



Mahatma Gandhi - The Doctrine of Trusteeship

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Abstract: Gandhian Economic thought is based on four fundamental principles. Truth, Non-violence, Dignity of Labour and Simplicity. One principle that played significant role in Gandhi's life was : simple living and high thinking. Gandhiji was a practical idealist. The economics of Gandhi might also be described as the economics of non-violence. Gandhi opposed modern capitalism because it is based on the exploitation of human labour. To Gandhi moral progress is more important than material progress".

Key words: Truth, Non-violence, Dignity of Labour

Introduction

Gandhian Economics is based on ethical foundations. In 1921, Gandhi wrote, "Economics that hurts the moral well-being of an individual or a nation is immoral and therefore, sinful." Again in 1924, he repeated the same belief: "that economics is untrue which ignore or disregards moral values."

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Gandhi has developed the doctrine of trusteeship to provide an alternative to Marxian socialism. He thought it was surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty. In Gandhi's ideal social order,

'the individual will be at the Central and the State has to promote his welfare.' But under Marxism individual will be subordinate to the State. Again while Marx considered force and violence as inevitable in the birth of new order, Gandhian socialism is based on non-violence. In this respect Gandhi was the very opposite of Marx.

Gandhi and ethical values:

The ethical genius of Gandhi is delicate, emphatic and mellow-Indian. It invites the masses to reflect and act. His personal values are hatched in the growing and conquering triple disciplines of Gita. These values are self-diffusing and firmly anchor themselves. First comes the intuition of permanence. It emanates from the mind which is a welter of creative flux. The cosmic outlook, which grasps the truth and the reality, is its feat. This discipline of mind would require a complete change of thinking.

The ichor of Gandhi's idealism is the passionate understating and fidelity to world-view. It makes him assume in life a sacrificial role. The discipline of the flesh gives an expansive sincerity which



absorbs him in moral experiment. He holds the mirror to his soul and reveals to mankind its affirmations. The nation again and again accepts the burden of his temperament. It is the inner fidelity to world-view, the will and sacrifice it involves, that unifies his moods and utterances.

Moral values through education:

Moral and ethical knowledge is the core around which Mahatma Gandhi's concept of value education is based. Any education that lacks these two cannot be termed as good or complete. Without morality and ethics no student in the real sense can be considered to be healthy physically and mentally. A person who does not differentiate between right and wrong cannot rise to the essential level of a true student. Besides spiritual growth as described by Mahatma Gandhi can only be gained through morality and ethics. Reading traditional wisdom and Gandhi together, we understand that education as a means of attaining salvation is indistinguishable from spiritualism.

These values, Mahatma Gandhi said are fostered through respect for one's parents, teachers and elders, adoration for younger people, adherence to social traditions and constant awareness of one's duties and responsibilities. Towards this end, Mahatma Gandhi advocated introduction of religious education. This kind of education brings values of forbearance, tolerance and reverence in one's character. And in turn, these values are an indivisible part of ethics. Explaining the importance and need of religious education Mahatma Gandhi writes in the 'Young India of 6' of December, 1923

Gandhi made a distinction between 'Possession' and 'possessiveness'. In his view, the evil lay not in possession as such but in the attitude of possessiveness. Gandhi desired the capitalists to become trustees of the nation by running their business with integrity and efficiency and for the welfare of the people.

Sometimes, it is alleged that by means of his trusteeship doctrine, Gandhi was trying to give a new lease of life to the capitalist system. It is often alleged that Gandhiji, by advancing his trusteeship theory, had retarded the forces of revolution in the economic sphere because the capitalists could not be expected to function. But the doctrine of trusteeship "does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and the use of wealth." Gandhi only wished to give one more chance to the owning class to reform itself in the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

The salient features of the trusteeship formula of Gandhi's ideal social order :

"□ Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an equalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class, the chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

"□ It does not recognise any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its welfare.

"□ It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and the use of wealth.



“□ Thus, under state-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.

“□ Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so, a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

“□ Under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.”

Many economists tend to dismiss Gandhian economics as utopian in nature. They regard Gandhi as a medieval mystic who tried to put back the clock of human progress. But much of the criticism is based on gross misunderstanding of Gandhi's views. It requires sympathy; Gandhian economics is based on ethical value and the dignity of man it is regarded as the only enduring alternative to prevalent Western notions of scientific socialism and communism. Gandhi was a practical idealist. His economic thought is basically sound and is relevant to our times. His economic ideas are not medieval and out of date. Gandhian thought has significant relevance for modern India and many things which have happened since he passed away have not diminished but heightened its relevance.

Conclusion

Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence, decentralisation, and village swaraj are

all relevant today. Gandhi firmly believed that communist methods of violence and class-war are unsuitable to Indian conditions. It would have been a better thing if the state governments had continued the policy of prohibition without looking at it as a profit and loss account. Gandhi was right in opposing controls. For the licence-permit-quota policies of the government have resulted in monopolies and concentration of economic power in a few hands.

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Gandhiji written a letter to Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 20-10-1936.



Gandhian thought on Khadi and Rural Development

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Abstract: Gandhiji advocates as Khadi stands for simplicity, not shoddiness. It sits well on the shoulders of the poor, and it can be made, as it was made in the days of the yore, to adorn the bodies of the richest and most artistic men and women. It is reviving ancient art and crafts. It does not seek to destroy all machinery but it does regulate its use and check its weedy growth. It uses machinery, for the service of the poorest in their own cottages. The wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery Khadi delivers the poor from the bonds of the rich and creates a moral and spiritual bond between the classes and the masses.

Key words: was village, self-sufficiency, Grama Swaraj

Introduction:

The basic theme of Gandhiji's concept was village self-sufficiency or Grama Swaraj. It meant that every village should be self sufficient in two basic requirements – food and clothing. Every member of the family will play the charaka and spin yam. The village weaver will play the loom and produce the cloth necessary for the village. Similarly, the village should produce its own rice, vegetables etc. Food and clothing will not have to be imported in to the villages from out side. Through his speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi always advocated the potential of khadi and village industries to bring about self reliance and prosperity in our villages. To Gandhiji Khadi represented human value and mill cloth material value. As we salute the Father of the Nation on his birth anniversary, it is indeed heartening to note that large number of innovative programmes is in place throughout the country to further

reinforce the values and concepts that were dear to Gandhiji. Recently, different initiatives have been taken both at the centre and states, to further rejuvenate Khadi and cottage industries sector that provides employment opportunities and income to tens of thousands of people across the country.

Over the years, our Khadi and village industries have grown from strength to strength. At present, the sector produces goods worth over Rs.21,675 crore and provides employment to 1.3 crore people annually. Besides this, the sector has considerable export potential. Together with fast increasing domestic demand for Khadi products it has captured international markets like never before. India exports Khadi products to more than 17 countries including all the major developed economy countries.

Term of Khadi: The term Khadi is today not just confined to the fabric which has its origin in a hand spun charaka, it has become generic denoting thousands of