



“Women Are Sabala Not Abala” – Mahatma Gandhi

1-Dr. Anuj KUMAR 2- Nidhi Dixit

Associate Professor

Department Of Economics, Govt. College Dholpur (Rajasthan)

ABSTRACT

The status of women in India has been dependent upon numerous incredible changes in the course of the last not many centuries. From equivalent status with men in antiquated occasions, through the depressed spots of the medieval period, to the advancement of equivalent rights by numerous reformers. One of them is Mahatma Gandhi. In present day India, women have embellished high workplaces in India including that of the President, Prime priest, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition and so forth. Truth be told its credit goes to Mahatma Gandhi. In India he was included women in Political development first time of Satyagraha. He worked not just for the political liberation of the country, yet for freedom of all the stifled and abused segments of society. One of the notes commendable consequences of his labor of love has been the enlivening of women. This made them shed their profound established feeling of inadequacy and ascends to respect and confidence. Women, urban and country, taught and uneducated, Indian and outside, were pulled in to his thoughts and deeds. An endeavor is made in the current paper to comprehend Gandhi's perspectives on women with regards to social, monetary and policy centered issues.

Keywords: Social Equity, Satyagraha, Social Practices and Evils, Woman's Rights, Women Empowerment, Social Injustice

INTRODUCTION

The situation of women in India has fluctuated in various periods and various classes, religion and ethnic groups. Pre freedom period has seen the exploitation of the women in and the outside of the home. The Gandhian time frame and even before that is set apart by the way of thinking of the a portion of the splendid social changes and scholars like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dyanand Saraswati, etc who strived interminably to achieve an adjustment in the state of the Indian women with the goal that they become” better wives” and “better mothers“. The Mahatma said that women have been smothered under custom and law for which man was dependable and in the molding of which she had no hand. Rules of social direct should be encircled by common co-activity and meeting. Women have been instructed to see themselves as captives of men. Women must understand their full status and have their impact as equivalents of men. Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service. The customary and legal status of women is bad and demands radical change.

Gandhi however saw women not as “objects of reforms” but as “self conscious objects” and he includes the women among the masses in a most natural way. Women participated in the mass movements led by him and he made a great breakthrough in Indian women’s lives for time to come. It was Mahatma Gandhi’s revolutionary call to women to join the freedom struggle that led to the drawing of a new era. He recognized the importance of women’s participation in the freedom struggle. Gandhi appraised the women’s potential for Satyagraha and for the social reconstruction as higher than that of men.

He found that a larger section of our women needed a great deal of attention. “Women are sabala not abala“, believed Gandhi and accordingly envisioned country’s freedom with their active participation. In fact, he was convinced that women’s involvement and participation was necessary for accomplishing the onerous task of national regeneration and rejuvenation. The Indian national development was political as well as a social monetary development, which opened for women’s freedom in a customary society. It was Gandhi’s constant endeavours which not just made ready for their investment in the patriot developments yet additionally instilled the soul of pride, dignity, social uniformity and individual opportunity among women.

Gandhi had an enormous confidence in the internal quality of women. He held that women ordinarily are supplied with the characteristics love, non-violence, forgiveness and a remarkable capacity for sacrifice. Gandhi once commented:

“God only knows who invented the word abala for the women of India. To call them abala is to condemn the inherent strength of women, in my view it is an insult to them. If we pursue the history of the Rajput, Mughal or Mahabharata period of our country we shall come across marvellous instances of bravery shown by women. They not only exhibited their bravery through arms, but by building up their moral courage they developed immense strength. If women resolve to bring glory to the nation, within a few months they can totally change the face of the

country because the spiritual background of an Aryan woman is totally different from that of the women of other countries.”

WOMEN’S INFLUENCE ON MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhi was influenced by his mother (Putlibai and wife Kasturba). Gandhi said: "The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without daily prayer. She would take the hardest of vows and keep them without flinching. Illness was no excuse for relaxing them." He got his mother's permission to go to England for studies by taking an oath: "I vowed not to touch wine, women and meat." These three vows shielded him throughout his stay in England.

