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## UNIT 14 GANDHI'S APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS

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### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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The most salient feature that stands out unmistakably in every aspect of the social revolution that Gandhi worked out in India is the deep respect with which he held man. The task of substituting new social schemes for the old ones is ultimately a task of dealing with men who constitute the society. And so in attempting such a task Gandhi had to deal with the millions of his countrymen belonging to various social groups. In his approach to these diverse classes, he had a marvelous consistency in his attitude which can well be described as a sincere respect for the dignity of the human personality.

It was actually much more than a mere attitude. It was a natural outflow, an instinctive expression of the deep seated conviction of the Mahatma. It was this conviction about the inviolable dignity that he attached to every single person that proved to be his spring of action. The existing conditions of Indian society were such a blatant violation of the basic rights of the human personality that naturally flow from his high dignity, that they clashed with his convictions and jarred on his sensibilities; and of sheer necessity Gandhi was prodded on to take the momentous decision to make his 'happiness dependent upon that of the poorest' till he would 'wipe every tear in every eye'.

To have, therefore, any fair understanding of the view Gandhi had of man, and of the dignity and respect he attached to that human personality, one will have to take into account his various activities and analyse them. For the Gandhian revolution in its essence aimed at resetting man into his rightful position where the adverse elements of an egoistic society had pulled him down and de-personalised him.

## Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you would be able to understand

- Gandhi's approach to Human Rights;
- Different kinds of rights an individual can exercise; and
- Emphasis on Duties than Rights.

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## 14.2 CHARTER OF EARNED RIGHTS

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Gandhi did not delineate coherent characters of rights as he was not an academician. Any action, which would affect, distort or violate the inherent dignity of a human being, would amount to violation of his/her human rights. Keeping this aspect in mind, he concluded that human rights are the basic rights of a person that is essential for the realisation of his/her personality, as an individual as well as a member of the society in which he/she lives. They are based upon the belief that all persons are born free and with equal dignity and natural rights.

An outline of the rights that he wanted the people to earn, secure and enjoy does nevertheless, emerge from his writings scattered over two scores of years of his active political life. For the purpose of systematic presentation, the rights he advocated and fought for are classified under the broad categories of political, civil, religious, economic and educational rights.

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## 14.3 POLITICAL RIGHTS

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In Gandhi's list of political rights may be included the right to vote, right to participate in one's governance, right to liberate one's country from the foreign yoke, and the right to warn, to resist and to disobey a bad government. He subscribed to the notion of "universal adult franchise exercised by a disciplined and politically intelligent electorate". He, however, prescribed quite a few qualifications for the people who would be entitled to vote in elections. In the first place, he wanted the voters to be within the age group of 18/21 to 50 years. Once prescribing the minimum age limit he hoped that when the Congress government comes into power, "the large majority of men and women of 21 years and above will have been enfranchised." Though he specifically wanted 21 years to be the minimum age-limit for the general body of voters, his statement recorded by *Harijan* indicates that he would not have objected to its fixing even at 18 years. The maximum age limit, on the other hand, was prescribed by him with the sole intention of debarring the people above fifty years of age from voting. He thought that "old men like himself . . . were of no use as voters", and, as such, "he would have a bar against persons beyond a certain age, say fifty" (*Harijan*, 2-3-1947). The prescription by Gandhi of this maximum age limit was the outcome of his belief in the *varnashrama of Vedas*. The Vedas compartmentalise the life of man into four stages of 25 years each, namely, the *Brahmacharyashrama*, the *grihasthashrama*, the *vanaprasthashrama* and the *sanyasashrama*. Accordingly, Gandhi would include in the list of voters only those citizens who belong to the second stage of life, the *grihasthashrama*, or are nearing it. Secondly, he wanted the literacy test to be necessary for every voter in order to enable him "to value his freedom" before he actually comes to exercise it. Emphasising the necessity of such test for every voter, he said:

“I have come round to the view that a literacy test is necessary for two reasons. The vote should be regarded as privilege and should therefore carry some qualifications. The simplest qualification is a literacy test. And if the ministry appointed under the literacy franchise is sincere and solicitous about the disqualified illiterates, the much desired literacy would come in no time” (Ibid., 14-1-1947).

