

# Gandhi's Views on Truth, Cleanliness, Good Health and Community Services

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## **Abstract**

The Gandhian Charkha plan is also crucial for fostering community growth. Gandhi's contribution to constructive labor is crucial for modern India. In this paper, we will discuss the Gandhian philosophy of community development. The village industry programming the country, village self-sufficiency, and the belief in Panchayati Raj, Gram Swaraj, Bhoodan, Sarvodaya, Garmdan, decentralization, and Swadeshi are very significant and helpful in Gandhian Community development.

**Keywords:** Gandhi, Truth, Health, cleanliness, community Service

## **Introduction**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's life is a story of his heroic efforts to establish values of Truth and Non-violence in human life. Born in a middle-class Vaishnava family, he became a Mahatma and a messenger for the world in the twentieth century. By encouraging Truth and Nonviolence in India's quest for independence, he prevented mutual hatred and retaliation between India and Britain. Gandhiji's journey to South Africa, where he served clients, led him to become a Mahatma. His campaign for non-cooperation led to his identification with the humblest and lowest of the land, and he was imprisoned multiple times for his non-cooperation efforts. Gandhi developed methods of widespread civil disobedience in South Africa, which were afterward imitated in India and other countries.

In India's political and social movements, Mahatma Gandhi was a key figure. He gained publicity for his nonviolent demonstrations, dedication to the truth, neatness, good health, and volunteerism. As the basis of all morality and the source of love, fairness, and friendship, he emphasized the significance of truth. Gandhi thought that maintaining good health was a responsibility and that cleanliness was spiritually important for living well. He also emphasized the value of volunteering, saying that doing good deeds and serving people was the finest way to appreciate and respect them. Gandhi continues to inspire people all throughout the world with his nonviolent resistance, honesty, and service. AIR reports on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy on cleanliness and good habits, emphasizing their connection to good health. He placed a strong emphasis on lavatory cleanliness and made sanitation a cornerstone of the Gandhian way of life. Gandhi believed that cleanliness is crucial for physical well-being and a healthy environment. He believed that habits learned early become embedded in one's personality

## **Gandhi's views on truth**

Gandhi's philosophy revolves around the concept of Truth (Satya), which has been a central topic for thousands of years. Aristotle's classic suggestion, "To say of what is that it is, or what is not that it is not,

True," resonated with Gandhi, who called himself a seeker of Truth. He considered Truth the supreme value of ethics, politics, and religion, as the ultimate sources of authority. He considered Truth a "philosopher's stone" and the sole talisman available to mortal man. Gandhi's commitment to the truth prevented him from compromising on anything, including the nation's liberation. He believed that truth needs constant inquiry, as no truth always wears the same face. Gandhi's life was a series of experiments with truth, demonstrating the importance of recognizing and embracing truth in one's life.

Gandhi's life was marked by a relentless pursuit of truth, which he recorded in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. He believed that truth is the substance of all morality and the essence of Dharma, and regarded it as the basis of socio-political thought. Gandhi's life and daily conduct were soaked with God-consciousness, and his daily prayer and hymn singing were important aspects of his personality. He was a devoted Vaishnava, and even when his life was in danger, he never wavered in his pursuit of the truth.

God has many names and forms, and different devotees have different views of God. Gandhi revised his maxim from "God is Truth" to "Truth is God" in order to amend his incorrect conception of God. The only way to find and establish truth is via truth itself. He laid stress on truthful means, which had to be as true and pure as the end. He closely associated truth with non-violence, and Satyagraha, the passion for truth, was the name given to the means.

In summary, Gandhi's maxim 'Truth is God' serves to elucidate what 'God' means for him. His Truth was a unique combination of a personal style of life and a technique (Satyagraha) for tackling injustices. He accepted the view that there is an absolute truth, which is God, in addition to the relative reality of our idea. While Absolute Truth is God, the Relative Truth is something we perceive as Truth. The Absolute Truth is eternal and boundless, hence no evidence is necessary to know it. Since we are tied to the phenomenal world, relative truth is the only Truth we have, allowing us to accomplish our objectives.

Gandhi's path of Truth and non-violence was the only one he did not wish to change, as he felt the path to be narrow and often like the edge of the sword. His constant treading on the right path made him the greatest votary of truth and non-violence in the history of mankind.

