

DECOLONIZATION OF THE INDIAN MIND : IN THE SPECIAL CONTEXT OF GANDHI'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The physical decolonization of the Indian people occurred in 1947. However, their mental decolonization has not happened yet. Mental or mind decolonization means that our thinking tendencies, moral standards—that is, what we consider good and bad—are all thought of in the same way as the English. Mahatma Gandhi's developmental model can play an important role in decolonizing our minds. At the center of this model are self-reliance, Swaraj, non-violence, minimal use of machines, ethics, etc. This research paper attempts to erase the colonial script from the Indian mind through Gandhi's developmental model named "Hind Swaraj." Colonial education, language, and developmental models created a sense of inferiority in the minds of Indians. Gandhi's developmental model attempts to erase this feeling.

Keywords : Decolonization, Mind, Development, Education

Introduction :

Colonialism is generally understood in physical terms as one country dominating or ruling another. It is human nature to imitate those who are more powerful, that is, to want to become like them. Indians also gradually became mentally like the English in a progressive manner. This is mental colonization. As a result, Indians began to consider their own culture, moral values, and language as inferior. French thinkers like Franz Fanon and Edward Said were the first to draw attention to this mental colonization. India can be freed from this mental decolonization through the concept of "Swaraj" in Hind Swaraj and the developmental model. When the country became independent, there were two models of development: capitalist and developmentalist. Along with these, Gandhi's developmental model also existed, which Nehru called utterly impractical. If Nehru had accepted this model at that time, we would have been mentally decolonized by now. Nowadays, during Modi's rule, there is a lot of discussion on decolonizing the Indian mind through the "Indian Knowledge Tradition."

Gandhi's Developmental Model

Gandhi discussed his developmental model in "Hind Swaraj" (1909). The concept of development presented in the model is completely different from the Western developmental model. The Western developmental model is based on fulfilling individual desires and materialism, whereas Gandhi's developmental model is based on controlling individual desires and ethics. In this context, Gandhi said in Hind Swaraj: "Human tendencies are fickle." His mind runs and wanders. The more you give to his body, the more it demands, and even with more indulgence, it does not remain happy; desires increase upon enjoyment. That's why our ancestors gave us the bonds of restraint. After much thought, they saw that happiness and sorrow are caused by the mind. Wealth does not make the rich happy, nor does poverty cause sorrow for the poor. The rich are seen unhappy and the poor happy. Some have to remain poor anyway, so they should abandon desires. Our ancestors, seeing this, abandoned desires. Thousands of years ago there were huts, and we still use them.

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Thousands of years ago there were brooms, and we kept them. The education system that was thousands of years ago, we kept it stable.-----This was not because we were unaware of the invention of machines. But our ancestors saw that man would become a slave trapped in the jungle of arts and machines and abandon religion.¹

The above lines contain the fundamental elements of Gandhi's developmental model, which are control over desires and contentment. The Westerners were moving forward with the concept of development, and its consequences were signaled by Gandhi in 1909, and today it is proving true. The biggest crisis in this is the contradictory relationship between development and the environment, that is, if we develop, it will be at the cost of environmental damage. In Gandhi's developmental model, environment and development go hand in hand. Furthermore, Gandhi told us in the above lines that we have been made materialistic. Our knowledge tradition/ancestors taught us contentment because our civilization and needs are different from the West. Our and the Western diseases are different, and we want to cure our diseases by taking Western medicine. This is not possible.

Therefore, Gandhi presented a new interpretation of Swaraj in Hind Swaraj and said that living according to one's desires is not "Swaraj." According to him, controlling one's desires and keeping one's senses under control is Swaraj. In this context, Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "The word Swaraj is a Sacred word, a vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraints."²

In Gandhi's developmental ideals, ethics plays a central role. Gandhi expresses the possibility of employment for all individuals in his developmental ideals. Can any Western developmental model even imagine this? The developmental model (mixed economy) that we adopted after independence for development was not the medicine for our problems. Our problems were something else, and we took Western medicine. Its adverse effects are still visible in the country today in the form of terrible unemployment and economic inequality. That's why Gandhi opposes heavy machines so that everyone can get employment necessarily. While

giving arguments related to the necessity of employment for all, Gandhi says: "Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself. But for this very simple performance we need no assistance from economists or their laws."³

Gandhi did not oppose machines in his developmental model, but opposed the madness of machines. If the people displaced by machines are provided with respectable employment, then Gandhi has no opposition to such mechanization.

In fact, the center point of Gandhi's developmental ideals is the village. Whereas the center point of other developmental ideals is the city. The adverse effect of this is that all facilities, employment, etc., are available in the city. Therefore, people migrate from villages to cities. As a result, many problems arise due to this increased population. Today, all major cities in India are struggling with this problem. The center of Gandhi's developmental ideals is in the village. Therefore, the problem of urbanization will be solved automatically.

