

GANDHI AND KHADI: AN INTERNATIONALLY POTENT BRAND SYMBOL

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Abstract- Specifically as readers of modern marketing we go through the experience of Philip Kotler, Seth Godin, Ranit Seth and etc. as gurus of modern marketing strategies. We, the Indians have been forgetting a famous marketing guru Mahatma Gandhi, an ideal management guru, equipped with trust and non-violence as the two key components marketing management.

The present paper is an attempt to review the principles of Gandhi, which today applied to modern marketing particularly the qualities of Gandhi are attributed to a chief executive officer, a manager and an executive, a supreme practical leader for change. Based on the secondary sources of information and published research papers, this paper analyses the Gandhi's concept of self-reliance, applied to the modern international marketing of Khadi cloth, in association with the Indian Khadi product producers, e-commerce companies and designers. Consequently, the sales and exports of khadi cloth gained much preference from the consumers not only in India but also in international market. A special focus was laid on these aspects in the present paper how the principle of Gandhi has accelerated the sales and as Mahatma, he has influenced the marketing of khadi cloth.

Mahatma Gandhi knew well that British were the opponents and competitors and done a SWOT analysis to market the Indian products, in general and Khadi in particular. "Self-reliance" was the powerful mantra which Gandhi has adopted as a powerful marketing strategy to market the goods produced in villages."Trusteeship" was another mantra which Gandhi propagated to build a world based on the concept of genuine social equality in it- the employer and employee are on the same level. The principle of "Trusteeship" of Mahatma Gandhi is being translated into the present corporate social responsibility, which believes that "a trustee is one who self-consciously assumes the responsibility of protecting and putting to good use whatever he possesses, and earns. Trusteeship is the process of capitalism, which not only creates wealth but takes care of the shareholders and also the people in the society.

In recent years we are witnessing the resurgence of Khadi, the khadi brand has been reinvented with our Honorable PM-Modiji as the brand ambassador. The ideas of Gandhi-Self-reliance and freed from foreign rule (non-cooperation) are today being transformed into a style statement for millennials. Using tools of modern marketing –such as association with designers like Ritu Beri making khadi a part of "Lakme Fashion Week" and tying up with Bollywood to glamorize the fabric khadi demand has almost doubled during the last five years. It is quite appropriate here to mention that Amazon has just launched Amazon Karigar, helping the weavers and related craftsmen prosper by connecting them directly to a growing base of consumers on line.

To sum up the future cloth market would be dominated by the spinning the intertwined yarn of Gandhi and Khadi not only brighten the international futures of these two Inextricably linked brands Gandhi-Khadi.

Keywords:- Gandhi-Khadi, Self reliance, trusteeship, Non-Cooperation, Corporate Social Responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the literature of business management, “leadership” was propagated as the important aspect of management. It is a proved observation that leaders are a person who are able to think and act creativity in non-routine situations and who sets out to influence the actions, beliefs and feeling of others. This is the process of marketing management; particularly influence the actions, beliefs and feelings, which acts as an important strategy to influence the behavior of consumers/ customers. Mahatma Gandhi proved efficiently that leadership flows from an individual’s qualities and actions.

To be specific, Gandhi dressed himself with hand woven clothes made up of cotton, representing a normal, poor, and have not’s in the sense of Karl Marx. Gandhiji strongly believed that an individual is very important because he is the most active component of society and there is no distinction between individual growth and corporate growth, in turn the corporate growth is entirely dependent upon individual growth. His concept of “Sarvodaya” explains the same thing as the good of the individual contained in the good of all. For Gandhiji “Khadi” a symbol of “Bread labour” a token of dignity of labour and resembles the life worth living of handicraftness. Gandhiji thought that weaving khadi cloth is the best way to help the poor for practicing “bread labour” which proclaims the strength of a person to earn his bread by laboring with his own hands. This concept of “bread labour” (weaving Khadi Cloth) is central to the economic philosophy of Gandhiji. Being directed by Bhagavatgeetha, Gandhiji repeatedly announced that “one who eats without labour eats “stolen food”. Khadi became a strategy for “Swadeshi” the spirit of the people which is essential to serve their immediate neighbours, which Gandhiji promoted Khadi by refusing to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful it might be produced and supplied from foreign countries. It was the contention of Gandhiji that our people should consume locally produced goods; particularly produced by village industries. This was considered as the trade-off between utility and loyalty, because khadi serves humanity to the best if the capacity of ordinary skilled weavers. We all know that ‘khadi’ was used as a weapon of non-cooperation against the British and represents “commerce with morality”.

