

Gandhi's "Sarvodaya" and Nyerere's "Ujamaa": An eco-sociopolitical appraisal

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Abstract

The theories of thinkers like Gandhi and Nyerere though not postulated within the present times can still be helpful in some areas in combating ecological and socio-political predicaments. Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya (universal uplift of all) and Nyerere's concept of Ujamaa (familyhood or brotherhood) share common elements of fostering the welfare of all people. The welfare and wellbeing of all achieved through a life of sharing and cooperation has implications for re-ordering society and the conservation of the natural world. With hermeneutic and analytic methods, the paper critically dissects and interprets the concepts of Sarvodaya and Ujamaa. The paper concludes by asserting that aspects of the thoughts of both thinkers are still relevant in ameliorating ecological and socio-political challenges.

Keywords: Gandhi; Nyerere; Sarvodaya; Ujamaa; Ecological; Sociopolitical.

A central challenge that every society faces is what values and principles should govern the organisation of society. And today with the rise of environmental philosophy and environmentalism it is understood that the organization of society should not be separated from ecological issues. This is why environmental governance is vital to realising the goals of every society. Remarkably the United Nations has enunciated the imperative for environmental care and governance in many documents.¹ It has also been taken up by many national constitutions.² Principles and values to help in the

¹United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, "The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development," accessed September 13, 2019,

http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/rio_e.pdf. See also United Nations, "The Sustainable Development Goals," accessed September 13,

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>.

² Government of South Africa, "The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa," Section 24, accessed September 13, 2019, <https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996>. See also Federal Republic of Nigeria, "The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," Section 20, assessed September 13, 2019,

<http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>. See also The Government of India, "The Constitution of India," arts. 48a & 51a, accessed September 13, 2019, https://www.india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf. See also Kyle Burns, "Constitutions & the Environment: Comparative Approaches to Environmental Protection and the Struggle to Translate Rights into Enforcement (2016)," in Virginia Environmental Law Journal, accessed September 13, 2019,

<http://www.velj.org/elrs/constitutions-the-environment-comparative-approaches-to-environmental-protection-and-the-struggle-to-translate-rights-into-enforcement>



organisation of society, and that equally have implications for environmental wellbeing has been proposed by many social thinkers and philosophers.

Two of these thinkers are Mohandas Gandhi and Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere. Among the principles proposed by Gandhi is "Sarvodaya" which is the concern of this paper. For Nyerere he proposed "Ujamaa." These two ideas or principles are analytically evaluated in this paper and their implications for ecology and sociopolitical realities examined. Outside the section on evaluative comparison of both thinkers, the paper restricts itself to an examination of the concepts as presented by both thinkers respectively. It will be difficult to examine all the issues that both thinkers discussed in their lifetimes. The discussion here is restricted to Gandhi's concept of "Sarvodaya" and Nyerere's concept of "Ujamaa."

Life and times of Gandhi and Nyerere

Mohandas Gandhi was born on 2nd day of October in the year 1869 in Porbandar, India. He died on 30th day of January 1948 in New Delhi, India. He was an Indian lawyer, anti-colonial freedom fighter or nationalist and sociopolitical thinker. His father, Karam Chand Gandhi, was prime minister of Porbandar. For his works and fight for Indian independence, he is recognized as the father of the Indian nation. He married young at the age of 13 to Kasturbai who was equally 13 years old. He travelled to England at the age of 17 to study law. He was called to the English Bar in England. He began law practice in India until he joined law practice in 1893 in Natal, South Africa at the invitation of Gokhale. His experience of oppression and discrimination heightened his awareness of the injustices in society. He joined political activities insisting on using non-violence (satyagraha) to change the system in South Africa. In 1915, he returned to India and joined in the struggle against British rule. He worked for the protection of the wellbeing of farmers. In 1920 he started a movement of non-cooperation against British rule. He was arrested and will be imprisoned until 1924. He was president of the National Congress from 1924 to 1948. He actively campaigned for India independence in 1930 through Civil Disobedience Movement. He worked to ensure that Hindu and Muslim live together in unity. His campaign successfully brought India to independence on 15th August 1947. A Hindu fundamentalist assassinated Gandhi in 1948. Influences on Gandhi include: his devout mother, Jainism, Buddhism, the Sermon on the Mount, the message of Isavasya Upanishad, the Bhagavad Gita, his compatriots Naoroji and Raychnadabhai, Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin.³ Two major works of Gandhi include: (1) "An Autobiography: The Story of Me Experiments with Truth," (2) "The Teachings of the Gita."⁴

