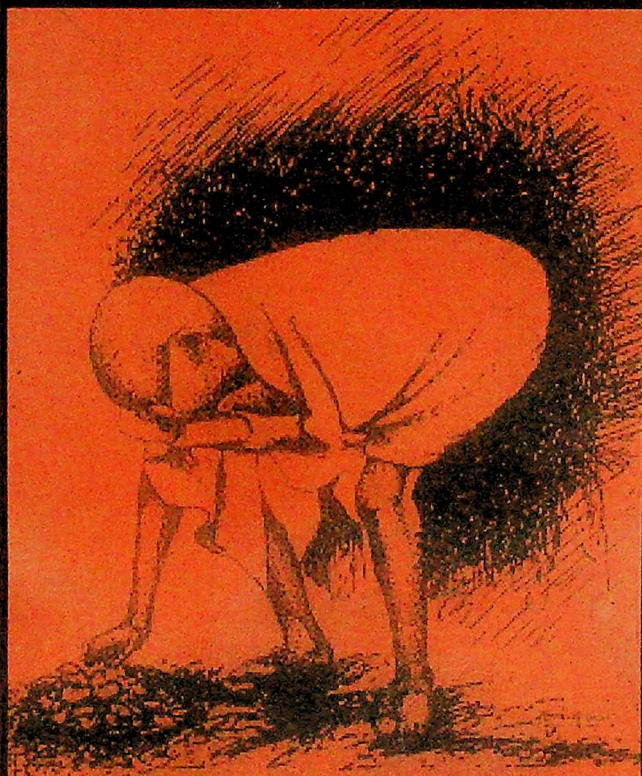


GLOBALISATION GANDHI AND SWADESHI

(What is Economic Freedom? Whose Economic Freedom?)



Dr. Vandana Shiva

I. The Seven Superstitions of Globalisation

There are seven superstitions or myths associated with economic globalisation which are leading to the assumption that it is inevitable and there is no alternative possible.

Myth 1 Globalisation is a natural phenomena not an ideology

Globalisation is often described as a natural phenomena. However, globalisation is not inevitable. There is not one but many alternatives to globalisation based on the rights of people rather than the rights of corporations, based on democracy rather than corporate rule.

Globalisation is not a natural, evolutionary or inevitable phenomena as is often argued. Globalisation is a political process which has been forced on the weak by the powerful through political institutions such as the Structural Adjustment projects of the World Bank and IMF and the free-trade arrangements of the World Trade Organisation.

Myth 2 There is no alternative to globalisation

If globalisation is natural, it cannot be violent, and if it is natural, it becomes inevitable. The TINA syndrome (There is no alternative - therefore becomes inevitable. Once the idea of inevitability is accepted the reality of inevitability is created and each of us starts to participate in the violence of globalisation.

Myth 3 Globalisation is a totally new stage of human evolution

Globalisation is not new. It was earlier simply called colonialism. The first wave was the colonisation of the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia by European powers over 500 years. The first free-trade treaty was a treaty between the East India Company and the declining Moghul Empire in India.

Myth 4 Globalisation will increase citizen freedom and democracy by reducing the power of the state

Globalisation is basically a take over of the rights of citizens by corporations through a dismantling of the structures of the state that protect people. It is therefore leading to less freedom for people, but more freedom for capital. The search for absolute freedom by corporations is expressed in the rules of the Multilateral Agreement for Investment (MAI) being negotiated by the OECD, to then be imposed on the rest of the world.

Myth 5 Globalisation will increase prosperity for all by leading to limitless growth

The growth under globalisation is not a growth in goods and services, but a growth in international trade and a growth of the financial economy. There are 2 trillion dollars of fictitious money moving daily. This economy is 70 times larger than the economy of real goods and services. More financial growth does not mean more access to the goods and services we need. For the poorest of the world, increased free trade internationally leads to an increase in poverty by the diversion of or destruction of the resources on which they survive and by the dismantling of institutions which protect their rights.

Myth 6 Globalisation will protect the environment by leading to economic growth and hence creating more resources for environmental resources and a greater appreciation of environmental values

This myth assumes that only the rich are environmentally aware. The assumption is empirically falsified by the movements of women, peasants, small fishworkers, indigenous people and tribals for environmental protection. The myth also ignores the fact that globalisation leads to the globalisation of non-sustainable production and consumption patterns - more cars and more fossil fuel consumption, more industrial agriculture and more

consumption of pesticides and fertilisers, more use of toxics and more trade in toxics. The environment is therefore destroyed faster and on a larger scale. In addition, globalisation leads to environmental deregulation and a dismantling of laws and policies for environmental protection.

