

Cottage Industries and Gandhian Village Swaraj

Thagendra Chutia



ABSTRACT: Mahatma Gandhi “The Father of the nation” was one of the prominent socio-political thinkers of the 20th century. He had greatly emphasis the village swaraj. He was interested in developing the villages as self sufficient units. In order to village swaraj Gandhi said, “The village of my dreams is still in my hand. After all, every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor small pox, no one will be idle and no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour.”

Key words: Cottage Industry, Dhakuakhana, Mahatma Gandhi, rural Development

To try to find out the conditions of village sanitation in Dhakuakhana Su-division.

To examine the educational development among the villagers in Dhakuakhana Sub-division.

To try to find out the use of Cotton Industries by the people in the villagers of Dhakuakhana Sub-division.

To try to find out whether the people of Dhakuakhana Sub-division can achieve equal status and equal rights.

To examine the use of large-scale industries in Dhakuakhana Sub-division.

To highlight the economic equality in the common people of this area.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The word swaraj came from two Sanskrit words “swa” and “raj”. “Swa” means self and “raj” means rule. Literally swaraj means the rule of the self. Gandhis idea on village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of it neighbours for its own vital wants and yet Independent for many others in which dependence is necessary. According to Gandhi real India was to be found in villages and not in towns and cities. He thought that it was impossible to develop the country without development of the village area. He said, “When our villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and having will not be had in the villages.” Gandhi advocated some points regarding village swaraj as follows:

1. Every village first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth.
2. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall.
3. Education will be compulsory upto the final basic course.
4. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village.
5. An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation.
6. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation, built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it.

II. OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of the Proposed Research work are as follows:-

1. To highlight the Gandhian Philosophy prevailing in Village Swaraj regarding the present topic.

III. METHODOLOGY:

For any kind of social research and carry out investigation for gathering data, methodology plays an important role which should give the various aspects of the problem that had to be studied for valid generalization about the phenomena. To carry out the present study, the investigator may basically use primary data on the basis of case study method for gathering information by conducting field survey. The investigator will prepare questionnaire for collecting data from the villagers of Dhakuakhana Sub-division of Lakhimpur district, Assam. During my field visit for collection of information regarding execution of various plans and programmes by the GP which have relation directly or indirectly with Gandhi’s ideas of rural development. I put some questions to my respondents in this regards. My first question to them was whether they are aware regarding principles advocated by Gandhi for rural development. The responses of the respondents are shown in a tabular form in the following table.

IV. ANALYSIS

The conception of GRAM SWARAJ is still not properly touch the poor people in the nation as well as in Dhakuakhana Sub-division. Using the cottage industries in the villages of Dhakuakhana Sub-division of Lakhimpur district, Assam is very poor. They have less knowledge about the schemes which provided by the Govt. of India. In this case, it has a research work and the researcher going to research about the implement of Gram Swaraj in the selected area. The present study deals with the northern part of Brahmaputra river basically Dhakuakhana Su-division of Lakhimpur district of Assam. It is situated between 27.200 degree to 27.350 degree north latitude and 94.24 degree to 94.42 degree east longitude and delimited by the river Brahmaputra in the south and river Subansiri in the west. In east and north is bounded by of Dhemaji district, the altitude is 30Sft above the MSI. The Sub-division consists of 2 blocks, 12 GPs and comprises of more than five hundred villages and has 2.5 lakh populations according to survey report. Out of the total population 84 percent are poor and depend on cultivation and fishing. Most of the people of this region lived remote areas.

Revised Manuscript Received on October 30, 2019.

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So, they have less knowledge about the scheme which advocated by the government. They have a lack of knowledge about the Panchayati Raj system, village sanitation etc. Most of them are falls in plague, cholera, small pox and so on. In recent time, yet India will be a developed country, education does not touch them properly. So it is necessary to teach them about the conception of Gandhian Village Swaraj.