As for Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, he was born in 1922 in Butiama near Musoma, former Tanganyika to a Zanaki chief. He attended a primary school in Musoma. He studied at the nation's only secondary school at Tabora. He attended Makerere College where he studied teaching. After teaching for two years, he went to Edinburgh University, Scotland on a government scholarship.

³ Vincent Nankpak Fazing, Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Possession and Consecrated Poverty (Jos: Fab Educational Books, 2008), p. 17ff.

⁴ Bilimoria, p. 166.

In 1952, he bagged a Master's degree in history and political economy. He joined the Tanganyika African Association, which became the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). He struggled and fought for independence. In May 1961, he became prime minister of Tanganyika which was already granted self-rule in 1960. Tanganyika gained full independence in December 1961 and he became the first president of the country in December of that year 1962. Nyerere resigned as president in 1985. He was a founding pillar of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) in 1963, now the African Union (AU). He authored the following works among many others: "Freedom and Unity," "Freedom and Socialism," "Freedom and Development" in 1967, 1968, and 1973 respectively. Perhaps his most crucial work is Ujamaa (African Socialism) in 1967. The Arusha Declaration has its foundation and themes drawn from this work. He worked assiduously with other African leaders for the end of apartheid regime in South Africa, and end of colonialism in other African countries. He is reckoned as a key Pan-Africanist leader. He was first prime minister from 1961-1962, first president from 1962-1964 of Tanganyika and first president of Tanzania from 1964-1985.⁵

"Sarvodaya" in Gandhi's thought

John Moniz writes that the word, "Sarvodaya" comes from two Sanskrit words, "sarva" meaning "all" and "udaya" meaning "rise, prosperity affluence;" and together they mean "well-being of all."⁶ The word, "Sarvodaya" has been variously translated as, "the uplift of all," "the greatest good of all," "welfare of all," "service to all," or "the corporative commonwealth."⁷ The wellbeing of all here is not just human beings but includes non-human beings in the cosmos following the the Rishis from Vedic times.⁸ John Moniz rightly notes that:

The inspirations of *Sarvodaya* are found in the deepest principles of Hinduism. It is a movement which has a spiritual and religious basis in accordance with the best tradition of Hindu thought. The social order it seeks to establish is essentially a means for men to realise themselves as persons and their transcendent goal. It means the realisation of their fundamental relationship to God, the ground of all being.⁹

Gandhi notes that he was inspired and motivated by "Unto This Last" written by John Ruskin. He got from there the following ideas: (1) "The good of the individual is contained in the good of all," (2) a lawyer's work has the same value as the work of a barber" and worth living (3) the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living"¹⁰ The last two propositions,

⁵ Obasi Igwe, *Politics and Globe Dictionary* (Aba: Eagle Publishers, 2005), 300.

⁶ John Moniz, *A New World Order; Mahatma Gandhi & Pope John Paul II* (Bandra, Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 1998), 67- 68.

⁷ Thomas A Priest, "The Concept of Sarvodaya in Gandhian Education," accessed September 10, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1960.tb00021.x>.

⁸ Moniz, *A New World Order*, 68.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Mohandas K Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 299.

