



Sarvodaya in Action after Mahatma by Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jayprakash Narayan in Post-Independence India: An analysis

Paritosh Barman

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science

Cooch Behar PanchananBarma University

Cooch Behar(W.B), India.

Abstract

Upliftment of all is the priority of any democratic state like India. Sarvodaya Movement means a way to make an ideal society with equality, justice and freedom for all. The concept of Sarvodaya was first advocated by Gandhiji in 1908 as the title of his Gujrati translation of John Ruskin's "Unto this Last". Today, Sarvodaya has become a synonym for Gandhian thought. The literary meaning of Sarvodaya is the welfare of all. Sarvodaya is an ideal as well as a movement to uplift all. It is considered as an Indian solution to World problems, Gandhian panacea for socio-economic evils. As the ardent follower of Gandhi, JP and VinobaBhave started to practice Sarvodaya in action for making a Sarvodaya Society in India. To make the Indian Nation based on equality, justice and freedom for all, Vinoba launched the Bhoodan Movement to help landless poor and JP left the Socialist Party to support Vinoba's movement in 1954. It is said that take the name of Vinoba and all the rest is said about Sarvodaya. Samya-yoga is another name for Sarvodaya has come to Vinoba profoundly. He breathes and lives in the spirit of Samya-yoga to bring a progressive change in society. In the Post-Independence India, both Vinoba and JP devoted themselves to Sarvodaya to reconstruct India for the progress of all, especially for the downtrodden people. This study will focus on the contributions of Vinoba and JP for the Sarvodaya Movement after M.K Gandhi to establish People's Socialism against power politics. JP's Total Revolution was an active step to bring a positive social change in India.

Keywords: Sarvodaya, Equality, Justice, Right, Bhoodan, social change, total revolution.

Introduction:

'Welfare of all' is the ultimate goal of any developing nation in the world eliminating any socio-economic evils in the society for social change. The philosophy of Sarvodaya was Gandhian panacea for Indian problems. In the 20th Century, the political philosophy of Sarvodaya was an important addition to political thought by M.K Gandhi. We never say that Gandhi was the first maker of the Sarvodaya ideology on this planet. Before him, Sarvodaya was followed by many countries or regions in the world. But in Modern history, we must remember the pragmatic role of Mahatmaji for Sarvodaya or good for all. Sarvodaya was found in the Vedic era and also in Western societies.⁽¹⁾ It

was found also in the Greek political philosophy indirectly with another name. But the idea of Sarvodaya is practically implemented by M. K Gandhi to establish socio-economic justice and good for all in India. The basis of the Sarvodaya was equality, non-violence, peace and truth. The main aim of Sarvodaya was to create equal opportunity to progress of all. Gandhiji launched many socio-economic activities to uplift the downtrodden propounding the concept of Sarvodaya. So, he is called the father of Sarvodaya with the non-violent revolution in India. But after Gandhi, some saints, leaders and patriots and social activists followed the Gandhian method of social revolution through truth and Ahimsa because they realized that untruth gains cannot sustain more. JP and Vinoba continued Gandhian ideas to make an ideal society in India with Sarvodaya's actions. Without the elimination of inequalities in society, good of all is not possible. So as the ardent follower of Gandhiji both JP and Vinoba made an effort to establish equality in every sphere of social life. They realized that Sarvodaya was a pragmatic way to effect socialist principles in Indian society, ignoring the western meaning of Socialism. ⁽²⁾ Vinoba accepted truth as his goal and non-violence as a means to service of all.

Objectives of the study:

- a) To understand the Gandhian concept of Sarvodaya.
- b) To know the role of VinobaBhave for the Sarvodaya movement after Mahatma Gandhi.
- c) To understand the contribution of JP for the Sarvodaya Movement and Total revolution.

