

Economical Thought of Mahatma Gandhi

Prof. Santosh Sirsat

Head, Department of Economics, Sonopant Dandekar Arts, V. S. Apte Commerce & M. H. Mehta Science College Palghar,
Maharashtra, India

Corresponding author E-mail: sirsat025@gmail.com

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Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi's economic thought, deeply rooted in his broader philosophy of life, reflects a profound commitment to ethical principles, simplicity, and social justice. His vision for the economic well-being of individuals and society was intricately connected to his philosophy of non-violence (ahimsa), self-reliance, and the pursuit of truth. Gandhi's economic thought, encapsulated in concepts such as Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, and decentralization, has left an enduring impact on discussions surrounding sustainable and equitable development.

Objectives

1. To study of economical thought of Mahatma Gandhi.
2. To study Gandhi's village thought is to understand and promote a vision of self-sufficient, decentralized communities that prioritize local governance, economic autonomy, and sustainable development.

Research Methodology

Research methodology involving secondary data primarily involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of existing data that has been previously gathered and published by other researchers, organizations, or sources. Here is an overview of the research methodology for secondary data:

Economical Thought of Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi's economic thought is deeply rooted in his broader philosophy of life, which includes principles of non-violence (ahimsa), truth, simplicity, and self-reliance. His economic ideas were developed in the context of India's struggle for independence, and they sought to address not only the

political but also the economic and social aspects of the country. Here are key elements of Gandhi's economic thought:

Village Swaraj

Gandhi's concept of Village Swaraj emphasizes the importance of self-sufficient and self-reliant villages. He believed that true development could only occur when each village is economically independent and capable of meeting its basic needs.

Gandhi envisioned a society where villages would be the basic units of governance and economy. He argued that by empowering villages, the entire nation would progress.

Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya, meaning "the welfare of all," is a central theme in Gandhi's economic thought. He envisioned an economic system that benefits all members of society, with a particular focus on the upliftment of the poor and marginalized.

Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya advocates for social and economic equality, rejecting the extremes of both capitalism and socialism. It emphasizes the idea that progress should be inclusive and not come at the expense of any section of society.

Decentralization

Gandhi was a strong proponent of decentralization of political and economic power. He believed that decisions should be made at the local level, allowing for greater participation and representation of the people.

Economic decentralization, according to Gandhi, involves promoting small-scale industries and local economies. He opposed the concentration of economic power in a few hands and advocated for a more distributed and community-oriented economic system.

Machinery

Gandhi had a unique perspective on machinery. While he recognized the importance of technology and machinery for certain purposes, he was critical of its excessive and indiscriminate use.

He believed that machinery should be employed only when it benefits the common man and does not lead to the exploitation of labour. Gandhi cautioned against a blind pursuit of industrialization that neglects the well-being of individuals and communities.

His views on machinery were tied to his emphasis on simplicity and sustainability. He argued for a balanced approach that harnesses technology for human welfare without causing harm to the environment or fostering inequality.

In summary, Gandhi's economic thought, as reflected in concepts like Village Swaraj and Sarvodaya, revolves around the principles of decentralization, self-reliance, and inclusive development. His views on machinery underscore the need for technology to be harnessed responsibly in the service of humanity and without causing harm to society or the environment.

Swadesh of Gandhiji

Gandhi's concept of "Swadeshi" was an integral part of his philosophy and played a significant role in the Indian independence movement. The term "Swadeshi" is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Swa"

meaning self and "Desha" meaning country. Swadeshi, therefore, translates to "self-reliance" or "self-sufficiency." Gandhi's Swadeshi movement had economic, social, and political dimensions. Here are key aspects of Gandhi's Swadeshi:

Economic Self-Reliance

Gandhi advocated for the promotion of indigenous industries and the use of locally produced goods. He believed that economic self-sufficiency was crucial for India's development and independence.

The Swadeshi movement encouraged people to use and promote goods that were produced within the country. This was a form of economic boycott against British goods and aimed at reducing dependence on imported products.

