

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT: A LESSON TO BE LEARNT FROM SWADHYAY MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown has a deep impact on Indian economy. It has disturbed the whole world. Almost hundred economies have been destroyed. Government revenues and income growth have been affected to a great extent in all the economies of the world. Governments all over the world has announced economic packages to come out of this difficult situation. Indian Government announced a package of 20 Lakh crores. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi appealed the whole nation to join the "AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" (Self-reliant India Mission). Thus Atmanirbhar is the buzz word today to come out of this crisis as funds with government are limited and also a huge amount of fiscal responsibilities lies on shoulders of government. This paper explains some experiments of Swadhayay Movement undertaken by Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavle (popularly known as Dadaji) and socio-economic impact of these experiments on the society which can be applied in today's era as the solution to achieve AtmanirbharBharat.

Keywords: Atma-Nirbhar, Self-reliance, Swadhayay Movement, Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavle, Prayog, Yogeshwar Krishi, Matsyagandha, Shri Darshanam.

Introduction

COVID-19 Pandemic has disturbed the whole world. Almost hundred economies have been destroyed. Government revenues and income growth have been affected to a great extent in all the economies of the world. The lockdown has impacted on the revenues of businesses impacting the incomes of the households in return. Thus, leading to low revenue for Government in the form of taxes, higher expenditure on maintenance of health care sector and law and order, fall in investor sentiments has also impacted the industry and government. In all, impact of consumption and savings has impacted the economies to a tremendous extent. All the economies in the world are trying to find a solution for such a big problem.

In India, a solution to Atma nirbhar society has been proven by Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavale since last 7 decades through Prayogs (Experiments). If these experiments are studied in detail we can find solution for Atma nirbhar society concept, which is now crucial for all economies in the world. This paper is an attempt to explain these experiments to suggest the experiments as the solution to today's problems which have arisen due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

Swadhayay is a Sanskrit word which means Adhayan of Swa i.e. in depth study of the self. Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavale was a spiritual leader, a social activist and a leader, a social scientist, an economist, a manager, a philosopher, are formist founded Swadhayay Parivar (family) in the year 1954. Later Swadhayay became a movement rather a revolution in Indian society. He is known as Dadaji which means "an elder brother" in Marathi Dadaji believed "One owes one's existence to god who is the inner most aspect of our total being. The continuous awareness of this indwelling divinity restores human dignity and one starts adoring and respecting oneself".

Dadaji undertook various experiments (Prayogs) in Maharashtra and Gujarat to uplift the society socio economically by means of God-centric devotion, including cooperative farming, fishing and tree-planting projects in the spirit of collective, divine labour (bhakti). Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavle was

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awarded the Roman Magsaysy Award in 1996 for Community Leadership. Dadaji believed Bhakti (devotion), can be turned into a social force. "Since God is with us and with in us, He is a partner in all our transactions. Naturally, He has His share, God's part of our wealth, can be redistributed among the poor and needy."

Objectives of Study

- To study the Prayogs (Experiments) of Swadhyay movement
- To study the socio-economic impact of these experiments on rural as well as coastal areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat
- To try to provide solution for making Self-reliant society

Experiments of Swadhyay Movement: (In this paper I have considered only first three experiments)

- Yogeshwar Krishi
- ShriDarshanam
- Matsyagandha
- Amrutalayam
- Goras
- Hira Mandir
- GharMandir
- PatanjaliChikitsalaya
- BhavFeri
- BhaktiFeri
- **Yogeshwar Krishi** : A revolution in Farming communities

The concept of Yogeshwar Krishi is followed in villages where around 40% of population are swadhayayees. The farm land is rented at the prevailing market rate. The size of an average farm is approximately 1.5 to 2 hectares. There are three elder brothers selected by the villagers who take decision regarding sowing, cultivation, crop cutting, marketing, etc. in consultation with the villagers and the paperwork is kept minimum. Everything works on trust and divine brother hood. Each swadhayayee family in the village devotes 2 days (Shram Bhakti) in a month for the cultivation this land. Concept of Shram bhakti is – generally people keep fast on ekadashi according to hindu religion. So, instead of keeping fast for twice a month divine labour (shram bhakti) is offered in the farm. Yogeshwar Krishi also acts as agricultural research centre. Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is discouraged rather use of bio-manures and indigenous pesticides is encouraged. Thus the produce becomes organic.

