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## Mahatma Gandhi in New India

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### Abstract

In today's interconnected world, the challenges we face are not confined to internal conflicts or localized issues. The global landscape is marked by complex problems such as border management, environmental degradation, nuclear threats, a moral crisis in humanity, climate change, economic and social inequalities, and the escalating competition for scarce resources like fossil fuels. Added to this are the growing fears of unrestrained violence, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the persistent threat of international terrorism. Our world is increasingly fractured by unrest, fear, anger, hatred, and despair, with ethnic and religious conflicts intensifying in scope and severity.

Mahatma Gandhi, with his profound foresight, cautioned humanity against the disastrous consequences of unbridled consumerism, environmental exploitation, and a detachment from core values. He believed that unless modern civilization aligns itself with nature and adopts a simpler, value-driven lifestyle, it would spiral into chaos marked by ecological ruin, social unrest, and human suffering. Gandhi emphasized that true progress for humanity lies not in unrestrained materialism but in harmony with nature and a conscious effort to curb excessive desires.

This discussion aims to delve into Gandhi's pivotal role in shaping modern India and his continued relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His principles and philosophies, particularly those concerning truth (Satya), nonviolence (Ahimsa), and the practice of Satyagraha, hold the potential to inspire the resurgence of less violent, more compassionate societies. In our contemporary context, Gandhi's ideas serve as a beacon for transformation and global awakening, transcending temporal, geographic, and cultural boundaries. His enduring values of truth, respect for human dignity, and love for all beings are as significant today as they were during his lifetime.

Gandhi's approach to sustainability was rooted in a deep respect for nature. He advocated for eco-friendly practices, minimal consumption, and an organic way of life to reduce the strain on the planet. He personally exemplified these principles by leading a life of simplicity and reduced material demands. In stark contrast, modern lifestyles have created an unsustainable burden on the environment, distancing us from the ideal of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world as one family.

To honor Gandhi's legacy, we must reignite conversations about the fragility of our ecosystem and the urgent need to address its degradation. It is crucial to reevaluate our consumption patterns and devise ways to live within ecological limits. Gandhi's reflections on the seven social sins:

- Politics without principles
- Wealth without work
- Commerce without morality
- Education without character
- Pleasure without conscience
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice

**Keywords:** Humanity, morality, spirituality, truth, nonviolence, untouchability, New India, sanitation, wealth

### Introduction

In today's interconnected world, challenges are no longer confined to internal conflicts or domestic matters. We face complex issues such as border management, environmental degradation, nuclear threats, a moral crisis in humanity, climate change, economic and social inequalities, and increasing competition for limited resources like fossil fuels. Additionally, the growing threats of unchecked violence, nuclear proliferation, and international terrorism have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Our world is becoming more fragmented by global unrest, hatred, anger, and despair. Ethnic and religious conflicts are escalating in both frequency and intensity, posing serious threats to global harmony.

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Mahatma Gandhi foresaw these challenges and warned humanity about the dangers of social and political upheaval, environmental destruction, and widespread human suffering. He emphasized the importance of living in harmony with nature and adopting a simpler lifestyle to curb excessive desires. Gandhi believed that unchecked consumerism and indifference to ethical values would hinder humanity's progress toward peace. This paper explores Mahatma Gandhi's role in shaping modern India and highlights his enduring relevance as a leader and philosopher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just as he was in the past.

### **Influence of Gandhi in shaping New India-**

To implement Gandhi's vision in building a New India, ten key objectives are being pursued by the government. These reflect his ideals and serve as a roadmap for progress:

- 1. Inclusive Economic Policy:** The first objective is an economic policy grounded in inclusivity, development, and trust—commonly referred to as *Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas* (collective effort, inclusive growth, and universal trust). It is crucial to ensure that the benefits of development reach all sections of society, including marginalized groups such as minorities, Dalits, women, and tribal communities. No one should be left behind in this journey toward progress.
- 2. Clean India (Swachh Bharat):** Gandhi famously said, "Sanitation is more important than independence." Inspired by his vision, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) was launched, with the Prime Minister urging citizens to strive for a cleaner nation. This historic initiative underscores the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in building a better India.
- 3. Healthy India (Swasth Bharat):** A clean environment naturally contributes to a healthier population. Gandhi emphasized that "Prevention is better than cure," and his lifestyle exemplified physical fitness, walking approximately 18 kilometers daily. In line with his ideals, initiatives have been introduced to promote better health and preventive care among citizens.
- 4. Empowered India (Saksham Bharat):** Gandhi envisioned an India that was self-reliant and capable. The government has taken steps toward financial inclusion through schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, which has enabled over 37 crore citizens to open bank accounts, fostering economic empowerment at the grassroots level.
- 5. Prosperous India (Samriddh Bharat):** Gandhi believed that prosperity should be accessible to all. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana have empowered citizens by providing them with opportunities for self-employment and livelihood generation. This focus on enabling individuals to sustain themselves reflects Gandhi's vision of an economically robust India.
- 6. Empowered Women (Sashakt Nari):** Gandhi was a staunch advocate of women's empowerment, advocating for education, widow remarriage, and the abolition of oppressive practices like the purdah system. Modern initiatives such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana reflect his ideals by promoting gender equality and empowering women to participate in society.
- 7. Good Governance:** Gandhi's concept of *Ram Rajya*

emphasized transparent and ethical governance. He envisioned a system where truth and justice prevailed. Today, the government is working toward proactive disclosure of information, clear delineation of responsibilities, and the establishment of accountability at all levels to create a system aligned with Gandhi's ideals.