And, in order to speedily wipe out unemployment, he prescribed an additional qualification of ‘manual labour’. Of the literates belonging to the age group of 18 50 years, Gandhi would give the right to vote only to those who serve the State by willingly undertaking manual labour. In *Young India*, he proclaimed that by Swaraj he meant “the government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population . . . who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the state” (Ibid., 2-3-1947).

Gandhi was eager to secure the right to vote to all those citizens who fulfil these three qualifications, irrespective of their caste, colour, creed, sex, religion, property, qualifications, or place of birth. The actual exercise of this right, he, however, would leave to the discretion of the voter. He wanted suffrage to be the citizens’ ‘privilege’ rather than their ‘duty’. He would allow the conscientious objectors to abstain from voting, for his South African Satyagraha had taught him that “a very powerful effect can be produced by abstaining from exercising the franchise”.

Gandhi also upheld the citizens’ right to participate in the conduct of government through their *bona fide* representatives. He fought for securing this right to his countrymen for he sincerely believed that like all other peoples, Indians, too, had an innate “capacity to regulate national life through national representatives.” The additional ground of his demand for this right was that they were actually “fighting for” securing this instinctively deserved right. Moreover, he subscribed to the maxim: “He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune”. In other words, he thought that since people send their representatives to the Assemblies “loyally to carry out” their wishes, they have a right to the government of their choice.

Freedom from foreign rule, he believed, was a pre-condition to the attainment of self-rule or Swaraj. He, thus, inaugurated and led several Satyagraha Movements for securing this right to his countrymen. And, it was during the course of these movements that he appealed to them “to lose all, if they will save their souls and gain the freedom which is their birthright”. He desired both Great Britain (the foreign ruler) and her allies “the United Nations” to recognise India’s birthright of freedom from foreign rule. At the same time, he called upon Indians to exhibit a high degree of political awareness needed for securing this freedom, for he thought that “there is no room for cowards in a society . . . which loves freedom” (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XXXII, p.337).

He also urged them to exercise their birth-right to warn, dismiss or resist a bad government by “undergoing hardships and self sacrifice” and by attaining a high degree of political awareness. Once, justifying the attitude of South African Indians towards their government, he said: “we often talk of the disabilities . . . and we have a right to complain about them and to seek redress”. He justified peoples’ right not only to warn their government if it went wrong, but also “to protest and to carry on any agitation” against it, if it perpetuated its wrongs. In extreme cases, he also recognised their right to “remove the Government if they wished to”, that is if they found it to be incorrigible. His abiding belief was that the notion of “responsible government includes the power to

dismiss ministers”, if they commit excesses or overstep their limits. In specific cases, he thought it to be “the birth right and duty of the people to disobey orders which on mature consideration, they regard as unjust or oppressive”. He, nevertheless, insisted that they ought to earn even this instinctively deserved right by first “obeying the many laws of the state”. He found the confirmation of his views in Thoreau’s statement: “Mankind has the right to refuse allegiance to and resist the government when its tyranny becomes unendurable”. Gandhi was only eager to persuade everybody that civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. In short, Gandhi upheld citizens’ right to make the government and also to unmake it.

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## 14.4 CIVIL RIGHTS

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Gandhi’s Satyagraha struggles were characterised by his strenuous defence of the rights which he thought the citizens would enjoy in a state which is free from foreign rule. He believed that “Civil liberty consistent with the observance of nonviolence... is the breath of political and social life...the foundation of freedom ... the water of life” (Harijan, 24-06-1939). Following were the various civil rights that he specifically claimed and advocated from time to time: (i) Right to Citizenship; (ii) Right to Legal Equality; (iii) Right to the Freedom of Speech and Expression; (iv) Right to form associations and to hold public meetings; (v) Right to the Freedom of Movement; (vi) Right to the Freedom of Residence, and (vii) Right to Legal Remedies.

Gandhi thought that a person ought to be recognised as a citizen by the singular fact that he was born in the state whose citizenship he seeks. He upheld the principle of *jus soli*, irrespective of the descent of the citizen. He said: “The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French”. Giving his own example he observed:

“If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned, my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment” (Ibid., 26-11-1948).