This divine farming works wonders for the families in the village. As the income from this God's plot is collected in Amrutalayam (local village temple) and given to families in need, under cover of night, as Prasad. Thus none of the recipient feels the sense of inferiority as everyone has given their labour for the community. There is no

obligation on the recipient to repay the principle or interest of such sum. As on today there are more than 10,000 YogeshwarKrishi in the world.

- **Shri Darshanam:** Shri Darshanam is extension of Yoggeshwar Krishi. On the same philosophy of Yogeshwar Krishi, a 40 acre or bigger plot of land is cultivated collectively by twenty or more than twenty villages. Four pujaris from each village come for their shram bhakti (selfless service). The income, Mahaprasad, from such plot is spent on the needy village. Shri Darshanam experiment thus creates friendly environment, co-operation and unity amongst these twenty villages. As it is rightly said by Dadaji "Sanghe Shakti KalauYuge". (In the current scenario unity is strength).

- **Matsyagandha:** A revolution in Fishing Communities

Matsyagandha is the experiment undertaken for upliftment of fishing community. Matsyagandha is the experiment in the fishing communities living and working along the coastal waters of Maharashtra and Gujarat. These communities make their living off the sea even today though there are lots of changes in the world around them. Dadaji called Fishermen the "Sagar Putras". The first Matsyagandha was launched on 23 December, 1990. Matsyagandha is a boat which is a floating temple for the community and the fishermen working on it becomes Pujari. As per the same philosophy of YogeshwarKrishi, collectively people from each house hold will devote one day of Shram Bhakti on this temple (person from each house will work one / two days on Matsyagandha). He stresses the same

principle of Ekadashi (one day fasting in the fortnight according to Hindu religion), instead of fasting, give one day labour on this boat. The income earned by the sale of fishes caught of this boat will not belong to anyone personally and belongs to community. Needy person will be given the benefit under the cover of night as Prasad. Thus, no one feels inferior as everyone has worked on this floating temple. An impersonal wealth of the community is created. On average, 87 Matysagandhas are working today. The management of people and cash is done by the big brothers elected by the community and everything works on trust even today.

Impact of these Experiments on Society

- **Generating impersonal wealth:** The wealth created by each experiment does not belong to any one and is for the whole community since every one has given their divine labour for creating of this wealth.
- **Growth and development of the village without government help:** Without any governmental or any other help from outside the community, economic needs of all the people in the community are being catered to without anyone feeling inferior.
- **Devotional work and not social work :**Whenever any activity has its base in religion, it can become stronger and can create stronger bonds amongst the members of the community. The labour offered by the member of the society is treated as devotional work and not social work.
- **No one feels inferior:** Since everyone has worked in the farm or on the boat the Prasad received by the devotees does not have the element of obligation. Thus inferiority complex, which can destroy individual's desire to work does not have any place in such community.
- **Due to the influence of its philosophy, people have given up bad habits like alcohol drinking, wife beating (in case of fishermen community):** The philosophy of these experiments are purely based on in-dwelling God and working for God, which has brought a huge difference in their social life also.

Findings, Conclusion and Suggestion

- Creation of Impersonal Wealth : Impersonal wealth can be a solution for Atma- Nirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India).
- "Sanghe Shakti Kalao Yuge": During these times Unity is strength.
- Growth without any outside support : No outside intervention/ support required for such self-reliant societies.
- Although Ethos of Swadhyay is Hindu, its not only for Hindus or Indians–Bhakti or devotion to God is there in all religions so can be applied universally.
- These models can be applied in almost all communities which can act as a perfect solution to Atama-Nirbhar Bahrat Abhiyan.

According to Dadaji, Bhakti is a social force, and it can solve all the societal problems. These experiments are practical projects that were envisaged by Dadaji. All these experiments have collective form and include huge number of followers. These experiments of Swadhyay Movement started by Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavle and running successfully all over the world today can rightly be the solution for Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's appeal for Atma Nirbhar Bharat Mission.

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