Myth 7 Globalisation leads to peace because borders are removed and everyone becomes a member of the global village

Globalisation is increasing violence and disintegration in society by increasing economic insecurity and by ethnicising and ghettoising all forms of dissent, protest, and articulation of alternatives. First globalisation empties cultures of their economic and material base by transferring control over production and markets to transnational corporations. Materially emptied cultures are then pitted against one another, because their common economic base has disappeared. Cultural diversity is then pushed into conflict and ethnocide as in the case of Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, ex-Yugoslavia.

II. Globalisation as the Rule of Corporations

The first globalisation was based on the take over of lands and territories by merchant adventures and pirates from Europe.

On 17th April 1492, Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand granted Christopher Columbus the privileges of "discovery and conquest". One year later, on 4 May 1493, Pope Alexander VI through his "Bull of Donation" granted all islands and mainlands "discovered and to be discovered, one hundred leagues to the West and South of the Azores towards India" and not already occupied or held by any Christian king or prince as of Christmas of 1492, to the Catholic monarchs Isabel of Castille and Ferdinand of

Aragon. As Walter Ullmann has stated in Medieval Papalism,

The pope as the vicar of God commanded the world, as if it were a tool in his hands; the pope, supported by the canonists, considered the world as his property to be disposed according to his will.

Charters and patents thus turned acts of piracy into divine will. The peoples and nations that were colonized did not belong to the pope who "donated" them, yet this canonical jurisprudence made the christian monarchs of Europe rulers of all nations, "wherever they might be found and whatever creed they might embrace". The principle of "effective occupation" by christian princes, the "vacancy" of the targetted lands, and the "duty" to incorporate the "savages" were components of charters and patents.

The Papal Bull, the Columbus charter and the patents granted by European monarchs laid the juridical and moral foundations for the colonisation and extermination of non-European peoples. The Native American population declined from 72 million in 1492 to less than 4 million a few centuries later.

500 hundred years after Columbus, a more secular version of the same project of colonisation continues through patents. The Papal Bull has been replaced by the (GATT) treaty. The principle of effective occupation by Christian princes has been replaced by "effective occupation" by modern day rulers, the transnational corporations manipulated by modern day rulers. The "vacancy of targetted lands" has been replaced by the vacancy of targeted lifeforms and species manipulated by the new biotechnologies. The duty to incorporate savages into Christianity has been replaced by the duty to incorporate local and national economies into the global market place, and to incorporate non-western systems of knowledge into the reductionism of commercialised western science and technology.

The creation of property through the piracy of others wealth remains the same as 500 years ago.

The freedom that transnational corporations are claiming through intellectual property rights protection in the GATT agreement on TRIPs is the freedom that European colonizers have claimed since 1492 when Columbus set precedence in treating the licence to conquer non-European peoples as a *natural right* of european men. The land titles issued by the Pope through European kings and queens were the first patents. The colonizer's freedom was built on the slavery and subjugation of the people with original rights to the land. This violent take-over was rendered 'natural' by defining the colonized people into nature, thus denying them their humanity and freedom.

John Locke's treatise on property¹ effectually legitimized this same process of theft and robbery during the enclosure movement in Europe. Locke clearly articulates capitalism's freedom to build on the freedom to steal; he states that property is created by removing resources from nature through mixing with labour. But this 'labour' is not physical labour but labour in its 'spiritual' form as manifested in the control of capital. According to Locke, only those who own capital have the natural right to own natural resources; a right that supersedes the common rights of others with prior claims. Capital is thus defined as a source of freedom, but this freedom is based on the denial of freedom to the land, forests, rivers and biodiversity that capital claims as its own and to others whose rights are based on their labour. Because property obtained through privatization of commons is perceived to be depriving the owner of capital of freedom. Thus peasants and tribals who demand the return of their rights and access to resources are regarded as thieves.

These Eurocentric notions of property and piracy are the bases on which the IPR laws of GATT/WTO have been framed. When Europeans first colonised/ the non-European world, they felt it was their duty to "discover and conquer",

to "subdue, occupy and possess". It seems that the western powers are still driven by that colonising impulse to discover, conquer, own and possess everything, every society, every culture. The colonies have now been extended to the interior spaces, the "genetic codes" of life forms from microbes and plants to animals, including humans.

John Moore, a cancer patient, had his cell lines patented by his own doctor. Myriad Pharmaceuticals has patented the cancer gene in women in order to get a monopoly on diagnostics and testing. The cell lines of the Hagahai of Papua New Guinea and the Guami of Panama are patented by the U.S. Commerce Secretary.

The assumption of empty lands, *terra nullius*, is now being expanded to "empty life", seeds and medicinal plants. The take over of native resources during colonisation was justified on the ground that indigenous people do not "improve" their land. As John Winthrop wrote in 1869:

Natives in New England, they enclose nor land, neither have they any settled habitation, nor any tame cattle to improve the land by soe have nor other but a Natural Right to those countries. Soe as if we leane them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest.²

The same logic is now used to appropriate biodiversity wealth from the original owners and innovators by defining their seeds, medicinal plants, medical knowledge into nature, into non-science and treating the tools of genetic engineering as the yard stick of "improvement". Defining christianity as the only religion, and all other beliefs and cosmologies as primitive funds its parallel in defining commercialised western science as the only science, and all other knowledge systems as primitive.

