

**Reflections on the Philosophy  
and  
Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi**

*Edited by*  
**Dr. Karabi Mitra**  
**Ranjana Sarkar (Ghosh)**



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# Relevance Of Gandhian Economic Philosophy : A brief understanding

Anuradha Banerjee

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was not a methodical philosopher but a man of action and a leader who commanded considerable influence over men. He certainly had emphatically put forward certain fundamental ideas for the regeneration of man and the reconstruction of society and politics and in this sense he could be regarded as a moral, social, economic and political thinker. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of truth, non-violence and satyagraha helped India get liberation from British rule and is considered a perennial philosophy to fight injustice, oppression and suppression of human rights. While Gandhiji's philosophy had wide acceptance to deal with political and social issues, it had not many followers in the arena of economics. He was aware of it. "Pandit Nehru wants industrialization because he thinks that, if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate it."<sup>1</sup> He was neither impressed by the capitalist free-market economy nor the state-bureaucratic socialism of the communist countries, the two prevailing dominant systems of the management of the economy. Finally India adopted the Mixed economy model of development after independence, though it had not solved the severe problem of poverty and backwardness. Even when we adopted the free-market economic model in the Post-liberalization era the genuine progress and development remain as an illusion to us.

Gandhiji propounded a total philosophy of life which necessarily includes economics. He did not draw distinction between economics and ethics. "Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful."<sup>2</sup> He did

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1. U.S. Mohan Rao, *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1968 (reprinted 1994), p - 54; *Harijan*, 19.9.1940.

2. *Ibid.*, p-47; *Young India*, 13.10.1921.