

# Prototype Of Society According To Mahatma Gandhi

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<b>ARTICLE HISTORY</b>	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
Accepted: Oct 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 Revised: Oct 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 Published: Nov 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	The model of society that Gandhi was about to build was a manifestation of the teachings of religiosity or religious beliefs, where each individual jointly carried out his life activities in society as a holy <i>dharma</i> . As a <i>dharma</i> , then each individual must be able to overcome all the potential of his greed in developing the ethonomization of his individuality to realize common interests. The idealization of society that Gandhi hoped was inseparable from his human perfection as the core of the constituent community. For Gandhi, the ideal society was what Indian society called the <i>ashram</i> . This article examines Gandhi's thinking about idealized community prototypes because life in the <i>ashram</i> contains a set of ethical principles derived from the culture that forms the construction of society. The root of the culture is then upheld as a life principle that must be obeyed by all <i>ashram</i> citizens as an exemplary community, without exception. The goal is to uphold the principle of a fraternity of mankind, human values that are the culmination of every form of service, upholding that all human beings are essentially the same and sibling. The principle of all humanity is sibling becomes the morality in society idealized by Gandhi.
<b>KEYWORDS</b>	
ethical principle nonviolent prototype of society	

## INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who is famous by the name Mahatma Gandhi is a figure who is very concerned with various forms of oppression and violence in society. His life in India and in Africa has encouraged him to become a humanitarian fighter with an anti-violence movement. His life journey which was full of pain, reviled, scolded, insulted, and imprisoned by the British colonial at that time, encouraged to keep fighting for a peaceful civilization. The suffering of others, due to war and prolonged conflict has disturbed the conscience of humanity to stop it.

According to Gandhi (1951), the community prototype that was intended to be embodied contained the teachings of ahimsa as a philosophy of abstinence from violence and satyagraha as a form of nonviolent struggle, and prioritizing truth as the main principle of struggle. For Gandhi the truth is God. In this context, belief is the main basis for the formation of society; the human cannot become autonomous when he does not establish a form of relation with other human beings. Individuals become meaningless when humans are only present in the world in their loneliness. Such a community prototype is a nonviolent society that adheres to ethical principles applied in a community called *ashram*.

The ashram concept according to Ratu Bagus (in Wisarja, 2017), is learning in nature, being friends with nature and the professor is the creator of nature itself. The essence of the teaching is to preserve nature. If nature is well preserved, trees thrive, animals can live and thrive, that means the life chain can survive.

Learning religion in the ashram community aims to practice Hinduism in a pure and consistent manner. The ashram concept was taken to institutionalize the Hindu model learning process. Learning material is more on spiritual and spiritual matters so that it can give birth to individuals who have *jnana* and *wijnana* - smart and also wise. Even if there is the giving of worldly knowledge, it is solely to support the spiritual.

The ideal community in the ashram is that every individual must practice and obey the spiritual teachings proposed and believed by Gandhi. So that in the implementation of spiritual teachings hoped that there will be a common life in every citizen. That is, every individual with a different social background, when living in the ashram, all must be one, that is, one large family of ashram without discrimination.

The principle of life developed in the ashram is simplicity. The ashram community continues to practice religious and morality because morality is a necessity for everyone who upholds and defends the truth. Ashram activities show amazing independence. For example, in the business of spinning, milking and tanning cow leather to be used as sandals and shoes. Leather tanning is taken from dead cow's skin because in the Hindu tradition there is a prohibition on killing cows as protected sacred animals. These efforts contain deep meaning for the growth of self-sufficiency and self-help of ashram residents to not depend on others, especially against the colony state. The reciprocal reality between living things as formulated by Gandhi is as follows: "Mutual linkages and dependencies should be made into the aspirations of mankind,

apart from the desire to be self-sufficient. Humans are social beings. Without linkage with society, it is impossible to realize unity with the entire universe and it is impossible to suppress the lust of one's own interests. Reciprocal linkages with society allow him to test his faith on the teststone of reality. His dependence on society made him aware of the nature of humanity "(Gandhi, 1988: 139-140).

