TOWARDS NON-VIOLENT DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

All economic theories are meant for human community and pursuit of their well-being is ultimate goal. It is essentially in this context that the entire economic philosophy of Gandhi is to be studied- a philosophy which is set in an altogether a new pattern of thinking, for fuller and near perfect development of people and his society. J.C. Kumarappa is a Gandhian economist who has been almost wiped out from the present time. For Kumarappa, the founder of Gandhian economic philosophy, the very development would be meaningful and sustainable if it brings nature and human beings at the center of discourse. Parallel to the prevailing concept of 'Violent development', the economic philosophy of Kumarappa argues for Non- Violent development which leads towards building a ‘stable’ society and human emancipation.

Key Words: Non-Violent Development, Economy of Permanence.

Introduction

The issue of 'development' is at the center of the attraction today. It is often believed that 'Development' a product of modernism, would emancipate humans from slavery of society, nature and the powers that pervert the life. However the dreams of modern development have shattered. As a consequence of this the scholars of development who represent the liberal western contemplations are appearing irrelevant and misleading. Those ‘voices’ of disagreements which were weak in the beginning are now finding strength and people have started to think and explore about alternative forms of development. Thinker’s like Kumarappa, Schumacher, Illich, Sugadas Gupta and Paulo Freire have acknowledged the limitations of developmental thinking reiterated that only the non-Violent form of development is meaningful and sustainable. It goes beyond current economic problems but Gandhi's unlike Marx’s economic thought is all embracing. It is based on a practical philosophy of his own and covers all the problems that plague our social life. This Paper outlines the ideas of Kumarappa’s on the alternative model of development which may be termed as Non-Violent Development.
Non-Violent Development

Before perusing Kumarappa's Vision about development is it important to define the concept of non-violent Development. Any kind of non-violent economy/Development must incorporate three basic premises suggested by Ruskin in his book 'Unto the Last'.

1. Good of the individual is contained in the good of all;
2. Lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right to earn livelihood from their work;
3. A life of labour i.e. that life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living

Hinting non-violent development gandhi wrote that, "As there is no economic activity which is completely free of violence since all activities involve violence but all our effort is to minimize the violence in it."  

Gandhi's economic philosophy gains added significance with the tremendous emphasis on ethical aspect of problem. Gandhi wrote that, "I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics."  

Whereas Modern economics (e.g. Marshall) accept that economics as the science which studies welfare of man in the ordinary business of life, Gandhi stresses more emphatically that 'Economics that hurt the moral well being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral'.

This strong plea for ethical values is the first brick upon which the edifice of the entire discourse of non-violent development or Gandhian economics stands. Describing non-violent aspect of economics Gandhi went further and said that 'The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce'.

Economy of Permanence

According to Kumarappa, the modern method of development has made man's life "blocked and animalistic". That is why he compared the structure of modern development to 'the wolves in pack' because this system of economy presumes the human beings as a consumer, hence the emphasis is on earning maximum profits which inevitably does violence. This system also kills latent creativity and life hence leads us to destruction.

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1 Ruskin UNTO THIS LAST, M. K. Gandhi, pp-02
2 Harijan, 1 Sept., 1940
3 N.B. Sen, Glorious Thoughts of Gandhi, pp-84
4 Ibid
5 Ibid
6 जॉ. कॉ. कुमारपा , स्थायी समाज व्यवस्था, पृष्ठ . 80 (Translated by author).
7 Ibid, pp-136
Alternative to this system Kumarappa suggested a new kind of development in which nature and human are at the center, as for Kumarappa, the very purpose of true development is to create a favorable environment for the development of the latent powers of human beings. In his words:

“If we seek to obtain permanence and non-violence, we must have an order in which the customer will play the leading role and that personally. This can only be achieved when consumption-goods are locally made, perhaps in cottages, under the eye of the consumer, to meet the existing needs. Only under such conditions can the consumer bring into effect his scale of values which will develop, as well as express, his personality.”

In the plan of development there should scope for creating a favorable environment for the promotion of human beings and it can happen only when development cultivates a culture which is stable and helps in human progress. The progress here is not only economic but also moral. As in Gandhi’s view “being a human means to be moral.”

Kumarappa further says that such a culture of development can only be made when its structure is non-violent and love is a basic condition for the creation of non-violence. This love can only be permanent when everything we need is made from locally available raw materials by the artisans around us. If the local material and resources are used in the production and its profit is used by the artisans of the same area in their subsistence then in the words of Kumarappa a ‘natural cycle’ will complete. There is no competition in this system so there is no violence in this condition. That will take us to the eternal system. So Kumarappa says that if we have to build a permanent society we will have to see how human beings should behave with nature and society and how to attain single a unity in it.

But it is important that the model of development has a clear objective. According to Kumarappa, making self-sufficient and organized villages, called gram-swaraj by Gandhiji, should be our goal. To quote him,

"The plans made in the village for non-violent development should be of the benefit of that village but at the same time should not be against the country’s plan."

Kumarappa lays emphasis on the following programs in this alternative model:

1. Agriculture
2. Rural Industries
3. Sanitation, Health and Housing

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8 स्वायत्त समाज व्यवस्था, जो. काृं. कुमारप्पा, पृष्ठ 80 (Translated by author).
9 सम्बन्धता का विकास, नंदकिशोर आचार्य, पृष्ठ - 40 (Translated by author).
10 स्वायत्त समाज व्यवस्था, जो. काृं. कुमारप्पा, पृष्ठ -141 (Translated by author).
4. Village Education.

5. Village Organization

6. Village Culture.

Foreseeing the self-sufficiency of villages in cloths, foods and shelter he goes on to we suggest giving importance to cultivation, agriculture and rural industries.

To realize non-violent development of Kumarappa's vision, then development should not be merely economic growth rather human centric. This requires basic structural change. When Gandhiji points to swadesi, he does, in fact, refers to the structural change where the production does not depend upon the requirement of 'market' rather fulfills the requirement of 'society', because market creates artificial demand and alienates human. Kumarappa call a new institutional framework for desi (alternative) development, the cooperative societies in which the citizens can get a more decisive role. It is thus necessary to ponder over the process of development which makes it participatory in true sense. It will be possible only if the common man has access to power and resources. Even the Gandhi's dream of gram-swaraj was to achieve this.

In conclusion it can be said that Non-violent (Gandhian) model of development is based upon two basic principles-

1. Everybody must have equal opportunity
2. Nobody in society should own or enjoy more than the necessity.

Thus Non-violent (Gandhian) theory of development is basically ethico-economic principle of development in which human being are treated as a whole rather than in parts.