



Economic Aspects of Bharatiya Freedom Movement

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Abstract: With the passage of time, on the threshold of 19th century the British India Company has grown many fold, on all sphere, consequently its expansionist policies, economic exploitation, administrative network and overall excesses were leading to social unrest in general. This simmering discontent against the company, burst in 1857 named the 'First War of Independence', which shocked the Empire in India to its very foundation. In this write up a sequential analysis of emergence and growth of the Indian economic ideas has been presented which further went alongside to the political movement of Bharatiya freedom movement. The Bharatiya Economist who bore the torch of economic changes as well as economic freedom against the implementation of "pocket area transformations" (permanent settlement in Bengal, mahalwari settlement in the central Bharat and ryotwari settlement in Southern Bharat) took forward the charge of economic and political leadership. These reforms had devastating impact on the mindset and economic well being of masses. At the mean time, the ideas like of drain of wealth and poverty during British rule had been imprinted in the mind of masses which further provide food for the thought and strengthen freedom struggle. Here is a serious attempt to acknowledge and refresh the contribution of economics and political think tanks on the eve of (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) to mark the 75th years of Independence.

Keywords: Bharatiya, Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, Golden sparrow, endogenous, Arthashastra.

Introduction: As the historical traces proved, that Indian Economy had been amongst the World's top economy since ancient time. Especially, during the Gupat period and Mauriayan period Bharatiya economy had attained new highs and pronounced as "GOLDEN SPARROW". This was exactly the time when Bharatiya Economy was on full-swing, most of countries in the world were fascinated toward the Bharatiya Economy to do trade with. This was the time when different traders and scholar visitors across the world stepped-in, to gauge the glory, growth and size of the economy, namely Marco Polo from Italy (1288-1292 AD), Iba-e-Batuta from Morocco (1333-1342 AD), Tsang Hi from China (1421-1431 AD), Athnasuis Niketin from Russia (1470-1474 AD), Eduardo Babosa Portuguese (1516-1518 AD) and Ralph Fisch (first English traveler) 1585-1591 AD Vasco-De -Gama Portuguese, Fie Hein a Chine's traveler and many – many others and latterly became the ambassador and guide to traders, intruders and aggressors. Here is the advent of East India Company, who arrived to Bharat as a British trade company and latter acquired the economic as well as political power who ruled the country for about 200 years.

BHARATIYA ECONOMIC THOUGHTS AND THINKERS

It is the broad day truth that we (Bharatiya) had fundamental distinct political and economic thinking and thinkers since the time immortal. Our scriptures namely The Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmans and Epics are jam packed with fabulous economic and political ideas. Kautilya was the first known economic thinker of ancient Bharat who laid the foundation of Arthashastra. He gave us full pure indigenous concepts of consumption, production, distribution and state. Unfortunately, in the medieval era we did not have any Indian thinkers on the record because this era was ruled by invaders specifically Mughals (up to 1800).

By the turn of century, the Indian economic and political oppression and exploitation caused for the emergence of the modern economic thoughts. The leading thinkers were Dadabhai Naoroji, Menhaden Govind Ranade, R. C. Dutt and Gopal Krishan Gokhale and his disciple Mohan Dass Karam Chand Gandhi (20th century economic & political thinker) who laid the foundation of pure and refined Bharatiya economic thinking based on empirical analysis of ours culturally and economically rich social heritage. Moreover all the economic thinking was based on the Bharatiya philosophy of life. As per the philosophy, there are four aspects of an individual's life i.e. Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksha (money, desire, righteousness and liberation respectively).

The present script is a serious and genuine effort to put the fundamental and bonofied Bharatiya economic and political thoughts and thinkers in the lime light for their unmatched and rich thinking on this very occasion of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" which are

still of utmost relevance but least in mind and practices in the modern days economic and social affairs. Thus the present piece of work has been carried out with the following objectives;

1. To mark the distinct features of Bharatiya economic thinkers.
2. To enlist the legendary thinkers and thoughts.
3. To highlight the cultural and economic blend of Bharatiya philosophy

It is purely a secondary study, based on deep and analytical reviews of various published books, journals and pieces of good research work. Those are the sources which provided an enrich enough and deep insight into the subject matter to shape the present work.

It is the very true fact that that when Bharatiya people were striving hard for the economic and political freedom from cruel clutches of the British rule, the global economic and political scenario had also been experiencing the similar situation of economic and social turmoil.

Global Scenario: Even England and some parts of Europe were also facing the music of economic changes which started about early 16th century up to 18th century; it was the decline of feudalism and advent of commercial capitalism and on other hand political transition led to the emergence of NATIONALISM. Here is the advent of Nationalism in India also.

Kautilya's Arthashastra is undoubtedly most ancient endogenous politico-socio-cultural heritage resource of statecraft and strategic discourses not only in Bharat but also in west. Kautilya propounded the Saptanga theory for the state, as physical organism (seven elements) having mutual inclusiveness. The Swamin would be (king) at apex having sole responsibility and might to ensure good and fair ruling in the state.

Kautilya adopted a multi-faceted ethical approach on National Security rather than Adam smith's idea of justice. Hence, Nationalism was almost not less than an alien concept in that era. The king should have maintained national interest over all other interest. Arthashastra recognizes food security as a key component for national security. It has been undisputed fact among the scholars that Arthashastra is Agriculture centered amid state controlled production and distribution along with freedom for individual for manufacturing and selling (distribution).

The Ashoka Buddhist emperor, who united India, ruled (from 270BC to 233BC) for 37 years almost every part of the subcontinent except southern most few areas. It was the largest ever empire of the known ruler history. For him state should be power

full on political boundaries as well as economic frontier with a humanitarian approach of co existence of human races.