### **Gandhi's perspectives on cleanliness**

Gandhi showed a childhood interest in cleanliness and hygiene. When he was 12 years old, he questioned his mother about why she had him take a bath after touching the neighborhood sweeper. Many people are aware of his opinions on cleanliness, which were profoundly affected by his experience in South Africa. After living in South Africa for three years, when he returned to India was shocked to learn about the plague breakout in Bombay. He was afraid about the risk of the illness getting into his state as a concerned citizen. Gandhi decided to take it upon himself to promote cleanliness and stop the disease's spread by offering his services to improve sanitation. In this moment of need, his commitment and selflessness were absolutely admirable.

He emphasizes cleanliness in homes, especially latrines and toilets, as people used to excrete everywhere. He explained to the populace that unsanitary conditions in toilets were the main root of many diseases. He recommended using two different buckets for night dirt and pee, which many of the people soon began

doing. Gradually, the condition started improving. During one of the Congress meetings in Calcutta, he witnessed several members using the verandah in front of their accommodations as a toilet without any restraint. Gandhiji then started cleaning with a broom, putting many of the onlookers to shame.

He lectured about the value of cleanliness and the risks of not practicing it in many of his public gatherings. During his numerous trips to various regions of the nation, he observed of people's actions and customs, such as spitting on the ground, tossing trash on the ground, littering in public areas, polluting waterways, and even defiling places of worship Gandhiji brought India to independence, but his vision of a clean India has not come to pass. "Sanitation is more important than independence," stated Mahatma Gandhi. He included hygiene and sanitation in the Gandhian way of life. His dream was total sanitation for all. For physical well-being and a healthy atmosphere, cleanliness is crucial. It affects both personal and public hygiene. Everyone has to be educated about cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation, and the different diseases that are brought on by unsanitary environments. The behaviors one picks up early on become ingrained in their psyche. Even while we teach our children to wash their hands before eating, to regularly brush their teeth, and to take a bath, we don't care if public spaces are clean. In his famous quote, Mahatma Gandhi declared, "I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet."

Gandhiji emphasized the need for lavatory cleanliness, saying that a lavatory should be as clean as a living room. He believed that cleanliness rules are more strictly observed in the West than in the East, which contributes to decrease many diseases. He hoped for people to share his belief in the importance of maintaining a clean environment for nature and clean objects. Equally significant to his fight for Indian independence was Gandhi's lifelong commitment to cleanliness and sanitation.

### **Mahatma Gandhi's Views on community Service**

The standards Gandhi established for a "public worker" were a crucial component of his philosophy and had significant societal repercussions. These were created in accordance with his strict moral standards, without which, in his opinion, there could be no healthy public life. He led by example in the following ways in 1899.

The Indian community in South Africa sent him a number of pricey gifts in appreciation for his public work, including diamonds, silver, and a substantial gold chain for his wife. He felt guilty about this because he had earlier said that such work was performed for free.

He was also preparing his family and himself for a life of selfless service, and he had publicly urged others to get over their obsession with bling. In spite of his wife's objections, he opted not to keep these items as personal belongings after considering all of this. He designated five influential Indians as its trustees and established a trust with the presents for the community's sake. He was unwavering in his belief that a public servant should not accept expensive presents.

Gandhi puts out yet another crucial principle for performing public duty. This notion is that a public servant should focus on a small number of well-chosen areas rather than taking on too many responsibilities. He believes that would produce the finest outcomes. "Surely God has not laid on us the burden of ending all that suffering (of the world)," he writes in a letter to a friend.

Gandhi believed that the condition of India's villages was the genuine barometer of the nation's health and that the villages' conditions needed to improve for the nation's health to be adequate. Gandhi's approach was to revitalize the villages with an all-encompassing strategy of rural uplift that addressed every aspect of life, including health, education, and employment. Urban communities needed to develop a desire for their products, and village-based enterprises needed to be resurrected. Volunteers like himself were essential to his agenda for improving rural areas. They should relocate to a chosen hamlet, live there in the most uncomplicated manner possible among the peasants, and instruct them in leading a healthy lifestyle via example and practice. Gandhi published *Navajivan*, *Harijan*, *Young India*, and other publications to spread his ideas. In other regions of India, they were copied or translated into other languages, becoming well known.

