



## MAHATMA GANDHI AND HIS IDEALS - GS I AND IV MAINS

**Q.** Gandhian ideologies have become the lighthouse for Indian policy makers over the years. Discuss the ideals of Gandhiji at the present geo-political context. (10 marks, 150 words)

**News:** *Lessons from Gandhi's life*

### What's in the news?

- January 30 marks the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi—the father of the nation—who was assassinated on this day by Nathuram Vinayak Godse in 1948, just five months and 15 days after the country gained independence from British Rule.

### Relevance of Gandhiji's values in 21st Century:

#### Need for Tolerance and Peace:

- Each year, over 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence. Violence is among the leading causes of death for people worldwide. It accounts for 14% of deaths among males and 7% of deaths among females - WHO's World report on violence and health.
- **Violence ranges from physical, sexual, reproductive to mental health problems. Millions of lives are lost every year amid conflict zones. Example- Yemen and Afghanistan.**
- Violence places a massive burden on national economies, costing countries billions of dollars each year in health care, law enforcement and lost productivity.
- In world that is moving through the phases of war marred by violence and naked dance of death of common people due to the menace of terrorism there is a significant requirement of Gandhian idea of Non-violence more and more today than the past days.

#### Sarvodaya:

- **According to the recent WEF'S "Global Social Mobility Report 2020: Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative" Report: Indians born in low-income family would take seven generations to even approach the country's mean income.**
- Some 220 million Indians sustained on an expenditure level of less than Rs 32 / day - the poverty line for rural India going by the last headcount of the poor in India in 2013.
- It is necessary that each individual renders back unto society what he/she, owes to society.
- Gandhiji's political order of Sarvodaya encompassing Swaraj, Panchayat Raj, Decentralization and more importantly a non-violent statehood will be the basis for the solution to ailing communities all over the world.



## Self Reliance (Swadeshi):

- **Globalization and consumerism** have in fact made people's lives tougher. The gulf between the rich and poor is widening day by day.
- Gandhian principle of self-sustenance and serving others is a significant requirement in present times as ever.
- This can be reflected in the "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" started by the Government.

## Sustainable Environment:

- Gandhiji's environmental concerns were real and are taking shape in the present times. Gandhiji had said "**Earth has enough for Human needs, But not for Human greeds**"
- He was quite apprehensive of machinery production and industrialization, which will harm the environment. And here we are, living a deplorable life among the noxious fumes, polluted, and harmful gases released by these industries.
- **Deforestation and pollution** harms the ecological balance of the world.
- The world is whirling under the burden of **global warming, climate change and resource crunch**.
- The world, including the United Nation has recognized Gandhian idea of sustainable development. The recent inauguration of Gandhi Solar Park at the headquarters United Nations (UN) is a testimony to that.
- Behind all the climate deals, environmental conservation treaties and sustainable development goals of the UN Gandhian view self sustenance operates as driving philosophy.
- The need for sustainable development is quintessential in present times.

## Secularism:

- The secular ideologies of Gandhiji are not only there in Indian constitution but also there in Indian society as a core value system. That is why so many people of diverse religions coexist in India.
- Today, the world today needs more and more tolerant people in societies where violence is committed in the name of religion.
- **Tolerance in the society will help in neutralizing the ethno-centric bias in the globe that is taking place day by day on the basis of religion, caste, ethnicity and region etc.**

## Democratic Decentralization:

- Gandhi made it very dear that concentration of either economic or political power would violate all the essential principles of **participatory democracy**.
- To check centralization, Gandhi suggested the institution of village republics both as institutions of parallel polities and as units of economic autonomy. Village is the lowest unit of a decentralized system.
- Gandhian idea of decentralization of power is being implemented in democracies through empowered local self governments at grass root level.
- Indian government, for instance, have implemented **local self government** by adopting to Panchayati Raj and Municipality system in rural and urban areas respectively.



## Casteless society:

- Gandhi was against the caste system which is still a taboo in India.
- Even after 72 years of Independence and despite having reservations Indian society is grappling with casteism, communalism, regionalism and provincialism.
- **Gandhiji wanted to eradicate untouchability and casteism from root and cause through the change in hearts of people.**
- Thus, the Gandhian philosophy is useful create a casteless society where everyone is treated equally irrespective of their caste.

## Trusteeship:

- While India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it is also one of the most unequal countries. **The top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth - Oxfam Report.**
- The Mahatma had suggested trusteeship as a concept where a certain part of an individual's wealth was held in trust for the greater good of society.
- Today, the concept of trusteeship, can work as antidote to potential deviations from public interest.

## The ethics of Truth, Non-stealing and Non-possession:

- According to the recent **“Global Corruption Barometer – Asia” Report by Transparency International (TI), India has the highest overall bribery rate (39%) and the highest rate of citizens using personal connections (46%).**
- The country is riddled with the politician-bureaucrat-business nexus of corruption.
- Ethical approach of people in authority and transparency in service dispensation in institutions like education, law and order, judiciary and transport sectors, are imperative to curb this menace.
- And the answer lies in Gandhiji's Philosophy of Truth and Morality that alone can rehabilitate India's Moral Crisis.

## Sanitation and Cleanliness:

- Clean surroundings are a must for humans to exist as such an environment holds the promise of safeguarding our health to quite a degree against a plethora of often fatal diseases. It also helps in curbing mortality rates.
- The health of future generations depends on these factors. The Mahatma rightly said: "Sanitation is more important than independence".
- India has ranked a poor 168th out of 180 countries in the 2020 **Environmental Performance Index (EPI)**, according to researchers at Yale and Columbia universities.
- Gandhiji had said, **“Everyone must be his own scavenger,”** but modern-day India is anything but that.
- We have let the sanitation of the nation go to the gutter and sent the poorest of the poor to go clean it up, letting them die in the process.





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- Hence, it is more important today than ever to imbibe the values upheld by the Father of the Nation when it comes to cleanliness.
- The **government's Swachh Bharat Mission** is a welcome move in this context.
- “So long as you do not take the broom and the bucket in your hands, you cannot make your towns and cities clean,” Mahatma Gandhi famously said and his words are true even today.
- No matter how much money is allocated to the cleaning up of the country, it is only when the individual citizen will take this herculean task in his hands that we would be able to eliminate the ghoul of dirt from our lives.
- If we feel ashamed in cleaning the very filth we create, despite having modern methods of disposing of waste, then we have knowingly pushed the nation into a septic tank of apathy which will consume us all.
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan needs the Gandhian push if the nation has to become a cleaner and more disciplined one.

Gandhian ideologies have become the **lighthouse for Indian policy makers** over the years. Starting from poverty alleviation to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and universal health care (Ayushman Bharat) to skill India programs everywhere the core inspiration comes from Gandhianism. National food security act of India to Obama Care policy of the United States of America Gandhian concept of socialism holds the key as a guiding principle. **Every individual should follow the key Gandhian ideologies in their day to day life for a happy, prosperous, healthy, harmonious and sustainable future.**

