

# CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

Gandhi's comprehensive plan of national regeneration, which he named the constructive programme, aimed at establishing a social order, based on truth and non-violence. He wanted to abolish the exploitation of man by man, in any shape or form. This was perhaps more difficult than the achievement of freedom because in the process of establishing a new social order, there was a possibility of conflict between groups and classes of our own people. Gandhi's constructive programme was based on the idea that foreign domination in India lived and prospered because of our negligence towards fundamental duties as a nation. The advancement of any nation crucially depends on the performance of such duties. He believed that when duties are fulfilled, the rights will automatically flow. The second was the efficacy of such a programme in organising the nation. Such an organisation is built on the work done in unity and cooperation. More real and more useful the work, the stronger would be the organisation built around it. The items included in Gandhi's constructive programme were not arranged in order of their importance. He clarified that, if anyone finds that some important subject in terms of independence is left out, he can unhesitatingly add to the list. The reach of the programmes proposed was vast and the full programme included eighteen items, which were indispensable for the emancipation of the nation through non-violence. Gandhi did not follow a particular pattern in giving the programmes but he placed the issues according to their necessity. Through these programmes, he tried to touch many spheres of life, and many of them encompass more than one field of life, i.e. economic, political and social. We now discuss the agenda and aspects of the main programmes here.

## Communal Unity

As is known, Gandhi strove hard throughout his life to bring about communal unity. Many times, he resorted to 'fasting' to subside the communal violence. Whenever there was violence he reached the place without caring for his life. According to Gandhi, communal unity does not merely mean political unity but should be an unbreakable unity of hearts, and can be achieved only by living like people and living with them as they live. This was what Gandhi did and achieved. That is why he wanted every Congress man to be one with the people and to represent in his own person every Hindu and non-Hindu to achieve such a unity. He wanted them to cultivate personal contacts and friendship with people of different faith other than his own, and to have the same respect for their faith as for his own. Communal disunity and untouchability were the major hurdles in the way of establishing social unity in our society that created discrimination in the minds of the people. These social evils were age old and deep rooted in Indian social structure and the Indian Constructive Programme 109 110 Gandhi: The Man and His Times psyche. The British Government, taking advantage of our social situation, adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' and attempted to encourage and nurture the communal differences to retain and sustain their power and politics. Moreover, religious elements of our society purposely incited the poison of communal disunity in order to gain political advantages. Gandhi wanted to bring such practices to an end.