Five hundred years ago, it was enough to be a non-christian culture to loose all claims and rights. 500 years after Columbus it is enough to be a non-Western culture with a

distinctive world view and diverse knowledge systems to loose all claims and rights. The humanity of others was blanked out then and their intellect is being blanked out now. Conquered territories were treated as peopleless in the patents of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. People were naturalised into "our subjects and naturals". In continuity of conquest by naturalisation, biodiversity is being defined into nature-the cultural and intellectual contributions of non-western knowledge system are being systematically erased.

Today's patents have a continuity with the patents issued to Columbus, Sir John Cobot, Sir Humphery Gilbert, Sir Walter Raleigh. The conflicts that have been unleashed by the GATT treaty, by patents on life forms, by the patenting of indigenous knowledge and by genetic engineering are grounded in processes that can be summarised and symbolised as the second coming of Columbus.

At the heart of the Columbus' "discovery" was the treatment of piracy as a natural right of the coloniser and necessary for the deliverance of the colonised. At the heart of the GATT treaty and its patent laws is the treatment of biopiracy as a natural right of western coroprations and as necessary for the "development" of the Third World Communities.

Biopiracy is the Columbian "discovery" 500 years after Columbus. Patents are still the means to protect this piracy of the wealth of non-western peoples as a right of western powers.

Through patents and genetic engineering new colonies are being carved out. The land, the forests, the rivers, the oceans, the atmosphere have all been colonized, eroded, and polluted. Capital now has to look for new colonies to invade and exploit for its further accumulation. These new colonies are, in my view, the interior spaces of the bodies of women, plants and animals. Resistance to Biopiracy is a resistance to this ultimate colonisation of life itself - of the

future of evolution as well as the past and future of non-western traditions of relating to nature and knowing nature. It is a struggle to protect the freedom of diverse species to evolve. It is a struggle to protect the freedom of diverse cultures to evolve. It is a struggle to conserve both cultural and biological diversity.

Over a century, the merchant adventures organised themselves into corporations. The development of commercial corporations was linked with colonial expansion. The Crown of England created through Royal Charter, Chartered Corporations) in the 1600s and early 1800s to carry out business of merchant adventuring and colonial plunder. The East India Company, which received its Royal Charter in 1600 was the first Chartered Commercial.³

The first free trade treaty was a treaty between East India Company and the declining Moghul Empire.⁴

The contemporary globalisation based on the rules of free-trade is in fact the establishment of the rule of corporations over governments and people. The fiction of the corporation has become the only legal personality which can be protected under globalisation – people and their rights have been reduced to “protectionist” forces which interfere in free-trade and economic growth. Through the fiction of the corporation a minority has used the corporate form to dominate the majority. Corporate entities which were first equated with human persons, have now been elevated above people. In Europe and the U.S., the original corporations were given the legal personality of white, male, property owners. The fiction was based on the exclusion of nature and her species, non-western cultures, women, men without property. Now the option has grown to exclude all humans

The courts, when dealing with a corporation, accept the fiction that the corporation has a birth or death and more importantly entitlement to human and civil rights. A

corporation, which exists solely on paper, can assert that it has the right to do something and that right can prevail over real persons. Over times all responsibilities of corporations have evaporated system of absolute rights and absolute irresponsibility

The rights of this fiction have increasingly become higher than those of real people. Further, while real people have rights and responsibilities, the fictitious persona of the corporation only has rights. Collections of opeople as communities, as cooperatives are not recognised as not having a distinct legal personality like the commercial corporation.

The latest proposal of the Multilateral Agreement Investment (MAI) is the ultimate statement that only the corporation has rights — neither people nor governments have rights.

The MAI prevents governments from interfering in foreign investments in any way. The rules of the MAI apply to all levels of government: Federal, state, county, city. Under the new MAI, no country can prevent entry by foreign companies in any economic sector. The "free flow of capital" will be sanctified in MAI. To further empower corporate dominion over nation-states, the MAI gives private corporations and investors "legal standing" to sue sovereign governments. Director General of the World Trade Organisation, Renato Ruggero, admits the MAI is designed to become the "Constitution for a single global economy".

Globalisation has in effect made the citizen disappear, and it has reduced the state into being a mere instrument of global capital. The persona of the fiction has displaced the human persons on which it was modeled. Their only role is as consumers in the market place - the roles of human beings as members of productive, cultural communities is being erased. On the one hand this is rendering human beings dispensable to the production process, on the other

hand it is eroding the cultural diversity of people shaped by the diverse ways in which they have produced goods and met their needs.

