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## RELEVANCE OF ECONOMIC IDEAS OF GANDHI IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### Introduction:

Gandhi is larger than economic science. He had not studied economics as a subject in the curriculum nor had he opportunity of reading standard books on modern economics. He drew his thoughts on economic affairs from three sources. The First was his ethical and Spiritual conviction, the second was his close involvement with the economic conditions of the people particularly the rural people who formed over 80% of the country in his day, and the third was his reading and reflection and the results of his putting into action what he read of the Utopian Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' and Tolstoy's 'The kingdom of God is within' you. The Bible also shaped his thoughts on social and economic matters.

While in detention during the quit India movement, he found some time to read Marx's 'Das Capital.' The fullest statement of his views about ultimate criterion in the economic sphere is to be found in his December 22, 1916 speech at the Muir College, Economic society in Allahabad. In that speech he declared: "I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatise on laws of economics than many modern text books..... He (Jesus) is himself the greatest economist of his time". (Tendulkar, 1961, P 195)

Gandhian economic ideas were a product of the socio-economic conditions that Indian was facing during his time under the British Rule. Therefore, his basic economic thought was devoted to solving the basic problems of poverty and unemployment. He again thought about the empowerment of the women. He has expressed his views and his contributed to various sectors of the economy. The basis of Gandhian thought has been in utilization of natural resources of the country. He wanted economic change to be brought about through non- violent methods and which should promote general welfare and peace in the society.

Gandhian economic philosophy deals with certain principles of social economic i.e. humanism, love & cooperation, nonviolence, trusteeship, Social Justice, Sattvik materialism, harmony etc. It is on these principles; he wanted to build the idea socialist society. Consistent with his economic philosophy discussed in the above mentioned principles, Gandhiji developed his economic ideas which are based on his vision of Swaraj and the philosophy of non-violence. In Fact, Gandhi's economic ideas are found scattered all over his writing & speeches which are relevant even after sixty years of independence. His economic ideas aim to promote Spiritual development and harmony with a rejection of materialism.

In this research paper Gandhi's view on sustainable development, Decentralization a Rural development has been studied. In the 21st century Gandhian Ideas on economic development are very important because Gandhian economic development takes care of environment as well as protect from decentralization Gandhian Ideas does not let to create cities and does not let to exploit to poor, Humanity, peace, equality non-violence justice etc are virtues of his economic ideas which are very important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Sustainable Development:**

Sustainable development is an important concept in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The loss of the resources in vast proportion doesn't indicate sustainable development. According to Sing and Kedia indicate the meaning of the sustainable development, Sustainable development is the key word in the modern development literature It has acquired an important dimension in the context of gradually depleting exhaustible resources which are limited and finite, destruction of forests, ecological imbalance, pollution of air and water, environmental disaster, spread of terrible diseases affecting plant and animal life and colossal waste and thus usually high casts of development which a rational society cannot bear long for its sustenance and development There has been a recent surge of interest in sustainable development, (Singh, 1998:168).

#### **Gandhi's view on sustainable Development:**

According Gandhi, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." The Gandhi's thought represent that, man should not consume much than his need, because the nature will be utilized more than its giving capacity.

Gandhi is regarded an apostle of humanism and of what is good and virtuous in man and he is among those eminent thinkers and philosopher who could foresee the social and ecological consequence of economic development. He noted that nature was being destroyed by unlimited industrialization and massive urbanization which were thought necessary for development. These processes were creating problems of ecological balance. He was highly critical of modern civilization (Misra 1997:122).



Indian intellectual Rani Bakshi spoke to Oliver Balch on the occasion of debate on 'Relevance of Gandhi in the capitalism' on 28 Jan, 2013. She says his world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed. Mahatma Gandhi said in what is now one of his best-known quotes. The ubiquity is for good reason. Our 'must have, economy is eating into the planet's resources like never before, something Gandhi foresaw three-quarters of a century ago. He also warned of the dangers of other countries taking to western industrialism.

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known quotes. The ubiquity is for good reason. Our 'must have, economy is eating into the planet's resources like never before, something Gandhi foresaw three-quarters of a century ago. He also warned of the dangers of other countries taking to western industrialism.

Despite his global impact as a moral philosopher asking what Gandhi would do is not a question many economists care to ask. Instead, the man known as 'Bapu' (father) in his homeland is regularly written off as something of a retrograde luddite and idealist. After all, this was the man who opposed mass production and called on his supporters to wave their own cotton clothes.

Instead of high speed production as an impact of modern industrialization resulting in destruction of human dignity and individuality and making human- being a mere cog in the machine and contaminating environment with prisons of many kinds, thus inviting unforeseen natural disasters, humankind should, Gandhi said, decentralize and simplify production in such a way which will help promote human creativity and develop individual personality which alone can achieve harmony between man and his environment. The Gandhian model of development has potentialities for offering remarkable opportunities for social reconstruct on for perennial social and human progress locally, nationally and globally (Unnithan 1997: 220) Unnithan observes, the Gandhian model of development will help the world to protect its environment and obtain sustainable development.

