



**COMMENT OF THE KHADI & VILLAGE INDUSTRIES
COMMISSION ON THE REPORT OF THE KHADI
EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

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COMMITTEE REPORT**

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The former All India Khadi Board was formed for "preparing and organising programmes for the production and development of Khadi and village industries, including training of personnel, manufacture and supply of equipment, supply of raw material, marketing and research and study of the economic problems of different village industries". The Board had to work in close co-operation with the State Governments and the All India Spinners' Association. The A. I. S. A. in its first Five Year Plan submitted to the Planning Commission in 1951 gave production and sale of Khadi as the main object of the Plan. It had stated that 80 per cent of the total production was meant to be marketable Khadi.

2. It will be seen from the above that the All India Khadi Board (and later the Commission) when formed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Planning Commission was to carry on and expand with the help of the Government the work for production and sale of Khadi which the Khadi institutions were doing and on the basis of which a programme was framed by the A. I. S. A.

3. The Evaluation Committee should have taken into account principally the functions laid down for the Khadi Board by the

Government of India and the programme of the A. I. S. A. given to the Planning Commission in judging the work of the Commission.

4. It is the work of production and marketing of Khadi and a programme for fulfilment of regional self-sufficiency that the Khadi Board was entrusted with. The expansion of Khadi was sought, principally, for providing employment in rural areas to spinners and weavers, part-time or full-time. In the initial stages, representatives of the Sarva Seva Sangh and long-experienced Khadi and constructive workers were on the Board.

5. In view of the experience of the Gramdan movement, the Sarva Seva Sangh has, for the past 2-3 years, been thinking in terms of all work carried on, under its aegis as part of an integrated economy, echoing the sentiments expressed by Mahatma Gandhi in 1944. This has called for a new approach in the organisation of Khadi and village industries work. Several conferences of Khadi institutions and their workers were called and finally in 1958 at Chalisgaon under the guidance of Vinobaji it was decided to reorientate, on the basis of the Nav Samskaran suggested by Gandhiji, Khadi work on a basis known as the "New Approach" (Naya Mode) by which the entire programme of Khadi and other constructive activities may become a dynamic force for achieving the objective of establishment of a non-violent self-reliant rural society.

6. It is on the basis of this new approach that the Evaluation Committee has assessed the work of the Commission. It may be asserted here that the Commission has been in constant touch with the Sarva Seva Sangh for the purpose of reorientation of its Khadi programme to the extent possible within the ambit of its statutory functions. But, while the Commission may adopt this basis for its future programme, it would be unfair to assess the Khadi Commission's work during the past few years from the newly adopted standpoint.

7. The following information represents the achievements of the Commission since the work was started in February 1953 :

Traditional Khadi

	1952-53	1953-54	1958-59
I. Organisation			
1. No. of Institutions	138	186	696
2. „ Production Centres	N.A.	421	2,479
3. „ Sales Centres	N.A.	455	2,463
4. „ Villages Covered	9,426	19,390	1,00,000
II. Production			
1. Production for Sale			
Qty. (lakh sq. yds.)	72.88	105.53	383.14
Value (Rs. lakhs)	127.45	206.05	810.70
2. Self-sufficiency :			
Qty. (lakh sq. yds.)	6.72	10.10	99.80
Value (Rs. lakhs)	9.54	12.98	144.35
III. Sales (Rs. Lakhs)			
1. Sales to Consumers	164.99	129.98	861.10
2. Wholesale Sales :			
Inside the State	- }		271.14
Outside the State	- }	93.64	317.02
IV. Employment ('000 s)			
1. Spinners	222. 5	348. 0	1,007. 4
2. Weavers	11. 5	19. 2	61. 5
3. Others	3. 1	11. 4	47. 0
Total	237. 1	378. 6	1,115. 9

Khadi Work In New Areas

8. It has been stated in the report that Khadi work has not spread to new areas. According to the Evaluation Committee, in 1953-54, Madras accounted for 30 per cent, U. P. 24 per cent, Bihar 10 per cent and Andhra 10 per cent of the total production. By 1958-59, in spite of increase in production from about Rs. 1½ crores in 1952-53 to about Rs. 10 crores in 1958-59, the percentage of Madras and U. P. came down. It is not understood how extra production to the tune of Rs. 8 crores could have been obtained without expansion of work in new areas and creation of new centres. In the whole of Madras State in 1953 there were only a few districts which had taken up Khadi work. Today Khadi work has spread practically in every district of Madras State. Similar is the case with U. P., Bihar and Punjab States. The number of institutions in 1953-54 which was 186 increased to 696 in 1958-59 and production centres from 420 to about 2,500. The work has spread from 9,000 villages in 1952-53 to about 80,000 to one lakh villages by 1958-59.