The absolute power of corporations is being established by making the rights of corporations absolute and eroding the rights of people that have been built through democratic struggle. Food provisioning, health care, education, social security are all being transformed into corporate monopolies under the code words of "competitiveness" and "efficiency". People's rights and the public domain are being eroded by exporting the economic label of "protectionism" to cover all domains — ethical, social and political. The protection of the environment and the protection of people's security are treated as non-tariff trade barriers which need to be dismantled. While corporations have absolute rights, they have no responsibility. While citizens and the state have no rights, they have to carry all the responsibilities.

Food is a good symbol to see how the powers of citizens, the state and corporations are shifting.

On the one hand, the roles and the function that the state used to perform to guarantee the right to food are being dismantled. During the World Food Summit, the U.S. Secretary of State stated the food could not longer be recognised as a right since the right to food would interfere in free trade of food commodities.

On the other hand, domains in which people have organised themselves are being taken over by the state on behalf of corporations. Two examples of this threat to people's freedom in the area of food are the denial of farmers to save seed and denial of citizens to set food standards.

Patents on seed are being used by corporations to treat the inalienable right of farmers to save seed as a theft and a crime.

Organic standards and labelling are a means which people have created to have the freedom to get food free of

chemicals. It is the means of survival of small organic farmers and the means to guarantee food safety for consumers.

Now the U.S is changing the standards of "organic" labelling. The USDA will allow Now the U.S. is changing the standard of "organic" labelling. This USDA will allow fruits and vegetables to be labelled "organic" which have been genetically engineered, irradiated, treated with additives and raised on contaminated sewage. Under the new proposals, "organic" livestock can be raised in batteries, fed with the offal of other animals. Organic food is thus being redefined to include all that it was meant to replace.

The law also forbids setting of standards higher than those established by the department. Farmers will, in other words, be forbidden by law from producing and selling good food.

Similarly, in the area of genetically engineered crops and food, while the corporations are claiming absolute rights through "intellectual property rights", they are also ensuring that they will have no responsibility for the ecological and social costs arising from genetic engineering.

Genetically engineered crops and foods are being launched in a context in which profits are privatised through IPRs and costs are socialised, even though the public is kept deliberately ignorant of those costs. Social and ecological costs are being collectively pushed out of the public mind through denial of the need for biosafety regulations and the consumers "right to know" through labelling of genetically engineered foods. Society is thus being pushed into a situation in which citizens increasingly become victims of ecological and public health disasters but can do nothing about it. They are being robbed of their basic rights as producers and consumers, and they are being forced to accept costs to their health and environment which as free and informed citizens exercising democratic rights they would never accept.

The imposition of genetic engineering and its potential hazards on society is a product of totalitarian structures in which citizens are being denied their fundamental rights to safety and security, and are being prevented from exercising their democratic choice in the vital area of food production and consumption.

The emergence of genetic engineering has been based on the violation of democratic rights of people. The future of genetic engineering can only be built through the establishment of totalitarian structures.

Corporate totalitarianism is different from other forms of totalitarianism because it is exercised through a fiction and hence is not like dictatorships in which the dictator has a clear identity which people recognise and see. Corporate totalitarianism is also different from the dictatorships we are more familiar with because it is the first slavery which does not need the slave. It rules through dispensability rather than exploitation. It treats communities, people, countries, ecosystems, species as disposable and dispensable. They have no protection no sanctity. The only sacred is the dollar.

III. Swadeshi as Economic Freedom

Globalisation is generating social, economic and ecological insecurity on a global scale. It is undermining citizen freedoms. What we need is a new movement for freedom from corporate rule.

Central to India's movement for freedom from colonisation were the concepts of 'Swadeshi', 'Swaraj', and 'Satyagraha'.

Swadeshi is the spirit of regeneration, a method of creative reconstruction in periods of dependency and colonisation. According to the Swadeshi philosophy people possess both materially and morally what they need to evolve and design

their society and economy and free themselves of oppressive structures. Economic freedom according to Swadeshi is based on endogenously driven development rather than externally controlled development.

Swadeshi for Gandhi was a positive concept based on building what a community has in terms of resources, skills, institutions and transforming them, where they were inadequate. Imposed resources, institutions and structures leave a people unfree and are non-sustainable. The collapse of the Nehruvian model based on import substitution rather than endogenous development shows how patterns of development which do not emerge from self-organisation cannot be sustained. Swadeshi for Gandhi was central to the creation of peace, freedom and sustainable development. Swadeshi is based on people's economies and their ability to organise themselves. Swadeshi or self-organisation in economic affairs is the basis of economic freedom, and without economic freedom, there can be no political freedom, or self-governance and self-rule.

Swaraj, or self-rule, is the birthright of all people. The phrase that echoed most during our freedom movement was "Swaraj hamara janmasidh adhikar hai" – Self rule is our birth right. For Gandhi, and for the contemporary social movements in India, self-rule did not imply governance by a centralised state, but decentralised self-governance by local communities "Nate na raj" "our rule in our village" are slogans of our grass roots environmental movement from the mountains to the sea.

