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Section-A

Rise of machines, an opportunity or threat to humanity.

"Frankly, I do not have a problem when machines think, though I do fear when ^{humans} stop to do so" - Anonymous

The above quote has very beautifully elucidated the current tensions between the living and machine world. Machines, as they are today are indispensable to one's life. From morning to night, north-south, rich to poor, machines have impacted every dimension of human existence. Nonetheless, despite machines' usefulness in areas including economy, policy-making, security etc; we have several side effects too. The negative implications have impacted not only on our living, but our very existence.

①

Nevertheless, such tension and multivarious implications have been observed since time immemorial and are not recent phenomenon-

Historical overview.

Mankind invented wheel and did not look behind since then. Such simple machines including hunting tools set us on path of efficiency and innovation, however it had negative implication of labour division resulting into confinement of women in domestic lives

Few millenia later, human-kind was set to begin a new journey with industrial revolution. Machines like steam engine, spinning jenny and assembly lines made production easier, cheaper and on much larger scale. However, the implications it had on worker's health, social equality, environment led

(2)

to the rise of movements against these
machine themselves like Luddites.

We have now entered industrial
revolution 4.0 The machines have continued
advancing and benefitting us even today

opportunities.

Humanity has made great
trides in cultural sphere owing to
machines. Computers, televisions, radios
have helped in wide dissemination of our
culture, as well as improved understanding
of others. Indians watch American shows
and adopted hip-hop, jeans etc., whereas
Americans were introduced to butter-chicken,
yoga and bollywood

Machines have helped immensely
in social welfare too. Today, children
in remote villages can access advanced
lectures on computers. Attendance-machines
have curbed teacher absenteeism. Similarly,
machines like coronary stents, health

(3)

monitors etc. have helped increase our life span. Disabled use machines like braille translators, artificial limbs etc. to gain dignity.

Machines have helped us in environment conservation. Numerous cameras help in tiger census. Similarly heavy machineries have helped in restoring animal-corridors. Machinery has helped us in more sustainable practices like solar, wind, water energy.

Machines also help in policy making. Today large administrative functions have been mechanized leading to efficiency. Data computations can be done to better target end-users and welfare schemes and formulate future policy corrections. Aadhar is an example how machines can help in preventing leakages in service delivery.

(4)

Machines have helped us in improving our material life too. Cheap products in sufficient quantities are produced by industrial machines.

Further efficiency in production is envisaged through coming of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Microsoft has come with Brainwave AI which will undertake complex functions and calculations in split seconds.

Machines have also improved our security. Disaster Management has been better handled through satellite imagery and drones. Our food security is also improving through better agricultural, logistics and storage machinery. Advanced weapons have helped us better defend ourselves.

Nonetheless, as with all good things, the side effects of machines are also abundant.

(5)

Threats

Machines have made us more culturally and socially isolated. Today we give more time to machines and gadgets than our family members. One can see people setting up gyms within their homes and young kids stuck to mobile screens. Even digital connectivity has confined us to our shells.

Machines have created a more divided and cleaved society. We have divergence between generations where elderly feel out of touch with modern mechanized youth. There is inequality increasing between rich and poor.

Rich have been better able to use and thus improve their lives through costly machines, where poor have lagged.

Machines are huge threat to our environment. Heavy machines

have cleared vast tracts of forests,
has increased pollution which threatens
lives of 300 million children globally
according to WHO. Big dams have
threatened wildlife as well as forest
dwelling tribes. Heavy mining has
depleted our limited resources..

Machines have threatened the
existence of human race through nuclear
war. Recently North Korea threatened to
blow up island of Guam which has
over 1 lakh inhabitants. Machines have
evolved into Artificial Intelligence which
has hypothetically threatened us if
machines start thinking independently of men.

Machines have created vast
economic inequalities. According to Oxfam
report 'An economy for 99%'; 50% of
wealth is concentrated with 8 people

(7)

who happen to be industrial tycoons.

Machines have also threatened employment with machines fast replacing labours.

