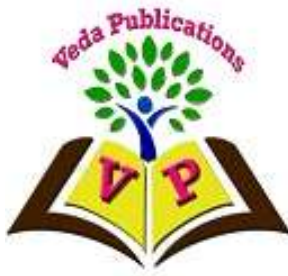


**GANDHIJI ON SWARAJ:SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GRAM SWARAJ****Dr. Suprita Dash¹, Dr. Jayshree Mishra²**¹(Lecturer in Political Science , Womens' College , Jharsuguda , Odisha)²(Lecturer, Womens' College , Jharsuguda , Odisha)**ABSTRACT**

Swaraj was quoted by Bal Gangadhar Tilak followed by Mahatma Gandhi for National Independence. Gandhiji locates Swaraj at three levels: Individual, State and Community. Swaraj at the individual level is the self control, at the state level, it refers to national independence and at the community level, it is gram Swaraj. Giving importance to the people participation, he is particularly keen that the villagers who are generally neglected should be at the centre of government. He believes that india's soul lives in villages. Gandhiji's dreams on Purna Swaraj can be realized only if his project of Gram Swaraj is success.

Keywords: *Swaraj ,Nationalism ,Village Swaraj, Gram Swaraj, Swachh Bharat, Satyagraha*

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Gandhiji was neither a political philosopher nor a political thinker. Yet, during the course of his struggle against British Empire, he evolved his unique view on man, social, economy, state moral code and a technique of action. Mahatma Gandhi was a product of Indian culture and civilization. He was a true karmayagi, a practical man of action who struggled without the desire for results. He said "when doubts haunt me, when disappointments start me in the face, I turn to Bhagwat Gita, and find it, in it a verse confront me; I owe it to the teachings of Bhagwat Gita" Besides the Gita, Jainism and Buddhism also had a profound influence on him. Before he left for London, he solemnly took three vows, not to

touch wine, woman and meat. It is therefore said that Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism have perceptively coloured Gandhi thought and shaped his action.

According to Humayeen Kabir, Mahatma Gandhi was an interior of the liberal tradition, the value of personal liberty and the like of the tradition of philosophical anarchism and the tradition of collectivism found in the socialist thought that the good thing of life ought to be shared. If Mahatma Gandhi is living today, it is likely that, he would support the social welfare State ideal, but the interpretation of such a state would be his own. He would support a welfare state because of his great



concern of the masses and because of his instinctive sympathy for those whom we regard as the uneducated and backward.

In his book *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhiji gave conception of Swaraj. While defining it, he said, "Swaraj to me means freedom for the meanest of our country men. Real Swaraj will not come by the acquisition of authority by few but the acquisition of capacity by all to resist authority when abused."

Again, he believed that Swaraj would not be achieved through Sathyagraha by a few, but it would come when the people had the capacity to resist the unjust laws of the state, which was against the abuse of authority. In other word, Swaraj would be achieved only when people were so trained that they were in a position to balance and control the authority.

Gandhiji gave a positive concept of Swaraj. Swaraj means self rule, it means not to have any outside power in the world to exercise control over any other. These two things together make Swaraj, no submission and no exploitation for a nation. Swaraj means freedom from foreign rule and in that sense Gandhiji also finally demanded the exits of Britishers from India. A free nation, in Gandhiji's opinion, cannot be selfish and need not be an isolationist. Gandhiji was both a nationalist and internationalist. In this context, he said, "Indian nationalism must organise itself for the benefit and service of humanity."

In Swaraj, Mahatma Gandhi gave emphasis to Individual freedom without which freedom is meaningless. It means real participatory democracy should be established where every individual must be in a position to rule himself (politically and economically) and participate in the functioning of political system. He rightly argued true democracy cannot be worked out by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked out from below by the people of every village as it is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all. Therefore Gandhi said, "Swaraj should provide equal opportunity to all where the necessities of life should be enjoyed by all in common as enjoyed by the princes and moneyed people."

HOW TO ACHIEVE SWARAJ

Gandhiji strongly believed that Swaraj can be achieved by the application of truth, non-violence and Sathyagraha and after attainment of Swaraj a country should develop true democratic polity, in which every individual is capable of resisting the absolute authority and ventilate his views freely. In this context, he said "in this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by bottom, but it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual who always ready to perish for the village".

