



WHERE IS GANDHISM?

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ABSTRACT

Gandhism is very relevant in the political scenario of India or any other country of this world as well but the implications of the Gandhian philosophy does not match with new economic world. Emerging as one of the largest consumer economy India seems less to be a 'Karambhumi'. The man who has fought all the years of his life against British Empire and ended up with his Quit India Movement is the Father of that Nation which welcomes all to the land once again. Where lies in India the concepts of Sarvodaya? The data of Indian economy shows a reckless increasing trend of urbanization and unequal distribution of wealth. Liberalization was the last step of accepting that Indian administration was not liable to be improved. Corruption and red-tapism in the government department were obstructing the growth of Indian industry. That ultimately means that we lost the war against our own system.

KEYWORDS: Karambhumi, Bhogbhumi, Sarvodaya, Consumerism, Sustainability.

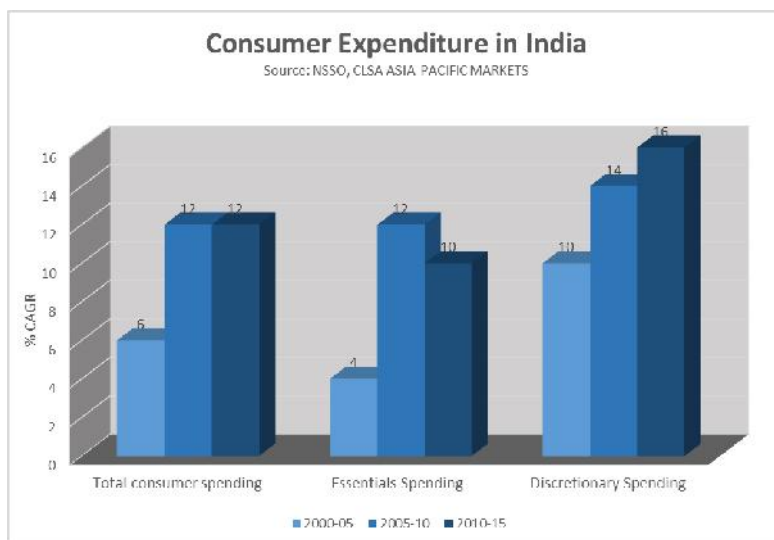
INTRODUCTION

"The ideas that Mahatma Gandhi is remembered for are based on universal ideals. Many "Isms" battle for our minds, but few succeed in touching our hearts. Many political ideologies have come and gone over the past century, some with doubtful legacies and others with terrible consequences. The only political philosophy that I believe will remain relevant for as long as humankind seeks peace, peace in our societies, peace between

nations and peace with nature, will be the ideas and values we associate with Mahatma Gandhi." *

The spirit of Gandhism, no doubt is relevant in the political scenario but practically not applicable in Global Indian Economic scenario. "India is essentially a karambhumi (a land of duty) in contradiction to bhogabhumi (a land of enjoyment)."¹ One of the largest consumer markets of the world, India proves to be the bhogabhumi rather than karambhumi, I apologize.





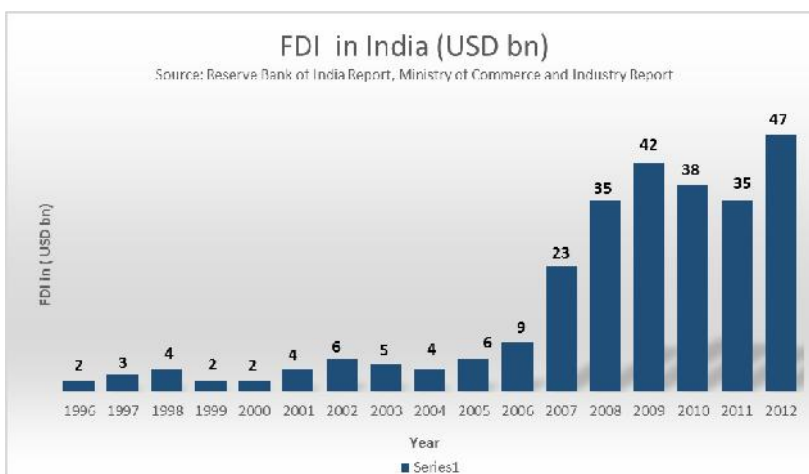
The consumer surveys in India are regularly alerting the rise in consumer expenditure in the coming years. The market in India clearly depicts the essential spending decreasing while the discretionary spending increasing in India.