Gandhi opined were revolutionary to him as he had never really thought of them. Stating the deep impart of Ruskin's book upon him, he avers:

Of all these books the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was 'Unto this Last'. I translated it later into Gujrati entitling it Sarvodaya (The Welfare of All). I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin and that is why it so co-activated me and made me transform my life.¹¹

Gandhi's ideal society is based on decentralization of authority to the Panchayat Raj system.¹² This society is grounded on authentic love of all, no discrimination and shared living.¹³ The rich should give of their surplus to others in need. Writing of the kind of society that Gandhi desired, Mukhi states thus:

Gandhiji, had the image of a society in which all were to have their rightful place and where there will be individual freedom, decentralized authority, both in economic and political life, there will be no Varna Vyavastha, and no one will be expected to retain surplus but everyone will have only that much which he essentially required for his use. He also wanted that in the society of his imagination everyone will do some kind of manual work, including those who were doing mental labour. He believed in the development of Paachayati Raj system¹⁴

The Sarvodaya society is aimed at the collective welfare of all. It is in the welfare of all that the individual finds his welfare. Human work and labour was something to be valued and respected in this society, and all forms of works were to be respected and not despised. Gandhi emphasized village autonomy in the production and distribution of goods in society, and also in political power. The wealthy in society are mere trustees of their wealth and should make available to the nation, the excess that is beyond their genuine need. Work is to be valued and all are to work. Society shall be based on self-governing autonomous villages loosely federated, with no parliament, and there is no state or the powers of the state are greatly reduced. For Gandhi, the welfare state causes individuals not to be responsible for themselves and so is an affront to their destiny.¹⁵ He advocated for local self-government and the state should facilitate this. He was against rapid industrialisation, endless economic growth, and he advocated adopting the spinning wheel or loom as the symbol of the ideal of village life.¹⁶

¹¹ Mohandas Gandhi as cited in H.R. Mukhi, Political Thought (Nai Sarak, New Delhi: SBD Publishers Distributors, 2008), 453.

¹² Mukhi, Political Thought, 452

¹³ Ibid., p. 452

¹⁴ Ibid., 452

¹⁵ Kevin Burns, Eastern Philosophy: The Greatest Thinkers from Ancient to modern Times (London: Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2006), 71.

¹⁶ Burns, 73.

He rejected Utilitarian philosophy coming from the 19th century.¹⁷ He rejected it because Utilitarianism affirms that doing good to one necessarily involves deprivation of the other; rather Sarvodaya give credence to the wellbeing and welfare of all with none excluded.¹⁸ Sarvodaya is aimed also at self-realisation not simply material wellbeing. ¹⁹ Amore rightly avers that: "The moral philosophy of Gandhi has the goal of improving the lives of the masses through the power of truth (satyagraha), using only approaches compatible with universal love (ahimsa), to bring about systematic social and economic change for the common good (sarvodaya)."²⁰

Gandhi's concept of "Sarvodaya" or the ideal society is deeply influenced by his theocentric-philosophical anthropology in which all persons are manifestation of the supreme deity. It is true that: "Every thinker formulates his ideas based on a concept of self, man, and human nature."²¹ Gandhi states that: "God is present in all of us," and "For my part every moment I experience the truth that though many, we are all one."²² Elsewhere, Gandhi writes thus: "We are all children of the same Father whom the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian know by different names."²³ No doubt this idea of Gandhi is deeply influenced by Hinduism. From the "Bhagavadgita," VI, 29 comes the teaching: "The mind whose mind is absorbed through Yoga and who sees the same Self in all beings and all beings in the Self."²⁴

John Moniz writes correctly of Gandhi as follows:

He made it clear that his mission was not merely brotherhood of the Indian community but rather he hoped "to realise and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man". His entire life was a continuous effort towards universal brotherhood. Gandhi's solidarity with the discriminated in South Africa, identification with the oppressed poor, fellowship with the outcast and the downtrodden , struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity, vision of equality of religions, consideration of women's equality are just some of the different examples. Through the doctrine of non-violence he preached loudly and clearly the universal brotherhood to world society.²⁵

Tersely, Gandhi's concept of "Sarvodaya" has as its objective the total wellbeing and welfare of all, and not simply pleasure or sensual excitement. Gandhi enunciates succinctly that society should work sacrificially for the greatest good

¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Roy C Amore, "Gandhi-Moral Philosophy," in The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace, Volume 2, ed. Nigel J Young (Oxford: oxford University Press 2010), 187

²¹ T N Khoshoo and John S Moolakkattu, Mahatma Gandhi and the Environment: Analysing Gandhian Environmental Thought (New Delhi: The Energy Resources Institute, 2009), 4.

