



Mains Practice Question

Q. Gandhiji's vision and philosophy encompasses human rights and sustainable development. Discuss. (150 words)

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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 centred approach** towards sustainability and emphasized on '**betterment of human life**' and ensuring **fulfilment 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 collective efforts of all. Trusteeship will result into 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 labour 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.