

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)  
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## EASTERN v. WESTERN VALUES

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Ravindra Nath Tagore, in one of his essays, wrote as follows :

"The civilization of ancient Greece was nurtured within city walls. In fact, all modern civilizations have their cradles of brick and mortar. These walls leave their mark deep in the minds of men. They set up a principle of 'divide and rule' in our mental outlook, which begets in us a habit of securing all our conquests by fortifying them and separating them from one another.

"In India it was in the forests that our civilization had its birth, and it took a distinct character from this origin and environment.....

"Even in the heyday of its material prosperity the heart of India ever looked back with adoration upon the early ideal of strenuous self-realization, and the dignity of simple life of the forest hermitage, and drew its best inspiration from the wisdom stored there.

"The West seems to take a pride in thinking that it is subduing nature.... This sentiment is the product of the city-wall habit and training of mind. For in the city life man naturally directs the concentrated light of his mental vision upon his own life and works, and this creates an artificial dissociation between himself and the Universal Nature within whose bosom he lies.

"But in India the point of view was different, it included the world with the man as one great truth....." (*Sadhana*—Chap. 1)

It was a very bold, if not impertinent, feat on the part of Sardar K. M. Pannikar to make an oration that he did on the occasion of the convocation of the Vishwa Bharati, Shantiniketan, de-crying, almost ridiculing, this great truth of India's civilization and culture. *The Hindu* (27-12-1955) has very aptly described the Sardar's feat of oratory let loose on young minds receiving their degrees and diplomas at Shantiniketan, in the following words :

"Sardar Pannikar seemed to find great pleasure in assembling a number of ghostly pretenders in order to scatter them with the greatest ease with a whiff of his dialectical skill."

The 'ghostly pretenders' called to dance at the touch of the historian-scholar's tongue were that (1) India has accepted "poverty as a national ideal"; "The doctrine of the simple life which is presumed to encourage high thinking is but the worship of poverty"; that (2) India is more spiritual than the rest of the world is no more than a self-deception; "nowhere in fact,

is materialism so rampant as in India"; and that (3) the adoration of the village life and rural economy based on handicrafts or home and village industries is based on a perverted view of our past, because "at all times a vigorous urban life existed in India."

Therefore he denounced the Ashram mentality which, according to him, is only the worship of poverty. Did not Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, the Union Minister of Industries also denounce the Gandhian Ashrams almost in a similar vein?

One does not know what threw Sardar Pannikar off the balance and made him speak what appears to me bad history and worse social philosophy. However, the view that he took of India's culture is not altogether novel, because such a perverted or unbalanced view is often to be found among those who have drunk at the fountain of modern science and other loves of the West and have come to be infatuated with its social philosophy of mad pursuit of raising the standard of living higher and higher. Such people, in their learned arrogance, forget that insatiety and want of contentment are real poverty, that contentment is not poverty but is a rare virtue of the soul — is real prosperity, and that what is plain or simple in life is not necessarily poor nor even puritan, and that high living is not high thinking nor even good living, and may be a positive evil in a world of grinding inequalities and cut-throat competition.

Again one wonders who ever said that India should be a poor nation, that poverty is to be our national ideal! If the Sardar's homily on riches and urban civilization was meant as a reply to the decentralized economy of Sarvodaya which to people like him might appear as a poor economy, — if this is a true surmise, then one should only say that Shri Pannikar does great injustice not only to those who stand for Sarvodaya, but also to himself. *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, writing editorially under the heading "Brilliant Oratory", has well retorted that,

"Ravindranath was one of the earliest advocates of handicrafts. He never denied the values of an urban civilization nor did he ever express any apprehension..... He thought, even as Mahatma Gandhi did, that handicrafts held the key to the rehabilitation of village economy..... But the whole question is whether even today..... the village has been given its rightful place.

If the villages continue to remain in the paralysing grip of poverty, illiteracy, disease and unemployment, all our cherished plans of building an urban civilization will prove chimerical."

Surely it is not the worship of poverty to emphasize this vital aspect of India's problem. The difficulty of people learned in Western lore and living in cities, dazzled by the glamour of Western technology, really is that they forget and as if do not care to note this aspect. To them *The Hindu* has well reminded that,

"The danger rather is that well-meaning evangelists (like Shri Pannikar) may, under the delusion that all change is progress, preach a milk and water latitudinarianism and an indiscriminating cultural receptivity. That can only have the effect of further widening the gulf between the masses rooted in a living tradition and a section of the intelligentsia which has lost its moorings."

