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Swadeshi: The Inner Core of RSS

Bhagwati Prakash

Sangh has been endeavouring since its inception in 1925, to restore the ultimate and age-old glory of Bharat, and rebuild this ancient Hindu Motherland through reinvigorating the patriotic fervor of citizens. All Swayamsevaks have a strong resolve to place Bharat in the front rank of the prosperous and strong nations of the world, capable to sustain, wholesome life for its citizens, through self righteous and unified efforts with optimal use of the nation's resources. However, while talking of the glory or vaibhav of Bharat, it would not be out of place to mention that Bharat had more than 33% share in the world GDP between 1 AD to 1500 AD, as calculated by the British economic historian Angus Maddison in his book, entitled the "World Economic History - A Millennium Perspective", published by the OECD nations from Brussels in Belgium. It was more than five times of what it is today. The Pathway envisioned by the Sangh, for this, has been of 'Swadeshi', aimed at sustainable development and growth by optimally employing and harnessing nation's resources for the economic resurgence of the nation with the participation of all its people. The concept of Swadeshi, though stresses for preference to products and brands 'Made by Bharat' over the foreign brands, while buying any goods and services. But, it is not confined to such economic issues alone, pertaining to industry, commerce and trade alone. It encompasses all facets of life, including the ancient scriptural wisdom language, culture, conduct, food habits, dressing, life style, values, morals, ethos and so on. The Sangh swayamsevaks, ever since the Independence of the nation, have also kept on asserting against all kinds of foreign or external influences over the nation's economic affairs.

Assertion against External Influences since Independence

First such major and explicit patriotic assertion displayed by the Sangh thinkers was against the Government's succumbing to external pressure in 1949, when the Jawahar Lal Nehru Government devalued the rupee by 30.5% on September 19, 1949 to obtain a loan from the World Bank, to set up some public sector enterprises. Value of the Bharatiya rupee had then been Rs. 3.23 per USD since 1946, ever since the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had fixed the value of Bhartiya Rupee at par with 30.23 cent. It was suddenly devalued to Rs. 4.76 per USD. Before this devaluation Bhartiya Rupee and Pakistani Rupee were at par. But, after this devaluation, the value of Indian rupee went down to Re 1.44 vizaPPvis per Pakistani rupee. Shri Guruji, the then Sarsanghchalak had and other major functionaries warned the government at that time over 3 things viz-viz against borrowing money from the World Bank, devaluation of the Indian Rupee and

burgeoning imports leading to a whopping trade deficit of Rs 95.18 Lac. Shri Guruji and senior office bearers had then pointed out that as a result of the devaluation Bharat had to immediately pay a higher amount of price by 44% in Bhartiya Rupees for the import of raw Jute etc from even pay more price in rupee terms for all its imports which led to sharp price rise in the economy. All jute mills of India had to erstwhile East Pakistan, as most of the Jute Cultivation areas had gone to the then East Pakistan. To the Contatory, Pakistan had to pay less for the tea etc. They imported from India. Shri Guru ji and other adhikaris had expressed grave concern over it. Soon, as a result of this devaluation Bharat lost its place from among the top five quota holders (i.e. share holders) of the IMF and the world Bank in 1954, due to a decline in the value of deposits held as capital for the IMF and World Bank quotas, in Indian Rupees. As a consequence, Bharat also lost the post of one of the five permanent directors of the IMF and of the World Bank in 1963, which it was holding since their inception in 1946. Sangh functionaries, including Guruji and Deen Dayal Ji had thereafter, very strongly condemned the Union government for sacrificing the national interests in the Nehru–Ayub agreement over sharing of Indus water in 1960. The country is now suffering from water scarcity due to over yielding to Pakistan and today India a has only 1800 cubic meter of per capita availability of against 2750 cubic meter per capita in Pakistan and 9400 cubic meter of water per capita.

Sangh karyakarttas had become even more vociferous to condemn the second devaluation of Indian Rupee, done by 57.5% in one go in 1966 on June 6 from Rs. 4.76 to Rs. 7.50 per US Dollar. At that time pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay, had raised this issue across the country, delivered a series of lectures and also authored a book entitled 'Fall of Indian Rupee'. Sangh karyakarttas including Shri guruji and all senior thought leaders of Sangh had touched upon this issue, very often in many or their bauddhiks i.e. the routine discourses. Poor implementation of the third 5 year plan, relentless price rise, rampant black marketing and scarcity of all goods of basic necessity were pointed out very often in those days. This had eroded the popularity of the ruling congress party in the general elections of 1967 wherein they secured 78 seats less than the 1962 elections and their vote percentage also declined by 3.94 % to 40.78%. The Swyamsevaks in Sangh and Jansangh 'both exposed the governments' inept economic policies, including failure to achieve the targets of the third five year plan in 1961-1966 period. The govt. fared so badly that it could attain only 2.4% growth rate against a target of 5.4% per annum in the third plan. In spite of timely warnings of Shri Guruji and Sangh functionaries against devaluation, over spending in the budgets and excessive imports, the government continued with the ongoing muddle, that the government could not formulate the fourth five year plan for three years after the 3rd plan was over.

