

## Relevance of Gandhi's Economic Wisdom

### What is the issue?

With India facing new age economic challenges, Gandhi's economic wisdom might prove to be of help.

### What is Gandhi's economic wisdom?

- J C Kumarappa called it "economy of permanence". [J C Kumarappa is a Gandhian thinker and economist]
- Gandhi proposed bringing together the best in city people and the best in village people.
- He was telling the young people of those days, be it Subhash Chandra Bose or Nehru or hundreds of other highly educated city people, to go to villages.
- He was also asking the village people to go to the city for inspiration.
- His economic model provided for saving nature by actually shifting to production systems that use less of automation.
- By this way, the nature is treated as less of a raw material.

### How different is India's economy from Gandhi's idea?

- For Gandhiji, economy meant construction of jobs, more than production, more than profits.
- In contrast, in the last 70 years, India has been increasing production only because it meant a lot of profit for a few people.
- It was genuinely believed that those few people would transfer the profit to the masses.
- Jawaharlal Nehru tried seriously to achieve that, as did others, and the present PM Modi too is trying to achieve that.
- But unfortunately, this has not happened.

### What is the consequence?

- The economy of over-production and excess profit and growth is collapsing.
- There is much hope for economic revival but the possibilities are too less or are highly challenging.
- In the recent [Climate Action Summit](#), activist [Greta Thunberg](#) expressed concerns for the global economic growth pattern.
- She said to the leaders, "You people are destroying my world".

- She was so concerned because many developed countries have converted so completely to homogenised economic systems that they may be unable to go back.
- However, India's economy, which was dear to Gandhiji, is still alive in India.
- So, there is a possibility of going back to nature, unlike the many other countries that have homogenised economic systems.

### **How can that be achieved?**

- A hundred years after Gandhiji, India cannot draw the line between the handmade and the machine-made.
- Nevertheless, the country should start the scale from the complete handmade, as the most sacred; a little less handmade is a little less sacred and so on.
- This alternative needs time as well as hundreds and thousands of what Gandhiji called constructive workers, who will go to the villages and arm them with systems.

### **What should be done?**

- Over the last 250 years, millions of dollars have been spent in industry.
- The knowledge accumulated is in the construction of systems of accounting, of management, production, managing markets, managing production, etc.
- But the villagers do not have this.
- It is time to inspire thousands of young people, who are rendered jobless every day, to go to the villages.
- India definitely needs Gandhi. But, the challenge is to find ways to utilise his wisdom to sort out the problems created in the last seven decades.

**Source: The Indian Express**