He also pleaded for the recognition of citizenship by naturalisation. He urged the South African Government to define the status of Indians residing in various South African Colonies and to accord to them the rights of citizenship on the footing of equality with the original inhabitants. Claiming the right of Transvaal Citizenship for his countrymen domiciled in Transvaal, he declared: “We think we have as much right to be in this land as the Whites have. The Negroes alone are the original inhabitants of this land. We have not seized the land from them by force; we live here with their goodwill” (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, X, p.340).

Consonant with his belief in the Divine equality of men, Gandhi wanted that all should be equal in the eyes of the man-made law, irrespective of the type of their citizenship. He also desired that equal protection of laws be available to all the citizens, whatever be their caste, class, colour, material possessions, numbers, race, religion, sex or social status. He was eager to stop the exploitation of man by man, for he had realised that people suffered because of these distinctions and that this sense of high and low had vitiated their lives.

Once expressing his opposition to the distinctions based on caste or class, he observed:

"I hold all classes of people - Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, Rajput, Mahar, Chamar all alike, and I regard the distinctions based on birth as immoral" (Harijan, 2-5-1936). He objected to the apartheid policy of the South African Colonies on the ground that it entailed the regulation of immigration on the basis of the colour of man's skin. He, further, desired that in extending equal protection of laws to all the citizens, poverty or riches should not stand in their way. Nor should this equality be denied to any one on the ground that he belongs to a particular minority group, for he believed that "Even a minority of one can expect perfect justice". He also maintained that freedom without equality of all, irrespective of race or religion, was not worth having. Similar was his view about distinctions based on sex. He thought that in the scheme of God and nature, both man and woman are equal. No less was he convinced that the abolition of untouchability was man's right. He, thus, was averse to discrimination amongst the various sections of citizens on any one or more of these grounds.

Gandhi's notion of citizens' equality extends specifically to the unrestricted use of public places and services. Gandhi wanted that all citizens should, without any distinction, have the equal right to the use of wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort maintained out of State funds or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

Citizens' legal equality was the solid foundation on which Gandhi built the edifice of civil rights. The very first of these rights was the freedom of speech and expression. He not only claimed this natural right for all his countrymen but also specifically directed his individual Satyagraha of 1940-41 against Government of India's refusal to allow the people freely to preach non-cooperation with them in their Second World War effort. He desired that everyone should have perfect liberty to preach by pen and tongue. His notion of this freedom was comprehensive enough to include the freedom of healthy, well informed, balanced criticism. He wanted everyone to say: "it is for me to judge when to say something and when to hold my tongue". In *Young India* he observed: "Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed, even when the speech hurts; liberty of the Press can be said to be truly respected only when the Press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters, protection against misrepresentation or violence being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the Press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the Press itself unrestricted. Freedom of association is truly respected when assemblies of people can discuss even revolutionary projects, the State relying upon the forces of public opinion and the civil police, not the savage military at its disposal to crush any actual outbreak of revolution that is designed to confound public and the State representing it" (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XXII, pp.176-77).

He clamoured for the achievement of this freedom for his countrymen because he sincerely believed it to be the foundation of Swaraj and dharma and a pre-condition for evoking the best in the opponent. He was also sure that no Government, however despotic or coercive it may be, can stop the exchange of views for a long time. In *Harijan*, he observed that even if the Government dared, "Inter relation of ideas cannot be prevented". Yet, he knew that "there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction". Two restrictions he specifically put on the exercise of this right. First, that the people should exercise this right in such a manner as not to influence the matters *sub-judice*; and, secondly, that its exercise must not result in the outbreak of violence.

Gandhi's list of civil rights also includes the freedom of association, assembly and movement. He thought that man's instinct of sociability required that he should have freedom to form associations (including political parties) and unions of his choice. Conversely, he required the state not to prohibit the peaceful associations or assemblies in an arbitrary manner. For instance, he sent strongly worded protest notes to the Government of India when the latter declared the Congress organisation "unlawful", with the intention of suppressing the freedom movement in 1942, he wrote to the Viceroy:

"The whole Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measures of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non violent? ... however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy" (Pyarelal, 1959, p.32).