As the Gita says (Chap 2-41 . . . . .), the pursuit of pleasure and power is materialism; it is the way of the Asuras, as it described in another chapter.

India rejects this way of life described by the Gita, because that is verily materialism. The Western will to power (i.e. ऐहिकवैशक्त ) vulgarizing itself as a race for arms with the help of science, and the craze for a life of ease and opulence and expressing itself as the unscrupulous pursuit for higher and higher standard of living (i.e. भोगवैशक्त ), — these two together make up this sort of materialism. It has overtaken the modern Western world. Success in these has made it arrogant also. And its nemesis also is as the Gita has said: *समाधी न विधीयते* ! It does not lead to peace and tranquillity. The way to it is to reject the above and to work for positive peace. India stands for this, and the economics of peace is not the one that materialist West is following today, but it is what the idea of Sarvodaya stands for — a decentralized agro-industrial economy allied with the ideal of plain living and high thinking. Gandhiji put this vital difference between eastern and western values of life, in the following memorable words :

"European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans, but it will mean ruin for India, if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil might have crept into it. The incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication is such an evil, and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remodel their outlook, if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are becoming slaves. It may be that my reading is wrong, but I know that for India to run after the Golden Fleece is to court certain death. Let us engrave in our hearts the motto of a Western philosopher, 'Plain living and high thinking'. Today it is certain that the millions cannot have high living and we the few who profess to do the thinking for the masses run the risk, in a vain search after high living, of missing high thinking...." (*Young India*, 30-4-31).

6-1-56

## THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION OF OUR TIMES

(By B. G. Kher)

We are all busy planning for prosperity. Reconstructed India must have wealth and be rich. So the income per capita must be doubled — if possible trebled or more. Rapid industrialization and mechanization of all industries, even of the main industry of India, viz. agriculture, are advocated by some, and we must get rich quick.

When, therefore, I read in the Orchard Lea Papers by Wilfred Wellock the following sentence "Western survival now depends upon calling a halt to 'Prosperity' and revolutionizing our values, ends and ways of life as nations and as communities of persons", I admit I received a bit of a shock. Why should anyone have to call a halt to "Prosperity"? Can we not have the aim of prosperity — unlimited? Talking of ways of life are not most of us going on the assumption — may be unconsciously — that the true way of life has already been discovered by the prosperous and progressive nations of Europe and the United States of America long ago? All we have to do is to follow the discovered path? Is anything yet to be discovered in this age of nuclear fission and Hydrogen Bombs?

I then read the following :

"Despite occasional conferences of Big Fives, Big Fours, and Big Threes (and we may hope, big six), the world would appear to be moving relentlessly towards the third world war, H. Bombs notwithstanding. One serious trouble is that the heads of the two big power blocs see in their own way of life the only hope of civilization and world peace, while a considerable number of deeply troubled people see little hope in either. Meanwhile, in Asia, new revolutions proceed and others threaten, while in the West an erratic economic barometer puts the politicians on tenterhooks. Hence fear also rises and falls, while armaments grow steadily in quantity and killing power."

One must admit that the remarks are just and true. But then if all the nations agree to progressive and drastic disarmament and also decide never to use atomic or Hydrogen bombs, shall we not then all have security, peace and freedom from fear — the most valuable of the four or fourteen freedoms? The world is divided into two power blocs each claiming its own aim to be Peace and each pointing to its own way as the way to Peace and Progress which is the cherished goal of all of us. We are puzzled — Will "anti-communism" lead to the goal? Will Communism lead to it?

The answer perhaps, is, neither of these will lead to what human beings really want. Speaking about the era of civilization ushered in by the Industrial Revolution in the West we see that it has resulted in an "impasse". "Today the West calls for more world trade while the East plods steadily towards self-sufficiency which signifies a gradual dwindling of world trade amidst a rapid expansion of world industrial production and thus of competition for markets, food and raw materials." If the standard of living, all of us are aspiring after, is that of the

U.S.A. ; if we must increase production until we are all able to achieve it, and if there is no reason why we should not all be shareholders of "Prosperity Unlimited", alas! we *must* face this economic and political impasse and say goodbye to freedom from fear.

