

National Campaigns; Pride or an Unforeseen Environmental Challenge

Ar Seema Thippeswamy

Associate Professor, BMS College of Architecture, Design & Planning, Bengaluru

Abstract: 15th August, 2022' marks the 75th year of Independence in India. The Union government under the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" programme initiated a special campaign "Har Ghar Tiranga" celebrated from August 13th till 15th 2022 to encourage people of this nation to hoist the Tricolour at their homes. To make this celebration memorable the government recently amended the Flag Code of India, 2002 in December 2021. This amendment allowed for the tricolour to be made from polyester and machine-made to make it affordable to every household. To facilitate the availability of the flags, the government joined hands with the Department of Post and other small players and reached out to the masses. This new venture, started with a healthy motive, took pace and celebrated successfully throughout the country. This new amendment may have a certain impact on the environment post the campaign. The Research paper tries to find out what the new amendment says and how it can impact the environment.

Keywords: Environmental challenge, Har ghar Tiranga Campaign, Indian National Flag code 2002, Mass campaign

1. INTRODUCTION

15th August, 2022' marks the 75th year of Independence in India. Celebrating India's Freedom for a glorious 75 years. India has far gone progressively in the last 75 years and is still progressing. The Union government under the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav"¹ a year long celebration by the masses to mark the 75th anniversary of India's Independence undertook various initiatives. The journey commenced from 12th March 2021, 75-week countdown to the 75th anniversary of independence on 15th August 2022 and will end post a year on 15th August 2023. One such initiative by the central government was a special campaign "Har Ghar Tiranga"² which would be celebrated from August 13th August to 15th August 2022 to encourage people of this nation to hoist the Tricolour³ at their homes to mark the 75th Independence Day. According to the Cultural ministry, Government of India (GOI), the idea was to reach out to more than 20 crore homes across the country by August 15, the 75th Independence Day. The campaign "Har Ghar Tiranga" was launched on April 12th 2022. The idea behind this initiative is to invoke the feeling of patriotism in the hearts of citizens and promote awareness about our national flag, as stated by the cultural ministry in a letter to government departments on May 20 2022. Various agencies and the postal department joined hands with the government to supply the flags to every home in the nation. In reference to this campaign the Department of Post, Government of India 'sold more than 1 crore national flags in 10 days through its 1.5 lakh post offices spread across the country. (1) various Self Help Groups (SHG's) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were roped in by the cultural ministry for manufacturing the flags so as to be made available for over 20 crore national flags that would be hoisted atop houses for the three days. (2) Several organizations volunteered to distribute the flags to the general public. (3)

2. INDIAN NATIONAL FLAG CODE 2002

As stated in the Indian National Flag code 2002, The Indian national flag represents the hopes and aspirations of the people of India. It is the symbol of our national pride and there is universal affection and respect for, and loyalty to, the National flag. It occupies a unique and a special place in the emotions and psyche of the people of India. The design of the National Flag was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 22 July 1947. The hoisting/use/display of the Indian national flag is governed by the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act 1971 and the flag code of India, 2002. The said code also states some of the salient features of the Flag on the use, make, size, scale, proportion, material, hoisting, disposal and every detail of the flag. (4)(5)

3. TRADITION OF FLAG MAKING

As per the flag code of India, 2002 the tricolour has certain standards to be followed. In the code every detail of flag making is prescribed. What's interesting is the code is very specifically mentioning about the material (cotton/silk/khadi bunting) to be used in flag making such as (cotton/wool/silk/khadi bunting). It also prescribes about the size and proportion of the flag, proportion of colours, number of stitches on the flag, distance between the stitches and many others. This tricolour is made in India's only National flag manufacturing unit at Karnataka Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS) in a small village named Bengeri in Hubballi taluk of Dharwad district, Karnataka. They have been weaving and supplying flags to all Indian government offices for years. The Khadi Sangha of Tulasigeri village in Karnataka was assigned the responsibility of weaving cloth for the Tricolor. The khadi cloth for the Tricolor is brought from Tulasigeri village to the national flag manufacturing unit at Bengeri in Hubballi, Karnataka where

the cloth undergoes a meticulous treatment for dyeing and screen printing before it is cut and stitched. The Indian national flag is manufactured in nine sizes measuring from 0.5×0.3 feet (the smallest) to 21×14 feet (the biggest).