On another occasion, he justified the demand of his associate, Jamna Lal Bajaj, for the lifting of the ban on the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal, by declaring that the Jaipur "civil disobedience struggle will cease, the moment the bans are lifted and the right of free association, holding public meetings, etc., is conceded". He also extolled Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's defiance, of the Goan Government's order, and proclaimed that Lohia had "thereby rendered a service to the cause of civil liberty and especially to the Goans".

In the course of Satyagraha Movements, both in South Africa and India, Gandhi and his associates stood up to condemn and defy the unnecessary restrictions imposed by the Governmental authorities on their exercise of the freedom of movement. They also endeavoured to persuade the rulers of princely States to allow Indians from other parts of the country to enter their states without hindrance, provided, of course, their objective was not to create lawlessness. He fought for these rights for he considered them to be essential for awakening the ignorant masses to a sense of their duty as citizens.

His fight for the South African Indians' right to the freedom of residence was only a corollary to his demand for the freedom of movement. He was opposed to the South African Government's policy to confine Indians to particular locations and bazaars just because they belonged to the coloured races of Asia. He incessantly asked the Government to abrogate the legislation that imposes disabilities on them "because they wear a brown skin". He proclaimed that the imposition of such restrictions was not only inhuman but also undeserved. Indians, he thought, had earned this right, in common with the original inhabitants by voluntarily and cheerfully serving South Africa - the land of their adoption.

It was in order to check flagrant violations of the citizens' earned rights that Gandhi insisted on the recognition of their additional right to legal remedies. He wanted that the citizens should have a right to obtain legal and political protection against acts of violence, compulsion or intimidation. The citizens should rather have the constitutional right to get their fights enforced through the courts of law in cases of their violation. Once, deploring the absence of this right in the Dealers' Licences Bill of Natal, he made the following statement:

The Dealers' Licences Bill is ... the worst of all. It...gives absolute power to the licensing authorities to refuse, to issue or renew licenses without the right to the aggrieved party to appeal to the highest tribunal of justice. It is thus subversive of one of the most cherished principles the British Constitution (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, III, p.92).

At the Round Table Conference, he specifically asked the Indian Princes to grant to their people the right to constitutional remedies, i.e. the right to get their rights enforced through the courts of law. In South Africa, he had also demanded the appellants' analogous right to see the documents on record of the court, by declaring that "if a man has a right to appeal, he ought to have a right to see the documents which are on record" (Ibid., IV, p.138).

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## 14.5 RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

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Gandhi was a staunch upholder of secularism and wanted the people to be true to their conscience. He advocated the people's right to profess, practice and propagate the religion of their choice, without any hindrance. He thought that communal animosity was a serious contravention of man's conscience, which entitles one to follow the religion of one's choice and which simultaneously obligates him to tolerate the free exercise of this right by the fellow human beings. He said:

"Let people's religions be different. You worship a Being a single Entity as Allah and another adores Him as Khuda. I worship Him as Ishwar. How does any one stand to lose (by this arrangement)? You worship facing one way and I worship facing the other. Why should I become your enemy for that reason? We all belong to the human race; we all wear the same skin; we hail from the same land. When the facts are as simple as that, it will be nothing but folly and short sightedness to bear, implacable enmity towards one another" (Ibid., XI, p.175).

He, thus, insisted that so long as men differ in temperament, their paths are bound to differ. Conversely, he rejected the possibility, and even the necessity, of a particular religion being one day recognised as common for all mankind. In his letter to Jamnadas, he observed: "Personally, I think the world as a whole will never have, and need not have, a single religion" (Ibid., XII, p.94).

His abiding faith in the conscience of man implied that every individual had the right to choose his religion and to practice and profess it without hindrance, so long as he obeys the common law of the land. He, thus, required the State to respect the liberty of individual non violent conscience, however inconvenient it may be. He thought that freedom of worship would become a farce "if interference became the order of the day".

He also wanted that everyone should have the right to study, interpret, accept or reject the tenets of any religion. Once, claiming for himself the right to study and interpret the message of Islam, he said: "Islam was not a creed to be preserved in a box. It was open to mankind to examine it and accept or reject its tenets" (Harijan, 23-2-1947).