Wilfred Wellock in "New Horizons" \* has tried to tackle this problem, viz. (1) to expose the impasse into which Western Civilization has drifted and the causes, (2) to expound the values, relationships and qualities by which freedom from that impasse can be secured and (3) to indicate some of the social, industrial and cultural changes for which this spiritual revolution calls.

The "Industrial Revolution" started in Europe two centuries ago has not led the West to Peace and Progress — The "Spiritual Revolution" started by Gandhiji in India in the twentieth century has not yet caught roots even in the land of its birth, not to speak of other soils. But signs are visible that it may lead us all to both peace and progress. It is a long long way and hard, and unattractive.

Over two thousand years ago Lord Shri Krishna — so says the Bhagavad Gita — warned humanity about two ways of life, leading people to opposite goals and warned it to choose wisely. This is what he said :

"Twofold is the animal creation in this world, the Godly (Daiva) and ungodly (Asura) ; the Godly hath been described at length ; hear from Me, O Partha, the ungodly or Asura. Asura — ungodly men know neither the right energy nor the way of renunciation ; not purity, nor even propriety, nor truth is in them. "The universe is without truth, without a moral basis," they say, "without a God ; not brought about in regular causal sequence and caused by desire and nothing else." Holding fast to this view, these ruined selves of small understanding, of fierce deeds, come forth as enemies for the destruction of the world.

Surrendering themselves to insatiable desire, possessed with hypocrisy, conceit and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they engage in action with impure resolves. Obsessed with unmeasured cares and fears whose end is death, regarding the gratification of desires as the highest end, feeling sure that this is all there is, and held in bondage by a hundred ties of desire, given over to lust and anger, they strive to obtain by unlawful means hoards of wealth for the gratification of their desires. "This today by me hath been won, this desire I shall gain ; this wealth is mine already and also this shall be mine in future. I have slain this enemy, and others also I shall slay. I am the lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful, happy ; I am wealthy, well-born, who or what else is there that is like unto me ?" Thus deluded and bewildered by numerous thoughts enmeshed in the web of delusion, addicted to the gratification of desire, they go downwards into a foul hell."

It sounds a dreadful thing to say, but the world seems to have started on this wrong road. We only think in terms of creating and fulfilling more and more wants — the path of insatiable desire — of *asuri sampatti*. Or else why should there be this great conflict and the fear of the destruction of the world? If that is so then we must change the road and start the trek towards a new creative era. We must reconstruct society

\* Reviewed in these columns, see *Harijan*, 1-1-55, p. 356.

into a civilization of high quality with "the whole man" as the foundation of a virile world democracy. We must take into account not only the material but also the spiritual being of man. In the words of Wellock "Material need should be related to the well-being of the whole man, whence mind and spirit would control and limit material demands. Not until we learn the art of living, which involves the subjection of the material to the spiritual, shall we solve our economic problems and evolve an economy that is consonant with the demands of world peace. It is manifestly absurd to denounce aggression while pursuing an economy that is inherently aggressive."

How is this to be done? I have just returned from Bezwada where I went to see Shri Vinoba Bhave. He is the author of the Bhoodan Movement which seems to be founded on the very principles indicated by Wilfred Wellock. Its aim is not, as some people seem to think, merely to collect land-gifts and redistribute land among the landless. It is intended to show a new way of life to the people in a world full of fear and selfishness, not the way of strife and competition but of love and peace. Vinoba wants to effect a bloodless revolution by "a radical transformation of the human personality". He does not want State help to usher in a classless society of "unto each according to his need and from each according to his capacity". He wants to do this by creating a change of heart in the people, by *jana shakti*. His is an all-party programme of purification of public life. He has started not only Bhoodan but Sampatti Dan, Shrama Dan, etc. The movement aims at social reconstruction without class hatred. He wants Sarvodaya. We should aim not only at increasing production but also at equitable distribution simultaneously. He has realized the truth of Yayati's message — "Not by satiation can you hope to extinguish the fire of desire." The way of peace and of fearlessness is not the way which we have been following so far. Peace must be wooed not out of fear or for greed but for its own sake. It is not too late to begin — a new way. Land for all — work for all — integrated employment and progress for all but also the joy of hard work and renunciation and self-discipline for all. Was it not Emerson who said "God offers to every mind its choice between Truth and Repose. Take which you please. You can never have both." It is the old conflict between *shreyas* and *preyas* so familiar to the ancient seers of India. And now there is a prospect of joy and there is Bhoodan and there is Shrama Dan ! We must devote ourselves to these with a will and with faith.

