

Gandhi on Development

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Abstract

Development is generally define as process of progress in the every sphere of life and the present human society and human set-up is result of the development process of human civilisation from the very dawn of human history. However, development is also a very complex and multi-dimensional phenomena and the concept of development may vary not only from one civilisation to other civilisation but two individual may also differ on the concept and notion of development and it's out-put. In this paper and attempt has been made to understand the modern notion of development its shortcoming and the Gandhian solution to catastrophes of the modern development.

Key words: Gandhiji, Development ,Humanity, Ethics,Greed

Introduction

We have entered in the new millennium seventeen years back with great hope and celebrations. But man finds himself within eleven years under severe strain and feels compelled to sit up and reassess his environments, nature, culture and future. Development, the credo of modern age, has become a dubious proposition.

The humanity today faces developmental crises of global dimension like terrorism, war for controlling more and more resources for development, environmental degradation, gender disparity etc, have threatened the very survival of mankind due to the rape of the mother earth and nature in the name of modernisation and development. The whole planet is in danger due to unbalanced development. It is a crisis that threatens the survival of all alike, the rich countries as well as the developing countries like India. Environmental degradation in both the rich and poor countries is proceeding at an alarming rate – all in the name of more and more development. Development as a process of modernisation has proved inimical or antithetical to our environment. The more development means the more environmental deteriorations and displacement. Developmental problems is global concern and its solution is one of the most challenging tasks facing mankind today. "Consumption for today and conservation for tomorrow "has become the slogan of humankind all over the world. It is correct to say that "no technological intervention, however, brilliant, no socio-economic reform, however, profound will be able to save us from the impending catastrophe, if living natural resources are reduced below the sustainable levels and the environmental elements are degraded to the point of dysfunctional." Therefore the need of the hour is to radically change our life style and learn to live in harmonious relationship with nature.¹

¹ Anil Dutta Mishra, **Reading Gandhi**, Pearson, New Delhi, 2012.

In this paper an attempt will be made to spell out the developmental dilemma. An attempt has also been made to find out the environmental ethics from Gandhian perspectives which is an ecological one and involves a not mere reassertion of the ancient beliefs but involves the rejection of the existing paradigm – capitalism, industrialism, consumerism, patriarchal order and reconstructing a new one values is more environmental friendly.

The developmental problems of the earth began with its very birth some 4.6 billion years ago. Environmental degradation has been associated with most human endeavours leading to changes in the chemistry of nature. All these can be traced to the ecologically unsustainable human development. The human being has thus become according to John Mc Hall, the most dangerous organism that the planet has ever hosted.²Silent Spring (Rachel Carson, 1962), The Limits to Growth (Meadows et al. , 1972), The Report of World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) have summarized the environmental problems facing humankind and way out. The Rio de Janeiro conference of UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and development) is a landmark. The result of the conference was the release of five documents, the principle one being Agenda 21. It is a blue- print for the future.³

Human Development Report, 1990 beautifully stated that “The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy **long, healthy and creative lives**. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth”.

Is human being are enjoying long, healthy and creative lives. If not who is responsible.

The moot question is in development syndrome where are people? And where is the care for mother earth nature and side effect of development and industrialization? Uncontrolled Capitalist mode of production and uncontrolled consumerism are the biggest enemy of natural resources which are limited. Industrialism and consumerism and the value systems they promoted, commercialized both nature and human beings. The man became a factor of production, and nature a resource for exploitation. The production of farms and factories increased but at a great ecological and human cost. It is widely recognized that the race to rapid industrialization has left with us the polluted rivers, contaminated soil, depleted wildlife and exhausted natural resources. It is a crises that not only threatens of the survival of the poorest one billion inhabitants of this mother earth, but a crises that threatens all of humanity and which has come to be known as the global ecological crises.High level of consumerism and heavy expenditures of sophisticated life style have brought the modernized West or Group of Seven highly industrialized state where they consume 80 percent of world's resources even though they constitute only 20 percent of world population.The question of Green House Effect, Warming of the Earth and resultant damage to the Ozone layer, scarcity of Water, and the pollution of air, water and food through increasing chemical and industrial wastes, has given a jolt to all concerned. But the irony is that the pampered West is unwilling to put a restraint to its pattern and level of consumerism, and seeks a remedy for the environmental degradation in further technological innovations. If environmental problems are to be solved, then a change in the way individuals think about, interact with their environment must occur; It is for this reason that the cultural and spiritual underpinnings of Dharma, which is the primary virtue in the active life of all individual can be of benefit to all people.

