



## MAHATHMA GANDHIJI THOUGHT ON KHADI

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## ABSTRACT

Gandhiji presented khadi as a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance. It was his belief that reconstruction of the society and effective Satyagraha against the foreign rule can be possible only through khadi. Khadi is the central core of the constructive activities as recommended by him. According to him there could be no swaraj without universal and voluntary acceptance of khadi. In his words, "I am a salesman of swaraj. I am a devotee of khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear khadi. The spinning wheel was at one time the symbol of India's poverty and backwardness. Gandhiji turned it into a symbol of self-reliance and non-violence. Khadi enabled him to carry his message of swadeshi and swaraj to the people and to establish connection with them. This paper is based on secondary sources. It focus on concepts of KHADI, Gandhiji's ideas on KHADI.

**KEYWORDS** : Importance of KHADI, Propagation of KHADI, Gandhi's views on KHADI,

## INTRODUCTION:

Gandhiji presented khadi as a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance. It was his belief that reconstruction of the society and effective Satyagraha against the foreign rule can be possible only through khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear khadi."1. Gandhiji started his movement for khadi in 1918. His emphasis at first was on khadi as providing relief to our poverty-stricken masses. But one finds a change in his emphasis from 1934, more especially from 1935, when he began on insisting on khadi for the villager's own use, rather than merely for sale to others. His further over his khadi movement, and when he came out of jail he came with a determination to give a new turn to khadi work in order to make khadi serve the needs of villagers themselves first and foremost. He poured out his soul to his fellow-workers in 1944, and urged them to effect the change. 2. The spinning wheel was at one time the symbol of India's poverty and backwardness. Gandhiji turned it into a symbol of self-reliance and non-violence. Khadi enabled him to carry his message of swadeshi and swaraj to the people and to establish connection with them.

## IMPORTANCE OF KHADI

"Like swaraj, khadi is our birth-right, and it is our life-long duty to use that only. Anyone who does not fulfill that duty is totally ignorant of what swaraj is. We cannot claim to have understood the meaning of swaraj till khadi becomes as universal as currency. I have only one message to give and that concerns khadi. Place khadi in my hands and I shall place swaraj in yours. The uplift of the Antyajias is also covered by khadi and even Hindu-Muslim unity will live through it. It is also a great instrument of peace. This does not mean that I do not favor boycott of Councils and law-courts, but in order that people may not have a grievance against those who go to them, I desire that the people should carry on work concerning khadi even with the help of lawyers and members of legislatures. Keep the Moderates highly pleased; cultivate love and friendship for them. Once they become fearless, that very moment they will become one with us. The same holds good also for Englishmen. "Ever since the commencement of our present struggle, we have been feeling the necessity of boycotting foreign cloth. I venture to suggest that, when khaddar comes universally in use, the boycott of foreign cloth will automatically follow.

## GANDHIJI ON KHADI

Speaking for myself, charkha and khaddar have a special religious significance to me because they are a symbol of kinship between the members of both the communities and the hunger- and disease-stricken poor. It is by virtue of the fact that our movement can today be described as moral and economic as well as political."1 (Letter written to Abdul Bari from Sabarmati Jail, after 12-3-1922. "You have asked me why wearing of Indian mill cloth does not amount to boycott of foreign cloth. This is colossal ignorance. For fulfilling the boycott it is not enough if we wear mill cloth. The

Bengalis even today complain of the exploitation of Bengal by the mill-owners at the time of the Partition. Their experience should teach us that boycott cannot be achieved with the help of only mill cloth. The propaganda should, therefore, be in favour of khadi only. It is obvious that mill cloth has no place in the house of the Congress."2 (A speech at Public Meeting, Poona, on 4-9-1924.) "I am convinced that swaraj cannot come so long as the tens of millions of our brothers and sisters do not take to the charkha, do not spin, do not make khadi and wear it."3 (Opening speech at Belgaum Congress, 26-12-1924.) "What is the national programme today? Removal of untouchability by the Hindus, khaddar and Hindu-Muslim unity. I think all the three items are calculated to help a solution of your difficulties. Even Hindu-Muslim unity means more or less a solution of the untouchability question too, and khaddar can unite us as nothing else can."4 (Young India, 14-5-1925.)

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

- To know Propagation of KHADI,
- To know Mahatma Gandhiji's views on KHADI

## METHODOLOGY

Information in this study has been secondary sources. A secondary source includes books, articles, journals and news papers etc.

## PROPAGATION OF KHADI

"Using khadi is the foundation of swadeshi, since khadi is the only thing which can be made from thick yarn, and made easily. It has not so far had to compete with machine-made cloth. The consumption of khadi alone enables lakhs of poor people to earn an honest living, staying at home. boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand weaving, i.e., khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money, but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organization of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organization.

"The two issues of khadi and political organization should be kept absolutely separate. There must be no confusion. The aim of khadi is humanitarian; but so far as India is concerned, its effect is bound to be immensely political. "If khadi is not constantly kept in view, the result will be that the price of cloth made in mills in India — not Indian mills — will keep increasing and the boycott will never become effective.

1. In this age, no amount of effort would make it possible for mills to make cloth sufficient to meet the country's needs.
2. The concern of mills generally is, and will be, profits.

3. The Government can, at any time, suppress the mills.
4. As mills are dependent upon foreign machines and foreign techniques, they could, all of a sudden, be faced with a difficult situation. While on the contrary:
  1. If the sentiment for khadi becomes widespread in the country, we can produce today as much khadi as we require.
  2. Khadi does not require as much capital as mills do

### Gandhiji's Views on KHADHI

#### (a) To Harijans

"Gandhiji has given up all those things which were only a means for securing swaraj. You must, however, pursue that which helps the attainment of self-purification — khadi, the abolition of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. Hinduism will be destroyed if untouchability is not ended and, without khadi, there will be such starvation in the country that our flesh will be eaten up by crows and dogs, leaving only bones behind."