Gandhi wedded at thirteen years old. In any case, he lost no time in expecting the authority of spouse to stack over her life. Be that as it may, as the years passed, she turned into his dynamic accomplice and supporter in the entirety of his exercises. She was a dedicated spouse who was substance to live in the shadow of her famous husband. She had diverse character. She was savagely autonomous women. Kasturba became Ba-mother of all who dealt with Bapu's more distant family.

In a letter kept in touch with Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 2010-1936, Gandhi composed “If you women would only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full use of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But man has delighted in enslaving you and you have proved willing slaves till the slave and the slave holders have become one in the crime of degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make women realize her dignity. I was once slave-holder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus “opened my eyes to my mission.” He exercised authority on Ba not only physically but mentally as well. At one point Gandhi forced Ba to clean the toilet of his visitor and Kasturba refused and there was a violent conflict between the two.

Gandhi gained much from Kasturba and maybe considerably more from his mother. Millie Polak, a nearby colleague of Gandhi in South Africa, composed that "Gandhi's mother was largely responsible for the extremely tolerant, religious disposition of Gandhi," with Kasturba being the second major influence."

His commitment to women started with his dedication to his mother and Kasturba, most especially to women as mother. Parenthood turned out to be progressively his model for freedom of India and his own life, a mother, having delivered a kid, benevolently dedicates herself to his consideration till he grows up and gets autonomous. Over the span of his social change work the acknowledgment came to him that on the off chance that he needed to change and purge society of the different shades of malice that had crawled into it he needed to develop a mother's heart.

He was significantly impacted by Annie Besant, a British activist women's activist and a Theosophist, Sarojini Naidu a confided in Gandhi's associate, Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, a red hot Satyagrahi. Geraldine Forbes looks at the model that Sarojini Naidu created in her discourse as President of the "Indian National Congress", a model with India as the "house", the Indian individuals as "individuals from the joint family and the Indian lady as the Mother". Naidu, Gandhi, and numerous different promoters of women' and national freedom concurred wholeheartedly that women and India would progress together to the degree this new familial model for India was embraced by the women and men of India. Gandhi accepted women could do a lot to change India on all levels. He accepted that equivalent rights for women and men were vital however not adequate to make a negligible simply social request.

WOMEN EDUCATION

Instruction empowers women to maintain their characteristic rights. People are reciprocal to one another. Man is incomparable in the outward exercises and accordingly he ought to have a more prominent information thereof. Home life is totally the circle of women and hence in household undertakings, in the childhood and instruction of kids women should have more information. Except if courses of guidance depend on a segregating valuation for these essential standards, the fullest existence of man and women can't be created.

The Mahatma's views on women's education are based on family ideals because he assumes that man is supreme in the extra-mural activities and that woman is supreme in intra-mural activities. Hence, education imparted to both men and women should be according to their pre-ordained stations in life. The Mahatma's views on women's education are based on his belief in woman being a complement of man and are therefore out of sync in the modern context.

SOCIAL EVILS

Gandhi criticized various social practices and evils which were justified on the ground of their traditional sanctions which included the custom of child marriage, enforced widowhood, sati pratha, dowry etc.

Purdah:

Gandhi was tormented and felt embarrassed by the custom of pardha. He was incited to compose as ahead of schedule as 1927 that "celibacy is definitely not a hot house development. It can't be dinner forced." He said that it can't be secured by the encompassing mass of pardha. It must be developed from inside and to be worth of anything, it must be fit for withstanding each unsought allurements. He exhorted men to be men, must have the option to believe their women people even as the last are constrained to confide in them. He said that Rama would be no place without Sita, free and autonomous even as he was himself. He asked very pertinent question "why do our women not enjoy the same freedom that the men do? Why should they not able to walk out and have fresh air." He didn't accept

purdha as Indian tradition. He accentuated that mankind will stay lessened as long as women are confined and restricted in their homes and little patio. Henceforth he proposed that it was each Indian's obligation to tear down the purdah with one's forceful.

