

“Role of Mahatma Gandhi in Rural and Economic Development in India”

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Abstract:

According to Gandhi, economic laws which aim at material progress as well as social harmony and moral advancement, should be formulated according to the laws of nature. The principle of non-violence is the principle of Gandhian philosophy. The main objective of the present study is viable alternative of present day mindless industrialization and A solution to employ and feed large rural population of India. Researcher has collected data in secondary resources. Finally, researcher has concluded that, Gandhi believed that economic emancipation can be achieved through small and medium enterprises and rural village based economic activities. He suggested that in order to make khadi universal, it should be made available in exchange for yarn, i.e., yarn-currency.

Key words: Rural development, Economic development, Economic Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi’s views on cottage industries, Gandhiji views on Khadi Industry and Gandhiji’s views on modern industry and its implications.

1.1 Introduction

According to Gandhi, economic laws which aim at material progress as well as social harmony and moral advancement, should be formulated according to the laws of nature. There is no conflict between the laws of nature and laws of economics. The laws of nature are universal. The laws of economics, which deal with practical problems, are not universal. The economic laws of a country are determined by the climatic, geological and temperamental conditions of that country. Hence they vary with the conditions of the nations. Gandhi advocated non-violence and hence his economics may be called economics of non-violence. The principle of non-violence is the principle of Gandhian philosophy. As there was no industry and no activity without certain violence, he wanted to minimize it. He believed that violence in any form breeds greater violence. He defined a non-violent occupation as one “which is fundamentally free from violence and which involves no exploitation or envy of others”. The solution to Indian basic problems lies in the practice of nonviolence. Gandhiji opposed capitalism as it resulted in exploitation of human labour. He believed that nature produced enough for the satisfaction of the people’s wants and there would be no pauperism and starvation if everybody took only that much that was sufficient to him.

Gandhiji described machinery as ‘great sin’. He believed that the modern technology was responsible for human frustration, violence and war. It was also responsible for the multiplication of material wants. The use of machines created a class of wealthy people and led to unequal distribution of wealth. Gandhiji was not against machinery. He says “the spinning wheel itself is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine, what I object to is the

craze for labour saving machinery. Men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation”. But he was against all destructive machinery. He welcomed such instruments and machinery that saved individual labour and lightened the burden of millions of cottage workers.

1.2 Review of Relevant Literature

1. Joshi S (2020), Has studied Gandhian economic thought and its relevance in rural development. The main objective were to Mahatma Gandhi and his economic ideas are relevant to economic process and in twenty first century and to create Indian villages prosperous and progressive is feasible through economic process. he has collected secondary data from the different sources like journal, articles and books. He has focused on gram swaraj, khadi, ramrajya, rural development. Finally he has concluded that his vision to create Indian villages prosperous and progressive is feasible through economic process and In positive sense, there are huge prospects and ways in which to create agriculture, village economy, farmer’s life and rural areas prosperous are international trends of trade is unfold to villages.

2. Anamika Dinesh & Arya Devi R.(2017),He has studied Gandhian Approach to Rural Development: A Study of Sustainable Farming by Gandhi Smaraka Grama Seva Kendram (GSGSK). The main objective were as understand Gandhian approach of rural development and examine various activities of GSGSK and identify various methods of sustainable farming implemented by GSGSK and to analyze it under the framework of Gandhian principles. He has collected primary data direct personal interviews and Secondary data was obtained from various research publications, books, reports of various committees and commission, periodicals and annual report of GSGSK. He has focused on importance of gram swraj in rural sector, revellence of swadeshi in rural sector importance of gram swaraj in rural sector, bread-labor in the rural sector, sarvodaya in the rural sector, Self-sufficient village economy sarvodaya in the rural sector and constructive program me and its relevance for rural development. He has concluded that Sustainable farming practices of GSGSK have its root in Gandhi an principles. Most of the people in the villages where GSGK functions depend on agriculture, therefore the institution is dedicating its great effort for the development of sustainable agricultural activities. And he has suggested that Government should give more attention to cooperate with NGOs which are working in the field of rural sector. Grama Panchayats must stay connected with these institutions and should organise various development projects effectively through them.