The methodology of the study:

This research study is observed on secondary data mostly on the books and articles related to VinobaBhave and Jayprakash Narayan. Vinoba and JP's writings are a very important source of this study. An attempt has been done to evaluate their thought about the reformation of the Indian political system. Their role for the Sarvodaya movement after Gandhiji has been focused in this study. After understanding their thoughts and works, some suggestions can be found out to modify the political system for the rise of all through non-violence and cooperation.

Gandhian philosophy of Sarvodaya:

Gandhiji meant Sarvodaya philosophy as synonyms of the good of all, welfare to all and progress of all. The concept of Sarvodaya was first implemented in action in modern India by M.K Gandhi. The word 'Sarvodaya' is comprised of **Sarva** meaning all and **Udoya** meaning rising that is the rise of all, the welfare of all. ⁽³⁾ The word 'Sarvodaya' was first used by Gandhi in 1908 as the title of Gujrati translation of John Ruskin's "Unto this Last". In Indian political thought, Sarvodaya is a synonym for Gandhian thought. Gandhiji was deeply impressed by Ruskin's book and made him change his life. Gandhian view about the teaching of Unto this Last were-

- a) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.**
- b) That a lawyer works has the same value as the barber's works.**
- c) That life of labor is the life of worth living.** ⁽⁴⁾

Sarvodaya philosophy means a balanced all-round development of the whole man and similar development of all men. Gandhi said, "It stands for human considerations outweighing all else, whether in the economic, social or political sphere." ⁽⁵⁾ To face the problems of the cast, communal evils, economic inequalities, and social discriminations, Gandhiji tried to apply the concept of Sarvodaya. He propounded another concept of partyless democracy and a classless society to prevent socio-economic evils. Sarvodaya focuses on the development of villages. ⁽⁶⁾ Gandhi viewed

that Sarvodaya is not a mere utopia but it is a guiding philosophy to reconstruct society and individuals. Sarvodaya attempts to meet the challenges of socio-economic discrimination.⁽⁷⁾

Sarvodaya in action by Acharya VinobaBhave:

Acharya VinobaBhave conveyed his attitude on the concept of Sarvodaya, **“We desire the welfare of all, and also our own. But the question is as to which of them we give priority. If we give it to the good of others, our attitude is that of Sarvodaya. If it is otherwise, then it is not.”**As the ardent followers of Gandhiji, Vinoba executed the philosophy of Sarvodaya through non-violent means after Gandhiji. VinobaBhave advocated that the term Sarvodaya indicates a two-fold meaning. Firstly, Sarvodaya means makings happiness for all by removing social dogmas and discriminations and secondly, establishing a new society with equality, divinity and kindness.⁽⁸⁾ According to VinobaBhave, ‘The concept of Sarvodaya as preached by the Geeta is to merge oneself in the good of all’.⁽⁹⁾ It attemptsto boostthe human mind with ethical ideas. The concept of Sarvodaya and Vinoba are synonyms. VinobaBhave considers that Sarvodaya as the “Best dharma”(righteous living) and sarvodoymidamTirtham (Universal blessing). The core meaning of all religions of the world, propose the well-being, prosperity and happiness of all human beings. In this way, Sarvodaya connects all the religions of the world.⁽¹⁰⁾

According to VinobaBhave, Sarvodaya is to establish based on the truth and non-violence, a classless and castles society. In this society, everyone will get equal opportunities for their highestdevelopment. Indeed, Sarvodaya is a way to implement socialism in society. It was a great gift of Gandhian philosophy. Vinoba tried to eliminate the contemporary ruling system based on exploitation and discrimination. The concept of Sarvodayawas a strong weapon to solve the problems of Indian society. Vinoba stated that the means for Sarvodaya is the strength of masses, contrary to the basses required for violence and punishment.Sarvodaya can establish people's rights with the organization's mass strength from unjust rules.⁽¹¹⁾ For the establishment of Sarvodaya society,Vinoba launched a lot of movement in a non-violent way. After Gandhi’s assassination on 30th January 1948 all eyes were fixed upon on Vinoba to fulfill dreams of Mahatma Gandhi. He proposed the formation of SarvodayaSamaj to work for Gandhian thought.

