

Gandhiji's Idea of Swaraaj and Its Relevance In the Present Context

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Abstract

The twelve concepts which constitute Gandhiji's ideology of Village Swaraj are: Full-Employment, Body-Labour (Bread-Labour), Equality (Economic), Trusteeship, Decentralization, Swadeshi, Self-sufficiency, Cooperation, Satyagraha, Equality of Religions, Panchayat Raj, Nai Talim (Basic Education). In the last sixty years after independence, most of the above concepts have been implemented in some form or the other at various points of time, by the Central / State Governments, but with the name of the father of these concepts carefully kept out of the view of the people.

Keywords: Concepts, Various, Carefully, Implemented;

Introduction

Almost seven decades since independence, India now stands at the crossroads. The bright side at the top of the cloud has been sighted and therefore the Indian economy is poised for the breakthrough which can carry it from the dark regions of under development to the brilliant regions of the developed world. Political Pandits hail India as an emerging economic power. Some even predict that India are going to be a superpower by 2020. At this juncture, it's pertinent and necessary to pause and ponder if all this is often really true. it's and it's not. Urban India is prospering indeed, but rural India is degenerating. Urban Indians enjoy the advantages of world standard state-of-the-art technology in habitation, clothing, food, health care, education and entertainment. But rural India has not even heard of those. The promoters of technological advancement can never be persuaded to maneuver to the villages of India. So rural India is doomed to stay backward. there's a danger of the agricultural urban divide deepening thus far that the one are going to be totally stop from the opposite within the near future. This is an impossible situation. Urban India can't afford to chop itself faraway from rural India for the straightforward reason that almost two thirds of India's population lives in rural India.

Meaning of Swaraj

The word Swaraj may be a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means. By Swaraj mean "the govt of India by

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the consent of the people as ascertained by the most important number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labor to the service of the State and who have taken the difficulty of getting registered their names as voters. Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a couple of but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it's abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be obtained by educating the masses to a way of their capacity to manage and control authority."

Gandhiji's ideology of Village Swaraj consists of twelve concepts, namely,

1. Full-Employment
2. Body-Labour (Bread-labour)
3. Equality (Economic)
4. Trusteeship
5. Decentralisation
6. Swadeshi
7. Self-sufficiency
8. Cooperation
9. Satyagraha
10. Equality of Religions
11. Panchayat Raj
12. Nai Talim (Basic Education)

Full-Employment

According to Gandhiji, "Every person features a right to measure, and thus to seek out the time to feed himself and where necessary, to clothe and house himself." Gandhiji also says,

"Take no thought for the morrow" is an injunction which finds an echo in most the religious scriptures of the planet. In well-ordered society the securing of one's livelihood should be and is found to be the simplest thing within the world. Indeed, the test of orderliness during a country isn't the amount of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses.

Gandhiji writes: "Real planning consisted within the best utilization of the entire man-power of India". Gandhiji also writes: "We should be ashamed of resting or having a meal goodbye as there's one able-bodied man or woman without work or food."

Body-Labour (Bread-Labour)

Gandhiji asks, "How can a person who doesn't do body labour, have the proper to eat?." Gandhiji writes.

"Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow," says the Bible. Sacrifices could also be of the many kinds.

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one among them could be Bread labour. If all laboured for his or her bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over- population, no disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labour are going to be the very best sort of sacrifice. Men will little question do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this may be labour of affection for the commonweal. there'll then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable."

Gandhiji says, "Intellectual work is vital and has an undoubted place within the scheme of life. But what I enforce is that the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, need to be free from that obligation." Gandhiji writes, "God created man to figure for his food and said that those that ate without work were thieves."

Equality

Vyas clearly explains what Gandhiji means by equality: The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural wants and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants. To bring this ideal into being the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent too, shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.

Trusteeship

Gandhi ji writes; Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours. How is this to be brought about? Non-violently? Or should the wealthy be dispossessed of their possessions? To do this we would naturally have to resort to violence. This violent action cannot benefit society. Society will be the poorer, for it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth.

Decentralisation

Gandhi ji I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non- violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces"

Swadeshi

Gandhiji's concept of Swadeshi was revolutionary: Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.If we follow

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the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible. This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mohammedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mohammedan household.

Self-sufficiency

Gandhi ji writes: "Every village's first concern are going to be to grow its own food crops, and cotton for its cloth". Gandhiji also writes, "Every village has got to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the entire world"

Cooperation

According to Gandhiji, "As far as possible every activity are going to be conducted on the cooperative basis". He also writes, "Let it's remembered that cooperation should be supported strict non-violence".

Satyagraha

Gandhiji says, "Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation are going to be the sanction of the village community".

Equality of Religions

Gandhiji writes, "Every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of an imposing tree whose trunk can't be shaken off its roots which are at heart within the bowels of the world. The mightiest of winds can't move it".

Panchayat Raj

Gandhiji says, "The government of the village are going to be conducted by the Panchayat of 5 persons, annually elected by the adult villagers, male and feminine, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications," adding, "Since there'll be no system of punishments within the accepted sense, this Panchayat are going to be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to work for its year of office".

