V. Prabhath the editor mentions very rightly in the Introduction about the belated acknowledgement of the Nobel Committee that it was a serious error on the part of the Nobel establishment, in ignoring the naked fakir (Gandhi) for the award of a Noble Peace Prize. I am of the confirm opinion that the Nobel Peace Prize would have been more nobler and prized had it been given to the greatest peace maker of the world. The loss is theirs and not of Gandhi.

The book is a work of conviction and hope. Some of very profound, provocative and engaging articles have been included in this volume which should be read by all. A treasure trove of reflections on Gandhi, the compilation unfolds his thoughts and deeds. The collection also mirrors the many fold contribution of Gandhi to humanity. The outstanding work is bound to blaze a new trail of Gandhian alternatives because the collection includes the very best in the field. The sweep and richness of the book will help the reader to contextualize and grow their own understanding of the ideals and principles of the Mahatma. The work is an invaluable edition in the Gandhian Thought. I congratulate the editor for his endeavour.