

RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN ECONOMICS AND KHADI IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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ABSTRACT

Gandhi's economic system is based on the traditional system and khadi. He believed that production is to be determined by social necessity. He opined that modern system gives importance to the capital. He opposed modern industrialisation and opined that progress has to go with moral values. He felt that villages to be free from the influence of industrialisation. and gave more importance to khadhi and desired to promote social, ethical and economic value of spinning wheel. He believed that this transformation to khadhi will provide solutions for all contemporary problems.

KEYWORDS: Khadi, Moral Values, Spinning Wheel, Cooperative Farming, Chakra

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi's crusade against exploitation, poverty and the exploitative Socio-economic order is more relevant in contemporary times. His economic system is based on the traditional religious teaching and he believed that this ethical system alleviates the economic sufferings.

Gandhi opined that the production is to be determined by social necessity but not by personal greed. The approach of Mahatma Gandhi is essentially constructive but not a static one ¹

The modern economics bestows utmost importance to the capital. But, Gandhi believed that the labour is more superior than capital.² Hatred and Violence never results in progress. Capitalists must not rob labourers for their profits but make them share-holders in economic development.

Gandhi found inequalities in the society. He believed that non-violence plays a significant role in establishing economic order and equality in the society. He emphasised that removing conflict between capital and labour is essential for economic equality.³ He cautioned labour not to make exaggerated demands. He believed that labourers must not paralyse industries for their immoral demands. He desired to transform the economic system by his non-violent method. Gandhi believed that the change of mind plays a vital role in capitalists to bring the above transformation. In hi own words," I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees." (Young India, 26.11.1931.p.369.)

The economic order of Gandhi emphasised the production will be determined by social necessity than personal greed or whim.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Economic equality is Gandhi's opinion is that everyone in spite of caste and creed should have enough for his or her needs.⁴ He stated that he would like to bring equality by appealing to the reason of the people. He wanted to bring equality through non-violence by converting people to his point of view. He wanted to bring-out equitable distribution by opening the hearts of people to be aware of the needs of the poor people.

Gandhi opposed modern industrialisation. He opined that progress has to go with moral values and ethical values. He has no consideration for heavy machinery and he believes that it results in mass unemployment. He believed that common people cannot afford large-scale machinery and proposed small-scale industries as the best option for Indian economy. Gandhi opined that concentration of wealth in the hands of few, but in the hands of all is the good sign of healthy economy⁵

VILLAGE-AS AN ECONOMIC UNIT

Gandhi felt that villages to be free from the influence of industrialisation. He opined that a village has to be converted as a economic unit. The establishment of village industries, he opines, solves the unemployment problem in villages.

Gandhi gave most importance to Khadi as a village industry. He desired to promote social value of hand-spinning. In his words, the spinning wheel represents to me the hope of the masses⁶

Gandhi firmly believed that cooperative farming is the best solution for poor persons for prosperous agricultural economy. Cooperative cattle-farming in a scientific manner results in additional income for the farmers. This is possible only when people becomes friends of one another, love each other and live as one family.

Gandhi appealed the nation to accept the norm of "go back to villages". The wealth of village is the wealth of nation, welfare of the village is the welfare of the nation.⁷

KHADI – AS VILLAGE INDUSTRY

Gandhi gave most importance to khadi. He opined that khadi results in economic building of a village. He emphasised revival of economic, social and cultural life in the villages. He believes that khadi alone helps the village population to depend on their own efforts to improve themselves; it also embodies a cultural value. Further khadi helps them to be self-dependent. In the words of Gandhi, "khadi is a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every person above the age of sixteen either male or female".⁸

Gandhi felt a need of simple industry to supplement agriculture for the rural people. These augment the income of the rural masses. He opined that this will create income and helps them to fight starvation. Khadi is the only alternative to social unrest due to large-scale unemployment in rural areas. He believed that India will get socialism only by means of spinning-wheel.

The chakra (Spinning wheel) serves the poor and needy. In his own words, "the Spinning wheel represents to me the hope of the masses-----the chakra the symbol of dignity-----to be away from laziness-----kept the carpenter and blacksmith busy-----villages became self-confident-----generates wealth"⁹Khadi is a symbol of unity to Gandhi and a

great importance to Indian nation. He believed that it is the true national industry of India. Reviving and promoting this industry will bring true economic independence to the millions of our country men and build the national society based on peace, harmony and love.

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