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## UNIT 14 SWARAJ

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### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the late nineteenth century, the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and the parallel consolidation of cultural nationalism under the leadership of Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda created a feeling of self-assertion and identity shaking off the sense of inferiority that the educated middle class felt earlier on. It is in this context of the new assertiveness the two important phrases that the nationalist movement imbibed were *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj*, each being complementary to the other. Tilak's famous statement that '*Swaraj* is my birthright' is an important reflection of the new mood of nationalism that consolidated after the Ilbert Bill controversy. The Partition of Bengal of 1905 further enriched this till of thinking with self-assertiveness and also with an attempt to create a new awareness with new Indian idioms. Rabindranath Tagore's essay entitled '*Swadeshi Samaj*' depicts this new awareness and an emerging identity of one India where the gulf between the educated and uneducated and between the cities and the villages were to be eradicated not under the patronage of the colonial masters but with our own efforts and sacrifices. In the *Hind Swaraj* (1909), Gandhi's indictment of the Brown Sahib represents the spirit of this new accommodative nationalism.

Gandhi prefers to use *Swaraj* instead of the English word, independence or freedom. In Gandhi's practice and theorising, there is an effort of building a theory on the basis of continuity of tradition with essential reforms and integrating with the larger organic concept of the individual that he propagated *swaraj*. It assumes a different meaning in Gandhi rather than in the simple political sense that was used by his predecessors. Freedom or *swaraj*, for Gandhi, is an inclusive concept - political, economic, social and moral - emphasising on the utmost necessity of the human being to be as perfect as possible. He asserts in the *Hind Swaraj*, "real home self is self control".

#### Aims and Objectives

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

- Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj*
- The meaning of *swaraj* as self-control and self-rule.

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## 14.2 SWARAJ AS SELF-CONTROL

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Gandhi borrows the term ‘*swaraj*’ from the Vedas. One meaning of *swaraj* is self rule and self control and differs from the English usage, which implies freedom without restraints. It also means the “all around awakening-social, educational, moral, economic and political” (*Young India*, 26 August 1926). True freedom is conformity to moral law, the inner conscience, and the law of one’s true being. It induces a person to seek the good and attain it, an end that is worthy. Freedom means self-control, a conquest over self which can be attained only by being fearless. It involves arduous discipline and requires that one follows one’s vows of self-purification and self-realisation. It is through active involvement and participation in the day to day affairs of society that the individual attains salvation or *moksha*. Gandhi insists on the need to rationalise and synthesise desires in an integrated life in order to attain the moral height to distinguish humans from brutes. Another implication of *swaraj* is moral and spiritual freedom or *anāsakti* which comes as the consequence of will and reason leading to concentration of energy. This is the cardinal lesson that Gandhi learns from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

*Swaraj* as self-rule or self-control means three things: first, freedom is primarily an individual, not a collective quality. Second, it includes the conventional civil liberties of the press, speech, association and religion and third, it distinguishes between inner and outer forms of freedom, inner freedom as anchoring and sustaining outer freedom (Dalton, 1982, pp.144-47). For Gandhi, the individual is the pillar of *Swaraj* but this does not mean unbridled individualism; rather it implies, as in T. H. Green, a balance between individual freedom and social restraint. He insists on individuals cultivating qualities of discipline, voluntary loyalty and solidarity and internal freedom as these would ensure an unimpeachable character and conduct. He constantly emphasises that inert and emasculated people would never be able to attain freedom and individual consciousness alone would lift people out of servility. Gandhi considered weakness, cowardice and fear as sins against human spirit. He taught the Indians the spirit of fearlessness. Self-rule, self-restraint, self-discipline and voluntary self-sacrifice rooted in the notions of individual autonomy and moral self-determinism forms the basis of *swaraj*. “When Gandhi pursued the political goal of *swaraj* (self rule) he meant to teach himself and Indians, that only those who could rule themselves in the sense of self restraint could rule themselves in the sense of controlling their political universe” (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p.249).

