

# GANDHIAN THOUGHTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A SOLUTION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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*Abstract: In India in protection and development of women many voices raises time to time for their libration and equality. Many reformers fought for the rights of the women. Gandhiji was one of them who favor of women empowerment documented the importance of women in societal and environmental development. In India in protection and development of women many voices raises time to time for their lubrication and equality. This paper discusses the importance of women in rural development or can say rural development verses women empowerment.*

**Index Terms - Rural Development, Women Empowerment, Gandhian Thoughts**

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Country Report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power". The process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless a) become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives and c) exercise this control without infringing on the rights of others and d) support the empowerment of others in the community. [1]

The journey of women in Indian society crosses many barriers created by religion and society. After a long struggle women now comes to the point where they can contribute efficiently in every field. The Mahatma said that women have been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand. Rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual co-operation and consultation. Women have been taught to regard themselves as slaves of men. Women must realize their full status and play their part as equals of men. [2] The perfect view which most suitable for the women which was given by Gandhi "When woman, whom we all call abala becomes sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerful". [3] When women are economically and socially empowered, they become a potent force for change. In rural areas of the developing world, women play a key role in running households and make major contributions to agricultural production. But the inequalities that exist between women and men make it difficult for women to fulfill their potential. [4] The critical role of women has been widely acknowledged in advancing agriculture, rural development and food security.[5]

Empowerment is moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power.[5] it is a continue process and in this process, groups, people and organizations who has lesser power rise with given aspects:

- a) awareness of the dynamics of the power at work place.

- b) develop of skills and capacity to gain control over their live reasonably.
- c) exercise such control without affecting rights of the others.
- d) Coming out in support of empowerment of others.

## II. ROLE OF WOMEN AS ENVISAGED BY GANDHI

In Gandhian view, women should not be limited to kitchen and emphasized that womanhood is not to restrict to kitchen. He opined and felt that, “Only when the woman is liberated from the slavery of the kitchen that her true spirit may be discovered.” [6] For economic strength of women Gandhiji felt that cottage and small scale industries are the best place for female empowerment. By this way, role of women to society and quality of the society and development to themselves can increase.

Making of women positive in psychological, economics and political areas will make them self reliant. She should entitle as supreme role in her place in her own sphere of activities. The model of women empowerment is directly associated with the rural development and the acceptance to the thought was given by Gandhiji. According to Gandhi, the three important factors that promote women empowerment are:

**Education:** Development in education only would not automatically empower them. The Kerala is the case point. The state with 100 percent literacy is not even today free from women exploitation. The reason behind is the Keralite society yet to reform their traditional values. To provide equal rights to the women in realistic terms such changes are necessary. Therefore, social reforms are primary requirement of change along with employment opportunities.

**Employment:** Employment should be at home or within village as per women knowledge domain. Employment should be of traditional and related to their culture and religion. By providing training, finance and market such development will take place rapidly.

**Change in Social Structure:** Women should not consider as sexual object. Women are full of affection, love, care. Let give a chance to spread it the whole community by giving them opportunity to express thoughts. Let all qualities of women be converted to practical, their tiny skills to broad thoughts of oneness.

## III. CONCLUSION

India includes all legal procedures in protection of women; therefore India is far ahead in policies and legislation favouring women. It adopted universal franchise before many other nations. Yet men in the political structure refuse to acknowledge the relationships between social justice and gender justice while women outside the political system are unable to effectively implement and integrate these two most powerful national and international agendas.

With religion, caste and gender groups perpetuating traditional and modern divisions and indigenous human resources being replaced by western technologies the mission of Gandhiji and the dreams of women are yet to be fulfilled. Still in India women are considering woman as a kitchen bee. Such attitude needs a change among the mind of the people. So, today also need to know and follow Gandhian thoughts on women upliftment and rural development.

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