

Gandhi in the Millennium

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Avenel Press

First Edition : 15 August 2020

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ISBN 978-81-945031-3-2

Published by : Arati Mitra for Avenel Press, Memari,
Burdwan and Printed at Santi Packers Kolkata

Cover designed by : Babul Dey

Email : avenel.india@gmail.com

Website : www.avenelpress.com

Philosophy, Peace, Education Culture and Civilization, Vol. 13, No. 13.

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The Concept of State and Democracy in Gandhian Thought

Swarup Rana

"I understand democracy as something that gives the weak the same chance as the strong." –Gandhi.

Introduction:

Gandhi is universally known as the most renowned theorist and also the practitioner of truth, love, non-violence, tolerance, freedom and peace. He was very much concerned with the nature, poor, deprived, and the downtrodden and he has intended to alter the evil political, social and economic systems of the people. Mahatma Gandhi struggled to inculcate the sense of self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance to promote the power of decision-making among the people (Indira: 1). Gandhi's notion of state forms an integral part of his political and social philosophy. It stands apart from the prevailing notions of state, especially, that of modern Western political philosophy (Gandhi's theory of state: 57). Mahatma Gandhi's perspective on the theory of the State questions, and is opposite of westernized modern state system and it reflects a growing dissatisfaction with the working of the State and contents its unsuitability for India. Gandhiji found the Modern State is a System considerably nonadjustable with the socio-economic characteristics of the Indian Society. His study of the functioning of British State in England and in the colonial territory of South Africa seemed to have given him a deep understanding of the theoretical framework of the modern State and its actual working in a variety of situation. Consequently, he developed an understanding of the modern State that was profoundly original in its approach and refreshingly analytical in its assessment. These features made possible a model of polity whose guiding principles

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