Since, Indian independence movement had been a series of equally likely events, had have a sole goal of ending British rule. This movement was ignited from Bengal, seeking right to appear for Indian Civil services examination in British India along with more economic rights for natives. This marked the appearance of Dadabhai Naroji, the father of Indian Nationalism, purely bank on economic philosophy, emphasized national income of India. He calculated per capita income on the basis of official information for 1867-70 at Rs. 20 only while the bare basic life needs of an ordinary laborer for food and cloths stood at Rs. 34.Hence, he pointed that such meager amount was insufficient to mitigate minimal life support resources .He recognized the co-existence of two economic scenes in India, prosperous India of British and other foreigners while poor and miserable India of natives. Since Indian economy was a poor agrarian economy attributed to low per capita income. He separately estimated agriculture and non –agriculture income to produce an accurate estimate of national income. The essence of his whole writing was to put forth the accesses of colonialism that led to impoverishment of Indian masses called it serious evil needed urgent remedies.

M.K. Gandhi the pioneer thinker and scholar gave a blend of political-socio-economic philosophical source to eradicate all prevalent ills in colonial era. The prevailing scenario of poverty and misery of people of the country provide enough food the Gandhian thoughts. His thinking started from countryside with full use of abundance labour force at their native places, propogated the idea that production at a large number of places on small scale. He gave the idea of village industry or cottage industry as a tool for social justice, equal economic distribution, zero exploitation of human being by fellow human. To harnessing of all the energies which were drained, could be channelized through integration of agriculture with village and cottage industries.

His each thought speaks a lot about statehood, democracy, economic unification and self-sustainability with least dependence and charity. Last but not least, he gave the mantra for food self-sufficiency through endogenous agriculture so millions of lives would be saved from starvation and to support family earnings for a dignified life.

Jawaharlal Nehru established that for every state, it is a must to have a National ideology, for its very existence and to make it purposeful, unified and to move ahead ruthlessly and tirelessly. Nehru opinioned that small and cottage industries were

initially necessary to start ice melting of persisting giant problems of poverty and unemployment until we realized full industrialization. He had been firm with the idea that large scale industrialization could only ensure permanent eradication of poverty and deliver legitimate aspiration of its people. He asserted, agriculture based growth was primitive one and culturally inferior one that may lead to economic vulnerability and foreign dependence cum dominance on one or another sphere. Consequently, state would fail to attain economic modernism.

On Nationalism Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar quotes that “We all are Indian firstly and lastly”. The classical architect of Indian Constitution was an eminent scholar and political cum economic leader of the 19th century who gave dynamic look to Indian philosophy at the global level. He belonged to a down trodden, under privileged social strata of Indian society that had have a first-hand experience of British colonialism and excessive of Indian society which a particular section had been experiencing for ages. His thought, depicted a deep imprint of social and economic inequality of that very time. Hence, advocated for a central government at national level over localized one who could not be expected to be inclined towards the localized issues. He advocated the concerns of vulnerable deprived and underprivileged last man. He must be given his political (participatory democratic role) and economic dues as a stimulator to stand as a frontline to fight against the cast and exclusion biasness meted to him in the society.

For him social justice is a must to ensure economic and political progress that consequent upon humanistic dignified development of human beings, away from any form of social and power discrimination.

Economic progress meant for a movement away from villages, traditional doings with tradition made of operations which would definitely ensure good earning, good learning and good contribution for industrial growth.

He opined urbanization and industrialization as panacea for all social evils. Lastly, preached for religious move away from Hinduism toward Buddhism as if it is nearing to humanistic approach over Hinduism.

Hence, in the light of predetermined objectives it can be concluded that Bharatiya economic thinkers had have a crystal clear impacts of foreign or western /colonial contemporary concerns on their minds because they were not alien to the planet. A very rich amount of our ancient economic thinking has been reflected in their writings, reason being rich endogenous socio-cultural globalized sources of pure Bharatiya thinkers like kautilya and Ashoka who proved the iron of their concepts of Nationalism, statehood and governance since time immortal. Therefore, agriculture

and village economy have been the major source of Food Security as well as economic activities for the earlier thinkers. Enlisting of the contemporary thinkers is not easy although some eminent ones are Kautilya, Ashoka, Mohan Dass Karmchand Gahdhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar. These are the eminent thinkers who have a deep insight into endogenous issues and proved their political and economic leadership with concrete out or solution.

India has been a rich cultural heritage which emphasized on the humanistic Ways of progress for social-economic and cultural wellness of its natives. The legendary thinkers like Kautilya laid the foundation of good governance provided that Swamin's (king) would have to serve people on priority bases from external aggression and internal evils thus held responsible to strengthen the Nation. Agricultural progress was given top priority that would ensure food security as well as national security. The successive thinkers hold on national unity and humanistic approach for the welfare of vulnerable and deprived classes for more equitable share in socio and economic powers. Although J.L. Nehru and Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar propounded the industrialization and modernization concepts, took a turn from agriculture based cottage small industry model. These were the economic and political leaders of India who deviated from the line and paves the ways toward industrial led grow of India and its natives.

In concluding remarks, it is high time to acknowledge the economic and political heroes for their immortal and precious contribution which paves the ways for Indian independence in order to mark 75th years of Aazadi. It is inevitable to mention here that economic aspects of Bharatiya freedom movement has also been remained equally part and parcel to ensuing the goal to set Bharat free from the cruel clutches of colonialism. No matter, the bone of contention for the legendary thinkers have remained same viz. Nationalistic ideology, eradication of impoverished poverty, national security through food security and industrialization as per the available resources and cultural blend of humanistic progressive strategies. Therefore, there is a dire need of some healthy and gradual research work to put forth the legendary work on the paper in national interest and mass welfare of Independent India.

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