9. Even though in the later years no special incentives were given to Institutions and checks and indirect controls exercised, expansion of traditional Khadi has taken place. The spinners on the rolls of institutions alone come to more than 11 lakhs. In addition, there are a number of unregistered spinners. In the circumstances to lay down that the traditional charkha should be plied for self-sufficiency purpose alone may be undesirable.

Ambar Charkha Programme

10. Criticism has been levelled against the Commission with regard to the working of the programme, particularly the organi-

sation and training. To understand and appreciate the results, it is necessary to study the background of the programme and the efforts of the Commission to put it through.

11. On the strength of the results of certain experiments on the Ambar Charkha, it was agreed to by the Planning Commission in the middle of 1955 that 100 pilot centres might be started in different parts of India. Funds were given by Government in November 1955 to start these centres. The Board had to supply raw materials, manufacture charkhas, train carpenters to manufacture charkhas, train instructors who in turn would be training artisans and to report the results to Government before the end of March, 1956. All this was completed within five months with the help of old Khadi workers from the institutions who underwent training from 15 to 25 days and artisans who were given training for a period ranging from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 months. The results achieved were encouraging and indicated that if Ambar Charkha was worked for 8 hours a day one could at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ as, per hank of yarn earn 12 as. per day which was equivalent to a reasonable agricultural wage for 8 hours working. Due to procedural delays in the issue of necessary sanction by Government, the work, however, came to a standstill; but was restarted after a break of about 4 months.

12. An ambitious plan was drawn up, originally, to put into operation 25 lakhs of Charkhas which could produce 400 million lbs. of yarn. The yarn so produced was to be utilised by handloom weavers for weaving under the Handloom Board. The cloth production had to be incorporated in the common cloth production programme of Government. The arrangements about Handloom weavers utilising Ambar yarn did not materialise. It was at this stage that the Sarva Seva Sangh under the guidance of Vinobaji agreed to term the cloth produced out of Ambar yarn as "Khadi". Hence, the production of yarn, having it woven into Khadi cloth and its marketing had, therefore,

to be taken up by Khadi institutions, regulating the processes according to the usual Certification Rules. This resulted in a considerable reduction in the targets originally fixed. The basis that obtained in the Pilot Programme that spinners would work for 8 hours a day did not come true subsequently for various reasons, and this also resulted in revision of the targets. Admittedly, originally high targets were fixed on the strength of the results obtained through the Pilot Programme. These assumptions did not always come true as was seen from the further experience of the working of the programme in the field and, therefore, the Commission was compelled to revise considerably the targets.

Training

13. The Ambar Charkha was completely a new implement of production and its problems were quite different from those for the traditional charkha. In order to train thousands of instructors, a number of Vidyalayas were opened. In the initial stages, the training for instructors was given only for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 months, which duration was subsequently increased to 3, 6 and now 12 months, in the light of the experience gained. Thus, training in the initial stage had necessarily to be on a short-term basis lest there be delay in making a start with the programme. The Charkhas manufactured in the early stage were heavy in operation and servicing arrangements were not available to the extent required.

Achievements

14. Despite the comparatively little experience of organising the programme on a completely decentralised basis and the numerous difficulties the Commission had to face in that regard, its achievements are by no means small. The following table gives an idea of the work the Commission has, with the help of various institutions, been able to do within a short span of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years :

Ambar Charkha Programme

	1956-57	1958-59	Total since 1956-57
I. Organisation (total as on 31st March)			
1. No. of Vidyalayas :			
A) Instructors :			
i) Main	35	37	37
ii) Sub	14	24	24
B) Carpenters	20	17	17
2. No. of Saranjam Karyalayas :			
i) Large	77	-	108
ii) Small	-	206	485
II. Training			
1. No. of Instructors Trained	2,538	3,760	9,559
2. „ Carpenters Trained	753	381	2,109
3. „ Spinners Trained	48,669	1,14,686	2,83,633
III. Manufacture And Distribution Of Charkhas			
1. No. of Charkhas Manufactured	76,784	74,397	2,66,833
2. „ Charkhas Distributed	45,742	1,00,424	2,45,015
IV. Production			
1. Yarn (lakh lbs.)	7.03	38.40	70.86
2. Cloth (lakh sq. yds.)	18.79	240.38	370.62
V. Employment			
1. No. of Spinners families	45,742	1,00,424	2,45,015
2. „ Weavers' families	5,000	10,488	18,771
3. „ Others	6,528	5,486	20,035
Total	57,270	1,16,398	2,83,821

Despite the fact that this was an entirely new programme with an altogether new type of implement for the working out of which there was neither any previous experience nor any elaborate preliminary preparation and, notwithstanding difficulties incidental to organisational effort of a novel and pioneering type which the Commission had to face, the results achieved are by no means small. Moreover, being new to the decentralised work of Khadi and Village Industries, except the Madras State Government, other State Governments, C. P. A. and even the newly created State Boards had their own difficulties in carrying out their share of the programme.