²² John Moniz, John Moniz, No Greater Service: Mother and the Mahatma (Bandra, Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 1997), 136.

²³ Gandhi, All Religions are True, p. 7, cited in Moniz, No Greater Service, 137.

²⁴ Moniz, No Greater Service, 136.

²⁵ Ibid., 137.

of all and not simply some.²⁶ This welfare is extended to all human beings and non-human beings in the cosmos. All beings are reflections of the supreme deity. Human beings are to live in love, non-violence, co-operative sharing and collaboration. All human labour is valuable and is to be cherished in society.

“Ujamaa” in Nyerere’s thought

The concept of “Ujamaa” developed by Nyerere comes from Swahili and means “familyhood”²⁷ or “brotherhood.”²⁸ It is an African term with Arabic roots.²⁹ The word was not invented by Nyerere but it was used by him to designate that kind of life that people should live in fostering equality and freedom from racial or tribal discrimination, and economic exploitation.³⁰ Nyerere as cited by Okeregbe avers that Ujamaa is a mental attitude in which people feel the need to care for their fellowmen.³¹ And this notion of sociality or the communal has made this philosophy to be tagged, “African Socialism”³² or even African communalism. Nyerere rightly notes that the notion of familyhood cannot be limited to the village or nation but must extend to African and the whole human race. Nyerere writes thus:

For socialism the basic purpose is the well-being of the people, and the basic assumption is an acceptance of human equality. For socialism there must be a belief that every individual man or woman, whatever, colour, shape, race, creed, religion, or sex, is an equal member of society, with equal rights in the society and equal duties to it.³³

Welfare is at the heart of Ujamaa philosophy. It is a duty and responsibility to live a life of social concern for the wellbeing of your neighbours and society. For Nyerere, “Ujamaa socialism means love extended to the individuals in the state as members of the same family aimed completely at the progress and well-being of humanity.”³⁴ In the Ujamaa socialist society, wealth is to be used for the benefit of all. What defines a person as a socialist is your attitude of mind and actual behaviour in using what you have for the service of your fellowman. Both rich and poor people then can be socialists. Nyerere states:

²⁶ Gandhi in “The Diary of Mahadev Desai,” 149; cited in Moniz, *A New World Order*, 69.

²⁷ Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (ed.), *The Dictionary of Global Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 489.

²⁸ Anthony Okeregbe, “A Critical Evaluation of Ujamaa in Julius Nyerere’s Political Philosophy,” in *A Study in African Socio-political Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Professor Muyiwa Falaiye*, ed. Anthony Okeregbe, Samuel B Jegede, and Dotun Ogunkoya (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2012), 45.

²⁹ Oliver Alozie Onwubiko, *The Church in Mission in the Light of Ecclesia in Africa* (Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline Publications Africa, 2001), 33.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

³¹ Okeregbe, 45.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Mwl Julius Kambarage Nyerere, “Ujamaa: Essays On Socialism,” accessed September 13, 2019, <https://medium.com/@LcTheDreaMKiD/ujamaa-essays-on-socialism-by-mwl-julius-kambarage-nyerere-93d53c1419b6>

³⁴ Munyaradzi Mawere and Tapuwa R Mubaya, *African Philosophy and Thought Systems: A Search for a Culture and Philosophy of Belonging* (Mankon- Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa Research and Publishing CIG, 2016), 163.