The Bhoodan Movement:

Vinoba started the Bhoodan movement as the mean of Sarvodaya philosophy for good of all in 1951. He devoted his life to convince the landlords that all should accept that all land belongs to Gopal (God). With this mind, people should donate some part of their land to the landless. Vinoba advocated that“ In ancient India,elders conducted sacrifices for the establishment of peace”. To remove the preventing tension in the village, I am unending this Bhoodan sacrifice. For the welfare of the general masses, every individual should take part in this.⁽¹²⁾ On 18th April 1951, Vinoba received 100 acres of donation of land at the village of Pochampalli in Telengana from Ramchandra Reddy, a local landlord. He realized the possibility of a great revolution with love and non-violence. He started every action to change the heart of the people to do something for landless and poor people. Vinoba was able to collect 12,200 acres of land as a gift in just 51 days from the starting day. Bhoodan was the pragmatic way to meet the problems of acute poverty and unemployment. During this movement, Vinoba focused that hungry people will not tolerate their suffering anymore; land and wealth must be redistributed.⁽¹³⁾ The cruelties of capitalism can be eliminated by receiving land as a donation from landlords by the change of heart.

Vinoba walked thousand by thousand miles for looting land by love for the rise of all. Vinoba realized the power of the Padayatra (March on foot). He walked for 13 years throughout India to bring a socio-economic change for landless

and poor people. Vinoba left Panuar on 12th September 1951 and returned on 10th April 1964. He started Toofan Yatra, using a vehicle in Bihar for almost four years. He addressed thousands of meetings and mobilized the people to ignore the barriers of caste, color, class and religion. From the notorious Chambal Valley, a gang of dacoit surrendered themselves to Vinoba in May 1960. For saint Vinoba, it was a victory of non-violence in Post-Independence India.

Gramdan Movement:

Another step for Sarvodaya in action by Vinoba was the Gramdan movement. This movement means all the landowners of a village should donate their lands to the village community and then the entire village should produce collectively and share the produce among themselves.⁽¹⁴⁾ The whole community will achieve ownership for Gramdan.

Mangroth village in Orisha became a Gramdan village on 30 January 1953. Vinoba walked village to village appealing for land. But many landowners did not donate their all lands but a part of the land as Gramdan.

Some Sarvodaya sacrifices like Sampottidan, Shramdan and Jeevandan were also continued by Vinoba dedicatedly to bring a change of concise for humanity. Sampottidan was to provide the other means of agricultural productivity like seeds, fertilizers, cattle and so on. Those who do not have land should contribute, but through their hands and legs to help of leveling of the fields and converting wasteland for farming as Shramdansacrifice⁽¹⁵⁾.

Saint leader Vinobasaid,

“Whatever land, wealth, knowledge and strength we have is from the community. These are not private properties, gifts of God, and therefore should be used for the welfare of the masses. Like the cooperation which we employ in working with a family, we should cooperatively worship nature in the same manner. Sarvodaya could be done with the establishment of humanity and the good of all”.

Sarvodaya Programmes:

Satyagrahee Vinoba strongly supported of World Government. Sarvodaya philosophy can apply only in a cooperative society. According to Yogi Vinoba, **“The welfare form of Sarvodaya will be evident only the people forget their differences and live together like a family.** They share their joy and sorrow. Vinoba contributed a multi-dimensional way to act for Sarvodaya in society. Some of the Sarvodaya programs can be mentioned here: a) eradicating of untouchability b) building communal unity c) development of agriculture d) women education e) development of Khadi and cottage industries f) establishment of trade unions g) care and protection of cows.⁽¹⁶⁾

The welfare of Women:

