

## About The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi — (Cwmg-Ks-1956-1994): A Brief Perspective

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a phenomenon of the ages past and is for the ages to come. He is a modern man, learning from all that is ancient, and reinventing the same for the new age. His intellect is hungry for Truth; heart hungry for Love; soul hungry for Liberation. He picks up Truth from every jewel the human civilization has offered – from every creed and religion, from every region and period, from every visionary – a prophet, a poet, a scientist, a saint, a sufi, a revolutionary. His fertile mind receives influence from the greats of all streams, hues and shades of the world, spanning more than two millennia. (Yes, contrary to our general perceptions, he was an intellectual giant, deeply and widely read in the world history, world religions, world literature of all times.)

He listened to the call of the cosmic law through his inner-most voice. He responded to that call of Truth, acted upon it, and laid bare its intricate working for us. There is hardly anything arbitrary and random in his life and thought. Every moment in his life is potent and pregnant with an analysis in ethicality and ethical analysis. Couched in the contemporary context of his life-time, his thought and conduct bear a universal message.

His reinvented message is Truth and Non-violence in action, executed with supreme sense of Justice. His experiments are scientific and empirical, done with probing reason and unflinching faith. His invention – scientific and spiritual – is Satyagraha for Justice and Freedom. He strives to convert the evil into Good, the untruth to Truth, the injustice to Justice, through his appeal to the reason and the heart of the wrong-doer, through soul-force, through self-suffering and austerity.

Like a fighter, a Military General, he initiates and conducts his battles, devises his own weapon *Satyagraha*, trains a whole people in the art and science of this novel warfare. He targets victory for the armies arraigned on both sides. To achieve this, he trained his satyagrahis, men and women, across the width and breadth of the country, to follow an elaborate code of conduct, for the struggles for justice and freedom. In

the process of fighting these battles, he changes the discourse on peace and war permanently.

What experiments he conceives, he puts them into immediate practice. He undertook an actual trial and testing and success of his novel weapon of Satyagraha based on Truth and Non-violence in the war-ravaged world, full of heroes celebrating martial prowess; it was a life lived in example of the potency of the soul-force and what miracles it can wrought.

Mainly, his internal journey seeks Truth and Non-violence in the very process of living. Journey is itself a liberation from all shackles. His life-journey is epic in scale and fascinating in every detail.

He is a modern man standing on the threshold of the ancient and the modern. He is an accomplished Barrister who goes beyond the letter of the law to practise the spirit of law. He fights many a battle on several fronts - conducts revolutions on varied fronts – social, economic, cultural, religious, political . . . as part of one whole, all at the same time.

He is an intense man, man in a hurry, and lives every moment of his life for the Good of his people, in harmony with the Good of all people. His nationalism is not narrow; it is cosmic in its compass. He strives to lift his own people out of the dark pit, to rejuvenate them from decadence, to make them torch-bearers for the world. He seeks and strives for heart-felt harmony among all people – of all castes and creeds, putting his own life on stake in the process.

He defines Self-Rule as self-governance and self-discipline, as one whole. He tirelessly toils to educate, reform, equip his people for the same; through his own example, his associates, his journals, his endless yatras and tours, his constructive programmes, his non-violent struggles of non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

He sets up ethical standards of conduct of business and gives a model of Trusteeship. He seeks true emancipation of the exploited, through full economic self-reliance, with charkha as his symbol and weapon. He seeks Sarvodaya, and the Good of his people, consistent with the universal Good.

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He stands up and lives for the dignity and the welfare of the last and the weakest. He gives up his own identity, immerses himself into them fully, and feels their woes to be his own. He dresses like them, and lives like them.

He engages with people across the globe in their rainbow variety – hundreds and thousands of them – individually and collectively – through his endless written communications – through his endless tours and visits – visiting more than two thousand towns / cities / villages, in almost all the Indian states, covering about thirteen foreign countries by today's division.

He engages with issues any of which requires his attention and application of his ethical thought. He does not tire of finding new weapons, learning new lessons. With brilliant reinvention and relentless pursuit of charkha, he converts the structure of economic power into an engine of social, economic, political reform.

His experiments in education finds its fruition in an alternative system, pivoted on heart and hands, soul and mind, to raise and equip whole generations for reconstruction of a new social order based on equality and justice and universal Good.

