

---

## Economic and Political Views of Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar

---

DR. SEEMA TAMTA

Research Scholar, Sociology Department, DAV College, Dehradun

---

**Abstract:** Since ancient times, India has had a rich heritage of social and philosophical thinking. Indian political thoughts and thinkers have contributed significantly to the domains of World Politics, Sociology and Political Science. Who can ignore the noteworthy contribution of Kautilya in the realms of Diplomacy and Political Science? From Kautilya to Swami Vivekananda to Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar, Dr. Ram Mahohar Lohiya and more, the list is quite long. They represent a culture of diverse political thoughts existing in India at the same time. However, there are few thinkers whose political and social thoughts, despite being relevant, could not get a place in the syllabus of Indian Political Thought as a subject, perhaps due to political reasons. The name of Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar is one among such names. The second *Sarsanghchalak* of *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* is known for focusing on Swadeshi and linking the same to the economy of the country. He also promoted an economic system based on Swadeshi instead of capitalism and communism. In the light of present times, when the entire world is looking for a way out of the brunt caused by Covid-19, the political and economic thoughts of Golwalkar show a sustainable way to boost economies. This article focuses on the political and economic thoughts of Golwalkar.

**Keywords :** Political, Heritage, Philosophical, Culture

---

### INTRODUCTION

Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar is one of the prominent personalities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who has left an indelible mark on the social and political scenario of India. From June 1940 to June 1973, Golwalkar headed the All India Organization of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He proved to be an efficient and a powerful leader as the head of RSS, both in pre-independent and post-independent India. He kept the organization motivated throughout the country. Golwalkar was a multi-faceted personality, great scholar, thinker and a sensitive person. He had studied more than 3000 books and texts in his lifetime. Although Golwalkar has not written much in the form of books or articles, yet his views and ideology are manifested clearly in his interviews and lectures that cover various social, economic, religious and political issues.

The political, social and economic systems of any society are inter-related and inter-dependent and hence any change in any one has the capability to alter the other two. Keeping this important point in view, Golwalkar came up with an integrated way of socio-political-economic thoughts.

Despite being a student of zoology and a practising lawyer before joining the Sangh full-time, his views on economic and political fields are incredibly important, especially in present times when India is trying to fulfil its vision of being self-reliant. His discussions, speeches and conversations and correspondence with his close friends and other thinkers on Indian economy have been endorsed by many renowned experts and writers related to Political Economy. For example, Dattopant Thengdi, the famous ideologue of nationalist economy and the founder of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh and the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, was majorly influenced by Golwalkar. Thengdi understood Golwalkar's attempt to bring a connectedness between his thoughts on Political Economy and the Sangh. Thengdi has written, "The thoughts of *Gururji* (as Golwalkar was fondly addressed by his students and friends) on economic issues and labors are unique and relevant; however, I think that he probably did not want to discuss any such issue that were directly not related with Sangh."<sup>1</sup>

Anant Kanekar, a renowned writer from Maharashtra, has also written about Golwalkar, "*Gururji* not only pondered about the societal concerns but also pondered about the economic issues and the related problems of the society (*sic*)."<sup>2</sup> After independence, a big change occurred in the political economy of India. Earlier based on agriculture, now the Indian society was experiencing a remarkable change through industrialization, which in turn helped marketization in expanding its feet across the nation. Apart from this, a significant alteration emerged in the ideological roots of Indian economy as the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to apply the socialist philosophy while devising the socio-political-economic policy of the nation. He was extremely impressed by the socialist ideology and philosophy of the former USSR and wanted to establish a similar socialist society in India. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the influence of socialist revolution in the Soviet Union, socialism was gaining momentum throughout the world in the countries that had faced or were facing the

brunt of colonialism. It may also be considered that after the end of World War II, the world was divided into two blocs and countries like India, despite being known as 'non-aligned countries', had a soft corner for socialism on account of its revolutionary and equitable approach towards equal distribution of resources among all the members of a country.

In a socialist society, the resources of a country and its wealth belong to the society and the nation. The government exercises control over all public resources and wealth and manages its equal distribution among all members. Socialism is both a theory as well as a movement. It acquires different forms in different circumstances within the community. It is said that it is like a cap that is used by different people in different ways; thus, it has lost its original meaning. Generally, it can be said that socialism is that form of revolution that promotes gaining control over the wealth and the resources of the nation to create a classless society.

