



# Gandhiji's Thoughts and Rural Development

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## Abstract:

*Gandhi's idea to develop the Indian society was based on his understanding of the society and hence based on the village system. Talking about the importance of village, he wrote in 1936, "I would say if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. His one mission in the world will get lost." Harijan. 29.08.36. He was aware of the realities of the village life and knew the plight of half starved masses of India. He often acknowledged the same in his vivid descriptions of Indian villages. He wrote, "instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the lands, we have dung-heaps. The approach too many villages is not a refreshing experience. Often one would like to shut one's eyes and stuff one's nose, such is the surrounding dirt and offending smell". (Gandhi: Constructive programmes-its meaning and place). His understanding of the plight of the people has been extremely well brought out in his writings, identifying his emphasis on removal of poverty over aesthetics. This article communicates Gandhiji's thoughts and rural development according to Gandhian point of view.*

**Keywords:** *Khadi, Rural, Rural development, Thoughts, Village*

## 1. Introduction

India is a very thickly populated country. It is on the second rank among the most populated countries of the world therefore it is natural that the use of human resource for labour work is seen in large scale. On the other hand the other countries have to suffer because of low population but India's condition is different than the other countries. Most of the people in India live in rural areas and their main occupation is agriculture and animal keeping. The situation in these villages is that for sometimes villagers get work while for most of the period of time they have to remain unemployed or without proper work for earning livelihood. Moreover, the industrialization has worsened the workers' condition.

In the past, India's industrial prosperity was very good. At that time, there used to be big a demand of different things and articles made in India in the foreign countries. Many things used to be exported in other countries. Thus, foreign exchange used to come in India. The economical condition of Indian workers was very good. At that time India's income per capita was high but the situation changed with the industrial revolution in Britain between 1750 to 1850. Moreover, India came under the British rule. It affected the economy of India. Indian labors lost their employment. Small scale home industries had to suffer a lot because of tough competition. Other industries also started falling down because of cruel tax policy of the government. It gave rise to many other problems and difficulties. The form of trade and business was also changed. The contradictory condition came into existence because the raw material was exported and the readymade garments and others things started to be imported. On this basis Britain began to prosper through the establishment of the East India Company in India. It happened at the cost of India and Indian workers. In such circumstances many efforts were made for economic reforms in India but all those efforts were in vain. At that time the father of the nation- Mahatma Gandhi also started his movements for betterment of Indian economy. He propagated his thought for the

country's upliftment and people's welfare. His movement and ideology was against modernization. He was successful to some extent in saving India from poverty and unemployment. Therefore, the economical philosophy of such a great person naturally becomes a subject of the study.

## **2. Mahatma Gandhi's Economical Thoughts**

Mahatma Gandhi gave his ideas on removal of unemployment, poverty, inequality of income and discrimination between high and low classes of the society.

### **2.1 Protests against Madness after Machine Technology**

Because of industrialization, the work of man was done by machines and technology. This condition proved to be harmful for the countries like India having very large scale human resources for labour work. Gandhiji opposed the blind madness after machines and not the machines. He made efforts to encourage the use of human resources rather than machines. Thus, he gave his idea of not to use or accept machine made things. He prepared people for the protest against the use of machine.

### **2.2 Priority to Work by Man**

Gandhiji always gave importance to physical work or labour. In the country like India physical work and the use of human resources is well and good to be appropriate for the country's economy so he advocated capitalist production method. Instead of using clothes prepared by machines, he gave more importance to the hand woven clothes. Gandhiji used to say that every person should be able to use the spinning wheel. He or she should prepare his or her clothes himself or herself. Moreover, he or she should fulfill his or her needs on his or her own. Even in the mills the importance was given to the physical work.

### **2.3 Rural Upliftment**

According to Gandhiji, the real India is in Indian villages. Indian villages, village life and spinning wheel are of prime importance. Gandhian ideology was that people should live in village and do farming and animal keeping occupation. Along with that, people should prepare clothes by using spinning wheels and by that way the use of 'khaadi' should be encouraged because through the encouragement of 'Khaadi' village life can be made prosperous and happy. Gandhiji always tried to see it. He gave more importance to village occupation like animal keeping and small scale industries.