Nai Talim (Basic-Education)

Gandhiji writes: By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the

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moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools". The Government of India implemented Gandhiji's concept of Panchayat Raj under the name of the *Community Development Programme* in 1951. M.Aram, in "The Contribution of Universities to Integrated Rural Development," says:³⁶ The Community Development programme included agriculture, animal husbandry, rural health, rural industry, rural housing, education, communications etc. It was a comprehensive approach to rural development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. K.P. Jaiswal in *Hindu Polity* (1955), points out that from the Vedic period, the village administration was looked after by the village headman, called Gramani. He was the leader of the village and he was a nominee of the king. The Gramani was the head of the town or village and its representative at the coronation ceremony.
2. H.D. Malaviya in *Village Panchayat in India* (1956), points out that people's institutions, bearing various names, existed all over the country even in Vedic times.
3. S.V. Samant in *Village Panchayats* (1957), says that, in ancient times, the rural local body constituted the primary territorial unit of administration, that Manu Sastra distinguished three kinds of administrative divisions, namely, Village (Gram), Town (Pura) and City (Nagar) and that the rural areas and rural local bodies were considered to be the important fundamental units of the administration.
4. U.N. Dhabar in *The Role of Panchayat in New India* (1957), states that the village in those days enjoyed a large measure of self-government and the Indian village was a vital and dynamic socio-economic organism. He reports that, in 1882, Lord Ripon's Government passed the historic resolution on local self-government.
5. Hardly any literature worth mentioning is available on Gandhiji's concept of full employment. The only exception is Aram's monograph titled *Gandhian Perspective on Integrated Rural Development* (1983), which is reprint of his research article "The Contribution of Universities to Integrated Rural Development," presented at the 13th Quinquennial Commonwealth Universities Congress held at the University of Birmingham from 14 to 20 August 1983.
6. Gopinath Dhawan, in *Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (1990) says that the ideal of bread labour automatically leads to non- possession and economic equality which non-violence also implies. The ideal of bread labour will bring about complete economic and social equality. The ideal of bread labour also implies an agricultural, rural civilization based on handicrafts. There will be no room in this society for exploitation, the zamindari system or capitalism. Everyday will be his own master and none a hired labourer of another.
7. K.S. Bharathi in *Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi* (1990) says that bread labour is closely related to truth, non-violence, brahmacharya, non- stealing and non-possession. Gandhiji believed that

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to live, man must work. To Gandhiji, justice demands that the fruits of labour accrue only to him who has worked for it. The vast majority of people throughout the world live by tilling the land and they do not need any extra physical exercise.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are

1. To study the level of villagers' awareness of the twelve components of Gandhiji's ideology of village swaraj; and
2. To elicit the opinion of villagers of
3. The components of Gandhiji's ideology of village swaraj;
4. The practicability, in the present scenario, of some of the components of Gandhiji's ideology of village swaraj; and,
5. The means of enhancing the effective implementation of some of the components of Gandhiji's ideology of village swaraj.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses framed for the study are the following:

1. There is an association between the sex of respondents awareness of the Gandhian concepts of Village Swaraj.
2. There is an association between the age of respondents and their awareness of the Gandhian concepts of Village Swaraj.
3. There is an association between the community of respondents and their awareness of the Gandhian concepts of Village Swaraj.

Research methodology

Research methodology is a logical way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be executed. In other words, it is also defined as the study of methods and ways by which knowledge is gained. Different researchers are using different methods and techniques for their research depending upon their research field but so far as my research work is concerned I have used historical method.

Primary sources:

Primary sources are original documentations of certain incidents, things, persons or work. They empower students and researchers to get as close as possible to the real events and facts

Secondary sources:

Secondary sources generally translate, investigates and explains primary sources. These sources are one or more footsteps removed from the original events and thus sometimes lacks the closeness of

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the original subject matter. So far as the secondary sources of my research program is concerned I have used several sources like:

1. Historical text books
2. Journals
3. Magazines
4. Encyclopedias
5. Newspapers

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to actual practices in the study area. So it can, at the most, be generalized only upto the level of Tamil Nadu State. While the questions on awareness were answered by a simple "Yes" or "No," which was easy to record, the questions on opinions posed two problems: some questions had to be explained several times before the respondents to comprehend them and some of the responses were so irrelevant that the respondents had to be guided back. The collection of the secondary data did not pose any problem, except that Gandhian books were rarely sold, except by Sarvodaya book- stalls.

Conclusion:

Thus, Gandhi's aim of totally implementing the concepts of Swaraj in India was not achieved. The voluntary work organisations which he founded for this purpose did serve as precursors and role models for people's movements, voluntary organisations, and some of the nongovernmental organisations that were subsequently launched in various parts of India. Although the word Swaraj means self-rule, Gandhi gave it the content of an integral revolution that encompasses all spheres of life, at the individual level Swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing selfreliance. Gandhi was undaunted by the task of implementing such a utopian vision in India. He believed that by transforming enough individuals and communities, society at large would change.

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