

Mahatma Gandhi and Deendayal Upadhyaya: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Whether comparisons are 'odorous' or not, only Dogberry, a character from "Much Ado About Nothing" and his creator Shakespeare were likely to know. But the common experience is that comparisons at times certainly odious. Bracketing Deendayal's name with that of Gandhi is likely to strike some persons as sacrilegious. Deendayal was no humble and unassuming that he himself would have brushed aside any direct or indirect hint that he was anywhere near Gandhi in political or spiritual stature. The present paper focus on an analytical study of Gandhi and Upadhyaya: How far were their ideologies similar and dissimilar to each other?

Keywords - *Odorous, odious, analytical, comparison.*

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Introduction

Whether comparisons are ‘odorous’ or not, not only Dogberry, a character from “Much Ado About Nothing” and his creator Shakespeare were likely to know. But the common experience is that comparisons are at times certainly odious. An admirer of Deendayal Upadhyaya writing on Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Lohia and Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya, was constrained to admit:¹

It is not with any spirit of comparison that I link the name of Deendayalji with that of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest man of the century... I am only trying to lay bare the truth that no one except these three, tried to give an ideological orientation... to Indian Political life.² It is said that Deendayal was so humble and unassuming that he himself would have brushed aside any direct or indirect hint that he was anywhere near Gandhi in political or spiritual stature.

Concept of Good Governance

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Deendayal Upadhyaya also talked about good-governance. According to Upadhyaya the problems of Bharat were not merely political, social, economic or cultural but of establishing in our society those values of life which can solve these problems. The root cause of all this is political corruption. Therefore, unless we bring about a qualitative change in politics, we shall not be able to have a good government run by good people. Deendayal was the ideal of such a leadership.³ ‘The king is the master of the state which he does not enjoy for himself - this is the principle which is true for all times. According to him, we need leaders who do not serve their self-interest and who, rather, serve others with a sense of thankfulness.

Mahatma Gandhi had also referred about good governance. According to him, political *swaraj* in the sense of transfer of power from one set of rulers to another set did not satisfy him. He said, “I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange ‘king log for king stork’. Hence for me the movement of *swaraj* is a movement of self-purification”.⁴ Even when one’s own brothers were ruling oneself, one might not have *swaraj* and might have *swaraj* under foreign rule. Gandhi was opposed to all types of oppressions.

Democracy

Today, democracy has been reduced to a race for power among the power-groups and our politics is principled only in name and in reality it is nothing but power-oriented opportunism. Deendayal used to say, “Only the common man should

be made the god of democracy”. Speaking on the relations between political parties and the people, Deendayal had stated, “If you are democrats, you should follow the dictates of your own discretion rather than accept any other authority. Political parties are constituted to function as representatives of the people. Their only base is the power of the people. It is the people who confer on them the capability to function; it is the people who create them and, through them, shape their own future. Therefore, a political party is not merely a conglomeration of power-hungry people. It is rather, a unified entity and a disciplined organization of god oriented and committed people working for a specific ideology.”⁵

Thus Deendayal emphasized on the role of people in Democracy. According to him, political parties should work as unified entity for the welfare of the people. Deendayal laid down the principle that national interest is always for above party interest. We stressed that just as an individual is not supposed to sacrifice the national interest for the sake of his personal interest, so is a party supposed not to serve its own interest to the detriment of national interest. Thus the focal point of politics was the nation.

Similarly Mahatma Gandhi’s true democracy was participatory democracy. It was the idea of participation by the whole community in the political process. It based political authority on the will of individuals who by a process of cooperation make decisions that were binding on all. Gandhi considered that citizens had a duty to decide to whom they should give their loyalty and support and under what conditions. Their self-respect and dignity required that their loyalty should not be unconditional or taken for granted. When a law was just, they had a ‘sacred duty’ to give it their ‘willing and spontaneous obedience’, if it was unjust or morally unacceptable, they had the opposite duty. To obey it was to ‘participate in evil’ and incur moral responsibility for its consequences.⁶

Swadeshi and Decentralisation

Deendayal’s thinking encompasses fourfold objective of nationalism, democracy, social strength and swadeshi. He once said, “The economy policy suitable for the present situation can be described in two words, Swadeshi and decentralization. Today, Swadeshi seems to have become an out of date and retrograde concept. We accept foreign aid with a great sense of pride. We are making use of foreign help in our conceptions in the field of management, in procuring capital investment and in the field of production. Even our ideal of consumption of consumer goods is based on the foreign pattern. This can never be the path of progress and development for

us. It is a slavish tendency which ignores our own entity and to which we are becoming slaves. To be honest, the constructive aspect of the concept of Swadeshi should do from the basis of our economic policy.”⁷