3. Madhumathi M (2011),Has studied the Gandhian approach to rural development. The objectives were to fort economic progress of India and to achieve a sustainable economic model. He has collected secondary data from the various resources like books, reports and journals. He has covered gram swaraj, constructive programme, rural development, sevagram, cottage

Industries, Rama Rajya, Trusteeship. he has found that. He found that the progress of the country lies in the development of majority of its rural villages and develop rural economy,

industry and rural skills. he has concluded that the Gandhian model of rural reconstruction, like any other development model, has both its proponents and opponent and the proponents argue that under the prevailing sociocultural and economic conditions in India, the Gandhian model is still relevant, and is the only alternative available for bringing about equitable and sustainable rural development.

4. Ravi B Mahatma (2012), He has studied Gandhi in the context of enhancement of small scale industry in the development of India. The main objectives were to viable alternative of present day mindless industrialization and solution to employ and feed large rural population of India. he covered secondary data through various sources likes journal, books and reports. He has observed that decentralization, khadi, swadeshi, small scale industry, Inclusive economics, village sarvodaya, Non-violent economy and food problem. He has concluded that small scale industries promoted by today's economists were envisaged decades ago by Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhi believed that economic emancipation can be achieved through small and medium enterprises and rural village based economic activities. He has suggested that that Gandhiji's model of village industry needs to be explored in today's day and age.

5. Somavanshi M.L (2019), He has studied Mahatma Gandhi's views on rural development. he has covered development, villages, swaraj, economic and development. The main objectives were to analysis the Mahatma Gandhi view of the nature of gram swaraj. He has collected secondary data from the deferent sources like a books, journals and reports. He has concluded that rural development and village may be self- dependent and economically strong. He has suggested that people from buy and sell the products which are made by them.

1.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of present study is as follow:

1. Viable alternative of present day mindless industrialization
2. Solution to employ and feed large rural population of India.

1.4 Rural development

Rural development usually refers to the method of enhancing the quality of life and financial well-being of individuals, specifically living in populated and remote areas. Rural development still remains the core of the overall development of the country. More than two-third of the country's people are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, and one-third of rural India is still below the poverty line. Therefore, it is important for the government to be productive and provide enough facilities to upgrade their standard of living.

Rural development is a term that concentrates on the actions taken for the development of rural areas to improve the economy. However, few areas that demand more focused attention and new initiatives are:

- Education
- Public health and Sanitation

- Women empowerment
- Infrastructure development (electricity, irrigation, etc.)
- Facilities for agriculture extension and research
- Availability of credit
- Employment opportunities

Gandhian strategy of rural reconstruction was based on village swaraj and swadeshi movement. The basic principle of village swaraj as outlined by Gandhiji are trusteeship, swadeshi, full employment, bread labour, self-sufficiency, decentralization, equality, Nai Talim etc.

Economic development

Economic Development is programs, policies or activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. Economic Development is a sustained. Increase in prosperity and quality of life realized through innovation, lowered. Transaction costs, and the utilization of capabilities towards the responsible, Production and diffusion of goods and services. economic development is taken to be the structural transformation of an economy by introducing more mechanized and updated technologies to increase labor productivity, employment, incomes, and standard of living of the population. Prof. Meier and Baldwin defined economic development as a process by which an economy's real national income increases over a long period.

Economic Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhian Economic Ideas are based on ethical and moral foundations. According to him economics that hurts the moral wellbeing of an individual or a nation is immoral, and therefore sinful. He believed that the economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The principle 'Simple living and high thinking' played a significant role in Gandhi's life. Gandhi was a practical idealist. His economics should be described as the economics of non-violence. He opposed modern capitalism, because according to him it exploits human labour.

Mahatma Gandhi's views on cottage industries

Gandhiji observed that in the early part of Industrial Revolution in India, cottage industries carried out major part of the production by giving work to be done by the workers at home. Then relatively small scale industries and business operations were carried out from the home. At that time majority of population in India are below the poverty line. He thought that any pursuit of activity in a cottage industry involved an unusually large number of independent participants. There is no need of huge capital to establish a cottage or small scale industry. Normally a cottage industry is carried out at home by the family members using their own equipment. These types of small and tiny organizations are following complexity of activities relating to production which provide more employment to members in the family. The study of Gandhiji's views had become a virtual cottage industry in the last 30 years producing schools, museums, foundations and more than 400 biographies.