The statement emphasized that Gandhi strongly emphasized human beings as individuals and social beings. In establishing a correlation, not infrequently individuals sacrifice for the benefit of society. Likewise, the reality of life at the ashram shows the togetherness of each of its citizens. All citizens have the same rights and obligations to obey the rules and principles applied, regardless of social status and religious background. This shows a form of society that has the same life orientation based on the same spiritual values, to be upheld together as a common good. The process of social life in the ashram is a reflection of Gandhi's attitude of life and commitment, that all humans are brothers. There are no enemies and no opponents, there are friends. This principle is the background of the lives of residents in the ashram to distance themselves from destructive or anarchic behaviour that can harm themselves and others (Wisarja, 2003).

Based on the background description, this research problem can be formulated as follows: (1) What is the model of society aspired by Mahatma Gandhi?, (2) What is the ethical principle applied in the ashram according to Mahatma Gandhi?. To answer the research problem, the following will be discussed by Gandhi's thinking about the idealized community prototype and the ethical principles that the ashram must adhere to as an exemplary community.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a literature study. The material object is a prototype of society according to Mahatma Gandhi, while the formal object is social philosophy. As a literature study, this study uses descriptive methods to explain Gandhi's conception of society as it is, and then analyzed using interpretation and hermeneutic methods. Through this approach, the interpretation of the concept of society according to Gandhi can be explained in more detail and depth (Bakker and Charis Zubair, 1990: 61-66). As a factual study of characters, this study prioritizes the study of literature or references relating to the research theme. The primary literature used as a material or research

material is (1) *Observances in Action Ashram*, published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabab (1959), (2) *Gandhi An Autobiography, the Story of My Experiments in Finding Truth*. Translation of Gedong Bagoes Oka, submitted by: Sinar Harapan, Jakarta (1982), (3) *Satyagraha*. Published by: Navajivan Publising House, Ahmedabab (1951), and (4) *Susila Religion*. Sumirat translation. Published by: Balai Pustaka, Jakarta (1950). Along with several secondary libraries and other supporting libraries related to Gandhi's thoughts about society.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

### **Ashram; as a Model of Community Idealization**

Gandhi's ideas about society cannot be separated from the main idea of the principles of the pattern of relations between human beings to live side by side peacefully, tolerantly, and far from violent behaviour. The pattern of relations between people who are in a place or region is the first and foremost guarantee that forms a society (Gandhi, 1988: 28). That is, the community is a community that occurs and is formed from the process of relations between people who occupy a particular area.

The relationship between humans is not understood in an individual process, where humans are considered autonomous subjects, as understood by the construction of modern society. Rather, humans are religious creatures with the ability to become autonomous but still respect their relationships with fellow human beings. That is, humans cannot become autonomous if they do not build relationships with other humans. Individuality becomes meaningless when humans are only present in the world in their loneliness.

Humans as autonomous beings always try hard to build good relationships with others. The principle of good relations is the basis for the conception of society according to Gandhi. Society is formed because of the presence of humans as autonomous beings that are correlated. These correlating factors provide an effort for humans not to destroy other human beings and to avoid violent behaviour.

According to Gandhi (in Wegig, 1986: 60-63), a perfect society cannot be separated from a human condition that has perfection as well. Likewise, evil humans will bring evil effects on the surrounding community. For Gandhi, a perfect human being is a person who is *satyagrahi*, namely someone who is able to overcome the evil forces carried out with ahimsa attitude and self-purification. The attitude of self-

purification includes the attitude of freedom from property and freedom from the delights and pleasures of food through self-control, fasting, and *brahmacharya*. Such human perfection will eventually correlate to the conditions of the society it forms.

The logical consequence is that the goodness and perfection of society are strongly influenced by human life in it. This is because humans are compilers for the building of a society (Gandhi, 1988: 164). That is, the good and bad of the community is very much determined and influenced by the circumstances of its constituents, namely human behaviour. There is no point in idealizing a perfect community, if it is not accompanied by a determination to make humans perfectly. Although humans are perfect individually, in the end, he will also perfect himself socially.

Community life basically shows a deep religious dimension. This is for Gandhi (in Thomas Merton, 1992: 14) that social life is a *dharma* or self-service of every human being. According to Gandhi, the social world is not secular; the social world is sacred. The logical implication is that everyone must be involved in it; this means that everyone must also be involved in the *dharma suci* as a human being. Submitting themselves to the demands of dharma is basically a form of surrender to God and His will manifested in the midst of the people. Thus the conception of society that was to be built by Gandhi was a manifestation of the teachings of religiosity or its religious beliefs. Which every individual together carry out his life activities in the life of society as a holy religious dharma. As a dharma, each individual must overcome all potential greed in developing the autonomy of individuality to realize common interests.

