



## Mains Marathon

**Day 53:** The ideals and philosophies of Gandhi include both human rights and sustainable development. Discuss. (150 words)

01 Sep 2022 | GS Paper 4 | Theoretical Questions

### Approach / Explanation / Answer

#### Approach

- Give a brief introduction about Gandhi's Philosophy.
- Discuss how Gandhi's ideology relates to human rights and sustainable development.
- Give a fair conclusion.

#### Answer

Gandhi has been attributed as being the inspiration or model for various rights struggles around the world. His vision and philosophy encompasses both human rights and sustainable development.

#### Gandhi's moral perspective on human rights:

- Gandhi considered human dignity to be one supreme value and a key element of his thought rested around swadharma or individual responsibility.
- However, Gandhi's programme of social reform was based on duties rather than on rights.
- Gandhi takes the attitude of a social reformer calling upon the higher castes to accept the untouchables or 'Harijans'. He does not say that the untouchables have rights, but says that upper castes have a duty towards them. When he advocates resistance, he adds that it must be done in the manner of Satyagraha—that is, not by asking for rights, but by showing the other person what his duty is.
- Hence, it can be said that Gandhian notions are not sympathetic to human rights unless they are products of duties well-performed.

#### Gandhi on sustainable development:

- The basis of Gandhi's philosophy is 'Sarvodaya' that is the welfare of all.
- He took a community centered approach towards sustainability and emphasized on 'betterment of human life' and ensuring fulfillment of basic needs of all humans.
- His trusteeship model of economic governance is aimed at achieving Sarvodaya. It asks for distribution of wealth generated out of the collective efforts of all. Trusteeship will result in non-violent and non-exploitative socio-economic relations and development models based on

production systems centered around the preservation of nature.

- In his book Hind Swaraj (1909), he has criticized the unplanned and reckless industrialization. According to him, self-help, self-reliance, decentralization of industries and labor-intensive technology are the qualitative goals of satisfying meaningful life.

Hence, Gandhian ideas are quite relevant in the present times when we are facing the challenges of human rights violations like ethnic conflicts, wars, crimes against women, etc and also towards achieving sustainable development goals.

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