Spinning Wages

15. A comparison has been given about the average income of a spinner on a traditional charkha and an Ambar Charkha. The comparison is somewhat misleading. The average income on traditional charkha has been given as Rs. 20 to 25 per annum while that on Ambar Charkha as Rs. 53 per annum, the rate of spinning wages per hank being 3 as. and 2 as. respectively. If the rate of wages for Ambar Charkha is taken to be the same as that for traditional charkha, the average annual income per Ambar Charkha would come to Rs 80. It is also necessary to consider that the traditional charkha is easy to operate and that it has 40 years' working behind it, whereas Ambar is a new implement having been in the field for the last only $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. Needless to say that any new implement, even in the centralised large scale industry, would require several years before it can be properly and successfully operated. Since this is a decentralised industry to be developed in villages mostly among people a majority of whom are illiterate and unaccustomed to the handling even of a simple mechanism, an adequate period of time should be allowed before arriving at a proper assessment of the potentialities of the programme.

16. Another matter to which reference is necessary is the criticism contained in the opening paragraphs of Chapter VIII about the categories of persons to whom employment has been provided and the nature of this employment. The implication seems to be that the classes most in need of work have not benefited and that the proportion of those who go in for full-time work as spinners is very limited. At the same time, the Committee acknowledges that the data on which these observations are based are incomplete, and not very accurate. In these circumstances, it may have been desirable if the Committee had not come to conclusions on the basis of inadequate data. In Appendix No. 9 reference is made to certain information supplied by Shri Krishnadas Gandhi who was at the time not a member of the Khadi and Village Industries Board, which showed that in the area surveyed the bulk of the spinners belonged to the low income categories. It should not have been assumed that the situation was peculiar to the area surveyed. Hence, it would have been appropriate for the Committee to have withheld any opinion on the subject because of the lack of accurate data.

17. In the initial stage, it was expected that the Ambar Charkha would be plied for full-time employment. The experience of the past 2½ years shows that more than 80 per cent of the spinners are women and that they cannot for various domestic and special reasons work for 8 hours a day as in the case of those engaged in the large scale industry. The Ambar Charkha is an improved implement and is largely plied as a subsidiary occupation thereby providing additional income to a family. This income that the Ambar Charkha brings to a spinner in comparison with the traditional charkha is much larger. Moreover, Ambar Charkha results in reducing the cost of yarn by about Re. 1 to Rs. 1.25 nP. per lb. as compared to the traditional yarn.

18. The potentialities of Ambar Charkha are great. It is estimated

that 8 to 10 per cent of those working on Ambar Charkha have taken it up as the sole source of income working for 8 to 10 hours a day. Those who do so earn as much as Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 per month per family.

Research

19. Within the short span of 2½ to 3 years, considerable advance in research has also taken place, although it may take some time before the new Charkhas designed as a result of the research are put in the field. The research has shown potentialities of increasing production per Charkha from 8 hanks to as much as 20 hanks within 8 hours' work. The pressure on the Charkha which was 5 to 6 lbs. has been reduced to 1½ to one lbs. making it easier and lighter to operate. Even with all the improvements in the Charkha it has to be recognized that it will be utilised by women who would use it in the same way as Singer Sewing Machine is used by women at home and not as by professional tailors. The Charkha may be plied for part-time work for additional income for purposes of self-use.

20. A great deal has been said about fixation of higher targets by the Commission and non-fulfilment of the same. The factors responsible for this have been explained earlier. It would be worthwhile to mention that the Khadi Commission has to get its programme implemented mainly through institutions already in the field, or those newly created, composed of social workers, over which the Commission possesses no authority.

21. Neither the Commission nor the workers in the field are wholly satisfied with the results achieved on the Ambar Charkha programme, but any new project has to overcome innumerable serious obstacles and often work against current trends. If, therefore, a realistic approach is adopted and the various factors and conditions involved are fully taken into consideration, the results

achieved with the help of voluntary agencies, autonomous institutions and constructive workers will be found to merit appreciation.

