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Gandhi's Doctrine in Role of Women in Change of Civilization

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ABSTRACT *A woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man and has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. They are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Women's are more fitted than men to take bolder action in ahimsa. They are the embodiment of ahimsa and self-reliance, courage, patience, purity and capacity to undergo suffering. To be good mother, a woman has to be given different education, which gives her knowledge of home economics and basic information about the world she living. A woman has higher moral and spiritual role to the welfare of the people. A good healthy society does not automatically emerge on its own and stands firm but it needs to be emerged and for its emergence women play a pivotal role. The present paper focuses on the Gandhi's view on role of women in development of society.*

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi who is also known as father of nation (Bapu) was born in 2nd October 1869. He was the leading leader in British ruled India. He engaged nonviolent civil disobedience movement in India during British rule. He ~~was~~ believed spiritual principles in all situations. He considered ahimsa as the main task to soften and not to stiffen our opponents' attitude towards us. Love and patience is regarded as positive aspect of ahimsam. Women had an important role to play in combating communalism and helping the process of national integration by making every household the battlefield of individual satyagrah. Gandhi was seeking to extend the power of women as wives and mothers. The present paper focuses on the Gandhi's view on role of women in development of society.

Gandhi saw women not as object of reform and humanitarianism, but as self-conscious subject who could, if they choose. Gandhi represent a crucial break from the attitudes of many of the leaders of the reform movements of the late 19th century, who tended to see women as passive recipients of more humane treatment through the initiative of enlightened male efforts. Gandhi first realized how women could become the leader in satyagrah during the agitation against the Black Act in 1813. The entry of women in the satyagrah gave the movement a new force.

Women activity and discussion focused on spinning, hawking khadi, fund raising, enrolling new members, picketing and fit fully working for removal of untouchability and for promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity. The role of the women in the national movement thus remained auxiliary and supportive. Gandhi's tribute to a women's sacrifice puts forward clearly the role that women came to play, which had much in common with the role played by women in many of the movements. Women as ideal "mother" in the service of the mother land, by and large continued to play a supportive and nurturing role for the men in the movement.

Gandhi urged women to take up fight against prostitution and the rehabilitation our fallen sisters for national reconstruction and purification. He asked the women to give up their unworthy profession and become "Sannyasinis" of India.

Women's entry into the movements was seen as a life preserving and humanizing force, which would prevent the movement from getting dissipated by senseless. In Gandhi's view, the aim of the movement was not just to gain political independence, but to restructure the society. Gandhi admitted to having learnt the technique of nonviolent passive resistance from women, especially from his wife and his mother.

The time during which Gandhi was living and the today have difference. However his thinking and ideologies have great relevance till today, especially the Ahimsa (Non violence) has gained much acceptability throughout the globe. Since the society was comparatively backward, some of his remark on women might be looking to be out dated, but those also carry value even today. He gave great emphasis on the role of women in boosting up the society, even in participating in economic activities through handicrafts. He also lighted on the importance of women education to empower them to empower the society. It was Gandhi who lamented the power of women force in movements, agitations, etc.

The Gandhian belief about women

- Men and women have distinct qualities where roots are biological. But of them have separate spheres in societies and specific role in making of the Indian nation for they are essentially complementary to each other.
- Women are not play things but creative individuals in the arena of the house hold and the domestic space.
- In the domestic they are self-reliance, courage, patience, purity and capacity to undergo suffering.
- To be good mother, a woman has to be given different education, which gives her knowledge of home economics and basic information about the world she living.
- Existing new custom like child marriage, sati and dowry exploit women and reduce their dignity. Women's organization should be formed which not only fight against these social evil, but also build awareness in women of her new role in free India.
- The precious quality of women is her purity. To retain this purity, she should not engage in economic work.
- Women's have important role in politics as a mother;

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she introduces national consciousness in the children and participants in the programs.

