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THE RE-VITALIZATION OF KHADI - A NEED OF THE HOUR: A CASE STUDY AT SANGRUR (PUNJAB)

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ABSTRACT

Sheen of Khadi is faded now, needs re-vitalization by an effective dose to be given by Government of India, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Khadi Industries (KIs), non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the like. Concerted efforts are needed by them in favour of Research and Design (R&D) work, training to artisans, market – survey to note who wants what. A very good infrastructure, Financial as well as Political Support, borrowing high-tech to complete internationally, giving an impressive exposure to quality Khadi, through mass-media in a bid to make our young generation of 21st century socially aware and awakened is the need of the hour today. 'Khadi' is our national pride should now be recognized as 'National Fabric' 'National Flag', 'National Dress', 'Symbol of National Economy' and what not more, as dreamt by Mahatma Gandhi, our Father of the Nation. We do not lack manpower, natural resources, finances or infrastructure in our country however, we lack only will power. If it is brought on the way we can definitely bring our India once again on glittering globe ahead of Japan, Indonesia, Switzerland, Singapore, Malaysia and China even. We should try to revive it as 'Quality Khadi', out lost glory with full sincerity. It is hoped that Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can play more effective and better role, in this direction.

KEYWORDS

Sheen, Marginalization, Glittering, Revolutionize, Vigours.

INTRODUCTION

Khadi has been our national pride as a sacred National Fabric. Just to enhance its pride, it is needed to support *de-centralization* of our national economy at village level where there is the heart of khadi work, needs to be more focused in terms of its strength's and weaknesses. Mahatma Gandhi, our Nation-Father has taught Indians and to those residing abroad, a lesson of clothing sense of wearing or using khadi and clothing ethics against the mill-cloth coming to India from Britain, and its undue taxation on weavers, spinners and cloth-makers specially in India. Mahatma stressed on spinning khadi, a different kind of cloth, with a difference of superior quality. Hand spinning was emphasized for clothing with a conscience by the skilled spinners. Undoubtedly, in pre and post independence era, 'khadi' had been used as synonym of Mahatma Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi as 'Khadi'. It was commonly known as 'khadi' or 'khaddar' throughout India which was woven using hand-spun yarn, by men, women, peasants, artisans and even by labourers. The cloth became a key symbol of India's freedom struggle from British rule. Mahatma Gandhi was no doubt, a great soul with great vision having a great idea of elevating the living standard of Indians through this national cloth for *self-sufficiency*. Generation of employment to the Indians was the hidden agenda of the movement.

Further, his aim was to boost Indian Economy through cottage industry of 'Khadi' in every home of villages named as '*Swa-deshi*'. Begali actively participated in it and promoted this '*Swa-deshi*' movement through Indian produced hand-spun cloth. By embracing khadi cloth, this had become the dress of every Indian-traditionally the dress of every labourer, tribal, artisan and every spinner of the country. All the national leaders and citizens including Mahatma Gandhi himself adopted khadi in form of white kurta, white dhoti, white topi (cap)/Pagdi (Turban) which had become then the National Dress. Resultantly, the sale of foreign cloth and its import from Britain was boycotted by almost all the Indians – rather burnt whether these were in their custody. During this movement of Swa-deshi, the Congress Party used it as official national uniform and secondly, used this wheel of progress (symbol of charkha) at the centre of the National Flag (Tri-Colour) made of 'khadi' only. The promotion of 'khadi' was thus, in the main national agenda.

'Khadi' at the subsequent stage in India was reformed and developed to refer as 'khadi'- silk and 'kahi-wool', through hand-knit-cotton and silk by the Indians. It was recognized by all, much cheaper than machine-knit-yarn mill-cloth, coming from Europe to use. It was much imported in Europe to use it as raw material and after dyeing it again exported to India as Lion Cloth at much higher rates, which was opposed into-to by all the Indians through 'khadi'(swa-deshi) campaign. Therefore, Khadi clad Mahatma with white dhoti kurta-pagdi had an impact on rest of the Indians, his followers in particular, not in India but in abroad too.

In post independence era, it was Mahatma's dream that Khadi would be the every day dress of all the Indians, however, it could be insignificantly achieved. Love towards the sacred national cloth could not be sustained. It could be retained only in political arena. 'Khadi' had been more *marginalized* owing to introduction of 'Globalisation' and 'Liberization' of Indian Economy. Resultantly, khadi was merely stored in selling centres and its production was marked remarkably at low ebb.

