The concept of development has become important as newly independent countries have tried to develop themselves following their perception of development. To discuss various strategies of development, various approaches have been evolved. Among them Gandhian approach to development is important. He has stressed upon the ‘small industry small city model’. According to this model, the decentralized production system should be acceptable as such system creates opportunities of jobs for rural unemployed youths.

Gandhi has said for development of India, rural development is very essential. For realizing his dream Gandhi has said to establish Panchayat, consisting of five members, possessing certain qualifications. For rural development Gandhi has projected ‘Trusteeship theory’. The ideal village of Gandhi is self-dependent republic. The pre-requisites of the establishment of this village are well-lighted, well-ventilated house, clean roads, well for villagers’ purpose, schools etc. To him, ideal village based upon panchayaty democracy and RamRajya are almost identical. To materialize his dream Gandhi has advised people to follow certain methods like development of Swadeshi Mentality, setting-up small industries peoples’ active participation on the development process etc.

The importance of his idea has been felt when formation of the Panchayat has become mandatory for every province through 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1992.
countries of the Third World has motivated the scholars to study the development process which has been followed in the Third World Countries. Studies in political development have been encouraged in the U.S.A. under the auspices of Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council.

Generally by development is meant the maintenance of such a socio-economic and political condition where everybody can enjoy his freedom best by fulfilling his needs and desires.

With a view to changing the existing socio-economic and political condition into a better one various principles and methods are propounded by various schools of thought. Amongst them, important ones are modernists, liberals, Gandhians and the Marxists respectively.

Samuel P. Huntington and S.N. Eisenstadt have considered political development as a process of institutionalisation of organisations and procedures in order to enable them to become viable and persistent in rapidly changing environment. This process permits the growth and spread of strong, durable and specialised institutions, e.g., political parties, pressure groups and so forth. These newly emerged powerful institutions check and balance one another’s power and prevent abnormal concentration of power in one individual and institution. Because, according to Huntington, democracy is the primary object of the inhabitants of the Third World countries.

In order to meet this demand, economic development of the third world countries is badly needed. And such economic development would be feasible only by expanding market economy and creating a strong bourgeois class.

From the structural functional approach, Almond and Powell have said that an important feature of the developed politics is the functional diversification and specialisation among various branches and agencies of the government. To them a political system would be regarded
as developed if that system effectively reacts to the ‘developmental problem through structural diversification, functional specialisation and cultural secularisation’. Such functional diversification based on specialisation provides the ordinary citizens with better protection of rights from the attack of persons, usurping powers and authority inordinately in the society.

The propounders of the Dependency theory regarding ‘development’ have opined that there are certain problems like population explosion, stagnant social structure, absence of agrarian reforms and so forth and so on embedded in the developing countries of the Third World. Development is supposed to be achieved only through the eradication of these internal problems from the society. And eradication of these internal problems would only be feasible when these developing countries come to close contact with the developed countries, which have been able to solve these problems judiciously.

The propounders of the Dependency Theory have said that in this present socio-economic world order, the industrially advanced and developed countries with the U.S.A. at zenith make the hinge around which the developing countries move like satellite. Thus it may not be wrong to say that the developed and developing countries are nothing but the off-shoot of the present inequalitarian global order hierarchically structured. Therefore, it is very natural that only proper industrialisation in the developing countries can fill in the gap between developed and developing countries.

Some thinkers have thought that economic development and democracy cannot go hand in hand for ever. Professor Lipset has said that there is a positive relationship between economic growth and democracy but during 1970s unfortunately it has been found that some countries which have developed economically to some extent have failed miserably in attaining democracy. Thus many scholars have held the opinion that in comparison to the democratic form
of government, development oriented authoritarian form of government is more acceptable in the
developing countries. Professor Huntington has opined that the democratic form of government
cannot always attain the high rate of economic growth.

Professor Amartya Sen has offered a critique to such typically western paradigm of
development. In the opinion of Professor Sen, for all round development of human beings certain
pre-requisites for better human life, e.g., expansion of basic primary education, primary health
care, agricultural advancement, eradication of untouchability and so forth and so on must be
fulfilled.

