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GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SARVODAYA AND ITS PRINCIPLES

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Abstract

Sarvodaya means ‘progress of all’ or ‘Universal uplift’. Gandhi started this Sarvodaya movement, and people consider it an addition to his efforts in his non-violence movement. The main objective of this event was to establish a new India based on non-violence and love. It is an intellectual and powerful movement to develop India’s socio, economic and moral independence.

Key Word – movements, Sarvodaya, Swara, Human, Universalization, dehumanization

The concept of Sarvodaya is a significant contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the socio-political philosophy. His vision of Sarvodaya is not independent from the religions he came across, the persons with whom he came into contact, and the movements he has acquainted with. Though it is not easy to define properly Gandhi’s vision of Sarvodaya it is an all-comprehensive vision assuring the total good of every individual: religious, moral, social, political, and economic. He used the word Sarvodaya to describe the principles that he felt should guide us in our efforts to build ourselves, our families, our communities, and nations. He had arrived at these principles of a Sarvodaya society based on his studies, his observations and his experiments with truth and non-violence. In the world threatened by poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination, exploitation, ecological destruction, war, and dehumanization, it was Gandhi’s ardent desire to establish a new just society free from all social evils and which would ensure the good of all. He proposes Sarvodaya to achieve the integral development of every individual. It is an ideal to be translated into action in order to build up a new world society.

The Meaning of Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya is a Sanskrit word derived from two words, namely, sarva and udaya. Sarva means ‘all’ which includes every kind of living beings. Udaya means ‘rise,’ ‘uplift,’ ‘prosperity,’ ‘affluence,’ etc. So Sarvodaya literally means ‘the welfare of all’ or ‘the upliftment of all.’ The ultimate objective of Sarvodaya is the total well-being of all or the greatest good of all. By ‘welfare of all’ Gandhi means the sum total of conditions – religious, moral, political, social and economic – for the all-round growth of the total individual and of every individual in the context of the overall development of society. By the concept Sarvodaya Gandhi really means universal uplift or the welfare of all men and women and not just the welfare, or greatest happiness, of the greatest number. Sarvodaya is the name Gandhi gives to the new society embracing the betterment of the entire humankind and the world at large. It is a society directed towards the integral welfare of all living beings based on age and on the old spiritual and moral values of Indian and those found elsewhere.

Gandhi summed up the teachings of Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*, which he called Sarvodaya, in the following three fundamental principles:

- (a) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
- (b) That a lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
- (c) That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is life worth living.



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THE GOALS OF SARVODAYA

The fundamental goal of Sarvodaya is the greatest good of all living beings. Gandhi aims at the transformation of society in which everybody contributes his or her own maximum share for the peace and harmony of the world. Therefore, the integral growth which includes spiritual, moral, political, social and economic welfare of every individual and the welfare of all is visualized. It also aims at the all-round development of all, without distinction of caste, creed, sex or religion. Gandhi wanted to establish a welfare state in India, which he called Ram Rajya. When everyone including the sick and the invalid fulfils his or her duties according to his or her capacity, there will be a healthy community assuring the integral welfare of all beings. By providing sufficient opportunities to every individual for their personal initiatives and capacities Sarvodaya aims at the total and integral development of every individual in human society. Gandhi was not the supporter of utilitarianism which aims at the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Sarvodaya aims at the integral liberation of every individual. It also stands for the well-being of the whole individual, body and soul. The goal of Sarvodaya is not the suppression or liquidation of an individual or a group but the triumph of truth which means the victory of the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited. It is not the victory of an individual over another individual or even a group over other. The main principle behind it is that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all. Gandhi's liberated society defends and stands for the rights and the dignity of every human person. While rejecting the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number, it upholds the maximum welfare of every individual based on sharing goods and services regardless of one's own contribution. The resources and the progress of the village should be accessible to every individual. No individual or a group will be left out or suppressed in the Sarvodaya society. The philosophy of Sarvodaya, based on the insights and experiences of Gandhi, is a reassertion of his commitment to the problems of mankind in the direction of establishing a new social, political, economic and moral order. Vinoba Bhave, an ardent disciple of Gandhi, rightly says, "Sarvodaya stands for not only making all happy by eliminating suffering from all but also for bringing a world state based on equality" For Gandhi, Sarvodaya as a broader concept stands for the merger of one in all with self-sacrifice and a selfless service. His Sarvodaya ideal, apart from standing for the meaning of the welfare of all, implies the meaning of the universal welfare and integrated development of all. The greatest contribution of Sarvodaya in this century lies in the reassertion of the Gandhian moral approach to the problems of humanity. Through Sarvodaya, Gandhi strives for the establishment of a new, moral, just, non-violent, nonexploitative, non-materialist, non-imperialist, non-racist, non-consumerist, egalitarian, liberated, humane and de-centralised socio-politico-economic order which aims at the integrate welfare of the whole person everywhere. To achieve the welfare of all, the benefits of the nations' progress and prosperity must reach down unto the least and the lowest of the society. The natural and available resources of the world are to be for the total well-being of all human beings for their proper fulfilment as human persons. Sarvodaya aims at the realisation of global welfare and, consequently, a universal brotherhood and friendship in the place of a corrupt and unjust world where only a few enjoy the fruits of the world. The goal of Sarvodaya includes ultimately the self-realization of every individual. Total self-realization, according to Gandhi, is the god-realization. It is to be achieved through the inner conversion of the individual and a life based on the twin principles of truth and non-violence, within the family, the village, the province, the nation and the world as a whole. It embraces all humanity and all spheres of life. The liberation of one and all, including even the animal and plant life, is aimed at. The entire world is seen as an organism.

