

Gujarati Diaspora: Contribution of Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta to the Development of Gujarat

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ABSTRACT :

Since time immemorial man has led a wandering life. That is, they migrate from one place to another according to their needs. Which is now known as Diaspora. In short, people who leave their motherland and live in another place are called diaspora. Today, the Gujarati diaspora lives in more than 125 countries. Gujarati Diaspora Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta has made many cultural and educational contributions in Gujarat and in Africa. Neither Gujarat nor Africa can forget such a selfless charitable humanitarian and great donor. Which are described here from various points.

KEYWORDS:

Diaspora, Philanthropist, Karma Yogi, Humanist

Introduction

The term "Diaspora" is used to refer to the Jewish people. After the Babylonians captured the Jews as slaves in 530 BC, the Jewish people fled to different parts of the world. The Jewish people living outside of Israel is called the 'Diaspora'. Since about the 1950s and 1960s it has also come into circulation with reference to African peoples. A diaspora is a population connected to a place of origin and dispersed in different places over a small geographical area. Diaspora also means the process of migration from one's homeland to another place. According to Webster's dictionary, when people who have lived in one place for a long time or their descendants have lived in the land, when they leave that place and live in another place, it can be called diaspora.

There are two types of Diasporas.

1. Voluntary- Voluntary means to migrate at one's own will.

2. Involuntary – Involuntary means forced migration.

The Gujarati diaspora is a voluntary migration. Sagar's relationship with both Gujarat and Gujaratis has been going on since time immemorial. The reason for this may be the vast coastline that Gujarat has and the enterprising nature of the Gujarati people. Gujaratis have always been the pioneers to go and live in other countries than other states of India. Gujarati people are commercial people. It is also famous as a seafaring people for commercial employment over the years. Gujaratis have not only increased business employment by crossing the seven seas and going to distant countries, but these people have also created such a unique identity. The main characteristic of Gujarati people is patriotism and philanthropy which is also seen in Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta. Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta was an industrialist and philanthropist from Gujarat. who was the founder of the Uganda-based “Mehta Group of Industries. The head office of which is now in India. He was an ardent nationalist and a contemporary of the Father of the Nation. Gujarati people are already known as entrepreneurs and seafarers. Thus, Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta also went to foreign lands and built a huge empire by himself. He also served the society and the nation with the money he earned. He was humanistic in nature and very loving. Such philanthropists and Shresthi Mahajans have got the title of Bhamasha.

Early Life

Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta was born in 1887 AD. to a middle-class Lohana merchant family in the village of Gorana in west Saurashtra. “Childhood is the father of the man” means he was ambitious, clever and adventurous from childhood. Thus the formation of his personality started from his childhood. His family was a Western Vaishnava and the family tradition was one of trade and philanthropy. He studied Gujarati up to standard four in a village school.

Professional Career

Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta sailed to Mombasa in 1901 after gaining experience in his father's shop. From there he went to Madagascar and joined the shop with his elder brother. In 1904 he went to Jinja village. There, Alidina listened to Visram's big businessman and Alidina became Nanjibhai's role model. In 1905, he worked as a clerk in the shop of a Baloch merchant named Behram Khan in Kamli village. The next year he started his own independent shop. Before that he had learned English, Swahili, Malagasy and French languages. Business was like a game to him. He enjoyed doing any big deals, going to any dangerous forest, becoming famous in unknown regions. By 1910, he owned five shops. As profits increased, so did their enthusiasm. Nanjibhai took huge risks to build a bright career. He started the work of ginning by buying the wool. After making significant profit in this business, he started his own ginery

and started new ginery one after another. Nanjibhai bought thousands of acres of land in regions like Enteli and Kampala and scientifically planted cotton and started ginning factories. There were also 15 gins and presses.

Nanjibhai earned a lot from business and industry of Rs. He achieved a good reputation by expanding and organizing the ginning industry. So he tried to diversify the business. Nanjibhai planted sugarcane on the 3000 acres of land he bought. He then traveled to Mauritius and India to study sugar factories. He then proved his business acumen, acumen and foresight by starting a sugar factory in Lugazi and gradually developed the Bugazi Sugar Factory. 10 thousand Africans, 350 Indians and 4 Europeans were working in it. This factory had 15 thousand acres of land, seven hundred miles of railway, 800 trucks, 15 locomotives and 30 tractors. There were paved houses, a 100-bed hospital, a beautiful school, a cricket ground, a club etc. for the factory staff and labourers. Free education, medicines, accommodation, libraries were provided to the workers living in the Lugazi township founded by Nanjibhai. In East Africa he was known as "Sugar King". Nanjibhai established Maharana Mills in Saurashtra-Porbandar. Which is still going on. Thus he was a unique industrialist and Daneshwari. He was awarded "M. B. E – Member of the British Empire " was awarded the title.

