



GANDHI'S KHADI: THE PRIDE OF NATION

Dr. (Mrs.) Hemlata A. Padole

Sevadal Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur

hema.padole@gmail.com

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.

In India, Khadi is not just a cloth, it is a whole movement started by **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**. The Khadi movement promoted an ideology, an idea that Indians could be self-reliant on cotton and be free from the high priced goods and clothes which the British were selling to them. Khadi is an Indian fabric. Khadi is also known by another name "Khaddar". It is made by spinning the threads on an instrument known as "Charkha". During pre-independence era the movement of khadi manufacturing gained momentum under the guidance of father of nation Mahatma Gandhiji. This movement of khadi manufacturing and wearing started as to discourage the Indians from wearing of foreign clothes.

Key Words: Khadi, symbol of Nationalism, Indian fabric.

INTRODUCTION:

Khadi, or Khaddar, is a traditional fabric from India that was popularized by Mahatma Ghandiji before the independence. Before, it was only worn by rural people and political leaders, and its manufacture was quite limited. Today, the population demands more khadi than the manufacturers can supply due to its increasing popularity as a worthy addition to one's wardrobe. Early forms of khadi had coarse textures, but recently, khadi has been made with cotton, silk, and wool, making it more comfortable, and hence, more popular.

One of the most surprising aspects of Khadi fabric is its ability to keep the wearer cool during the summer and at the same time keeping him or her warm during the winter. The more you wash it, the better it looks and feels. Khadi is more than fabric; it is a way of life. It stands for independence and for going back to basics.

Khadi is also normally embellished with designs and handwork. Men and women alike are involved in weaving this fabric in a pattern that allows air ventilation. Earlier, Khadi was dyed with earth tones, but today, different colors and prints are available on the market. Salwar suits, saris, shirts, handkerchiefs, and trousers can also use khadi cotton as its base material.



Khadi is mainly manufactured in rural areas of India. Wearing khadi is no more for the poor, many high profile personalities and economically sound people prefer to wear it. It is considered as one of the most beautiful Indian fabric. The khadi wearer gets a royal and distinguishable look due to its fall and style. It symbolizes luxury and uniqueness.

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 insisting on khadi for the villager's own use, rather than merely for sale to others. His imprisonment in 1942 and 1943 gave him time to ponder 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.

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.

“Mahatma Gandhi began promoting the spinning of khadi for rural self-employment and self-reliance in 1920s India, thus making khadi an integral part and icon of the Swadeshi movement. The freedom struggle revolved around the use of khadi fabrics and the dumping of foreign-made clothes. Thus it symbolized the political ideas and independence itself, and to this day most politicians in India are seen only in khadi clothing. The khadi fabric is slowly disappearing in India if it were not for a few innovative designers who try to give it a new life. They come up with new colours and weaves. Khadi can take on many different looks.”

Khadi is woven in often rural areas where there is no electricity. Everything is done by hand. It explains the loss of fabric that can be as much as 20%. Often small stains, discolouring and even bird droppings can be found on the cloth ... before washing (all khadi products are washed and pre-shrunk) and sewing.

Khadi commands a sentimental value for Indians. It is often associated with Mahatma Gandhi. Someone said, the first true Indian designer was Mahatma



because of his appeal to Indians to wear Khadi garments. That appeal was necessitated because of the need of creating self-reliance and proving unity of India to English. Khadi also symbolized the need and importance of indigenous manufactured goods. Khadi represented India's resistance and revolution. Khadi was also the face of Indian identity.

Khadi is not just a cloth, it is a whole movement started by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The Khadi movement aimed at boycotting foreign goods and promoting Indian goods, thereby improving India's economy. Mahatma Gandhi began promoting the spinning of Khadi for rural self-employment and self-reliance (instead of using cloth manufactured industrially in Britain) in 1920s India thus making Khadi an integral part and icon of the Swadeshi movement. The freedom struggle revolved around the use of Khadi fabrics and the dumping of foreign-made clothes.

This fabric has coarse texture and gets easily crumpled, therefore in order to keep it firm and stiff, starch is to be added. This fabric on washing is more enhanced thus the more you wash it, better the look. Khadi is not easily worn out for years together, at least for 4-5 years. Very attractive and designer apparel are made by doing handwork on them garments made from it. Khadi spinning is generally done by girls and women and weaving mostly by men. During spinning of Khadi the threads are interwoven in such a manner that it provides passage of air circulation in the fabric. Apart from this unique property, it also provides warmth in winter season which is quite surprising factor. Khadi cotton is required to be starched so that it does not get easily crumpled. It comes in many colors and is not harmful to the skin as synthetic fabrics. This cotton is very soothing in summer season as ample amount of air ventilation is there, it has the capacity to absorb moisture therefore it easily soaks the sweat and keeps the wearer cool and dry. Khadi cotton comes in plain as well as in printed fabrics.

The most common outfit made from Khadi cotton is the 'Kurta'. Many types of apparel are manufactured from Khadi cotton like saris, salwar suits, fabric yarns, western tops, shirts, trousers, skirts, handkerchief, etc. It is a very durable fabric. In Khadi silk, the ratio of Khadi and silk fabric is 50:50. This fabric requires dry cleaning. It shrinks about 3% after the first wash. It is quite an expensive fabric. Khadi silk provides a royal and rich look. The various types of apparels made from Khadi silk are salwar kameez, kurta pajama,



saris, dupattas, shirts, vest and jackets. Apparels like kurta, jacket, sari blouses requires lining to be given to ensure its longevity.

Previously Khadi was dyed in earthy color tones and was used to make traditional garments but now designers are experimenting by dyeing Khadi with striking colors like limegreen, violet, baby pink, turquoise blue, etc. Stylish garments like mini skirts, halter neck tops, racer tops, tunics, etc are made from Khadi. Khadi is hand woven and hand spun fabric which takes time to be made. It is mainly manufactured in rural areas of India. In previous times it was considered as the fabric for the poor rural workers & farmers. But wearing Khadi is no more for the poor, many high profile personalities and economically sound people prefer to wear it. It is considered as one of the most beautiful Indian fabric. The Khadi wearer gets a royal and distinguishable look due to its fall and style. It symbolizes luxury and uniqueness.

CONCLUSION:

A country remains poor in wealth, both materially and intellectually, if it does not develop its handicrafts and its industries and lives a lazy parasitic life by importing all the manufactured articles from outside. There was a time when we manufactured almost all we wanted. The process is now reversed, and we are dependent upon the outside world for most manufactured goods. The past year brought forth a remarkable awakening of the Swadeshi spirit. It has therefore become necessary to define Swadeshi goods. But in giving a definition care had to be taken not to make the definition so narrow as to make manufacture all but impossible or so wide as to become farcical and Swadeshi only in name. We do not want to follow the frog-in-the-well policy, nor in seeming to be international, lose our roots. We cannot be international, if we lose our individuality, i. e., nationality.

REFERENCES:

- Chapter 3 :Textiles And Khadi In India – [Www.Google.Com](http://www.google.com)
- Chapter Vi- Gandhi's Economic Reference To Khadi
- Chapter Vii - Relevance Of Khadi
- Gandhiji On Khadi --Divya Joshi, Gandhi Book Centre, Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal 299 Tardeo Road, Nana Chowk Mumbai 400007 India
- Recent trends in khadi fabrics processing- Vijay B. Hebbalkar.