

# Mahatma Gandhi's Vision for the Future of India: The Significance of Enlightened Perspective

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## Abstract

There is a widespread consensus that Mahatma K. Gandhi was a very influential figure in both the political and spiritual realms during the twentieth century. One of the significant accomplishments attributed to Gandhi is his pioneering of Satyagraha, a method of resistance against oppression via mass civil disobedience. Additionally, he played a crucial role in vocalizing a transcending message that ultimately facilitated the Indian National Congress in achieving independence from British rule in August 1947. Frequently overlooked or excluded in conventional historical accounts are Gandhi's idealistic inclinations, which actually undermined the universal appeal of his message and complicated the intellectual foundations of the Indian nation. The individual's perspective on the future of India exhibited a markedly unconventional approach. According to Gandhi's envisioned state, the absence of a representative government, constitution, army, and police force would be observed. Furthermore, industrialization, machinery, and modern urban centers would be non-existent.

**Keywords:** Politics, non-violence, idealism, communism, exploitation

In a hypothetical scenario devoid of capitalism, communism, exploitation, and religious violence, the socio-economic and political landscape would undergo significant transformations. However, it is proposed that a prospective Indian nation will be structured based on the historical India. The proposed society would be characterized by an agrarian-based economy, self-sufficient villages, a lack of civil legislation, and a moral structure that reflects the collective desires of its inhabitants. Gandhi's writings exhibit characteristics aligned with anarchic ideas as they advocate for a pre-modern, morally enlightened, and apolitical state in India. The user's text is already academic and does not require any rewriting. Gandhi's perspectives on the matter underwent small modifications throughout time, as seen by

his writings prior to the Transfer of Power. However, these changes do not undermine the presence of significant consistency in his thoughts, hence justifying the portrayal of such continuity.

Certain historians have expressed hesitancy in endorsing this portrayal of Gandhi due to the occasional ambiguity found in his contemplations regarding the future. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India and a revered figure in leadership, recollected that Gandhi exhibited a tendency towards ambiguity when discussing the specific structure of the desired governmental system. The user's text is too short to be rewritten academically. However, the contention put up in this essay posits that there is ample data available to amalgamate Gandhi's perspectives on the future. The most comprehensive articulation of his concepts can be observed in the *Hind Swaraj*, a publication from 1909 that has been regarded as the closest he got to creating a cohesive piece of political theory. The user's text is too short to be rewritten academically. Despite occasional self-contradictions, *Hind Swaraj* effectively presents a methodical elucidation of Gandhi's concepts pertaining to the state, society, and nation. This influential piece of literature, in addition to Gandhi's autobiography, speeches, interviews, pamphlets, and essays, provides a comprehensive perspective of Gandhi's political aspirations. Collectively, these materials constitute a substantial body of intellectual work referred to as the *Collected Works*, encompassing approximately 90 voluminous editions.

Given the extensive body of knowledge available, it is feasible to succinctly encapsulate Gandhi's prospective strategies. This essay provides a comprehensive analysis of *Hind Swaraj*, with a lesser focus on the *Collected Works*, in order to explore Gandhi's economic, political, and social ideologies. The objective is to support the argument that Gandhi advocated for a form of individualist anarchy, which rejects state control and devalues private ownership. The government was perceived as a hindrance to the achievement of a moral existence rather than a means to facilitate it. The government, by virtue of its associations with contemporary society, inherently guaranteed a future that was incompatible with Gandhi's vision of an enlightened India from earlier times.

The governments of Western societies exhibited cultural chauvinism and moral offensiveness. According to Gandhi's perspective in *Hind Swaraj*, the responsibility for India's miseries does not lie with the British, but rather with the Indian population who have yielded to the influences of modern civilization. Therefore, it was the advent of modern civilization, characterized by the promotion of a powerful centralized government, that hindered the ability of Indians to restrict their materialistic aspirations, achieve a sense of self-worth through labor, and develop a responsible management of riches. In 1929, Gandhi expressed his strong disapproval of Western society, stating that he found it repulsive. Modern civilization has been instrumental in promoting materialism, instilling misguided notions of merit and riches, and contributing to the prevalence of violence and competitiveness. In contrast, Gandhi asserted that the practice of satyagraha would lead to a lifestyle characterized by simplicity, wherein individuals would prioritize the fulfilment of their fundamental necessities over indulging in ostentatious materialism. India's ability to embark on a new path as an independent nation was contingent upon its use of the moral resources inherent within its own traditions. The presence of genuine civilization can be observed in intelligent communities that remain unaffected by the influences of modernity.

