

Gandhi's Social Outlook and Sarvodaya

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ABSTRACT

Human is a social animal by nature. An overview of its progress and development proves that the progress that man has made has been possible only by living in the society. Man and society are so much interdependent on each other that without one the stability and progress of the other cannot be imagined. Where man is animal without society, society without man is illogical and meaningless. During the Vedic period, the condition of the society in India was good and women also had a respectable place in the society. After the arrival of Muslims in the medieval period, social evils were born and the condition of the people became miserable. At the time when the British Empire was established in India, fatal social evils like female slaughter, child marriage, slavery, sati pratha, untouchability existed in its worst form. Due to the influence of western education and culture, a new awakening arose among the Indians and they realized the need for social reforms. As a result, Lord William Bentinck abolished the practice of Sati, Bal Vadya and Ugi, Lai Ellenbury abolished slavery and Lord Dalhousie abolished human sacrifice at places of religious worship. There were many social reformers in India like Bhimrao Ambedkar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, Kabirdas Nanak, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Savitri Bai Phule etc. who contributed in this field, but where Gandhiji enlightened the field of politics with his versatile personality, the field of social reform also shone with his talent.

KEYWORDS: *Sarvodaya, Man and society, social system, non-violence, Truth, Satyagraha*

INTRODUCTION

Gandhiji started his active life as a social worker and entered politics as an associate. Why did India become a slave? Searching for its reasons, Gandhi found that caste discrimination, untouchability, social injustice, secondary status of women, underestimation of labor etc. were the reasons which made our society weak. To solve all those reasons, Gandhiji ran various

constructive programs along with the freedom struggle. To build a new society, Gandhiji had adopted two methods – non-violent resistance and constructive programme. Both these works were complementary to each other. Gandhiji gave more importance to constructive work than to Satyagraha because it was the work of every moment.

According to Gandhi, the social system should be such that by removing the difficulties coming in the way of development of the person, he can move forward on the path of progress. Gandhiji has given the name of such social system as Sarvodaya and has clarified its entire system through his thoughts. Since the basis of Sarvodaya is spiritual, the means of its achievement are also spiritual and the method of action is the method of Satyagraha, that is, by taking indescribable suffering and even embracing death, to remain firm on truth and non-violence. Gandhiji did not become a blind devotee of the Indian social system and culture, but he strongly opposed all those practices, traditions, ideas and beliefs which were in his opinion.

According to Gandhi, the ideal social order would be based on equality between man and man and between men and women. According to him, in this social system, there will be a social system free from sectarian rigidity, religious accusations and lack of discretion imposed on ignorant and straight people by pompous religions, in which full opportunities will be available for the development of the individual's personality. Gandhi ji tried to renovate the society by strongly attacking the evils prevailing in the Indian society.

COMMUNAL UNITY

In his social programme, Gandhi considered the establishment of inter-communal unity as the most useful way. Gandhiji had well absorbed the fact that India is a country of many religions, castes and practices, unless there is a sense of mutual sympathy and tolerance, the country cannot progress. After a

long discussion and experience of different religions, Gandhiji came to the conclusion that

1. All religions are true
2. All religions have some mistake and
3. All religions are as dear to me as Hinduism.

Mahatma Gandhi's desire day and night was that the India of his dreams should become like such a beautiful garden in which different religions and sects are safe like fragrant flowers. He tried throughout his life to achieve this ideal.

Mahatma Gandhi used to describe India as a bird and Hindus and Muslims as its two wings. Gandhiji did the last fast of his life (from 13 January 1948 to 18 January 1948) to establish communal unity. It was the result of his universal personality that after independence the Government of India was able to lay the foundation of secular democracy in the country.

PREVENTION OF UNTOUCHABILITY

In order to achieve his ideal social order, Gandhiji wanted to eradicate all the diseases from which the Hindu society was badly affected. Gandhiji's fierce struggle for the removal of untouchability is one of his most influential acts related to nation-building. Although he was a supporter of the Varnashram system, he was a bitter critic of the present caste system. Gandhiji had said, "From the point of view of history, the caste system can be called such an experiment of man in the laboratory of Indian society, which was aimed at mutual adaptation and adjustment of different sections of society. If we can make it successful, It can be offered to the world as the best antidote to the ruthless competition and social disintegration we see in the world today due to greed." The perverted form of the caste system that was in vogue and the sense of superiority and inferiority that had entered it,

