



Impact of Gandhian Ideals

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Chapter: 6**GANDHIJI IDEAS ON
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA****Dr. D. Rajya Lakshmi**

I. Introduction: Social Development is concerned more with scientific study of the development of human society or the development of mans social life. Since man is a social being and mutually acts and reacts with one another, study of the nature of this relationship is important. Infact, everything man does has some sociological implications, because all the activities, religious, economic, scientific, educational etc are performed in society and in their turn influence it in some way or the other (Zatlin Irving-1987). Aristotle was fully aware of man's intimate relationship with society, which prompted him to say that "Man is a Social Animal". Hence in this background the present paper is to analyze the Social development ideas of Mahatma Gandhi .This paper is purely based on secondary data, the main sources of information regarding economic thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi from various sources of Indian scholars.

II. Biographical Sketch of M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948): Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbander. In 1887, he went to England for education in Law, and was called to the bar in 1891. From 1893 to 1914 Gandhiji rendered great service to the cause of social equality in South Africa. He served the people of South Africa for two decades and came back to India in 1915 and assumed the political leadership of the country. He was shot dead by an extremist who did not agree with his views, on January 30, 1948. The great has been the influence of Gandhian ideology that the period from 1920 to 1948 was called the Gandhian era. His ideas was influenced and shaped by the philosophy of Tolstoy, Tustain, Thoreau, Kropotkin, Kabir Nanak and of Hindu scriptures like Upanishads and Gita. Gandhi's economic

philosophy is based on the well-being of the individual, social justice, non-violence and ultimately self realization of man as a central metaphysical norm.

III. Social development concept-Mahatma Gandhi: The term social development may seem a very idealistic in itself but it is very complex and more difficult to achieve. Social development is about improving the well being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. Gandhi's basic aim was to have an all-round development of the society that included human development along with socio-economic-political development. He wanted freedom and equality for all. His ultimate goal was Sarvodaya (the development of all in all facts of life). The concept of Sarvodaya pre supposes the principles, of justice Sarvodaya generates movement after changes out ward as well as inward and strives for egalitarian social order based on truth nonviolence and purity. For Gandhi, villages formed the foundation of Indian Society and therefore he supported the idea of self rule, governance at the local levels. Decentralization was his mantra for achieving equality and development. His emphasis on decentralization, community based economics, self sufficiency, handicrafts, rural development and use of low capital intensive appropriate technology indicate his vision for a self sufficient economy. "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not even one man's greed". This statement was given by Gandhiji himself as he always oppose the exploitation, he emphasized on equal distribution of resources. Gandhi has tried to explain the concept of Swaraj or home rule from the point of view of non-violence or love. He has bitterly criticized many of the things associated with modern (western) civilization. For example, he has attacked railways hospitals, doctors, lawyers, machines etc, as things that are not only useless but also positively harmful. (M.K.Gandhi-1962)

A civilized or modern society is becoming rigid day by day. The state of unauthentic existence of man and his impersonal elements have however proved inimical and antithetical to his basic individuality. The speedy automization of modern mechanized society is fast resulting in de-individualization and de-humanization of man in modern times. As a result there is an economic and social exploitation. (Reddy.V.N.K-1963). Gandhiji's objection to modern civilization is based on the ground that it takes note neither of morality nor of religion. (Gandhi M.K.-1962). As one knows, Gandhi's entire outlook is based on moral principles, man is essentially a spiritual entity, although the human body is a material things. Since civilization means progress, the test of a civilization should be in its ability to facilitate spiritual progress. A true civilization should help man to progress morally, not materially. A civilization that caters to only material comforts and conveniences and leads man away from the path of righteousness is a false one. It is like intoxicating liquor which temporarily creates a false sense of well-being and happiness, but is infact, harmful dangerous. (Devadoss. T.S.-1983)

7. Gandhian Philosophy of Rural Development: Gandhi is regarded as the first social thinker in India who presented a complete picture of an ideal Indian society based on rural realities, giving thought to every aspect, such as nature of the state and its administration, defense, health, sanitation housing, education, unemployment, development of weaker

sections and eradication of various social problems such as untouchability, alcoholism, poverty etc. It is interesting to note that Gandhi used the word Grama Swaraj with a double meaning in the context of Indian National Movement. Gandhi promoted in the concept of Swaraj or self rule, advocating Indian Independence from foreign domination. Simultaneously, he also discussed his belief in Gram Swaraj (village self rule) asserting that the Indian village should be self sufficient and autonomous.

