

Gandhi Equalised the Concept of Such "Bread Labour" To Social Service: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT:

The majority of developing countries typically enact severe labour market policies because jobs (labour) first and foremost brought employment, more money, more spending, and of course a better quality of life with higher wages. The government receives a lot of tax money from second jobs. People have a tight obligation to pay taxes to the government. Therefore, it only makes sense that both the people and the government profit. And if people lose their jobs or are laid off, the government has a duty to provide everyone with a basic level of support. For this reason, certain industrialised countries granted businesses and corporations nearly total control. It is anticipated that these entrepreneurs and businesses would boost the nation's economy and boost job growth. Because businesses provide jobs for individuals and, along with those jobs, tax revenue for the government, business corporations are greatly admired and protected by political governments in the modern world. But then, things start to go wrong. Nowadays, affluent countries are more concerned than poor countries about employment creation, job loss, work possibilities, and job search. The majority of Western developed nations are currently concerned about job loss and unemployment. Millions of individuals are laid off without jobs in several nations. The number of job prospects has drastically decreased, particularly in light of the current financial crunch and weak commercial trade. The beginning of 2009 and the middle of 2008 are particularly noted for dwindling employment chances. Again, when countries industrialise, large industries create jobs. The majority of items are produced on an industrial basis. Millions of jobs are lost due to industrialization and increased mechanisation in both developed and emerging nations. Another issue is that industries manufacture goods without regard for and without consideration for the actual basic necessities of people (surplus of production). Businesses create goods that can be sold for the highest price. The top priorities are money and profit. Humans and their fundamental needs are placed last.

INTRODUCTION

The labourer becomes a more affordable commodity as his output increases. Through his labour, he raises the worth of the objects, but at the sacrifice of his own worth. Finally, the worker is reduced to nothing more than a commodity, an object—an inanimate object rather than a true human person in the traditional sense. Therefore, there is absolutely no respect, dignity, or equality.

The laborer becomes a cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the 'increase in value' of the world of things arises in direct production the 'decrease of value' of human beings. Labor does not only produce commodities, it produces itself and the laborer as a 'commodity' and in relation to the level at which it produces commodities."¹

Karl Marx thus overlooked the fundamental principle of equality in order to begin with the production of goods. It is obvious that Gandhi intended a restructuring, particularly in the production of goods and labour, where Karl Marx saw this as a problem. Gandhi seemed to have discovered a means of establishing equality and human dignity through his idea on labour that generates the most basic demands of existence, which Karl Marx had highlighted in his work on labour. Gandhi's goal was to provide everyone with a job, a life, dignity, and equality while also preventing the job and economic crises that are so common in today's world. The term "equality" is used frequently in this chapter to refer to both the physical and psychological components of equality. Since a section of this chapter discusses generated tangible things, the word equitable is actually more appropriate. However, the second section of this chapter discusses the kind of activity where the psychical side of equality is appropriate to apply. The general term "equality" is thus used throughout this chapter to reduce confusion.

PRODUCTIVE LABOR, A GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

Gandhi talked about labour, although the word "labour" he used would not really fit with the modern definition of a white employment. His opinions on work (labour) may once again be more divisive than ever. Thus, it is intriguing to consider his opinions in light of the current predicament. We must begin with the production of products and labour in addition to attempting to understand economic equality as essential. The study that follows revolves around two key philosophical issues. It begins by discussing the "what" of things or the "what things" that are to be produced. Additionally, the study's second section discusses "how things work" or "how things are made." It simply refers to the kind of work that might promote equality. Gandhi was concerned about this, but his major focus was on providing equality and dignity to everyone. His concerns were centred on the creation of products and jobs.

PRODUCTION OF GOODS

Gandhi was essentially convinced that life cannot exist without food. People get hungry, starve, and eventually die without nourishment. However, as is common knowledge, money is used to exchange goods for food in the modern world. We all think that we can eat more food if we have more money. Gandhi challenges this notion. For him, money as it is cannot ultimately provide food if food products are not readily available. Even if one has a healthy bank account, without food supplies his money will be worthless. Therefore, the first and most important thing that must be done is to produce food, which is the foundation of life, rather than goods that will make more money or profit. Generally speaking, being reliant on others for one's fundamental needs is a form of slavery. This might be different in a parent-child connection, where slavish dependence is replaced with parental love, duty, and obligation. However, generally speaking, relying on others for sustenance causes many people to wonder why this is the case. Gandhi's primary focus was on production, which involves providing food for everyone, eliminating poverty, shame, and dependency, and fostering an environment that fosters human value, dignity, and equality. Thus, in his opinion, putting food on the table is essentially what we need to do. So he suggested making meals. For Gandhi, agricultural activity made it simple to produce food. He therefore emphasised strongly on using agriculture to provide food. He referred to this as "bread labour," which in the precise sense refers to the creation of food. Agriculture was intended to provide sustenance for him. And all families and nations will continue to work on and support this.