Promotion of Handicrafts and Cottage Industries:

Gandhi emphasized the importance of handicrafts and cottage industries as a means of providing employment to rural communities. He believed that these small-scale, decentralized industries were more in line with the principles of sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Boycott of Foreign Goods

As part of the Swadeshi movement, Gandhi called for a boycott of foreign goods, especially those produced in Britain. This was seen as a form of non-violent resistance against British economic exploitation.

The boycott extended to items such as textiles, salt, and other goods. Instead, people were encouraged to use locally produced alternatives.

Ahimsa (Non-Violence) in Economic Practices

Gandhi's Swadeshi movement was closely linked to his philosophy of non-violence (ahimsa). Economic activities were expected to be carried out in a way that did not harm others or the environment.

The promotion of self-reliance was seen as a way of resisting economic exploitation without resorting to violence.

Cultural and Social Revival

Swadeshi was not limited to economic aspects alone. It was also a cultural and social movement aimed at reviving and preserving Indian traditions, languages, and values.

The use of Swadeshi goods was seen as a way of preserving and promoting the cultural identity of India.

Political Significance

The Swadeshi movement had political implications as well. It became a tool of resistance against British colonial rule, and the boycott of British goods was a form of protest against economic exploitation.

Overall, Gandhi's Swadeshi movement was a holistic approach that sought to create a self-reliant, culturally vibrant, and politically independent India. It was not just an economic strategy but a way of life aligned with principles of non-violence and sustainability.

Mahatma Gandhi's economic thought is characterized by a unique blend of moral principles, simplicity, and a vision for social and economic justice. His ideas have had a profound impact on movements for self-reliance, decentralization, and equitable development. In summary, the abstract of Gandhi's economic thought includes:

Self-Reliance (Swadeshi)

Gandhi advocated for economic self-reliance, encouraging communities to produce and consume locally. The Swadeshi movement aimed to reduce dependence on foreign goods and promote indigenous industries, emphasizing the importance of economic independence for a nation.

Decentralization: Gandhi believed in the decentralization of economic and political power. He envisioned self-sufficient villages as the building blocks of a just society, where decisions were made at the local level. Decentralization, according to Gandhi, fosters community participation and ensures a more equitable distribution of resources.

Sarvodaya (Welfare for All)

The concept of Sarvodaya, meaning the welfare of all, underpinned Gandhi's economic philosophy. He sought to create an economic system that uplifts the weakest sections of society, promoting social and economic equality. Sarvodaya rejects extreme forms of capitalism and socialism in favour of a balanced and inclusive approach to development.

Non-Violence (Ahimsa) in Economics

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence extended to economic practices. He believed that economic activities should not harm individuals, communities, or the environment. Economic decisions guided by non-violence reflect ethical and sustainable practices.

Promotion of Cottage Industries: Gandhi championed the cause of small-scale, cottage industries as a means of providing employment to rural communities. He believed that such industries were more in harmony with nature, promoted skill development, and contributed to the overall well-being of society.

Critique of Industrialization: While recognizing the role of machinery and technology, Gandhi was critical of their excessive and indiscriminate use. He cautioned against a blind pursuit of industrialization that could lead to the exploitation of labour, environmental degradation, and social inequality.

Simplicity and Sustainable Living: Gandhi's economic thought is closely tied to the idea of simplicity and sustainable living. He advocated for a lifestyle that is mindful of one's impact on the environment and prioritizes basic needs over material accumulation.

Conclusion of Study

Mahatma Gandhi's economic thought stands as a profound and holistic philosophy that goes beyond mere economic principles. Rooted in his overarching principles of non-violence (ahimsa), truth, and simplicity, Gandhi's economic philosophy emphasizes self-reliance, decentralization, and the welfare of all. His ideas, encapsulated in concepts such as Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, and Village Swaraj, carry enduring relevance and offer insights into ethical and sustainable economic practices. Gandhi's critique of industrialization, emphasis on cottage industries, and call for a simple and sustainable way of life reflect his concern for the dignity of labour, environmental sustainability, and social justice. As we grapple with contemporary challenges, Gandhi's economic thought remains a source of inspiration for those seeking alternatives that prioritize human well-being, community empowerment, and a harmonious coexistence

with nature. Ultimately, Gandhi's economic vision extends beyond material prosperity to envision a society where economic activities are guided by moral principles and contribute to the holistic development of individuals and communities.

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