In the individual, as in the society, it is an attitude of mind which distinguishes the socialist from the non-socialist. It has nothing to do with the possession or non-possession of wealth. Destitute people can be potential capitalists–exploiters of their fellow human beings. A millionaire can equally well be a socialist; he may value his wealth only because it can be used in the service of his fellow men. But the man who uses wealth for the purpose of dominating any of his fellows is a capitalist. So is the man who would if he could!³⁵

There should be no exploitation and class system in the socialist society. For Nyerere selfishness and individualism are not part of African culture.³⁶ The human persons in a socialist society are to live as brothers, recognise their equal dignity and share life and resources together.³⁷ Nyerere writes of the socialist society thus:

A country in which all her citizens are equal; where there is no division into rulers and ruled, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, those in distress and idle comfort.....in this country all will be equal in dignity; all would have an equal right to respect, to the opportunity of acquiring a good education and the necessities of life; and all her citizens should have an equal opportunity of serving their country to the limits of their ability.³⁸

As should be known a person's philosophical postulations are often influenced by his philosophical anthropology. Influenced perhaps by his Christian background, he believes that man is made up of body and soul. The body is his physical component while the human soul is unseen and non-corporeal. Humans are creatures of God and as they strive for the realization of their destinies they need to rely on God, and not only their human efforts. Man is created for freedom and happiness. Humans are architects of their destinies. This destiny is achieved only through the community and not as solitary beings. Because of this living the "Ujamaa" ethos is necessary. Man's efforts are to be fostered together in community of the group such as through "Ujamaa" villages. Men are called together to cooperate and live together in harmony. Nyerere recognizes that human beings are altruistic in nature but also selfish. The human person is more important than money and material wealth, and there has been too much emphasis on industries, Nyerere opines³⁹. Exploitation of

³⁵ Julius K Nyerere, "Ujamaa – The Basis of African Socialism," in *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.1, no.1, 1987 (4), accessed September 13, 2019, <https://www.jpanafrican.org/edocs/e-DocUjamma3.5.pdf>

³⁶ Joseph Omoregbe, *Socio-Political Philosophy: A Systematic and Historical Study* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2010), 140.

³⁷ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 15

³⁸ Julius Nyerere, "President's Address to the National Assembly", December 1962

³⁹ Julius Nyerere, "The Arusha Declaration and TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance," 1967, accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nyerere/1967/arusha-declaration.htm>

fellowmen and women whether done by the colonialists or Africans among themselves after independence is evil and wrong.

Nyerere was an avid critic of capitalism. For him capitalism is an exploitative system. He states that capitalism “seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man.”⁴⁰ For him, Ujamaa also is different from socialism as understood in the classical Marxist tradition that understands conflicts, struggle, tension, and class antagonism as inevitable on the road to socialism and eventually communism.⁴¹ Matthew I Nwoko has described what exploitation means for Nyerere. It implies a capitalist mindset, greed for power, wealth, prestige and privileges; oppression of the poor, enjoying the fruits of others labour while refusing to work, excess acquisition of money at the expense of others, avarice, making a living from the work of others, etc.⁴² Private ownership of the means of production, laziness, idleness, dishonesty, cheating, and uncooperativeness all cause exploitation.⁴³

The principles of “Ujamaa” are encapsulated in the 1967 Arusha Declaration. In the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere affirms an egalitarian society of brotherhood, cooperative living and self-sufficiency. Men are ontologically equal created in God’s image and likeness, though not equal in physical abilities. He opted for Ujamaa villages and collective agriculture. He forcefully moved many of the people in rural places to these villages. The Arusha Declaration proclaimed a war against exploitation. The Declaration among others declares as follows:

Socialism is a way of life, and a socialist society cannot simply come into existence. A socialist society can only be built by those who believe in, and who themselves practice, the principles of socialism. A committed member of TANU will be a socialist, and his fellow socialist – that is, his fellow believers in this political and economic system – are all those in Africa or elsewhere in the world who fight for the rights of peasants and workers. The first duty of a TANU member, and especially of a TANU leader, is to accept these socialist principles, and to live his own life in accordance with them. In particular, a genuine TANU leader will not live off the sweat of another man, nor commit any feudalistic or capitalistic actions.⁴⁴

Nyerere intended it as a panacea to African socio-political predicament after colonialism. Omoregbe rightly states that for Nyerere the nation or society is to be organized as “atomic family units, family villages, or ‘ujamaa villages,’ with mutual co-operation and collaboration. The whole society i.e., the whole

⁴⁰ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 12.