Sustainable national character of 'khadi' needs its revival now-how to re-vitalize its use and role in Indian society at large. 'Khadi-Cotton', 'Khadi-Silk', 'Khadi-Polyester', 'Bio-Khadi' and 'coloured Khadi Garments' introduced by National Institute of Design (NID) and National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Khadi and village Industries Commission (KVSC) are not good enough, require something practical than its purity. It requires proper focus on what is the taste and trend of people of India; what it should be the Marketing-Strategy in today's perspective, so as to make 'khadi' more popular, more trendy and more tasty in view of the new trend of fashion today. Our Fashion Designers have done a lot in this direction still; they have to do a lot more because their efforts have been proved just like a drop of water on heated fry-pan. Finest khadi is the requirement of India-Today, with colours, its durability and low maintenance cost. Patriotic young trendy minds of India should come forward to *revolutionize* this khadi sector in form of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) best using rural/urban masses of India in terms of every home employment and to go ahead of China after learning lesson from Japan, Switzerland, Malaysia, Singapore etc. the small fries much *glittering* on the globe.

'Khadi' is much more than a Fabric for we Indians. We Indians have no less knowledge, skills, natural resources but to improvise natural or, Govt. resources with strong will. The Sheen of 'Home-made Hand-Spun khadi' may be brought on National/International screen once again by our strong will power. Number of Indian Fashions Designers like Ritu Kumar, Devika Bhogwani, Rohit Bal, Rakesh Thakore have helped to put khadi in fashion world. Government too, made efforts to promote it. KVIC, NID, NIFT