
THE MARCH OF INDIAN ECONOMY ON THE IDEOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS OF GANDHIJI: THEN AND NOW

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Abstract: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar Gujarat in India. Gandhiji was commonly known as “**Mahatma**” (meaning great soul). Gandhiji was a great lawyer, politician, social activist and his ideas in economics were vital. Gandhiji was one of the most respected spiritual and political leader in India. Gandhiji was leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule, of India. The main motive of Mahatma sGandhiji was to free Indian people from British rule through non-violent resistance. Mahatma Gandhiji led India’s independence movement softly facing the british colonialists with inspirational speeches and non-violent protest. The entire campaign of India’s independence from british rule was headed by Gandhiji with employing non- violent resistance. Mainly Gandhiji in turn inspired the movement for civil rights and freedom across the world. Throughout his life Gandhiji believed in the power of truth compassion for others and non-violence.. Gandhiji encouraged oppressed villages to improve their own circumstances, leading peaceful strikes and protests. In 1921 Gandhiji leaded Indian National Congress and reorganized the party’s constitution around the principles of “**Swaraj**” or complete political independence from british. Gandhiji instigated boycott of british goods and institutions and encouraged civil disobedience. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to analyse the economic scenario of Mahatma Gandhi from Gandhian perspectives.

Keywords: Economics, Political, Boycott, Decentralization, Villages.

Introduction: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar Gujarat in India. Gandhiji was commonly known as “**Mahatma**” (meaning great soul). Gandhiji was a great lawyer, politician, social activist and his ideas in economics were vital. Gandhiji was one of the most respected spiritual and political leader in India. Gandhiji was leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule, of India. The main motive of Mahatma Gandhiji was to free Indian people from British rule through non-violent resistance. Mahatma Gandhiji led India’s independence movement softly facing the british colonialists with inspirational speeches and non-violent protest. The entire campaign of India’s independence from british rule was headed by Gandhiji with employing non- violent resistance. Mainly Gandhiji in turn inspired the movement for civil rights and freedom across the world. Throughout his life Gandhiji believed in the power of truth compassion for others and non-violence. Over the course of Gandhiji’s life he made various achievements that impacted the world’s great people. Gandhiji encouraged oppressed villages to improve their own circumstances, leading peaceful strikes and protests. 1921 Gandhiji leaded Indian National Congress and reorganized the party’s constitution around the principles of “**Swaraj**” or complete political independence from british. Gandhiji instigated boycott of british goods and institutions and encouraged civil disobedience. When the british government introduced a tax on salt in 1930 he actively leaded a 250 mile march to the sea to collect his own salt. Moreover, Mahatma Gandhiji five pillars of non-violence: respect, understanding, acceptance, appreciation and compassion were the basic pillars for the existence of non-violence. Gandhiji was the great philosopher of India who played major role in the national movement that defeated british ruler in India. Even though Gandhiji was not a economist but his vision in economics if implemented would

have solved in India from many socio-economic problems. Gandhiji always worked for the wellbeing of the Indian people who were suffering from the policies of East India Company during the era of british. Although Gandhiji was not basically economist but given his ideas on economic issues and struggled against the exploitation policy of british. Mahatma Gandhiji was mostly inspired by Ruskin's heterodox doctrine that the wealth of nation consisted not in its production and consumption of goods but in its people. Therefore, the main focus of this paper is to analyse the economic scenario of Mahatma Gandhi from Gandhian perspectives. Gandhiji's economics is a part of a way of life principle which govern economic, social, political and other considerations. "Truth" and "Non-violence" Gandhiji's views on economics was simple and straight forward which would make India economically self-sufficient, manufacturing and satisfying its own needs in the domestic market, home grown ways which would not only improve the composition of the rural economy of India, it also demoralized the british economic motives of the exploitation of Indian people. Ultimately, Gandhiji spread the ethic of economic self-sufficiency all over the world during the colonial period. The economic idea of Gandhiji enhanced the development of rural areas and minorities by giving them equal and sustainable status. According to Gandhiji, work is not only means economic activities, spiritual growth is necessary for a country like India. Gandhiji's idea was that a country like India should have its own economic policy rather than relying on other foreign countries policies.

Gandhian economics is a school of economic thought based on the spiritual and socio- economic principles propounded by Mahatma Gandhiji. Human beings are always rational actors seeking to maximize material self-interest and western economic system was based on multiplication of wants which felt Gandhiji both the economies unsustainable and devastating to the human spirit. However, Gandhiji was not professional economist but his consistent with philosophy of truth and non-violence gave a set of economic ideas. Gandhiji economic theory was a counter theory to western economies and it claimed to be more suitable for peaceful and stable future. Gandhian economic ideas were highlighted on six points.

Swadeshi: Gandhiji imagined villages as self-sufficient republic. He knew that India lived in villages so he concentrated on the growth of the rural economy such as khadi, handloom, handicraft and sericulture, because rural industries were based on family labour with less capital. In Gandhian's view, Swadeshi system would satisfy two objectives firstly it provides employment and income to the Indian's and secondly it would generate equality, freedom and justice to eliminate poverty. Gandhian was not against foreign goods but his motive was to have healthy and non-exploitative form of trade because it is criminally foolish to produce the goods which are not profitable to be produce in the country, instead of producing them country should import those goods.