Gandhian philosophy and ideology is most relevant but least applicable in Indian economy. The question which arises here is not of relevance. It is regarding its implications in economic field. The implications of the theory are world-known and accepted but practically not implemented “When Satan comes disguised as a champion of Liberty, Civilization, culture & the like he makes himself almost irresistible.”² In 1991, India adopted a new Industrial policy, very popularly known as LPG policy: Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization policy. All these three points are no match to Gandhian philosophy. Liberalization he says is like a Satan alluring the modern world towards consumerism which is no match to his ideology of simple living. Otherwise too Liberalization was the last step of accepting that Indian administration was not liable

to be improved. Corruption and red-tapism in the government department were obstructing the growth of Indian industry. That ultimately means that we lost the war against our own system.

Privatization, -the second notion of that Industrial policy means death of nationalism; to which Gandhi ji said, “the dream I want to realize is not the spoliation of the property of private owners, but to restrict its enjoyment so as to avoid all pampers, consequent discontent and hideously ugly contrast that exists today between the lives and surroundings of the rich and the poor.”³

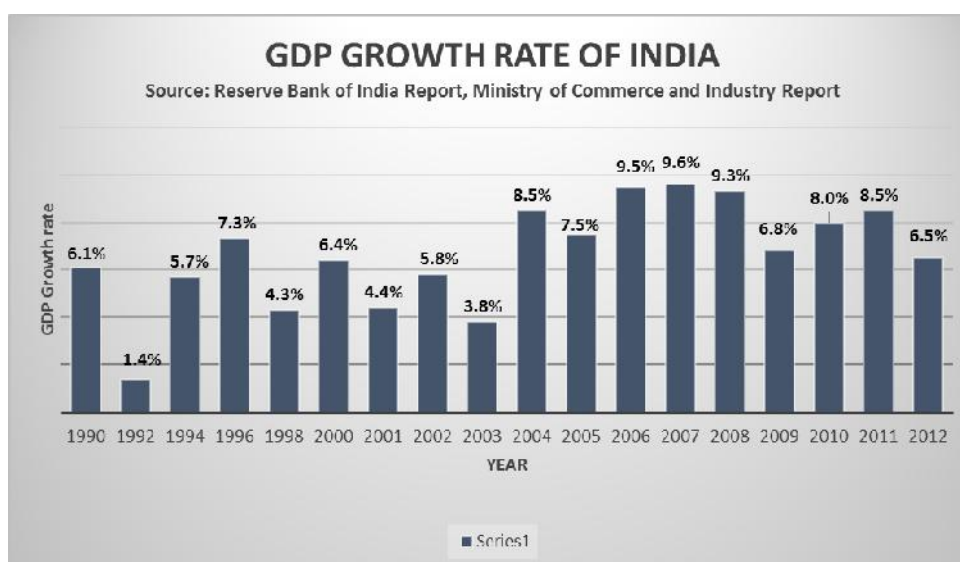
Thirdly, the man who fought all the years of his life against British Empire and ended up with his Quit India Movement is the Father of that Nation which welcomes all to the land once again. We introduced Globalization which attracted all those companies in this Global India which were then pushed out from this land for various reasons. The slogan of today’s India is “Welcome to India” which does not match with Gandhian philosophy of ‘Quit India’ at all.



Philosophies like ‘globalization’ and ‘marketization’ always work against the interest of the man. Market economy believes in capturing market by ruthless elimination of rivals and conquering their income. Market economy quickly converts this wealth in furthering inequality. Through mutual funds people are forced to become involuntary investors in business. By accumulating small savings, business houses collect huge funds from investment. This wealth further generated inequality. Therefore, in conclusion when we look at the ‘role’ of Gandhi in the 21st century, one can doubtlessly say that his ‘role’ is becoming more and more relevant and meaningful. “Economy meant the total living of a country that has got the right to survive with coexistence”⁵ that is the cause he was the first man to care for ecology. He rejected the idea of ‘economicman’ and accepted the average man with all his characteristics. According to him, an average man lives a satisfied life with his resources and

‘unlimited demand’, ‘dissatisfied man’ and ‘limited resources’ are no concepts. He explained about the requirements of a common man “A man should have food worth 3000 calories every day, 15 meters cloth per year, a house of 100 sq. yards and educational and medical facilities.”⁶ Gandhiji was of the opinion that to satisfy such real need the resources are sufficient. God has given enough to satisfy the need not the greed.