Dowry System:

Gandhi passionately contradicted the settlement framework and called it „the contemptuous system“, “marriage by purchase” and a, “degrading practice“. He saw the natural malice in it for both the provider and save since it make the subjugation, since it resembles purchasing and selling, dealing, and in light of the fact that this framework transforms people into things. The age at which the young women are usually hitched provides some insight of the situation of them in the general public. Gandhi had considered to be places of young women as youngster, spouses, and widow. Gandhi denounced endowment as an unfeeling custom which was liable for transforming women into dairy cattle to be purchased and sold. He accepted that any relationships ruined his training and disrespected womanhood. He made intense intrigue to going taught man and women to remove dynamic strides to do with fiendish. He was in some help to make a solid popular assessment in judgment of the debasing act of share. Mahatma Gandhi, whose energy as a reformer outperformed even his duty to riding India of the British Raj, criticized the „evil custom“ consistently in his papers, Harijan and Young India, and disgraced men for consenting to be “purchased“. He supported that ladies hold on to get hitched until they discovered grooms who might not request endowments.

Widow Remarriage:

Widowhood forced by religion or custom is an agonizing burden and contaminates the home by mystery bad habit and corrupts religion. So as to spare Hinduism, authorized widowhood must be ridden. Youngster widows must be appropriately and all around wedded and not remarried. They were never truly married.

One can't have a superior view on Widow Remarriage than what the Mahatma has introduced. He was plainly against Child Marriages and needed kid widows to be very much hitched in light of the fact that they were not so much wedded. He was the man who drove the nation by model. In 1918, when Hiralal's significant other kicked the bucket of flu, he was fifty and needed to remarry. Gandhi didn't permit his child to remarry. He later on yielded however needed Hiralal to wed just a widow.

Child Marriage:

Gandhi was against child marriage, which he considered as a shameless and barbaric act, for it undermined, our ethics and instigated physical degeneration. Revoking the case that youngster marriage had a strict assent, Gandhi contended, smritis which urged early relationships don't portray the genuine embodiment of Hindusim and must be dismissed as insertions. In 1931, the pace of maternal mortality in India was 24.5 per thousand when contrasted with

4.5 in England. These relationships hurt mother as well as the youngster and thus the race. He argued for rising the time of union with 16 years for young ladies. He accepted that both the child and the young lady ought to be completely grown truly and intellectually at the time marriage and they ought to have the voice in a mind-blowing decision accomplice.

Gandhi accepted that no genuine upliftment of women was conceivable without the extreme changes in the marriage framework. The greater part of the handicaps from which women endured were because of the insidious which had crawled into the organization of marriage itself. On the off chance that women endured as widow it was because of the child marriage and forswearing of the privilege to widows remarriage. The Hindu marriage exceptionally had numerous maltreatment, for example, polygamy, new born child marriage, preclusion of widow remarry and substantial endowment and so forth. Fundamentally Gandhi had confidence in the structure and reason for marriage as imagined in the Hindu religion. He said that he had no hypothesis of marriage that is changeable with a faith in transmigration, resurrection or mukti. So he firmly pushed, in the teeth of restriction from the Sanatana Hindus for the remarriage of supposed widows and cited from Sastras that they are adequate to reason and nobility of womanhood.

Sati Pratha:

Gandhi considered sati-pratha as boorish in the current age. He accepted that self-immolation on the fire of the spouse is an indication that of edification however of gross numbness regarding the idea of soul, the spirit is undying, unchangeable and inescapable. It doesn't die with the physical body however venture starting with one good casing then onto the next. He proposed women to demonstrate their sati hood not by the mounting the burial service fire however by renunciation, penance, self-refusal and the devotion to the administration of her better half, his family and the nation. Despite the fact that Gandhi reprimanded Sati Pratha entire heartedly, yet his analysis didn't reach out to the then existing social standards which required absolute self denial on the cause in law and society. He additionally didn't scrutinize the inconsistent property relations which leaves a widow any entrance to the methods for subsistence.