According to Gandhi, true civilization should be based on non-violence and self-reliant villages. He wrote: "Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary cooperation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence.... The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India."⁴

The villages that Gandhi envisioned in his developmental ideals would be self-reliant. They would produce all the things needed for their requirements and would not depend on anyone for this work. For this, he said to produce food grains for one's food and cotton for clothes. Some land should be left for pastures for animals and playgrounds for children, and if land remains after that, cash crops should be produced on it.

In Gandhi's developmental ideals, the governance of villages should be in the hands of the Panchayat. This Panchayat should be an institution of five individuals, whose election should be annual, and in this election, five individuals should be elected by the villagers through universal adult suffrage. This Panchayat will perform executive, administrative, and judicial functions.

Regarding its possibility, Gandhi wrote: "Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work and he will find good results. It begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and school-master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning."⁵

In Gandhi's developmental ideals, intelligent humans will live in villages. They will not live in dirt and darkness like animals. Women and men will be free. All individuals will do physical labor according to their capacity and take according to their needs.

Gandhi believed that our first duty is not to become a burden on society or family, that is, we should try to become self-reliant. This self-reliance is social service in Gandhi's eyes. After becoming self-reliant, the remaining time should be devoted to the service of others. In fact, Gandhi's argument is that if every individual in society becomes self-reliant, there will be no need for social service. But we have not reached that level yet. Therefore, we should do social service in spare time. In this context, Gandhi wrote: "All must be self-sufficient, none will be intolerable. In such a state of affairs there would be no need of serving anybody. But we have not yet reached that stage and therefore we have to think of social service."⁶

In Gandhi's developmental ideals, the intention of the self-reliant idea is that villages should not depend on anyone for food, clothing, housing, and basic needs. In the context of this self-reliance, Gandhi wrote: "Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world."⁷

It is clear that Gandhi's developmental model is completely different from the colonial developmental model. It is according to our needs. The colonial developmental model was based on exploitation and heavy machines. Gandhi called heavy machines "sin" because they displaced humans from employment. In contrast, Gandhi suggests labor-centered development.

The colonization of the Indian mind began first with education, where Macaulay's policy wanted to make Indians "brown Englishmen." Gandhi opposed this and said that primary education should be given to children

only in the mother tongue. He understood the importance of English even then. His only point was that its education should not be given in primary schools. According to Gandhi, English education should be given only to some students at the university level. Gandhi calls the idea that we cannot do anything without English "mental slavery." In Gandhi's words: "English is today admittedly a world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in school, but in the University course. That can only be for the select few—not for millions... It is our mental slavery that makes us feel that we cannot do anything without English."⁸

Conclusion :

The decolonization of the Indian mind is a continuous and multidimensional process. It demands Swaraj at cultural, economic, and mental levels. Gandhi's developmental model can prove to be the strongest tool to achieve this. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi clearly said that true Swaraj will not come merely from the end of British rule, but from the liberation of the mind, that is, the liberation that frees the Indian consciousness from the colonial feeling of inferiority. Gandhi's developmental model emphasizes economic self-reliance. In his economic model, the spinning wheel and khadi were not just symbols, but revolutionary weapons against colonial economic exploitation. He wanted to instill self-confidence in Indians through the boycott of foreign clothes and establish an economy based on local resources. This model becomes even more relevant in the context of today's globalization and neo-liberal capitalism, where multinational companies and foreign capital are imposing a new kind of mental slavery.

Gandhi's village-centered developmental model was different from Nehru's heavy industries and urbanization model. Gandhi believed that true development should be measured by the upliftment of the last individual, not by GDP growth.

Gandhi challenges the mental inferiority established by colonial education through satyagraha and self-restraint. Macaulay's education policy alienated Indians from their culture, language, and traditions. Gandhi advocated education in the mother tongue, moral development, and labor-based education so that the mind

could be freed from colonial prejudices.

In contemporary India, the discussion on decolonization has been revived. Discussions are happening in universities worldwide on cultural renaissance, ancient knowledge traditions, self-reliant India, etc. But the danger is that this process should not remain limited to superficial nationalism. Gandhi's model cautions us that true decolonization is possible only through internal self-criticism and inclusive sensitivity, not by establishing any kind of dominance. Ultimately, the complete decolonization of the Indian mind is possible only when we practically adopt Gandhi's developmental model in education, economy, and culture. We must always remember Gandhi's message

that Swaraj must first be achieved in the mind, only then will it become meaningful in the external world.

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