The present world has been divided into two groups – one is developed and the other is
developing. India, till now, is in the group of developing countries. The greater the development,
the greater becomes the chasm between the poor and the rich. Despite political and legal attempts
at equitable distribution, the bureaucrats and the capitalists take a lion’s share of the production.
This is the tragedy. In order to change this tragic condition, various methods, e.g., subsidisation,
credit remittal etc. have been adopted in India. But the situation remains unchanged. The plan,
based on scientific technology, failed too. As the participants of this technology based revolution
will be deserted in utter poverty sans the necessary purchasing power. The technology based
development programme brings the old story of imperialism back. Today, in the rural areas,
producers of necessities of life and raw materials for large industries are being exploited by the
urban and city-dwellers in a planned way.

Having inferred such problems, Gandhi has laid emphasis on decentralised production
and generation of employment opportunity for unemployed people. According to Gandhi, there
is no other alternative to provide job for millions of villagers who are in a ‘forced idleness’. This
is the quintessence of ‘small industry and small city model’ propounded by Gandhi. Side by side,
Gandhi has emphasised the development of standard of living for rural people to transform the villages from ‘dung heaps’ into the ‘garden of Eden’.

In order to make the poor rural people free from exploitation of both Britons and rich city-dwellers Gandhi has favoured the establishment of panchayat. So he has firmly believed that after this, rural people would only obey verdict of the panchayats, resulting in waning of influence of rich in rural areas.¹

Gandhi has repudiated the development policy initiated by the Britons. Gandhi has projected trusteeship theory for rural development and social change. According to this theory, the influential and affluent section of the society would be the trustee of the resources, which would be beyond their needs and kept aside for rural development. To meet this end, Gandhi has emphasised on the change of attitude of individual. Gandhi has said that the workers would non-cooperate with the rich when they would realise that without their active cooperation rich persons could not accumulate their property.

Gandhi has said again and again....

“...The government of the village will be conducted by a Panchayat of five persons, annually elected by the adult villagers male and female. Possessing minimum prescribed qualification....I have not here the question of the relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any... There is perfect democracy based on individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world.”²

According to Gandhian system, panchayat democracy, and Ram-Rajya are almost identical.³

In his ideal village Gandhi has laid importance on democracy. He has firm belief that under this system the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. This can never
happen except through non-violence. He has strongly believed that such type of democracy would be developed only in the self-dependent, simple and easy villages.\(^4\)

Gandhi has depicted the picture of ideal village in the article, named ‘Content of Independence’.

“My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbour for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every villager’s first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adult and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops, thus excluding ganja, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water works ensuring clean supply. This can be done through controlled wells and tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have to-day with their graded untouchability. Non violence with its technique of satyagraha and non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the Panchayat of five persons, annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. This will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat, will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its years of office.”\(^5\)

From the above-mentioned quotation of Gandhi, we may infer that the village, idealised by Gandhi, is a self-dependent republic, enabled to protect itself from foreign invasion. According to Gandhi, important pre-requisites for the establishment of such ideal village are
well-lighted, well ventilated houses, built by raw materials, avoidable from the same localities, clean roads, wells for villagers’ purpose, place for worship for all communities, general meeting place, primary and secondary schools and so forth.

For the formation of such ideal village, Gandhi has talked about various methods. These methods can be described in the following way –

1. According to Gandhi, the main purpose of rural development should be self-sufficiency. For this he has emphasised the development of Swadeshi Mentality among the villagers.

2. Gandhi has always wanted that large factories must sub-serve the villages and their crafts. Gandhi has said again and again that the villagers are constrained to live idly for maximum time of year. Thus setting up of the cottage industry should be encouraged, so that these people would be provided with jobs. Thus Gandhi has opined that eradication of unemployment through the generation of employment with the help of setting up new cottage industries is one of the important methods of rural development.⁶ And new cottage industry is conducive to decentralisation, compatible with the law of echology.⁷

3. Gandhi has suggested that local people should actively participate in the rural development programme. They would formulate their own development programme keeping in mind locally available resource. At this level, integrated development would be feasible. Agricultural surplus can be properly utilised for the development called Constructive Programme should be initiated by the literate people.⁸

