

# The Present Economy, Environment and Survival of Human Quality: Relevance of Gandhi

Biswajit Baidya

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, I. C. V. College, Belonia, South Tripura, Tripura, India

**Abstract:** *Modern civilisation with its scientific temper, humanistic spirit, and secular view of life is uprooting the world over the customs of long centuries and creating a ferment of restlessness. The new world cannot remain a confused mass of needs and impulses, ambitions and activities without any control or guidance of the true human spirit. The void created by abandoned superstitions and uprooted thinking calls for an ethical filling. We are aware of the scale, level and difficulty of the problems on which the paper deals with. Present Economic system is one of the essential factors of morality and environmental ethics. In regard to the question of the relation of man - made economic system and environment it is wise to be less solemn and more sincere. We tend to fake a part to the world in these deepest matters of life. M. K. Gandhi always gave importance on human resource development but not materialism. Underneath this vision there has been preference for moral order. All activities, economic, political and social have moral contents. Judgement of rationality comes from human consciousness. Human consciousness plays an important role in society. Rationality is rooted in both empiricism and intuition. Even pure empirical evidences show us that a crisis is growing in the working of present economy. The gathering crisis is due to incompatibility between industrial raw materials for processing and maintaining continuing of amount of production. The present economy is a production oriented economy. To sustain production, an uninterrupted supply of raw materials of natural resources is required. Natural resources mainly mineral resources are not never - ending goods. They are not renewable by human institution. As a result, the economy is threatened by severe scarcity of resources. Mineral resources will be exhausted in not very distant future. By the massive power of the quantity of production the structure is going to collapse. Gandhian views teaches us that we should meditate to conserve nature and natural resources for the betterment of society from the point of view of social, cultural and economic development. We should adopt appropriate ways and means to solve existing environmental problems.*

**Keywords:** environment, values, poverty, inequality.

## 1. Introduction

Modern civilisation with its scientific temper, humanistic spirit, and secular view of life is uprooting the world over the customs of long centuries and creating a ferment of restlessness. The new world cannot remain a confused mass of needs and impulses, ambitions and activities without any control or guidance of the true human spirit. The void created by abandoned superstitions and uprooted thinking calls for an ethical filling. We are aware of the scale, level and difficulty of the problems on which the paper is deals with. Present Economic system is one of the essential factors of morality and environmental ethics. In regard to the question of the relation of man - made economic system and environment it is wise to be less solemn and more sincere. We tend to fake a part to the world in these deepest matters of life. M. K. Gandhi always gave importance on human resource development but not materialism.<sup>1</sup>

Some times before in the world, there were two types of economic systems. One was capitalist or liberal system and the other was Soviet system of social economy. We are well known of the fact that the Soviet economic system was collapsed for mismanagement of market. But at the same time same fear is shadowing in the present economic system. The capitalist system stems from the writings of Adam Smith, "An enquiry into the nature and causes of wealth of nations". In Adam Smith's own words, "the object of the political economy of every nation is to increase the riches and the power of that country". (quoted by Gide Charles and Rist Charles, history of Economic Doctrine, Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1979, p - 113.). Another important element of Adam Smith's ideas was that he thought that natural resources were the source of wealth. It is the human

activities with vision of natural resources that produces mass of commodities in society. Amount of wealth depends on quick convertibility of raw materials into finished product, which are qualities or not, it is not in prime focus. This process is determined by human efforts united with the help of modern technology. In a general way, natural resources and technology act as complimentary to each other. That is a relation like inhalation and exhalation of humans. The main significant matter is that industry needs frequent supply of raw materials (natural resources mostly) for uninterrupted production. It is the role of modern technology and thought of main stream economy. In this position we need Gandhian view of environmental ethics because of environment protection.<sup>2</sup>

**E. Ethics:** Environmental ethics is a newly emerging concept. It is the study of how human beings should interact with the nature or environment. The word ethics has been derived from the Greek word 'ethikos'. There are two words; one is environment and another ethics. When we combine them together, we get the concept of environmental ethics. Environmental conservation is precious - - - when this moral sense develops in every person, it is called environmental ethics. Man is rational. Rationality plays a significant role in ethics. This rationality does not come from outside, but from within. In order to this man can realize how to behave with different aspects of environment which are not harmful to the local, national and as well as international communities. This realization creates a moral sense of environmental conservation which refers to an approach to be developed in each person, to make decisions and take action to all natural creatures. In the 1930's environmentalists and scientists began to worry about the degradation of the environment due to human activities and

thus developed the concept of environmental ethics. It is very significant because it persuades people to think how their actions are affecting the environment. Afterwards, peoples realize the effects; they are more positively paced towards re - cycled things. They are very friendly to animals and all other creatures and support environmental protection.