- 8. Village Empowerment (Gram Swaraj):** Gandhi believed that true independence began at the grassroots level. He advocated for self-sufficient villages that could manage their own affairs. To achieve this vision, local governance structures like Panchayats and Gram Sabhas have been empowered to play a pivotal role in development initiatives.
- 9. Sustainable Farming:** Gandhi dreamed of a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. He championed sustainable agricultural practices and believed in self-sufficient farming systems. Current initiatives focus on practices like zero-budget natural farming, aimed at increasing farmers' income while reducing dependency on harmful inputs, echoing Gandhi's principles.
- 10. Secure India:** Gandhi emphasized the importance of safety and security for a nation's progress. A secure India requires a robust response to both internal and external threats. The government is focused on strengthening national defense, internal security, and disaster preparedness to ensure stability and peace.

By adopting these ten objectives, modern India is striving to embody Gandhi's vision of a harmonious, inclusive, and sustainable society. His philosophy continues to guide our journey toward creating a nation that values both human dignity and ecological balance.

Mahatma Gandhi said that seven things will destroy us. Notice that all of them have to do with social and political conditions. Note also that the antidote of each of these "deadly sins" is an explicit external standard or something that is based on natural principles and laws, not on social values. These sins are following:

1. Wealth Without Work
2. Pleasure Without Conscience
3. Knowledge Without Character
4. Commerce (Business) Without Morality (Ethics)
5. Science Without Humanity
6. Religion Without Sacrifice
7. Politics Without Principle

The concept of "wealth without work" through honest labor has significant implications for fairness and equity. This issue is especially relevant in today's world, where some professions thrive on generating wealth without tangible effort. From exploiting tax loopholes to benefiting disproportionately from government programs, such practices exacerbate inequality. Gandhi's critique underscores the need for social justice and emphasizes the responsibility of the wealthy to give back to society through philanthropy, social initiatives, and ethical practices..

The idea of "pleasure without consciousness" could refer to a Seeking pleasure without consideration of its consequences reflects a lack of moral awareness. For many in positions of power, this temptation can lead to ethical lapses and irresponsible behavior. This idea challenges individuals to align their pursuit of joy with integrity, mindfulness, and an understanding of the broader impact of

their actions.

As dangerous as a little knowledge is, even more dangerous is much knowledge without a strong, principled character. "Knowledge without character" is a phrase that Knowledge, when unaccompanied by strong moral values, can be more dangerous than ignorance. Gandhi stressed that true education involves both intellectual growth and character building. A society where knowledge is misused for selfish or harmful purposes risks ethical decay. Traits like integrity, empathy, and responsibility are essential to ensure that knowledge serves humanity rather than harms it.

"Commerce without morality" refers to Gandhi's warning about commerce devoid of ethics highlights the consequences of prioritizing profit over principles. Businesses that exploit labor, harm the environment, or disregard social responsibilities contribute to systemic harm. Sustainable practices, fair wages, and community engagement are crucial for aligning commerce with morality, ensuring economic activities benefit society as a whole.

"Science without humanity" refers to the pursuit and application of scientific knowledge without considering the ethical, social, and human implications of the research and its potential consequences. Without a human-centric approach, scientific progress risks causing harm rather than fostering well-being. Fields such as genetics and artificial intelligence exemplify the need for a balance between innovation and respect for human rights, autonomy, and dignity. Gandhi's vision reminds us that science must remain a tool for the betterment of humanity, not its detriment.

"Religion without sacrifice" refers to a religious practice or belief system that lacks the element of self-denial, dedication, or offerings typically associated with traditional religious rituals. True spirituality requires dedication, humility, and the willingness to give up personal comforts for the greater good. Modern interpretations of religion may shift focus toward compassion and self-awareness, but the principle remains: spirituality without ethical action loses its transformative power.

Regarding "politics without principle", Gandhi said having politics without truth(s) to justly dictate the action creates chaos, which ultimately leads to violence. Gandhi called these missteps "passive violence", 'which fuels the active violence of crime, rebellion, and war. The focus on the personality ethic is the instant creation of an image that sells well in the social and economic marketplace. We can see politicians spending millions of dollars to create an image, even though it's superficial, lacking substance, in order to get votes and gain office.

### Conclusion

Gandhi's philosophy of Truth, Nonviolence, and Satyagraha offers timeless wisdom for creating less violent and more harmonious societies. His values transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, inspiring a global awakening toward compassion, dignity, and sustainability.

Gandhi also championed environmental preservation and the need to reduce consumption to lessen humanity's burden on nature. He practiced simplicity, setting an example for sustainable living. However, today's consumerist tendencies have pushed the planet to a breaking point, making the vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world as one family) appear increasingly distant.

To honor Gandhi's legacy, we must initiate conversations

about the fragility of our ecosystems and explore ways to rationalize our needs. By addressing the seven deadly sins he identified, we can strive to align our actions with ethical principles and work toward a future where humanity lives in harmony with nature, grounded in compassion and universal values.

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