Objectives of the Movement

Gandhi's Sarvodaya focused not only on the welfare of the individual citizens but also on the welfare of society as a whole. Here's why-

Peace as a weapon- Sarvodaya promotes peace and has no place for non-violence. It believes in self-discipline and self-reliance. This movement also believes in a government that lets people be free and does not approve the use of the state's power, even if it is meant for the state's welfare.



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Democratic nation- This movement did not believe in political parties ruling the state. Instead, it suggested that there would be chosen Panchayat heads who take up the final decision. The panchayat heads would be honest people selected by the agreement of the village and not on a political basis.

Economic equality- Gandhi believed in economic equality and thought it could give financial independence to a nation. For this, equal pay according to labour should be implemented. A non-violent government functions best when there is no vast gulf between the rich and poor.

Moral and ethical values- Sarvodaya attempts to control the craze for power using manipulative and non-violent ways. As a result, people give up their morals and ethics while achieving power and wealth. Thus, this movement attempts to stop it.

Spiritualism- This movement believes that spiritual power is above any materialistic philosophy. Thus, it tries to shape people's ideologies, be it feudal or capitalists. It asks people to focus more on higher and nobler ideas of spiritualism instead of concentrating on shallow thoughts.

Village council (Gramrajyam) – Sarvodaya believes in a self-sufficient village system. This meant that every village would have a village council composed of one member from each family. It is the overall well-being of the village as a whole.

Bhoodan movement- Gandhian follower Vinoba Bhave started the Bhoodan movement, also known as Bloodless Revolution, in 1951 while he visited the Ponchampolly village. The objective of this movement was to convince rich people who had a large area of land to give up a part of their land area to the poor.

Principles of the Sarvodaya:

1. There is no centralized authority, and there is political and economic atmosphere in the villages.
2. Politics will not be the instrument of power but an agency of service and Rajnity will yield place to Loknity.
3. All people will be imbued with the spirit of love, fraternity, truth, non-violence and self-sacrifices. Society will function on the basis on the non-violence.
4. There will be no party system and majority rule and society will be free from the evil of the tyranny of the majority.
5. The sarvodaya society is socialist in the true sense of the term. All calling will be the same moral, social and economic values. The individual personality has the fullest scope for development.
6. The sarvodaya society is based on equality and liberty. There is no room in it for unwholesome some competition, exploitation, and class-hatred.
7. Sarvodaya stands for the progress of the all. All individual should do individual labour and follow the ideal of non-possession. Then it will be possible to realize the goal of: from each according to his work and to each according to his needs.
8. There will be no private property, the instrument of exploitation and the source of social distinctions and hatred. Similarly, the profit motive will disappear, rent and interest to will go.
9. The Sarvodaya Movement is based on Truth, Non-violence, and Self-denial.
10. The Sarvodaya Movement makes a sincere and bold attempt to create the necessary atmosphere to bring together such individuals with an unwavering faith in the Welfare of All
11. The gain to the individual would be small. The development of each quality depends upon every other. If all the qualities are improved a little, then the individual would gain more.

Conclusion

Gandhi propounded the theory of Sarvodaya and applied it in the context of particular time, place and situation. Each age and each problem need a solution of its own and techniques of its own to resolve the problem. Those who appears to follow in the footprints of Gandhi how to evolve techniques different from the one that Gandhi, evolved. In the words of Evikson,"Gandhiji's instrument once innovated by one of the rarest of men under specific culture and historical conditions, now exists in the images, impulses and ritualisations of many who have become aware of it by, what we may call ritual diffusion. It now calls for leaders who will renovate it elsewhere, sharing, no doubt, some of the personal or historical motivation of the first leader, the



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first followers of those first led, but recombining its motivation with totally new elements." The philosophy of Sarvodaya is integral and synthetic in character. The synthetic approach is of great merit in political philosophy. For instance, Plato built his philosophy by the synthesis of the ideas of Parmenides, Socrates and Pythagoras. The philosophy of Sarvodaya is based on the mystical intuitions and socio-political experiences of Gandhi. He attempted the synthesis of the ideas of Vedanta, Buddhism, Tulsidas, Christianity, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Thoreau, etc. He tried to incorporate some ideas from the Western philosophy as well. The political philosophy of Sarvodaya is an intellectual attempt to build a plan of political and social construction based on metaphysical idealism. It is based on the insights of Gandhi in the framework of independent India. The synthesis of party less democracy and village self-government is a notable contribution from the standpoint of Indian political thought and practice. The villages of Sarvodaya may appear as a reaction against the modern industrial trends of civilization, but it has added the new radical gospels of the ownership of all land of the village by the village community itself and the formation of a decentralized village commonwealth.

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