I would also humbly submit that the Parishramalaya and the Rural Life Conference Movements are an humble attempt to tread on the path indicated by Mahatma Gandhi in his constructive programme — a path of the Spiritual Revolution started in India. Let us pursue it. This is a good resolve for Xmas and New Year 1956.

# HARIJAN

Jan. 21

1956

## A-I. SERVICES EXAMINATIONS MEDIUM

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Shri N. K. Sidhanta, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, addressing the Punjab University annual convocation, touched an important problem of the all-India services examinations. Emphasis on the study and importance of English language has been the burden of these annual academic orations these days. Shri Sidhanta in the course of such a burden is reported (vide *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, December, 22, 1955) to have said as follows :

"Giving reply to his own question, 'Are we doomed to the retention of English as the medium of teaching for many years to come?' Shri Sidhanta observed, 'I shall not be too pessimistic but must emphasize this that much more of effort is necessary if the regional languages are to improve their potentiality for expression,—more of joint effort by intellectuals and State authorities to enrich each language.'

The need of such efforts on our part is obvious. English having usurped from our languages their place of being the medium of instruction, the latter naturally could not develop to their full extent. Therefore, when we now wish to restore them this place, much leeway has to be suddenly made up, which is surely a heavy task. But it is not so difficult, for the simple reason that we are to develop our own mother-tongues; this is never difficult for their children if only they will do it.

Prof. Sidhanta in his address did not call us to such an honourable venture. Difficulties, of course, there are in our way. No one denies it. The point is, they cannot overwhelm us, much less deter us from the venture to overcome them. What people expect to hear from people like Prof. Sidhanta is, 'Here is a way to overcome them, let us take to it courageously and boldly.'

Prof. Sidhanta has specially noted the following difficulties in regard to the change-over from English to Indian languages :

"He said that the difficulties about the all-India services should not be brushed aside too lightly even though it was only a very small percentage of university graduates that could aspire to enter them. For one thing, this percentage had to be larger in future on account of the expanding activities of a Welfare State which wanted an ever-increasing personnel for manning the new development projects. But students who desired to serve the Government in these spheres might need to master the English language as the other needed not.

"Having been associated for a number of years with the recruitment of young university graduates for the higher posts under the Government, he had occasion to note the frequent complaint of examining and interviewing Boards about the inability of the candidates to think for themselves and their clumsiness in expression. This could not be entirely due to lack of mastery over English which still continued to be the

medium of examination for the all-India services and likely to continue to be so for some time to come.

"It would be years before the candidates from the non-Hindi areas were able to compete with the Hindi-speaking people in examinations conducted in Hindi.

"Examinations in a dozen regional languages would lead to considerable difficulties,—almost insuperable ones,—in the equating of standards of examinations in the different languages. As it was with the large number of candidates appearing in these examinations, it was difficult to ensure that the same standards were maintained by all examiners in the same subject or by the examiners in the different optional subjects. With answer-books in different languages entrusted naturally to examiners from the respective linguistic areas there might be a natural tendency to be generous and the generosity might transcend the limits of reason.

"At any rate, with linguistic patriotism running rampant and getting the better of nationalism, as it unfortunately appears to be doing at the present moment, such an experiment might not be advisable in the near future."

Prof. Sidhanta would wish to have Hindi as the language of A-I. examination in place of English, whenever the latter goes out. The regional languages can be immediately helpful here to remove English earlier and more easily and naturally. But Prof. Sidhanta would not have recourse to them, as examinations in a dozen regional languages would lead to considerable difficulties, e.g. in the equating of standards. On the other hand, he points out, "It would be years before the candidates from the non-Hindi areas were able to compete with Hindi-speaking people in examinations conducted in Hindi." The obvious inference which we are left to make, therefore, is—continue English! One may not mind this even, if that was possible to do. But we know that the standard of English is fast going down. On the other hand, universities in India are considering the change of their medium, as they ought to. Moreover, the advent of independence requires our Governments to encourage the propagation and teaching of Hindi and begin to work for the quick development of regional languages. Introduction of Hindi teaching in schools takes away some time from English teaching which has had a lion's share of the school time-table all these years. This is a factor obviously making for less of English language equipment.

Further, the Congress Working Committee has resolved to permit optional use of regional languages as medium of all-India services examinations. And the Central Government has declared to accept it.

