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## **Gandhi's Notion of Economic and Political Decentralization**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Gandhi advocated both economic and political decentralization. He was a votary of individual freedom. Centralization is incompatible with individual freedom. If the creation of a non- violent society is to be brought out, centralization should go, for centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Centralization makes life highly complex and is restrictive of individual initiative and diminishes opportunities for self- government. It also leads to depersonalization and makes men insensitive to moral considerations.

**Keywords:** individual freedom, economic and political decentralization.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Political Decentralization**

Political Decentralization means that the village communities should be given the largest measure of autonomy in managing their own affairs. The village Panchayat should be entrusted with the task of the development of the village in all aspects of life. The control of the national or the federal government should be reduced to the minimum. Every individual should have a sense of participation in the governance of the affairs of the society. In a centralized political system where political power is placed in the hands of a few men the capacities of the individual for self- government get atrophied thus destroying something priceless which could be of great use to the society. Gandhiji was in full agreement with C.E.M.Joad that if man's faith in social action is to be revived, the state must be cut up and its functions distributed. The machinery of government must be reduced in scale; it must be made manageable by being made local so that in seeing the concrete results of their political labors before them, men can be brought to realize that where self- government is a fact, society is malleable to their wills because society is themselves".

### **Economic Decentralization**

Economic Decentralization means the replacement of centralized large scale industries by cottage industries. This is a great necessity in a non-violent society, for a great deal of violence that is witnessed in the present day world is due to the existence of a highly centralized industrialized system. The modern centralized industrialization leads not only to division of society into haves and have not's, but also makes men insensitive to the sorrows and sufferings of others. No real happiness can ever be thought of in a society where the accumulation of wealth alone is the be and all end- all of life. Most of the evils of modern civilization like colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and wide spread international tension are due to the mad rush for accumulation of more and more wealth. The promotion of moral and spiritual values of life does not find a congenial soil in a climate polluted by the emission of greed and avarice from the chimneys of industrialism. Moral and spiritual development of man and the pursuit of higher values of life are possible only in a system of cottage industries in which the workers own the instruments of production and the manufactured goods.

The substitution of cottage industries for large scale industries is the best method of ending exploitation of man by man and introducing the principles of truth and non-violence in the economic sphere. Gandhi was convinced that the mental, moral and spiritual growth of mankind was possible only in a decentralized system. If the large scale industrialism of the present type goes unabated the humanity is destined to face annihilation as a consequence of warfare.

### **CONCLUSION**

Gandhi's political philosophy was a fusion of individualism, idealism and socialism. The key words of his economic and political programme were self-sufficiency, non-competition, equitable distribution and decentralized production.

Gandhiji's concept of decentralization is radically different from decentralization and delegation of power as is being talked about nowadays. To him, Decentralization is possible only by beginning from the bottom upwards. Under the modern concept, power remains with the centralized authority. Decentralization as conceived by Gandhiji has the basic philosophy of giving strength to the small groups to be able to resist exploitation. Gandhiji was convinced that "the small communities can certainly act as forces for the stabilization of personality by creating a nucleus of organic socio-psychological density.

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