Gandhi believed that because India was a developing nation and its service should not include a lifestyle beyond its means, the village worker should only demand a living wage from the All India Spinners Association or the new national provincial system that was being organized. Gandhi also discussed the "village-worker ratio" that would be necessary for his plan for rural regeneration to be successful. He suggested that villages be arranged into blocks, each containing around ten villages and having a radius of ten miles. A worker would be needed for every block under this plan, and 70,000 men and women volunteers would be needed to cover the nation's more than seven lakh communities. The village worker's work schedule was meticulously laid out by him. He must first conduct a census of all the cattle to determine their average milk production, a report on the conditions of the untouchables, and a thorough examination of the village's size, crops, land value, industries, crafts, wells, and varieties of trees. Since it would be extremely helpful for both the worker and the development of uplift initiatives, it was important to carefully document all of this information. It would be best to enlist the assistance of local volunteers. In answer to Gandhi's appeal, committed volunteers established centers for village service around the nation, and thankfully, some records of their work are still in existence. C. Rajagopalachari established a Gandhi ashram in Tamil Nadu close to Trinchengodu. The Abhoy Ashram was managed by Drs. S.C. Banerji and P.C. Ghosh in Comilla, Bengal. The Gandhi Ashram in Meerut, run by Acharya Kripalani, was a sizable institution with outposts all across the city. Spinning, medical assistance, national education, dairy, agriculture, rural sanitation, eradicating untouchability, and combating alcohol addiction were among of the activities of these ashrams.

The All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA) was founded in October 1934, which was a significant development in the programme to improve the condition of villages. In accordance with Gandhi's advise and direction, J.C. Kumarrappa established AIVIA as a separate entity that was nevertheless affiliated with the Congress although being free from its political activities.

### **Gandhi's perspectives Of Community Development**

The Gandhian philosophy of community development has gained official acceptance, and the adoption of the Khadi and village industry programming the country, village self-sufficiency, and the belief in Panchyati Raj, Sahakary Samaj, Gramme Samaj, Bhoodan, Sarvodaya, Garmdan, Decentralisation, and Swadeshi are very significant and helpful in Gandhian Community development. The actual development is in the village. Gandhi believed that constructive work should be directed towards the welfare of the people, eradicating evils and miseries. This included various programs like hospital construction,

education, and eradication of unsociability. Gandhi aimed to awaken individuals to their religious potential and transform society through economic, political, and social aspects. His constructive program, known as Poorna Swaraj or complete independence, involved truthful and nonviolent means. Some of his constructive works were:-

### **Khadi**

Gandhi ji believed Khadi was crucial for community development and health, benefiting frame producers and weavers. Under his guidance, the spinners association introduced a certification system for khadi, regulating production, sale, and profit administrative costs, with laborers receiving a significant portion of profits.

All of the country's significant underemployment and unemployment could have been eliminated with the rebirth of the cottage industry. Many cloth mills may receive employment from khadi and small-scale manufacturing. This is a non-violent method of destroying international and national capitalism. Khadi serves workers, and cloth mills also exploit it.

The Gandhian Charkha plan is also crucial for fostering community growth. Gandhiji's Charkha Scheme is another constructive activity. He believed that the Charkha Scheme is highly beneficial and a valuable symbol in India's war for freedom and that wearing Khadi has become a regular practice for all Patriotic Indians and a powerful symbol of economic resistance that is peaceful and non-violent. Gandhi identified with the millions of people who were starving thanks to his embrace of khadi, his Swadeshi mentality, and this.

### **Panchayati Raj**

In India, Gandhi is regarded as a leading proponent of the Panchayati Raj. By establishing the panchayat, he hoped to reorient local life. He believed that a village is the foundation of a country. He claimed that the real India was found in its villages. He said it himself: "If the village perished, India would perish as well."

With Swaraj, he had the chance to influence rural development in India in accordance with his own customs and requirements. He remarked as a result. "To build Swaraj is to serve our villages. Other than the ideal dream, nothing else exists. Gandhi therefore continued to be interested in the advancement of rural society.

Gandhiji included the Panchayat system in his plan to rebuild society and emphasized that democratic ideals will be realized through the correct implementation of the Panchayat system.

### **Trusteeship**

Gandhi's idea of trusteeship is a crucial component of constructive action for neighborhood improvement. It is the result of his labor and investment. He gave advice to capitalists, landowners, and other people with excess wealth since the gap between labor and capital will disappear once the capitalist is appointed trustee of the excess riches. The inhabitants will then have access to a variety of amenities, including adequate food, clothing, education, and medical care, and they will be realized in their greatest possible

state. The Gita gave Gandhiji a hint about the concept of trusteeship. He believed that it is crucial for achieving economic equality.

