



## Tracing the path of Mahatma Gandhi's Khadi Shankarappa and his concept of Shadi

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### -Abstract

*Mahatma Gandhiji leading the freedom movement against the mighty British, wished to expel the British power through mass support. He knew that the British were powerful hence he applied the simple tenets of Swadeshi & Satyagraha & the involvement of Indian masses was thus wide spread. There were several leaders who were influenced by the Gandhian concept of Swadeshi & Satyagraha. Mahatma Gandhi 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. It clearly displayed that through employing a fresh and imaginative approach, how an idea, determinedly pursued, can become a movement. This paper traces the contributions of Sri Shankarappa also known as Khadi Shankarappa towards propagation of Gandhian ideals.*

**Key words:** Mahatma Gandhi, Swadeshi & Satyagraha, Khadi Shankarappa, Khadi movement

### Introduction

Mahatma 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. It clearly displayed that through employing a fresh and imaginative approach, how an idea, determinedly pursued, can become a movement.

### Khadi Shankarappa

K. Shankarappa (1915 – April 27, 2005), also known as Khadi Shankarappa, was a senior freedom fighter and Khadi worker in Karnataka he was from Shimoga, He started his service for the cause of Khadi from 1930 onwards in Shimoga.

**Establishment of Sudarshana Khadi Nilaya in Shimoga** K. Shankarappa along with Shetty M N, started Sudarshana Khadi



Nilaya in Shimoga. Both of them served the cause of Khadi and freedom movement. At that time Khadi bhandaras were the meeting points of congressman and freedom fighters. Shankarappa was jailed several times. Much of his activity was underground. He was a congress party messenger between towns in the nearby Shimogga.

### **Khadi Shankarappa Work towards Khadi**

Shankarappa carried messages of Mahatma Gandhi & other national leaders, distributed handwritten papers, letters and other confidential information to the Congress workers<sup>13</sup>. He toured the whole region carrying the message of self-reliance & self-service. People thronged to hear from this leader about Swadeshi & Swaraj. Khadi was not only linen but it represented the spirit of independence from foreign yoke. He was recognized as Khadi Shankarappa as a result of his work. Thus the spinning wheel became the symbol of India's self-reliance and Swaraj<sup>14</sup>. The process in which Mahatma Gandhi turned Khadi into a symbol of autonomy, self-rule and non-violence was appreciated by Shankarappa & he was inspired to spread this message to his native place. Khadi enabled him to carry his message

of Swadeshi and Swaraj to the Kannada people and he strove to establish connection with them<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Essence of Khadi**

Shankarappa knew that it was for economic, cultural and social reasons and not merely political that Mahatma Gandhi established the Khadi Movement<sup>16</sup>. Shankarappa was influenced by the speech of Mahatma in Shanthiniketan University, where he declared clearly that "The charkha is the only device which makes us all feel that we are children of the same land. If there is no Khadi, the whole country will remain sunk in utter poverty."<sup>17</sup>

### **Shankarappa visions about Khadi:**

Shankarappa always knew that Gandhi's concept of spinning would also help social alleviates on vast masses. He believed that Khadi was needed for

1. the alleviation of poverty,
2. the liberation of women,
3. brotherhood amongst differing religions and ethnicities,
4. an end to untouchability and caste discrimination,
5. the economic self-sufficiency of the nation,



6. Swaraj the independence of India from British colonial domination

Shankarappa was attracted to spread these ideals of Mahatma & hence rural reconstruction was taken up by him along with propagation of the ideal of Khadi.

### **Shankarappa & Rural Reconstruction**

During 1934-35 Shankarappa expanded the idea from helping the poor individual to self-reliance of whole villages as was the wish of Mahatma Gandhi, he also undertook rural reconstruction programs<sup>18</sup>. In 1942-43 he had sessions with workers groups and village organizers to re-organize the whole programme as recommended by him. Gandhiji wanted Khadi to be the symbol of not only worn by every Indian, but equality and self-reliance of all Indians<sup>19</sup>. It was his belief that reconstruction of the society and effective Satyagraha against the foreign rule can be possible only through Khadi<sup>20</sup>.

### **Khadi Shankarappa and Political thoughts**

Shankarappa knew that Khadi was introduced by Mahatma Gandhi as a political weapon and as the best instrument for giving concrete expression to the Swadeshi Spirit to boycott foreign

goods. He knew Khadi rendered an opportunity to every man, woman and child to cultivate self-discipline and self-sacrifice as a part of the non-cooperation movement<sup>21</sup>. Shankarappa was of the opinion that Spinning and weaving can be elevated to the level of an ideology for self-reliance and self-government & British administration would one day succumb to the demands of large mass of self-reliant Indians. Thus Khadi is not mere a piece of cloth but a way of life thought Shankarappa as was the ideal of Mahatma.

Shankarappa made Khadi as the nucleus of the several constructive activities. Gandhi viewed Khadi as the end of dependence<sup>22</sup> on imported foreign materials symbolizing foreign rule and thus giving a first lesson or real independence<sup>23</sup>. He hoped for bond of unity between the classes and masses by bridging the gap with a common occupation called spinning, and he saw great social value in hand-spinning.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus the Indian Freedom movement was motivated by Mahatma Gandhiji who presented Khadi as a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance & Shankarappa who was the staunch



follower of ideals of Mahatma Gandhiji propagated Khadi in his own way. Like Mahatma Gandhiji he also believed that reconstruction of the society and effective Satyagraha against the foreign rule can be possible only through adoption of the ideals Khadi. Mahatma Gandhiji clearly displayed that through employing a fresh and imaginative approach, can become a movement & millions of people like Shankarappa followed the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi is making Khadi a movement of all Indians.

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