



HISTORY

REFLECTION ON UPROOTING PENURY IN THE CREATIVE PROGRAMS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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Abstract

The fact that Poverty is a bane that checks the growth of any to any developing nation as well as and hinder her progress is now well established. It is rightly stated that India is a rich country whose inhabitants are poor. In fact the age-old problem of Poverty has stricken more than half of India's population. Mahatma Gandhi who is also known as the father of nation has tackled this malady with his Sarvodaya program which was focused chiefly on the rural development. This paper tends to throw light on the reflections of Mahatma Gandhi on Poverty elimination through his Sarvodaya program and other related thoughts on cottage industries.

Keywords: Gandhi, Sarvodaya, Poverty, India, Economic

Poverty is a curse to any developing country. Without deterring it, progress cannot be imagined.¹ In the history of India, the problem of poverty is continuing from a long time. The country where more than half of the population is poor, its economic, social and cultural progress cannot reach its desired target. Poverty is widely spread in India and it is a great obstacle in the development of the country. Due to the large domain of poverty, it is being noticed from ancient times.²

King Ashoka and Kanishka, the chief kings of India attempted much to eliminate poverty to relieve the poor. Kanishka spread the message of the religion of Lord Buddha for the welfare of the public at large. Gupta dynasty is considered the golden age of India but then too, there was a great difference between the poor and the rich.

India is an agricultural land but colonial exploitation of the English chiefly tormented the peasants of India. During the rule of Clive, India was economically prosper. In the modern times, after the implementation of Permanent Settlement 1793, the cases of ejection of peasants from their lands increased and land became a salable property and the ownership of peasants and encasing of taxes on lands, the cases of ejection also increased. These causes enhanced the number of landless peasants. When the small industries of the country were destroyed, skilled labours and artisans turned themselves into landless peasants leaving their traditional work of industry. So, poverty reached above the mark during British rule.³

Gandhi ji knew that real India lives in villages. He wished that the villagers must experience economic prosperity and social equality and to achieve this aim, he proposed the idea of trusteeship, which later turned

into the *Sarvodaya* Movement. Explaining the *Sarvodaya* in the introduction of the book *Sarvodaya Darshan* by Dada Dharmadhikari, Krishandutt clearly wrote:

The ideal of *Sarvodaya* is *Adwait* and its policy is combining: to form such a society where no discrimination based on religion and caste should remain, nobody is exploited, and the individual and society may get full opportunity to develop.⁴

On his arrival in Champaran in 1917, Gandhi ji said:

Till there will be a difference between the handful of rich and millions of starving people, state system based on non violence cannot be maintained.⁵

To declare the taxes leveled on peasants, Gandhi ji raised a movement in Champaran. For the sake of the poor, Gandhiji established Ashrams on different places. He thought that Bihar must chiefly be based on large and small-scale industries.⁶ To uproot the poverty, high technology in agriculture and the development of large and small-scale industries is needed. The Government is conducting several programs for the development of rural areas in which facilities of loan, grant and distribution are also available. The Government is attempting to uproot the poverty through different plans and in the rural areas, several plans are being conducted through Five Year Plan.⁷ The Government is conducting some plans like Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna, Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojna and Rashtriya Grameen Rojgar Guarantee Yojna. The villagers must be aware of such programs.

Indira Gandhi also endeavored to uproot poverty through Five Year Plan which was known as '*Garibi Hathao*.' It clears that poverty is an economic issue in india. Besides this, Government should organize

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training camps and workshops from time to time for rural peasants to adopt new methods of agriculture through Government and non-government organizations.⁸ Gandhi ji recommended large scale and small-scale industries to engage most of the people in the work of labour.⁹ These small and large-scale industries and traditional handicraft also exist in the whole country and not only India but also the foreign countries are also continuously demanding these articles. Gandhiji's economic thoughts are linked with those poor and unsheltered people who are not included in the new 'interpretation of progress.' Gandhiji does not believe in the game of Virtual Economic Policies of present times which depend on wavering capital but he talks on the progress of capital based on labour and the villagers, peasants and labourers can easily get the net profit of it.¹⁰

It is said about the extension of poverty:

Gandhi ji considered the helplessness of the poor as a curse because it destroys the morality of man. Nobody has ever said this that one can maintain one's morality in chill penury.

On the basis of four maxims Gandhi ji looked upon economics as *Sarvajana Hithaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya* and following these maxims, man can live a realistically happy life rather living artificially or becoming the slave of markets and products. During the days of slavery, Gandhi ji faced the imperial powers with the help of Charkha and Khadi revolution and poor farmers and laborers helped him. In his view, when man will consider himself a servant, he will earn money for the society, he will spend for society, his earning will be pure and non violence prevail in his daring tasks also".¹¹

Gandhi ji's economic views are not an economic structure of global age to be put innocently rather it is a mobile and permanent request of economic human rights. It is also a humble plead to protect the pride of man. This way, according to Gandhi ji, poverty can be uprooted from three levels in society: First-meditation, second-promise and third-behavior or works."¹²

Today, in our society materialization and western de-culture is unrestrainedly overshadowing the generation which is maturing rapidly. The word morality is changed in its meaning and a country where Bureaucracy and political interference continuously create hurdles in the way of progress, Gandhi ji dreamt of economic self-government where all may have equal social standard and labor class and self declared civil class must have an equal standard. So, Gandhi ji pleaded they have to learn to make balance between individual liberty and social liberty. So, Gandhi ji not only wished to make a social structure for small scale industries, adequate and self developed distribution and self dependence, but at least, he wanted to see man as man. This way, optionally, it is possible that one day the world may have to return to Gandhi ji.

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