OVERALL DISCUSSION OF GANDHI'S THOUGHT

He was critical and considered it a stigma on the Hindu society. He explained that "the varna system, by motivating the individual to compulsorily perform his duties, ensures the welfare of mankind and emphasizes that the work attached to each varna and the members of each varna are equally dignified." A Brahmin and a scavenger are equal and while doing their work with utmost devotion they are equally fulfilling their spiritual obligation and in worldly terms they are equally entitled to earn livelihood in return for their work. Have been." This is the reason why Gandhiji wanted to remove the stigma of

untouchability from the Hindu society. Gandhiji had given a place to the prevention of untouchability in the vows to be followed in his ashram. It was his belief that "since all are sparks of the same fire, no one can be born as an Untouchable. It is wrong to regard human beings as untouchables by birth."

Gandhiji says that, "Untouchability is not only a part of Hindu religion, but a very big disease, which is the main duty of every Hindu to remove it." Therefore, to prevent this evil, untouchables have to be made friends. Gandhiji says in this context, "Removal of untouchability means love in the whole world, service in the whole world and thus it is inseparable from non-violence." They believed that without the abolition of untouchability, the attainment of Swarajya is both impossible and futile. Untouchability is one such sin and kills the soul. That's why the resolution to remove untouchability is not a favor done by the upper castes towards the Harijans, it is actually a sacrifice of atonement and purification for the upper castes.

Gandhiji considered the problem of untouchability and untouchability going on from birth and caste as a stigma. He was of the opinion that untouchability leads to social disintegration, decline in national consciousness and morale and it is fatal to the development of a free social system. They considered untouchability as an artificial i.e. man-made institution, hence considered it as 'curse of Hindu society', 'disease' or 'leprosy'.

Gandhiji coined the term 'Harijan' meaning 'people of God', 'man of God' for the upliftment of untouchables. Opening of Hindu temples for untouchables and mutual marriage relations between upper caste Hindus and untouchables were also emphasized.

Although many Ambedkarites object to the naming of Dalits as Dalits, they say that Gandhi made them Dalits permanently. Gandhiji said that the Harijan does the pious work of keeping the society clean and tidy everyday by removing the filth. If this work is not done regularly, then the whole society will reach the state of death. It is not correct to say that due to their profession, they have got cultureless and weak condition. These professions should also be considered at par with other professions. The social ostracism that the untouchables of India faced, they were forced to do the most menial jobs, they were denied human rights like temple entry, drawing water from wells and free use of public places Gandhiji could not tolerate all this.

Gandhiji never tired of saying that if someone could prove that untouchability was an essential part of Hinduism, I would give up Hinduism. Gandhiji wanted that if he was reborn, it should be in the house of an untouchable, so that he could share in his troubles and sorrows. According to Gandhi, untouchability in its present form is a heinous crime committed against both God and man, which is gradually eroding the life of Hinduism.

Running 'Vaikom Satyagraha' by Gandhiji in Travancore is an epoch-making event in Indian history from the point of view of Harijionism. In 1932, when the British imperialists conspired to separate the untouchables from the Hindus for the purpose of electing the new constitution of India, Gandhi foiled their evil attempt by 'Poona Pact' at the risk of his life.

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

The name of the confluence of nature and man is creation, nature is the symbol of woman. And male of male. Male and female are the two wheels of the universe. One without the other is crippled. The role of women in Gandhi's thinking is based on this universal principle. It is also an irrefutable truth that the condition of women in India has not been any better since the beginning. Although their position in the Vedic age can be called dignified, but after that the condition of women gradually deteriorated and

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In the middle ages she certainly became pathetic. The society was suffering from bad practices like polygamy, child marriage, purdah system, sati system, illiteracy etc. Gandhiji attacked all those evil practices which hindered the progress of women. On the one hand, Gandhiji was a supporter of women's upliftment, on the other hand, he was also an advocate of women's rights equal to men. In some parts of the country, especially in Rajasthan, girls were killed as soon as they were born. A woman had to be under the control of her father in childhood, husband in youth and son in widowhood.

Gandhiji included the advancement of women in his constructive programme. This is Gandhi's belief - "Woman is the companion of man, whose intellectual capabilities are in no way less than the intellectual capabilities of man. She has as much right to freedom and independence as man has. The progress of many of our movements is due to our women's society. Backward conditions lead to stoppages. Our position is like that of a miserly trader who does not invest

enough capital in his business and therefore incurs losses.