Some of the central planks of the Gandhian model of sustainable development are the following. The Gandhian perspective is non materialistic, non- violent harmonistic, egalitarian and value-driven. These values highlight the moral over the sensual and the material the sanctity necessity and dignity of manual labor and the valuation of the spiritual and the virtue of simplicity, of social and inner peace planes. The central unit is the eternal village and villagers, who are deemed to be reservoirs of what is intrinsically valuable in society.

His ideas about sustainable development are not limited any environment protection but also regarding social justice and malnutrition. According to Awashthi, Gandhiji thought for economic stability as long as the hunger, malnutrition and exploitation of the poor continued in any part of the world there could be no economic stability social justice and ecological sustainability (Awasth, 1997:20)

#### **Gandhi's thought about decentralization:**

Village-level self-sufficiency is an objective.

Gandhi was a philosopher, social thinker, a prophet and an economist. 'Adam Smith built-up a system of free economy violent socialist economy systems was built up by Karl Marx but Gandhi's system was very different from both. He advocated system of decentralization non violent economy. The Gandhian model of decentralized economy and planning centers round his ideas about economic centers round his ideas about economic philosophy decentralization machinery, emphasis on



agriculture and tiny sector, cooperatives, justice employment, mixed economy and doctrine of trusteeship.

Capital economy or social economy could not solve the problems of malnutrition, unemployment, or could not establish peace or welfare in society. In capitalist & social economy in both political and economic power centralized in a few people's hand, therefore exploitation has been taken place. In this scenario only the ideas of decentralization can be solved the problems of economy.

Gandhiji believed that 'Mechanized Economy model' is no longer valid model and salvation of masses lies in a decentralized organic economy. A centralized economy leads to the concentration of population in the cities leading to many problems of urbanization, gangsterism, alienation from society and natural surrounding leading to slums population of the atmosphere, problems of housing and water supply, acceptance of material values as against spiritual, violence and crimes and many other social values are its natural consequences. Centralization has caused inequalities among the people, conflicting interest, warring classes, wasteful competition dehumanized markets, over production of luxurious and harmful articles while the basic needs are starving and the degradation of skilled workers. It is owing to centralization that western Europe practiced the colonial exploitation of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and greatly divided the world between rich countries comprising of the nations of western Europe, North America and Australia and the poor countries of Asia and Latin America Gandhiji's economic critique of imperialism is non Marxist in origin tracing back to the influences of Naorogi, Gokhale and Tolstoy, Gandhiji Visualized a decentralized economic order where they would be no exploitation social economic of man by man.

Decentralization of productive activity is another essential element of Gandhian Economic Small Thought. It favors widely depressed cottage and industries using labor-intensive techniques as a solution to the problems of a labor surplus economy and does not see any sense in pushing through gigantic programmes of industrialization, which might increase material wealth but do impoverish the masses. Large scale industry leads to concentration, greed, exploitation, inequality and slums, in this respect, there is much confusion about the place of modern technology any industry in the Gandhian Economic thought. This theory is not an uncompromising opponent of power-driven machinery and modern large scale industry. It is opposed to craze for machinery and not to machinery as such if it does not render labour surplus. Gandhi said, "If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers using their implements and tools with the help of electricity ... But where there is no Machinery, no electricity what are the idle hands to do? Will you not give them work ....? (Ganguli, 1977, P 254).

## Gandhi's view on Rural Development:

It was Gandhiji who first understood the importance role and place of Indian villages in the whole country. The rural character of the economy and the need for regeneration of rural life was stressed by Mahatma Gandhi. He wrote in Harijan (4 April, 1936):

"India is to be found not in few cities but in its 700,000 villages. But we town dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly paused to inquire if those poor get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain.

Gandhiji's approach to rural development was practical and productive. He wanted to develop a 'New social order' based on the foundation of non-violence and truth where economic upliftment and rural progress go together focusing on 'Development of man' (M. Sinha & R. Singh, 2007, p. 66)

Gandhi remarked "Exploiting the village itself is organized violence...." The blood of the village is the cement with which the edifice of cities is built. I want this blood that is today inflating the arteries of cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the Villages."

Gandhi wanted each village should be self-sufficient and self-reliance. According to Gandhi my idea of self-sufficiency is that village must be sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other basic necessities. The village as "community" should be a production and consumption unit.

Gandhi wanted "development to be related to human scale: handicraft instead of gigantic industries, village habitats instead of megacities, Swadeshi in place of imported technology, a decentralized economy instead of centralized one (Indireson: 1994).

The above paradigms of development portend a bright ray of hope for the toiling millions in rural India. Alvin Toffler in his celebrated volume "Third Wave" makes a very objective analysis of the various options available to modern man. In a critical appraisal of the three waves that is the capitalist, Marxist and Gandhian. Toffler prefers Gandhian model as the best alternative for the whole world. Therefore, it is high time for our policy makers, bureaucrats and academicians, to make a reappraisal of our development strategies and programmes on Gandhian lines which would give us proper insight and broad vision to rethink and redesign our planning perspective, allowing India live in villages not in cities. In so far as the self-sufficiency of village life of 75% of India's population is concerned, the best resource is to rediscover the Gandhian paths of development. We can achieve what we had tended to achieve if we are willing to follow Gandhiji not in theory but in practice.

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