Gandhi sees an intimate link between *swaraj* and *swadeshi* or self-reliance. For Gandhi, freedom is rooted in human nature and is to be claimed as part of self-awareness earned through self-effort and conversely, any external threat to human freedom arises not from circumstances outside one’s control but by recognising our weaknesses in the first place, which is why he considers self-purification as integral to the concept of *swaraj*, as that gives the individuals the strength and capacity to translate the abstract notion of freedom into a practical reality in society and politics. According to Gandhi, a person truly realises freedom if he listens to his conscience or the inner voice, the only tyrant that one should accept. Fearlessness, self-rule, self-restraint, self-discipline, non-attachment, renunciation and voluntary self-sacrifice would make resistance to evil easy and that forms the core of the philosophy of *satyagraha*. Gandhi describes *satyagraha* as the act of the brave and the fearless<sup>1</sup> and through it, “Gandhi turned the moral tables on the English definition of courage by suggesting that aggression was the path to mastery of those without self-control, non violent resistance the path of those with control” (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p.185).

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### 14.3 SWARAJ AS SELF-RULE

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*Swaraj* for Gandhi also means positive freedom, to participate in the process of politics in every possible way. It implies participatory democracy as there exists an intimate relationship between the citizen and the state.

By *swaraj* I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the services of the state and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters.... Real *swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority (Gandhi 1947, 14).

To underline the meaning of *swaraj*, Gandhi in the *Hind Swaraj* (1909), through the Italian example, points out that for Victor Emanuel, Cavour and Garibaldi, 'Italy meant the king of Italy and his henchmen' whereas for Mazzini, it meant the whole of the Italian people, that is, its agriculturalists. Mazzini's ideal remained unrealized and that Italy still remained in a 'state of slavery'. Merely replacing the British rulers with their Indian counterparts is *Englishstan* and not *Hindustan*, an "English rule without the Englishman, the tiger's nature, but not the tiger" (1997, ch. IV). The quintessence of *swaraj* is service for the betterment of the ordinary people, an idea that Gandhi derived from Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Sermon on the Mount and numerous texts and saints of the Indian tradition.

Gandhi's concern for majority alleviation led him to advance the notion of *Gram Swaraj* with its focus on the village, at the centre of his social, political and economic philosophy. As majority of Indians lived in the villages, he was moved by the appalling conditions – lack of sanitation, health care, hygiene and education, under which they lived. The enormous gap that exists between the villages and cities with regard to employment opportunities, educational avenues, health care, recreational facilities coupled with the onslaught of modern machinery and industrialisation, villagers migrated from villages to cities, only to live in shanties with its squalor and a sense of rootless existence. While village is natural, a city is artificial facilitating the exploitation and plunder by the imperialist powers. Though he considers the growth of cities as an evil thing, as it houses 'brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan', he is not seeking its elimination.

Gandhi castigates the Indian princes for the condition of the poor in their states. He severely criticised the British occupation of India, as it led to extreme oppression of the poor pointing out to the earlier periods of self-sufficiency in food and clothing. The English East India Company was responsible for ruining the village industries, and it is for this reason that he places centrality to the renewal of villages through the Constructive Programme<sup>2</sup>.

Gandhi, with the help of his close associate, Kumarappa, prepares the blueprint to change India's rural life. 'Villagism', a term which Kumarappa coins, is accepted by Gandhi to bring about a complete revival of villages and realise *swaraj*. The aim of *gram swaraj* is self sufficiency in material conditions necessary for fulfilling the needs of the ordinary person. The India of my dreams, observes Gandhi, is the *swaraj* of the poor person (Ibid, 17). A truly non-violent state would be composed of self-governing and self-sufficient small cohesive village communities in which the majority would rule with due consideration to the rights of the minorities.

Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic or panchayat, having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs, even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. But this does not exclude dependence on the willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces.... In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But will be an oceanic circle, whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever number, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Gandhi makes welfare of the masses, with fulfilment of their basic needs as the basis of economic freedom, thus reflecting the inspiration that he derives from Ruskin. Gandhi points out that political independence, without economic freedom, without an improvement and elevation in the lives of the ordinary people, the toiling masses, would be meaningless. He wants the complete destruction of modern civilisation and the creation of a new society without governments, parliaments, railways and other fast modes of transport, machinery, doctors, lawyers and armed forces and, in which, people totally renounce violence and resist authority through *satyagraha*. Like Thoreau, he does not consider the government to be important in the day to day activities of the individual, as both believed that all states, including the democratic ones, are the embodiment of force and physical strength, concerned with functions related to law and order, and protection of property. Laws, policies and associations are essentially coercive, stifling and hindering individuality and spontaneity. Gandhi insists on the need to look at political work within the framework of social and moral progress, as power resides in the people and not in legislative assemblies. He dismisses disparagingly power politics, and like Huxley, desires politics that would enable people to improve their lot. Echoing Aristotle's sentiments, Gandhi considers public life as the arena for bringing out the highest spiritual qualities of an individual. Politics is not the art of capturing, holding and managing governmental power but of transforming social relations in terms of justice.

“*Swaraj* for me means freedom for the meanest of my countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange ‘king log’ for king stork’... there is no freedom for India so long as one man, no matter how highly placed he may be, holds in the hollow of his hands the life, property and honour of millions of human beings. It is an artificial, unnatural and uncivilized institution. The end of it is an essential preliminary of *swaraj*”.

Gandhi clarifies equal distribution as his ideal and till that is realised he would like to settle for equitable distribution, as that would not only ensure elimination of gross disparities in income but also allow every member of the society to receive enough goods and services to meet his basic requirements and enjoy a certain minimum standard of living. He considers accumulation of wealth as immoral which is why he proposes trusteeship. To achieve equitable distribution he proposes four specific measures: (a) Bread Labour<sup>3</sup> as that would remove exploitation and obliterate the distinctions of rank. It would reduce not only economic inequality but also social inequality and in the Indian context it would

undermine caste-based inequalities. (b) Voluntary renunciation, a value that Gandhi reiterates from the *Isopanishad* and that means not coveting the possessions of others and not accumulating beyond one's basic needs. Personal wants ought to be kept to the barest minimum keeping in mind the poverty of one's fellow human beings and try for a new mode of life. (c) *Satyagraha* to resolve industrial and agricultural disputes as legitimate and the proposal of trusteeship to resolve the conflict between labour and capital with the core idea of non-appropriation by owners. The Ahmedabad Mills strike of 1918 was an example of Gandhi led *satyagraha* movement in industrial conflict<sup>4</sup> just as the Champaran *satyagraha* of 1916 undermined the notion of submissive labour force and initiated the first village improvement scheme. (d) The need for governmental action to ensure that every work receives a minimum or living wage. Gandhi insists that his ideal would have to be realised through moral process of transformation of individuals by non-violent measures. According to Gandhi, the cause of poverty is the covetousness of the rich and the exploitation of the needy by the greedy. Incomes would have to be redistributed for raising the output and fulfilment of the basic needs of the masses would depend on limiting the wants of the rich. To get rid of poverty there is a need for drastic changes in prevailing attitudes to consumption and to wealth in affluent as well as in the poorer societies.

Gandhi desires economic equality but without wanting to abolish private property. He accepts the fact that the capacities of human beings differs and in any society only a few can accumulate wealth by industriousness but that does not mean they have a right to go for conspicuous consumption. He expects the rich to act as trustees of the entire society. Since they would act neither for private gain nor for profit, there would be differences in the amount of wealth, but there would be no differences in services and lifestyles. Private ownership would continue, except in large-scale industries which would be dictated by concerns of public welfare. He admits that state ownership is preferable to private ownership but in general, he considers the violence of private ownership as less injurious than the violence of the state. According to Gandhi, if there is no law of inheritance<sup>5</sup> then it would not lead to the growth of a privileged class or allow for personal inequalities of wealth.

The development of social spirit and humanist consciousness are the two cardinal principles of Gandhi's concept of trusteeship. The deeper meaning of his concept of trusteeship is akin to the Weberian notion of puritan ethics, which does not decry the increase in production but prohibits conspicuous consumption. It has a Calvinistic overtone and is beneficial to societies like India where wide disparities are an eyesore and exist without any effective social sanction and control.

