



## The self-less insufficient villages –Forgotten Gandhism on Gramswaraj

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**Abstract :** *Self-sufficiency, the core value which was inherent in the Gandhian Economic thought of Gram Swaraj is now under severe threat. The term is primarily linked with economic self-sufficiency. Absence of gram sabhas, proper transfer of funds and functions, gross negligence of 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment and finance commission reports shows the insufficient political indicatives. Misuse of govt. schemes by both the citizens and authorities, centralised planning instead of federal or grassroots planning is said to be the root cause of failure of administrative self-sufficiency. The unending groupism in the name of diversity questioning the unity of villages and cooperative system has become a myth. The downpour of foreign goods and urban industrialised products made the average Indian village so unnatural and non-native that the mind-set is also very much influenced by other cultures like consumerism. These resulted in all social, economic, political problems in the villages and led to a distressed life for many. Gandhiji's talisman lies in encouragement to cooperatives, rural industries, Sarvodaya, trusteeship, decentralisation etc., A honest adoption of this theory along with practical solutions can bring us much needed Gramswaraj today.*

**Key words:** *self-sufficiency, Gramswaraj, rural industries, handicrafts*

### Introduction:

Self-sufficiency, the core value which was inherent in the Gandhian Economic thought of Gram Swaraj is now under severe threat. The term is primarily linked with economic self-sufficiency. This requires a great deal of developmental efforts in the fields of Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Horticulture, rural industries, handicrafts etc., In the current state of self-insufficiency, villages are struggling with outward exodus which is burdening the cities in the form of expansion of slums. Increasing farmers suicides, debt trap, crop holidays mark the plight of our farmers which is the sole economic activity in many of the 6,50,000 villages and 70% of the Indian population.

**Methodology:** This paper is based on secondary sources of data and restricted to theoretical linkages, qualitative analysis and academic discussion orientation.

### Analysis:

The successful failure of Land Reforms can be said to be the primary agent in the enhanced plight of the farmers community as a whole. Elimination of the middlemen was considered as a major success in the earlier era of these reforms. But now the onslaught of modern middlemen despite the minimum support price is the proof of repetition of history of middlemen in the new avatar. This presence of grand support to this failure is against to the Gandhian philosophy of Trusteeship and



today's constitutional value of Socialistic pattern of society. People most often found debating and fanfare with the new concepts like 2<sup>nd</sup> Green Revolution and Rainbow Revolution amidst gross negligence of agriculture sector shows the sheer under estimation of ground level scenario. The globalisation brought Mechanisation, Genetic engineering, etc., against to the interests of marginal farmers and farm labour. The policy makers seems forgetting the Gandhian ideology of Technological innovations in this regard while having a clear cut understanding of bulging rural population and increasing poverty levels. The Diminishing forest cover, ground water, increasing salination of lands due to prawn culture and loss of mangroves, question the environmental support to self-sufficiency. Greening rural India initiative by the Indian government is again depending on a micro approach focussing more on energy front only leaving aside the macro degradation of natural resources available in the rural arena.

Absence of gram sabhas, proper transfer of funds and functions, gross negligence of 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment and finance commission reports shows the insufficient political initiatives. Misuse of govt. schemes by both the citizens and authorities, centralised planning instead of federal or grassroot planning is said to be the root cause of failure of administrative self-sufficiency. Most of the Government policies as highlighted in the Ministry of Rural Development in the spheres of Employment creation, Livelihoods, Social Security measures etc., are understood to be focussing on micro issues while ignoring or leaving aside the bigger and macro challenges in the rural

development front. Persistent problems like absence of marketing linkages, identification of right beneficiaries, coordination among various departments pose a severe threat in the rural administration saga. This questions the spirit of the Governments in adhering to the value system of our father of the nation. The iconic representation and symbolic fervour alone cannot take the society to what gandhiji dreamt a long back.

The unending groupism in the name of diversity questioning the unity of villages and cooperative system has become a myth. The downpour of foreign goods and urban industrialised products made the average Indian village so unnatural and non-native that the mindset is also very much influenced by other cultures like consumerism. These resulted in all social, economic, political problems in the villages and led to a distressed life for many.

Macro changes are very much needed to transform the profile of the Indian villages at this juncture. Since Land Reforms are forgotten agenda and became a non-issue, the farmers community should unite and form cooperatives to raise their demand for betterment. The society must comprehend that employment guarantee acts are not enough and cannot replace asset guarantee acts like Land redistribution acts. The peripheral issues like skill to the unskilled labour, micro finance, micro insurance etc., are not sufficient when macro issues like NPAs, Tax evasion, Black Money, misguided subsidies etc., are not resolved. The governments are not mere clerks and society should realise that they are the game changers and catalysts. Hence modern day welfare governments have to



follow the footsteps of the great Indian souls to serve better to the common citizens of the country.

As the population is now being considered to be the great human resource, it should be given enough weightage while planning the Indian village growth prospects. The absence of District level planning agencies is a major setback and it leads to the failure in proper channelization of human and local natural resources in the villages. Rural artisans, handicrafts, small scale, cottage industries are completely washed away with the forceful flow of Dumping of foreign/urban industry goods like Chinese products, MNC products, E.commerce products etc., The innovation, creativity, labour intensive, eco-friendly products are the need of the hour and our Indian cottage industries have the potential in realising the above objectives. The Charaka is the symbol of a new beginning depicting the rural industrialisation as the wheel in the stone age history for the Neanderthal man. The present day youth and the elders as well must be able to realise the effects of consumerism and inherent potential and dire need of supporting rural industries.

### **Conclusion**

Gandhiji's talisman lies in encouragement to cooperatives, rural industries, sarvodaya, trusteeship, decentralisation etc., A honest adoption of this theory along with practical solutions can only bring us much needed Gramswaraj today.

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