- A woman can achieve a higher moral and spiritual role if she rejects her sexuality, reproduction and family life and devotes herself to the welfare of the people.[1]

Ideal Models

Gandhi often presented ideals before women, drawn from Indian traditions, mythology and history. He often talked about Sita, Draupadi, Damayanti and Mirabai as great women. There is nothing new for a social reformer drawing inspiration from the tradition. What is new here is the fact that this innovate interpretation of these characters gives a glimpse of the dynamic element in his thinking. He did not accept the negative elements of the Hindu tradition. He visualized the Indian women as new Sitas, Draupadis and Damayantis, "pure, firm and self- controlled".

For Gandhi, Sita was not a weak and dependent creature, but a strong woman conveying the message of *Swadeshi,* who only wore "cloth made in India" and thus kept her heart and body pure. Moreover, she should defy the might of Ravana by sheer moral courage and she would not waste "a single moment on pleasing Rama by physical channs". Implying thereby that a woman could assert herself in doing what she considered right even if the husband thought otherwise. Another ideal model presented by Gandhi was Draupadi who was not dependent on men and saved herself by an appeal to Krishna when the Pandavas failed to protect her. Here the appeal to Krishna is to be understood as following one's own conscience. He saw Mirabai, as a symbol of courage, which followed her chosen path by defying the social norms of the time.

It is interesting to note that Gandhi does not advise a woman to be an ideal wife or ideal mother. Deviating from the traditional framework, he advises women to be sisters. Pointing out the greatness of a sister over a wife, he maintained that a sister is to the entire world, while a wife hands herself over to one man. Moreover, it is possible to become the world's sister only by making *Brahmacharya* "a natural condition" and being 'fired by the spirit of service". Women have the potential to do immense service to the unfortunate, by doing this they can be "Sisters of Mercy".

Though Gandhi gave the traditional role a new vigour, he had undaunted faith in the chastity and purity of woman. He was sure that the "dazzling purity" of a woman could disarm even the most beastly of men. In his opinion, an ideal woman would rather give up her life than her purity. Construction of the woman in such terms seems to be at times too idealistic in contemporary times. According to Madhu Kishwar, "Gandhi's very vocabulary, in its exaggerated idealization of women as 'sisters of mercy' and 'mothers of entire humanity' reveals the bias of a benevolent patriarch."

And yet, there is something in his ideas that is essentially radical. He did not see women as helpless objects of reform. Neither did he think of bringing change only in some spheres of life, such as marriage or education. His vision of change was comprehensive. He connected the moral with the political, the social and the economic, presenting an eclectic view of life. For him the means had to be identified with the ends; similarly, he did not differentiate between the private and the public worlds of women. He also enhanced the dignity of woman's housework, advising his men followers to take to spinning and to do ordinary works in everyday life. He himself imbibed so many of a woman's qualities that he became 'mother' to many.

Gandhi saw that the low status of women was the result of prejudices arid adverse traditions, which were centuries old. It was difficult to get women interested in the larger problems of life and society because they knew nothing of them, having never been allowed to breathe the fresh air of freedom. The only factor that would enable women to come out of this situation was the determination and strength of the women themselves. Though men should help in the cause of women, ultimately women will have to determine their destinies. Gandhi sympathizes with women, but he does not want to pity them all the time. Neither does he want them to be irresponsible, pleasure-loving beings.

In Gandhi's philosophy, the women of India found a new identity. His words and deeds have inspired thousands of women, and will continue to do so, in their struggle against injustice and inequality [2].

Conclusion:

Brigham Young Says "You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation." Although women's roles have increasingly become more significant throughout history, men have been portrayed as the dominant gender since the beginning of time. The basic unit of society is a woman and as woman makes a family, family makes a home and homes make a society. So we should never think that a society would come into existence without the contribution of women. A good healthy society does not automatically emerge on its own and stands firm but it needs to be emerged and for its emergence women play a pivotal role. From behavioral to health education women have their hands in. It's a woman who teaches how to behave, how to speak and how to deal with different classes of people. These all are the basic fundamentals of a good society and women are the main contributors in building up strong society.

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