Gandhi advances two propositions on the state that establishes his close affinity to classical anarchism, namely (1) the state represents an authority that poses a threat to individual liberty and (2) that it represents violence in an organised form. He shuns Austin's notion of absolute state sovereignty and advocates limited state sovereignty. Accepting the distinction between state and society he looks upon with suspicion any increase in state power. A state has no right to dehumanise or suppress the individual. It exists to fulfil the needs of the individual and failure to do so entitles the individual the duty to disobey and to resist.

The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, the state can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.... I look upon an increase of the power of the state

with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress...what I disapprove of, is an organization based on force, which a state is (Gandhi, cited in Tendulkar, 1960, Vol. IV, pp.11-13).

Power, according to Gandhi, lies in being an actively engaged citizen with a capacity of public involvement and political participation rather than being a passive acquiescent subject. If individuals recognise the power in their hands and use it constructively to bring out *sarvodaya* through non-violent means against injustice and repression of the state, then the monopolistic and coercive nature of state power could be reduced, thus ensuring purification of politics. A truly non-violent state would be composed of self-governing and self-sufficient small cohesive village communities in which the majority would rule with due consideration to the rights of the minorities. He desires the revival of the *panchayat* (council of five) system but not in its traditional form which was organised around the group and was strictly patriarchal. For Gandhi, the individual and not the group is the unit of the modernised *panchayat* elected annually by all adult villagers- men and women alike. Individual freedom would be the basis of his village democracy with consensus<sup>6</sup> as the basis of decision-making process.

Gandhi's *swaraj* recognises no race or religions; nor does it distinguish between lettered persons or the moneyed. It is also inclusive with due respect to the toiling masses. It is secular and egalitarian. It is complete independence from foreign rule and complete economic independence. He constantly reminds his readers that political independence involves transfer of power from one set of rulers to another; true freedom is freedom from exploitation, suffering, poverty, deprivation and destitution. Freedom for Gandhi is freedom from political subjugation, economic exploitation and social tyranny. True *Swaraj* would be realised with mass awakening which is possible only through non-violent non-cooperation. Rule of people, for Gandhi, means transcendence of particular interests.

As a philosophical anarchist Gandhi desires a society without the state but as a practical idealist he settles for a minimal state. In a state of enlightened anarchy everyone is his own ruler, ruling in a manner without obstructing others. There would be no political power as there would be no state. In the absence of this ideal, Thoreau's maxim of a "government is best which governs the least" is the next possible option. According to Gandhi, human beings have the capacity for developing their moral capacities to such an extent that exploitation could be reduced to the minimum which is why he states that he "looks upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress". The citizens' obligation to accept the authority of the state would depend on its just laws and non repressive policies. A government is an instrument of service if it is based on the will and consent of the people. It is citizens' obligation that distinguishes a democratic from an authoritarian state though Gandhi views all states as soulless machines. A citizen's responsibility is greater under a democratic regime as citizens would have to safeguard against authority becoming corrupt and farcical. In every state there is a possibility of abuse of power and it is the citizens vested with superior moral authority who should not lose their conscience or lose their distrust of state authority. Gandhi makes it the responsibility of every citizen for every act of the government.

It is the citizen who ought to decide whether to show active loyalty or total opposition to the state, to resist none or few of its laws as the citizen is endowed with *satya* and

*ahimsa*. The citizen cannot relinquish a portion of this responsibility in the name of a social contract or legal sovereignty or tacit consent or the rule of law or similar notions that are implicit in democratic constitutionalism. According to Gandhi, for the sake of peace there can be no unconditional consent, even if secured under majority rule nor can the limits of state action be established in advance in a manner that will automatically secure the citizens his natural rights. Gandhi distrusts institutional safeguards in societies with many factions and class conflict, as the majority could be wrong. The individual alone is a moral person which no state or institution could ever become. A citizen could appeal to eternal unwritten laws against the laws of human beings and of states and the commandments of religion, but like Socrates accept the consequences for challenging the laws of the states.

