

Economic Views of Mahatma Gandhi

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ABSTRACT: Gandhian Economic Philosophy is based on truth, non-violence, dignity of labour and simplicity is more relevant today than that it was sixty-five years ago. The Economic Philosophy of Gandhiji might also be described as the economics of non-violence. He opposed modern capitalism because it depended on the exploitation of human labour which Gandhiji regarded as violence. It is true that Gandhiji was not in favour of reckless industrialization and urbanization and certainly opposed mechanization. The economics of Gandhiji is really based on his personal experience having a whirlwind tour to the whole country. During the British rule Gandhiji witnessed the society from close quarters. During his African tour he was Brest of the poverty of the people.

KEY WORDS:- Economics, Labour, Organization, Urbanization, Village

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I. INTRODUCTION

Gandhian Economic Philosophy is based on truth, non-violence, dignity of labour and simplicity is more relevant today than that it was sixty-five years ago. The Economic Philosophy of Gandhiji might also be described as the economics of non-violence. He opposed modern capitalism because it depended on the exploitation of human labour which Gandhiji regarded as violence. It is true that Gandhiji was not in favour of reckless industrialization and urbanization and certainly opposed mechanization.

The economics of Gandhiji is really based on his personal experience having a whirlwind tour to the whole country. During the British rule Gandhiji witnessed the society from close quarters. During his African tour he was Brest of the poverty of the people.

Gandhiji borrowed equalities, simplicity and seclusion from Tolstoy and Thoreau. He took the concept of political decentralization from Krampatkin. Gandhiji was adorer of the Gita and Upnishad and this is the reason. His work and actions bear the testimony to these books. His thought was influenced by Saint and Nanak. In politics he was a disciple of Gokhale.

Gandhiji did not believe in any definite planning Economic Thought. His Economic thought is a part of his general life philosophy. Prof. Vakil has rightly said that, "one has to interpreter Gandhiji's economic ideas and build up what may be described as Gandhian economic thought from what he did and said in this connection."¹

In the words of Prof Huxley, "Gandhiji's social and economic thought is based on man's nature and the real evaluation of the success of the progressive organization and of advanced technique cannot change these basic principles that human beings are not huge animals and mostly are creatures of simple ability."²

The defect of most of the thinkers of his time is that they believed that by virtue of Technique and organization a simple human being can be transform into a powerful human being and limitlessness of spiritual attainment can be propounded.

The most important principles of Gadhiji's life was "plane living and high thinking."³ Being a practical economist he felt that the solution of defects of modern civilization lies in this philosophy. Gandhiji clearly stated that happiness and satisfaction are two different mental situations and there is no limit of necessities in life. In words of Gandhiji,⁴ "we see that the mind is restless bird, the more it gets the more it needs nevertheless is remains unsatisfied."⁵

Gandhiji was an adorer of non- violence. The principle non-violence is soul of his philosophy. Gandhiji opposed modern capitalism because it depended on the exploitation of human labour which Gandhiji regarded as violence. He was not in favour of use of machines because bring about unemployment. Gandhiji valued human labour much. During the freedom movement against the British rule, Gandhiji was barest of the economic problems of the Indian at close quarter. It is because of the fact that Gandhiji propounded some fundamental principles in field of economics for the guidance of the undivided and organizations in which the following are most important.

Gandhian Philosophy of Rural Development

As I think it was Gandhiji who first understood the important role and place of Indian villages in the whole Country. The rural character or Indian Economy and the need for re-generation of rural life was stressed by him in 'Harijan' on 4th April 1936 that, "India is to be forced not in cities but its seven lakh villages. But when town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly paused to inquire if those poor get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain."⁶

Actually Gramin sarvodaya was a great ideal of Gandhiji. Discussing old days rural economic system Gandhiji said that, "with consumption and distribution, production could have been made and there would have been no vicious circle of monetary economy in that system. Gandhiji wished that the old rural communities should be re-established and prosperous agricultural- based decentralized industries and small scale organization of co-operatives should be re-established. He argued that the Indian villages were like unhygienic villages made on the heaps of dung. Gandhiji wished that every village should change into self-sufficient republic. In Gandhiji's words, "my idea of self sufficiency is that village must be sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other basic needs. The village as community should be a production of consumption centre".⁷

II. TRUSTEESHIP

According to Gandhiji if any person was inherited a large fortune or amazed a lot of wealth from trade and industries, the whole wealth belongs to the society and not to him only. As a matter of fact a man can have only as much as required for his respectable life. The rest of earned wealth belongs to the whole nation and it must be spent on the welfare of all. He compared a capitalist to a thief but he was not in favour of confiscating the excess wealth from the well of by force, because he believed that in the society the rich people assume importance. By trusteeship, he meant that all the social wealth should remain under trusteeship. He termed capitalist as the trustees of the society. The labour should regard capitalist as their well- wishers and bank upon them. Under this circumstance there will be no conflict between the capitalist and the labourer in the society.

III. INDUSTRIALIZATION

Gandhiji was dead against the industrialization on large-scale. He did believe that large scale production has resulted into economic ills. For the full development of mind, body and character of a Man it is necessary that a man must have full individual liberty. He was of the view that with the use of motive a man becomes idle and he has no interest in his labour. He opposed industrialization on a large scale of economy become on the hand; it spreads crime and violence in the society. He believed that in a poor country like India where on the one hand there is lack of capital and on the other hand there is over population, under these circumstances, the use of machines cannot be beneficial for the poor and unemployed people of India. He favoured of such an economy which may generate job to the jobless on the large scale.⁸

IV. POPULATION

Gandhiji was of the view that the use of the contraception regarding problems of population would weaken the male members of middle class family on the one hand and on the other hand the production system would be misused. This is because of the fact that Gandhiji was in favour of birth control by Sanyam and Bramcharaya. He was of the opinion that sex education should be imparted with aimed at overcoming sexual indulgence.

V. PROHIBITION OF INTOXICATION

Gandhiji was of the view that coffee, tea, tobacco and consumption of liquid and wine are harmful for the mental physical and moral development of man. He considered the consumption of intoxicants to be a kind of disease. He prefers to see India as a pauper India to the India of thousands of drinkers before him. In an

article that he wrote that, "if he were appointed dictator of India for good, he would close all the shops of wine without any compensation and would force the owner of the wine factories to prepare drinks without harm and catering to the people. He was also of the opinion that the consumption of intoxicants can be dropped with the help of law.

VI. CONCLUSION

As I think it was Gandhiji who first understood the important role and place of Indian villages in the whole Country. The rural character or Indian Economy and the need for re-generation of rural life was stressed by him in 'Harijan' on 4th April 1936 that, "India is to be found not in cities but its seven lakh villages. But few town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly paused to inquire if those poor get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain."⁹

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