

# INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi as a visionary of India, had a very clear perception of its villages and made an emphatic assertion that "India lives in her seven and half lakhs of villages'. He further believed that India will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts not in palaces. He held this conviction by saying that "If village perishes, India will perish too.

It grew out of the knowledge he had grasped of the naked reality of our country at that time through his intense travels throughout the nation. These programmes were not a passing thought but a creation of well-planned and thoughtful strategy of his mind. It was Gandhi's firm conviction that self-reliant villages form a sound basis for a just, equitable and non-violent social order, which can be a guiding principle for all citizens, constructive workers and policy makers in India.

According to him, re-building of the nation could be achieved only by reconstructing villages. He himself initiated such efforts at many places including Champaran (1917), Sevagram (1920) and Wardha (1938). With the passage of time, he visualised and developed an elaborate programme of constructive work, which included economic self-reliance, social equality and decentralised political system. According to him, 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 but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

## Aims and Objectives

1. Gandhi's vision of a non-violent social order through constructive programme
2. The agenda of constructive programme and its main elements
3. Its relevance in the contemporary times.