In periods of injustice and external domination, when people are denied economic and political freedom, reclaiming freedom requires peaceful non-cooperation with unjust laws and regimes. This peaceful non-cooperation with injustice has been the democratic tradition of India and was revived by Gandhi as 'Satyagraha'. Literally, Satyagraha means the struggle for truth. According to Gandhi, no tyranny can enslave a people, who consider it immoral to obey laws

that are unjust. As he stated in Hind Swaraj, As long as the superstition that people should obey unjust laws exists, so long will slavery exist. And a non-violent resister alone can remove such a superstition.⁵ Satyagraha is also the key to self rule or Swaraj.

IV. Globalisation: Whose Economic Freedom?

Swadeshi is not obsolete in today's context. It is more relevant than ever before. It is the creative alternative to both the rule of the centralised national state under the Nehruvian model and the rule of global corporations and global institutions such as the W.T.O. Economic freedom requires reduced control of the state and reduced control of World Bank, IMF, W.T.O. and the G-7 and Global Corporations. Economic freedom is more freedom for the people of India to have secure livelihoods, to have control over the policies and resources that make their livelihoods. The contemporary discourse on 'Swadeshi' and 'Swaraj' has however been severely distorted by the discourse on globalisation.

The Congress party in its election manifesto referred to globalisation as 'Arthic Swaraj' but equated economic freedom with Globalisation.⁶

The BJP Government which had won elections on the anti-globalisation and Swadeshi plank has made a rapid turn around and announced that Swadeshi is not anti-globalisation. The Commerce Ministry removed restrictions from 336 items in its new Export-Import policy, including black pepper and shrimp and said this was Swadeshi. The Industry Ministry stated that he would implement TRIPs and this was not inconsistent with Swadeshi.⁷

Whether it is the BJP or Congress, Swadeshi and Swaraj are being used rhetorically, but not for economic policy.

Every government implements the globalisation agenda when it comes to power even if they have criticized globalisation as opposition parties. This is evidence of the growing lack of economic freedom and economic sovereignty.

Globalisation has undermined the conditions of self-rule, self-governance and self-organisation especially the countries of the Third World and for the poorest and smallest producers. Globalisation is in fact recolonisation and the trade liberalisation policies of the World Bank, IMF and W.T.O are no different from the free trade treaty of the East India Company which allowed a trading corporation to become the rulers of our land.

The 1717 firmans granted to the East India Company by Faruksheer Firman, the great grandson of Aurangazeb, addressed to the Governors of Bengal, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, were recorded as follows:-

Dilly, January Anno 1716-17

A translate of three Phirmaunds granted to the Right Hon: English East Company for a free trade, by Faruksheer

King of Indostan

The language and concept of free trade was therefore very central to the East India Company policy for laying the "foundation of a large, well grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come".⁸

The dominant thinking of the Indian elite views globalisation and trade liberalisation as a miracle cure for poverty at a time when the high costs and vulnerability of economic globalisation have become visible through the South East Asian crisis. The dominant thinking of the Indian elite views globalisation and foreign direct investment as a recipe for economic freedom at a time when entire economics are being taken over and recolonised by western powers.

The South East Asian countries carried out all the steps prescribed in the globalisation recipe. Today their banks and financial institutions, their industries and their natural resources have been taken over by western banks and transnational corporations.

In a recent article, Gerald Segal, Director of International Institute for Strategic Studies in London has written "Next, a Western Era with Europe Sharing the Leadership"

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, we spoke of a post-cold war world.

What we can now foresee, amid Asia's financial crisis, is a period dominated by the west.⁹

The western powers and their strategists view globalisation as recolonisation of the countries that became independent from western colonial rule half a century ago. Today, the political parties including the Congress, which had played a major role in the independence movement, have adopted this agenda for recolonisation in its election manifesto. What is worse, it has named the arrangement for new economic slavery "Arthic Swaraj" or Economic freedom.

The recipes for "arthic swaraj" are neither informed by the economic reality of India, nor by the lessons and experiences from other parts of the world. They are literally lifted from the Bretton Woods institutions and their prescriptions for trade liberalisation and economic reforms.

The South East Asia crisis has been created precisely by financial liberalisation and economic deregulation. The consequence has been a total take over of the economy through the currency crisis and the IMF programme. Foreign banks and companies are already going through the wrecked economies and buying up local assets and institutions at throw away prices. What we are seeing in South East Asia is the result of the package that the Congress is trying to sell to the Indian people as "economic swaraj" but which has only one outcome – total economic bondage and economic take over.