have contributed well in order to conserve and promote India's natural and cultural Heritage-Khadi. M/s Volkart Foundation, a Swiss Charitable Trust in association with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), an NGO have appreciated and took remarkable step in the recent past towards changing khadi's earlier image of being unfashionable. 'Preyasi', the Indian Designer, certified by GOI have launched

'Khadi Range Collection' and provided a glamorous platform for the Gandhian National Cotton. Sky is the limit-we have to do much more in this direction something to re-vitalize it and regain its lost healthy Sheen.

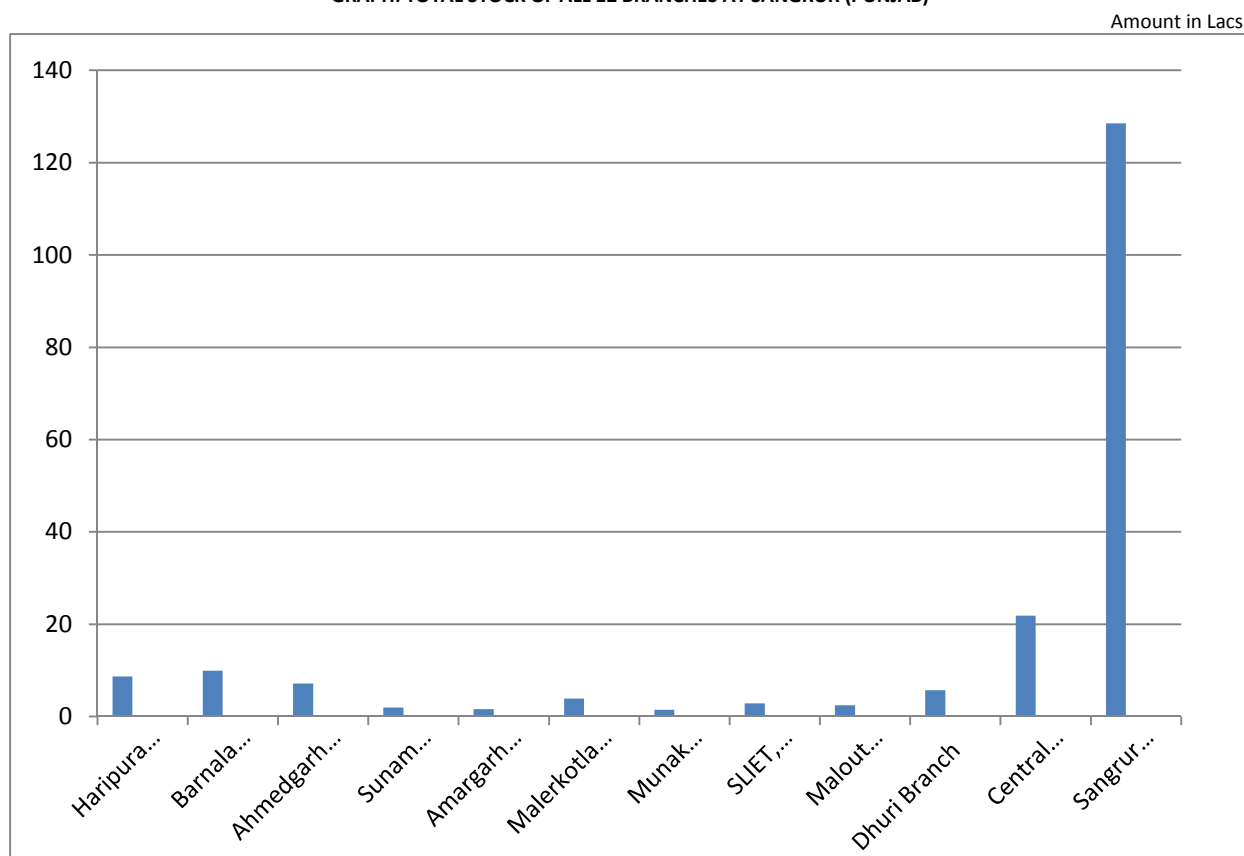
Why this cloth had lost its healthy Sheen? There were certain causes or weaknesses to it like, colours were limited, not durable, prone to *shrinkage* and high maintenance cost etc.. On the other hand, it bears some strength too, like bearing low cost of production, sweat absorbant, suiting to Indian climate conditions, touching almost every economic level of Indian society at large. We may say that much scope is there to revive this SME Sector for better Indian Economy and new *vigour* to Mahatma's Dream. And, it will give rise to *enormous* employment, as well. It covers another big area of production of Consumers goods like Agro-based products, Hand-made paper, pickles, incense sticks, Floor-Mats, Toilet Soaps, Ceramics, Spices under 'Sarvodya' Scheme of Govt. of India. KVIC established in 1957 received an adequate Financial Grants time-to-time from Central Government, The Initial objectives of establishing KVIC were – Self Sufficiency, Door-to-Door Employment and producing items as per the requirement of the masses. It tried much to keep 'Khadi' alive and promote it, as National Fabric by establishing a huge network of retail outlets across the Nation.