Gandhi's idea on village republic is bold and comprehensive. According to Gandhi, Village Panchayats should have full powers and little interference from the state. Emphasizing on autonomous village republic is the way to promote participatory model of rural development "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers (Harijan, 4-1-1948, p.500) rural prosperity begins with the formation of all powerful village panchayat that would self-impose the rules and regulations for self-reliance and sustainable development. Rural development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standards of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment.

V. Mahatma Gandhi Ideas on Sarvodaya: The Sarvodaya thinkers accept that democracy is the best form of polity so far conceived by human ingenuity, but they assert that the existing democracies have too many defects to be accepted as they are. Their criticism of democracy through based mainly on Indian experiences is generally applicable to all democratic governments (Patil, V.T.-1985). The fundamental defects of the present day democracy is that it ignores the organic nature of the society. It bases itself on the individual voter and the whole process rests on the arithmetic of votes leading to an atomization of the individual (Narayan Jayaprakash- 1959)

In the field of politics and administration independence with mean that the village manages its own administrative and legal problems without outside interference, through the panchayat. The grama panchayat is a body of the five persons to be chosen unanimously on the basis of merit without any party, caste or religions consideration and will be vested with all executive judicial and legislative powers. In case of any dispute the panchayat without as a court. All decisions effecting the economic, social and political life of the community will be taken by the panchayat. (Narayan Jayaprakash -1961).Explaining his stand on village Swaraj or Rama Rajya Gandhi said: "My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic independent of its neighbors for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many other in which dependence is necessary. Thus every villages first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and play ground for adults and children. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will has its own

water works. Education will be compulsory up to final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the cooperative banks. (Gandhi. M.K.).

VI. Conclusions: Panchayats have been in Indian villages from the time immemorial. Though many political changes have swept in India the social organization has nom remained stable more or less because of the stability provided by the Panchayats. The directive principles of state policy, in difference to the wishes of Gandhi, has laid down that the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and to endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self- government. (Base, D.D-1980). In order to make the Panchayati Raj institution a really effective instrument of economic, political, and social growth the Ashok Mehta Committee has recommended strengthening of democracy at the grass-roots. This means that power should not be centralized at the Union and State levels as at present, but should go down to the district and mandal levels. (Muttalib-1980)

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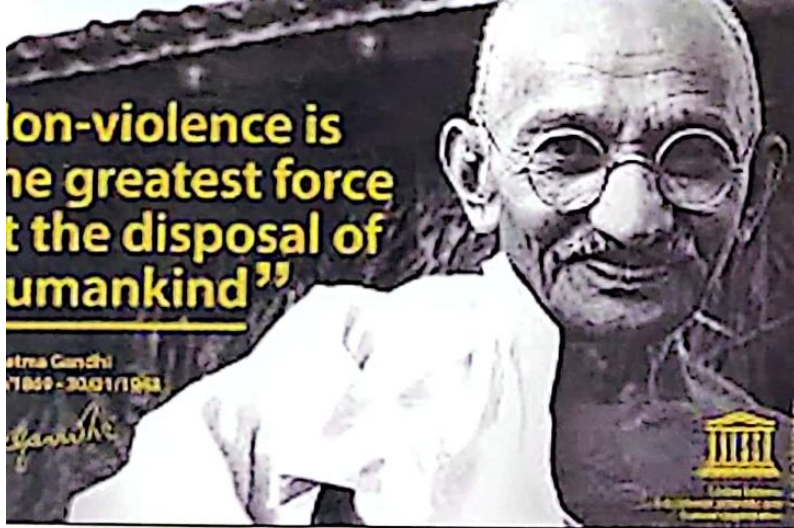
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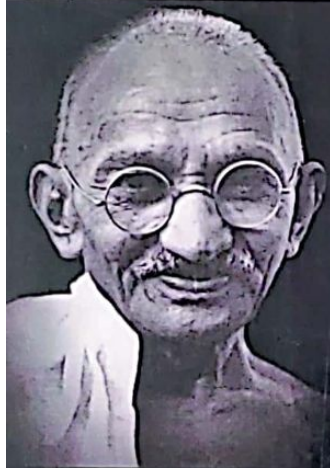
Non-violence is
the greatest force
for the disposal of
mankind"

Mahatma Gandhi
1869 - 30/01/1948

Mahatma



satyagrahi has infinite
patience, abundant
faith in others
and ample hope.



In a **gentle** way,
you can **shake** the world.

- Mahatma Gandhi



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