Moving towards the higher stages of development India is developing as one of the leading countries of the world with more than 30% of the investment ratios inclusive growth in industry agriculture and basic infrastructure positive change in trade scenario in the world economy with a blessed treasure of natural resource, a wonderful climate variation, skilled human resource and significantly changing national and personal income.



Economic Development of a country depends on the proper utilization of resources (both human and non-human). India, at the time of her independence, had an economy with a low level of economic and technological development, low per capital income, slow pace of development of economic and social institutions and outdated methods of production techniques. Our objective then was to attain and accelerate the economic development of the country. At the time while India started formulating planning strategies in 1951 -52 there was debate on India’s development problems. The debate centered on the Gandhian approach and the Nehruvian approach. Nehru adopted modernizing approach of the planning i.e. socialist framework of

economic policy. So, we begun with the other policies which were not according to the philosophy of Gandhi.

A clash of ideology stands on the issue of decentralization also. In the present world we have no decentralization in industry and infrastructure. The concentration of wealth and economic resources in few regions of India has widened the regional imbalance. These regions have become the special HUBS of investment and growth. The global world also approaches the particular regions as center of investment which ultimately leads to a differentiation in the level of living in these regions leading to a major regional inequality.

Science and technology have helped human beings a great deal by enabling and equipping them to be more productive and creative in every aspect of life, liberating them from several drudgeries and monotonies and enriching them in their material conditions of life. But the problem lies in the exclusivity of the enjoyment of the fruits of science and technology. Instead of doing distributive justice to all human beings from the gains of science and technology, some people decided for themselves the total control, ownership and enjoyment of science and technology, against the interest of all. As long as this pattern and relationship remain, science and technology will increasingly be made use of as instruments for inflicting miseries and destruction to masses.

“The present use of machinery tends move and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregards of millions of men & women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.”

“I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all. Today, Machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropy to save labor but Greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.”

Gandhian philosophy regarding machinery & its use is concerned; Indian Economic scenario again is reflecting a different database. The use of Hi-tech capital intensive technology and its import is not only affecting the ballet of our finance ministry but also adversely affecting the labor-intensive techniques in India. With the entrance of Global World to India, the competition among industrial units is increasing. Mahatma Gandhi was not against machinery but a very intensive use of machinery as he said was not useful for the present and future generations. The sustainable growth is through the labor intensive rather labor saving techniques. “Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India.”⁹

The labor saving techniques are basically not good for a highly populated country like India with population more than one billion; we need to create more than ten million jobs every year and cannot afford the Hi tech Global world. With the Globalization policy of 1991, the hi-tech world is in India. They are not only capturing the Indian market with best of

their products, but also giving a very tough competition and increasing unequal distribution of wealth which again is anti -Gandhian approach.

Gandhi holds the view of the maximization of social welfare (Sarvodaya) and for this he gives prime importance to the welfare of the individuals by reducing inequalities in income and wealth. According to Gandhi every person should be provided with bare minimum necessities i.e. food, shelter, and clothing. Concentration of wealth to a few groups of people certainly will shatter the dream of a society which will be socialist in nature. “Gandhi is in favor of the self-sufficient village economy where the villages will be the independent economic units. In agriculture that techniques will be adopted, which will not deplete the soil and pollute the environment? For this farmers should use eco-friendly production technique by using lesser and lesser amount of fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides. He prefers well irrigation instead of large hydro-electric projects since this will lead to exploitation. As regards the ownership of land holding. Gandhi is against the zamindari system and ownership of land should go to the actual tillers of the soil”.¹⁰ He also viewed that there should be communal ownership of land for balanced cultivation and the surplus land, if any must be distributed to the rest of the village. All these important issues are neglected these days. The data of Indian economy shows an increasing trend of urbanization, higher proportion of use of fertilizer and non-friendly techniques on soil without 3ny concern of sustainability.

Performance of Gandhi’s system can be tested by the application of seven criteria. The seven criteria are:

- I. Eradication of poverty and minimization of affluence.
- II. Self-sufficiency of every unit in basic needs
- III. Identification of human needs and their fulfillment
- IV. agro-centric economy as the basis to create economy of permanence
- V. Need-based production as far as possible through small-scale units
- VI. Check on distortions through basic education and skill formation
- VII. Curtailment of concentration of economic power

“To call Gandhian economy an ideal system is to ignore what is practically is happening in India. Reality changes with the necessity of life. Without entering into a philosophical polemics, it can be said, reality is not always real. The system which cannot be sustained is not real.”¹¹

Ultimately, we in India are following the policies other than his thought and ideology unfailingly giving a note of respect to that man on his birth and death anniversary only.

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