Prostitution and Devadasi

Gandhi posted against prostitution, which he considered as good uncleanliness. He didn't anyway sentence prostitution that had to carry on with an existence of transgression. In this supposition men visiting these spots were similarly answerable for sustaining this wickedness. He was viable enough to perceive that the men would be as fallen as the women if this calling spread. He said that all men should drape their heads in disgrace insofar as there is single women who be commit to our desire.

He bestowed with a solution for overcoming for this dreadful disease by leading a chaste and simple life with “Charkha”. He appealed to all Indian men to ponder over the fate of the thousand of the sisters who are destined to a life of shame for their unlawful and immoral indulgence. Hence he questioned, what is worse or more hurtful to society to steal property or to steal the honour of the women. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “whether they known as devadasis or by other name the problem is the same. It is a matter of bitter shame and sorrow of deep humiliation, that a number of women have to sell their chastity for man’s lust.”

It was Gandhi, who aligned the liberation of women with India’s antiquated social customs, exuding illumination alluding Gargi, Droupati as paragons of righteousness. He infused new figuring out how to the meaning of womanhood and focused on vehemently for a status and an unequivocal job to impact and advance society all in all.

Equality of sexes:

Women must not endure any lawful handicap which isn't endured by men. Both are splendidly equivalent. Sexual balance doesn't convert into word related balance notwithstanding the nonattendance of a lawful bar. Women naturally pull back from a capacity that has a place with men. Nature has made genders as supplements of one another. Their capacities are characterized similar to their structures.

The Mahatma's view on sexual fairness won't be taken merciful either by the cutting edge man or the women. The instinctual pulling back of women from a capacity that has a place with men is an outcome of chronicled teaching. What has a place with men and what has a place with women is profoundly installed in the mind of people. It ought to be matter of decision both for the man and the woman as a couple regarding what business they should take up. It is shameful to anticipate that the women should supplement as an issue of an unwritten standard. To state that their capacities are characterized similar to their structures is to accentuate on the sexual division of work. The hypothesis of sexual division of work has been put aside by the improvements since the take-off of the Mahatma. Today people, contend and co-work, supplement and even supersede one another. Be that as it may, the Mahatma's view on women being a supplement of man ought to be taken a gander at from the perspective of his expectation. He needed to ensure the organization of family and simultaneously magnify women with equivalent status.

Birth Control:

Brahmacharya is an infallible sovereign remedy. Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease.

It is unethical to look for escape from the results of one's demonstrations. Moral outcomes must be delivered by moral limitations. Every single other restriction nullify the very point for which they are proposed. The utilization of contraceptives slaughters the longing to practice patience. Man must comprehend that women is his friend and not a methods for fulfilling his bodily want. Women must be instructed the specialty of saying no even to her better half.

She has rights just as obligations. The main thing is to liberate her from mental bondage, to show her holiness of her body and to show her respect of national assistance and the administration of humankind.

Sterilization:

I think of it as brutal to force cleansing law on the individuals. I am against the utilization of contraceptives if there should be an occurrence of women. I wouldn't fret intentional disinfection if there should be an occurrence of man since he is the assailant while the Mahatma surrendered Sterilization for men since he believed that man was the attacker, he was plainly against the utilization of contraceptives by women. His contemplations about restraint and immaculateness appears to have blurred his psyche and kept him from making reasonable big time answers for big time issues like the issue of populace blast.

