



Gandhian Approach on Environmental Conservation

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Abstract

This paper analyses the Gandhian conceptualization of environmental conservation.It is said that all people living in this earth should realize that they have only one place to live & this place should be maintained for future generations as well. Preserving our earth should become the agenda of every one's life because we owe a lot to the nature's bliss.

Key words: *conceptualization, Environmental, Conservation, Generation*

“Mother Nature has enough for our needs but not enough for our greed”- Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

The use of technology & economic growth have led to ecological problems this economic growth has been achieved at the cost of environmental it is manifested through pollution vanishing bio diversity critical shortage of basic resources. The role of ethics becomes important as it helps to assess strengths weakness of a developmental activities such as deforestation building a dam mining draining wetland etc many decision are binding on the human beings which they have to take one question they have to ask themselves that they do they have any right to spoil the environment.

Gandhian concept on Ecology

World is facing global environmental crisis. Mahatma Gandhi is becoming relevant in a new area called ecology Gandhian concept paved the way for environmental protection as an

environmentalist Gandhi was sidelined all these years but now with the shrinking resources & environmental crisis the global awareness has brought Gandhi to the fore front. Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that man can live without food without water but he could not live without air. An indiscriminate satisfaction of which has led to west to have mastery over nature. He criticized the very essence of western thought which required heavy demands over nature. He called Indians not to blindly follow the westerns because the Indian cultural traditions demanded man's living together along with nature. He also cautioned against the consumer culture. Kamala Chowdhary has found the reflection of Gandhi's ideas related to environment in the "Agenda 21" fashioned by the largest ever number of the nations of the world at the Earth Summit at Rio-de-Janeiro in 1992.



Environmentalism

Several of Mahatma Gandhi's followers developed a theory of environmentalism. Kumarappa was the first, writing a number of relevant books in the 1930s and 1940s. He and Mira Behan argued against large-scale dam-and-irrigation projects, saying that small projects were more efficacious, that organic manure was better and less dangerous than man-made chemicals, and that forests should be managed with the goal of water conservation rather than revenue maximization. The Raj and the Nehru governments paid them little attention. Guha calls Kumarappa, "The Green Gandhian," portraying him as the founder of modern environmentalism in India

Modern civilization

Commenting on modern civilization Mahatma Gandhi said that it seeks to enhance physical comforts of the people we should keep patience to see that such a civilization will invite its own destruction he emphasized on the cleanliness keeping the surroundings clean & personal hygiene. The very philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi was eco conserving & friendly alliance with nature. The environs played a great part in human living. One day Mahatma Gandhi was taking bath in Sabarmati River utilizing little water somebody questioned him why he was utilizing such little amount of water when the river was so abundantly flowing. He said the river did not belong to him alone. He always referred to the concept of aprigraha meaning non collection of things. He was

always telling advising his followers to give due reverence to nature

1. The technological innovations
2. Sky scrapper Buildings
3. Construction of heavy big dams
4. Heavy mining
5. Grave tree felling
6. no planned Urbanization
7. Residential house building without planning
8. plan less
9. poorly planned urban housing

According to Mahatma Gandhi western civilization meant following

1. help to enhance physical comforts
2. uncritical acceptance of technology
3. threatening the natural resources
4. over utilization of natural resources

Environmental gestures

According to Mahatma Gandhi to enhance natural living one should keep the environs clean by maintaining hygienic sanitary habits. Gandhi & his practice of environmental gestures

- ✓ He used limited paper. He did not waste paper as he used the reverse side of the letters/ envelopes for message writing
- ✓ He himself cleaned the toilets after use



- ✓ He utilized little water for his daily use
- ✓ He did not waste food. He said "you may not waste a grain of rice or a scrap of paper because it belongs to the nation & we are trustees for the use of it XXVI -272. Hence he ate only natural food
- ✓ He avoided spitting & urinating in public places
- ✓ He maintained himself with less cloth because he believed the truest test of civilization culture & dignity is character & not clothing (XXVI-258)
- ✓ He kept his surroundings clean because he believed that it does not require money to be neat clean dignified (MM 356)

Mahatma Gandhi wore Khadi. He said "Khadi will cease to have any value in my eyes if it does not usefully employ the millions T-7-187). In another occasion he said " I believe that the yarn we spin is capable of mending the broken warp & woof of our life (MM 405), He also said "I crave to die with a spinning wheel in my hand" (MM406).It was his dream that " In my dreams in my sleep while eating I think of the spinning wheel This is sword to me ,it is the symbol of India's liberty (XXV 351).