It will not be out of place to mention here, that the recent introduction of 'Tencel Khadi' by Deepika Gobind, a Bangalore based Designer in association with Karnatka Khadi Board was remarkably good in the sense that it showed less-shrinkage because of a blend of khadi and Tencel in the ratio of 70:30 Variety and quality-wise it was good –it was easy to wash and wear with low maintenance cost. Still, there is a need to establish Research and Development (R&D) units to experiment with new changing patterns and public demand time and again, and to face today's challenges. It will require political as well as beaurocratic support and strong will of the people to raise demand of 'khadi with quality. Special advertising budgets are needed to promote this Fabric, through today's media. Khadi shops are also required to be at every National / International Airports of the country, Suiting to the taste and trends of the local consumers. KVIC should design the packing and marketing strategy, in order to face the challenges of Globalisation. GOI had been sanctioning some of subsidies, grants for the same, to this sector.

CASE STUDY AT SANGRUR (PUNJAB)

Name and Address of UNIT Branch visited		M/s District Sangrur Khadi Gram Udyog Karyakarta Sangh, District Sangrur (Punjab)	
Nature of Business		Trading of Khadi Products and Products related to the Gramudyog Industry.	
Office		At Sangrur	
Factory Function		Earlier manufacturing was done but now-a-days, the finished goods are produced from other societies or from local manufacturers	
Date of visit to the Unit Branch at Sangrur(Pb.)		25 th August, 2009	
Person to whom contacted at the Unit with Designation and their contact numbers		1.Mr. Mohd. Bashir, The Secretary of Khadi Kavyakarta Sangh, Sangrur Contact # 09417766443 2.Mr. Rajendra Sharma, The Member of Khadi Karyakarta Sangh, Sangrur Contact # 094176-66354	
Premises in which stock is kept		Khadi Bhandar had twelve (12) Branches in all such as Central Store, Sangrur ; Sangrur Bhawan ; HP Road, Sangrur, Dhuri; Malerkotla ; Ahmedgarh, SLIET-Longowal, Amargarh, Barnala, Sunam. Moonak Branch and Malout Branch : These two branches have been closed from 31.03.2007. the stock kept there was transformed to central Warehouse, Sangrur. These branches on rented premises and have been vacated. So, these branches were not visited.	
Stock Audit Report		Vide letter # nil , dated 12.03.2007, M/s Dheeraj Lakhwara & Company-Chartered Accountants, Ludhiana have submitted its Stock Audit Report of M/s District Khadi Gram Udyog Karyakarta Sangh, Sangrur (Punjab) to the Chief Manager, Punjab National Bank , Patiala gate , Sangrur with certain observations. After going through the Stock Audit report, it has been observed there are twelve (12) branches in all, as already mentioned above. Out of these 12 two branches at Moonak and Malout have now been closed w.e.f. 31.03.2007.	
Condition of Store		On physical verification of Stores, the condition of stock was found not satisfactory. Undoubtedly, the stock was kept in Almirah and Racks however there was no proper keep-up of the stores. Huge layers of dust could be seen, piling up on almost all the items in major, of the branches. With the passage of time, the dust had even damaged the stock beyond alteration. Even in some branches, it appeared that the stock had not even being moved from their places for months together. The stock was not kept covered with polythene bags and no provisions had been made to stop dust from entering the place where stock was kept.	
Financial Position			
	a.	Sundry Debtors, as on 28 th February, 2007	Rs. 70 - 72 Lacs approx.
	b.	Sundry Creditors, as on 28 th February, 2007	Rs. 10 - 12 Lacs approx.
	c.	Insurance Policies, as on 28 th February, 2007	Insurance Policies 1.Rs. 163 Lacs and 2.Rs. 35 Lacs ,valid from- 1. 30.03.2006 to 29.03.2007 and 2. 04.12.2006 to 03.04.2007 Risk covered upto Rs. 198 lacs
	d.	Total Stock value at all the 12 Branches at Sangrur (as shown in graph. below)	Rs. 196.18 Lacs

GRAPH: TOTAL STOCK OF ALL 12 BRANCHES AT SANGRUR (PUNJAB)



OVERALL VIEW: As per Audit Report (2007), the overall condition of the Sangh was not good as on 12.03.2007. The financial condition of the Sangh was worsened a lot as they were not able to meet their day-to-day expenses. Some branches did not have any sale of Khadi Products in some month. The Sangh was surviving on Gramudhyog products like, Mehndi, Dhoop etc. It is due to frequent changes in likings of consumers and non-modernization of Khadi Sector. The Sangh had not been taking any aggressive steps to increase their sales nor, generated any demand from the customers.

The Mohd. Bashier, the Secretary had explained on 25.08.2009 during discussion that:

01. Total liability including Bank's advance and consortium Bank Credit (KVIC) was approximately Rs. 523 lacs;
02. A sum of Rs. 5 lacs per annum Financial Aid was received from Government which was quiet not sufficient to meet out such expenses;
03. 5% of total sale (Govt. – Subsidy) from Government of Punjab was awaited since 1994;
04. Neighbouring states like, Rajasthan, Gujrat, and Uttar Pradesh etc. were providing 10% - 15% Govt. subsidy to KVIC while Govt. of Punjab was offering only 5% but not paid so far;
05. Production was down as demand (Sale) was down; workers are resultantly unemployed;
06. Even no salary/wages/remuneration was regularly being paid to rural weavers/workers;
07. The condition of the stock which was bank's primary security, was adverse, as the stock was not saleable, due to this its worse condition or, due to adverse demand of the product in the market.

REASONS FOR SICKNESS IN KHADI SECTOR

- a) Lack of Demand of Khadi in general;
- b) Shortage of Working capital;
- c) Marketing Problems; and –
- d) Management Problems.

PROBLEMS OBSERVED

- a) Employment potential, not realized;
- b) Low wages earning;
- c) Stagnant production and Sale of 'Khadi'
- d) Inadequate Capacity of KVIC
 - i) Inadequate delegation;
 - ii) Insufficient skills
 - iii) Obsolete I.T and M.I.S
- e) Weak Khadi Institutions
 - i) Obsolete Production Technology;
 - ii) working Capital constraints;
 - iii) Limited Marketing capability;
 - iv) Govt. structure excludes weaver's participation
- f) Ineffective Khadi Policy and strategy
 - i) Weak marketing Policy;
 - ii) Poor Quality and cost of Raw Material and
 - iii) Repressive controls and support Schemes.

