

Gandhian Ideals' Relevance to Agriculture

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Introduction

The oldest, most important and most significant occupation in the world is agriculture. The systematic cultivation of plants and crops by man dates back thousands of years, when he first provided nourishment for his basic needs. He should use a variety of agricultural techniques, store grains and other produce, and improve the ways people consume the produce in order to meet everyone's demands. He had to battle nature, which represents the biggest threat to agricultural operations on a daily basis and comprises sunlight, heat, rain, soil, and other climatic factors. The hazards for growers to achieve the desired effective yields grow as cultivating techniques change. The risks of today are different from those that farmers faced in the past. The majority of dangers have been intentionally manufactured, and some have political undertones. In addition to informing farmers about proper farming techniques, the government and its administration have been restricting their ability to put those techniques into practise. When it comes to obtaining loans, grants, resources, and last but not least when it comes to selling the goods, the farming industry has been heavily politicized.

Farmer suicides, dried-up crops, and deserted areas devoid of water are just a few of the horrifying scenarios that have become all too common in the agricultural industry. Another unfortunate issue facing the nation is deaths from malnutrition and inadequate nutrition.

Agriculture carried out under typical circumstances

“To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves.” Gandhi made a comment that might teach us a lot about the fundamental philosophy of farming. Agriculture involves a lot of physical labour. A farmer must typically get up at four in the morning to begin his or her day's work on the farm. Before the Sun heated up even more, he had to conclude his duties considerably earlier than midday. The agricultural infrastructure is



made up of manual labour reinforced by help from domestic animals like horses and bulls as well as specific instruments like axes, crowbars, and ploughs. Later, farming gradually incorporated the use of machinery. The manual pumping of water from wells was replaced by electric motors. Farmers used tractors and other tools to prepare the soil and harvest the crops. Due to the mechanization, farming as a whole required less time and effort. Farmers will inevitably grow slower and lazier as a result of this transformation. They had more free time to concentrate on other facets of their lives.

The primary concern of farmers is the local climate. The beginning and finish of the seasonal rains have a big impact on when you can sow and harvest. Two-thirds of the produce must be delivered directly to retail stores or wholesale markets. Insuring and facilitating this process is the responsibility of the government. The hundreds of villages in India depended on this standard level of agriculture. The minimal output from conventional farming techniques meets the farmers' minimal demands. Seasonal rains that don't fall ruin the whole enterprise. "...Only a few minority are aware that farming in India's small, erratic holdings is not profitable. The inhabitants have a dull existence. Their existence is a slow starving process. In his 1953 piece *Village Industries*, Gandhiji's biographer D.G. Tendulkar stated, "They are burdened with debts. In general, farming has never been a prosperous or contented career.

Transitional agricultural practises

The Bengal Famine, also known as the first documented food crisis in history, happened in British India in 1943, leaving 4 million people starving to death. Poor rainfall and the conditions brought on by India's freedom movement were two major factors that forced Bengali farmers out of business. Following the country's 1947 declaration of independence, the "Green Revolution" was implemented to significantly improve agriculture production through the use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and high-yield crop types. In addition to promoting awareness about the need to protect the environment from industrialization, it sought to produce enough food for a growing population.

- ✓ Universities and colleges of agriculture were founded in the 1950s to conduct teaching and research on diverse farming techniques. Farmers were routinely updated on agronomic practises and troublesome farming areas. Machinery and a



partially scientific approach gave the farming industry additional vitality. To achieve self-sufficiency, production rose.

- ✓ Farming experienced two major changes during this period of transition: first, the adoption and application of contemporary production techniques; and, second, the challenges posed by environmental harm and economic instability. The farmer felt as though his hold on farming was slowly slipping away as a result of these two extreme ends, leaving him in a confused situation. The old type of agriculture involved a farmer bearing full responsibility for cultivation at full risk from Mother Nature. And now that the business was totally based on scientific procedures, environmental factors, and economic viability, farmers were being fed with far too many instructions and practises.

Modern agricultural practises

In the post-globalization world, agriculture is become an international industry. Farmers are now wealthier and happier than they were before the introduction of synthetic seed processing, genetically modified features in crops, organic farming, and other novel methods of plantation, etc. The rules and procedures of farming have been taught by professionals. Through regular encounters with professionals and the media, farmers also become more aware of the importance of learning and using fresh approaches. Due to an overall improved status of the economy in other sectors, the financial situation of today's farmers has significantly improved over that of their forebears. The agro-markets are now more lucrative thanks to consumer demand, distribution methods, and buying power. Based on the well-known and widely accepted axiom that "Farming is the base for all other industries," one may examine the effects and sufferings of today's farmers under the headings of corporatization, greedy farmers, failed government initiatives, and inequity among farmers.

1. **The inefficiency of government programmes:** Government grants, subsidies, supplies of saplings and seedlings, and advice on fertilisers for farmers have all increased over the years. Despite sufficient rainfall in cultivable areas, production is lower as a result of incorrect and poor crop choices. Farmers are upset when their crops don't produce as expected due to poor management of methods and procedures as recommended by the government. Banks and cooperatives provide money to



farmers so they can purchase land, but the failures drive them to despair. The end outcome is overall poverty.

2. **Greediness:** To put it frankly, farmers are occasionally getting greedier. Farmers choose specific crops with larger yields in an effort to generate higher returns, but they ultimately lose money since the soil and environmental conditions aren't right. To keep up with changing lifestyles and growing usage of modern amenities, farmers also have a tendency to make additional demands of the government. It is important to not misinterpret the assistance and significance shown to them, as this could have negative consequences for both the agricultural industry and the country's economy.
3. **Corporatization:** Corporate as a whole is purchasing a large number of dispersed farmed areas with the intention of industrialising them. Even in the farming industry, corporations have established themselves by leasing on properties held by several farmers and growing crops that the farmers are less familiar with. Sadly, farmers have turned into coolies who sell their own lands for this use. Increased competition and a race between larger and smaller farmers are benefits of industrialization and corporatization of lands. Poorer farmers are put under strain as a result, which diverts him from doing agriculture the conventional method.

Conclusion:

The decentralisation principle advocated by Gandhi has not been implemented in the agricultural industry. The poorer farmers have been forced out of the system as the entire system has been corporatized and consolidated. The pattern indicates that farming is no longer a village economy in modern times. With the reintroduction of more modern practises like organic farming, natural farming, and natural manures, both the government and the farmers became perplexed. The majority of these are more modern names for our age-old, traditional processes. Historically, many people have praised agriculture as "God's vocation." Modern farming is not all that miraculous. It creates pressure, avarice, competitiveness in the marketplace, and even slavery.

Governments are not doing enough to address both naturally occurring problems and those caused purposefully. Farmers are now more lazy than ever as a result of financial compensations for failures. Due to the growth of cities, industrialization, and resource



depletion, more farmers are leaving this line of work, which results in the suppression of their right to be referred to as "the sons of soil."