Although, terms such as 'Socialist Revolution' and 'Socialist' have been in use since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, yet the ideology of socialism has also been described in BC 6000. Scholar and philosopher Plato elaborated upon the term 'socialism' for the first time in history. Plato not only favored the utilization of resources and wealth equally by the whole society, but he also strongly favored the abolishing of the personal family system and wanted to promote slavery and make women and children social property. His favoritism was restricted only to the narrow-minded ruling class. Thus, it is called as 'Aristocratic Socialism'. In the early years of modern times, freedom of expression and speech laid the path for secularism, and scholar Thomas Moore (1923) propagated a structure of society based on equality. However, before the industrial revolution, there was no place for modern socialist ideology and for the proletariat section of the society. With the beginning of the industrial revolution, capitalist society came into being. It brought a gradual end to ancient traditions and religious practices. This eventually led to the rise of socialism and socialist revolution.<sup>3</sup>

### **Golwalkar's Thoughts on Economy**

Golwalkar had studied Indian philosophy, culture and its traditions, religion and literature thoroughly along with studying the Western concepts and thoughts like Socialism, Marxism and Westernization in detail. In his lectures and speeches, he clearly spoke against both, Marxism as well as Westernization. He would often make comparisons between Indian philosophy and literature and Marxism and its ideology. Marxism promoted economic determinism, dialectical materialism and class struggle as its three basic principles, but Golwalkar did not accept these theories. The foundational principles of Karl Marx are based on class struggle and the victory of classless society over capitalism. However, Golwalkar did not believe that mutual dislike and hatred among people can lead to any success. He believed that Communism often leads to class distinction and spread of hatred, which eventually leads to a struggle among the classes. The ideology of Karl Marx is based on this acrimony and mutual hatred. On the contrary, Golwalkar promoted class harmony, cooperation and mutual understanding to make a nation stronger. He believed that class distinction leads to the division of society, which is not good for a nation. The Soviet Union and China are often considered as the two leading examples of communism, which is based on the principles of Marxism. On this, Golwalkar said, "China and Russia have always tried to grab power in the name of socialism, for which both the nations indulged in several destructive measures. The history of both these countries cited several examples wherein the power-hungry politicians did not hesitate in harming the citizens of their own country to gain more political power. Both China and Russia call themselves progressive and developed but both desire to control the whole world. Golwalkar considers this kind of nature and behavior is demonic."<sup>4</sup> Golwalkar was a strict critic of violence in society. He believed that socialism and communism led to the rise of violent tendencies in an individual. In one of his talks, he has said that revolution and bloodshed are the two characteristics of communists and that is why they raise the slogan of *Inquilab Zindabad*, but what does a common man want—revolution or peace? If one always wanted revolution and violence, it would lead to disharmony in the society.<sup>5</sup>

The RSS and its political organization, the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), are considered to be propagators of the capitalist ideology. Since Capitalism is the stark opposite economic system of Socialism, it is believed that the RSS has always considered Marx as a villain. However, Golwalkar never had any ill feelings for Marx. Capitalism is considered to be the opposite system of socialism and its propagator, Karl Marx is regarded as an anti-hero, however, Shri. Golwalkar did not have any such ill-feelings towards him. Shri. Krishna Kumar Baweja has mentioned, "Golwalkar does not consider Karl Marx the way he has been portrayed by Western Marxist ideologues; immature, uncultured and rigid in his attitude. Golwalkar believed that Karl Marx considered economic policy as a tool and developed his ideology based on the same. He also believed that if Karl Marx had the opportunity to be influenced by Hindu ideology, his whole ideology and philosophy would have changed."<sup>6</sup>