Social Impact

22. One of the achievements of the Ambar Charkha programme i. e., its social influence, has been overlooked by the Evaluation Committee. The impact on the purdah system this programme has had during the last 2 years of its operation in the field, in the various parts of the country where it has been implemented, cannot be overlooked. Muslim women all over India, especially in Hyderabad where the purdah system is very strong, have come out and ply the Charkha 6 to 8 hours a day earning not less than Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per month. The programme has had a similar impact on the purdah system in Rajasthan, Bihar and U. P. and with the abolition of the purdah system, untouchability and refusal to work with lower class people have also vanished. In all the Parishramālayas in these places there is no distinction between caste and creed or high and low. Another aspect of the social impact is that in the villages of Bihar, in the initial stages, no women would come out to attend public meetings. After the introduction of the Ambar programme, not only does the audience at public meetings in villages in Bihar consist of more than 50 per cent women, but the women there have, besides, been emboldened to participate in discussions.

23. It may be mentioned that the reference to the working of Khadi programme in Community Development Blocks does not appear to have taken into account the progress achieved as recorded from time to time in the reports of the Programme Evaluation Organization. The Evaluation Committee makes mention of the report submitted by the Study Team in support of some of the impressions that it has sought to convey. However, a careful perusal of the report of the Study Team gives an idea about the fair results

achieved in at least half of the number of pilot project areas and especially performance of three of them.

24. There are portions in the Report where there are obvious contradictions and at several places, one gets a misleading picture. Had the statistical information been presented in the proper perspective and to suit the terms of reference and the functions of the Commission, it might have given a different picture from the one presented.

25. This apart, there are a number of suggestions and recommendations which will be useful to the Commission and also to institutions. These have to be considered in consultation with the Sarva Seva Sangh, its Khadi Samiti, State Boards etc.

26. The Appendix, attached to this Note, reproduces the resolution on the Report of the Khadi Evaluation Committee adopted by the Co-ordination Committee for Khadi and Village Industries constituted from among the representatives of Khadi institutions, State Boards, the Khadi Samiti of the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh and the Commission.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTION OF THE CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF KHADI INSTITUTIONS, STATE BOARDS, THE KHADI SAMITI OF THE AKHIL BHARAT SARVA SEVA SANGH AND THE KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION AT ITS MEETING HELD AT AHMEDABAD ON 1ST SEPTEMBER IN RESPECT OF THE REPORT OF THE KHADI EVALUATION COMMITTEE :

The Co-ordination Committee finds itself in general agreement with the Note on the Report of the Evaluation Committee prepared by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. In the opinion of this Committee, in appraising the development of the Khadi movement during the last six or seven years the Evaluation Committee should have viewed it in the light of the objects for which the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board (and later the Commission) was created and should have made an assessment in accordance with its own terms of reference. It was hardly appropriate, the Committee believes, to apply criteria that had little relevance to the purpose for which the organisation was set up. The judgments passed and the criticism offered suffer principally from this defect and the evaluation hence does scant justice to the Commission, to the various institutions and their workers in charge of the Khadi programme.

The Evaluation Committee complains at various places in the Report about the lack of adequate data. It was not proper for it, in that event, to have proceeded to form conclusions on the basis of insufficient or hastily collected data. Such conclusions should have been formulated only in respect of matters where the Evaluation Committee had data that could stand statistical tests.

This Committee is in full agreement with the view of the Evaluation Committee that Khadi should be promoted in future as an

essential part of an integrated programme of rural development, an objective set forth by Mahatma Gandhi when in 1944 he called for a reorientation of Khadi work. This aspect of Khadi has later been emphasised by Acharya Vinobaji Bhave and the Sarva Seva Sangh. The recommendations made in order to bring about such a reorientation are welcome; but this Committee desires that the details of these will have to be scrutinised carefully by the Commission and by workers in the movement. In order that the broad objectives of the Khadi movement as re-enunciated by the Evaluation Committee can be achieved successfully, this Committee desires that all possible care should be devoted by those engaged in this work to ensure that the utmost participation is secured of the rural community in formulating and, later on, in implementing plans for the development of an integrated rural economy, so that the Khadi movement becomes part of the economics of permanence for our countryside.

In conclusion, the Co-ordination Committee wishes to emphasise that efforts of rural communities in the direction of reordering their economy on the basis of self-reliance and self-sufficiency have to be supplemented by appropriate State policies. The planning of the national economy should henceforth, the Co-ordination Committee considers, be definitely rural re-orientated.

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