Under these circumstances, the obvious solution is to adopt the policy generally indicated by the Constitution of India and seek necessary means for implementing it. We witness at present the States reorganization. Is it not beset with its own difficulties? However, we apply ourselves to meet them, because we must, as the work has to be done. The language problem is a similar task for the people. We cannot now afford to delay it; we must put the progress

of our cultural, educational and political life on the new road by reorganizing the use of Indian languages in the suitable manner. It is the call of the age we are in. May those who preside over the universities and education departments of the country hear this call and heed to it as quickly as possible. Otherwise they will stand to be blamed by the people and the fault will be theirs if the work was not done.

Prof. Sidhanta points out difficulties of moderation in the all-India services examinations. Are they so unsurmountable? I do not think so. People like him, experienced as they are in the technique of examining, will surely get the way out if only they shed their fear and apply their minds to it.

The second difficulty he notes is that of increasing number of candidates. This is a question for the entire field of education. The way to meet it is not impossible; nor can we complain against it. Preliminary regional tests might help us to screen out the candidates. Do we not do similarly in our all-India games competitions etc.?

The essence of the whole discussion is that the country, having finished with the work of States reorganization, will be immediately faced with the following next new task:

1. We must begin to teach students and conduct States administration through the languages scheduled by the Constitution. This will automatically lead to their development and quicken its step.

2. Along with it, all States should begin compulsory teaching of Hindi in Schools and Colleges.

3. Universities and State Governments must be pioneers in implementing this new policy.

All these are new things. They are helpful in furthering the realization of true Swaraj. We cannot stop ourselves from undertaking them, looking to the difficulties of the task; we should rather rise to face them.

We should also remember that there will be a third language of study for those who reach the secondary or High School stage after completing 7 years of free and compulsory primary studies. What that third language will be is not a disputed thing. English is there. There might be other languages as an alternative, because now we are not ruled by the English and we deal with all the nations of the world.

If we do this, the question of the medium of all-India services examinations will solve itself. One thing must be noted here: in these open competitive examinations, no candidate can be put to a disadvantage comparatively to others on the count of language; it will be bad under the fundamental rights of a citizen. Therefore, a candidate will have to be offered the choice of

the medium. If we consider the question in such a broad perspective, the fears of the sort noted by Prof. Sidhanta rather turn out to be patriotic ventures for new India. Can new India falter at this call of patriotic duty?

6-1-56

## PRODUCTION v. EMPLOYMENT

(By J. D. Sundram)

In an article in the December (1955) issue of the *Reserve Bank of India Bulletin*, Dr. B. K. Madan, Economic Adviser to the Reserve Bank of India, observes that the recommendations of the Karve Committee are not likely to lead to 'a progressive economic development at a fairly rapid rate'. In his considered view, the Karve Committee's emphasis on the avoidance of any additional technological unemployment in each, particular industry and the consequent limitation, on the one hand, on the introduction of improved techniques for small-scale and village industries to such of those that may not have deleterious effects on employment and, on the other, on increased production and expansion of the technically more efficient large-scale, consumer goods industries, are likely to lead to indefinite continuation of backward techniques, occupational immobility, non-diversified low levels of production, predominance of relief-employment and low levels of incomes and standards of living. As the Committee's emphasis in his view subordinates improvement in technique to increase in employment or avoidance of technological unemployment in each industry, he fears that the aggregate volume of employment itself may not significantly expand, or facilitate increase in occupational mobility of the population.

2. The Committee's own assessment of the productive capacity of the village and small-scale industries, in his view, does not justify the ban on the increase in production and curbs on expansion of the large-scale industries, and consequently there is in the immediate future, a danger of a short-fall in production. Besides such a policy may, apart from denying the domestic market the benefits of larger, diversified, qualitatively, superior consumer products, lead to a waste of the investment in producers goods industries, which may not find a domestic market for their output. Dr. Madan fears that the pattern of production that may result from the Committee's recommendations, may be out of harmony with the consumption pattern that may emerge due to an increase in income, and may also affect the country's capacity to earn foreign exchange. In short, the Committee's insistence on the avoidance of technological unemployment in each industry and, therefore, the postponement of the adoption of improved techniques in each is a confusion in thinking and will deter the adoption of improved techniques, and compel the economy to do with smaller levels not only of production but also, in the long run, of employment and incomes.