The idealization of society which is to be formed basically cannot be separated from the idealization of its human perfection as the core of the constituent in the society. The idealization of society according to Gandhi is what Indians call an *ashram*. *Ashram* has similarities with *ashrama* terminology. The *Ashram* is recognized as an ideal conception of the building of the society that Gandhi aspires to as an exemplary community. Gandhi's desire to establish a community that is modelled with behaviour and life that practices his spiritual teachings is the initial evidence that he has a number of conceptions of the idealized society.

There are several rules based on a mutual agreement that should not be violated. This agreement indicates forms of utopian socialism, because in it also refers to a reality of shared ownership and responsibility. Every job must be carried out jointly and must not involve outsiders of ashram, one of them is the basic yarn spinning program to help

the nation and homeland of India which was hit by famine. According to Gandhi (1981: 112) every ashram citizen has an obligation to sacrifice for the nation and homeland. So, when the Indian people faced the problem of hunger due to their main income being destroyed by the British colonial, a series of work programs related to the restoration of the people's basic work began to be activated, for example; cotton planting, brushing, spinning, weaving cloth, separating cotton seeds, repairing to make heart, and dipping and printing. This exemplary community in the ashram showed remarkable independence, in addition to spinning, it also carried out milk milking and cow leather tanning businesses to be used as sandals and shoes.

### **Ethical Principles in the Ashram**

In the life of the *ashram*, what should be safeguarded is how to awaken and develop the adherence of its citizens to every rule. This is the characteristic that distinguishes between *ashram* residents as exemplary communities with other communities. Reality proves that the disobedience of society to obey the rules together is the beginning of a destruction and destruction of order in society.

The rules or ethical principles are as follows;

#### **1. Sat (Truth)**

The term Sat is taken from the word Satya which means "There" or "Truth". Gandhi (1979: 45) interpreted the truth as God. "There" is a conception of events in life, which are natural and can be felt. Therefore, it can be said that life is real, not a dream. The real and the existing is the truth.

In the ashram community, truth does not only speak honestly or does not lie, but includes all activities of human life such as thinking, saying, and doing well and right (Gandhi, 1951: 39). Pursuit of truth means true devotion or manifestation of devotion to God. For Gandhi, Truth is God himself, so the search and devotion to truth means meaning and devotion to God. *Dharma* of truth must be pursued through the attitude of *nirbaya*; that is, the truth is carried out on the basis of courage, tenacity, and the attitude of not easily giving in to evil and colonial British injustice. Gandhi (1951: 13) said, "How wonderful, if all of us, both men and women, young and old, devote themselves fully to the Truth in whatever activity we do when we are conscious, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, until it's time our body is destroyed and dies with the truth. God as Truth is a priceless treasure; hopefully, this is for everyone.

Truth as *bhakti* is a normative value that must be carried out by every ashram citizen. Understanding the truth in Gandhi's perspective is the harmony of the three elements, namely; thoughts, words, and deeds. This harmony guarantees the obedience of citizens to the regulations that bind together in life.

## **2. Ahimsa (affection)**

Devotion to the truth must still rely on the attitude of ahimsa or compassion for all living beings. *Ahimsa* is not hurting. For Gandhi (1981: 40), the ahimsa must be practised in depth, such as; attitude does not hurt any human being, either through thoughts, words, or actions, even for the benefit of that human.

The principle of *ahimsa* must be carried out by every citizen in their daily lives, especially for *ashram* residents as exemplary communities. This principle is the basis for preventing the emergence of conflict in society because the causes can arise from various behaviours "hurting" other people in any way. If every citizen adheres to this principle, surely any conflicts that arise can be minimized. Everyone must have awareness in implementing this principle as a basic humanitarian need. Human actions that do not hurt each other and are hostile between friends and opponents enable harmonious life to manifest in society.

## **3. Brahmacharya**

The ethical principle of *Brahmacharya* that is carried out by the ashram people is that all the behaviours and attitudes carried out must be adapted to the process of seeking Brahma or God which is the source of all truth and perfection. Etymologically, the word *Brahmacharya* comes from the words "*Brahma*" and "*Charya*". *Brahma* means God, *Charya* is defined as attitude. So *Brahmacharya* means every human attitude or behaviour must always hold to the truth because according to Gandhi the truth is God itself (Gandhi, 1979: 20).

