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## 'Aversion Of Ecological Damage By Promoting Traditional Handicrafts'

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### **Abstract**

Environment and in a larger perspective ecology has been facing serious threats from different quarters in different parts of the world and in the name of development, enough damage has already been done to it. However, in reaction, there have been various kinds of protests by people at the grassroots level across the globe. Similarly at the global level several environmental nongovernmental (NGOs) have taken up significant ecological issues like pollution, bio-diversity, climate change, the hole in the ozone layer, animal rights and wildlife and biosphere conservation. 1. Various international agencies like the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the United Nations Development Programme have from time to time organized several conventions and conferences in order to deliberate upon environmental issues and generate awareness amongst both the people as well as national government.

1. 'Why People Protest, An Analysis of Ecological Movements' Subhash Sharma, Publications Division, pg. 1.

In addition, various national government and their provincial counterparts have also realized these, and other problems, and have opened full-fledged ministries or departments. In the arena of academics too, new centers, institute and university departments have been opened to study environmental issues and concerns in greater range and depth. The most disastrous environmental effects have been observed mostly in the developing world but in different ways from the western apprehensions and environmental issues are no more a western fad only for the elite.

**Keywords-** Aversion Of Ecological Damage, Promoting Traditional Handicrafts.

## Introduction

Ecological problems are on the rise over the years in both developed and developing countries though their character has been different in the developed and developing countries. Correspondingly, various individuals and organization especially NGOs and Community-Based Organisations, have not only become conscious of the major ecological issues, but they have also challenged those responsible for the poor state of affairs including industrialists, contractors, traders as exploiters of natural resources and the state power that gives them direct or indirect support.

Now it is also being realized in different for a that 'catching up' with the Western paradigm of development has not worked and would not work in the future also in the interests of the developing nations. 2. As a matter of fact, the West has destroyed is natural resources as well as those in the developing countries under colonialism in the name of modernization in the past and in the 2. Ibid, pg. 5.

name of globalization, liberalization and privatization in the present age. Therefore, the developing world is not only to question but also to liberate itself from the shackles of neocolonialism and choose its own path of sustainability in general and of agricultural sustainability in particular (instead of the so-called 'sustainable development' which is an euphemism for the western pattern of capitalistic development) in the interests of the people, especially the subaltern. And to promote ecological and environmental conservation, it is very necessary that we in India focus on promoting manufacture and sale of zero carbon footprint industries like Khadi, Jute and other handloom and textile products if we focus on the Textile area. Over the years, Khadi has become the invaluable asset of heritage providing respectable means of livelihood to a huge human resource especially rural women. Seeing the potential of Khadi in providing employment to millions of people, the Prime Minister in one of his "Mann ki Baat", called upon the Indian youth to adopt at least one khadi garment among many others. Khadi is also the cleanest and the most sustainable fabric with the potential to provide a strong alternative to modern synthetic fibres which are environmentally unsafe. Handlooms is another diverse and eco-friendly sector which blends rich ancient traditions with modern innovations. 3. In PMs words, we need to give a rightful place to traditional handloom products and make them the centre piece of fashion for India and the world. Indian Silk has been famous worldwide from times immemorial. It was a major export item along with pearls, peacocks

3. Yojana, October, 2016, pg. 41.

and spices. Indian silk and muslin were much sought after the, world over. The sericulture industry is a major employer in the North-East and southern parts of the country. Jute, as a fibre is predominantly used in packaging material. But of late, jute has also caught the imagination of fashion designers and jute textile material is being marketed and worn in a big way.

At a time now when the world is talking very seriously about the ill effects of climate change and the enlarging carbon footprints of industrialization, India needs to establish on world stage the zero carbon footprint of Khadi industry, against the inadequately studied environmental harm being done by the synthetic textile industries. 4.

We are increasingly talking about building a modern nation. While it is important to develop infrastructure, scientific spirit, technical strength, military might, artistic excellence and all those diverse faculties that characterize modernity, it is more important for us to recognize our foundational capacities, going forward. A nation owes much to the grain it is made of. And building a dream depends much on the foundations that have stayed with us for long.

Even after centuries of British rule, we, as a nation, have remained distinctly grooved to the cultural and traditional ways of life. Mahatma Gandhi was quick to perceive that our future lies in our core strength at the grass root level and that it cannot be built on a

4. Ibid, pg.42.

foundation of imported values. In 1920, in the middle of British imperialism in India, Gandhiji launched 'Khadi' as a political weapon of nationalism within the Swadeshi Movement. By calling it 'the livery of freedom', he brought the eternal symbolism of self sufficiency to India. He demonstrated to the British that India could sustain on its own, while at the same time, gave the pride to Indians that they were free to weave the prosperity of their own lives from the fabric of their daily lives.