Table – 1

Respondent's awareness on Gandhians principles of rural development.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Fully aware	48	40%
Partially aware	54	45%
Not aware	18	15%
Total	120	100%

It is clear from the above table that majority of the respondents are partially aware regarding the Gandhian principles of rural development and their total number is 54. The Gaon Panchayat of Assam has also the power to take steps for development of cottage industry to make the rural people self development. Gandhiji also gave importance for the development of the cottage industry for removing unemployment and poverty from rural India. So, I wanted to know from the respondents whether their GP has taken any steps for the development of cottage industries in their area. The response of the respondents in this matter is stated in the following table.

Table – 2

Respondents view on step taken by GP for development of cottage industries.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
G.P. has taken partial step	10	8%
G.P. has taken no step	110	92%
Total	120	100%

It is clear from the views of the respondents that 8% of them think that GP has taken partial step for revival and development of cottage industry in the rural area, while 92% respondents think for the development of cottage industries their GP has not taken any step. Gandhiji wanted decentralization of political and economic power. As a result of decentralization of power the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) has come into existence. The PRI has given the rural people for the scope of self administration. During my study I wanted to know from my respondents whether they are aware about decentralization of power. The response of respondents about this question has been explained on numerical way in the following table.

Table – 3

Respondents view about decentralization of power for administration.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Fully aware	32	27%
Partially aware	65	54%
Not aware	19	16%

No comment	04	03%
Total	120	100%

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are partially aware about decentralization of power, while only 27% respondents are fully aware about decentralization of power. It is to be noted that 03% of the respondents give no comment to the question.

Panchayati Raj Institutions are created in India on Gandhian line to make the rural India prosperous and self dependent. But how far our Panchayat has been able to develop the socio-economic condition of the rural people after 60 years of independence is really a significant question. So, I wanted to know the opinion of the respondents whether their GP has been able to improve the socio-economic condition of the people to the expected level.

Table – 4

Respondent's view on socio-economic development through GP.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Has been able to develop to the expected level	41	34%
Has not been able to develop to the expected level	79	66%
Total	120	100%

It appears from the above table that out of 120 respondents 41 respondent's view is that GP has been able to develop the socio-economic condition of the rural people to the expected level, while 66% respondents view is that GP has not been able to develop the socio-economic condition of rural people to the expected level. According to them partial socio-economic development has been possible for the rural people through Gaon Panchayat. Gandhiji gave importance on education

of rural people also. He thought that if the rural people remain illiterate, rural development would not be possible. So far women are concerned, Gandhi's view was that without women education, women empowerment would be fruitless. During my study I tried to know from my respondent whether their Panchayat or any other Organization has taken any step to remove illiteracy from the rural people. Their answers are illustrated in tabular form as given below.

Table – 5

Gaon Panchayat and steps taken for removing illiteracy

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	97	80.5%
No response	23	19.5%
Total	120	100%

The above table shows that according to 80.50% respondents under their Panchayat the programme of removing illiteracy was taken by some other organization like Sarbasiksha Mission, Gyan-Vigyan Samiti, Higher Educational Institutions etc. though Panchayat itself did not take any step in this matter.

My next question to the respondents was whether there are any children under their Panchayat who are not going to school. In this regard the response of the respondents were as follows –



Table – 6
Respondents view on education of children.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	102	85%
No response	18	15%
Total	120	100%

Under every Panchayat there are some children who are not going to school. The above table shows that 15% of respondents view is that there are some children under their Gaon Panchayats who are not going to school. I came to know from the respondents that due to negligence of some illiterate parents some children remain absent from school or not going to school. But in majority cases the poorest of the poor parents have engaged their children for earning in various ways. Gandhiji gave importance on removing unemployment from rural India. Following the principle of Gandhiji Central Government has started the programme of MGNREGA and many other schemes of self employment through GP. I asked my respondents whether their GP has taken any step for removing unemployment. In response to my question the respondents gave their answer which is shown in the following table.