The earth has now become an endangered planet. In spite of ever new goods and gadgets, millions of people continue to be hungry and destitute.Every minute, the nations of the world spend 1.8 million US Dollars on military armaments.Every hour 1500 children die of hunger related causes. Every day,

² “Sustainability: Carrying Capacity & Ecological Footprints of WOA ...”, www.overpopulation.org/consumption.html, : Accessed, 12-1-2017, 10:00 am.

³ “On the Road to Sustainable Development - UNDP”, www.undp.org/.../On%20the%20Road%20to%20Sustai: Accessed, 12-1-2017, 10:30 am.

one species becomes extinct. Every year, an area of tropical forests three quarters the size of Korea is destroyed and lost. Every Decade the sea level will rise by about 1.5 meters as a result of present global warming trends, portending disastrous consequences for our plant and especially for the coastal areas.⁴ India's environmental crises has been forcefully highlighted by P. Dayanandan as follows:

1. Population reaching one billion by 2000.
2. Urban population increasing from 160 to 350 million.
3. 250 million suffer from malnutrition.
4. 70 percent below 35 years: demands for education and employment.
5. Urban- Rural and Rich- Poor gap widening.
6. Severe soil erosion (5 million tons per year).
7. Intensifying droughts and floods {6.4 to 9 million hectares in three decade}.
8. Land degraded [50 percent] , surface Water contaminated [70 percent].
9. Fodder Shortage [60 percent]; 500 million livestock; grazing land 3.5 percent].
10. Forest covers decreasing 34 percent loss in one decade.
11. At 0.47 hectare per person forest available only for 150 million.
12. More than 1500 plants and animals endangered.
13. Conflicts in land use and resources sharing⁵.

According to recent newspaper report the great powers of the world indulge in the great sins which affect us in everyday life in the developing world. The six sins are:

1. **GREED** - A little over 16 percent of the world's population, mainly the affluent seven countries, consume 81% of the world's resources.
2. **SLOTH** - No government has substantially altered its path despite the necessary changes called by Brundtland Report of 1987.
3. **ANGER** - Annual global military spending total \$ 600 billion. NATO accounts for 80 percent. Every minute that the world spends \$1.7 million on arms, 57 people die from hunger related illness.
4. **COVETOUSNESS**- In 1989, poor southern nations paid \$ 52 billion more to rich northern countries than they received by way of loan- or aid.
5. **PRIDE** - The affluent countries arrogantly believe that their path of development is the only one worthwhile.
6. **LUST** - Where tourism is often the largest earner of vital foreign currency for poor developing countries more disposed people living in cities find themselves forced to sell sex for tourists from wealthy countries.⁶

Lifestyles in USA and other countries are based on high levels of consumption. And high consumption levels ultimately leads to high environmental damage and problems of waste disposal. Per capita consumption of energy which is a good indicator of consumption levels of nations shows that USA uses 10127 Kg of coal equivalent. West Germany 5377 Kg, Japan 4032, China 810 Kg, India 307 Kg and Bangladesh 69 Kg. In other words, an average USA citizen uses over 30 times more energy than an average Indian, and in extreme cases the difference is likely to be 1: 150. Further in terms of use of steel the average USA citizen consumes 20 times more, paper 100 times more, cement 15 times more than per capita use in India. It is widely recognized that the race to rapid

⁴ "human development report 1990 - Human Development Reports",
hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/219/hdr_1990_en_complete_nostats.pdf: Accessed, 13-1-2017, 10:00 am.

⁵ "Environmental issues in India - Wikipedia", https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Environmental_issues_in_India: Accessed, 14-1-2017, 10:00 am.