Khadi and village productivity became a grand source of nationalism and India demonstrated to the world that our society is uniquely founded on the efforts and contributions of the rural masses. As such, Khadi came to be known not just as a piece of cloth, it came to be a harbinger of peace and an icon of our freedom and national existence.

After independence, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) was established as a statutory body by the Government of India under the KVIC Act 1956. This was a tribute to the power of self sufficiency that built a nation. A nation that had a huge human resource that was willing to work but was bereft of economic resources had to channelize the collective human power and talents to produce usefull national products, while also supporting individuals to earn a livelihood and prosper. 5. And India could never have pursued anything more significant and suitable than this aspiration of encouraging Khadi and Village Industries.

Production of Khadi is by far the largest rural

5. Yojana, October, 2016, pg. 41.

productivity programme in the world, wherein thousands of families directly reach their produce to the consumer without the menace of middlemen or complex marketing apparatus. It provides the rural communities a high value for their effort while providing the consumers a great value for money. For the nation, it is undoubtedly an invaluable asset of heritage.

At the present time, the world is increasingly bothered about the environmental damage being inflicted as a large scale effect of rapid industrialization and thus we need to promote Khadi as an industry as it has no bad side effects which damage our environment. Based on estimated annual global textile production of over 60 billion kilograms (KG) of fabric, the estimated energy and water needed to produce it is: 1,074 billion KWh of electricity (or 132 million metric tons of coal) and between 6-9 trillion litres of water. The synthetic textile industry is one of the largest green house gas emitters, amounting to about 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the total carbon produced.

However, Khadi is hand spun and hand woven, using no electricity in the process of production. It is completely organic and carbon neutral. In more ways than one, Khadi should occupy a coveted place in the fabric industry as the yarn of future. This is the fundamental basis on which, we need to take Khadi to the global stage and demonstrate its modern relevance and future role for a cleaner and sustainable world. Hon'ble Prime Minister in his "Mann Ki Baat" rightly said that "We want to establish Khadi Gramudyog network in the villages of India. Khadi has the potential to generate employment for millions. "One Yarn, One Nation" is now the new tag line. The branding has been changed from 'Khadi' to 'Khadi India'. Now the tag line is 'One Yarn One Nation'. In all, the Khadi and Village Industries are

increasingly proving their high relevance to modern India and the modern world as one of the most sustainable and eco-friendly socio-economic models developed in human history.

Khadi thus had become the icon of Indian Independence. And if we want a sustainable, eco-friendly development, khadi should be the foundation of all our developmental activities. Khadi Movement should become the people's movement and we should make Khadi our national dress. The mindset of the people is mostly created and we have to create a favourable atmosphere to use khadi for our own cloth needs. By using khadi, we are preserving one of the oldest skills of mankind.

Khadi spirit means fellow-feeling with every living being on earth. It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures. And if we are to cultivate that spirit amongst the millions of our countrymen, what a land this India of ours would be ! Gandhi wanted everybody to have the spirit of khadi and spirit of oneness of human beings. Khadi is not a piece of cloth to cover the body, but a philosophy to imbibe and follow. Gandhiji ignited the spirit of nationalism through swadeshi movement and made khadi as the symbol of nationalism. He through Khadi Movement positioned his non-violent weapon to strike at the very foundation of the colonial exploitation !

Charkha became the icon of the independence movement and khadi became the identity of nationalism. India witnessed a major shift from colonial power to people's power. Common people once feared policemen in this country but with Gandhi's introduction of non-violent strategy, policemen feared 'khadi people'. Purely an economic activity became a powerful political weapon!

Now the greatest challenge for khadi is how to make it more affordable to the people and how to make it more attractive without compromising the basic philosophy of dignity of labour, decentralization, non-violence and simplicity. In the absence of powerful influences like 'freedom struggle' or 'swadeshi movement', now khadi has to stand on its own strength and on its philosophical foundation.

No doubt, cotton is environmental friendly, suitable for our weather conditions, good for skin and body and a natural product. It is applicable to all cotton products including mill-made. But the testing stone will be the production, distribution and consumption. For khadi, the production itself will be eco-friendly with appropriate technology to suit the producer. The decentralized production will also help in the distribution of income to masses through which we can increase the purchasing power of the people.

Also, apart from jute is also an important and eco-friendly product. For the past 200 years, jute has proven to be a useful natural fibre which, because of its strength, has been used in the manufacture of packing materials and ropes. The fibre being coarser than cotton was not considered suitable for use in clothing; its principal use remained in packing. With the advent, of synthetic fibres which are cheaper to produce and also can be engineered to specific requirements, the popularity of jute textiles as a packing material waned. Of late, due to environmental concerns, along with other natural fibres, jute is poised to make a comeback and this should be encouraged.

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