

GANDHI ON SARVODAYA

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Introduction:

- It is nothing but the ideal social order promoting the welfare of all.
- His concept of sarvodaya was very much influenced by Ruskin work “Unto This Last”.
- Literally sarvodaya means rise or progress of all.
- The three meanings of sarvodaya are –
 - a. That the good of the individual lies in the good of all,
 - b. That there is dignity of labour to every work, lawyers work has the same value as the barbers,
 - c. That the life is worth living.
- Sarvodaya also means the welfare of all & not only a class or section of the society.
- It is also known as Gandhian socialism.

Sarvodaya as an Ideal:

1. It is the ideal of politics of cooperation rather than politics of power.
 2. It wants the inculcation of the values of freedom, equality, justice and fraternity.
 3. It is opposed to the state machinery.
 4. It advocates party less democracy.
 5. It believes in decentralization or Gramarajya.
- “Thus, political philosophy of sarvodaya is a powerful intellectual attempt to build a plan for political and social reconstruction on the basis of metaphysical idealism.” – V.P. Verma.

Sarvodaya as an Ideal

- If Utilitarianism believes in the greatest happiness of the greatest number but sarvodaya desires to promote the welfare of all.
- Sarvodaya desires to bring about the moral uplift of the rich and material uplift of the poor.
- Sarvodaya as the welfare of all, represents the ideal social order, according to Gandhi.
- Its basis is all embracing love.

Sarvodaya as an Ideal

- So it has room in it for all, without exception Prince and peasant, Hindu & Muslim, Touchable & Untouchable, White & Black, Saint & Sinner
- No individual or group is to be suppressed, exploited or liquidated.
- All are to be equally members of this social order, all sharing in the produce of their labour, the strong protecting the weak and functioning as trustees of the weak & each promoting the welfare of all (Bharath Kumarappan).
- Further, sarvodaya has been developed by J.P. Narayan & Acharya Vinobha Bhave.

Principles of Sarvodaya:

- Some of its principles are –
 - 1. Stateless Society:** the ideal of sarvodaya is a stateless society free from every type of authority.
- In such a society people are free from exploitation and oppression.
- Again, there is no distinction between rulers and the ruled as they are merged in the individual.

2. Party-less Democracy:

- In the present democracies there is the absence of sovereignty of the electorate & consent of the people.
- On the other hand, there is the domination of all powerful political parties.
- Sarvodaya is critical not only of political parties but also the representative democracy.
- Bhoodan movement is to realize party less democracy.

2. Party-less democracy.....

- Community consensus replaces the parties.
- Majority decisions are replaced by unanimous decisions.
- Direct elections is to be replaced by indirect nominations.
- Even in legislatures, the candidates were supposed to vote as representatives and not as party members.

3. Decentralization/Grama-rajya:

- Gandhi was opposed to the idea of centralization of power and he pleaded for decentralization of economic and political power.
- The sarvodaya society will be a loose federation of autonomous village which are self sufficient.
- In a Grama-rajya all political authority is being exercised by the inhabitants of the village.
- To him, 'Rajniti' should be replaced by 'Lokniti'.

Evaluation of Sarvodaya – merits:

- 1. Sarvodaya promotes individualism** – as it stands for the welfare of each & every individual.
- 2. State – reminded of its role:** role of the state is doing service to the people & not to exercise absolute power to exploit or harm people.
- 3. Promotion of high values:** it promotes values like freedom, equality, fraternity, social justice , etc.
- 4. Increases the importance of villages:** as village will contribute to the political and economic development of the entire society.

Demerits:

- 1. Sarvodaya was not realistic:** the principles of sarvodaya are idealistic and is difficult to practice.
- 2. Party-less democracy cannot exist:** party-less democracy feasible only in theory & not in practice.
- 3. Gandhian ideals followed only by a few:** very few people are convinced of Gandhian ideals like trusteeship of property & other principles. All people are not broadminded & self-less to follow him & his ideals.
- 4. It is a utopian ideal and not practicable(Dr. Usha Mehta).**

Conclusion:

- Gandhi gave great political ideas to the world.
- Most of his ideas have a great relevance even today like non-violence, good means & good ends, insistence of performing duties rather than enjoying rights alone, distributive justice, fusion of religion & politics, village autonomy, etc.
- “Gandhi lives for others. Society is Gandhi’s temple, service is his sole form of worship, humanity is his single passion, truth is his one god & non-violence is his only means of attaining it.”
– Pattabhi Sitharamayya.