Not only are states undesirable but even parliaments are as these are ineffectual and can do only when there is outside pressure. Gandhi is critical of the parliamentary system of government in the *Hind Swaraj* (1909), as the members of parliament 'are hypocritical and selfish'; indifferent to matters of serious concern and engage in endless talk. "Members vote for their party without a thought. Their so-called discipline binds them to it. If any member, by way of exception gives an independent vote, he is considered a renegade. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of the Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party. His care is not always that Parliament shall do right. Prime Ministers are known to have made Parliament do things merely for party advantage.... If they are to be considered honest because they do not take what are generally known as bribes, let them be so considered, but they are open to subtler influence. In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honour. I do not hesitate to say that they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience". Through his criticisms of the British parliament, Gandhi tries to show, according to Bandyopadhyaya (1969) that even the best of the parliaments are not the ideal substitute for anarchy. Later Gandhi diluted his rigorous opposition to parliaments. In 1937, he points out that today's legislatures, unlike that of the past, are composed of representatives of people and that people must be taught how to stand up effectively against the government. Members of the legislature ought to render service to the people, undertake constructive social work and ensure the passage of right legislations. He clarifies that he does not want to destroy the legislatures but "destroy the system which they are created to work". In the late 1930s, Gandhi also moved away from minimal role of the state in the economy to state ownership of key industries as it would provide employment to large number of people. The state would look after secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and own land as cooperative farming by the peasants subject to state ownership of land is something that he toyed with but never really developed in full details. Gandhi also insists that the state must eschew physical violence. He supports the idea of a decentralised, non-industrial, non-violent, self-sufficient and self-reliant free society; village *swaraj* would advance the cause of individual freedom.

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## 14.4 CONCLUSION

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This elaboration of the implicit meaning of *swaraj* in the formulation of the three pillars of *swaraj* sums up the entire political philosophy and action of the Mahatma. Emphasising the utmost necessity to have unity in a situation of larger plurality and also with the larger awareness of two India's, one of the city and another of the village with abject poverty allows him to portray a more realistic depiction of the Indian reality, much better than

attempted by the socialists and the Marxists. To give life and meaning to the concept of *swaraj*, Gandhi's formulation of the constructive programme is of supreme importance. It portrays the essential reformatory nature of his theorising ensuring the minimum resources and environment essential for self-development of every single Indian and as a means of reaching the goal of *swaraj*.

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## 14.5 SUMMARY

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Gandhi prefers to use *Swaraj* instead of the English word, independence or freedom. It assumes a different meaning in Gandhi rather than in the simple political sense that was used by his predecessors. Freedom or *swaraj*, for Gandhi, is an inclusive concept - political, economic, social and moral - emphasising on the utmost necessity of the human being to be as perfect as possible. Gandhi borrows the term '*swaraj*' from the Vedas. One meaning of *swaraj* is self-rule and self-control and differs from the English usage, which implies freedom without restraints. *Swaraj* for Gandhi also means positive freedom, to participate in the process of politics in every possible way. It implies participatory democracy as there exists an intimate relationship between the citizen and the state. Gandhi's concern for majority alleviation led him to advance the notion of *Gram Swaraj* with its focus on the village, at the centre of his social, political and economic philosophy.

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## 14.6 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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- 1) Explain Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj*.
- 2) What does Gandhi mean by *Swaraj* as self-control?
- 3) How does Gandhi equate *Swaraj* with self-rule?
- 4) What are the economic bases of *Swaraj*?
- 5) According to Gandhi, true *swaraj* is both political and economic independence. Explain.

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**(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Gandhi realizes the need to confront the fundamental fear of Indians as propagated by some British that Indians lack courage, are weak and morally unworthy.

<sup>2</sup> The Constructive Programme conceive of reorganization of society for the attainment of *poorna swaraj* (complete independence) through the following: (1) communal harmony, (2) removal of untouchability, (3) prohibition, (4) *Khadi*, (5) cottage industries, (6) village sanitation, (7) new or basic education – *nai talim*, (8) adult education, (9) upliftment of women, (10) education in health and hygiene and (11) propagation of national language, *Hindustani*. “The idea behind the Constructive Programme is to create the model of production even in the face of the opposition of those who try to preserve the *status quo* by means of political power. Its aim is to convert all men into toilers, and distribute the wealth of mankind equitably, if not equally....The idea behind Non-violent Non cooperation is not to oust the present rulers anyhow from power, but to convert them by determined, yet civilized refusal to subscribe to proved wrongs. The aim of conversion is to secure their cooperation in helping their erstwhile victims in building up a new social and economic order based on justice, equality and freedom” (Bose 1972, 10).