Finally, his advocacy for the freedom of religious worship and study also enabled him to uphold the analogous right of a person to "intelligent conversion", that is, to voluntary change of belief and faith. But, he was basically opposed to forcible conversion which he thought to be a flagrant violation of the Divinity man shares with God. Once, explaining the mission of his life, he proclaimed: "Love is the basis of our friendship as it is of religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love. And if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life" (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XX, p.318).

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## 14.6 ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

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### Economic Rights

In Gandhi's list of economic rights may be included the right to work, right to just and adequate wages, and the right to hold and dispose off property. His discovery of unemployment as a major symptom of India's social disorganisation had impelled him to ask the people to claim the basic necessities of their life only after rendering physical labour as per their capacity and choice. Conversely, he enjoined the State to guarantee the right to work to all unemployed men and women so that they may be able to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. The work ensured to each individual should, as far as possible, be of his choice. Not only that, the State should not force any citizen into work, it should also not force any one to do the work which is not his choice. In other words, every citizen should be ensured the right to work of his choice.

In his enthusiasm to expect the State to recognise the citizen's right to have the work of their choice, Gandhi would go to the extent of requiring the State to provide to every bodied person a variety of employment opportunities so that he may opt for the work of his choice. He once said: "A variety of work should be put before the people and they should have one month's notice that if they made no choice of occupations suggested, nor did they suggest some other acceptable occupation but declined to do any work, though their bodies were fit, they would not be able to give them doles after the expiry of the notice. It was wrong for any citizen to accept rations without some physical work" (The Hindu, 11-02-1947). The idea is that no able bodied citizen should live on charity and that there must always be enough occupations in a well ordered State for all those who are willing to work.

Though Gandhi allowed each individual to claim the occupation or profession of his choice, he was not radical enough to reject the traditional varna or class system under which each individual followed "the profession of his ancestors for earning his livelihood". He wanted to retain the varna system, which divided the Hindus into *brahmanas* (teachers of religion), *kshatriyas* (soldiers), *vaishyas* (merchants or farmers), and *shudras* (servants or employees, earlier termed as "untouchables"), for he believed that every person inherits the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors. At the same time, he thought that *varna* does not compel anyone to follow the parental occupation against his aptitude. It rather allows each individual to determine his occupation or profession in terms of his physical ability, mental aptitude and personal choice. Such a liberal interpretation of the traditional *varna* system of the Hindu society enabled Gandhi to synchronise with it the individual's democratic right to work.

Gandhi also upheld the citizen's right to limited hours of work. He wanted that nobody should be compelled to work for more than eight hours a day, so that he has his earned rest and leisure to look after himself, his family and to render to the society whatever service he can. Eight hours work should secure to each worker just and adequate wages (Gandhi, Delhi Diary, 1948, p.200). The State should see to it that the wages for such an honest work are sufficient to ensure satisfaction of worker's basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. This should be the minimum that the State should ensure to every one irrespective of the nature of his work. Over and above this basic minimum, the wages could vary according to the needs of the worker concerned. Gandhi also upheld the individual's analogous right to hold and dispose of the wealth he thus earns. He should be allowed to acquire, hold and dispose of property. If, however, the state wants to take



over his earned property for public purposes, he should be duly compensated. Gandhi fought for securing these economic rights to his countrymen in the course of his Satyagraha movements in South Africa, Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Kheda.

### **Educational Rights**

Gandhi attached primary importance to the problem of education. He knew that swaraj and democracy have no meaning in the context of a society in which the majority of the people are illiterate. He, thus, felt the imminent necessity of requiring the state to promote education and to speed up the literacy campaigns. At the same time, he was eager to relate education to the conditions of life in India. The scheme of education he hammered out is popularly known as the Wardha Scheme of Education, after the name of the place where a two-day conference was held in October 1937 to discuss and examine his propositions.