SUGGESTIVE MEASURES FOR RE-VITALIZATION OF KHADI**A) SUGGESTION TO GOVERNMENT**

- Khadi – A need to recognize it as 'National Fabric' Government may think of declaring 'Khadi, a National Fabric/Cloth. Quality of production, be focused attentively;
- Well Advertisement in Television/Radio/Internet – To awake youth and attract them for use of Khadi maximum in the areas of their taste. Younger generation must be made aware of its social, historic and economic relevance. 'Television', 'Radio' and 'Internet' etc., the mass media should be used for utilizing Khadi in every sphere of life.
- Uniform Code, be implemented in all Government run/aided schools/colleges/Government Offices – It should be mandatory by official declaration of GOI/State Govt., Schools, Colleges, Government Offices like, Railways, P&T Department, HAL, BHEL, GAIL, CPWD/PWD/All corporations and other organized groups. A National Dress Code should be introduced in all these areas so as to maintain Indian Identity by the dress itself as Arabians, Nepalese, Bhutanese are recognized, all over the world; politicians should go abroad in the National Dress for the Identity/recognition;
- Punjab Government may think of more effective subsidy on rational and realistic basis, in competition to its neighbouring states. SMEs including Khadi Sector should be well supported with 'Reliefs and 'concessions by the Government to boost and promote it.
- National Flag made of Khadi on all Government Buildings – compulsory to hoist. Government by its notification may made it compulsory to all Government/Government aided buildings for hoisting the Nation Flag in Khadi only at its top.
- National Awards/Incentive –Giving Ceremonies to appreciate and encourage Manufacturers/Exporters/Designers/Users as Government Departments for adopting Khadi and motivating others for Khadi use and Khadi wears.
- Government may think of, for providing 'Raw Material' at subsidized rate and providing other infrastructural facilities. Government must come forward to motivate by exempting dues on all important fronts and 24-hour power supply to the manufacturers/exporters.

B) SUGGESTION TO KVIC

- KVIC may think of re-energizing its 'Research & Development Cell' for collecting information about market trends – conducting proper market survey study about who wants what for incorporating variety of choices in the production process of khadi;
- Survey based on 'High-Tech National Fashion Trends' to be incorporated to produce variety of clothes for young girls/boys/elders etc. KVIC may think of conducting periodical exhibitions of khadi-products with variety of colours and choices;
- KVIC may think of imparting 'Effective Training' to those who are directly and indirectly associated with production and sale process. Short-term training programmes may be arranged at district Head Quarter level in various regional languages to make it more effective;
- 'Khadi Marketing and Distribution System' should be made more intensified – Pvt. Sector, NGOs may also be permitted to open outlets through 'Public Distribution System' and 'Consumers Co-operatives'. In order to get large number of customers, khadi should be sold through travelling and roaming sales Agents to every nook and corner of rural/urban sectors;
- 'For Sales promotion', in urban market in particular, an attractive rebate should be offered at par with Handloom Sector. Handloom Sector provides 20% while khadi sector gives 14% only. This limit should be abreast with Handloom Sector rebate of 20% or, even more in view of tough competition;

C) SUGGESTION TO OTHER KHADI INSTITUTIONS :

- We the citizen of India through Khadi Institutions should think that anything may not be applied by force – there should be free will of people to accept/recognize it; and, it is not tough if we are in close association, touch with people of rural/urban market.
- Schools, colleges, Government Departments should be persuaded to buy in bulk, the Khadi clothes to be used as school uniform, Police uniform., Defence Uniform, Railway/P&T Uniform etc. and wherever it may possibly be applicable.
- 'Khadi' should not be solely dependent on KVIC only, it should make its strong local base at rural, urban and organizational level – through exhibition-cum-sale under attractive 'Rebate Scheme'.
- Khadi Institutions play a major role in production and marketing sphere. Artisans/workers have directly associated with these Institutions. They may ensure continued employment opportunities for local workers by increasing their earnings. However, if not all, some of them need better working conditions, better sales and marketing support. They need re-vitalize themselves in this manner.
- Khadi Institutions may think of spurring growth in khadi and, thus empowering workers by creating more chances of their participation in setting up of future ventures. This participating venture of workers with entrepreneurs may boost khadi growth well in the region.

CONCLUSION

Implementation Part is more important than merely considering suggestions. Under the overall effective monitoring of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MMSMEs), these suggestions may be made more practical and executable, by minimizing disruptions in the way and providing Capacity-Building-Support to the Khadi Sector.

It is a considerable fact that there is no lack of manpower, Natural Resources, Knowledge, Skill or, any other thing in our country but, there is a lack of will-power. If it comes on the way, we may bring our India on glittering globe, ahead of china by boosting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in our country taking lesson or motivation from Japan, Switzerland, Singapore, Malaysia and the like.

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