

Rethinking Swadeshi

Are we still living in clutches?

During the British Raj in India, the Swadeshi Movement started in 1905 to encourage the revival of domestic products and to boycott the British products. The purpose was to improve the economic conditions in our country by Swadeshi approach. Our countrymen took part in the rise of Indian nationalism amid guiding principles of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, and our heroes of pre-independent India. Together, they led several campaigns nationwide to achieve Swaraj for an independent India where religious amity ruled, and social evils like poverty and untouchability were completely eradicated. On 15 August 1947, India became an independent nation with the efforts and struggles of Indian martyrs, unsung heroes and leaders.

But, the time has arrived to think once again: When was the last time we thought we weren't free. By any means or any reasons, are we still living in clutches? Are we truly free?

Swadeshi: A Call of Our Times

More than ever in the history, Swadeshi is the need of today's times when crisis and corruption have overtaken much of our lives. The downfall in our history, politics, fashion and lifestyle has consumed our Mother Earth, trees, health, education, ideology, etc.



Once more, our country calls for good faith, perseverance, purpose, loyalty, truth and heartiness from all of us in all what we do. Once again, it's time to **Rethink Swadeshi.**

At such a time, the artist **Sajal Sasanka Sarkar** brings back the pre-independence mood of Swadeshi in things around us through his inspiring work of paintings. His paintings have smiled often speaking about the artist's consideration for the mankind's problems.

Sarkar believes in capturing his original thoughts about what he thinks about the problems around us. The problems we face every day. The problems that need to be dealt in a collective manner. The artist, through his paintings and colours on the canvas, shows us the ways to solve them. His works pay tribute to the triumphs and struggles of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Bhagat Singh, Sardar Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose, Sri Aurobindo and many others.

Sarkar's paintings are thoughtful acts, displaying different emotions, wonderments and awareness about the needs of human lives. His works reflect on the need of gearing up to save our Mother Earth, nature and the mankind. He hopes that with this unique collaboration, we can together prove our true capabilities. It can be a new experience where art finds a true meaning in our lives. **You Think. You Decide. You Act.**

Counting Every Grain

In 1965, India faced severe food crisis. It had become extremely difficult for the then government to deal with the situation and arrange food for 12 million people. Despite that, Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of our country, refused to accept inferior quality wheat from the United States under PL 480. Shastri Ji, a true Gandhian in his heart, appealed to the nation that all its citizens should have one meal less every day. He asked his wife not to cook the evening meal. He also asked people to grow food even in their houses.

Today, we are facing the similar food crisis. The food grains are adulterated with urea and chemical fertilizers that pose severe health threats and risks to deadly diseases. At such a time, can organic food be a rescue to us? Organic agricultural methods can help in food quality and safety, soil conservation, climate change, biodiversity fitness and energy efficiency. We should encourage our farmers to confide in organic farming and our people to buy organic foods. This will help in making our nation self-reliant in agricultural and crop production.

Triumphs of Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is remembered for his teachings and principles, and vision of a free India. He was a champion of Swadeshi. His campaign to end British colonialism was only a small part of his struggle. His virtues spread non-violence (ahimsa), truth, love and fraternity in India that helped in spearheading the demand for independence. “Do or Die” and “Quit India” were his ultimate slogans, aiming at securing the end of British rule in India.

Mahatma Gandhi was one of those few people who dedicated his life for the cause of humanity, a greater cause in the society. He made a great impact on people when he went to South Africa where he learned about racial discrimination and oppression of common people. He strictly condemned them and when he returned to India, he lived among the poorest people and his approach was of love and non-violence. He made efforts to help the “untouchables”, to improve their own lot and gain self-respect.

The Treaty of Friendship

The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, signed in 1971, between India and the Soviet Union, still resonates in policy circles in post-cold war world order. The treaty signed some forty years back reflected the ‘model’ relationship between the only alternate superpower and the largest democratic country beyond bi-polar affiliation.

The Treaty still holds lessons to be learnt in the post-cold war international politics. The treaty was reflective of burgeoning Indo-Soviet relations and also instructive enough to reflect the prevalent bloc politics and associated international churning particularly in South Asia, which evinced interests from the Soviet Union, the United States and China. In the current times, the treaty holds mirror for many ongoing turbulences passing through the Indian subcontinent as well as surrounding regions. It is the mankind to decide who is friend and who is foe.

Buy Swadeshi

No country can become great without the development of home economy, its indigenous industries, education, medical science, technology, knowledge, food produces and costumes. Every citizen can contribute to making his nation healthy, prosperous and value-based. By encouraging the use of Swadeshi products can make our country a strong, powerful and self-reliant economy.

We should strive to make every citizen of our country healthy and self-introspecting. We should together work in eradicating social evils like dishonesty, corruption, hopelessness and feeling of self guilt. Together, we should inculcate values, morals and ethics in every child, youth and individual to build this nation.

Our Heroes & Freedom Fighters

The British rule came to an end with regular and rigorous protests from Indian nationalists and leaders. The period between 1858 and 1947 is referred to as the period of dominion in Indian history. It was during this time when the freedom fighters took part in several demonstrations against British rule. Their sole aim was to get our nation independent of any foreign rule. These people crusaded together against foreign domination and cultural imposition on the Indian sub-continent to obtain political independence from the British rulers. They deployed all sort of strategies which included both physical and psychological tricks to make our nation free. It is because of these brave men that we enjoy our rights today and are able to lead a life of freedom.



The Universal Man

The Green Revolution transformed India's agricultural industries, increasing agricultural production across the country in 1970s. However, this expansion came at a price as the increased use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers penetrated our food on the dining tables. It has led to extreme damage to human well being as well as environmental health through the dangerous use and disposal of synthetic pesticides. The soil and water seem to have contaminated due to chemicals. We need to build ecological and social resilience into farming systems; this means empowering small-scale farmers both economically and politically, and encouraging cultivation of diverse cropping systems.