### Phased Development

3. Progressive improvement in the economic conditions of the bulk of the artisans, engaged in the village and small-scale industries, is the *sine qua non* for the adoption of improved techniques. But the techniques must be deliberately adapted to conform to the values accepted by society, viz. a socialistic pattern of society. The creation of the basic operative conditions through financial and other aids for expansion of productive effort in the village and small-scale sector, on the one hand, and the assurance of markets for its output at prices that will ensure a minimum margin, through appropriate restrictions on the corresponding large-scale consumer goods industries, on the other, can alone provide both the means and the incentive to adopt improved techniques. Sustained development on this pattern alone can ensure a progressive increase in incomes and the basis for diversified productive effort. Although, in the immediate future, there may thus be no significant diversification of either production or employment, and consequently in occupational mobility, the development of village and small-scale industries as an integral part of the economy, over a period of time, can and definitely will create the conditions in which each of the requirements can be satisfied.

4. Decentralized productive effort, deliberately planned and developed, provides the time indispensable for the acquisition of diverse skills as well as for the changes in the prevailing occupational mores. The diversification and expansion of productive effort on a decentralized basis, through progressive adoption of improved techniques, can create demand for tertiary services on as large a scale in the aggregate as the operations of large-scale industries, without the excessive concentration of population, as in the present industrial areas.

### Production and Employment

5. Dr. Madan's thesis that there is adequate scope in the economy for the simultaneous operation of both large-scale and small-scale industries, and that such an operation will facilitate adoption of improved techniques by the village and small-scale industries, through the introduction of a healthy, mutually beneficial competitive spirit between them, misses the point. Competition to be healthy or mutually beneficial must be between equals; and no one can claim that large-scale village and small-scale units are equal in any sense. To eliminate competition and to formulate an integrated policy for them through allocation of specific shares in the total required output was the *raison d'être* of both the Karve Committee and the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board. In their respective plans they have so demarcated fields of production as to assign the responsibility of producing only the additional consumer requirements to the village

and small-scale industries, leaving the bulk of domestic as well as the export requirements to the technically efficient, large-scale industries. The size of the responsibility assigned in each case has been determined on the basis of a careful analysis of probable increase in consumer demand and the capacity of the decentralized sector. In each individual case, the Karve Committee has provided for specific improvement in technique which is possible of execution within the framework of their objective. It is, therefore, incorrect to argue that production and improvement in techniques have been subordinated to employment.

### Adequate Incentive

6. The curbs on expansion, Dr. Madan considers, may prove a disincentive to undertake modernization of plant and to maintain technical efficiency. The portion of output assigned to the large-scale sector in the principal industry viz. cotton textiles, is by no means small. What is definitely attempted is to reserve a little over a third of the domestic market to the handlooms. The large-scale cotton textile industry has all along asked for a number of concessions to replace or modernize its plant and machinery, even when there were no curbs on its activities, and profit levels were high. The availability of the major portion of the domestic market and the almost entire export market, with its acute international competition ought to be adequate incentives to maintain the required technical efficiency.

### False Alarms

7. To fear that a decentralized pattern of development may reduce our capacity to earn foreign exchange appears altogether unreal, as the Karve Committee have left untouched the responsibility for exports to the large-scale sector. Except cotton textiles, and to a smaller extent oils and oil-cakes, the industries affected by the recommendations do not contribute to the country's foreign exchange earnings. In the case of leather and other products, hides and skins may probably contribute a little more than at present as prices of tanned goods fetch substantially higher prices than raw hides and skins. At any rate, it is yet too early to assess the probable changes in the volume or composition of India's export trade due to the decentralized pattern, which has sufficient structural elasticity to be adjusted in the light of the nation's larger economic needs.

### Consumption Pattern

8. According to Dr. Madan, the Karve Committee did not fully examine the income-elasticity of demand for cloth. The changes in the consumption pattern, particularly for cloth, according to him, show an increasing preference for finer varieties, which the handlooms are not in a position to produce. While it is broadly true

that the production of cotton textiles has gradually changed during the last four decades to relatively better varieties of cloth, the bulk of the production today consists of coarse and medium varieties of which the domestic rural market consumes about 80 per cent. The analysis of the region-wise off-take of cloth by rural and urban areas shows that the per capita consumption in rural areas today is very much smaller than in urban areas, and that there are very wide differences in the levels of consumption between one region and another. While changes in the consumption pattern of urban areas are likely, given the conditions of consumption, the possibility and magnitude of income-increase in the entire country, significant quantitative, much less qualitative changes in consumption pattern are not likely, and no data available warrant such an inference. Consequently, production pattern that may emerge is not likely to be out of harmony with consumption pattern.