"Universalization of spinning means the automatic solution of many other questions. Take the untouchability problem. It is impossible to universalize the wheel without tackling untouchability. The two things hang together. You can thus see that spinning alone does lead to swaraj. "Very few people have any notion of what khadi means to Harijans. Simple weaving is almost an exclusive speciality of Harijans, and even though mill spinning and weaving have deprived many Harijans of a source of livelihood, thousands of them are still dependent upon weaving. I personally believe that hand-ginning, hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving have a brilliant future, at least in India. If the millions are to live with any degree of comfort, the mills must seek main custom outside India.

Those who, apart from the whole programme of anti-untouchability, are interested in the economic betterment of Harijans should know that khadi gives employment to thousands of Harijan men, women and children who otherwise had no employment. It entirely supports some families and supplements the slender resources of many more and keeps the wolf from the door. Its capacity to be the only universal source of employment to the starving millions is not now seriously questioned. It is this poor man's stay which is being undermined by unscrupulous methods.

#### (b) To Muslims

"Spinning is such an activity that both Hindus and Muslims can take equal part in it. In respect of some crafts, Muslims lead the world and weaving is one of them. The Dacca muslin used to be woven by Muslims alone. "I have not known many Muslim organizations devoted specially to khadi work. Indeed during the Bakr-Id in Ahmedabad, Mussalmans could be counted on the fingers of one hand who were dressed in khadi. They were not even dressed in Indian mill-cloth. It was all foreign. Let me hope this committee will change this state of things. I hope, too, that the members are all "You can win swaraj only

with non-violence and never with violence. If you are convinced of that, you will not take time to be convinced that by spinning alone can you win swaraj. non-violence in action can be achieved by nothing but a successful working out of a peaceful programme of the universalization of the spinning-wheel.

How will you solve the Hindu-Muslim question but by getting the Hindu to work in the cause of khadi for the Mussalman, and vice versa? And in order that you get the Mussalman and the Hindu and the untouchable to work together, you have to plod away in faith and confidence in yourselves.

The Maulana hopes that he will be able to bring around three thousand members from among the Mussalmans before the year closes. It has been complained that, whereas there are many Hindus in the khadi service, there are but few Mussalmans. Therefore, the Maulana wants me to declare this also that all such Mussalmans whose hearts are pure and who are industrious had got their place in

it. But they who want to come into it must obey its laws. Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews and all have their place in this A.I.S.A., if they believe in khadi. Khadi Pratishtan has some but they belong to the humbler walks of life. The Abhoy Ashram has one or two. There is not much money to be had for service. He has undertaken to examine every case personally and make his recommendation to the Council. But I give due warning to all concerned whether Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis or Jews, that they must not blame the Council if the khaddar service becomes a Hindu preserve for want of efforts, ability or love for khaddar on the part of the others.

#### (c) To Women

When Hindu and Muslim sisters have adopted the spinning-wheel and come to look upon khadi as their adornment, Gandhiji shall feel that He has got all he wanted. He shall then certainly please my correspondent by wearing a dhoti and a long shirt with a collar, for he believes that, when the women have fallen in love with khadi, swaraj will have been won. Meanwhile the correspondent should be kind to me and to those like me who wear a loin-cloth and, even if he regards the loin-cloth as indecent, should look upon people who wear it as his brethren, overlooking their indecency." Gandhiji knows hundreds of husbands who have been delighted to find their wives in khadi clothes. Their household expenditure has been reduced and their love for their khadi-clad wives has grown." He appeals to the sisters who think like her to take boldly to khadi and realize that beauty does not consist in dress but in purity of character, and clothes are not meant for adornment but for protecting the body from heat and cold."

It was reserved for the modern women of India to tell me that khaddar is too coarse for them. But do you know that by your ceasing to wear khaddar millions of our sisters and brothers have been reduced to poverty? It is all very well for you who are fairly well-to-do, to attend functions and to go about in saris of 18 cubits. But remember that your sisters in the villages of India have not only no saris such as you have, but have not even enough food to eat. And Gandhiji is telling God's truth when He says that he has seen hundreds, if not thousands, of women in India who have no clothes to wear but rags. Even your money, your jewelry, your rings and your necklaces can be of no earthly use to me unless both men and women will wear khadi and nothing but that. This collecting of purses for the spinning-wheel is only a brief and intermediate interval. When every man and woman in India naturally takes to khadi as they all take to the grains that are grown on India's plains there will be as little use for these collections as there is for collection in order to carry on propaganda for cultivating rice and wheat in India. And if Gandhiji could but induce you to understand the tremendous importance that khadi has to millions of starving people living in 7,00,000 villages in the whole of India.

### CONCLUSION

Gandhi presented khadi as a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance. According to Mahatma Gandhi there could be no swaraj without universal and voluntary acceptance of khadi. The spinning wheel was at one time the symbol of India's poverty and backwardness. Gandhi turned it into a symbol of self-reliance and non-violence. "Gandhi has given up all those things which were only a means for securing swaraj. You must, however, pursue that which helps the attainment of self-purification — khadi, the abolition of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. Spinning is such an activity that both Hindus and Muslims can take equal part in it. "A woman is adorable, not for the jewellery she wears, but for the purity of her heart. Gandhiji therefore urge you, if you believe that khadi will solve all the distress of India, we have been feeling the necessity of boycotting foreign cloth. He ventures to suggest that, when khaddar comes universally in use, the boycott of foreign cloth will automatically follow.

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