Gandhi carried out a variety of community development initiatives, including Panchayat Raj, Gramme Swaraj, Sarvodaya, and Satyagraha. They are a component of Gandhi's beneficial initiatives. Gandhi's contributions to constructive labor are crucial for modern India.

The Government of India launched the Community Development Programme on October 2, 1952, with just 77 blocks initially participating. As funds and framed personnel became available, more blocks were opened each year. The majority of an Indian district's rural land is currently under block administration.

### **Swadeshi**

The Gandhian perspective on development is based on the concept of swadeshi, or home economy. This approach emphasizes self-governance, self-reliance, and self-employment for people, especially those in villages. This reduces vulnerability to external market forces and allows villagers to develop a strong economic base and prioritize local goods and services. The village community emerges as an extension of the family, with cooperative individuals who share a common bond rather than competing individuals. The principle of Swadeshi implies the use of indigenous products and services, with Gandhi articulating it in different spheres of life. This approach restricts oneself to ancestral religion, uses indigenous institutions in politics, and emphasizes the use of home-grown and home-crafted products. However, Gandhi emphasizes that defects and deficiencies should be rooted out rather than overlooked or allowed to persist.

Swadeshi is a philosophy that emphasizes the use of indigenous products and services in various aspects of life. It involves adhering to ancestral religion, using indigenous institutions, and using only indigenous products in politics and economics. Gandhi believed that Swadeshi could remove poverty by focusing on economic and industrial life, removing defects and deficiencies. Swadeshi is not a duty that ends with spinning the wheel, but rather a philosophy of service to others. Communities practicing Swadeshi avoid unlimited economic growth, which can hinder self-development and lead to competition and strife. Swadeshi is a religious discipline that is not excessively concerned about the availability of non-indigenous items, as it helps individuals learn to live without them and others they may consider unnecessary.

### **Gandhi's teachings on health and fitness are reflected in :**

#### **1. Practice Non-violence**

Gandhiji believed in non-violence and ahimsa. The term Ahimsa signifies respect for all living beings and adopting a non-violent way of life towards all. If we follow this mantra, it can help us stay calmer, prevent hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases, and improve our mental health. It will also keep us away from binge eating or craving junk food when under stress.

## **2. Fasting for Good Health**

There are many recognized benefits to fasting. It provides several physical advantages as well as aids in establishing discipline in daily life. It strengthens the immune system, aids in detoxification, removes toxins from the body, cleanses the stomach, and helps the body make use of underutilized fats and nutrients. Fasting promotes regular bowel motions and prevents infections.

## **3. Sleep Early and Wake up Early**

Although modern research suggests that people need at least 8 hours of sleep, we may still practice sleeping early and rising early because doing so increases our productivity and lowers stress. Mahatma Gandhi is known to have slept for four to five hours each night and awoke at the crack of dawn.

## **4. Observe Your Diet**

This is very crucial. Nowadays, with so many options, processed or junk food frequently replaces wholesome, natural foods. According to Gandhiji, "The Body was never meant to be treated as a refuse bin, holding all the foods that the palate demands." For six years, he lived a vegan lifestyle in an effort to demonstrate that self-control was the key to a nutritious diet.

## **5. Anywhere You Can, Walk**

Do you recall the Dandi March? Gandhiji travelled 390 kilometers on foot to the Dandi beach to protest, and 10,000 people went beside him. Walking is therefore extremely helpful for our health, protest or no protest. According to nutritionists, we should walk for at least one hour every day.

## **6. Live a positive life**

Life is influenced by our thoughts. Therefore, if we continue to harbor resentments, maintain our anger, and generally think negatively, events in our lives will develop similarly. "A man is but the product of his thoughts," stated Gandhiji. He becomes what he believes. This is still very true for everyone today. We must therefore teach our thoughts to think positively. It enables us to approach every condition and situation positively, assisting us in identifying solutions as opposed to issues. Additionally, it enhances social skills generally, productivity, and mental health.

## **7. Forgive Others and Yourself**

Being able to forgive takes work. It implies letting go and moving on, which can take time to do. A strong advocate for world peace Gandhiji once observed, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is a quality of the powerful.

Our minds and hearts have little room for anything fresh or uplifting when we are harboring resentments and anger. It keeps stressing us out, which negatively impacts both our mental and physical health. Overcoming melancholy, anxiety, and exhaustion can be aided by forgiveness.

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