### **The economic framework of Gandhi's envisioned state**

Gandhi envisioned a transformed India that embraced a novel perspective on economics, rejecting capitalism due to its exploitative tendencies and socialism because to its association with industrialization. Gandhi, in reality, rejected the notion of a capitalist society characterized by abundant opportunities for exploitation and relentless rivalry, opting to abstain from both *laissez-faire* and

Keynesian economic principles. Gandhi said that India could no longer depend on a global market that operates on the principles of free trade and unrestricted movement of goods and capital. Furthermore, socialism was equally intolerable. In a 1940 interview, Gandhi expressed his unequivocal opposition to socialism, as he articulated his disagreement with Pandit Nehru's belief that industrialization, if socialized, would be devoid of the negative aspects associated with capitalism. My own belief is that ills are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of so-called canalization can erase them. Capitalism and socialism, which are considered fundamental characteristics of contemporary society, have resulted in individuals becoming constrained by their insatiable need for opulence and self-gratification. Gandhi's theoretical propositions regarding the subject perplexed his colleagues in the Indian National Congress, particularly Nehru. In Nehru's autobiography, he expressed his disagreement with Gandhi's economic theories, characterizing them as fundamentally flawed and unattainable. In spite of receiving limited positive reinforcement, Gandhi persisted in significantly disseminating his unconventional social, economic, and political perspectives. Gandhi's lectures and writings indicate his rejection of both capitalism and socialism, and instead propose an Indian state that is based on unorthodox economics and promotes self-reliance. It appears that Gandhi harbored a vision for a self-sustaining nation that espoused community cooperation and manual labor. The concept of organizing society based on the maximization of khadi (handspun cotton) production is discussed in Gandhi's Collected Works. Gandhi argues that khadi represents the sole viable economic proposition for the millions of villagers, until a more effective system for providing employment and fair wages to every able-bodied individual above the age of sixteen, regardless of gender, is established in the fields, cottages, or even factories of every Indian village. Gandhi espoused the notion of renouncing private property in favor of communal ownership, wherein proprietors would serve as custodians of public assets administered for the collective welfare. Consequently, any individual participating in this khadi economic system would receive compensation in the form of goods or services. As an illustration, it was customary for a blacksmith to receive remuneration in the form of sustenance in exchange for crafting tools, whereas farmers would be compensated with agricultural implements for the act of sowing seeds, and so forth. The aforementioned pre-modern exchange would yield extensive advantages. Gandhi expressed his lack of bias against reverting to the archaic techniques of grinding and husking. The individual proposed the notion of returning, as it represents the sole means of providing employment opportunities to the vast number of rural inhabitants currently residing in a state of unproductive idleness. Gandhi prioritized tradition and advocated for the practice of spinning khadi and engaging in manual labor as the most effective means to attain authentic self-governance. The adoption of an economy centered around organic khadi would effectively eliminate instances of exploitation, industrialization, and modernization. The proposed solution will effectively address the ethical obstacles that impede the process of spiritual rejuvenation, thereby fostering the attainment of genuine swaraj.

The machinery in question serves as a prime example and signifies a deviation from the values espoused by Gandhi. The advent of machinery, with its promise of heightened production and efficiency, had significant consequences that hindered the organic progress of humanity. Gandhi held the belief that the presence of machinery heightened the desires of customers, leading to the inevitable consequences of exploitation, unemployment, and ultimately, starvation. The proposed approach aimed not at perfecting industrialization, but rather at completely eliminating the process. In his written works, Gandhi expresses his thoughts and ideas:

Rather than embracing machinery as a beneficial development, it is prudent to regard technology as a malevolent force. The lack of technological

advancements among our ancestors was not due to their inability to create machines. Rather, they possessed the foresight to see that pursuing such innovations would lead to a state of servitude and moral degradation. Consequently, subsequent to careful consideration, it was determined that our actions should be limited to tasks achievable by manual dexterity and physical locomotion.