*Brahmacharya* proposed by Gandhi has a different meaning from Indian society in general. For Indian society, *Brahmacharya* is defined as absolute holiness through mastery of animal lust. For Gandhi (1981: 49), *Brahmacharya* emphasized the mastery of the five senses contained in humans. Furthermore Gandhi (1981: 49) argued, "Those who abstain can avoid the objects of the senses, but the bond of the will remains. But this feeling will also disappear later when someone can see *Brahma* or God itself.

#### **4. Mastery of Tongue Taste**

This principle is basically a behaviour that helps achieve the quality of humanity towards Brahma or God. This principle relates to human efforts to control themselves from eating food excessively, whether it is appetite or eating orientation that is poised to get drunk. Gandhi (1952: 22) said; "Eating is necessary to master a rough body, but it cannot be used as a mere goal. Avoid any spree that only intends to escape from reality.

Thus the meaning of eating according to Gandhi is food only as a means, not the purpose of human life. Therefore, every *ashram* is expected to avoid eating behaviour that only fulfils sensual pleasures, does not eat meat, and does not eat foods that can arouse lust, and not drink alcoholic beverages that cause a person to get drunk. The principle of avoiding excessive food becomes an endeavour for every *ashram*, it is not just fulfilling the sensory demands, but to uphold the principle of simple life (living in simplicity).

#### **5. Asteya (Not Steal)**

The act of stealing is a taboo for those who defend and uphold the truth. Stealing is an act that is harmful to others. Even if the act of stealing does not harm other people, at least the act hurts the feelings and feelings of others because they feel they have lost their property (Gandhi, 1979: 107). Stealing is a behaviour that can damage social relations in society because it will create a sense of insecurity and mutual suspicion among citizens. If the act of stealing is abandoned it will only give birth to a situation that is not conducive in society.

The principle of not stealing is upheld by the *ashram* community as an effort to avoid the lust of something that is not his property. If every human being obeys to live this principle, then undoubtedly the lust of greed will be minimized and even stopped its development potential.

#### **6. Aparigraha (Choosing Life in Simplicity)**

This principle is the development of *asteya*, which is an effort of the ashram to avoid the possession of objects or goods that are not needed at the same time, which are not their rights. Gandhi (1981: 27) made a statement that every citizen was forbidden to save something for future needs. This prohibition is intended so that everyone has the same opportunity to obtain a share so that there is no monopoly of goods which can damage relations between citizens. Gandhi (1981: 29) said, "The people have abundant savings that they don't need and therefore these things are neglected and wasted, while



millions of people die of hunger due to a scarcity of food. If everyone keeps something that is needed only, then no one will lack and all citizens will live adequately " .

This principle is upheld by the residents of the ashram to develop the mental attitude of citizens to have social sensitivity and concern. Ashram people are taught to share and care for others. All ashram residents must carry out the same life activities. All objects in the ashram are joint property and are used for mutual benefit. That is why Gandhi (1988: 96) considers that "Socialism is a beautiful word and as far as it is aware, in socialism, all members of society are the same, there is nothing low and nothing high. As in every organism, the head is not considered high, because it is the upper part of the body, just as the soles of the feet are not considered low, just because they touch the ground. And just as the parts of the body are the same, so it is with members of the community. It's called socialism.

#### **7. Food Works**

This principle is a citizen activity that is carried out to fulfil the needs of one's own life, with an independent business and without committing theft. Therefore, adherence to the principle of *asteya* and *aparigraha* can only be supported through the activities of ashram residents by carrying out food work (Toto Wasis Wibowo, 1989: 69). This principle is a moral obligation for every citizen not to interfere with others (independent). The logical consequence is to be a force for the growth of civil society with the ability to manage and fulfil their own needs.

#### **8. Swadesi**

Swadesi means that humans are not beings who have full power and have boundaries that make them have many weaknesses. Therefore, the best human service to the community can be done when they first serve their environment (Pleyser, 1992: 23).