The women at the Karnataka Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangha in Bengeri unerringly adhere to the Flag Code of India 2002 and the guidelines framed by the Bureau of Indian Standards. They ensure the exact measurements, colors, size and thread count of flags. The unit became unique as a manufacturing centre for the National Flag in 2006, when it was accredited with ISI certification and an authorisation to sell the National Flag throughout the country. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission certified KKGSS as the sole manufacturer and supplier of the Tricolour to the entire country. At the Karnataka Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS), it is the women who have been manufacturing and supplying flags to the whole country since 2006. It is a perfect example of women empowerment and a livelihood to many in that region. (6)(7)

4. AMENDMENTS 2002 IN INDIAN NATIONAL FLAG CODE 2002

Under a recent development in the Flag code 2002, the Union government amended the Flag Code of India, 2002 in December 2021 allowing for the flags to be made from polyester or machine made, besides the traditional handspun and hand-woven khadi. (8) The code was amended vide Order dated December 30, 2021, and National Flag made of polyester or machine made flag have also been allowed. Now, the National Flag shall be made of hand-spun, handwoven or machine-made cotton/polyester/wool/silk/khadi bunting, as per the amended flag code. (9) The amended flag code will facilitate the availability of flags on such a large scale and also make them affordable for the general public. The flags are now available for as low as Rs 25 on online portals. Once the flag code was amended, the government reached out to manufacturers and e-commerce sites to boost its availability. The Ministry has also held meetings with e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart to make sure these sites would be a platform to buy flags. (10) Couple of government bodies even reached out to the communities to provide families with the flags so that they could be a part of the mass campaign. (11)

5. A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

The government made it official for hoisting the flag in every household and gave some information on celebrating this event with respect and dignity towards the national flag. (12)(13) The people of the nation welcomed this mass campaign and joined hands with the government's initiative to make it a successful one. (14) The government launched a website and urged the people of India to post a selfie with the tricolour and upload it to the website. As per the recent update a whopping 6 crore+ selfie's have been uploaded on the website. (15) The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign has also generated business of Rs 500 crore with over 30 crore flags sold this year, according to traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT). (16) Milestones like Guinness World Record of World's 'Largest Human Image of a Waving National Flag' in Cricket Stadium with the participation of 5,885 people have been created during the campaign. (17)

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Mass production

As per the amendment 2022, in Flag code 2002 the flags were made of polyester fabric unlike all these years. Polyester being a non biodegradable material harmful for the environment and in the verge of manufacturing flags for a mass campaign, no thought was given to the non biodegradable waste which will be generated due to mass production of polyester fabric for flag making. Negligence was portrayed towards environmental impact due to such mass production of a non biodegradable material which is harmful material at every stage of its use cycle. (18)

6.2 Responsibility of waste disposal

The initiative taken by the union government to make the amendment in the Flag code 2002, made it affordable to the masses to celebrate and was a successful one, but this is not an end of story rather begins here. Moreover with the new amendment, the flags were manufactured using polyester fabric and not the traditional khadi, silk or cotton unlike every year. On the verge of making it a mass celebration, a huge amount of mass production of polyester was witnessed. Now the question arises of the situation post the celebration; Where did all the flags go after the campaign? Who disposed of them and how? Although a few local bodies took an initiative in proper collection and disposal of the flag, what about the rest of India? (19)(20). Although It's the nation's collective responsibility of adhering to the code of disposal according to the Flag Code, 2002. Mass production of flags with a fabric which is not easily recyclable, a fabric used for a mass campaign with every household in India is an accumulated waste at large and not concentrated at one place rather dispersed randomly. This could bear an unforeseen environmental challenge in the near future.