⁶ "human development report 1990 - Human Development Reports",
hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/219/hdr_1990_en_complete_nostats.pdf: Accessed, 15-1-2017, 10:00 am.

industrialization has left with us the polluted rivers, contaminated soil, depleted wildlife and exhausted natural resources. It is a crises that not only threatens of the survival of the poorest one billion inhabitants of this mother earth, but a crises that threatens all of humanity and which has come to be known as the global ecological crises.

If environmental problems are to be solved, then a change in the way individuals think about, interact with their environment must occur; It is for this reason that the cultural and spiritual underpinnings of Dharma, which is the primary virtue in the active life of all individual can be of benefit to all people. Science and technology have placed enormous power in the hands of man but without a moral code of conduct, its creative potentials have remained dormant. The conflict that is inherent to the man's quest for happiness through material advancement, has taken a variety of forms. There are World Wars, there are religious wars, there are social conflicts, and there are psychological tensions. The whole human society is getting torn into pieces. But above all these, man has waged a continuous war against nature endangering the very survival of life on the earth. Man survived the fury of the two world wars: but he would not survive the fury of the war he has waged against nature. The eco disaster is visible to those who can see. Before it is too late, man must return to sanity. The other name of this sanity is the conduct of life in consonance with the laws of ecology. Gone is the time when environment- protection was synonymous with caring for the big cats; today , on it depends the well-being of the planet as a whole, together with all its inhabitants (including human beings) and non-living. There is a tremendous connectivity and interdependence among various components, like natural living and non-living resources, with considerable social, economic, historical, cultural, philosophical, ethical, and moral dimensions. All these aspects are now under the purview of environment. The enemy of our environment is within each one of us because we want more and more at the expense of Nature, and consume more than our share of materials. There is undeclared war against Nature, Culture and Future. Today the human race is at the crossroads; the present eco-degradation and pollution are the result of greed of the rich, need of the poor to eke an existence, and careless application of technology. The importance of environment is ever increasing and there is no compartment of life, which is not affected by it. Years ago Gandhiji was asked if he would like to have the same standard of living for India's teeming millions as was prevalent in England. He quipped: **It took Britain half the resources of planet to achieve this prosperity. How many planets will a country like India require!**⁷

The industrial countries have an eye on developing countries. The fixing of targets by them for population stabilization in the developing countries, most now be backed by their willingly fixing targets for controlling and bringing down resource use in their own countries. The silver lining is that the ethics of environment and resource use are being increasingly and openly talked about now by thinkers even in the North. Contrarily, in India, saints and philosophers have not only been talking about resource conservation, but also practicing it since the dawn of human history. They lived the life of simplicity. In the present context the modern visionary Gandhi rightly said long back: **"The earth provides enough for every man's need but not for every man's greed."**⁸ Twentieth century is undoubtedly a century of unprecedented economy growth .The optimum production was the key to peace and prosperity. Nature becomes commodity and society is only of the human beings. It is our primary duty to sublimate nature with the help of science and technology so that she does not lose her capacity to sustain all life on the earth. The basic needs of all beings should be fulfilled from their surroundings with least efforts. The present system, which relies more and more upon the use of non-renewable resources like metals and minerals, cannot survive because the supply of these are limited. The ancient cultures survived, because they sustained on renewable resources. Ivan Illyich was asked what was the way out of the crisis of the civilisation? He replied, "Perhaps the Eskimos can show us

⁷ "Annexes - World Energy Council", https://www.worldenergy.org/..//WER_2013_Annexes. Accessed, 15-1-2017, 10:00 am.

⁸ "Loving Your Situation - McDonald Road Seventh-day Adventist Church", mcdonaldroad.com/sermons/02/1116.htm: Accessed, 17-1-2017, 12:00 am.

the way ". Edward Goldsmith, on the basis of his study conducted for 32 years, has also reached the same conclusion, when he says, " Inspiration must come from the world view of vernacular societies, in particular the Chathonic world view of the earliest period when people everywhere lived in harmony with the natural world. "Modern life has become so complex and complicated that we cannot do without certain things. So the next step should be to find out the Alternatives. There is an urgent need to replace the present energy system which is inhuman, hazardous and temporary. The energy priorities should be: human, animal, bio, solar, wind, tidal, geothermal and hydro thermal from the run of the river. The real development will take the society from **Vikriti** (perversion) to **Sanskrit** (culture). It is not going back, but going in the right direction.

The Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development in its report Our Common Future called for application of sustainability as a criterion for all development initiatives. "In order for development to be sustainable, it must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ", said the commission. This definition is highly generalised and hence has been subjected to a variety of interpretations. Broadly speaking, developed countries lay emphasis on economic and technological aspects. How to integrate environmental costs into economic decision- making while protecting and enhancing their industrial competitiveness and employment opportunities. In contrast, the perspectives of developing counties are understandably different. In their view, poverty is the greatest polluter of environment and hence they must accelerate economic growth to meet the basic needs of the people. And if the industrialised rich countries are really serious about environment, they should realise that it is they who have created the present environmental crisis, not the poor countries, and hence they should assist the latter with finance and latest environment friendly technological know-how to promote economic growth. Each country and each region assigns different weights to different approaches to achieve a sustainable future. Sustainable development cannot be a static concept. It is a dynamic process and will be applied by different countries in true with their own cultural, political and economic perspectives. Sustainable development has to be a long – term process, and one may say a continuing process. The economic, political technological and social structure and superstructure built during the last few centuries the world over, particularly in industrialised countries of the world, cannot be dismantled in a day. Equity and justice are the sin qua non of sustainable development. It is four dimensional : (1) Equity among nations – rich nations, poor nations, developed nations, developing nations; (2) Equity with countries- between regions, social classes, genders, sectors of activities; (3) Equity between generations; and (4) Equity between economics and ecology and science and spirituality. Sustainable development has a fixed set of goals. Approaches and means to achieve them can differ. These goals are: (!) Basic needs of all human beings; i.e. food, clothing, shelter, education, health, security, and self- esteem must be met adequately. Priority must go to these needs. Level of these needs will be determined by natural and technological resources available and the global socio-economic context; (2) Development process should be so articulated that ecological balance and environmental purity is least disturbed, if at all; and (3) All nations and people must join hands to support each other and work with each other to create a world in which the above two goals are optimised. Both India and Canada should find ways and means to promote this interdependence.

Sustainable development demands a change in our attitude towards nature. There is an urgent need, to move away from the Cartesian world-view and post ourselves in the ecological world –view. The idea is not to go back to the past, but to create a new future out of the present, the present as it is. The past can help in the shaping of the new future. Sustainable development is not the business of the government and private companies alone. It is the business of the people in general. It is a process, which has to be initiated at each level of human endeavour and life. It has to be a movement, because it involves paradigmatic change, which is difficult to bring about unless great many people get involved. The Western perspectives relates to the incompatibility of the western capitalist system with the idea of conservation. On the other hand, Indian perspective relates to the obvious need of

prescribing a way of life based on simplicity and self-restraint as the panacea for all our ecological and environmental problems. All cultures have in-built customs, manners and mores which preserve and conserve the environment. How to use various natural resources so that these resources are not destroyed or wasted is given in all cultures. We should have to examine these and codify them. And this code should be self-imposed.

Each society has certain values system which is part of their lives. Eastern and Western societies have different social values systems. In most of the cases we radically differ from each other in so far as social values are concerned. Western society have materialistic outlook where as Indian society have spiritual outlook.