Social activist Vinoba was the earliest thinker in India, who emphasized on Stree Shakti (women's power). This was in 1954, he started Bramhabidyamandir at Panver. This Ashram was an open platform for women empowerment and education. Traditionally, the seeking of Bramhma had been an activity of men only. Women were kept away from Sadhana. Vinoba set up an ashram for women, who follow Bramhchyarya (celibacy) and try to seek the Ultimate Truth. His women disciples from Bramhabidyamandir have set up 'Maitri Ashram' in Gauhati, Assam. Two of his women disciples continued Padayatra for 13 years in all parts of India to spread Sarvodaya and Bramabidya. He wanted women to realize their power and called this idea “Stree Shakti Jagaran (awakening of women's power) and wanted some women to be second Shankaracharya. He was against the concept of women's Liberation, but women's power to realize and use for self-sufficiency. Vinoba's advocacy for women's progress was highly appreciable. To him, women with character, intelligence and creativity can resist the menfolk from committing anti-social activities.

Sarvodaya in Action by Jayprakash Narayan:

Jayprakash Narayan was a Jeevandani in the Sarvodaya Movement from the year of the sixth Sarvodaya Conference held at Bodh Gaya in 1954. JP wrote to Vinoba in a short letter, "In response to your call for Jeevandan, I offer my humble life for the attainment of a non-violent revolution based on Bhoodan Yajna and sustained by village industries.⁽¹⁷⁾ For JP Sarvodaya was a non-violent means in the Gandhian way to reconstruct the society on socio-economic justice. He had a deep faith in traditional socialist methods to bring a social revolution. JP was an active participant in the Bhoodan Movement by Vinoba. He realized that the Sarvodaya way was more effective and original as compared to the socialist methods and resigned from The Praja-Socialist Party. He kept away himself from party politics to make a social change towards development.

In a formal letter, he revealed his mind,

"Some years back it became clear to me that socialism, as we understand it today, cannot take making to the sublime goal of freedom, brotherhood and peace, socialism no doubt, gives the promise to bring mankind closer to those goals than any other competing-social philosophy. But I am persuaded that unless socialism is transformed into Sarvodaya, those goals remain its reach".⁽¹⁸⁾

JP found in Sarvodaya a true way to socialism. He stated that there was to be self-government, self-management, cooperation, equality, freedom and brotherhood in his concept of the socialist society. A socialist society was possible only in a small community where the people live together as equals and help one another. There should be not only decentralization of authority, but there should also be economic decentralization. Sarvodaya rejects power politics and wants to eliminate representative democracy and in favor of partyless democracy. Satyagraha and non-violence can establish in society through Sarvodaya awareness. JP was fully committed to Sarvodaya to reconstruct the nation cutting the bars of socio-economic inequalities in the society.

As a Sarvodaya worker, JP gave importance to a rural civilization than other and considered city life unhealthy as it lacked community feelings, no contact with nature. To him, cities are "Human Jungle", dense but devoid of feelings.⁽¹⁹⁾ He devoted himself to improve the village community into the Sarvodaya community on truth, non-violence, tolerance and equality. The welfare of all can be fulfilled with Sarvodaya's ideology through non-violent means.

Jayprakash realized that Bhoodan Yajna had a spiritual and ethical basis by changing the heart of Landowners. Vinoba tried to convince the landlords that all land belonged to God. Everyone has a share of God-gifted land. JP opined that one could find in Bhoodan Yajna, a bold apply of Gandhi's concept of trusteeship.⁽²⁰⁾ Bhoodan is an active way to the progress of all among the village communities. JP said in his book, Towards a New Society,

"The present panchayats are not democratic. They are not working on a democratic basis. You might give those votes and you might give them some powers and you may hold elections, but in the village itself neither in the economic nor in the society nor in the political sphere is democracy at work".