Gandhi (1981: 109) gave the order of fulfilment of self-sufficiency through; self-service for the family, family sacrifice for the village, a village for the country, and country for humanity. This sequence indicates that the most important service for the community is devotion to humanity. That is, humanity is at the core of all dedication. Through devotion, every ashram citizen is expected to have a social sensitivity to this form of suffering. Besides that, ashram residents are also expected to make efforts to free humanity from oppression and injustice.

## **9. Nirbaya (Don't Know Fear)**

This principle is an attitude to never know the fear of any power including British colonial power. For Gandhi (1979: 29), every Indian must be deprived of his fear to speak out and speak publicly, while demanding to eliminate injustice for Indians. Gandhi more clearly (1979: 30) said, "Attitudes free from fear that come from outside, for example, free from fear of injury, injury, death, loss of property, loss of the closest and most loved person, loss of fame or fear insulted and others".

So the fear suggested by Gandhi is only fear of God. To find and eliminate the fear, Gandhi suggested that it starts from the conquest of fear in yourself. The conquest will eventually eliminate fear from the outside.

## **10. Eliminating Emotions Contact**

This principle is a form of elimination of social classes contained in Hindu society in India. In other words, this principle is a form of appreciation for human nature as an equal being. As equal beings, various forms of discrimination should not occur in any form. During the period of colonialism in Britain in India, there was a fundamental problem in Hindu society, namely the elimination or marginalization of certain social classes based on birth and descent (caste). Higher caste of people seems to be nobler, so it is forbidden to come into contact with lower caste people. Gandhi considered this to be contrary to the principle of ahimsa and human nature that was born in a holy state. According to Gandhi (1979: 33), "No one may be born as a person who cannot be touched because we are all sparks from one and the same light. It is wrong to treat certain people as people who are never touched by birth."

## **11. Tolerance**

Tolerance is an extension of the attitude of life to not discriminate in society. Gandhi (1981: 110) holds that all religions contain the revelation of truth, but because those religions are outlined by imperfect humans, they are influenced by imperfections and they are not absolute. Such imperfection can occur in any religion of any name, but Gandhi recommends that every human being develop the principle of tolerance, namely respecting the beliefs held by others.

### ***Reflection:***

The eleven ethical principles applied in the ashram are the power to realize full independence in society from various forms of hegemony and any power intervention. By applying these ethical principles, civil society is realized. The key to strengthening

civil society is the principle of social harmony. That is, in social life, there is no gap in creating chaotic situations or chaos that can damage human relations.

The civil society that is going to be realized is a model of society that is created thanks to the full participation of freedom by a number of people, each of whom is in an equal position, committed to building together a political community called the state (Soetandyo Wignjosoebroto, 1999: 273). In modern life filled with the aspirations of human liberation from all forms of oppression and oppression, the formation of civil society is something that must be put forward.

The basis of civil society that is offered and developed in Indonesia is the strengthening of communities that put forward: (1) dialogue in solving problems, (2) distancing themselves from conflict and violence behaviour, (3) promoting common interests on the basis of human values, and (4) have independence in all fields; social, political and economic. *Kemandirin* in this context is the ability to solve problems themselves without the involvement of other forces, including the power of the state. Independence in the economic field, for example, shows one side of the strength of civil society to be able to meet their own needs.

The basic principle that is to be built in civil society is the mainstreaming of the themes of common interests above their own interests based on universal human values. This principle is believed to be a shared morality that must be adhered to and carried out by every citizen so that the life of mankind is not based on a desire to dominate others.

## **CONCLUSION**

The ideal community prototype is a society that firmly holds ethical principles and rules that have been agreed upon jointly. Denial of the rules that have been agreed upon together will be the seeds for triggering the destruction of a nation. That is, the good and bad of the nation's society depend on human behaviour in holding the principles and obeying the rules that have been mutually agreed upon. There is no point in idealizing a perfect community, without being accompanied by the determination to make the human personality perfectly. This is because humans are compilers of community buildings. Without building a perfect human being, there must be a perfect nation.

The main condition for building a nation's society is how to build citizens' obedience to any rules that have been mutually agreed upon. During this time reality

proves that disobedience to shared rules is the beginning of the destruction and destruction of order in society. As an example; eleven ethical principles applied by Gandhi in the ashram became the power to realize full independence from various forms of hegemony and intervention. Through the application of these ethical principles created an exemplary community called civil society or civil society. Civil society is a model of society created by the full participation of citizens in an equal position, committed to building together a political community called the state.

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