⁴² Matthew I Nwoko, *Basic World Political Theories* (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 1988), 245; see also William R Duggan and John R Civile, *Tanzania and Nyerere: A Study of Ujamaa and Nationalism*, cited in Francis O.C. Njoku, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology* (Nekede, Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002), 59.

⁴³ Njoku, 60.

⁴⁴ Nyerere, “The Arusha Declaration.”

country will be made up of such Ujamaa units, a nation made up of 'family units'.⁴⁵ Individuals in society are willing to work for the good of the whole society, the leaders identify with the people by working with them, and there is self-realization and self-reliance aimed at freedom from foreign control.⁴⁶ Ujamaa is open to the modern technological society while respecting traditional moral values and cultural diversity.⁴⁷ The reality of work is crucial to the socialist society. Everybody unless incapacitated is to work and contribute to the good and wellbeing of society.

"Sarvodaya," "Ujamaa," and eco-sociopolitics

Both Gandhi and Nyerere were concerned with the devastating effects of colonialism on their nations. Nyerere saw the economic exploitation and degradation caused by Germans in his native land. For Gandhi the British exploitation and oppression of his native land India was unacceptable and so he fought against it. "Sarvodaya" is Gandhi's version of a new world order⁴⁸ and what is his country should be. The world should be organised following the principles of "Sarvodaya." "Sarvodaya" aims at the welfare and wellbeing of all. Nyerere's "Ujamaa" also has as its goal the welfare and the wellbeing of all. Both philosophies run contrary to such philosophies such as that of Karl Marx's violent revolution to create a communist society of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In both Gandhi and Nyerere, welfare and wellbeing is for all not only the poor. Both of them emphasize human equality and freedom from exploitation.

Gandhi unlike Nyerere did not have opportunity to put his ideas into practice. A few months after, India's independence he was assassinated. And as Mukhi puts it, "his dream of an ideal society thus remained only a dream."⁴⁹ Nyerere had great opportunity to put his ideas into practice. He became the first president of Tanzania. Though at the time he left office Tanzania was one of the poorest countries in the world. His one party state was also accused of imprisoning and oppressing any form of opposition and dissent. This is often the problem with many idealists who think only their vision of history is the correct one.

Both thoughts of Gandhi and Nyerere's thought have relevance for socioeconomic, political and ecological life. As Burns notes, at the time that Gandhi proposed his theory of "small is beautiful," it may have been considered irrelevant but do it is very relevant⁵⁰ in the light of the ecological crisis. The idea of simplicity and smallness is very relevant in these times of environmental crisis and chemicalised agriculture that has destroyed the environment. Roy C Amore is of the opinion that Gandhi's idea probably informed E.F. Schumacher's "Buddhist Economics" that emphasizes that people matter more than profits, and economics should improve the lifestyle of workers and consumers.⁵¹ Simple

⁴⁵ Omoregbe, 140.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Moniz, "A New World Order," 67

⁴⁹ Mukhi, 452.

⁵⁰ Burns, 73.