The Mahatma was persuaded about the need of discretion in issues of sex. The abrogating confidence in discretion was additionally a result of his own achievement in seeking after Brahmacharya. While discretion is a generally excellent arrangement, a high minded arrangement by each mean, it can't be normal from the whole populace.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Gandhi was an extraordinary political pioneer as well as an enthusiastic admirer of mankind. An inflexible adversary of all treachery and imbalances, he was a companion of the modest and the discouraged. Harijans, women and the poor directed his most delicate consideration. He had just about an instinctual comprehension of women and their issues and had a profound standing compassion toward them. Bad form, similar to abuse, must be opposed any place it is found, not just in the political field. For the battle against outside mastery, women by the thousands mobilized to Gandhi's call for common noncompliance. Women put aside their conventional jobs, they came out of disconnection, they push off their purdah. They entered the open space alongside men, and offered satyagraha; they stayed resolute by police beatings and outrageous hardships in jail. Indeed, even ignorant innate women from the backwoods joined the opportunity development. That is the Truth-power Gandhi asked in private issues too. Truth be told, that is the place he needed it to start. The principal state of peacefulness is equity all round in each branch of life. Maybe it is an excessive amount to expect of human instinct. In Harijan, October 3, 1936 we find the reason for his faith: "I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she will make the same effort, and have the same hope and faith".

Though pre-occupied with heavy responsibilities his views in this regard were clear and he tried to educate the public to accept women as equal partners. He said: "I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat daughters and sons on an equal footing of perfect equality." Again he said: "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is a man's injustice to woman. If by strength it is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not more self-sacrificing, has she not great powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women."

Women could have a critical impact in the opportunity battle under his moving authority, his encouraging consideration and cherishing direction. As indicated by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, of the considerable number of components adding to the enlivening of women in India none has been so intense as the field of peacefulness which Gandhiji offered to women in his "war" against British mastery of India. It brought them out in their hundreds from protected homes, to stand the heater of a searing preliminary without wincing. It demonstrated as far as possible that women was as much capable as man to oppose wickedness or animosity.

The best catastrophe of present day circumstance is that considerably after very nearly 53 years of our advancement work we have not had the option to dress our women.

This problem was brought to our notice in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi. He said: "I happened to visit a village in the Champaran district of Bihar. I found some of the women dressed very dirtily. So I told my wife to ask them why they did not wash their clothes. She spoke to them. One of women took her into her hut and said: look now there is no box or cupboard here containing other clothes. The Sari I am wearing is the only one I have. How am I to wash it? Tell Mahatmaji to get me another sari, and I shall then promise to bathe and put clean clothes everyday. This cottage has no exception, but a type to be found in many Indian villages."

He took to spinning so that every poor woman could be clothed and he promoted production of khadi as an economic activity.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

M. K. Gandhi is known to be one of the few people who encouraged women's active participation in the freedom struggle-marking him as a rare promoter of women's liberation. In Gandhi words, "My contribution to the great problem (of women's role in society) lies in my presenting for acceptance of truth and ahimsa in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this, woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed her inferiority complex. Women's entry into national politics through non-violent methods brought miraculous results. On the one hand, women became aware of their inner strength, and on the other, the process brought human and moral elements into politics.

Gandhi had colossal confidence in women' inborn limit with respect to peacefulness. Also, his experience of investment by women in legislative issues from his days in South Africa till an amazing finish bears declaration to the way that they never bombed his desires. With Gandhi's motivation, they took the battle directly into their homes and raised it to an ethical level. Women composed open gatherings, sold Khadi and endorsed writing, began picketing shops of alcohol and remote merchandise, arranged stash salt, and approached to confront a wide range of outrages, including brutal treatment by cops and detainment. They approached to give all that they had - their riches and quality, their adornments and assets, their abilities and work all with penances for this unordinary and extraordinary battle.

Gandhi's call to women to include themselves in the opportunity battle had broad outcomes in changing their viewpoint. "The reason for Swaraj cleared all taboos and old traditions before it". Numerous women in their individual lives shed their well established partialities against the standing framework. They had no dithering in leaving the limits of their ensured homes and setting off to the prison. Women's cooperation in the opportunity battle feminized patriotism and the patriot battle helped them to free from age-old conventions. In spite of the fact that Gandhi never tested the customary set up, he motivated women to cut out their own fates inside it, and consequently changing its very pith. Women gained from Gandhi that one can be solid, regardless of whether apparently frail, to challenge unfairness. They understood that they don't need to acknowledge the standards of male-commanded legislative issues. They developed their own points of view and figured their own strategies.