Golwalkar had openly discussed his views on industrialization and industrial economic planning through his speeches. For example, Golwalkar considered the use of term 'Collective Bargaining' as incorrect. According to him, by using this term, only the owner and the labor look like the two pertinent parties in an industrial system. It neglects the fact that it is the society that plays the most important role in defining the industrial structure. In industrialization, peaceful solutions and production cannot be considered as a matter of concern only between

the owner and the labor. If considered so, it may prove to be dangerous for national interest. Golwalkar also believed that it is essential to have an open dialogue between the organizers and the labor so that they can be aware of their personal benefits and realize that their personal benefits are obsolete when compared to the country's causes and concerns.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Golwalkar did not like that every person registered under the Bhartiya Labour Union should demand the right to work. According to him, work is the duty of every person. Every person in society should get work according to his interest and capability, and it is the duty of the leaders to create such opportunities in the society and economic system. Golwalkar wanted to create such a society wherein every individual could get work according to his or her natural interests.<sup>8</sup>

In the economic field, Golwalkar was in the favor of maximum production. Therefore, he was against the inconsiderate closure of production houses and strikes by workers; but under special circumstances, he considered the call for strikes by labor unions as essential. Thus, he was not in favor of the complete abolishment of strikes and inconsiderate closure. He wanted to establish such a system wherein the need for strikes could be eliminated.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1946, Golwalkar held discussions on the topic, 'Nationalization of industries and most favorable industrial form'. These discussions were held with the journalists at various locations throughout the country. During these discussions, he said, "Nationalization of industries would lead to the capitalism in the nation, which is as equally good or bad as a normal capitalism is. I am looking forward to a cooperative form of industrial system with lots of hope. I am looking forward to a system where not just the cooperative committee but also every person of the society would lay ample stress on duties and responsibilities instead of truancy, because Indian culture and tradition focuses on the duties and responsibilities of every individual. I wish that the independent India should encourage such sentiments."<sup>10</sup>

Golwalkar proposed that instead of centralizing and nationalizing industrial organizations, small-scale and cottage industries should be promoted. He believed that only defense-related big industries should be established in the country and encouraging small-scale industries would reduce the disparity between the rural and the urban classes as well as between rural and urban society. According to him, a rise in the industrial economy, disciplined behavior and a feeling of patriotism among the citizens would bring prosperity to the country. By citing examples of countries such as Germany and Japan, Golwalkar tried to explain that both these countries were financially shattered due to World War II, but as a result of the dedicated attitude of their labor force and the patriotism of its citizens, they have become one of the strongest economies of the world.<sup>11</sup>

The thoughts and ideology of Golwalkar have been compiled in a compendium called *Arthik Samasayo ka Samadhan*. He believed that using industrialization as a parameter of any nation's progress leads to more struggles in the world. When a country tries to sell its surplus products in other countries, it leads to financial struggles and consumption of goods. The other problem with increasing industrialization and mechanization is the rise in unemployment. Thus, the goal of industrialization should be providing more and more employment opportunities in a society. Instead of blindly aping western countries in industrializing manufacturing units, there is a need to leverage the available labor force of our country so that there is more opportunity to earn money and reduce poverty, hunger and unemployment from society. He believed that just raising slogans and taking out processions are not enough; we need to utilize our labor force and raise our economy to make our country into a strong economy.<sup>12</sup>

### **Political Views of Golwalkar**

Golwalkar spent 40 years of his life serving a non-political organization such as the RSS. He provided exemplary guidance to the RSS as its leader. The political views and ideology of Golwalkar does not cater to a particular group and does not entertain any selfish political strategy. He always worked towards the betterment of the country. According to him, "in modern times, many Western scholars and philosophers have shared their ideology based on anarchy, socialism, scientific socialism which lays the foundation of stateless society. However, none of the western scholars could provide solutions to how to maintain law and order in a society and in the absence of law and order; how to make a society function in an organized way. On the other hand, in a traditional Indian philosophy, there are solid evidence of that the whole nation and its organization was based on the ideology of religion."<sup>13</sup>

In the field of politics, Golwalkar has shared his views on the theory of a nation, nationalism and a Hindu nation from time to time. His views, though traditional, continue to be relevant in modern times. A popular misconception in the realms of Political Science is about the interchangeably use of 'State' and 'Nation', despite the fact they are different from each other. In reality, a state is basically a political entity with its defined territory, population, government and sovereignty. This is supported by the law that ensures the four core constituents of a 'state' remain intact. However, when we look at a 'nation', we find a sense of collective identity and the pride of its people added to the political notion of a state.