Table – 7
Respondents view on steps taken by GP for removing unemployment.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	120	100%
No	00	0%
Total	120	100%

The above table shows that every Gaon Panchayat has taken step for removing unemployment. During field visit I came to know from the respondents that though GP has taken various steps for removing unemployment still this problem has not been solved fully. There is necessity of permanent solution of the problem. Though some youth have

Table-8:
GP and step taken for socio-economic development of down trodden people.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Has taken step	28	23.5%
Has taken partial step	77	64%
Negligible	15	12.5%
Total	120	100%

The response of the respondents shown that more or less all the GP have taken step for socio-economic development of the economically backward section of people. But majority of the respondents think that the GP has taken partial step for socio-economic development of the people. Another question was regarding corruption in the implementation of MGNREGA scheme. In this regard the information as given by the respondents can be stated as follows.

Table-9:
Respondents view on corruption in MGNREGA and other Schemes.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	58	48%

Do not know	42	35%
No response	20	17%
Total	120	100%

According to 48% respondents there is corruption in the implementation of MGNREGA and other schemes. While 17% gave no response to my question and 35% respondents view is that they do not know whether there is corruption in the implementation of MGNREGA and other schemes or not.

I also tried to know the view of respondents whether they think that by implementing Gandhian economic principle through Gaon Panchayat rural development is possible. The response of the respondents about this question is explained as follows.

Table-10:
Rural development through Gandhian economic principle.

Comments	Number of respondents	Percentage
Possible	32	27%
Partially possible	76	63%
Not possible	12	10%
Total	120	100%

The table shows that 63% of my respondents think that rural development is partially possible through Gandhian economic principle but according to the 27% of the respondents rural development is possible fully by implementing economic principles of Gandhiji. On the other hand 10% respondents view is that in the present complex situation rural development is not possible through Gandhian economic principle.

During my study I came into contact with 38 representatives of Gaon Panchayats and tried to know some information regarding implementation and awareness of Gandhian principles for rural development.

My first question to them was whether they know the economic principles of Gandhiji. But from the collected information I came to know that 30% of these representatives have no idea regarding Gandhian economic principles, while 70% has partial awareness regarding the same.

My second question to them was whether they think that in the present era of globalization Gandhian principles for rural development has any significance. In response to my question 40% of them said that Gandhian principles has partial significance for rural development, while 11% said that it has no significance in the present era. On the other hand the view of 49% respondents was that it has significance even in the present day era of globalization.

Findings of the study:

The area of my study is Dhakuakhana sub-division, Lakhimpur District of Assam and as the topic of the study is related to rural development through implementation of Gandhian principles. So, all the respondents of my study were selected from rural area of the district.

The main points of findings of the study may be stated as follows:



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- (a) I tried to know from the respondents whether they
- (b) are aware about Gandhian principles of rural development. Collected information shows that majority of the respondents are partially aware about Gandhian principles of rural development.
- (c) Small scale and cottage industry can provide better scope for removing rural unemployment. In this matter Gram Panchayat of the district has not given much more importance.
- (d) Gram Panchayats are the product of decentralization of power. Through decentralization of political and economic power Gandhiji wanted to develop the condition of rural Indian. In my study it is being found that majority of the respondents have partial knowledge regarding decentralization power for administration.
- (e) Gram Panchayat of the district has not been able to develop the socio-economic condition of the rural people to the expected level.
- (f) The government of India has taken remarkable steps by taking primary education compulsory and free, and now it becomes fundamental rights for the children. During my field visit and from information's of respondents it becomes clear that under every panchayat there are some children who are deprived of the right to education. It happens partially due to negligence of parents and partially due to poverty. The poor parents engaged their children to do some work for earning money.

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V. CONCLUSION:

The people of our country particularly the rural common people know Gandhiji as the political leader of freedom movement. Though Gandhiji was not an economist yet his model of rural economy is practical and suitable for Indian rural condition and its prosperity.

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