On 5-6th December 1997, the "Wall Street Journal" wrote that the restructuring of Thailand's financial system is expected to result in foreign majority ownership in many of the country's 15 commercial banks.¹⁰

In Korea too, the IMF required that 'Foreign investment in the capital markets will be liberalised and direct foreign investment procedures will be simplified and made more transparent. Foreign entities will be allowed to buy 50% of the equity of a listed Korean company by end 1997 and 55% by end 1998 paving the way for foreign take-overs of Korean firms.'¹¹

When a major party in the country states in its election manifesto that the threat of foreign take over no longer exists, and there is no enemy outside, only an enemy within, and hence the concept of 'Swadeshi' is no longer relevant, it is either ignorant about the state of the world's economics or it is deliberately misleading its potential voters. If the former, it is unfit to rule. If the latter, it is guilty of being anti-national. Instead of taking lessons from countries which have implemented trade liberalisation and financial liberalisation and are today in deep crisis as a consequence, promoters of globalisation repeatedly state that :

We should not be afraid of the world

To be aware of the consequences of liberalisation on the basis of the South East Asia cannot be interpreted as fear, and blindness to facts is not fearlessness, it is foolhardiness. To put your hand in fire and insist it will not burn is a sign of stupidity, not smartness. The volatile global economy is like a fire, and it 'burns' livelihoods and national economies. Integration into it without limits and cautions is not a cure for poverty, it is a cause for poverty. It is not a cure for unemployment, it is a recipe for unemployment on unimaginable scale. The assessment of unemployment in Thailand and Indonesia as a result of the crisis is 4 million. In Korea and Malaysia, prosperous workers are suddenly on the street.

South East Asia is looking towards India for finding models that provide economic alternatives. The concept of Swadeshi is today even more relevant than during the independence movement. It is the key to genuine economic freedom in a period of economic totalitarianism dominated by World Bank, IMF, W.T.O. and TNCs. Swadeshi leads to "Arthik Swaraj". "Arthik Swaraj" without Swadeshi is like a building without foundations. It must collapse.

Even though we have the colonialism of the past and recent experience of globalisation as recolonisation, many commentators refer to globalisation as economic freedom and equate Swadeshi with the past fifty years of the Nehruvian model. As Gurcharan Das¹² says,

There is nothing new about Swadeshi, we have practised it since independence and "Swadeshi will bring back the license - permit raj".

However, Swadeshi is as an alternative to Nehruvian socialism based on centralised state power, and the usurpation of the functions of the community by the state. Swadeshi is people centred, not industry or government centred.

Sharad Joshi, in his article, "Swadeshi the Third Battle" has also equated Swadeshi with the Nehruvian rather than the Gandhian legacy. Joshi goes even further to suggest that Swadeshi means violation and India has been isolated for thousands of years.

The Swadeshi brigade is in power now. It would try to set back the clock and go back to a closed India. It imposed isolation in India for thousands of years. It succeeded in keeping its domain despite the British. It succeeded again 50 years back under the banner of socialism, and hopes to succeed this time once again.¹³

However, India has been a more open society than any other, welcoming guests, and integrating cultures.

What seems to be common to these critics of Swadeshi is

that they equate globalisation with freedom and nationalism with slavery. However, globalisation is leading to the recolonisation of Third World countries.

V. False Dualisms: Swadeshi Vs Videshi

Our magazines and newspapers often refer to Swadeshi vs Videshi, and describe Swadeshi as a form of xenophobia. This is a false dualism and a distortion of the meaning of Swadeshi. Globalisation is in fact the xenophobic project because it is extinguishing all diversity, it is extinguishing autonomous small producers. It is a project of total control arising from the fear of everything that is alive, free and autonomous. In fact, the Intellectual Property Rights, which are central to the globalisation agenda is based on a racist view of knowledge. This racism allows the appropriation of indigenous knowledge as in the case of biopiracy of neem, turmeric, basmati, pepper etc.

Globalisation also breeds xenophobia by creating massive insecurity, which in turn breeds fear and violence among communities and societies. Ethnocide and ethnic cleansing are the gifts of global economic integration which robs people of their basic insecurities.¹⁴

The concept of 'Swadeshi' is not based on the fear of the foreigner. It is based on the recognition that economically powerful global forces are taking over the economic and political structures of our society and hence threatening the livelihoods and freedoms of the people.

Swadeshi is based on the recognition that self-organisation is the basis of freedom. Since self-organising systems are autonomous, and self-referential, though not insulated from others, they are at peace with themselves and they interact under conditions of freedom and peace. A self-organising system knows what it has to import and export in order to maintain and renew itself. It needs nothing else but reference

to itself. Self-organised systems interact with their environment but in autonomy. The environment only triggers the structural changes; it does not specify or direct them. It is the living system, which specifies its structural changes and which patterns in the environment, that trigger them. At the political and cultural level, it is this freedom to self-organise that Gandhi saw as the basis of interaction between different societies and cultures. "I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any".