A nation is a mindset, which is built by the sentiments of its citizens. For a strong nation, there are three fundamental requirements: first, strong feelings of the people living in that country; second, sentiments of the

people towards their historical heritage; and the third and the most important requirement, a harmonious tradition and culture. Golwalkar has used all these fundamental requirements to emphasize that India is one nation, united in its diversity. He believed that to build a powerful nation, its citizens should think of their native country as their motherland and not just a piece of land. People should understand that it is not a commodity; it is a live entity. When the citizens of a nation show their love and respect towards their country, only then a country becomes a powerful nation. Any kind of material condition or resource is not solely sufficient to build a nation because a nation is a spiritual entity.<sup>14</sup>

To further elaborate this view, famous French philosopher, Ernest Reno wrote that “The soil provides the substratum the field for struggle and labor’s man provides the soul. Man is everything in the formation of this scared thing that we call a people. Nothing that is material suffices here. A nation is a spiritual principle the result of the intricate working of history.” Around 100 years back, what Reno stated was believed and mentioned in his own words by Golwalkar too. He said, “The first thing to build a nation required is a mass of land, which is bounded by some natural boundaries, and which can provide employment to its people so that the nation can grow and prosper. The second very important thing that is required is a strong society that loves and respects its nation and nurtures it. However, a nation is not just a collection of human beings living and working together on a mass of land. An assemblage of people at one place does not constitute the definition of a nation. A nation is defined by the disciplined life style of the people. It should have a distinct culture and tradition, unique experiences, sentiments and rituals. In this way, when the society lives in conjunction with its ideology and principles and the people respect and love the land they live in, then only a powerful nation can be built.”<sup>15</sup>

Language is another significant feature of a nation. However, Golwalkar was never in favor of dividing a nation on the basis of language. He believed that the formation of a nation on a linguistic basis often leads to an unfavorable environment in the country. Sometimes people go to the extremes of establishing their own armies and a separate national flag because of language differences. One needs to find solutions to such issues. It is said that these issues are only recent developments; however, this is not the case. In earlier times, there was an absence of political unity in India. The country was divided into several independent states. Hence, if there are different states today also, it is not a new concept in India. This concept has been followed in India for centuries. He further mentioned in his speeches that, “I was already against dividing the nation on linguistic lines. When the whole nation was divided into different states, then instead of fighting on the basis of language, there should be an overall development of these states. The states should be developed on the basis of organized and capable governance.”<sup>16</sup>

About democratic form of governance, Golwalkar believed that of all forms of governments seen in the world, the democratic form of government is the least harmful. In this form of governance, every citizen has the right to represent the government. However, to make democracy a success, it is imperative that society should promote literacy. Only literate people can understand the issues of economy, and politics. In this way, only an educated and a knowledgeable society can select a qualified representative for the country.” He strongly believed that an uneducated and ignorant person or society would choose an incompetent person as their representative, under the influence of some kind of temptations, be it in cash or kind. As a result, the whole nation will have to bear the consequences of such incompetency stemming from illiteracy and lack of education. According to him, “If one chooses an incompetent representative, only such a kind of politician is developed who only knows how to win elections. In this way, we can say that the representative of the farmers is chosen as a doctor or a lawyer, who does not know anything about farming.”<sup>17</sup>

Golwalkar also knew that there could be multiple challenges in the way of a democratic government. He believed that, “A democratic form of government faces many such issues. One feels that in the present scenario, apart from the prevalent procedure of selecting regional representatives on the basis of population, one should also add representatives who can understand the issues of industrialization. In English, this term is known as Functional Representation. It is commonly used in some nations in the world. If this process is practiced in India, then along with the unknowledgeable people, there would be some knowledgeable representatives as well who can assess a problem and provide solutions for it.” Golwalkar’s views on democratic form of governance are very clear. He not only elaborated upon the problems with this kind of government but also provided solutions for these problems.<sup>18</sup>

Golwalkar has also elaborated his views on the Panchayati Raj system of India. Praising this form of rural governance, he said, “The Panchayati Raj system reflects the original nature of the representative society. Golwalkar has written in his texts, “Although the Panchayati Raj system is very famous in India but due to some structural discrepancies, there are a few anomalies in this system. In the current situation, groupism, and casteism create disharmony in the society. Such enmity and disharmony are also prevalent in the villages and taking advantage of such a situation, many criminals get voted as *Panch* and come in the Panchayats as powerful rural leaders.(sic)” Golwalkar further states, “These anomalies should be corrected in the Panchayati Raj system and this unique system of governance should be implemented in a way where each and Indian can be benefited. Wise and honest people should come forward as representatives and run the governance of the Panchayat to solve the issues of the rural population.”<sup>19</sup>