### **2.4 Employment oriented Education**

Gandhiji opposed today's education system. He advocated such an education system in which students can become self reliant for their everyday needs. Gandhiji opposed the education which was based on cramming. He emphasized Basic education system and tried to bring it into practice. He gave the philosophy of the post basic schools.

### **2.5 Basic Education**

Gandhiji established Gujarat Vidyapith. Moreover, even in rural areas and in tribal areas he started post basic schools. The efforts were made to teach the subjects like agriculture and animal keeping along with the knowledge based subjects in those schools.

## **3. The Principle of Trusteeship**

Defining the labour-master relationship in his principle, Gandhiji says that the owners of the mills are not the masters but the trustees or guardians of the mill workers. By this way each and every worker considers the owner as the guardian and he will do the work as his or her own and that way worker exploitation can be stopped.

#### **4. Importance to Small Scale Home Industries**

Because of the wrong policy of the British government, small scale industries of rural India were ruined. Gandhiji understood it well and he tried to develop small scale home industries and even unemployed persons can get proper work. He gave encouragement to India made materials and self reliant villages. Thus, Gandhiji presented his models for rural development.

#### **5. Reforms in Economic Inter Structure**

In the economic inter structure reforms the emphasis was given on the thought that economic reforms can brought if the facilities of communication among the villages, irrigation, transportation and electricity supply is improved. The basic thought was that through all these means the things produced in villages can be transported in urban areas and the farmers can get proper and enough market prices.

#### **6. Economical Thoughts along with Basic Education**

Education system of Gandhiji had the emphasis on the basic education. Moreover, in senior and junior basic schools students' creative activities were also emphasized. At the same time many basic education schools were started which were for both the work education for earning livelihood and the creativity development.

#### **7. Other Economical Activities of Gandhiji**

##### ***7.1 Leader of the Labors***

During the British rule the mill owners used to do exploitation of the workers. The exploitation was done in various forms just as – more work and less wages, irregular salary, lack of basic facilities, compulsory leave from the work, etc. At that time Gandhiji guided for workers' unions and started struggle for workers' rights. At that time of conflict non co operation and strike were used as a weapon for workers' rights.

##### ***7.2 Boycott of Foreign Things***

Indian workers could not stand in competition against the foreign things therefore Indian workers became unemployed. At that time Gandhiji advocated the use of India made things. The arrangement was also done that if foreign things entered in India the special watch was kept at the shops and people were stopped from buying foreign things.

##### ***7.3 Tax Structure***

During the British rule it was the law that if the crop failed the relief from half of the tax should be given but in Kheda district the crop failed and the relief from the tax was not given. At that time Gandhiji started the Kheda Satyagraha movement. Not only that, but also when the same condition occurred in Champaran of Bihar state, Gandhiji did the Satyagraha. It was under Gandhiji's guidance that Sardar Patel led the Bardoli Satyagraha against the excessive tax.

In addition to these developmental works, Gandhiji carried out other economic reforms which are as under.

- Protest against Rolet Act
- Awareness against Class Discrimination
- Prohibition of Wine
- Clerkmanship Act

#### **8. Gandhiji's Thought and the Present Scenario**

In the present time of 21<sup>st</sup> century Gandhiji's thoughts are followed on a small level. For example, even today Basic education schools are run. Institutes giving employment oriented education have been started. Many villages are taking its advantages but it is also a truth that because of globalization, Gandhiji's thoughts are being forgotten. Owing to this situation-

- Small scale home industries have been ruined.
- Foreign things are imported more.
- The education system has changed.
- Poverty and unemployment have increased.
- Inequality of income has increased.
- Class discrimination has increased.
- Corruption and bribe taking have increased.
- Villages are losing their real identity.
- Production system has been damaged.

### **9. Gandhian Thoughts and the Future**

If we look at the present scenario, we can make a logical analysis that willingly or unwillingly India and the other countries of the world will have to accept Gandhiji's economical thoughts in the future of very near time. To solve the problem of unemployment man he will try to be self reliant because of price rise. For removing poverty, employment is inevitable, so work based method will have to be developed. Thus, Gandhiji's thoughts are not only for the society of one particular time or region. Gandhiji was a visionary man. He thought seriously even about future. So everybody has to believe the fact that the world will have to accept Gandhiji's thoughts and some countries have even started to accept and apply them.

### **References**

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