From the beginning it has been my firm conviction that agriculture provides the only unfailing and perennial support to the people of this country

Gandhi emphasised the numerous advantages of agricultural products as one of his key justifications. This, in his opinion, promotes wellbeing, joy, and calm. Gandhi therefore anticipated that when everyone came together, the entire nation would be happier and healthier. To work in agriculture for a living and find happiness is a universal calling. He thought that by doing this, they were getting the necessary physical exercise for their health in addition to working in agriculture for food. Thus, such activity helps to build a world that is happier, healthier, and peaceful. Gandhi thus stated,

If everyone whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e., Bread labour? No one asks the cultivator to take breathing exercise or to work his muscles. And more than nine-tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier, healthier and more peaceful the world become, if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food! Any many hardships connected with agriculture would be easily redressed, if such people took a hand in it.

Gandhi first used the term "bread labour" to refer to agricultural labour as well as the creation of products. Gandhi, however, expanded his fundamental view of the importance of labour to provide not only food but also other essentials for human survival in later applications. It is true that some areas might not be suitable for strictly agricultural labour. Gandhi gave them permission to engage in weaving, carpentry, and smithery under this situation. Gandhi then expanded the meaning of the term "bread labour" beyond its precise definition to include the

creation of other essential goods for survival. He did, however, consistently restore giving agriculture first place. Thus, spinning garments was an alternative to farm items where this was not possible.

This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take it up. A person can therefore spin or weave or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal.

LABOR

'What objects' can be produced was the topic of the conversation above. Here, the debate is about "what kind of work" is most essential. There are primarily two categories of works. They are both physical and intellectual works. Though it may not be the widespread consensus, it is natural to believe that intellectual work is preferable to hard and physical labour.

There is some intellectual history associated with this idea of superiority and inferiority. One can find in the philosophical past that a clear division between the body and the intellect was formed. It goes without saying that some of the philosophies even emphasised the superiority of one over the other. The nature of job or labour itself was not exempt from the effects of this over time. According to that, intellectual tasks were to be completed via mind or intelligence. And manual labour or physical exertion are used to complete physical work. While placing a high value on intellectual activity, the question of whether manual labour is inferior naturally arises. In order to achieve equality, we must examine the effort Gandhi advocated. Agriculture and jobs involving food are already included in the definition of "bread labour." However, at first, we can tell the difference between "bread labour" and "bodily labour." The phrase "bodily labour" need not only be associated with agriculture. Literally, this may entail placing more value on physical labour than on intellectual activity. Gandhi thus referred to "bread labour" in two interrelated senses. First and foremost, it refers to labour for food and other necessities in the strict sense. The second connotation has to do with the kind of job he did in an effort to emphasise the value of physical labour. Therefore, we focus more on the physical labour and its significance rather than on creating food.

It is true Gandhi borrowed the idea of 'bread labor' from Ruskin's "Unto the Last". But the same concept of 'bread labor' was already in use by Russian authors. Originally it was to mean to do physical labor; it necessarily meant to earn one's living by physical work. So bread labor means in a broader sense to do useful bodily labor.

Strictly speaking Bread labour is not a word of Tolstoy's coining. He took it from another Russian writer Bendaref, and it means that everyone is expected to perform sufficient body labour in order to entitle him to it. It is not therefore necessary to earn one's living by Bread labour, taking the word living in its broader sense. But everyone must perform some useful bodily labour.⁶

First of all, he made it clear that by proposing physical labor, he is not discounting or underestimating the value of intellectual labor. But he argued, in any way intellectual works cannot take the place of physical work or belittle the importance of physical job for example food that is produced by physical labor is useful and helps doing intellectual activities. But intellectual work may not be benefiting directly and universally to all people if no one worked on the ground. For Gandhi even if people think intellectual works are superior in nature it can never substitute physical works. So physical works have a unique place and it can never be substituted.

Let me not be misunderstood, I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no account of it in any compensation, for bodily labour which every one of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to bodily labour, but it never is or can be a substitute to it, even as intellectual food though far superior to the grains we eat never can be a substitute for them. Indeed, without the products of the earth, these of the intellect would be impossibility.⁷

Gandhi also relied on scientific reason to disprove the view of intellectual work is superior to bodily work. Just opposite to intellectual works, the bodily labor appears to be bringing more, vegetation, plantation, forests and finally rain. Many believe that if there are more forests and trees, we are supposed to be getting more rain. This means bodily labor on ground, brings more resourceful and prosperous land. This is becoming quite true in modern world where; Green Peace and other organizations are working at preservation of the forest and trees. Thus, for him, there is scientific import to esteem high physical labor.