The Chilean scientists, Maturana and Varela have distinguished between two kinds of systems — autopoietic and allopoietic. A system is autopoietic when its function is primarily geared to self renewal. An autopoietic system refers in the first place to itself and is, therefore, called self-referential. In contrast, an allopoietic system, such as a machine refers to a function given from outside, such as the production of a specific output.¹⁵ Swadeshi, in scientific terms, refers to the building of autopoietic systems as the basis of our cultural, economic and political life.

Globalisation is an example of the transformation of what were autopoietic systems into allopoietic ones. Globalisation is not the cross cultural interaction of diverse societies. It is imposition of a particular culture on all others. Nor is globalisation the search for ecological balance on a planetary scale. It is the predation of one class, one race and often one gender of a simple species on all others. The "global" in the dominant discourse is the political space in which the dominant local seeks global control, and frees itself of local, natural and global control and responsibility and limits arising from the imperatives of ecological sustainability and social justice. The global in this sense does not represent the universal human interest; it represents a particular local and parochial interest and culture, which has been globalised through its reach and control, its irresponsibility and lack of reciprocity.

Swadeshi is an anti-colonial concept, it is not an anti-foreigner concept. It is not about people, who are outsiders – it refers to structures of power which colonise. It is not xenophobic, it is liberatory because it arises from a spirit of freedom, not the basis of fear.

VI. 'Swadeshi' and Citizen Freedom under Globalisation'

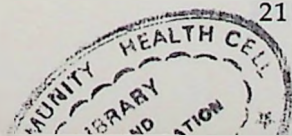
When the rights of farmers to save, exchange, evolve seed are denied, when the rights of consumers to safe and adequate food is denied, what we have is totalitarianism of a most basic kind since it is a totalitarianism based on the total control over the vital necessity – food.

Swadeshi and Satyagraha became the only path to reclaiming citizen freedom in this context of economic totalitarianism. Society in which the only citizens with rights are corporations and their rights are so absolute that they can totally extinguish citizen rights, is not a free society. It is corporate totalitarianism created through free-trade arrangements.

Economics in which most people are rendered dispensable, and in which most people cannot meet their basic needs are not free economies for the people. They are free only for capital.

Building free societies and free economies means, above all, putting people before capital. The liberation of people is a very different issue from the liberalisation of trade. In fact trade-liberalisation is based on either the dispensability of people or their enslavement.

How do we build alternatives in the context of this totalitarianism of a new kind – a totalitarianism based on the rule of fictions rather than the gun boat, a totalitarianism built on dispensability of the majority rather than their bondage, a totalitarianism in which there is no dictator, no



person, no government, but all prevailing corporations which are themselves a legal fiction?

Non-violence requires a withdrawal from participation in violence. The first step in building free societies again is to recognise that globalisation is not a natural phenomena, it is an exercise of absolute power for total control. It is a new kind of totalitarianism in which corporations are the rulers and are attempting to gain total control over life itself, domains that have been beyond the control of the market or the state.

The second step in a non-violent search for freedom is to start to reclaim our self-organising capacities as citizens and communities.

Reclaiming our self-organising capacities includes a non-cooperation with the systems of control that deny us our self-organisation capacity. Just as in agriculture, the shift from chemical to organic farming requires becoming free of external inputs and building up the internal inputs on the farm, in society, a shift to freedom requires becoming free of or less dependent on the "external inputs" through which corporations control our lives — through finance, through control on knowledge and information, through monopoly control on production systems.

LETS systems, local credit unions are some of the civil society initiatives which are "short circuiting" the global money economy - community is quite evidently the substitute for global capital, just as internal organic inputs are a substitute for external chemicals. The alternative to free-trade is building free local economies in which every one has a place and every one's needs are met.¹⁶

Rejuvenating our knowledge and skills to meet our needs with our own resources, and our own capacities is the alternative to the monopoly on life inherent to patents on life. I have often described patents on life as the enclosure of the intellectual and biological commons. The alternative to enclosures is the recovery of the commons - protecting

the free domain of knowledge exchange by non-cooperating with IPR laws which make knowledge exchange, seed exchange, biodiversity exchange at the local level illegal and we can only be truly free if our minds are free. Controlling and owning the mind, and products of the mind is a much deeper slavery than slavery itself. The bodies of slaves were bought and sold, their minds were not. Under the new regime of "free trade", both body and mind of the people are tradeable commodities, the property of the powerful to be bought and sold freely. Breaking free of this slavery requires making our bodies and mind free of the ultimate bondage inherent to patents on life.

We have to begin again to build free societies and free economies, where knowledge is free.

The Third World people and women have from the beginning of the waves of globalisation have had to organise ourselves again and again to define our personhood so that we too could govern ourselves, fulfil our humanity, defend our communities and other species. We know what it is like to be excluded. We need to remember how we have organised in the past, how we have built democratic institutions and cultures. Corporate rule has excluded all people as persons. It has reduced citizenship to being consumers — and by new mechanisms such as denial of the right to know, especially in the area of genetically engineered foods, the consumer too is a captive consumer. The corporate fiction has to be treated as what it is — a fiction, which can rule over us only to the extent that we allow it to. The most fundamental human rights agenda of our times is to reclaim our humanity in all our diversity.