India has the unique concept of preserving forests. People worship trees. Some tree's which have great medicinal values is associated with some God or Goddess. Similarly India has the distinction of developing unique irrigation system as early as 3000 years ago which conserved and replenished surface and ground water and improves the living environment of the people. One can find hundred of examples of water management, particularly watershed planning and water harvesting in Rajasthan and other parts of India. In India, the constitution lays down the foundation of sustainable development through Article 48 A and 51 A (9) which state that the "State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife in the country" and the duty of the citizen was "to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes and rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for the living creatures". Near about 424 nuclear reactors are operating worldwide and more planned for future, which are neither safe nor friendly with environment. The principal factor behind these maladies has been the need of the poor, greed of the rich and careless application of technology in each and every field of economic activities.⁹ Almost all the consumer items that are being promoted to sustain the economic growth have significant impact on society directly or indirectly. Take for example India. Indian has 32 million uneducated adults, 36 million unemployed adults and 44 million child labours. There are 2.4 million women forced into prostitution in 1100 red light areas of major and small cities in India. The child prostitution is on the rise. It is interesting to note that the hub of the child sex industry is in Asia, and India accounts for 4 Lac children who are sexually abused. Statistics reveals that a woman is molested every 26 minutes, one raped in every 47 minutes, one eve-teasing in every 6 minutes, one kidnapped in every 44 minutes, 7 dowry death in every 24 hours and every 7 minutes one act of criminal offence against women is committed in the country. Data shows that sexual violence is increasing every year not only in India but other countries also and in 21st century it will affect more and more women. The statistics shows that in 1980 the number of reported rape cases was 0.7 per Lac in the country. In comparison, the United States witnessed the highest of such cases (36.1 per Lac), followed by Sweden (10.7), France (3.5), Britain (2.5), Japan (2.2) and Bangladesh (0.3). Today 25 percent of reported rapes are of girls under 16. Infact, there is a rise of 30% rape in major cities in India. If we look carefully all adolescent girls are virally raped by men. By 2050 it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's people will be short of water. The former secretary General of U.N.O. Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali has warned that the war will not be waged over oil, but over water, which is becoming the scarcest natural resource. His predictions are echoed by World Bank Vice-President In M. Serageldin, who says: "Be under no illusion; the impact of general water shortages is going to hit over cities. In the most centuries, wars will be fought over water¹⁰." Mahatma's ideas about the dangers of Western civilization have assumed significance in the context of several issues concerning the survival of the humanity and evolution of a just and viable world order. Gandhi saw clearly the moral degradation and cultural decay long back. The Hind Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi published in 1909, long before the negative consequences of industrial civilization were exposed to the common experience, must have appeared to the generation of his times, a book of reaction and retreat from modernity and

⁹ Anil Dutta Mishra, no.1.

¹⁰ "Secretary-General of the United Nations - Wikipedia" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary-General_of_the_U.N. Accessed, 19-1-2017, 1:00 pm.

civilization. The fact is that long before the people in the new millennium will be awakened to the peril and limits of unrestrained economic growth and technological innovations, Gandhiji pointed out the pitfalls of industrialism and the damage to nature and man and he strongly criticized the emerging trends of consumer culture in future in all spheres of life and emphasized austerity and the moral principle in development, which is essential for new millennium. Gandhian Ethics fosters awareness, ecological knowledge, attitude, values, commitment, skills and environmental responsibilities in individuals and nations for sound use of the earth's resources and protecting and improvement for the present and future generations. The Gandhian way of life style is known for sound and widely accepted tenets of environmental ethics. The environmental challenges of new millennium require total newness on all fronts. The holistic analysis, churning of knowledge, ruthless codification of lessons of past and total transparency, viability and replicability are some issues for clear accelerated plan of action. As the time passes the need to look at Mahatma Gandhi from practical utility with reference to action becomes important. What gamut of synergisation of truth, non-violence, simplicity, characteristics, mission and on the whole a personification of action. Gandhian concepts of Sarvodaya, Satyagraha and Swadeshi will be very useful for solving the social economic and political Challenges of new millennium. The concept of Sarvodaya can be interpreted as the "awakening of one and all". In addition to the awakening of everyone, it refers to the awakening of the total human spirit and personality. Sarvodaya concept stresses duty of individuals to themselves and beyond their immediate families to the entire world. Sarvodaya believes that by tapping their inner most beliefs and values, one can awaken people to their swa-shakti (personal awakening or power) and Janashakti (collective awakening of people's power)" in order that their Dharma can be realized. The sarvodaya ideal, apart from standing for the meaning of the welfare of all, implies the moving of the universal welfare and integrated development of all. As a universal ideal it aims at not only fulfilling the material needs but also developing the Ithaca-spiritual aspects of all people. Similarly Swadeshi will be the greatest tool for solving the economic problems of the new millennium. Swadeshi means self-reliance in every field. In other words, Swadeshi is service and if we understand it, we will simultaneously benefit ourselves, our families, our country and the world. Gandhi delimited the modus operandi of Swadeshi in terms of limited wants and the capacity of social surroundings and resources to meet the need of the people. In his famous sentence he laid down his dictum: "Nature produces enough to meet the needs of all the people but not enough to satisfy the greed of anyone." Our motto in new millennium should be simple living and high thinking so that we can stop the evils of the society. Infact, Swadeshi movement may become part of renaissance in new millennium. Because it conveys the idea of returning to one's own country- to its culture and heritage, its own gifts and tradition and screen the mud of the next door neighbor. This is the appropriate times for us to understand the concept of Swadeshi and implement it in every possible manner and we will be doing this progress by making ourselves self-reliant and self-sufficient in every field and we would be free from moral degradation, economic exploitation, and political subjugation. Satyagraha will be also an important means by which individuals and groups can have an immediate effect on government policy and programmes related to conservation.. Individuals and groups can organise the people and draw the attention of the Government and masses of issues of environment. At a personal level also lot of people can work. To operationalize the 'Satyagraha for better future', it would be desirable to bring like minded people under one umbrella to fight against injustice and wrong governmental policy which is creating social tensions, alienation and polluting environment.