PRODUCTIVE LABOR AND EQUALITY

Equality in Labor

Gandhi first thought that if everyone worked for their food, there would be enough for everyone, and that such labour would create equality in having one of life's essentials. Again, this promotes equality because everyone is motivated and working towards the same end while obtaining fundamental essentials of existence. And with this philosophy as their foundation, everyone who works towards these goals can feel equal. But in saying this he also laid the condition of limit, saying that all need to work for 'their bread and no more'. Although this cannot be taken in a strict sense, surplus of productive labor may create cheap labor and cheap commodities, which can create further problems. So, to bring equality some kind of control over production is needed, and this should be in keeping in mind the necessities of life.

If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all... There will be then no rich and poor, none high and none low, no touchable and untouchable.

What is said above almost became true when very recently the global energy market thought surplus of gasoline and oil production would help to fix the price for future; but such decision was revoked later. Thus Gandhi's concern in limiting production stood to help equality to those who work who are also the consumers. Such an action surely would also help to avoid too much of consumerist tendencies. At the end, as in food, the same logic could be applied to all other necessities of clothing and shelter or housing.

Again in labor, it very much depends upon the mentality in which the work is done. He knew well that along with caste and class distinction, the type of work done should not determine and degrade one another. Where caste and classes dominated, certain jobs were considered lower than others. Gandhi wanted to shatter this feeling of the popular mind. So he advised to reverse this belief, saying it does not matter what type of work we do, but how we take it or appreciate it brings equal feeling with ones' labor over another.

No, almost everything depends on the spirit in which a thing is done. It would not mind being my own drawer of water and hewer of wood, provided, I am doing the work intelligently and not because someone compels me to do so. All labour when done intelligently and to some high purpose becomes at once creation and recreation.

Vinoba shared the same view also. But he added saying that this kind of lowering the status of certain works and low images are giving space for domination and conquest; and according to him, the real example for this was the conquering of British in India. Or in other words Vinoba is saying that we need high esteem on any kind of labor we undertake, how low they may look. It is that will lead to independence and freedom from domination and exploitation.

CONCLUSION

One of all people's basic desires is to want to live a life of equality. Nobody likes to be unacknowledged and treated unfairly by others. In today's interconnected world, equality is a goal shared by communities, institutions, and international governments in addition to people. If everyone has this as a natural interest, how can we define and accomplish equality? First and foremost, equality is not identity, identity, or being like other people. One is an exact replica of the other; neither are equal. On the contrary, it essentially affirms the uniqueness of each person, group, and country. Therefore, equality in a practical sense means that "B" is not "A," but instead aspired to be like "A." Additionally, rather than in a vacuum, the notion of equality

must also be understood in relation to others. As a result, plurality or others are implied in the egalitarian ideology. It implies the presence of others rather than the eradication of uniqueness. In real life, equality should be present at all levels of society—economic, social, political, and interpersonal. These factors might all be categorised into two main levels. When viewed from a physical perspective, it may be more about material equality, whereas when viewed from a psychological one, it is about equal esteem. People and nations should make significant efforts to create the fundamental foods they consume, as well as the clothes they wear and the homes they must live in. This is especially true in the economic realm. Again, whenever possible, all of these productive tasks should be carried out manually to prevent overindustrialization and to provide employment for as many people as possible. As a result, regardless of one's preference for physical labour, everyone engaged in productive work experiences no feelings of superiority or inferiority. By being willing to accept and recognise physical works, everyone will become equal.

Second, given the propensity to accumulate material possessions, the greatest advice is to control greed and maintain possessions solely for necessities. This could be achieved by consciously lowering excessive wants and approaching non-possession. Third, it is always preferable to maintain properties in a cooperative spirit and be conscious of the fact that everyone should act as wealth trustees when managing wealth and material resources. Therefore, regulation of individual ownership of significant results and assets must ensure that ownership is shared among many, rather than being totally held by one or two people. It is encouraged to adopt a decentralised power-sharing mentality with reference to the sociopolitical power struggle. Therefore, there is no one to rule over, subjugate, or control. Sharing the sociopolitical power will strengthen the grassroots and the periphery as a result of this process. As a result, everyone will have the chance to share responsibility, and there will be plenty of chances for mature leadership that doesn't favour anyone in particular. Finally people would like to act according to non-violent strategy, by way of loving and respecting one another with I-Thou attitude in their relationship. They would never intent to use I-it relationship, which by nature is doing harm and is violent. For this community living can be great help or in other words such equitable life will be easier in community living. Thus equality and equitable world order is possible by each one engaging in Gandhi's nonviolent strategy with mutual cooperation in a community spirit.

However, if the evil of inequality is to persist without any hope of liberation then Gandhi's nonviolent protest will be there. The intention is not to do any harm to the evildoer, but positively in love and concern, wish and expect the opponent to change his ways. Thus, he too will join the community, in love to consider all as equals.

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