According to the citation from Hind Swaraj, Gandhi expressed a desire for his motherland to adopt a trajectory characterized by a pre-modern approach that placed significant importance on traditional values. It is suggested that individuals of Indian descent should embrace the diligent and morally upright work ethic exhibited by their ancestors, who consciously opted against adopting modernization in favor of an alternative form of advancement.

### **The Political Prospects of Gandhi's Indian State**

Gandhi expressed his disapproval of contemporary economic systems such as capitalism, socialism, and industrialization, which can be seen as a reflection of his discerning perspective on contemporary political matters. Gandhi expressed strong criticism towards contemporary political structures. The individual specifically focused on Western democracy and its detrimental manifestations within the system. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi characterizes the British parliament as a "sterile woman" because to its perceived lack of positive accomplishments, and as a "prostitute" due to its dependence on transient ministers for governance. Gandhi held a strong conviction on the deficiencies of the Westminster system, expressing his belief that India would face ruin if it were to emulate England. The plight of individuals is more dire in comparison to that of animals. Gandhi expressed criticism towards communism in a like manner. Certain elements of Marxism were theoretically acceptable to him, however, he strongly disapproved of the manner in which it was enforced and its promotion of atheism. The individual expresses his aversion towards a particular ideology, stating that he finds it unappealing due to its foundation in violence and the rejection of a divine entity. In practical application, it was also criticized for its tendency to centralise authority among a select few, as exemplified by the U.S.S.R. Gandhi's conceptualization of the state was fundamentally opposed to a hierarchical power structure. According to Gandhi, the detrimental nature of this consolidation of power stemmed from its ability to undermine the individuality of individuals, which Gandhi believed to be the fundamental basis for moral advancement.

Consequently, Gandhi endeavored to create a separation between India and both democratic and communist ideologies. He seemed to have exhibited a preference for a political alternative that promoted the absence of political institutions and complete lack of political leadership. The individual proposed that as the nation progressed towards enlightened anarchy, the need for constitutionalism would become obsolete. Expressing optimism, he articulated, "It is anticipated that a condition of enlightened anarchy shall prevail, wherein every individual shall assume the role of self-governance." He will comport himself in a manner that does not impede the welfare of his neighbors. The philosophy of enlightened anarchy has significant parallels with Gandhi's modest worldview. Gandhi held the belief that he himself lacked the moral qualities necessary to assume a leadership role in politics. In his autobiography, Gandhi expresses his unequivocal aversion for professional politicians, while simultaneously refuting speculations regarding his own political aspirations. The author expressed that he experiences a sense of discomfort while receiving praise, as indicated by his statement "praise stings me." Additionally, he conveyed his profound distress in relation to being bestowed with the title Mahatma, which translates to "Great Soul," by stating that it has caused him significant anguish. Despite his widespread popularity and global

recognition, Gandhi did not possess any intentions or aspirations to pursue a political office. Moreover, he harbored apprehension over the motives of individuals who actively pursued positions of authority.

### **The sociocultural and religious milieu of Gandhi's envisioned state**

Gandhi held strong convictions regarding the social and religious trajectory of India's development, with his advocacy for manual labor, self-sustaining communities, and communal unity. Although Gandhi occasionally expressed uncertainty over the political future of the state, his religious perspective remained unwavering. The individual's contemplations pertaining to religion encompassed three primary objectives. The objectives encompassed the eradication of Untouchability, the preservation of varna divisions within the caste system, and the establishment of India as a society characterized by tolerance, modesty, and devotion. It can be envisioned that any prospective Indian state will receive backing from these fundamental ideals.

### **Conclusion**

Gandhi expressed a strong desire for a future that was firmly rooted in a swift restoration of previous times. While the conventional literature may occasionally neglect Gandhi's unconventional thoughts, there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that he held strong beliefs on the future of his homeland. Central to this worldview was the denunciation of contemporary civilization, encompassing capitalism, socialism, democracy, and communism. The individual expressed a strong aversion against the luxurious characteristics inherent in capitalism, alongside the industrialization inclinations associated with socialism. In a similar vein, Gandhi expressed a critical perspective on the merits of democracy, deriding the British parliament and downplaying its purported efficacy in representing the interests of the people. Communism, as an alternative, was often regarded as a temporary solution with inherent flaws that would ultimately lead to its downfall. It was characterized by its association with violence and its rejection of religious beliefs. According to Gandhi's proposition, India required a reorientation towards principles of integrity, ethics, and personal restraint.

### **References**

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