4. The urbanite people can look after their well being. But in the villages superstitions, prejudices are very much in vogue. The learned urbanite people should initiate to eradicate these shortcomings through spreading education and proper information to lead a clean and healthy life. Gandhi has named this new education system, New Talem. The basic elements of this education
system would be gathered from our daily life. This form of education has to start with birth and continue till death.⁹

5. Gandhi is of the opinion that in the evolution of human being cooperated and mutual aid plays a vital role. Thus he has motivated to work among small rural group, for in such group there is no dearth of cooperation. Gandhi has said on Gram Swaraj, “Swaraj of my dream is poor man’s swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by princes or moneyed men. But that does not mean that you should have palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys.¹⁰

6. With a view to establishing such an ideal society, Gandhi has put emphasis on the method of Sarvodaya. For the all-round development of the present society, internal metamorphosis of human nature is very urgent. For this end, no earthly institutions can play any pivotal role. In that case internal change of human being can play the vital role. Which the state can do is to give only its sanction.

Gandhi has said that the method of rural development can be properly followed through the Panchayat. Thus Gandhi has enlisted some other functions excluding the conventional functions, say, legislative, judiciary and executive functions for the Panchayats. These functions can be described in the following way –

i) Every worker of the Panchayat will wear Khadi. They would abhor castism in their social life and regard would be paid to all religious.

ii) Every member of the Panchayat would know every inhabitant of his locality personality.

iii) Every Panchayat would make arrangement of training for the villagers and maintain register of the name of the trained persons.
iv) Every worker should enlist his daily programme.

v) Every Panchayat should make arrangement so that every village would be self-sufficient through agricultural means.

vi) Panchayat will give training on sanitation and hygiene and try to eradicate various diseases.

vii) Panchayat will make arrangement of education for villagers. Basic elements of the education should be coined from daily life.

viii) Panchayat should enlist the name of the villagers in the voters’ list.

ix) Panchayat would arrange training for its own staff.

According to Gandhi, if a member of a Panchayat follows these methods scrupulously, it would help the village in the process of development.

From the aforesaid discussion on rural development activities, it can be inferred that annually elected five members of the Panchayat should be sprinkled with the qualities like love, fearlessness, knowledge, cleanliness, industrious.

In the opinion of Gandhi Panchayat would train people to sacrifice for others. Villagers would be trained in such a way that they will not attack others rather they would be docile and cooperative with each other.

But the notion of rural development through the Panchatati Raj Institution, propounded by Gandhi has not got proper attention after independence. Thus we see that it has been placed under the good will of government of the provinces where it has called upon the Indian state ‘to organise village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as unit of self government’. But during nineties when tutelary Nehruvian centralised state-system has been started to wane owing to the world wide economic
liberalisation policy, the importance of economic rebirth of the federal system as well as the local
government, conceived by Gandhi has been felt by many Indian politicians and intellectuals.\textsuperscript{11}

In his ideal village Gandhi has been in favour of such a development approach which
would be eco-friendly. He has said in the ideal village, nature would not be allowed to destroy at
any cost. He has contended that the agricultural surplus would be properly utilised for the
development of Animal Husbandry and locally available law materials should be used for the
production of essential common goods. It is his staunch belief that if village perishes, India will
perish too.

Such type of development has been encouraged not only in India but abroad too. Everyone is very anxious about the future of the globalisation civilisation. For the destruction of the environment the human beings would be endangered. Thus various steps suggested by various environmentalists to curb various environmental pollutions are consistent with the ideas propagated by Gandhi.

Gandhi’s imagined ideal village, his conception of rural development may not be
permanent panacea for the multiple crises of the modern state. In present milieu today’s cure
may be tomorrow’s disease. But these days and for some times the Gandhi-like post-modern
slogan of thinking globally and acting locally seemed suited to the needs and temper of the 21st
century.\textsuperscript{12} (Post-modern Gandhi and other essay, Rudolph and Rudolph, Oxford University Press,
New Delhi – 1, 2006, P.31.)

\textbf{References and foot-notes}:

1. Harijan-01-04-1947
2. Harijan-21-12-1942
3. Ibid.


6. Ibid.


8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.
