



Mains Practice Question

Q. Production by the masses rather than mass production was Mahatma Gandhi's idea to transform the rural economy. Examine. (150 words)

27 Feb, 2019 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- In introduction give Gandhian perspective on centralization and mainstream economics.
- Examine the merits and demerits of the theory of Production by the masses rather than mass production.
- Give a short description of today's agrarian crisis in conclusion.

Introduction

- According to Gandhi the cause of all contradictions is centralism. It may be described as a situation in which a few controls the means and the power to make decisions which affect many that are left out.
- Gandhian economics rejects the precepts and assumptions of mainstream economics. It represents an alternative to mainstream economic theories as a way to promote economic progress without emphasizing material pursuits, or compromising human development.

Body

Merits of Production by the masses-

- **Gandhian principles of self-sufficiency:** The goal of Gandhian development is to build a self-sufficient society. Each community should be self-reliant. Gandhi regarded an area covered by a radius of five miles as the basic unit of self-containment. The production of each basic unit should be linked with the natural consumption requirements of those living in it.
- **Gandhian theory of balanced growth:** It is guided by a purpose of balanced growth which is higher than the purpose of just pure economic gain. It offers the maximum protection against unequal distribution of gains from trade among nations. Given the existence of gross inequality, to achieve greater balance would require strategies to redistribute income.
- **Gandhian doctrine of trusteeship:** Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one; it gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
- **Gandhian sarvodaya plan:** True economics stands for social justice and moral values. He said we must replace apathy with sympathy, exploitation with benevolence, profit with welfare. and materialistic development with human development
- **Principle of decentralization:** It raises efficiency and better implementation of development plans. It raises sensitivity and flexibility, and institutionalizes peoples' participation. It ensures greater equity in resource allocation and income distribution.

Critical appraisal of Gandhian development Theory of rural economy:

- His thinking on economics does not contain any technical knowledge that has analytical value. He was a practical idealist and was immediately interested in solving the problems of poverty and inequality in his country.
- With the acceptance of sarvodaya principles, the rich are unable to free themselves from the lust for profit. And production does not expand due to obsolete methods of production. It leads to perennial stagnation.

Conclusion

- According to Gandhi, the salvation of the Indian economy depends on rural development and rural transformation. The prevailing agrarian situation indicates that this cannot be brought about in the context of India's present obsession with economic growth, and the trend of economic development in the world, in general. A strong rural economy lays foundation for the strong society and nation.

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