Mahatma Gandhi avoided using machines made goods He said the divorce of intellect from body labor has made us perhaps the shortest lived most resource less & most exploited nation on earth (T-3-289). He carried a wooden long stick instead of a machine walking

stick. He walked without shoes .He tied his watch to a cloth in his waist instead of wrist because he thought that would disturb him in his spinning work

Mahatma Gandhi spun cloth from a local handmade Charaka instead of an automatic spinning machine. He repeatedly thought that the study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning wheel (XXV 561).Mahatma Gandhi toured all over India by walk instead of taking the help of a vehicle. He always sat on floor instead of heavy thickly foamed chairs. He helped himself in open surrounding instead of closed doors. He maintained lively a green garden around his ashram. He walked a lot helping himself with a lot of substantial exercises. He was always supported by self spun linen. He never ate extra, never drank without need He said eating for the sake of pleasure is a sin like animal indulgence for the sake of it (XXVI-453).He kept his temper cool through habitual prayer he believed that prayer was the only means of bringing about orderliness & peace & response in our daily acts. Because prayer presupposed faith No prayer went in vain (TIG -43).

Mahatma Gandhi spoke to people in gentle ways never screamed or shouted. He never used umbrellas as a comforter .He liked to breathe in fresh air instead of Air conditioners, fans & coolers. He always liked to read & write in a library to keep his mind in touch with knowledge. He said an education which does not teach us to discriminate between good & bad to assimilate the one



&eschew the other is a misnomer (T -5-43). He never used room heaters or any other electrical appliances, whether in extreme cold or hot he wore limited clothing. He always believed that economics that hurt the moral wellbeing of an individual or a nation are immoral & therefore sinful (MM 263) . He respected cow he said cow protection is one of the wonderful phenomena in the human evolution (T-2-51)

Mahatma Gandhi always pointed out air was very essential since it is free we cannot misutilize it (Indian opinion dated 01-02-1913). "Whether air is free or has to be paid for, we cannot carry on without it for a moment" he said. In a speech at Ahmadabad dated 01-01-1918 he explained in his explicit words the importance of purity of air & water "Air, water and grains are the three chief kinds of food. Air is free to all, but, if it is polluted, it harms our health. Doctors say that bad air is more harmful than bad water. Inhalation of bad air is harmful by itself and this is the reason we need change of air. Next come water. We are generally very careless about it. If we were to be sufficiently careful about air, water and food, the plague would never make its appearance among us."

Mahatma Gandhi also felt appalling about the people who were polluting the sacred river Ganga. By doing so he felt that people were going against the ethics of dharma & destroying their nature besides dishonoring their duties towards society. "Such recklessness leads to pollution of air & water it is also the reason why diseases spread so fast"

questioned Mahatma Gandhi (22-09-1929) . In his speech in 31-08-1942 he called on people to understand the rationality behind the practice of nature has provided us with sufficient reserve for vitality other man would have disappeared from the face of the earth because of his own mistakes & transgressions of the rules of health. He suggested people to breathe fresh air & sleep in open air . Anyone who fouls the air by spitting about carelessly throwing rubbish dirtying the ground sins against man & nature (speech 01-02-1946). At a prayer meeting on 21-04-1946 Mahatma Gandhi explained that inhaling impure air & water gives invitation to several diseases. He called on people to understand the laws of nature for a hygienic living through cleanliness of mind body & one's own surroundings 28-05-1947.

Conclusion

Larger enhancement of physical comforts has led to uncritical acceptance of technological innovations which has further led to over utilization of natural resources. Mahatma Gandhi advocated eco conserving & friendly alliance with nature his dress code his food code his life code all were connected with veneration the nature's reserves. Thus Gandhian ideals have become more applicable today. If India can embark upon the Gandhian principles of nature conservation there would be a metamorphic change in the thought process of futuristic generation.



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