Gandhiji has said, "Woman is a companion of man who has the same mental capacities as man, has the right to participate in the smallest activity of man and has the same right to freedom and independence as man. If strength is meant by moral strength, then woman is many times superior to man. If non-violence is the rule of our existence, then the future of humanity will be women. In the words of Gandhiji, 'Woman is the embodiment of non-violence.'

As many duties of the wife towards the husband have been enumerated in the Indian scriptures, not that much of the husband towards the wife. Instead of considering women as their friends and allies, the male class used to consider themselves as their masters and rulers. According to Gandhiji, a woman is not 'Abla', but if she recognizes her power, she is stronger than a man. The way she builds a child as a mother and the way she drives her husband as a wife, many men become like that. The immense power hidden in the female race is not due to her scholarship or physical strength, the reason for this is the fervor and sacrificial power of the fervent devotion filled within her. Gandhiji made women participants in his Satyagraha movement because the sacrifice, austerity, self-control, patience and tolerance required for this are many times more in women than in men. as a result.

Kasturba Gandhi, Kamala Nehru, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sarojini Naidu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Meera Ben etc. are some of the prominent women personalities of the national movement who participated in the freedom struggle with the inspiration of Gandhiji. Strongly opposing the practice of Sati, Gandhiji said- "To teach a woman to burn herself with her husband, is to forget the importance of human dignity. She must maintain both loyalty to her husband and human dignity while she is alive." And her love for her husband will widen and merge with the love for God. Gandhiji considered the Hindu widow as the epitome of sacrifice and purity and at the same time he believed that the widow is worshipable for all people, considering her inauspicious is an evil. It is a great crime. According to him, it is the duty of the parents to try for the marriage of the child widow. Gandhiji said that the husband should win his wife by love, not by force. They are not wealth but complementary to each other. Gandhiji had said, "If non-violence is the mantra of

our life, then it must be said that the future of the country lies in the hands of women."

Gandhiji was a big supporter of faith in life, he considered faith to be the root of religion. Gandhiji cautions the woman about her real role. Gandhiji is in favor of women's independence. They don't consider her as a slave of a man, they consider her as half wife, co-religionist, friend. He wanted to create a sense of self-defense among women. He wanted women to learn to be fearless. Gandhiji called 'prostitution' 'a colossal' and 'increasing vice'. Regarding the eradication of prostitution, Gandhiji thought that the problem of prostitution cannot be solved until sisters of extraordinary character are born from among women and take up the work of salvation of those fallen sisters. Dowry system modern time has become a curse of Hindu society. Gandhiji's opinion is that when the groom takes money from the girl's father for the favor of marrying her, then the limit of meanness is reached. Gandhiji does not consider marriage done for the greed of money as a lowly deal. The purdah system started after the arrival of Muslims in India. Gandhiji was against keeping women under purdah. He used to say that purity does not flourish by keeping it under the guise of purdah, nor can it be imposed from outside. It has to be created from within. He was of the opinion that the veil does not protect the woman, it harms the body and mind of the woman. Gandhiji was a bitter critic of the modern education system. Gandhiji laid the foundation of Basic Education or Vardha-Shiksha Yojana for the cultural awakening of the masses. One of the main features of this education scheme is that it provides economic self-sufficiency to the students. Gandhiji was also in favor of the education of moral principles.

Thus it is clear that Gandhiji was a strong advocate of women's freedom, women's education and giving them an equal place with men in the society. He said that, "Education, the spirit of sacrifice and faith in one's own dignity ensure the freedom of women." Gandhiji started a new tradition which enabled women to play a proper role in the social and political life of the country. As a result of Gandhiji's efforts, there was such a social change in India that without any legal reform, the Indian society gave women the right to equality and freedom as men.

IDEAL SOCIAL ORDER OR SARVODAYA

Gandhiji's concept of Sarvodaya is the self-element of his thought philosophy, the center of his thoughts is

the rise and development of the entire society. Gandhiji believes that 'Sarvodaya' is a philosophy of life, a way of life and a commendable effort towards the creation of a new society. For them Sarvodaya is an end as well as a means. At the time when Gandhiji was considering his concept of Sarvodaya, at that time utilitarian ideology was prevalent in the entire western world. He used to consider only physical happiness as happiness. But contrary to this ideology, Gandhiji named his ideal social system as 'Sarvodaya'.