Principle of Trusteeship:

One of the principles of Gandhiji was “Principle of Trusteeship” foundation philosophy of the present “Corporate Social Responsibility”. The principle of trusteeship explains to hold capital in trust and corporate should function as the trustees of the society, which must result into management of wealth to bring about economic welfare the people. Gandhiji strongly advocated that Capitalism should be replaced by trusteeship and accumulation of wealth beyond needs of a person and preached that production should not be guided by desire but by need. Keeping this spirit of trusteeship at his heart Gandhiji suggested and promoted Khadi industries, to make the villages self-sufficient and for value addition to khadi products within the village. Gandhiji believed that when each villager produces his own cloth khadi, the economic and moral life of the people would be revived. We know well that “khadi” could be produced with less capital, ensuring certainty of employment and income to villagers. With its a ready and unlimited market for Khadi, Gandhiji suggested the following selected measures for the promotion of production and sales of Khadi.

- 1) Cloth produced by mechanized looms be banned in areas where hand spun cotton cloth is abundantly available.
- 2) Government employees must use handloom clothes.
- 3) Spinning yarn should be made an essential subject at school level.

These measures suggested by Gandhiji shows his vision, as he understood the future economic scenario of our country. Today many corporates are implementing a variety of CSR programmes, aiming at the development of environmental quality and extending the spirit and objectives of Gandhiji’s concept of “Trusteeship”.

A Master Strategist:

Today the people, corporate, business owners and entrepreneurs are honoring Gandhiji as the master strategist, an exemplary leader and a management guru, whose ideas and tactics corporate. India has been

successfully duplicating for their business management. Gandhiji proved that leadership skills stem from the focus on a definite purpose, discipline and belief of systems. Being attracted by these qualities of Gandhiji, the present business guru in India are talking about him as a new role model and his ideas are of particular relevance to not only our country but for whole of the corporate world, who are striving to become economic superpowers.

Though not developed into a separate branch of economics, the ideas of Gandhiji are very much relevant to this modern world also. He has strived to create a more holistic and integrated society which delivers more happiness, generate more altruistic economic surplus for bringing about a more egalitarian society than what is now available to us.

The modern management gurus like Philip Kotler, Seth Godin, Rani Seth etc. have admitted that Gandhiji is a great management guru. Gandhiji prepared a SWOT analysis with reference to Britishers to get independence in a different way and adopted "Walk and Talk of Peace" and motivated people not to cooperate/ encourage the imported clothes and inspired the people to weave and wear Khadi cloth, as a weapon of Swaraj and Self Reliance. The charka which weaves Khadi, a household industry, was not an alternative to new technology or to the process of Industrialization but as symbol of Self-Reliance, though his policies gathered a great amount of criticism. The corporate have forgotten that the ideas of Gandhiji represented the essence of what we need in our business leaders today.

The famous Indian Management guru C.K. Prahlad opined that corporate India needs to apply the lessons learnt from Gandhiji ideas to their leadership styles, as these ideas have particular relevance for India to achieve a targeted double digit growth rate. To be specific, we need courage to accept and re-invent the means and rules of the game to deal with the modern situations, where the available existing methods have failed.

Resurgence of Khadi:

The ideas of Gandhiji on self-reliance and trusteeship have been translated into powerful marketing strategies for the promotion of Khadi as a "national cloth" from a common man to Bollywood. In recent years the production of Khadi clothes and products have increased significantly and Khadi products were the main source of increasing demand particularly after the motivational actions of our Honourable PM Modi's acceptance as "brand ambassador" the data published by KVIC revealed that between 2015-19, the compounded annual production and sales of khadi, poly and solar vastra grew by 25.5% and 34.9% respectively. There was an encouraging budgetary support for KVIC, particularly for khadi, for the period 2014 to 2019. For example, a total amount of Rs. 3180.25 cr were allocated in the budget for the years 2018-19 and against Rs.3195.12 cr were released for the development of Khadi and Village industries. The data also exhibits that the production of Khadi related clothes have increased by 88% between 2017-18 and 2018-19 as shown in Table-1

Table:-1 Production of Khadi related Products

S.No	Khadi Products	Production (in Rs Crore)		% Increase
		2017-18	2018-19 (p)	
1	Khadi	1465.21	1727.21	18%
2	Ploy Vastra	159.67	230.00	44%
3	Solar Vastra	1.78	6.09	242%
All Products		1626.66	1963.30	21%

Source: GOI (2019) MSME Annual Report 2018-19

The data presented in Table. 1 reveals that the Khadi products worth of Rs. 1627 crore was produced in 2017-18, which has increased to Rs. 1963 crore during 2018-19, indicating an increase of 21%. The production of Poly Vastra and Solar Vastra were the dominant products among the varieties of Khadi products.

Increase in Sales:

The data published by KVIC products in India show that the sales of Khadi products has grown across the components like fabric, readymade garments and solar vastra. During the last 5 years, khadi sales witnessed a quantum jump from 6% in 2013-14 to 28% as shown in Table: 2.

Table:-2 Surge in Sales of Khadi Products

Year	Sales (in Rs Crore)	Growth (%)
2013-14	1217	6
2014-15	1311	8
2015-16	1664	27
2016-17	2147	29
2017-18	2510	17
2018-19	3215	28

Source: GOI (2019) MSME Annual Report

The data in Table:-2 indicates that the sales of khadi products have increased from Rs.1217 crore in 2013-14 to Rs.3215 crore in 2018-19, accounting for an overall increase of 164% during the period of 6 years. No doubt the spurt in demand for khadi products led to this significant increase in sales and it is estimated that the sales would touch the figure of Rs 5000 crore by the year 2019-20.