In order to enable every citizen to understand and experience the real meaning of swaraj and democracy, his scheme provided for the right to a seven-year free and compulsory vocational primary education. In the beginning, Gandhi had desired that education at all levels should be optional and not compulsory. He thought that compulsion was unnecessary if the people wanted education. It would rather be harmful if they did not opt to be educated. However, the stern reality of mass illiteracy in India ultimately led him to allow compulsory education at the primary level. On the eve of the Wardha Conference, he declared:

“I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties” (Harijan, 09-10-1937). He wanted the state to make the primary education free so that the obstacles from the way of those who cannot afford it may be removed. In other words, “education to be universal must... be free.” He also insisted that this state managed compulsory and free vocational primary education should be spread over a period of seven years, between the age group of seven to fourteen, so that at the end of this period the students become self-supporting.

In his scheme of education, individual's rights to higher vocational education are to be ensured by the state in collaboration with the private enterprise that would pay for the training of the persons required by them. Gandhi wanted to leave higher vocational education to be financed by the private enterprise so that the universities do not cost the state much, practically nothing beyond the cost of running a central education department. The rationale of leaving higher vocational education with the private enterprise was two-fold. In the first place, he had realised that “no government can provide fully for all the education which the people need”. Secondly, he would not like the state to pay from the general revenue for all higher education also because its purpose is narrow and demand limited. He summed up his conclusions as follows: “1) I am not opposed to education even of the highest type attainable in this world; 2) The state must pay for it whenever it has definite use for it; 3) I am opposed to all higher education being paid from the general revenue.” Thus, he subscribed to the maxim: “He who needs the expertise shall pay for its training too” (Ibid., 9-7-1938).

Gandhi did not deny to women the right to study any branch of human knowledge. He, however, observed that they traditionally are the masters of household and should devote themselves to the education primarily of domestic affairs. The nature of women's biological

and social functions being different from that of men, they should be taught management of the home, the things they should or should not do during pregnancy, and the nursing and care of children.

Gandhi made no distinction between man and woman in so far as their educational rights were concerned. He was uncompromising in upholding the equality of the sexes and was eager to restore to women their traditional and natural right to rule the home. Gandhi also championed the right of the educationally backward classes to special treatment in matters of education so that they may also come up to the level of the educated ones and enjoy their rights equally with others. They should be free to preserve and develop their own script, language and culture.

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## 14.7 RIGHTS AND DUTIES

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There is a well known incident which illustrates Gandhi's attitude towards duties and rights. H. G. Wells once drew up a Charter of Human Rights and sent it to Gandhi asking for his subscription to it. Gandhi cabled him back: "Begin with a charter of Duties of man, and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter" (Ibid., 13-10-1940). His reply amounted to putting a premium on the duties of man. He thought that the true source of rights is duty and urged his countrymen to discharge their various obligations willingly and cheerfully. He upheld the *Gita's* gospel of '*nishkama karma*' by giving it a fresh interpretation. Explaining its dictum of *karmanyevadhikaraste ma phalesu kadacana*, he observed: "Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone. *Action is duty; fruit is right.*" This was an attempt only to "correlate every right to some of corresponding duty to be first performed". He believed that "those only are true rights which flow from due performance of one's duties".

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## 14.8 SUMMARY

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In consonance with his views on the cultural inheritance of man, Gandhi also subscribed to a coterie of natural rights, describing them variously as "birth rights", "primary rights", or "inherent rights". These rights are, however, natural only in the sense in which Green uses the term "natural", that is, "they arise out of and are necessary for the fulfilment of a moral capacity without which a man would not be a man". In other words, these are natural in the sense of being innate.

Gandhi, thus, simultaneously subscribed to two different theories of rights, namely, the rights which the people earn by first performing the corresponding duties, and the natural rights which they deserve instinctly, i.e. by virtue of their cultural heritage. Put together, these constitute his charter of earned rights. Despite his conviction that "Rights accrue automatically to him who duly performs his duties", Gandhi admitted the hard reality that only those succeed in actually securing the deserved rights who shout, strive and are ready to sacrifice their all.

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## 14.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss Gandhi's Views on Human Rights.
2. Rights and Duties are two sides of the same coin. Comment.
3. What are the different types of rights that man can enjoy as basic rights?

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## **SUGGESTED READINGS**

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