#### Investment Pattern

9. A decentralized pattern of industrial development, Dr. Madan fears, may render the investment-pattern in the Plan a waste, as the producers goods industries may not have a domestic market for their output. As was already explained above, the continued operation of the large-scale industries will provide some market for producers goods. But with effective planning the investment pattern can be modified to serve the needs of a rapidly expanding decentralized industrial sector. Such a modification will not only ensure an ever expanding market for the output of the producers goods industries, but also the diversification of production, which Dr. Madan desires, development of higher technical skills and also a decentralized production of machine-tools industries, on a regional basis.

#### Conclusion

10. To sum up : a deliberately slow, phased technological change towards creation of a decentralized pattern of society to accord with larger social and political values, necessitates at each stage of development the provision of the essential conditions for technological progress. As the conditions in the country, economic, social and demographic, permit such a deliberately slowed down change without endangering consumption, the phased programme to avoid technological unemployment in each particular field, as recommended by the Karve Committee, provides adequate internal incentives to change and equates progress with production. Changes in consumption pattern, the available data show, are slow except in urban areas ; and the allocation of production between the large-scale and small-scale industries ensures continued harmony between demand and supply, as well as the continued availability of normal levels of exports. What is therefore, required is early

orientation of the proposed development of basic industries to serve the future needs of the small-scale decentralized industrial sector.

#### WHAT IS AMBAR CHARKHA

The All India Khadi and Village Industries Board has issued a small pamphlet introducing the Ambar Charkha to the public. It is priced As. 4/- and it can be had from the Board's Office (Post Box 482, Bombay-1).

This Charkha has created a very desirable stir in the minds of our planners and the industrialists also. It is disturbing the placid or conventional economic thinking of our Commerce and Finance Ministries at the Centre. This is all to our good, because India is required to tackle a problem which is unique in her economic history.

Conventional economics which took its birth mainly under the over-all influence of Western capitalism-cum-imperialism does not help us here. A bold and new departure from that orthodoxy is called for. The solution of our problem is a veritable venture befitting India which tries to lead the Peace March of the World on Gandhian lines.

Gandhiji gave us, during his life-time, enough ideas to initiate and organize such an economic venture for the nation. His idea of India's economic and industrial regeneration by utilizing our massive employment-potential in our villages through home- and village-industries on a nation-wide scale, buttressed by a national system of basic education which would work its programme of public instruction through these industries — this integrated idea of Gandhiji awaits to be experimented upon and perfected by the Government through its industrial and educational policies and programmes.

The Ambar Charkha, really speaking, has raised this fundamental point before our Government. It is therefore very good that the Khadi Board has issued a pamphlet introducing this new Charkha to the public. As it is an important matter, I propose to issue it in these columns in three or four instalments. The following is the first :

28-12-'55

M. P.

#### I

##### Brief History of the Charkha

1. Of the many and varied gifts of Gandhiji to India, the Charkha or the hand-spinning wheel is the greatest. On the political plane, it rallied the different sections of the population to the nation's call for Purna Swaraj ; and on the economic and social plane, it was the symbol of the nation's determination to achieve economic salvation and social regeneration. To Gandhiji the Charkha was an effective instrument not only for attaining total self-sufficiency in cloth through the utilization of wide-spread knowledge and skill in hand-spinning and hand-weaving and consequently total independence from foreign imports but also for inculcating the lessons of self-help and profitable use of enforced leisure to secure relief from crushing poverty.

In his opinion, such an instrument, therefore, deserved universal introduction to ensure economic uplift of the people.

2. During his very early efforts in Ahmedabad, Gandhiji paid relatively greater attention to hand-weaving as the means to ensure the economic uplift of the people. He soon realized that if hand-weaving was to be revived and developed as an effective means of relieving the wide-spread distress of the people, the dependence on the mill supply of yarn must cease. In his search for an effective method of ensuring the decentralized supply of yarn to suit the needs of a decentralized handloom industry in the country, he came upon the spinning wheel or the Charkha. His knowledge of the prevalence of many types of Charkhas in the country on the one hand, and of the limited but continued use of it by the people, on the other, led him to advocate hand-spinning in 1919 and to initiate the search for a better and more effective Charkha that could be universalized in the country. In his considered view, the universalization of the Charkha and an effective integration of hand-spinning with hand-weaving alone would provide the true basis for an effective revival of India's indigenous, decentralized cotton textile industry. Consequently, during the twenties he carried on a systematic propaganda to familiarize the country with the economic, social, moral and political significance of the Charkha.