Gandhiji emphasized that he was against large scale production only of those things which villages can produce without difficulty. He believed that machinery was harmful when the same thing could be done easily by millions of hands. He wrote “mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. Production should be organized in a large number of places on a small scale. As Gandhiji was for the development of cottage and rural industries, he suggested delocalization of industries. Gandhiji believed that decentralization was essential for the survival of democracy and for the establishment of a non-violent state.

Gandhiji views on Khadi Industry

Every Indian needed at least 13 yards of cloth per year. Gandhiji believed that multiplication of mills could not solve the problem of cloth supply; therefore he stressed the development of Khadi industry. For Gandhiji, khadi was the “symbol of unity of Indian humanity of its economic freedom and equality”. Khadi means the decentralization of production and distribution of the necessities of human life. Khadi movement began only after Gandhiji’s return from South Africa. Gandhiji presented khadi as a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance. It was his belief that reconstruction of the society and effective Satyagraha against the foreign rule can be possible only through khadi. The spinning wheel was at one time the symbol of India's poverty and backwardness. Gandhiji turned it into a symbol of self-reliance and non-violence. Khadi enabled him to carry his message of swadeshi and swaraj to the people and to establish connection with them. He believed that Khadi industry would save millions of people from starvation and would supplement the earnings of poor people. His slogan was “swaraj through spinning”.

His khadi scheme included the following:

1. Compulsory spinning in all primary and secondary schools.
2. Cultivation of cotton in areas where it was not grown.
3. Organization of weaving by the multipurpose co-operative societies.
4. All employees in the department of education, co-operation, municipalities, district boards and panchayats should be required to pass a test in spinning, otherwise they may be disqualified.
5. Control of prices of handloom cloth woven of mill yarn.
6. Imposition of a ban on the use of mill cloth in areas where the hand woven cloth was in abundance.
7. Use of hand-spun cloth in all Government and textile and weaving departments.
8. The old cloth mills should not be allowed to expand and new ones should not be opened.
9. Import of foreign yarn or cloth should be banned.

Gandhiji’s views on modern industry and its implications

Gandhiji remarked that the capitalist who had amassed a large sum of money was a thief. If a person had inherited a big fortune or had collected a large amount of money by way of trade and industry, the entire amount did not belong to him. It belonged to the entire society and

must be spent on the welfare of all. He wanted to avoid a violent and bloody revolution by gearing a permanent stability of economic equality. He wanted the capitalists to be trustees and he enunciated the doctrine of trusteeship. All social property is meant for all people—rich or poor. Capitalists being trustees would take care of not only themselves but also of others.

His entire ideology is summed up as follows:

(i) “Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian 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.

(ii) “It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its welfare.

(iii) “It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and the use of wealth.

(iv) “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.

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

Gandhian idea on exchange economy is based on the swadeshi spirit. Every Indian village should be a self-supporting and self-contained unit exchanging only necessary commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible. The person who has accepted the discipline of swadeshi would not mind physical discomfort or inconvenience caused by the non-availability of certain things which he has been using. He would gradually learn to do without those things which up to this time he has been regarding as necessary for his life.

According to him, “capital should be labor’s servant, not its master”. Moreover, he believed in the formation of labour unions. If the rights of workers were not conceded, they could go on a strike which should be based on non-violence and truth.

1.5 Conclusion

Small cottage industries promoted by today's economists were envisaged decades ago by Mahatma Gandhi, said speakers at a discussion yesterday. Gandhi believed that economic emancipation can be achieved through small and medium enterprises and rural village based economic activities. He suggested that in order to make khadi universal, it should be made available in exchange for yarn, i.e., yarn-currency. Through this paper author exhorts that Gandhiji’s model of village industry needs to be explored in today’s day and age.

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