Mechanisation: Gandhiji was never against to machinery but he opposed the machinery which replaced labour. Gandhiji was worried of technology-induced unemployment. According to Gandhiji machinery should not destroy the dignity and self reliance of the villages. In a country like India where labour is abundance maximum industries should be labour intensive rather than capital intensive. Only small-scale industries can solve the problem of unemployment because small- scale industries use labour intensive technique. The small-scale industries gives equal distribution of income and wealth among labourer mainly because small-scale industries are wide ranging compared to large-scale industries and are having more employment potentials.

Industralisation: Gandhiji expressed that industries are based on large scale and highly sophisticated technology which leads to unemployment, poverty, urbanisation, deforestation, desertification, pollution etc. so Gandhiji was totally against modern industrial system. Gandhiji visualised that electricity, shipbuilding, iron works etc should exist side by side with village and cottage industries. Mostly he concentrated on physical and manual power. Gandhiji never believed aristocracy because they do not appreciate the manual labour and they appreciate the hard labour. Gandhiji was against the industrial, technological and commercial society of the modern age. Main ideology of Gandhiji was to make Indian villages self-sufficient economies. Gandhiji believed in law of the bread labour that is, every man should earn his bread by sweat in some labour connected with agricultural and its allied activities.

Though industrialisation increases the standard of living Gandhiji never wanted to rise in the living beyond a certain point because ultimately it continues poverty.

Decentralisation: Gandhiji strongly advocated decentralisation of economic system. Gandhiji believed that centralisation was the root cause of exploitation which leads to unemployment and poverty in India as the powers are concentrated in the hands of few because centralization creates wide gap between rich and poor, rich are becoming more richer and poor are becoming more poor. Mahatma's desire was for decentralization because huge capital accumulation is needed to industrialize the country through large-scale industries. The large -scale industrialization invites existence of foreign market, which India may not have so according to him the ultimate cherishable goal is only decentralization. Large- scale industrialism is the base of the centralization of political powers in few hands. Under capitalism, the power becomes to be concentrated in the hands of few individual capitalists and under socialism it is arrogated by managers, technocrats and bureaucrats. A country like India has plenty of human resources but capital supply was poor, therefore labour intensive technology should be followed in India. In Gandhiji, view decentralization was essential for the survival of democracy and for the establishment of a non-violent state. Gandhiji preferred the decentralisation of small-scale units in few places. Through decentralisation schemes their might not be over production and waste compellation and production by small units may be economical.

Trusteeship: According to Gandhiji, capitalistic and rich should consider themselves as trusty of society and make use of their wealth for the benefits of society which is known as trusteeship. Gandhiji emphasized on cooperative system to develop India in agriculture and other fields so that economic welfare can be achieved. He want to avoid a violent and bloody revolution by gearing economic inequality. Motivation of Mahatma was to remove private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its welfare. Under state regulated trusteeship, an individual may not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society. Proposed to fix decent minimum living wage limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in the society. The difference between maximum and minimum income should be reasonable, equitable and variable form time to time.

Villagism: Gandhiji always concentrated in the development of villages. He opined that India could not be developed unless we develop the villages. Unless grass root development is not possible a country cannot be developed. The process of development in India should begin from village level. Gandhiji started experiments in rural life style such as revival of village crafts and agro processing industries, village cleanliness, diet surrounding to live. According to him if village perishes, India will perish too. As agriculture does not need revolutionary changes and Indian peasants requires a supplementary industry. Immediately after independence, the Indian Planning procedure incorporated many crucial Gandhian thoughts into the five-year plans. Although Nehru disagreed with Gandhian views with respect to heavy industrialization and use of machinery but achieved important Gandhian visions were sought to be achieved through economic planning. Gandhian economic philosophy has been critised on many grounds. Ambedkar critised Gandhian ideal village republic and its economic structure and expressed that the decentralize village was the main power base of exploitation of money lenders, provided the cultural stage for caste exploitation and isolated economies which often failed to cooperate with each other due to long distance and disconnectedness. Gandhiji concept of swadeshi system was seen as divisive by some critics as it leads to favouritism in an already divided and stratified society. As most of the Indian villages are caste-oriented villages, it may actually cause greater isolation than assimilation. Rise of cities and rapid industrialization along with globalizing economy are indicators to some Gandhian ideals, which were given a back seat in Indian economic planning.

Conclusion: In the age of globalization there is different scene in India. Globalization is playing vital role in Indian economy. Presently, the economy of India standards fourth largest among the world after USA, China and Japan. At the initial stage of independence, Indian economy was stagnant and was caught in a vicious circle of poverty. Then Indian government took a policy of “*laissez fair*” articulated by Jawaharlal Nehru. From than onwards India focused on import substitution policy and due to

ongoing process of globalization India has given more emphasis on expansion of industrialization on large-scale. As a result, new foreign industries entered into Indian market, which enhanced India's growth. With the existence of globalization Gandhiji's emphasis on small-scale industries was ruined and abolished from Indian economy. Apart from this, large-scale industries have also ruin the environment through pollution which affects the health of the human beings. The rapid growth of large industries due to globalization has not benefited to everyone. It tremendously increased informal sector, which affected the working population. The great economic ideology of Gandhiji enhanced the development of rural areas and minorities by giving equal and sustainable earnings therefore invites many questions.

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