Growing Disengagement with Gandhi's Ideas

What is the issue?

The recent acts of placing Hindutva leader Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on the same footing as Mahatma Gandhi has sparked criticism from Gandhians.

Who is Vinayak Savarkar?

- Vinayak Savarkar, a central figure in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination trial.
- Savarkar was let off for lack of adequate corroborative evidence, but the Jivanlal Kapur Commission set up in the 1960s concluded that the facts were destructive of any theory other than the conspiracy to murder by Savarkar and his group.
- No further inquiries about Savarkar's role were made as he was dead by then.

What about the Gandhi power?

- **Non-violence-** The non-violence of Gandhiji was a powerful idea and a weapon.
- **Religious tolerance** - In 1931, while moving the Resolution on Fundamental Rights at the Congress session in Karachi, Gandhiji emphasised religious tolerance and religious neutrality of the state.
- **Interpretation of ideals of Hinduism**- Gandhiji's message was not about Hindu reform but of an interpretation of high ideals as the soul of Hinduism itself, putting it on a higher pedestal.

To know about ideological comparison of Savarkar and Gandhiji, click here

What will be the consequences of diminution of the Mahatma Gandhi?

- **Diversity-** A discourse seeking to diminish Gandhiji will have grievous consequences on the diversity among Indians, and all those who share the Indian dream because it offers them rights, liberation and space.
- **Education system**- India's education system will be immediately impacted by this twisted alt-history.
- Learning of ancient India without its cultures, religions and contradictions will be similiar to the Islamisation of Pakistani textbooks where vast and rich aspects of the subcontinent were left untaught.
- **Impact on youths**- With over 60% of India younger than 26 years of age, ideas drilled down now will stay for the lifespan of this now young population.
- **Widen social equality**- The Golwalkar-Savarkar framework rooted in a now discredited and failed idea of states in the European imagination of the 1930s can widen social distances.
- Data on economic inequality (the Sachar Committee Report on Muslims), have clearly established the extent of backwardness and oppression suffered by a majority of our

countrymen and women.

- **Communal violence**- Already, communal incidents are on the rise by everyday acts and differential treatment accorded by those in power to the place of religion in public life.
- A push towards a worldview promoting deeply divisive ideas from the days of the two-nation theory ensures that real issues are not posed at all thus having a setback for not just Muslims but for India as a whole.
- **Downtrodden**- Taking away the soul of Gandhiji and replacing it with Savarkar has implications on the future of the most downtrodden — Dalits.
- Without Gandhiji's empowering and revolutionary companion call, untouchability in Hinduism would be left out.

References

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