According to World Bank, machines threaten 70% of Indian jobs currently.

Machines have aggravated natural disasters like earthquakes owing to heavy drilling, floods caused due to dam and pollution & global warming causing unaccounted floods & droughts.

These ^{machines} ~~threats~~ nonetheless do pose grave ^{these} threats and are as real as their existence. However, their usefulness also can't be denied. Problem lies thus not in their existence but the way their use has been deployed.

Problem is not in the way machines work, but in the way human mind does.

Thus, need of the hour is to recognize

These threads and use machines in a more sustainable way.

Need for greater sustainability

Machines should be used to bring people closer, not move them far away. In this light, greater interventions to allow social interaction not only through digital world, but in person are needed. Civil society needs to arrange more cultural programs, museum visits, international student exchanges. This will allow meeting of hearts as well as minds.

Machines should be used to benefit poor and vulnerable to help them rise on their feet. Thus, technology should be subsidized in benefit of poor.

Cheaper healthcare instruments, free digital education, price caps on disabled-friendly devices can bridge much

~~are~~ widened social and economic gap.
Budget companies can allow subsidized
dispatch of devices to poor and needy.

Machines should be used for
environment sustainability and not for
its degradation. Sustainable technologies
more mining, using machines to monitor
depletion of resources to ensure their
responsible extractions, will go a long
way in conservation. Machines should be
used to create pollution free vehicles
and industries.

Machines should augment and
not replace human skills. Nonetheless,
inevitability of mechanization needs to
be recognized. Thus, greater job-oppor-
tunities through MSMEs, labour-intensive
sectors, skill development should be
ensured. Further, machines should ensure
shift in job profiles through creation of

new fields and thus appropriate training needs to be ensured. Augmented Reality has created new space in skill development.

Also, machines should be for development of mankind not its destruction. Use of surveillance machinery to detect nuclear proliferation needs to be ensured. Also, international cooperation to channelize technological competence and capacity for sustainable development and not a destructive machinery needs to be carried out.

CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi has talked about ills of machines due to their destructive nature and in their capacity to replace humans. However, he was never against machines, he was only against their irresponsible use. Machines should be used for human welfare which is their intended purpose. Even

charkha was a machine. Thus, we need to create a world when application of human mind is towards constructive innovations and development of sustainable usage of machinery. It is time that humans start to think and think sustainably!!

Section - B

2. Rights based approach is the key to socio-economic development.

Meenu was born in a small village near Saharanpur district. Her childhood was spent watching her parents struggle to make their ends meet. The small brick kiln they worked in would shut intermittently leading to prolonged joblessness. She would helplessly watch as children went to nearby school carrying freshly cooked meal from home.

However their life changed suddenly. Her parents now got assured work in nearby watershed development. Few years later school headmaster informed them that Meenu could now study free of cost and could get free meals within school hours. This turnaround she later discovered was owing to rights

(13)

of work, food and education her family was now entitled to.

Rights-based approach to socio-economic development makes it a government responsibility to ensure an equitable and dignified life to its citizens. Right to education which many children like Meenu are now entitled to has pushed up country's literacy rate.

This approach is not a recent prerogative and was a goal of our forefathers at the time of freedom struggle. Nehru Report framed in 1928 brought many aspects of socio-economic development under fundamental rights. However, the economic compulsions our country faced after independence brought these rights under non-mandatory directive principles. Nonetheless, as we progressed, our country has seen the

unfolding of rights-based approach domestically as well as internationally.

We have also seen the debate whether these rights indeed fit in socio-economic climate of developing and under-developed countries. Let us first explore the advantages this approach brings on our socio-economic development.

Rights as an imperative for socio-economic development

Rights-based approach ensure social equity and principles of positive discrimination. Many South-Asian countries have huge population of under- privileged and fair poorly in Global Hunger Index and many such indicators.

Thus, rights such as right to food, right to health etc. will bring the disadvantaged section up on social ladder.

15

Right to Food through Food Security Act;
Right to education, National Health Policy
etc. are India's recognition to this fact.