He was born to Indian parents in India, studied in England, flowered in South Africa. Gandhiji returning to India in 1915 is already a global citizen in Indian dress. By then, he had been actively engaging with individuals of all colours, creed, and class from across the world. Many of them had joined him as his soldiers in his novel warfare on social, cultural, economic, political fronts. Indeed, he truly belonged to the world. No wonder, the world community thinks and feels he is their own.

Fortunately for all of us, his epic life and work are voluminously recorded and documented; through an extraordinary effort, the will, the love – of his chroniclers, and core associates. Almost as if on divine cue, his chroniclers started documenting his life, thought, and action, beginning with his early childhood to his last day on this earth. Amazingly, the record of this internal and external journey was found scattered all over the world. Through a determined effort, his associates took up the herculean task of collecting them, organizing and arranging them and documenting them with fidelity, deep understanding, and an ethical sense of responsibility.

In the pages of the hundred volumes of *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, we find cables,

telegrams, appeals, petitions, memorials, notes, silence-day notes, articles, speeches, interviews, talks, dialogues, and the letters, and so on and on. They are a record of Gandhiji's words as he spoke and wrote them, day after day, year after year. The record begins with the year 1884 and ends with January 30, 1948. These volumes cover vital accounts of his engagements with thousands of subjects and of people and of issues.

As Pandit Nehru put it, ". . . To him life was an integrated whole, a closely-woven garment of many colours. A word to a child, a touch of healing to a sufferer, was as important as a resolution of challenge to the British Empire. . . ." (CWMG-I-ix-x)

Broadly speaking, the volumes cover his student years in India and London, his stay and struggles in South Africa, his return to India and leadership of the Indian freedom movement. In this apparently changing external scenarios, there is a consistent thread of continuity; his Satyagraha warfare keeps evolving to a finer and finer level; and his inner search for Truth achieves greater heights; his interactions with people get wider and wider, and his discourses change the contours according to the receiver of his message; quality of every writing is such that he appears to be talking to the reader straightaway.

In the student phase of his life, we live in London of those times through his eyes, and live with his evolving public persona – along with getting into his professional discipline of law and distinct sense of justice; his intermingling with the enlightened elites of England of those times, beginning of his intellectual journey through reading classical literature; his formal involvement with Vegetarian movement and groups and journals; and the beginning of his public writings, and so on.

In the South African phase, we are exposed to a whole range of appeals, petitions, memorials, to his letters to news-papers, to his starting his journal *Indian Opinion* and through them his continuous effort to educate his people, to his analysis of continuously changing legal disabilities of the Indian Immigrants, to his delegations to the authorities in England, to his continuous exchanges with these authorities; to his jail experiences, to his shift from legal battles to agitations and to satyagrahas, to his marches, and to his setting of the communes, to his experiments in community living and in diets and education, his changing dresses, his intimate engagements with families of his own, and those of the satyagrahis, his

daily accounts of money spent, and of meeting various kinds of people; and so on.

His return to India is full of new challenges, new agitations, new experiences, new perceptions. Here we live with his fresh set of communes, his never-ending tours, and visit to places, intermingling with people of each such place; his innumerable social reforms; his almost continuous dialogues with the British authorities at several levels; his role and relationship with Indian National Congress and a vast variety of political activists; his evolving aspirations for the economic and political freedom of his people; his numerous satyagrahas and the education of the people through his journals *Navajivan*, *Young India*, *Harijan*; his headlong confrontation of society and religious establishments against decadent and abhorrent practice of untouchability; his intimate and warm exchanges with individuals across the globe; and a sequence of his satyagrahas; rousing a whole people to a new level of awakening and morality; and finally the enigmatic denouement of political Independence; and the tragic aftermath of the blood-soaked exodus of the people across the borders. And the final call upon him, which he responded with his glorious martyrdom.

What has been stated above is merely a glimpse of the gorgeous magnificence of an extraordinary life, and no description can suffice the actual reading of the volumes. The pages of these volumes are indeed an evidence that such a one as this trod this world.