A Sarvodaya conference was held at Bodh Gaya. On 19 April, he said that his respect for Vinoba's movement was growing day by day and dedication of one year or five years were not enough. With these words, he announced his entire life for the Bhoodan movement as Jeevandan and called upon another worker to do the same. 656 out of 700 workers dedicated their life to Jeevandan cause inspired by JP's Jeevandan. Before the Jeevandan of JP, Dr. Lohia wrote to JP on 30 March, "The time to shake the country and the party was approaching and nobody else could shake it as you could. Only you can be the leader of the country and further socialism".⁽²¹⁾ To make Sarvodaya Samaj, he founded Gram Nirman Mandal, Sarvodaya Ashram at Sokhodeora village of Kowakol. JP wanted that he would stay

in the village and to do constructive work for making of the new society.⁽²²⁾ He kept himself from party politics of PSP to dedicate to Sarvodaya's actions.

Jayprakash was a strong critique of present democracy and party politics in India. He criticized the winning system of the elections violating democratic principles. Political parties dominating over the common people misusing political power. He propounded the concept of partyless democracy to establish people's socialism. From 1960 JP felt that the Congress Government was unable to meet people's expectations. Before the 1967 General Election, he advised that it would be in the interest of democracy if the Congress lost in some of the states. He profoundly realized that the ruling party needed shock treatment.⁽²³⁾ JP always fought for people's government (LokaSwaraj) and made a difference between changes of government from the change of the system.

JP's Sarvodaya moved towards Total Revolution:

JP's exceptional role in Indian politics was to turn student movement into a continuous Total Revolution to meet the challenges against the development of the country. JP was deeply concerned with the existing troubles of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and inefficiency of the bureaucracy. JP gave an interview that he would like to drastically change the system. As a result, he practiced the innovative ideas of the Total Revolution to reconstruct the nation after Independence. JP moved from Sarvodaya to Total Revolution for social reconstruction in society. There was a common word about the Emergency period by Mrs. Gandhi that "India's first freedom achieved on the mid-night of 14/15th, 1947, ended on the mid-night of 25/26th, 1975." An authoritarian ruler and her government took some arbitrary steps against the voice of the people who were victims of corruption, unemployment, endemic inflation and injustice or oppression.

The results of the JP movement created a huge turmoil in Indian politics and challenges for the ruling government to continue their regime. At midnight on 25 June 1975, President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on the advice of Prime Minister signed a proclamation that would come into the effect on the next morning. The President declared a state of Internal Emergency that the security of India was threatened by internal disturbances.⁽²³⁾ As a result of the declaration, JP and hundreds of prominent leaders of the Opposition were arrested to stop the wave of Total Revolution on 26th June 1975. JP pressed the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi by calling of total revolution against authoritarian rule. The normal political procedures were suspended; the basic federal provisions of the Constitution and guaranteed under Article 19 were suspended. This Emergency created a dark period in the Indian political process. Mrs. Gandhi had been complaining that Opposition and its disrupting politics had been opposing her activities to move the country forward economically.⁽²⁴⁾ She made a lot of complaints to denounce the Oppositions and their efforts. But a self-appointed dictator could not run the empire more as the voice on the truth line. JP had won with India regaining its freedom in March 1977 by destroying Congress dominion. In Patna, JP declared at a massive rally, "...after 27 years of freedom, people of this country is wracked by hunger, rising prices, corruption.... Oppressed by every kind of injustice..... it's a Total Revolution we want, nothing less...." Indeed, Total Revolution was a strategy of direct action to bring about a radical change in the social system. It was considered to be a continuous movement. According to JP, the Total Revolution would be able to purify the socio-economic, political and ethical life of the country and to eliminate rampant corruption.