An inclusive concept of personhood is also an inclusive concept of freedom since it does not gain freedom of one kind for a privileged part of society but protects multidimensional freedoms for all. We can only become free people if our rights are not extinguished by the rights of the corporate fiction.

All liberation movements in recent history have been partial and exclusivist. They excluded other species and they excluded diverse cultures. For the first time we have an opportunity to seek freedom in inclusive ways, in our diversity, to seek freedom for humans in partnership with other species and to seek freedom non-violently. This freedom of and through diversity is the alternative to globalisation.

VII. Towards an Ahimsic Artha Vyavastha (a Non-Violent Economic Order)

Violence and non-violence are primarily relational categories. As Gandhi has said, non-violence is not just the absence of violence. It is an active engagement in compassion. Ahimsa, or non-violence, is the basis of many faiths that have emerged on Indian soil. Translated into economics, non-violence implies that our systems of production, trade and consumption do not use up the ecological space of other species and other people. Violence is the characteristic of dominant economic structures and economic organisation which rule our lives in which the ecological space for other species or other people is usurped or enclosed.

In the Isho Upanished it is said,

The universe is the creation of the Supreme Power meant for the benefits of (all) creation. Each individual life form must, therefore, learn to enjoy its benefits by forming a part of the system in close relation with other species. Let not any one species encroach upon others rights

Whenever we engage in consumption or production patterns which take more than we need we are engaging in violence. Thus non-sustainable consumption and non-sustainable production constitute a violent economic order.

According to an ancient Indian text, the Ishopanishad:

a selfish man over utilising the resources of nature to satisfy his own ever increasing needs is nothing but a thief, because using resources beyond one's needs would result in the utilisation of resources over which others have a right.

This relationship between restraint in resource use and social justice was also the core element of Mahatma Gandhi's political philosophy. In his view:

the earth provides enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.

The eurocentric concept of property views only capital investments as investment, and hence treats returns on capital investment as the only right that needs protection. Non-western indigenous communities and cultures recognise that investment can also be of labour or of care and nurturance. Rights in such cultural systems protect investments beyond capital. They protect the culture of conservation and the culture of caring and sharing.

Non-violence or ahimsa combines justice and sustainability at a deep level. "Not taking more than you need" ensures that enough resources are left in the ecosystem for other species and maintenance of essential ecological processes to ensure sustainability. It also ensures that enough resources are left for diverse livelihoods of different groups of people so that they can derive their sustenance and meet their needs.

The criteria of not taking more than you need is not merely an ethical criteria – it is also the highest expression of the precautionary principle since it ensures avoiding harm in the absence of full knowledge of the impact of our actions.

Diversity and pluralism are necessary characteristics of an ahimsa or non-violent economic order. If the criteria of not encroaching on others rights is fully followed diverse species will survive and diverse trades and occupations will also

flourish. Diversity is therefore the litmus test for non-violence and reflects the sustainability and justice that non-violence embodies.

Diversity is intimately linked to the possibility of self-organisation. It is, therefore, the basis of both *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj* of economic and political freedom.

Decentralisation and local democratic control are political corollaries of the cultivation of diversity. Peace is also derived from conditions in which diverse species and communities have the freedom to self-organise and evolve according to their own needs, structures and priorities.

Living societies, living ecosystems, living organisms are characterised by three principles -

- a) the principle of diversity
- b) the principle of self-organisation, self-regulation, self-renewal
- c) the principle of reciprocity between systems, which is also called the law of return,
the law of give and take.

Our diversity makes mutuality and a critique of 'give and take' possible. Mutuality makes self-organisation possible.

There are two conflicting paradigms of biodiversity. The first paradigm is held by local communities, whose survival and sustenance is linked to biodiversity utilisation and conservation. The second is held by commercial interests, whose profits are linked to utilisation of global biodiversity for production of inputs into large scale, homogeneous, uniform centralised and global production systems. For local indigenous communities, conserving biodiversity is conserving their rights to their resources and knowledge and conserving their production systems based on biodiversity. For commercial interests, such as pharmaceutical and agricultural biotechnology companies, biodiversity in itself has no value, it is merely, "raw

material". Production is based on biodiversity destruction since local production is based on diversity are displaced by production based on uniformity.

These two paradigms are coming into conflict because of the emergence of new biotechnologies for the manipulation of life and new legal regimes for the monopoly control on life.

India's freedom struggle was based on perennial concepts of freedom based on non-violence which still have relevance today.

50 years after independence, a massive movement is needed which gives these non-violent concepts of freedom based on diversity and non-violence, a new relevance and a new life.

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