

The Influence of Gandhi and the Establishment of Badanavalu Khadi Centre in Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Gandhi and the Establishment of Badanavalu Khadi Centre in Karnataka is a landmark event in the history of Indian National Movement. The Badanavalu Khadi centre was established by Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar who has been called as 'Rajarshi' by Gandhi. Gandhiji and colonial Mysore met and interacted in a unique historical context. The Gandhian era in the context of colonial Mysore coincided with the dawn of Industrial Revolution. Much emphasis was laid on Iron & Steel, Paper, Cement, Soap and other similar industries. State Capitalism was in full swing in the development of Industries of Mysore. In fact, Mysore earned the reputation as a "Model State" among the native states of India. During the reign of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, economic development with special reference to industrial development was the salient feature of this "Model State". Mysore State was fortunate in having very able Dewans who could translate the vision of the Maharajas. Dewan Rangacharlu had stated as early as in 1881 his clear conviction that "no country can prosper unless its agricultural and manufacturing industries were equally fostered" and "the development of various industries on which the prosperity of the country is dependent, equally demand our consideration"¹ Dewans who followed, K.Sheshadri Iyer, Sir M.Vishweshwaraiah and Sir Mirza Ismail also had such a conviction and they formulated their policies based on it. At this juncture, the arrival of Gandhi and his sojourn and travels in Colonial Mysore led to the revival of traditional industries as the rulers of Mysore were fascinated by Gandhian economic thought.²

Key words : Retail Management, Factors Influencing Retail Management, Career Opportunities Are Available in Retailing, Need for Retail Management, Retail Management In India.

The freedom movement which also stressed on Swadeshi in the 1920s played a major role in giving a fillip to industries. While the Mysore Government did not accept the movement's political objectives, it appreciated the economic aspect of the movement which aimed at economic self-reliance and accepted the programme of Khadi and rural industries development. It advanced money towards capital expenditure for starting Khadi centers at Badanawal (Mysore district) and Aimangala (Chithradurga district). In this context, this paper focuses on the significance of the Influence of Gandhian economic ideology and the establishment of Badanavalu Khadi Centre in Karnataka which played a

prominent role in Indian National Movement.³

Adoption and Implementation of Gandhi's Economic Policy by the Rulers of the Princely State of Mysore for the Revival and the Development of Traditional Industries (1925-47) i.e. State was very significant. Gandhiji's attitude towards the village, untouchable and revival of traditional industries in India with special reference to Mysore is well documented. Rajaji and Vishweshwaraiah's interaction illustrates the emergence of two forces in Mysore State. Rajaji represented Gandhiji's view of economic development, while Vishweshwaraiah stood for modern economic development.⁴ Sir Mirza Ismail who was

Dewan at the time of Gandhiji's visit to Mysore sympathetic to the views of Gandhi. All these had an impact on the revival of declining traditional industries in the region. Gandhiji's visit to Mysore State in 1927 had an impact on the revival of traditional industries.⁵ Badanval was just another village in Mysore district till the arrival of Gandhi. But after the arrival of Gandhi it the headlines to become an all India name. It was called 'Badanval experiment'.⁶ The Government of the Maharaja was involved directly with the experiment. It contributed to the increase of wages to its spinners and raised their standard of living.

The Badanval Khadi centre, at the time of being taken over by the Government had 60 women weavers and 9 male weavers who were working with a capital investment of Rs. 3500. Within 5 years from 1927, there were 2000 thread makers and 140 weavers working. The work force had spread over 60 villages. In 1931 the centre had sold Rs. 50,000 worth khadi. There was a dyeing centre at Nanjangud and a printing centre too. Centers were also opened at Chitradurga and Kadur districts. Harijans in particular got employment opportunities. They were able to transform their life style to wearing khadi and be a model to others. Gandhi wanted the Khadi Bhandar at Bangalore to conduct a Khadi fair for nearly 10 days in different cities of India. For this there was encouragement from the Government and Gandhi wondered why the people had not taken advantage of this", (Harijana 13-6-1936) ⁷. I go on to present the Badanval experiment, as reported in the Mysore Information Bulletin of October, 1939.

