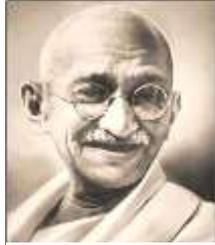


Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti

Genesis



Gandhiji settled down in Maganwadi, at the Magan Sangrahalaya premises, Wardha, after his departure from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. He named this Ashram after Maganlal Gandhi, his close associate and a rural scientist who had been his right hand in all the earlier three Ashrams but who suddenly died while working, at his behest, in Bihar in 1928.

Dedicated to the cause of village industries, Mahatma Gandhi founded the All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA) by a resolution of the All India Congress Committee on 26th October 1934. Gandhiji was the chairman and Prof. J C Kumarappa the secretary of AIVIA.

The advisory board of AIVIA constituted of towering national personalities like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, renowned humanists and international scientists like Dr. C V Raman, Dr. J C Bose, M A Ansari, Satish Chandra Das Gupta, P.C.Ray, Prof. San Higginbottom, Major-General Sir Robert Mc Carrison, Dr. Purushottam Patel, Shri V. Patel, Dr. B.C.Roy, Dr. S. Subbarao, Dr. Rajabally, Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Jamal Mohamed Sahib, Shri Ramdas Pantulu Shri S. Pochkhanawalla and prominent industrialist - Shri G.D.Birla.



Gandhi & Prof. J C Kumarappa (The great Gandhian economist) spearheaded the all India movement for revival and expansion of various rural industries and artisan-based crafts. Under the able leadership of Kumarappaji, the AIVIA evolved and developed traditional industries and established many new rural industries in various parts of India. The institution conducted training courses for technical personnel and master craftsmen from all over India to run these cottage industries.

To showcase the evolving techniques in rural industrialization, developed at AIVIA, Mahatma Gandhi wanted a dynamic museum that would impart information on new modes of production to the common man and help the poor of the land. Therefore, Gandhiji collected donations from the public and founded the Magan Sangrahalaya. This very first museum of Rural Industries (Magan Sangrahalaya)- was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi on 30th December 1938.



Devendra Bhai: The Crusader



Dr. Devendra Kumar, popularly known as Devendra Bhai, A science graduate from Lucknow University and an Oil Technologist from the famous Harcourt Butler Technological Institute, joined the All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA). Devendra Bhai helped his Guru Kumarappaji for six years in research and innovative experiments in various village industries. He also edited and translated Kumarappa's books as well as articles in Hindi language.

Guiding People to Self-Sufficiency

In 1952, Devendra Bhai opted to live with the landless poor of a small insulated hilly village, called 'Machla', near Indore, in the State of Madhya Pradesh for eight long years – to experience village life in the raw. He made a sea change in the lives of the rural people of Machla, who still rever him as a saint who changed their lives by making them self-sufficient, to lead a life of dignity and honor. He was also a part of the 'Bhoodan' movement (where landowners donated land to the landless poor) spearheaded by Acharya Vinoba Bhave – the barefoot 'Saint on the march'. Under Acharya Vinoba's guidance, Devendra Bhai acted as the Madhya Pradesh State Level Organizer of Bhoodan and was also active in Sarvodaya movements.

Catalyzing Policy Initiatives

In 1965 Devendra Bhai became the Organizing Secretary of the National Committee for Gandhi Centenary, of which the President of India was the President and the Prime Minister of India the Chairperson. From 1965 to 1976 he served as the Secretary of the National Gandhi Memorial Trust at New Delhi and initiated a number of institutions and was connected to various national and international committees on Gandhian constructive movement. Devendra Bhai acted as a vital link between the grassroot NGOs in the Gandhian field and the policymakers at the Central Government level. In 1973 -75 Devendra Bhai started the Chambal Ghati mission and worked closely with Shri Jayprakash Narayan in the peaceful surrender of the dacoits of Chambal Valley.

Devendra Bhai was instrumental in cultivating a number of scientific institutions in Delhi to orient them towards the needs of rural India. Even the concept of having Rural Development and Appropriate Technology Cells at all the IITs in India was the brainchild of Devendra Bhai. He initiated the formulation of Science & Society Division in Department of Science and Technology (New Delhi) and played a major role in starting the Council for Advancement of Rural Technology (CART) – the erstwhile CAPART. He was a member of around 150 National Science & Technology committees.

Transforming Rural Life with Technology

As a scientist, Dr. Devendra Kumar undertook the onus of providing momentum to the noble cause of helping those subsisting below the poverty line by empowering them with the tool of science and technology.

In 1978, Devendra Bhai made Magan Sanghralaya his base and took up the mission to create a new awareness pertaining to Gandhian values among the scientists, technologists, economists, sociologists, and experts in various disciplines all over the country. Here, he set up the Centre of

Science for villages (CSV). His entire life was nothing but a relentless pursuit to provide a human face to technology with the dream that no one slept hungry and every citizen of India became self-sufficient and led a life of dignity and honour.

The main objective of CSV is to bring to the fore the indigenous skills of the village artisans, stemming from their accumulated traditional knowledge, and facilitate its interaction with the latest knowledge of science and technology. Its mission is to innovate technologies that could be converted into sustainable business opportunities at the grassroots level.



With a team of committed scientists and technocrats, Centre of Science for Villages (CSV) developed 75 technologies to convert them into business opportunities for the rural people and constructed 30,000 low-cost mud houses, 100,000 hygienic toilets, 20,000 biogas plants and trained around 30,000 rural artisans in improved scientific techniques like non-violent honey extraction, collection of tree gum without harming the trees, developed single-bullock driven agricultural equipments, improved tools for artisans like potters, blacksmith, weavers and farmers.

In 1984 Devendra Bhai initiated a major artisan movement called 'Karigar Panchayat', creating artisan guilds in 22 states of India with a total strength of 200, 000 artisans.

From 1986-89 he served as Vice Chancellor of Rural University Gandhigram where 1990 he was honored with honorary Doctorate by the Gandhigram Rural University. In the year 1998, Dr. Devendra Kumar was conferred with Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Development.

For all his contribution Devendra Bhai, is hailed as the doyen of Appropriate Technology in India.

Light that continues to Enlighten



Though Devendra Bhai is no more in this world, his daughter – Dr. Vibha Gupta – is carrying forward the torch by creating sustainable livelihoods in Rural India through technological interventions. She worked with Devendra Bhai since 1978 and in the year 2000 she became the Chairperson of the Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti.