Rights based approach ensures socio-cultural harmony through equal rights and opportunities to all communities. India through its Article 29, 30, 350A-B etc. of constitution and schemes like Nai Roshni, Pasho Pradesh has recognized minority rights. World witnessing refugee crisis also needs this approach.

This approach also reduces economic inequality. India with MGNREGA provides right to work as well as greater economic empowerment and bargaining power to its citizens. With Oxfam report, "An economy for 99%" showcasing huge inequalities worldwide, world needs to adopt ideas like

right to basic income such as through
Universal Basic Income

Right to participation in socio-economic development is also an important prerequisite for it to succeed. Initiatives like citizen-charters, Right to Information etc will make the beneficiaries active participants. With criticisms of opaqueness in international aid, such right will ensure more equitable and efficient redistribution.

Recently, the scourge of climate change and pollution has become the biggest threat to humanity acting disproportionately on disadvantaged sections and under-development nations.

Internationally recognized right to safe environment will ensure concerted and responsible efforts towards this aim.

Nonetheless, such a right based approach faces several constraints which makes people to question its efficacy in multicultural, multi-class societies like India.

Constraints on Rights-based approach.

There is an inherent tension between individual rights and community rights. Many countries like in South-East Asian region have questioned International Bill of Human Rights. Right of women to socio-economic empowerment may not align well with societies like Saudi-Arabia.

In India too, rights of women to dignity, as well as that of lower castes has come into conflict with religious laws & customs

Rights of individuals has also come into conflict with right of regional culture and self assertion. In India, right to employment as well as

socio-economic development through dams, roads, factories etc. as come into conflict with tribals rights to reside in their homeland. Also rights of one, i.e. of farmer benefitting through irrigation is conflict with right of other, i.e., farmer cultivating in area of dam.

Implementation of rights also become politically and administratively difficult. Politically because the rights once imparted cannot be taken back especially in democracies. Administratively because non-developed countries do not have capability to ensure socio-economic rights of individual. India herself has seen issues of leakages and inefficiency in schemes like Food Security and MGNREGA.

Their implementation is also economically difficult, since owing to

economic constraints, impairing one right to every individual may cause other right to fall back. In India, proposal of Universal Basic Income has caused concerns about budgetary constraints it will entail.

Also these rights have often come into conflict with security. Infrastructures like dams have often caused disasters like earthquakes, floods etc. Also, example of Aadhar is worth mentioning, where socio-economic welfare has come into conflict with security of private data. Concerns of national security in European countries had led to denial of rights to refugees of basic sustenance.

Despite these constraints, importance of rights-based approach can't be denied. However to make these entitlements efficient, certain pre-requisites

are required.

What should be the way forward?

Amartya Sen has talked about capability-based approach. In order to enjoy socio-economic rights, one should have to capability. ~~to~~ A women in conservative family won't be able to enjoy her right to employment and work if she faces wrath of her family in doing so. Thus, ending deprivation including social, economic, cultural, political, etc. should be our priority.

Mahatma Gandhi has talked about community rights and how individual derives her right from her community's sense of right. This entails two imperatives.

First, we should be careful in reconciling individual rights with

community rights . Regional, ~~either~~ national, social culture should be respected. Second, we should strive for development of community as a whole to ensure that individuals of that community are fully able to realize their rights.

Certain safeguards are needed to ensure rights-based approach.

Unintended consequences, like in Adhar ensuring social welfare may risk important information of many; need to be taken into account. Any right should ensure the greatest good of greatest number and should be holistic in scope.

Further, states should increase their capability to provide imperative rights . Preventing leakage, corruption and ensuring full participation of people will go a long way. International

aid should be transparent, participatory and should not be blindly imposed.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi always talked about upliftment of the poorest of poor materially and of rich spiritually. Thus, his notion of rights was universal. However, he also considered rights as embryonic in duties we perform. Thus, any rights based approach can only be successful if it entails full participation of all towards betterment of all.

A bottom-up and not top-down approach will ensure rights based approach as the key to socio-economic development of all !!