3. Although the Charkha was satisfactory from the point of view of its employment-potentiality, capacity to ensure self-sufficiency in cloth and ease of manufacture and service by the village artisan with local raw materials, Gandhiji desired to have a Charkha with higher productive capacity so as to ensure the spinner a higher wage to enable him to raise his standard of living. He, therefore, advocated, encouraged and offered specific incentives for the manufacture of a more efficient Charkha.

#### The Search for an Improved Charkha

4. In 1923 he offered a prize of Rs 5,000 for effective research in evolving a better and more efficient Charkha. To be acceptable for his purpose a Charkha must be capable of being introduced and operated in the smallest of India's cottages; must produce yarn of good quality of a definite quantity to assure the spinner a living wage; and above all, must be capable of being manufactured and serviced by the village artisan in his village. Thus began the nation's search for a Charkha of his dreams to attain the purpose that he so dearly cherished and so ardently advocated.

5. This offer aroused interest not only within the country but also without. During the following years, many indigenous and foreign models were submitted to him for acceptance. But a careful and objective scrutiny of each of these showed that as spinning instruments they were poorer than the prevalent indigenous Charkha.

6. Among the several models that were submitted to him for acceptance during this period, mention may be made of the German and Turkish models of Charkhas. These were, however, found unsatisfactory either because of their cost or mechanism or their constructional difficulties. The models that attracted most attention and came closest to his criteria were Shri Purushottam Das's one-spindle "Jeevan Charkha" and Shri Kale's two-spindle and six-spindle Charkhas. These also did not pass the rigid test of Gandhiji. The two inventors were, however, requested to continue their efforts to evolve a more effective model. Political events of this period claimed the greater portion of Gandhiji's time and attention and consequently, despite his deep interest in this research, he could not give it sufficient time or attention, as he desired.

7. In 1929, however, with the wide-spread distress in the country owing to the unprecedented world economic depression, Gandhiji once again offered a prize, this time of Rs 1,00,000 for the invention of a Charkha which satisfied his conditions, except that of price, which in his opinion, could go upto Rs 150 per Charkha.

8. Political events, such as the Dandi March, Salt Satyagraha etc. of this period once again claimed Gandhiji's time and attention; and although work was being carried on at Sabarmati, Wardha, and other places, research as such received only secondary attention.

9. Chief among the various models that were constructed during this period was Shri Kale's improved ten-spindle Charkha, manufactured in 1937. Although on this Charkha, yarn of good quality according to specifications and conditions, could be spun, and its productivity was satisfactory, it was found unacceptable because it was not capable of being manufactured in the villages; it was too large to be set up in all the small huts of the villages and its price was beyond the means of the average villager.

10. Revival of sustained interest in technical research in all aspects of Khadi in general and a determined drive to evolve a technically superior Charkha came only during the second half of the World War II. Thanks to the zeal of Shri Krishnadas Gandhi, who convened several conferences to discuss questions of technical improvement of the Charkha and Khadi, research-mindedness as such received fresh impetus. The interest in research aroused by these conferences was reflected in the decision of the A.I.S.A. during this time to send a delegation at a cost of Rs 40,000 to Japan and China, which were reported to have devised small spinning units. Before the delegation left, however, a model of the Japanese spinning unit became available in the country for critical examination, and the trip to Japan was, therefore, cancelled.

11. The foreign model of the spinning unit was, however, found to be unsatisfactory, because its output was lower than that of even the ordinary Charkha and its price was prohibitive. Besides, the mechanism of the model was intricate and obviously beyond the capacity of the village artisan to maintain, let alone manufacture. Above all, its productivity and quality were each poorer than the models constructed in the country itself. The final rejection of the Japanese model paved the way for re-consideration of the indigenous models of Charkhas, such as the Rajagopalam Charkha, constructed during the thirties, and the Nagindas Charkha made in 1947. Although each of these was comparatively superior to the foreign model, they failed to satisfy the criteria of Gandhiji, and consequently, it was decided to continue the search for the Charkha of Gandhiji's dreams.

(Continued)

### By Vinoba Bhavne BHOODAN YAJNA

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