We have an urgent need to spread awareness regarding various environmental issues. For instance smoking, alcoholism, chewing tobacco etc. that kill humans are the most familiar phrases in our society and in medical world. But an important aspect of tobacco which people are not aware of is that tobacco production damages the environment as much as tobacco consumption, said a group of researchers of Asian consultancy of tobacco control in Hong Kong. A lot of wood is required to cure tobacco leaves; tobacco needs more water and more pesticides which affects the composition of soil. Tobacco plantation requires more and more forest land to be cleared and these counts to the act of deforestation.

Thus the aim of environmental ethics is to make human beings behave in a friendly manner to the nature as other animals or creatures on this planet not as the superior. 'Man is the centre of all things'—it is the central thought of anthropocentric thought or utilitarianism. The ultimate principle is not suitable for the present society. The corporate sectors must hold moral responsibilities and should not promote a culture of utilitarianism. For example, deforestation for railways, construction of buildings, towns or cities etc. in the name of development. But sustainable development is more necessary for restoring the life supporting systems.

The environmental ethics requires justification about utilitarianism and ecology. Utilitarianism recognizes to exploiting natural resources for economic prosperity. They are well known of the price of everything but they are knowingly or unknowingly ignorant about the value. Ecological justification rejects over consumption and considers each living organism as an equal numbers of living communities, and thus all living organisms have the right to equal respect.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Conclusion

The consumerism culture has brought drastic changes in our society; a painful picture as a result of consumerism is the huge accumulation of waste on earth. Sustainable development is a philosophy based on human goals and the understanding of long - term impact of human activities on the environment and biosphere. The major goal of sustainable development is the conservation of human resources including living things. Public awareness can play an important role in sustainable ecological development.

Underneath this vision there has been preference for moral order. All activities, economic, political and social have moral contents. Judgement of rationality comes from human consciousness. Human consciousness plays an important role in society. Rationality is rooted in both empiricism and intuition. Even pure empirical evidences show us that a crisis is growing in the working of present economy. The

gathering crisis is due to incompatibility between industrial raw materials for processing and maintaining continuation of the amount of production. The present economy is a production oriented economy. To sustain production, an uninterrupted supply of raw materials of natural resources is required. Natural resources mainly mineral resources are not never - ending goods. They are not renewable by human institution. As a result, the economy is threatened by severe scarcity of resources. Mineral resources will be exhausted in the near future. By the massive power of the quantity of production the structure is going to collapse. Gandhian views teach us that we should meditate to conserve nature and natural resources for the betterment of society from the point of view of social, cultural and economic development. We should adopt appropriate ways and means to solve existing environmental problems. When we are carefully studying the Gandhian literature it seems to us he was not against industrialization but the Father of the Nation always emphasised on sustainable development. Although he was always against the massive consumerism in the name of development. Man should use natural resources for his need and not for his greed, said the Mahatma. Thus Gandhiji thinks that over industrialization chains man into shackles of slavery of machines and lowers human dignity. Under such a condition one turns away from spiritual development and hankers after sensuous pleasures and material advancements.<sup>4</sup>

What we need today? The civilization demands a technology with human face because of severe environmental crisis. But it should be remembered that we are very much aware of the brighter aspects of industrial life. The history of economic literature teaches us that industrialization have created more poor people than rich. Gandhiji says that he wants to establish such a society in which even the poorest person may feel proud of contributing his share towards its development.<sup>5</sup> Everybody run after more and more. It is not human life. Happiness is not the end of human beings but dignity is supreme. For this we need rebuilding of human mind and improvement in imagination, daily - life's aspirations and also in the art of living.

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