Contribution of Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta in development of Gujarat :

The dazzling development of Gujarat that we see today is not a modern phenomenon. The state of Gujarat and its seafaring enterprising people amassed immense wealth by trading with the country and abroad. Initially, the development of Gujarat was due to trade and commerce. If we look back to the past to understand when the story of Gujarat's development began, Daneshwari Seth Jagdushah trading across seas from Bhadreswar port, Nakhuda Kali Malam, the first woman of Gujarat to write her name in golden letters somewhere in the development of shipping in Gujarat. Thus, many famous and anonymous traders have contributed to the development of Gujarat. One of the names is that of Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta, also known as Daneshwari and Bhamasha. Which the people of Gujarat and Africa cannot forget.

Apart from being a businessman, Nanjibhai was also a donor. Also, donations from East Africa and Gujarat are very important in terms of culture and education. Important are the two maternity hospitals he built for African and Indian women in the villages of Sorthi and Mbale in Uganda. Similarly, in Kamali he donated Rs 30,000 and Rs 50,000 for Hindi and African natives, hospitals and girls' schools in Jinja, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, and Rs 15,000 for a Dharamshala in Mombasa. Nanjibhai did not forget his native Saurashtra. Although Nanjibhai

was not educated much, he knew the value of education. A very beautiful example of this is in the words of the girls' school Dosani, which he started in Porbandar at a cost of 30000 rupees, "Today 200 girls are studying in this girls' school. And also learning handicrafts. Along with Nanjibhai Ranawav and the construction of the Lohana Wadi in Bhanavadda - he also donated Rs 10,000 to the library of Dakshinamurthy Bhavan in Bhavnagar during the early years of Nanabhai Bhatt's career. 3000 rupees for drought relief fund and 1000 rupees to Shantiniketan of Pagorji for giving milk to children, 3000 rupees were given to Tilak Swaraj Fund. For girls school and hospital in Rawal Rs. 4000 was given. Just looking at the variety of donations before 1924, one can understand what activities Nanjibhai supported even in his youth. In 1922, when the session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta under the presidency of Lala Lajpatarai, the 33-year-old attended as a representative of the Indians living in East Africa. Nanjibhai donated to many organizations. Such as Aryakanya Gurukul in Vadodara, Junagadh Lohana Boarding Camp (Porbandar), Harijan Ashram, Hardwar Dispensary, Public Gardens in Kampala, "Santokbai Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta Girls' School" named after his wife in Nairoli, Shraddhandanda Ashram in Nairoli, Kamalima School and Children's Temple in Mombasa and R Mandriya, Lugazima Arya Samaj Temple and Library, Jinja Library and Lohana Mahajan Wadis in Mombasa, Nairobi, Jinja and Kampala.

Nanjibhai's most special donation to him in Porbandar in 1935 was Rs. Arya Kanya Gurukul started at a cost of 2 lakhs. His account was done by Muhurta Harijan Bala. He had earlier met Nanjibhai Gandhiji in 1915, 1920-21 and 1922. Today, a huge complex has emerged from this donation. And it is appreciated not only by Indians, but also by many foreigners. A Gurukul was established in Porbandar in 1935 and inaugurated in 1937. Immediately Nanjibhai announced a donation of 40 lakhs for this institution. Today this organization is flourishing as a giant banyan tree. Similarly, Nanjibhai contributed significantly to the construction of the Kirti Mandir in Porbandar, the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi.

Nanjibhai and his family donated 2.40 crore rupees till 1973. He joined hands with the Aga Khan and other rich people to establish the Natural Cultural Center in Kampala in 1963. This center has developed cultural development in Africa by developing music, drama, dance, language laboratory etc. Royal Technical College, Nairobi was started in 1956 with the cooperation of Gujaratis like Nanjibhai, Maghwani, Ramanlal Yagnik, Ambubhai Patel and Mooljibhai. Nairobi University came into existence in 1970 after Gandhi Memorial Academy was merged with it. To promote girls' schools, Nanjibhai established girls' schools in many places in Gujarat and East Africa. Many dispensaries were also established. Among them, Arya Kanya of Porbandar, establishment of Gurukul and construction of Kirti Mandir are his

memorials. Nanjibhai lived a very simple life. Simple language, simple dress, simple food, no one thinks that this man is very rich. Nanjibhai was a Karma Yogi.

End of Legend :

Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta died on 25 August 1969. With his demise, the Mehta Group of Industries lost a mentor, gurukul, a patriarch and an entrepreneur of exceptional ability and a humanitarian of unparalleled generosity.

On the same day, Uganda also mourned his death. At that time the President of Uganda His Excellency Milton Abbott said, "In the death of Mr. Nanjibhai Mehta, Uganda has lost a true friend and a man who has made an invaluable contribution to the foundation of our economy.

" But I am sure, he will be remembered for a long time not only in Uganda and East Africa but also in India for his serviceable duties."

Conclusion

The enterprising, seafaring, resourceful Gujarati has become a cosmopolitan today. Gujaratis have a unique identity. His glory is sung all over the world. Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta is also one of them. In the thirteenth year of Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta, he plowed the oceans to commemorate his relatives who dreamed of crossing the oceans. "Kaka Saheb Kalelkar paid homage to him by calling him "Samudraveer". Thus, the life of such a Karma Yogi Purusha is like teaching it to children and teenagers and it is like adopting it in life for adults.

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