He stressed that socialism was becoming another name of all devouring statism. Poverty eradication programmes achieved nothing except carrying the burden of the administration. In such a situation, the freedom, the honour of the individual and democracy could be protected only through Panchayati Raj and decentralized economy.⁸

Spiritual Development

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Deendayal Upadhyaya believed that it is true that the body must be attended to properly but it is necessary to remember that the purpose of a healthy and strong body was as the chief instrument in observing the dictum of Dharma. He mentioned about Dadhich Saint who immolated himself so that a powerful weapon may be made from his bones for slaying a powerful demons. Thus Upadhyaya’s philosophy of integral humanism envisages the enjoyment of the various categories of happiness but at the same time emphasizes restraint and sacrifice and considers that with the investiture of authority is inseparably bound the performance of duty. The individual happiness must not only never stand in the way of social progress but must be congenial and complementary to it.⁹ The central idea of the philosophy of Integral Humanism was that the family is the first training ground for an individual towards social life. Mutual affection, willingness to work and suffer for others, tolerance and all such virtues necessary for social welfare are easily imbibed in family life. To extend the family concept first to the society and then to the universe is the direction of spiritual development.¹⁰ While mentioning about the supremacy of the individual or society, Upadhyaya says, “Any healthy thinking takes into account the interests of both the individual and the society. People ask us whether we are individualists or socialists. Our answer would be, “We are both”. According to our culture we can neither ignore the individual nor lose right of society’s interests. We do take into account the social interests and so we are individualists. We do not consider individual supreme and so we are not individualists. But we do not also think that society should have power to deprive an individual of all his freedom and thus exploit him like a lifeless thing, so we are not socialists either. One cannot conceive of a society without individuals and the individuals have no value without society. Bharatiya culture has set both in proper perspective and jointly considers the welfare of both.”¹¹

According to philosophy of integral humanism, a society is a living organism. And since every living organism has a body, a mind, intelligence and a soul, a society also has these four constituents.

Upadhyaya says that economic planning is important. He says that this planning must provide suitable work for every physically fit person and the job must be such as to give a reasonably adequate income. Only through such planning a country's wealth can increase. Both Upadhyaya and Mahatma Gandhi insisted, not on mass production but on production by the masses. National wealth must accrue out of the ArthaPurushartha of the masses i.e. out of the initiative and the urge to work of the masses. Wealth created by the efforts of a few or by the use of modern machinery is not for the good of the society. Similarly, the achievement of the ArthPurushartha for the society must be brought about according to regulation and spirit of Dharma.

State

In the Artha-Purushartha of the society, along with economic policy one has also to consider the power of the state to defend the good and punish the guilty. If the state is too weak to do this or if it makes indiscrete use of its power then instead of it being a Dharma-controlled state it becomes a Police-Raj and ruins the society.¹² Upadhyaya stressed that state is meant for the protection of the nation. Chiti is the Sanskrit word for society's soul equivalent to individual soul. And Rashtra-Dharma or Nation-Dharma consists of the rules for the expression and practice of this chiti (A people's ethos). The duty of the state is to observe this Rashtra-Dharma and in order to enable the state to do this duty certain power have been conferred on the state by the people. The state is expected to use these powers with discretion.¹³ But often the government becomes oblivious to its duties. In the language of the four-fold Purusharthas ArthaPurushartha is separated from DharmPurushartha, and this way starts the moral degradation of the rulers.

While discussing Moksha Upadhyaya said, "Liberation or Moksha is not an individual affair; it is social. Some people have a wrong notion that they can seek individual salvation even when the society is in disarray. It is only when society is liberated, uplifted and ennobled, that an individual can beat peace... He respected all Indian languages. But he could not bear the idea that English should be imposed on the country; it was foreign and not more than one percent of the masses understand it."¹⁴

Mahatma Gandhi followed the path of Satyagraha for the attainment of *swaraj* as well as it became the creed for whole life. While Upadhyaya expressed

his views by saying, “The run of events during the last fifty years has been such that the moments we talk of agitation, there come to our mind, jail, satyagraha, non-payment of taxes and revenue etc. Really speaking, no independent country should have any need of such agitations. But fact is that such a need is felt here. And this shows the government’s unwillingness to honour the people’s will. We must, however, bear in mind that such an agitation is the last weapon we should resort to. Jana Sangh does not believe in ‘satyagraha’ as its creed. But only when it is forced by circumstances, does Jana Sangh resort to such means in order to bend the government to the popular will. We desire that meetings, resolutions and memorandum should be adequate for the expression of the popular will and for government’s implementation thereof. In the absence of such peaceful expression and implementation, the whole atmosphere will be in a state of great strain.”¹⁵