Changing Needs, Demand and Aggressive Marketing:

Both the production and sales were influenced by a variety of incentives, strategies of marketing and change in the behavior of customers ranging from a common man to popular cine artists, political leaders, youth and employees in public and private sectors.

The information available reveals that Khadi institutions have transformed themselves to cater to the changing needs of time and improved their range of products. The surge in demand, production and sales of Khadi products can be attributed to the following inspirational motivations, being guided by the ideas of Gandhiji.

- 1) The Clarian call of our Honorable PM Narendra Modi to buy and wear Khadi products was the principal source for increased demand for khadi products. The data show that among ready-made items the Na Mo jackets were the favorite products for buyers of all age groups. Purchase of Khadi was made through 'Na Mo App' was as many as 7,000 Modi jackets from KVIC during the months of February and March, 2019. This rise in sales was made possible by the special emphasis given by Modi ji for revival of demand for khadi products. Arun Kumar Jha, CEO, KVIC, informed that after the address of the PM on October 2, 2014 the sale at Khadi Gramodyog outlet in Cannaught Place increased around 125%.
- 2) The government programme "Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of traditional Industries (SFURTI) aims at the promotion of cluster development of Khadi and Village industries.
- 3) The on-line purchases of Khadi products has been receiving increased attention of youth, as KVIC has joined hand with some major textile brands and the on-line shopping giants like Amazon, for increasing the volume of on-line sales.
- 4) The promotional assistance, popularly known as rebate on the retail sale value of Khadi in order to facilitate Khadi products to compete with other textile products in the market. A flexible and growth stimulating and artisan-centric scheme called "Market Development Assistance" (MDA) for Khadi was also introduced by the Government of India.
- 5) The Government has been encouraging to take up Khadi as the preferred uniform fabrics across several establishments both Government and Private. An estimated 83,000 employees of postal services are found dressed in Khadi uniform, generating demand for 37 Khadi institutions by ordering 7.47 lakh metres of Khadi fabric.
- 6) KVIC has been resorting to aggressive marketing strategies by joining hands with Raymond and Aarvind Mills for the purchase of Khadi fabrics. Raymond purchased 7.26 lakh metres

of grey khadi fabric during the year 2018-19 and Arvind Mills purchased 10.0 lakh metres of Khadi denim to manufacture and sell them under their own brand names.

- 7) Recently, Rs. 26 lakh worth of costumes made up with Khadi was designed by Neeta Lulla, an internationally renowned designer, for the bollywood actress Kangana Raunat in her film ‘Manikarnika’. It is quite encouraging step for increasing the sales of Khadi being inspired by the support given by a number of bollywood and tollywood film actors and actresses to use Khadi fabrics not only for their dressing needs and also for the people in general.
- 8) Brand Khadi is also entering into the international garment market and stepping to go global. Internationally famous fashion designer Gavin Rajah choreographed a show in Johannesburg during India-South Africa Business Summit to exhibit Khadi fabrics. Nearly 60 other international exhibitions took place during the year 2018-19 aiming at the promotion of Khadi sales. Exclusive exhibitions were arranged in 10 countries on 15th August, 2019 for the display of the most niche products supplied by KVIC.

II. CONCLUSION

All the above discussion makes it clear that these were the efforts resembling the translation of Gandhiji’s ideas, motivations and suggestions, in general, and his principles like Self-reliance, Bread-labour, Swaraj and Trusteeship in particular, are the key guiding forces, that made a common man and also the celebrities to follow his principles. Gandhiji has spread the message of Khadi because it is “skin-friendly” clothe and Khadi fabric production activity is mostly labour-intensive and human input is the prime factor of production as it is hand-woven. At present, there are about 11 lakh artisans are engaged in the production of Khadi fabrics and it is beyond doubt, increase in production, demand and sales of Khadi fabrics certainly brings smiles on the faces of these artisans involve in these activities.

The present day marketing gurus must know that economic growth without social justice and equity, destructive technological development and mindless consumerism are creating a dysfunctional society, which is engulfing the spirit of modern men and women. They should recognize the fact that the management technique of Gandhiji was that he could relate himself easily to the people sharing his ideas and vision through “Walk and Talk”, which many of the present marketing gurus have forgotten as they take decisions of sales of their products sitting in air-conditioned environment. Instead, if they share their ideas and vision with consumers (people) like Gandhiji did to achieve the objectives of motivation (marketing). Most of the corporate plans are conceived and finalized within the four walls of the meeting hall and no effort would be made to communicate/share the corporate plans and decisions to the masses (consumers of their products) who are the real engines of change. It is apt to conclude here that without flying into luxury accommodations, “living the values is the actual and right key for marching on the path of change management”.

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