### **Making of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—(CWMG-KS-1956-1994)**

#### ***Some Details***

In the fortnight after his assassination, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on behalf of Gandhiji's associates, expressed a pledge for three tasks: (i) To help set up memorials in main places where Gandhiji had lived and worked; (ii) To continue constructive activities so dear to Gandhiji; (iii) To collect his writings, publish them, and preserve them.

To this pledge many persons of eminence had assigned their collective will. In the years 1948-1949, a deeply introspective and thoroughly thoughtful exercise was undertaken by all the Gandhi associates to define the minimalistic, simple, elegant quality, and faithful, befitting standards for these memorial obligations. In the year 1949, 24 persons of eminence founded the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Trust, New Delhi

to translate their vision into action (see Ann-A-list 1 given at the end).

At the time, out of the three tasks, the one about the writings, of facilitating their collection, and publication, was assigned to the Government of India as recommended by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, without whose single-minded devotion, the Project would not have seen the light of the day.

In pursuant to that resolve, in the year 1956, a formal agreement was executed with the Secretary of the President of India by the then veteran, first/second generation Trustees of the Navajivan Trust. This agreement was in the nature of an actionable agreement which clearly laid out mutual responsibilities and obligations for both the Government of India and the Navajivan Trust, the official custodian.

Right in the beginning, due care was taken *not* to vest in the government any editorial control over the content; it was to only facilitate the task. Entire editorial authority was exclusively vested in the Advisory Board of the Gandhi veterans of distinction specially constituted to perform the task (see Ann-A-list 2 given at the end). This one-time Advisory Board had in their wisdom picked up from across the country a team of editors uniquely qualified and suited to undertake the following tasks.

Briefly and broadly put: Collect the Gandhi writings spread all over the world, decide their veracity and genuineness, organize that huge, unwieldy mass in a certain order, record texts from strictly verified original documents, render the non-English text into English, place them in their perspectives, providing honest and faithful navigational help to the researchers.

The collective effort of these editors was painstaking, meticulous, and honest, in design and details, to say the least; extraordinary application and understanding of a duly qualified and authorized team were brought to bear upon the same.

Some of the key factors essential for the performance of the task of such gravity and magnitude were: The senior-most editors' own knowledge of the world literature, world history, world religions; their full sense of the data, without which such a task cannot be undertaken; their proximity in time to the political, social, cultural environment and the milieu of the Gandhi era; their daily association with the writings and their intensely focused effort through their lifetime.

Thus, the herculean project started in the year

1956 saw its culmination in the year 1994 in the form of The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi – a hundred volume English series – intricately connected across the series, as an integrated whole. It is a monumental document of Gandhiji's words as he spoke and wrote, day after day, year after year, beginning with the year 1884 till his assassination on January 30, 1948. In this series his writings, scattered all over the world, have been collected and constructed with stringent academic discipline and with an ethical sense of loyalty.

The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (English series) (CWMG-original-KS-Eng-edition, called so after Prof. K. Swaminathan, the Chief Architect of the original series, who had led uniquely qualified team of editors) had taken about 38 years in the making (1956-1994). The CWMG-original-KS-Eng-edition volumes were published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India in the years 1956 to 1994.

The exercise was directed by the CWMG Advisory Board of the Gandhi veterans closely connected with him. Some details in this respect can be viewed in volumes I, XC, XCVIII, XCIX, C, and the standard edition table. The corresponding Hindi version – the Sampurna Gandhi Vangmaya – the SGV followed the English series under the same umbrella arrangement.

The English series came to be fondly known as the CWMG among the world fraternity of scholars and researchers. It was indeed a one-time editorial exercise in recording text from the original documents, with distinct sense of authenticity and loyalty, with well-thought-out protocols in place, high academic standards of execution, and meaningful architecture, allowing us an organized journey through the transparent workings of a truly creative mind. The CWMG again is also an invaluable record of a nation in turmoil and in the making.