The target of JP's total revolution was to evolve an egalitarian society alike Marxists but without their strategy of violent revolution since JP was deeply influenced by Gandhian socialism. He was keen to form a political strategy with a primary emphasis on peaceful transformation based on non-violence.⁽²⁵⁾ JP's total revolution aimed to achieve

basic changes in the social, cultural, political and economic values of the Indian people. He used the term 'total' in the sense of a comprehensive revolution affecting all aspects of social life. ⁽²⁶⁾

Conclusion:

The philosophy of Sarvodaya is an intellectual way to build up an ideal society based on metaphysical Idealism. For Vinoba, the understanding of the Supreme Lord through selfless service to all human beings was a path for Sarvodayasamaj. Mahatma Gandhi addressed Vinoba as a Kritiyayugi, an initiator of a golden age through great deeds. JP found in Sarvodaya to implement socialist ideas through Sarvodaya with non-violent means. He realized that Gandhian socialism is more useful in India than Marxist socialism. He was a man of action rather than a more political thinker and always a truth seeker for a better path for the establishment of equality, brotherhood and the all-round development of all. Loknayak JP wanted to set up people's socialism through Sarvodaya activities for the upliftment of all. JP called for a total revolution to bring a positive change in social, cultural, moral and political dimensions in the country. Both JP and Vinoba contributed to women empowerment with equal status in every sphere of life. After Gandhi, they worked for Sarvodaya in action upto their last breath. JP was a pragmatic Gandhian as he believed in truth, non-violent means in action. Both Vinoba and JP devoted their entire life through selfless service to bring a progressive change in society.

Reference:

- 1) Verma, V. P, The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, Agra: Laxmi Narayan Agarwal, 1980,p.260.
- 2) Ibid.p.269.
- 3) Dasgupta, Nitish, The social and political philosophy of Jayprakash Narayan, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1997,p.76.
- 4) Gandhi,M.K, My experiment with Truth, an Autobiography.p.44.
- 5) Tandon, Viswanath, The social and political philosophy of Sarvodaya after Gandhiji,p.1.
- 6) Ibid.p.13
- 7) Mohanty, J.N, Sarvodaya and Aurobindo a Re-rapprochement, Gandhi Marg, New Delhi Peace Foundation, 1960, Vol-IV,p.211.
- 8) RadhnamShetty,K.M, Sarvodaya and Freedom: A Gandhian appraisal, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House,1991,p.47.
- 9) M.K Gandhi, Harijan, February 1949.
- 10) Rawat, R.K, VinobaBhave contribution of Sarvodaya, Peace Research, Vol.36No, May2004,p.25
- 11) Ibid.p.26.
- 12) Narayan, Sriman,SageVinoba (Varanasi: All India SarvaSeva Sang Publication,1972),p.190.
- 13) Bhave, Vinoba, BhoodanYajna, trans.(Kashi: SarvodayaSahitya Sang,1953)p.10.
- 14) Rawat, R.K, VinobaBhave's concept ofSarvodaya, Peace Research, Vol.36,p.29.
- 15) Jaju, Srikrishna Das, SampattidanaYajna, Kashi: All India SarvaSeva Sang Publication,1955,p.29.
- 16) Majumder, Dharendra, ShasanMuktaSwamajKeAur, trans. (All India SarvaSeva Sang Publication, Varanasi,1955) p.8
- 17) Narayan, Sriman,SageVinoba (Varanasi: All India SarvaSeva Sang Publication,1972),p.11.
- 18) Prasad, Bimal, Gandhi, Nehru and JP: Studies in Leadership and Legacy.pp.231-232.

- 19) Ram, Suresh, Vinoba and His Mission, Akhil Bharat SarvaSeva Sang, Rajghat(UP),1962, Chapter-XIII,p.297.
- 20) Dasgupta, Nitish, The social and political philosophy of Jayprakash Narayan, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1997,p.78.
- 21) Ranjan, Sudhanshu, Jayprakash Narayan (Prophet of Peoples Power) National Book Trust, India,p.142.
- 22) Ibid.p.145.
- 23) Sharad Mishra, Sharad, JP Narayan and his contribution to Social Movement in India, RJHSS, Volume-3,2012.
- 24) 2THEPOINT, News Paper report, October 12, 2017.
- 25) Brahamanand, (ed),(1975), Jayprakash Narayan- Nation Building in India, Varanashi, NavachetanaPrakashan.
- 26) Brahmanand, (ed), Towards Total Revolution, Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1978.