Besides structure, Gandhiji also said that, Swaraj can be achieved by moral autonomy which demands self purification because it enables the individual to claim individual rights on moral ground. Such claims are more effective in politics and society. Again, there should be mass participation of the people who can bring mass movement and can educate the people politically. Gandhiji thus rightly said, "Purna Swaraj denotes a condition of things when the millions of dumb and lame will speak and walk" that Swaraj cannot be achieved by force but by organisation and unity.

VILLAGE SWARAJ

Gandhiji realised that the real Indian sits in villages. If villages develop than India would be developed. Thus, it is imperative to give the essence of the Swaraj to the villages as true democracy reflects here. Giving emphasis on political decentralisation, Gandhiji said, the fullest political autonomy giving to the village communities in managing their own affairs without any interference and direction from the Central Government. So like, by giving emphasis on economic decentralisation, Gandhiji said, people in the rural area lead a self sufficient life, leading to full employment and arrange food, cloth and other basic necessities of life would prevent rural to urban migration in search of employment and better livelihood.

Gandhiji worked out meticulously on wide variety of practical things which were vital to build a graceful village life by giving emphasis on the quality of life and his ideal village which contain intelligent human beings where they would not live in dirt and drunkenness as animals. There would be neither



plague nor cholera and small pox. His main mission was to make villages a thing of beauty. As his ideal village would be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation, it would have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation. The cottages would have courtyard enabling the house holders to plant vegetables for domestic uses and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets would be free of all avoidable dust. It would have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It would have houses of worship for all. A common meeting place, common pastures for grazing its cattle, a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education would be the central factor and it would have village panchayat for settling the disputes. It would produce its own grains, vegetables and fruits and its own Khadi. Gandhi not only visualised the development of village but the community as a whole. He propagated a theory of interdependence and co-existence which would lead to overall growth and development.

GRAM SWARAJ AT PRESENT

Gandhiji's Gram Swaraj in fact aimed at individual development, character building and adherence to basic human values for the development of community as a whole, but the way our Panchayati Raj system introduced in 73rd amendment act, is unable to adhere with the principle of Gram Swaraj of Gandhiji. In this context, people's participation in the development of the village is missing as the Gram Sabhas rarely meet to discuss the village development plans. No doubt, women and members from deprived class have come to occupy position in the panchayats, but their role in decision making is very limited. Unemployment is increasing, environment degradation is a major problem, village community is fragmented, people do not participate in the development process and due to break down of village cottage industries and migration to the cities has only aggregated to the problem. The answer to some of the problems is in adopting Gandhian model of village reconstruction, where every village will be self dependent and self sufficient to meet its basic needs but, the problem is that, if we do not go back to the ideals of Gandhi as envisaged for the upliftment of rural population, rural India would continue to suffer in the process of

development and by the time the nation discovers Gandhiji's Gram Swaraj, it may be too late. In this context, our present Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission which was started in 2014 and going to be completed on the eve of Gandhiji's 150th birth Anniversary. The campaign aims to achieve a vision of clean India by 2nd October 2019. It is a mass movement for cleanliness to fulfill the dream of Gandhiji, of a clean and hygienic India. Understanding the significance of health and sanitation, P.M Mr. Narendra Modi has simultaneously emphasised on the related health problems, that faced by roughly half of the Indians families in rural areas, due to lack of proper hygiene and sanitation in their houses.

Swachh Bharat Mission has received tremendous support from the people. Citizens too have turned out in large number and pledged for a neat and clean India. People have started to take part and spread the message of "cleanliness is next to Godliness".

The path of development that we have chosen for the Panchayats to trek upon will lead us no where near to Gandhiji's Gram Swaraj. In the year to come it will only complicate the rural scene further leading to greater migration to the cities for employment. The solution lies in promoting cottage and small scale industries as to hold back people from flooding to the cities.

Under this circumstances, Gandhian approach to Gram Swaraj does not really the answer to one aspect of development that is economic, but it is a way of life to be practiced by developing over populated and rural based country like India, to short out its multi dimensional problems.

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