#### **Copy-Duty of the Dedicated Custodians / Stake-Holders : An Overview**

Now, the core duty of any and every Gandhi-focused and dedicated custodian is: To respect and preserve the integrity of the CWMG (original-KS-edition-1956-1994); To carefully provide for its security through the state-of-art-technology; To protect the data from damage, intentional, or otherwise; To take care that the contemporary and the changing environments

do not pollute the universality of the message; To make it available and accessible in the form of print and, also through the electronic medium, on an on-going basis.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that we need to reach out to Gandhiji and seek from his words inspiration, clarity, and guidance on issues innumerable to list out; therefore, the greater need to preserve integrity of his legacy in words carefully. Gandhiji, being a renunciate, initially resisted the idea of copyrighting his writings; however, when he saw that his words were being twisted to mean things contrary to what he wished to convey, he attached stringent and serious conditions on the handling of his writings. In his own words, "... It was after much thought that I declared a trust in connection with my writings. ... I preserved fully the idea lying behind dislike for copyright, i.e., for personal gain for one's writings. The idea also was to prevent profiteering by publishers or distortion or misrepresentation, wilful or unintentional. ..." July 5, 1944, CWMG-LXXVII-p. 353. This is only an illustrative quote from among many.

#### **Action Now**

So, the time came when it became necessary to prepare a one-time-all-time electronic Master Copy of this data. With the full understanding of the moral responsibility enjoined in the performance of such a task, the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad stepped in. For the purpose, it specially set up in its premises a CWMG Cell, led by an editor, thoroughly acquainted with the process and discipline of making of the original series, assisted in her task by specially suited technology experts.

The electronic Master Copy of the CWMG-KS-edition-1956-1994-edition, in the form of refined images, perfectly matched with the original, verified with the original source-documents where necessary. Execution of the task involved an intensely focused, organic, and stringently supervised effort over a period of more than five years. A lot of research, customization, and innovation have gone into the process, with the objective of reproducing the loyal images of the original-KS-edition of the CWMG, keeping the content, structures, architecture, editorial edifice intact.

The research and trials had started in the years 2006-07; the real work had started in the years 2009-10. The preparation of the Archival Electronic Master

Copy of the CWMG-original-KS-Eng-1956-1994-edition was accomplished in the year 2015. The same is in the following forms for every page of the full series of hundred volumes: (a) Cluster of *archival-source-images* and the *corresponding black-&-white images*; (b) *Finished-digital-image-PDFs* with *searchable text* as hidden layer in the backend; (c) *Finished-digital image-PDFs* as print-ready static, non-editable images organized in suitable folders for jacket cluster, including photographs, maps, etc. and the text from cover-to-cover, so as to facilitate all-time printing as an ongoing process; (d) The above data suitably reduced for web-display; (e) The entire record including the work record for all-time archivation.

The above work was first presented to the Government of India in March 2015. The BETA version of the Electronic Master Copy of the *digital-searchable image-PDFs* for the full series of hundred volumes was dedicated to the people of the world on September 8, 2015, in two forms: i. DVD SET / PEN-DRIVE; ii. Downloadable form – in volume-wise manner – on the Gandhi Heritage Portal\* hosted by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT). A full, unbroken set of the hundred volumes of the CWMG-original-KS-Eng-edition-1956-1994 has been *reprinted* by the Publications Division, Min. of I & B, GoI, New Delhi from the Electronic Master Copy thus prepared at the CWMG Cell set up at the Gujarat Vidyapith, and has been rededicated to the people of the world in June 2017.

\*Gandhi Heritage Portal has been hosted by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT). The project was undertaken with the seed money given by the Ministry of Culture, the Govt. of India, in the years 2009-2010. The Gandhi Heritage Portal was envisaged to be the eternal source display of scanned images of the classical, authentic Gandhiana, of the first two generations of associates and scholars, before the same got lost by the ravages of time, identified and listed by the trained researchers of the SAPMT.

Thus, with the patient and understanding support from the authorities of the Publications Division, Min. of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, with the kind patronage of the Gujarat Vidyapith Board, and with the permission of the Navajivan Trust, the CWMG Cell at Gujarat Vidyapith has been able to accomplish the task assigned to it. For what is available now, and from where, please see Annexure B given at the end.

The CWMG Cell at the Gujarat Vidyapith is currently preparing the similar electronic Master Copy of the Sampurna Gandhi Vangmaya – the SGV – the Hindi version corresponding to the CWMG-KS-1956-1994-English version.