⁵¹ Amore, 186.

living for Gandhi also involves living “close to nature, without wasting plants, animals, or resources.”⁵² Nyerere also emphasize the important of people over materials and profits. This point from both of them needs to be highlighted in w a world burdened by the spirit of capitalist consumerism and materialism. It is important to note that capitalist consumerism and materialism has turned the earth into a global pillage city and a wasteland. In his remarkable encyclical, “Laudato Si,” Pope Francis is describes and is critical of this culture of aggressive rapid industrialization that has degraded the planet. He writes thus:

Account must also be taken of the pollution produced by residue, including dangerous waste present in different areas. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. Industrial waste and chemical products utilized in cities and agricultural areas can lead to bioaccumulation in the organisms of the local population, even when levels of toxins in those places are low. Frequently no measures are taken until after people’s health has been irreversibly affected.⁵³

Gandhi’s teaching on simple living has influenced the philosopher of peace and deep ecology, Arne Naess and the ecology movement.⁵⁴ Both Gandhi and Nyerere were critical of rapid and aggressive industrialization that have little or no value for villages and people’s basic means of subsistence. They valued villages and every form of human labour. Capitalist globalization often has no values for indigenous sustainable agriculture and ways of living. Bilimoria argues that Gandhi was concerned for the poor and rural population and argued for their sustainable way of life against massive and rapid industrialization. He knew the resources of nature were finite. He argued against the destruction of nature under both colonial and modernist ways in favour of traditional patterns of subsistence that were ecologically friendly.⁵⁵ It is right to note that:

He was opposed to following Western industrialism blindly because of the associated environmental, social, and economic problems. The principle reason was that such industrialism is based on an assumption that resources are unlimited, which is actually not the case. The biosphere does not have unlimited capacity to bear the eco-degradation

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Pope Francis, “Encyclical Letter –Laudato Si’ (On care for Our Common Home,” numbers 20-21, accessed September 10, 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

⁵⁴ Amore, 186.

⁵⁵ Purushottama Bilimoria, “Mahatma Gandhi”, in *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, ed. Joy A Palmer (London: Routledge, 2001), 163.

resulting from unsustainable development. While our planet's resources do not grow, population and wants grow exponentially. This means that there cannot be unlimited and infinite growth and development with limited and finite resources. He was not averse to industrialism per se as long as it was not resource- and energy-intensive and did not displace small cottage industry and labour. Cottage industry, according to him, has a future in the Indian context. It would help the villagers generate marketable goods. He advocated that we should not become slaves to unlimited desires for material growth.

The notion of all men and women as brothers and sisters is common to Gandhi and Nyerere. Nyerere spoke of extending brotherhood to all humanity, and Gandhi spoke of all men as brothers. This is akin to Kenneth Kaunda's idea of African humanism which leads to Pan-humanism.⁵⁶ In a world troubled by terrorism, violence, war, global capitalist profiteering the emphasis on universal brotherhood should not be overlooked. There is a vital need for massive education and conscientization of people especially those who control power to realise that all humans have equal dignity. They share in the same common humanity. Injustice and harm to one is injustice and harm to all to use the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. Each individual and nation needs to take interest in the wellbeing and welfare of others and all nations. Take for instance the issue of the global environmental crisis. Environmental problems affecting one nation often affect many other nations. The problem of droughts, climate change and even wars cause forced migration. The migration crisis in the Mediterranean region is partly caused by dire economic conditions and environmental changes in sub-Saharan Africa. The migration into Europe is also caused by conflicts and wars in the Middle East. This migration has caused a grave impact on the economies and lives of Europe. The areas through which the migrants pass have been environmentally degraded. The notion of Sarvodaya and Ujamaa will require recognising the human dignity of all migrants and according them their human rights. While it is true that illegal migration should be discouraged and each nation should work to ensure that their citizens are not subject to economic tragedies; nations at the receiving end should treat migrants as human beings while respecting the rights they are entitled to as migrants. Migrants should not be exploited or subjected to oppression. Both Gandhi and Nyerere are for concerns for all humanity and not simply one's nation. Global problems are better solved internationally.

One area in which the thoughts of both Gandhi and Nyerere are crucially relevant is with regard to the environment. R.K. Pachauri rightly notes that solving the various environmental problems in society requires drastic change in lifestyles and basic values not just technological fixes.⁵⁷ With regard to Gandhi, his "Sarvodaya society is a holistic version of what the West now calls a

⁵⁶ Maurice M Makumba, *Introduction to African Philosophy* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2007), 142.