6.3 Loss of Livelihood:

The mass campaign has benefited the Department of Posts (DoP) in terms of revenue generation; it has sold more than 1 crore national flags in 10 days through its 1.5 lakh post offices. (21) Whereas to some other industry it was a major setback especially the KKGSS who are certified manufacturers of the Indian national flag. Due to a sudden amendment in the flag code 2002, the stock

which was being manufactured since a year for 75th year Independence stacked unsold. It ultimately boils down to loss of livelihood to so many who are associated with this industry. (22)(23)

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental impact should be the driving force for any mass agenda. If a mass campaign involves a mass production of material, then the choice of material is very crucial because of its impact on the environment post the campaign. So in reference to that a material with less environmental impact should have been chosen. No harm would have happened if khadi was still retained for mass production. It is the best choice for mainly two reasons, first when it comes to environmental impact secondly as income for the weavers (24)(25) Another alternative to the virgin polyester (also called as PET), is Recycled polyester (rPET). It is made from post-industrial waste or other post-consumer plastics such as discarded textiles or ocean. rPET offers many advantages compared to virgin polyester fibers in terms of lower environmental impact, less use of water and energy in manufacturing process, limits waste generation, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, less water and energy consumption during manufacturing. (26)(27) Reaching masses is a good way to create awareness but any campaign for the masses should not result in a menace. So strategic approach in planning & policy framing are a key for a successful campaign. In the era of digitalisation, why go for physical commodities? Technology usage is another approach, where all of the campaigning can go completely online which includes banners, posters, hoardings, all social platforms and official websites. Every new project is not born overnight. It needs a lot of effort and commitment with an honest motive, but if efforts are taken keeping in mind the environmental impact then it will definitely reach the masses and be widely accepted. This small gesture of being sensitive to the environment is a baby step towards a larger goal. Journey is all about baby steps and crawling before we stand erect.

8. REFERENCES

- [1] <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/new-updates/har-ghar-tiranga-department-of-posts-sells-over-1-crore-national-flags/articleshow/93525771.cms>
- [2] <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/companies-can-allocate-csr-funds-for-har-ghar-tiranga-campaign-govt-11658897390483.html>
- [3] <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/wisdom-group-distribute-5000-national-flags-in-bidar/article65758702.ece>
- [4] https://harghartiranga.com/salient_feature
- [5] https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/flagcodeofindia_070214.pdf
- [6] <https://www.indianeagle.com/travelbeats/indian-national-flag-manufacturing-bengeri-karntaka/>
- [7] <http://www.khadifederation.com/>
- [8] https://gad.cg.gov.in/statecirculares/Circulars/Scan-file-2000-2002/year2022/202200174_001.pdf
- [9] https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/har-ghar-tiranga-national-flag-can-now-be-machine-made-in-polyester-122060100386_1.html
- [10] <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-reaches-out-to-manufacturers-e-commerce-firms-to-boost-availability-of-national-flags/article65567282.ece>
- [11] <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1851770>
- [12] <https://amritmahotsav.nic.in/har-ghar-tiranga.htm>
- [13] <https://harghartiranga.com/faq>
- [14] <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/har-ghar-tiranga-live-news-har-ghar-tiranga-campaign-azadi-ka-amrit-mahotsav-pm-narendra-modi-latest-updates-independence-day-national-flag-delhi-up-gujarat-live/2628079/>
- [15] <https://harghartiranga.com/>
- [16] <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1852264>
- [17] <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-eodb-75th-independence-day-har-ghar-tiranga-generates-rs-500-crore-business-over-30-crore-flags-sold-says-cait/2629484/>
- [18] <https://sewport.com/fabrics-directory/polyester-fabric>
- [19] <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/as-har-ghar-tiranga-gains-pace-disposal-of-flags-a-matter-of-concern-1135813.html>
- [20] <https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/har-ghar-tiranga-how-to-disposing-of-the-national-flag-flag-code-india-independence-day-11061961.html>
- [21] <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/har-ghar-tiranga-campaign-india-post-sells-over-1-crore-national-flags-in-10-days-news-215868>
- [22] <https://dai.ly/x8cip7h>
- [23] <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/har-ghar-tiranga-angry-garag-residents-in-dharwad-boycott-campaign-protest-change-in-flag-code/article65750552.ece>
- [24] <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/9157/cotton-vs-polyester-similarities-and-differences>
- [25] <https://fashinza.com/textile/fabric/khadi-fabric-everything-you-need-to-know/>
- [26] <https://www.panaprium.com/blogs/i/recycled-polyester-fabric>
- [27] <https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/how-sustainable-is-recycled-polyester/2018111540000>