



## Environmental challenges and Gandhian solution

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**Abstract:** It is true that the environmental problems are more challenging today than ever before. It's also a reality that we have to fight against the menace. I search of different approaches in tacking with environmental challenges; we are naturally attracted towards the Gandhian approach. Now a day Gandhian ideas, approaches and alternatives to Social transformation and development are a debate of global concern. If we go through voluminous writings of Mahatma Gandhi there are rare references to his concern for protection and preservation of environment. Only a few writers recognize Gandhi as an early environmentalist. But it is more than appropriate to remember Mahatma Gandhi as one of the hap bingers of environmental issues. We can say that Gandhian approach of life is the best remedy for solving environmental problems, but is does not mean that Gandhian has directly referred to the problem of environmental degradation and its solution.

**Key words:** environment, industrialization, western model

### Introduction:

It is true that the environmental problems are more challenging today than ever before. It's also a reality that we have to fight against the menace. I search of different approaches in tacking with environmental challenges; we are naturally attracted towards the Gandhian approach. Now a day Gandhian ideas, approaches and alternatives to Social transformation and development are a debate of global concern. If we go through voluminous writings of Mahatma Gandhi there are rare references to his concern for protection and preservation of environment. Only a few writers recognize Gandhi as an early environmentalist. But it is more than appropriate to remember Mahatma Gandhi as one of the hap bingers of environmental issues.

**Problem:** The literal meaning of environment is related to the surroundings of an object in nature. In fact, environment may be regarded as everything else but to me it includes the sky over our heads and the earth beneath our feet. It also comprises all other people and any living organism with which we have any connection. The environment includes not only the natural and man-made things for us but also the circumstances or influences created by physical and cultural conditions and processes. All living organisms, from microorganisms to human beings, have their own environments. It a nun-shell the conditions for existences and development for all kind of living beings postulate the whole perspective of environment. The biological existence of all creators depends on the harmonious relationship naturally maintained within the eco-system. It is true that the



environment pollution is the part and parcel of human activities aiming at more and more exploitation of nature for prosperity and development in life without caring the unfavorable changes imposed upon it. A UNESCO report elaborates the environmental crisis in the following words. Imperfect understanding of the natural systems and mechanism which make possible the maintenance of life on earth; disregard of the unintentional efforts technology, in particular the various forms of pollution, poor management of the soil, forests and water unbridled consumption of fossil fuels; uncontrolled; urbanization; the relegation of rural population to a marginal position; and the crushing of traditional cultures these are the most obvious and most frequent disadvantages of the changes that is taking place in the relation between man and his environment. The Environmental degradation is so alarming that very existence of humanity is in danger today. In spite of various safeguard measures for environmental protection situation is not healthy. With the growth of industrialization and the demand for more and more consumer goods, the cut throat competition amongst western industrial powers led to over exploitation of minerals, forests soil and flora and fauna. The cutting down of jungles and trees resulted not only in the ecological imbalance but it also resulted in erosion of soil and dryness of rivers, lakes and other resources of water. It has deserted the vast Area of land at global level. Consequently drought and famine force people for starvation.

#### **The Gandhian Solution:**

It is true that the environmental problems are more challenging today than ever before. It's also a reality that

we have to fight against the menace. In search of different approaches to tackle environmental challenges, we are naturally attracted towards the Gandhian approach. Now a day Gandhian ideas, approaches and alternatives to social transformation and development are a debate of global transformation and development are a debate of global concern. To quote Prof. Ram Chandra Gupta "the life and work of Gandhi have had a considerable influence on the contemporary environmental movements in India. The movement truly began with the 'Chipko Andolanam' in April 1973. In one of the first printed accounts of 'Chipko', a breathless journalist announced that Gandhiji's ghost had saved the Himalayan trees. Although we do not find in Gandhi's writings much detailed discussion on the type and scale of environmental problems which we are facing today. But one thing certainly goes to the credit of Gandhi is that he expressed his reservation against the western model of industrial development, which has caused environmental degradation. Gandhi warned long back against the rapid industrialization and urbanization in 1908 in 'Hind Swaraj'. He suggested the educated Indians who lived in the cities, to go back to the village because the villages of India, which were not polluted by railways or influence of modern living. Preserve all that was best in the ancient Indian Society, Gandhi was against industrialism and not against industrialization. The industrialism could flourish the dehumanized machine culture, which merely helped a few to ride on the backs of the millions. His main emphasis was on production by any individual. Gandhi had foreseen this predicament as nearly as in 1908 in his Hindi Swaraj where he had characterized



'Modern Civilization' as a "disease" and nine days 'wonder'. The global environmental problem has two major dimensions, resources depletion and pollution, which are linked with modern industrial and agricultural production and poverty. Gandhi's way of life was really a message to the mankind whatever he propounded he translated that into reality. Gandhi believed in all those principles of way of life, which had a full respect and harmony with the nature. Gandhi said that man can live without food for a week, he can also live without water for some hours but he cannot sustain life without pure air even for a few minutes. Gandhi said, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs but every man's greed" Here the more and more emphasis is given on the idea of "Swadeshi", the moral law of self-reliance. In Gandhian approach there is a solution to all problems i.e. economic, social, and ecological and so on. The methods for fulfilling these needs of life suggested by him were all eco-friendly. So the Gandhian ideology and method has a deeper aspect concerning the harmony between man and nature. The ultimate goal of Swaraj may be obtained by the method of non-violent non-cooperation and for attaining Sarvodaya Gandhi devised his famous constructive programme. Gandhi's emphasis on rejuvenation of decentralized rural industry of cottage industry and village arts and crafts may be useful in overcoming many problems of present day humanity. It can provide employment to many empty hands and reduce poverty of the millions. Maximum manual labour-intensive, employment - oriented and minimum capital - intensive efforts in each and every walk of life can reshape the structural change in the society. By

adopting the principle of 'simple living and high thinking' man can avoid the unnecessary and excessive use of machine.

**Conclusion:** We can say that Gandhian approach of life is the best remedy for solving environmental problems, but it does not mean that Gandhian has directly referred to the problem of environmental degradation and its solution. Only his views against the industrialization of western model, call for maintaining harmony with nature and his rejection of consumerist culture have earned him the fame of an early environmentalist. It is, therefore, essential to look forward for the solution of this problem through Gandhian ways. But sooner the better we have to make a beginning with the motto "think globally, and act locally".

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