The Janta Party government formed in 1977 had endeavored to infuse self-reliance in the economy and even paid off the total debt of the IMF, which was hailed by Sangh functionaries across the country. But soon in 1981-82 the Mrs. Gandhi government procured a loan of 5 billion SDR under the extended fund facility of the IMF against several conditionalities of the IMF. Sangh functionaries, especially the late Dattopant ji Thengadi expressed grave concern over it. It was the largest ever loan obtained by any country in the history of the IMF. Mrs. Gandhi also realised her mistake after getting disbursed only 3.9 billion SDRs and foregone the rest. Thereafter, the Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1987 declared new trade policy and liberalized imports too much, ignoring that India has to service huge debt. At that time Shri Thengadiji and many other economic experts of sangh background warned the government of a likely BOP crisis due over liberalization of imports. The IMF and World Bank also anticipated a similar problem in their twin reports viz. "India: An Industrializing Economy and Transition" and "India: A strategy for Trade Reforms". The warning of Sangh came true in 1991 when India had to mortgage gold to the Bank of England to tide over the BOP crisis. To overcome the crisis, the Narsimha Rao government, under the direction of the then Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh committed another blunder to negotiate a dollar 7.2 billion loan from the IMF on the conditionalities, most pre judicial to national interests. To comply with these conditional ties Dr. Manmohan singh devalued Indian Rupee by 11% on July 1 and by another 10% on July 3 in tandem with the two aforesaid reports. Thereafter, on July 5 the government liberalized imports and on July 24 liberalized Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Liberalization of imports, FDI and FPI is continuing to this date. Meanwhile, the Narsimha Rao government also kept on yielding in the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations, and surrendered to agree upon the 'Agreement establishing the World Trade organization' (WTO) and several Multilateral Trade Agreements (MTAs) coming under the domain of the WTO. All these MTAs restrain India from restoring back its economic sovereignty and curb imports foreign investments and other conditionalities.

Formation of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch:

This act of succumbing to the conditionalities of the IMF and the World Bank was the flash point for the sangh swayamsevaks to constitute the 'Swadeshi Jagran Manch' (SJM) as a forum of patriotic economic thinkers and organizations from across the country, having commitment to arouse economic patriotism in the country. Constitution of Swadesh Jagran Manch, to awaken the people against indiscriminate import liberalization and promotion of foreign investment to the

prejudice of the nation, initially pursued as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and later on as economic reforms or economic globalization.

Swadesh Jagaran Manch was constituted in November 1991 to arouse economic patriotism among masses across the country in the matters of purchase of goods, and act as pressure group to restrain the government from pursuing economic policies, prejudicial to the national interests. The first National Convention of the Swadesh Jagaran Manch was convened on September 4-5, 1993. Swadesh Jagaran Manch has since then attracted people from all walks of life and all ideological back grounds, comprising activists, from extreme right to extreme left Ideologies. The SIM has since then is active in awakening masses against reckless import liberalization and against promotion of foreign investments, leading to widening of trade deficits and also leading to growing hold of foreign companies over the industry, trade, commerce and agriculture of the country. The SJM has also been awakening intellectuals against the evil impact of various MTAs and Free Trade Agreements (FTAS).The SJM has also launched several campaigns in the country Since 1994, till date to awaken economic patriotism, techno-nationalism and swadeshi feelings in general.

Major campaigns of Swadeshi Jagran Manch:

The first such campaign to adopt and prefer the swadeshi products and brands while buying the goods and services, with a clear bias towards the unorganized and the small scale sector was started since **November 1991**. But, the **first major nationwide campaign was launched from January 1 to 15, 1994, comprising public meetings, conferences, distribution of pamphlets with list of swadeshi products, street meetings, addressing students in school and colleges, wall writings etc.** The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch is a forum of masses, wherein all the active swayamsevaks and members of sangh-inspired mass organizations participate whole heartedly for arousing patriotic feelings. It was followed by a campaign against the contract given to Enron and seven other foreign companies for power in the name of fast track projects, on the terms prejudicial to the national interests. Other campaigns included-

- I. Cattle wealth protection campaign against Al kabir and other mechanical abattoirs.
- II. Bidi Employment Protection campaign-1996.
- III. Campaign for protecting the fishermen across the coastal region against mechanized deep sea fishing by foreign companies.
- IV. Countrywide Swadeshi Chetana yatra-1998 and Swadeshi sangharsh yatra in 2001.
- V. Campaign against Singapur Issues of the WTO,

- VI. Campaigns and dharnas against allowing 74% FDI in insurance.
- VII. To oppose FDI in Retail, Agriculture, SSI sector and truck transport business on more than one occasion.
- VIII. Swayamsevaks have participated in the swadeshi campaigns against the unreasonable terms of WTO ministerials of 2001, 2003, 2005, 2013 and 2015 and various Multilateral Trade Agreements, coming under the domain of the WTO as well as against the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), prejudicial to national interests.
- IX. The latest campaign which was commenced in 2008 and is still going on is against the import surge of Chinese goods.

Sangh swayamsevaks have a strong resolve to make Bharat a prosperous and strong nation capable to usher in an era of wholesome life for all its citizens and promote universal well being for every living being across the globe. Sangh always preaches and strives to impart a holistic and integral vision, inter se the individual, family, society, nation, world, living universe, nature and even the whole cosmos, as illucidated by Pandit Deendayal Ji Upadhyay in the concept of intergral humanism, based upon eternal Hindu vision. It amis at integrating the aspirations of individual, family, society, nation, world, all living being along with the nature and the cosmos as a whole with a holistic approach.