

GANDHI'S VISION OF DEVELOPMENT: RELEVANCE FOR 21ST CENTURY

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Development through the use of state apparatus is integral to the notion of freedom, and poverty becomes a problem of politics and power. This process confers rationality and acceptability of practices and techniques of the government (and its agents) among the individuals in society. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply suspicious of the power of state to influence growth, and hence relied on the self-control of an individual as the force that could transform the society. He believed that there was no need to have a society based on the Western notions of greed and wealth but on moral individuals who cared for each other and followed their spiritual goals. This translated, in his vision, to a more equal society based on different religious groups showing tolerance towards each other, and engaged in small-scale economic activities.

INTRODUCTION

TO SAY that the state exists to help the poor is a statement that is often considered to be self-explanatory. However, this notion of state action has a historical basis even before India's Independence. Even though it is reflected in post-Independence, certain governmental institutions and practices; it was not without contestation between the competing visions of architects of modern India: Gandhi and Nehru.

The evolution of ideas of development are traced here in the sense of objectives of state action during the nationalist struggle for Independence, role of Gandhi and Nehru, and reasons for eventual triumph of Nehruvian idea of rational planning with the bureaucracy as the agent of pro-poor growth in Independent India. It is relevant to note here that while development has failed to reduce poverty in India, it has also led to expanding the state power because it has become self-perpetuating.

The genesis of pro-poor development can be found in the social reality