## ANNEXURE - A

### LIST 1:

#### List of the Founder Trustees of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi:

Dr. Rajendra Prasad; Shri Ganesh Vasudeva Mavalankar; Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru; Smt. Ashadevi Aryanayakam; Smt. Yashodhara Dasappa; Smt. Sucheta Kripalani; Rajkumari Amrit Kaur; Shri Shankarrao Deo; Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh; Shri Jagjivan Ram; Shri Purushottamdas Thakurdas; Shri Shri Ram; Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla; Shri Mangaldas Pakwasa; Acharya J.B. Kripalani; Shri Devadas Gandhi; Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya; Dr. Gopichand Bhargava; Shri Kasturbhai Lalbhai; Mr. A.P. Benthall; Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad; Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant; Shri J.R.D. Tata.

### LIST 2:

#### List of the Advisory Board, at different points of time, of the CWMG:

Sarva Shri: Morarji R. Desai (Navajivan & Gujarat Vidyapith), Chairman; Kakasaheb Kalelkar (Navajivan & Gujarat Vidyapith); Devdas Gandhi; Pyarelal Nayyar; Maganbhai P. Desai (Navajivan & Gujarat Vidyapith); G. Ramachandran (Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Madurai); Shriman Narayan (Navajivan); Jivanji D. Desai (Navajivan); P. M. Lad; R. R. Diwakar (Gandhi Peace Foundation); Thakorebhai Desai (Navajivan & Gujarat Vidyapith); Ramdhari Sinha "Dinakar"; Shantilal Shah.

#### The Three Chief Editors, in order of succession, of the CWMG:

Shri Bharatan Kumarappa (about a year); Shri Jairamdas Doulatram (about a year and a half); Shri K. Swaminathan (from 1960 to more than thirty years). These Chief Editors were eminent men of letters and were ably supported by many note-worthy Editors, among them, Shri R.K.Prabhu, Shri U.R. Rao, Prof. C.N. Patel for the English series, and Shri Sitacharan Dixit, and Bhavaniprasad Mishra, for the Hindi series.

## ANNEXURE - B

### THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI :

CWMG – KS – EDITION – 1956-1994:  
VOLUMES – I (I) TO C (100) : ENGLISH  
SERIES

#### AVAILABLE AS OF NOW:

1. Linkage with :

[www.gandhiheritageportal.org/the-collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi](http://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/the-collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi)

(For the cluster of *archival-source-images* and the *corresponding black-&-white images*)

[www.gandhiheritageportal.org/fundamental-worklist](http://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/fundamental-worklist)

(For *finished-digital images corresponding to the finished-digital-searchable image-PDFs with necessary corrections* – a record of which is attached at the end of each respective volume)

– Request for linkage can be made by :

Educational institutions / libraries / museums / archives / and Gandhi study centers of the world.

– Request for linkage to be made to :

The Gandhi Heritage Portal hosted at the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust - SAPMT, Ahmedabad

2. In printed form – as hard copies : FROM :  
The Publications Division, Min. of I & B, Govt. of India,

New Delhi, INDIA; Telephone no.: +91-11-24365609

Website : [www.publicationsdivision.nic.in](http://www.publicationsdivision.nic.in)

E-mail : [businesswng@gmail.com](mailto:businesswng@gmail.com)

3. E-copy of the *fully-searchable image-PDFs* – as a two-DVD SET and/or PEN-DRIVE : FROM :

i. The Publications Division, Min. of I & B, Govt. of India, New Delhi, INDIA : Telephone no.: +91-11-24365609

Website : [www.publicationsdivision.nic.in](http://www.publicationsdivision.nic.in)

E-mail : [businesswng@gmail.com](mailto:businesswng@gmail.com)

ii. CWMG Cell, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad -380 014, Gujarat, INDIA;

E-mail : [cwmg.gv@gmail.com](mailto:cwmg.gv@gmail.com)

iii. Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust – SAPMT,

Gandhi Ashram, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad – 380 027;

E-mail : [sales@gandhiashramsabarmati.org](mailto:sales@gandhiashramsabarmati.org);

iv. National Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi : 110 002;

Telephone no. : 011-23310168;

E-mail : [nationalgandhimuseum@gmail.com](mailto:nationalgandhimuseum@gmail.com)

Website : [www.gandhimuseum.org](http://www.gandhimuseum.org)

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