Gandhiji stopped the dominant materialistic current of western thought in India because he knew that it would take us in the opposite direction of Sarvodaya where the strong oppress and exploit the weak. In this context, Gandhiji has written - The priest of non-violence cannot support utilitarianism. He would strive for 'Sarvabhuta-hitaya' i.e. for the maximum benefit of all and would die in the pursuit of this ideal. He would like to die so that others may live. The utilitarian can never sacrifice himself in order to remain rational, but the non-violent is always ready to disappear.

Gandhiji wanted to establish Swaraj based on truth and non-violence. He has opposed big industries and businesses and he sees everyone's interest in truth and non-violence. Sarvodaya's faith is not in politics but in public policy, that's why discipline is the priority in Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya system moves from rule to discipline, from power to freedom, from control to plant and from rights to duty. Sarvodaya is the root of the ultimate development of humanity. Therefore, Gandhiji was an idealistic thinker and wanted to establish such a social system which was based on the moral, spiritual, political and economic regeneration of the society. Under the Sarvodaya system, the nature of society will be spiritual and society will be guided by religion and religion will be the deciding factor. All individuals in the society shall respect the moral and spiritual values. There will be no social discrimination and economic inequality in the Sarvodaya system. No class will exploit any other class and proper opportunities for development will be available to the people. The main feature of such a system would be aparigraha and asteya.

Sarvodaya principle is the natural culmination of Gandhi's philosophy. This concept is not an orthodox ideology but it is a syncretistic ideology. The meaning of Gandhiji's Sarvodaya ideas is-

1. In the good of one person lies the good of all.

2. The value of the work of both the lawyer and the barber should be the same because everyone has the same right to livelihood.
3. The simple life of a hard-working farmer is the true life.

In fact, Sarvodaya is a very broad word, which means everyone's rise, everyone's progress and everyone's development. In Sarvodaya, everyone will be benefited on the basis that all people will be bound by mutual love, there will be no discrimination among them. King and farmer, Hindu and Muslim, touchable and untouchable, white and black, criminal and saint will all be equal. Everyone will get a fair reward for their labor. In this way all people will be helpful in doing good to all. Sarvodaya is not only a philosophy or attitude of life, but it is also a policy of behavior.

The meaning of life is development, growth or progress. There should be co-development of all, that's why Sarvodaya. Gandhiji's exclusive disciple Vinoba Bhave has written - Integrity is the foundation of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya religion is not a new religion, but it is a coordination of all religions in which the goodness of all the works of the world is contained. This is a life-idea and will always be useful because its basis is the unity of the soul. The sages of India have explained this principle of self-realization to human beings from their own experience. This is the basic idea of this land, of India. The edifice of Sarvodaya stands on this basic idea. Sarvodaya is such a work-philosophy through which the path has been paved to make humanity free from exploitation.

In this way, it is clear that Sarvodaya has run keeping the happiness of the society as its basis. Its foundation is based on the bond of love and affection, community trust and feeling of mutual unity. Gandhiji made it clear that if we have to move towards achieving the ideal social system, then the transformation of the individual and the society would be possible only through the establishment of Sarvodaya Samaj.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Gandhiji's social philosophy and social program is also based on truth and non-violence. He considered non-violence as the religion of life and also considered this religion as the fundamental difference between man and animal. Probably Arnold Toynbee gave Gandhiji. That's why he has been given the noun of "the greatest personality of the 20th century". The whole society rests on non-violence in the same way that the earth is held to its position by gravity.

Gandhi's claim was that nonviolence is a social thing, not just an individual one.

Gandhiji confronted almost all the social evils of India and tried to get rid of them. He tried to eradicate the leprosy of untouchability and tried to give a new look to the education system. Gandhiji made unspeakable efforts for the progress of women. He did not consider woman as a slave of man, but as a companion. According to him, "Woman is the embodiment of non-violence. Non-violence means infinite love and it means infinite power to suffer.

Gandhiji wanted women to stop calling themselves weak. The following passage throws proper light on the immense reverence with which Gandhiji looked at women.

"To call a woman powerless is to insult her. If by power is meant brute power, then no doubt there is less animality in woman than in man, but if it is meant by moral power, then certainly woman is more powerful than man. If non-violence is our basic mantra of life, then it has to be said that the future of this country is in the hands of women.

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