⁵⁷ R.K. Pachauri, "Foreword," in *Mahatma Gandhi and the Environment: Analysing Gandhian Environmental Thought*, ed. T N Khoshoo and John S Moolakkattu, (New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute, 2009), vi.

'sustainable society'." ⁵⁸ In the Sarvodaya society proposed by Gandhi humans will live a life of sharing, avoid greed, promote non-violence towards all creatures, respect for women, unsustainable consumerism is discouraged, conservation and sustainable living is encouraged, development enhances local self-reliance, equity, social justice, human lives a part of nature and there is moral restraint in the use of nature.⁵⁹ Gandhi was pro-poor, pro-women, pro-nature, and pro-job, and equally highlighted the path of co-operation, love, non-violence and peace; and these are all antidotes to hate, conflicts and wars ravaging our world today.⁶⁰ Nyerere Ujamaa that foster brotherhood, communalism and a life of radical sharing is necessary as virtues in combating environmental degradation. Equality, love, work, and sharing are vital for the sustenance of society.⁶¹ The change in lifestyle in this time of environmental degradation requires ecological virtues. It is true that there are enough resources in the world to meet the needs of all but they are in the hand of few.

Concluding reflections

Burns rightly notes that:

Gandhi was not an original thinker as such; nor was his religious and philosophical synthesis entirely consistent. But to judge Gandhi on such criteria would be to deny the remarkable achievements of one of the twentieth-century's towering figures. He inspired future leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela to oppose and defeat injustice. Even to mention the leading figures of the communist struggle such as Stalin and **Mao** is to show how important Gandhi was as an alternative: providing a practical philosophy of life built not on hatred, conflict and division but on love, truth and the good of all.⁶²

Nyerere left a mixed legacy. While his notion of Ujamaa is noble and idealistic, his implementation of it was problematic. The experiment at socialism was a great failure and the so-called "Ujamaa non-marxist cooperative village communities" were ineffective in advancing production.⁶³ At the time he resigned as president, Tanzania was one of the poorest nations on earth and he expressed doubts about the one-party state.⁶⁴ Ochieng-Odhiambo notes that:

Ten years after the Arusha Declaration Nyerere himself attested to the fact that the goals of the Declaration still remained elusive: that there were still great inequalities between the citizens; that life of poverty was still the

⁵⁸ Khoshoo and Moolakkattu, vii.

⁵⁹ Subhash R Mehta, *The Concept of Practical Non-Violence* (Bandra, Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 2009), 192.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁶¹ Makumba, 141.

⁶² Burns, 73

⁶³ Obasi, 300.

⁶⁴ Appiah and Gates, 489

experience of the majority of citizens; that many people still suffered from preventable disease and ignorance; that the aged and disabled did not still live in decency or even security. Some people have often attributed the failure of the Declaration to outside forces beyond the control of Tanzanians, yet others have attributed it to the utopian elements of Nyerere's theory....⁶⁵

Today's world is troubled by ecological degradation, socio-economic and political troubles, etc. Humans need to bound and bond together more than ever before as these problems are challenges for all humanity. This is where the ideas of both Gandhi and Nyerere on human dignity and rights and fostering the welfare and wellbeing of all can be helpful. With the ideas of both of them that shares many things in common; the welfare of all individuals worldwide should be pursued more vigorously. Core aspects of both thinkers are still relevant to the contemporary world. Depending on how environmental thought is defined, Gandhi's thought have serious implication for solving the environmental crisis.⁶⁶ Nyerere's ideas of communal living and sharing equally have serious implications for living a humane lifestyle that puts less pressure on the ecosystem.

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⁶⁵ F. Ochieng-Odhiambo, *Handbook on Some Social-Political Philosophers* (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy, 1998), 93.

⁶⁶ See Vinay Lal, "Gandhi, Mohandas (1869-1948)," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, Vol I: A-J, ed. Bron Taylor (London: Continuum, 2008), 685-686.

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