<sup>3</sup> Gandhi understands Bread Labour to mean performance of body labour by everyone that would entitle them to daily bread. Symbolically it assumed the “form of *Khaddar* (handspun) economics with its tool and symbol the *charka* (spinning wheel) (Bondurant 1967, 156).

<sup>4</sup> Four injunctions were given during the strike: no violence, no molestation of blacklegs, no dependence upon alms, but self support through other labour, and no surrender, however long the strike were laid down before the striking workers. He considers the workers and the capitalists as ‘fundamentally equal’ with the former striving for conversion of the latter as “destruction of capitalists must mean the destruction of the worker” (*Young India* March, 1931). The outcome of the strike was the formation of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which exists till date, actualizing Gandhi’s concept of the relationship between the employer and the employee. It is more than a trade union. It has its own library, hospital, school, recreation centre, bank and newspaper.

<sup>5</sup> Gandhi represents the spirit of the modern era when he voices his discomfort against inheritance tax. Tom Paine is the earliest to articulate his critique of hereditary power and extends his critique of inherited political power to that of inherited economic power. In his two works, *The Rights of Man* (1791) and *Agrarian Justice* (1797) he argues for the adoption of inheritance tax in England to offset the unfair distribution of landed property. Reiterating Locke, Paine points out that it is common sense that God gave “the Earth as an inheritance” to all of God’s children. He proposes the creation of a national fund out of the inheritance tax to give (1) a sum of 15 pounds sterling to everyone on turning 21 years old as a compensation for the loss of their ‘natural inheritance’ and (2) a sum of 10 pounds a year to every person over the age of 50, an early version of social security.

Andrew Carnegie staunchly endorses estate taxes. His *Gospel of Wealth* (1928) explores the three possible ways to dispose of wealth: (1) leave it to the families of decedents, (2) bequeath it for public purposes and (3) administer it during one’s life. He disliked the first, allowed the second and encouraged the third. He dismisses the argument that parents leave great fortunes for their children out of affection, stating that such affection is misguided as it does more harm than good to their recipients. He concludes that motivation behind bequeath is family pride and not the welfare of the children. Sharply distinguishing between the intended consequences of the inheritance tax (to create funds for public purposes) and its unintended consequence (private philanthropy) he stresses that wealth is a trust fund for the community that enables the rich to ‘dignify their lives’. Philanthropy in a capitalist economy, according to Carnegie, solves the problem of rich and power. “The laws of accumulation will be left free, the laws of distribution free. Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor.” Carnegie concludes his famous tract with the words: “The man who dies rich dies disgraced.” True to his belief he gave away 90 percent of his estate before his death which also included a trust fund for Theodore Roosevelt’s widow, as there was no provision made by government for the wives of former presidents, and left a modest trust fund for his family

In 1906, in a message to the Congress, President Theodore Roosevelt proposed a federal inheritance tax with a logic that differed from that of Carnegie. Unlike Carnegie who advocates the duty of the rich towards the poor, Roosevelt, echoing Adam Smith's sentiments in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776): "It is only under the shelter of the civil magistrate that the owner of valuable property can sleep a single night in security." states that the wealthy have a special obligation to the government itself. A rich person needs to pay for the protection provided by the state for his property, both from external threat of foreign invasion and from internal threat from theft, fraud or destruction. In more recent times Warren Buffet echoes the sentiments of Paine and observes that if talent cannot be passed on to the next generation so shouldn't money? In this history of the concept of inheritance/estate/gift tax two arguments form the basis:the fairness issue (inherited wealth is not fair to the poor) and the productivity issue (inherited wealth is not beneficial for its recipients).

<sup>6</sup> The idea of Panchayat is consensus and shunning of adversary process; of allowing all those who should be heard and decisions reached not through show of hands but by judging the sense of moral fitness of the participants. Discussion continues till a satisfactory consensus could be arrived at; and in case of a standoff it becomes clear that no agreement is possible (Rudolph & Rudolph 1967, 187-88).