Keeping in mind the unity of the nation, Golwalkar used the term, 'us' to integrate the sentiment of unity among the people in every speech he gave. He believed that, "In India, secularism in this country is impractical and disorganized; this concept is imported from western countries. As per them, secularism is an essential aspect of democracy whereas nationalism in itself is a whole entity, but groupism and castism lead to create rifts among Indian Christians and Muslims in the society. On the other hand, a feeling of unity and respect bring harmony in the society and unite the Christians and Muslims with the Hindus in India."<sup>20</sup>

Golwalkar believed that nationalism, and not secularism, is essential for the development and the progress of the nation as well as of all the communities in India. The Indianization of every citizen of India is the only measure for the progress and development of the society and the nation. Hindu philosophy is the only ideology in which the integration of every community is reflected. Therefore, a Hindu society reflects unity in diversity. Golwalkar mentioned in various speeches and conversations that, "For any nation, secularism is not important, but respect towards every religion is the key to the progress and development of our nation. India has never promoted or favored any particular religion and the Hindu ideology has always respected every religion. This is the positive aspect of secularism as practiced in India."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Golwalkar's comprehensive thoughts on politics and economy were based on the concept of welfarist nationalism. He promoted the concept of self-reliance while ensuring different elements and stakeholders of an economic system stay connected and keep progressing with the changing times. Rejecting the idea of Marxism that promotes clashes and violence in society, Golwalkar's idea was to develop a system that is based on peace and cooperation. His political thoughts endorsed the concepts of democracy, human dignity, decentralization of power, nationalism, social welfare, a system built up on an educated society and the Hindu ideology that speaks of unity in diversity.

In today's testing times of Covid 19, when the entire world is looking for a solution to various political and economic challenges, Golwalkar's thoughts provide an array of solutions to progress both as a nation and as a global society.

## REFERENCES

1. Dattopant Thengdi, Sanket Rekha, Indian Labour Union, New Delhi, 1989, p. 63.
2. Shri Guruji, Samagra Khand, Chintan Sudha, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 2003, p.345.
3. Terence Bell, Socialism, Britannica Encyclopedia, available at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/socialism#ref276336>, accessed on 20 March 2021.
4. Dattopant Thengdi, Sanket Rekha, Indian Labour Union, New Delhi, 1989, p. 80.
5. N.H. Palkar, Shri Guruji, Vyakti aur Kaarya, , Nagpur, p. 298.
6. Krishna Kumar Baweja, Guruji Vyaktitva and Krittiva, Suruchi Publication, New Delhi, 2004, P. 117.
7. M.G. Vaid, Rashtra Kewal Bhautik Hi Nhi Ek Adhyatmik Anubhuti Hai, Swadesh Rashtrarishi Guruji Shatabdi Visheshank, Bhopal, 2008, p. 313.
8. Dattopant Thengadi, Sanket Rekha, Indian Labour Union, New Delhi, 1989, p. 78.
9. Ibid, p.80.
10. Shri Guruji, Samagra Khand, Samajodbodhan, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 2003, p.277.
11. Ibid.
12. Dr Bajranglal Gupta, Shri Guruji Ka Arthik Chintan, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 2006, p.143.
13. M.G. Vaid, Rashtra Kewal Bhautik Hi Nhi Ek Adhyatmik Anubhuti Hai, Swadesh Rashtrarishi Shatabdi Visheshank, Bhopal, 2008, p. 322.
14. Ibid, p.323.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid, p.325.
17. Aftab Ahmad Siddiqui, ek samagra aadhunik chintak, Shri. Guruji Swadesh (Rashtrarishi Shri Guruji shatabdi visheshank) Bhopal, 2008, p. 115
18. Ibid, p.116.
19. Shri Guruji, Samagra Khand, Chintan Sudha, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 2011, p.231.
20. Gaurinath Rastogi, Shri Guruji aur Rajneeti, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 2006, p.122.
21. Ibid.