"Badanval, its name is on the lips of the most ardent congressmen as an example of what the Mysore Government has done to encourage Khadi. The total production of yarn in 1938 amounted to 48,819lbs. of the value of Rs. 43,019 as against 29,491 lbs. of yards of the value of Rs 23,073 during the previous year. The calculated earnings of the spinners amounted to Rs. 7130 per head against the average of Rs. 5130 in the year 1937-38.⁸ And Badanval does not stand still,

resting on its oars. As with every share of beneficent activity,

Bandaval is proving a great experiment in the systematic expansion of Khadi". During 1938, for instance, the center embarked on a programme of spinning in several parts of the State. In addition to continuing the extension work, the center started a training section to train people required for work in connection with its extension programme. An attempt was made here to train educated young men in spinning and village industries with a view to utilizing their services after their training in connection with extending spinning and creating village industries to other centers in the State⁹. At the training sector in Badanval Khadi center there were 45 applicants in 1938 – the year the training section was started. Ten students had successfully completed their training. The students under training were each awarded a scholarship of Rs. 6% month to cover their boarding and lodging charges. They were provided with a common vegetarian mess. The section involved eight hours of manual work and an hour of general instruction class. Before the regular training section was started six young men had undergone training in paper-making in the Badanval Centre. One of them set up his own paper-making unit in Tagadur, another was an active helper of the Gorur Gramaseva Sangha and the third had joined the Mysore Grama Seva Sangha. Two other boys had started making hand paper in Kankanhalli.

The figures of production and sale of Khadi under both departmental and private control speak for themselves – 69, 653 pounds of yarn, 183,077 square yards of cloth valued at Rs. 94,249, with sales amounting to Rs. 1, 20,138. 7808 spinners, 432 weavers and 100 other artisans and 70 staff workers were at the industry which was spread across 202 villages of the state. Working capital invested together approximated Rs. 72,000. As a result of issuing new spinning wheels and improving old spinning wheels by fixing speed pulleys, the number of spinners rose to 4,000 as against 3,500 during the previous year. In many villages spinning became more

intensive. This partly was due to raising the spinner's wages to three annals per day of eight working hours, efficiency being 420 yards per hour of 14 counts and also raising the purchase price of yarn from four annals six paise to five annals per warp. In order to deal with the increased production of yarn produced in the area, attempts were made to increase the number of weavers. A small branch was established in Challakere where the local municipality gave a room, free of rent. Similarly weavers were recruited in Ramasamudra near Chamarajanagar whose requirements were being attended to by the Badanval Spinning Circle, direct.

The production of Khadi at the Badanval spinning circle during the year was 112,209 square yards, Rs. 58,924 in value as against the production of 95,361 square yards of the value of Rs. 45,753 in the previous year. The loom strength reached 180 by the end of the year 1938-39, the average active number being 150 and the average earning of a weaver being Rs. 80, practically the same as in the previous year. Other khadi centers had sprung up in various parts, all under the control of the Industries Department. In fact the Government's policy was to have uniform control and direction of the several centers in the state by the Department ¹⁰. With a view to increasing sale of khadi, the center had opened sale depots in Bangalore and Mysore cities. The total sales amounted to Rs.71,455 The consumption by the Government departments amounted to Rs. 17,380. The sales covering issue of cloth to spinners under the self sufficiency scheme amounted to Rs. 13,934 which was about one - third the total yarn purchase. The increase in sales during the year was about 15% more than that of the previous year.

Like Badanvalu cotton khadhi centre, the wool spinning centre was established kolara by the Government of the princely State of Mysore which provided employment opportunity to marginalized sections of the society. The wool-spinning Branch at Kolara employed 81 spinners and 32 weavers. The woolen goods produced during the year amounted to 4,400 square

yards valued at Rs. 4,382 and the sales amounted to Rs.5,061. This Branch was started in February 1938.

The impact of Gandhi on cottage industries in the Princely State of Mysore has been evaluated systematically. The bond between Gandhi and the Princely State of Mysore, the cottage industries and handicrafts the princely State of Mysore, British Colonialism, Economic policy of British, and its impact on traditional industry, Industrialization of Mysore State and other aspects have also been examined on the basis of historical and economic perspectives in the back ground of National movement.

Gandhiji also highlighted the need and importance of the revival of the cottage industry with a view to combat poverty, under-employment, economic exploitation and other social and economic evils. He firmly undertook the charaka movement and became a role model. Historically, the cottage industry had a long legacy. This sector had also enabled the socially and economically weaker sections of Indian society to obtain gainful employment opportunities and increase their economic status. The present study has attempted to examine the historical contributions made by Gandhiji toward the revival of the Indian economy by promoting the cottage industrial sector in the princely State of Mysore and other parts of the country. The royal family of Mysore was greatly influenced by Gandhian thoughts and deeds. The rulers also followed the Gandhian model of economic development in letter and spirit. The rulers accorded great importance to agriculture, irrigation, electricity, cottage industries, education, health and other spheres of regional economy.

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The reason people find it so hard to be happy is that they always see the past better than it was, the present worse than it is, and the future less resolved than it will be.

– Marcel Pagnol.