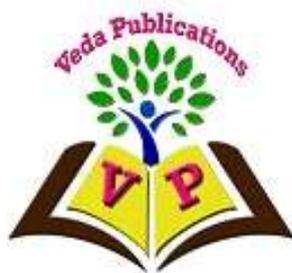


**MAHATMA GANDHI'S VIEWS ON COTTAGE INDUSTRIES**Dr.Vellore Bharatha Lakshmi ^{1*}, Pachipala Gayathri ²^{1*} (Principal, D.R.W College, Gudur -524101)² (Research Scholar, Department of Biotechnology, Vikrama Simhapuri University, Kakatur, Nellore.)**ABSTRACT**

Mahatma Gandhi not only acted as Indian freedom fighter against British rule but also acted as an economic reformer of Indian society. At the time of freedom struggle Indian society suffered from poverty, illiteracy and social evils. He worked a lot about Indian economy and proposed some economic principles to reform the society. In his words a free India meant a flow of thousands of self employed small communities who can sustain themselves without the dependence on others. He focused on the needs of the people at the village level. A form of his thoughts is a sarvodaya movement for ending poverty through establishing cottage and small scale industries in every village. He thought that it was the only way for rapid industrialization on the soviet model in the late 1930. First of all it was not correct to establish industries that produced goods contrary to the needs of the people who lived in the villages. After independence the then prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru directed Indian people to establish large scale industries. After the death of Gandhiji, his vision inspired his followers and they opposed industrialization.

Keywords: *Economic Reformer, Sarvodaya Movement, Industrialization.**Author(s) retain the copyright of this article*

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Gandhi, as an Indian leader, always struggled to promote the society based on spiritual and socio economic principles framed by him. He argued that every human being in India acts as an entrepreneur and always seeks to maximize the output with available local resources. He decided to fulfill the human needs with the establishment of cottage industries. His thoughts were based on the principles of protectionism nationalism, nonviolence and self sufficiency in the form of establishment of cottage industries. His model of industrialization is

aimed to fulfill the needs of people who lived in villages. Economic decentralization is one of his proposals to develop Indian society with the help of cottage industries. He emphasized rural development which was directly related to cottage industries. His preference is cottage industries especially with hand spinning and hand weaving for industrialization in India. He thought to put forward the change of education system also. He stressed on compulsory primary education to all children for acquiring skills to promote cottage industries. He believed in the



alignment of cottage industries which is only the right way to solve the shortage of raw material and develop cottage industries to fulfill the needs of people in India.

A cottage industry is an industry which produces many products by the skilled people working from their homes. Typically part time cottage industry is a term referred to home industries where the people dwelled in a home engaged in a task such as tailoring, shoe making, pot making, knives manufacturing, weaving, lace making, wall hangings, khadi weaving and jute bags making etc.,. When we categorize the cottage industries in India, we can identify six top Indian cottage industries which are cotton weaving, silk weaving, carpet making, leather industry, metal handicrafts and small food processing industries. Among them cotton weaving is a very important cottage and small scale industry in India. It is one of the top and branded manufacturing activities which brought name and fame to India. For example: - Venkatagiri jary sarees. kanchipuram sarees, Benaras sarees and Bengali cotton sarees etc.,.

Gandhiji observed that in the early part of Industrial Revolution in India, cottage industries carried out major part of the production by giving work to be done by the workers at home. Then relatively small scale industries and business operations were carried out from the home. At that time majority of population in India are below the poverty line. He thought that any pursuit of activity in a cottage industry involved an unusually large number of independent participants. There is no need of huge capital to establish a cottage or small scale industry. Normally a cottage industry is carried out at home by the family members using their own equipment. These types of small and tiny organizations are following complexity of activities relating to production which provide more employment to members in the family. The study of Gandhiji's views had become a virtual cottage industry in the last 30 years producing schools, museums, foundations and more than 400 biographies.

Nowadays the preference is shifted from large scale industries to small scale and cottage industries in the industrial policy which is promoted

by today's economists in India. This was envisaged decades ago by Mahatma Gandhi. Now his dream has come true and his belief that economic growth can be achieved through the establishment of cottage, small and medium scale industries is undeniable. His philosophy and promotion of economic thought are now being considered and new industrial policies are being framed by the economists. The economic principles canvassed by Gandhi have become the modern books of economic theory. His views on industrialization are universal. Those are suitable to be implemented in any developing country with huge population. That is why the Indian High Commissioner Sri. Dhaka Pankaj Saran said although Mahatma Gandhi was born in India, he is a universal leader. Gandhi was a multitalented person. He devoted his life to his Country to achieve enlightenment by serving his nation. He taught his economic principles by self-implementation. He used to weave khaddar by moving charka which was the first foundation stone to cottage industries by Gandhiji. Now in India, economic revolution is achieved through his thoughts and creative activities to promote cottage industries. Many forms of his economic activities are related to the economic well being of society.

Gandhiji stressed on economic self sufficiency by an individual which is unavoidable to nation's economic growth. This concept led him to think about the various ways to eradicate poverty in the country. His thoughts were not in educational form but were the need of the hour. He knows that the major part of a middle class human being is busy with earning money to meet his necessities. Hence he is always busy with economic activities. He stressed on rural development and gave direction to develop cottage industries to achieve universal well being. Gandhiji's economic models like rural based cottage and small scale industries were created largely on his understanding of the Indian culture and society situations. In his opinion any mode of economic situation is particularly humanitarian in nature and for him no economic modules are worth implementing unless it aims at the general well being of mankind. The growth of employment is getting increased year by year due to the establishment of



cottage and small scale industries and it is shown in the table:

Source: - Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises, GOI.

Year	Employment in Millions	Increase in % Over Per Year	Year	Employment is Millions	Increase in % over Per Year
1973 - 74	3.97	-	1990 - 91	15.83	32.36
1974 - 75	4.04	1.76	1991 - 92	16.60	4.86
1975 - 76	4.59	13.81	1992 - 93	17.48	5.30
1976 -77	4.58	8.50	1993 - 94	18.26	4.46
1977 - 78	5.40	8.43	1994 - 95	19.14	4.82
1978 - 79	6.38	18.15	1995 - 96	19.79	3.40
1979 - 80	6.70	5.02	1996 - 97	20.59	4.04
1980 - 81	7.10	5.97	1997 - 98	21.32	3.53
1981 - 82	7.50	5.63	1998 - 99	22.06	3.47
1982 - 83	7.90	5.33	1999 - 2000	22.91	3.83
1983 - 84	8.42	6.58	2000 - 01	24.09	5.15
1984 - 85	9.00	6.89	2001 -02	25.23	4.73
1985 - 86	9.60	6.67	2002 - 03	26.37	4.52
1986 - 87	10.14	5.63	2003 - 04	27.53	4.40
1987 - 88	10.70	5.52	2004 -05	28.76	4.47
1988 - 89	11.30	5.61	2005 - 06	29.99	4.28
1989 - 90	11.96	5.84	2006 - 07	31.25	4.20

It is clear that the table shows the yearly growth rate which was more than average rate in the initial year 1973 -79 after that it was observed that there was a lot of fluctuations from 1990-91. The yearly growth was observed stable.

Like that Gandhiji's economic thoughts are giving good and prosperous results in solving some social and economic problems like poverty and unemployment. His stress on rural economy and development emphasize on simple life, compiled with universal well being which were formed and formulated from his unique views on economics. So, it gives good results because his economic thoughts

and models were based largely on his understanding of the Indian scenario. It proved that the greater part of Gandhi's work was to renew India's economy with the help of cottage Industries.

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