What should be do

Every society has its own code of conduct, its own norms and its own concept of desirable behaviour. Since a human being has no power to create life, he has, therefore, no right to destroy life. Man's happiness lies in contentment. He who is discontented however much he possesses, becomes a slave to his desires.

Gandhiji's underlying philosophy was need but not greed, and some comfort but not luxury. Gandhiji's entire life and work is an environmental legacy for all humanity. This was not because he wrote a big treatise on environment, or led a movement to stall a dam or some industry, or clean a river. Or whatever. This was because he was a practitioner of sustainable development in the real sense of the word. In brief, his whole life was his message and a lesson on environment and development for Indians and world at large to follow.

1. Humankind would act in a manner that is part of Nature rather than apart from Nature;
2. Materials available on the earth {humankind's only home}, are not used with an element of greed;
3. Human beings practice non-violence not only towards fellow humans but also towards other living organisms and inanimate materials because over-use of such materials also amounts to violence;
4. Bottom-up shared view is preferred over the top down totalitarian overview
5. Conservationist and sustainable life-saving approach prevails over the unsustainable consumerist self-destructive approach;
6. Humans care for and share with the poor and the destitute in society as a moral obligation towards them;
7. The human race thinks about how much is enough for a simple need-based, austere and comfortable life style;
8. All development as far as is possible leads to local self-reliance and equity with social justice; and
9. Ethics and self-discipline in resource use is an over-riding criterion of development.

Dalia Lama beautifully wrote: If we care for Nature, it can be rich, bountiful and inexhaustibly sustainable.¹¹

Conclusion

The present developmental crises are consequence of follies, of greed, exploitation and domination. Therefore present exigency demands that one acquires the basic wisdom of nature that is to follow its laws and learn to manage according to its principles. Therefore, the present developmental crisis demands a different world view on Gandhian line that is give up the present life style and reduction in consumerism. The message is simple and very clear. People have no choice but to have towards a secure future and that it has to keep note of the imperatives as well as the potentials of sustainable environment. If there is anything that can solve the ill effect of developmental problems is Gandhian path, along with the opportunities, which will emerge from modern science and technology. Our approach to development and economic growth must be harmonized with human value. Our aim should be to have worth living place and worth living life, which can be achieved through change of our life style, and controlling our unlimited needs and grids. We cannot erect the city of peace on the foundation of violence. If mankind is to live in peace and achieve progress in all spheres, it has to eschew violence it has to develop a way of life anchored in the philosophy of love and cooperation. We should be cautions to these who want to reach heaven by creating a hell on earth. It is high times for the individual to change the chemistry of thought and action by adopting Gandhian values in our daily life. We have to start from somewhere to come to overcome the hurdle coming in the way of promoting environmental awareness.

Let us end with saying:

There is need to reiterate Gandhian values and instead of merely garlanding the portraits of Gandhiji, Indians must translate his ideals into real life.

¹¹ Anil Dutta Mishra,

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