Deendayal chose Dayananda and Tilak as the models to copy. These giants would brush aside everything else if it came in the way of their faith in our culture and their aspirations of social and national renaissance. Tilak did not compromise on national interests.¹⁶

Deendayal disclosed that it would be unwise to uproot our national century-old industries in the villages. Though there are many weaknesses in these small industries. It would be essential to make them economically viable in the course of planning. Our village industries should be transformed into viable units of production in the economy. If we inclusively emphasize modernized technology, old would be discarded. This would ultimately result in the waste of capital blocked in old industries. We cannot afford to allow this wastage of capital, because we are short of capital accumulation for progress. Deendayal further disclosed in his book on Indian Economic policy that, “We may produce with, the help of Westernised heavy and complicated technology, goods on mass scale. But this process cannot sustain an eternal and revolutionary transformation in the economy. It is necessary that while the pressure of population on agriculture is reduced, we should be able to promote the rural industries which are interconnected in the harmonious way with agriculture. Instead of giving priority to large scale industries, we must give priority to small size enterprises. Production units worked by a few workers, and with small machinery and small sized instruments, would be more useful ultimately in the correct situation. We will have to consider the foundation of Gramodyog smaller size enterprises, and the workers therein need our attention in the process of planning.”¹⁷

In this context Gandhian views of Sarvodaya and Gramodyog economy may be greatly relevant. All sections of the people should receive benefit more or less in

the process of the development. That economy is best which can achieve progress of all. Mahatma Gandhi connected this by Sarvodaya. Next to agriculture, Mahatma Gandhi was giving priority to village industries. He emphasized that poverty and unemployment cannot be removed by promoting the large scale industries and big industrial unit. It is necessary to promote decentralized village industries which are labour intensive. Gandhi said, "If you find a better alternative to charkha, you may bum Charkha; however, millions of villagers should not be removed from their homes and they should not be divorced from their small piece of land. This is possible only with the help of charkha which alone helps to get gainful employment, as it brings a minimum income from the same."¹⁸

The above mentioned views of Mahatma Gandhi could be compared with similar views on Deendayal. He, however, was not opposed to use machineries and appropriate technologies in the village industries. If machine creates unemployment or increase unemployment then machine should be opposed. Oil engines, electric motors etc. had no place in the village industries of Mahatma Gandhi. Deendayal however did not oppose machinery in this domestic manner.

Conclusion

DeendayalUpadhyaya and Mahatma Gandhi shared the views that democracy in real sense can be attained only through proper and active participation of people. They stressed on the collaboration of different political parties for attaining that. Both believed in adoption of Swadeshi and decentralization of social, economic and political powers.

(Footnotes)

¹ VasantNargolkar, "Gandhi, Lohia and Deendayal", ed. by P. Parameshwaran, *Gandhi, Lohia&Deendayal* (New Delhi: Deendayal Research Institute, 1978), p. **1**.

² *Ibid.*

³ B.K. Kelkar, *PanditDeendayalUpadhyaya: Ideology and Perception Part-III Political Thought* (New Delhi: SuruchiPrakashan, 1991).

⁴ Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. **118**.

⁵ B.K. Kelkar, *PanditDeendayalUpadhyaya Ideology and Perception Part-III Political Thought* p. **149**.

⁶ Bhikshu Parekh, *Gandhi: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), p. **93**.

⁷ B.K. Kelkar, *PanditDeendayalUpadhayaya Ideology and Perception Part-III Political Thought* pp. **150-155**.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ V.V. Nene, *PanditDeendayalUpadhayaya: Ideology and Perception Part II Integral Humanism* (New Delhi: SuruchiPrakashan, 1991), p. **32**.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. **46**.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. **51**.

¹² V.V. Nene, *PanditDeendayalUpadhayaya: Ideology and Perception Part II Integral Humanism* (New Delhi: SuruchiPrakashan, 1991), p. **60**.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ B.N. Joy, *PanditDeendayalUpadhyaya Ideology and Perception, Politics for Nation's Sake Part VI* (New Delhi: SuruchiPrakashan, 1991), p. **44**.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. **126**.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,p. **140**.

¹⁷ ShavadAnant Kulkarni, *PanditDeendayalUpadhyaya Ideology and Perception Part IV Integral Economic Policy* (New Delhi: SumchiPrakashan, 1991), p. 84.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. **85**.