Gandhi could consider women to be associated with administration and not with power. At the point when a lady kept in touch with him in 1946 about the political scene and the scarcity of ladies in it, he wrote: "So long as considerations of caste and community continue to weigh with us and rule our choice, women will be well-advised to remain aloof and thereby build up their prestige. Women workers should enrol women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them so as to bring about a change in them which will compel men to realise women's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour. If they will do this, they will purify the present unclear atmosphere." His advice to women was to teach people in villages simple lessons of hygiene and sanitation. Seeking power would be, for them, "reversion of barbarity". And still Gandhi believed that, "Women must have votes and an equal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation."

CONCLUSION

There was a stamped take-off of Gandhi's view of women from that of different reformers. The position taken by other social reformers and pioneers, before Gandhi made a vulnerable picture of the Indian women. For Gandhi, women were not insignificant toys in the hands of men, neither their rivals. People are basically enriched with a similar soul and in this manner have comparable issues. Women are at standard with men, one supplementing the other. As indicated by Gandhi, training for women was the need of the time that would guarantee their ethical turn of events and make them fit for possessing a similar stage as that of men. Actually, women for Gandhi were encapsulations of ideals like information, quietude, resistance, penance and confidence. These characteristics were basic essentials for guzzling the ethicalness of satyagraha. The ability of suffering interminable enduring can be seen uniquely in the women, as per the Mahatma. The convention of ahimsa as lectured by Gandhi fuses the temperance of enduring as is obvious in the women. In this way, Gandhi visualized a basic job for women in setting up peacefulness.

Women strengthening is no something which can be given over to women. This is a procedure which includes truthfulness, sincerity and limit and the ability with respect to the two people. It is a difficult assignment in town India as though today if a women goes to her parent's house or head off to some place, she should be joined by some male individual from the family. She can't take a free choice.

Mahatma Gandhi accepted that satyagraha was the most remarkable weapon in a peaceful battle. Satyagraha includes resistance. Since women were the most peaceful and impassioned admirers of harmony, it could be honed and reached out as a weapon in women' battles for equity and uniformity. To him a definitive ahimsa and satyagraha was when women, in immense numbers, ascended to stop the dangerous parts of male strength in the public eye. Had the force of opportunity battle not been eased back down, such preparation could have pulled in a lot more women into open life. Satyagraha is presently only a word, a negligible image, that fills no need for the scholastic or the tip top, or even the white collar class women's activist whose argument rises up out of a hypothetical foundation far expelled from Gandhi's poor women who act since they have no utilization for words to account for themselves.

Gandhi's careful and inventive advance to include women in the patriot development on such a huge scope was without a doubt a one of a kind marvels throughout the entire existence of the nation. It would be no misrepresentation to state that nobody in ongoing time in India has accomplished more than Gandhi for upraising women position. He in this way work for interminably for the recovery of Indian women and reproductions of Indian culture where women would have the option to rediscover her independence she had lost through year of subjection.

NOTES

Gandhi held very radical views about the emancipation and empowerment of women. Regeneration of women was an important aspect of his constructive programme, where women were accorded a special consideration. He had a dynamic vision on various issues and problems relating to women which has often been reflected in his numerous writings and speeches. He raised his voice against female feticide, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood, sexual harassment of women, domestic violence against women, discrimination against girl child, denial of education to women, dowry system etc. i.e., almost all the touching problems and issues relating to women of the contemporary world. Gandhi Ji strongly believed that only women should head organizations devoted to the cause of women empowerment. This is because his experiences had confirmed him that real advancement of women can only come through their own efforts.

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