

Gandhi's View on Empowerment of Women in India

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Abstract: *The position and status of women has been changing 'from age to age'. Sometimes, even within the same century, diametrically opposite views about the worth and importance of women have prevailed. Indian society in the 19th century had fallen into a stage of degeneration after centuries of Afghan and Mughal, and then British rule. The British rule, specially, had created widespread poverty and hunger, and the propaganda of their missionaries had created a sense of insecurity among the people about their traditional customs and beliefs. Faced with this threat, the caste-ridden society had retreated into a shell, and in order to protect them from this attack became more orthodox and repressive. At this crucial stage, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi called women to join the social reformation work for independent India from British Raj. He was advice the Countrymen to educate Girl child to empower women of India. He strived ceaselessly to reform the Indian society, and in doing so, raised a new voice of pan-Indian nationalism. He was thus the vanguards of the Freedom Movement. My sole aim in this piece is to shed light on the views of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on women empowerment and education that are worth discussing and cherishing, so far as all reformers of 19th century India contribute positively to our argument for a need for emphasis on certain Indic values and conceptions of femininity.*

Keywords: Women, Education, Social Status, Empowerment, Reforms

Empowerment has become a fashionable and buzz word. We essentially mean decentralization of authority and power. It aims at getting participation of deprived sections of people in decision - making process. We can say in other words giving voice to voiceless people. Activists want government to empower poor people including women by legislative measures and welfare programmed. Unless capacity is, build in those sections in reality, others rather than the sections for which they are mean use the power.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi popularly revered as Mahatma Gandhi was not only one of the greatest leaders of Indian Nationalism but a major social and political reformer, who played an important role in purging the Indian society of its inherent evils. In this regard, he assumed a pioneering role in attempting to eradicate the social wrongs committed against the women of the country through ages. Gandhi's political ideologies, strongly anchored in humanitarian values, were a reflection of his spiritual self. His personal philosophies of life molded largely his political strategies, with which he steered Indian on the path to freedom. For Gandhi, politics was not an exclusive category, but it was very much a part of one's holistic spiritual approach towards life in general.

To Gandhi, social emancipation was as critical as political emancipation. Gandhi throughout his life waged a crusade for the enlistment of the socially downtrodden, making significant contributions for the enhancement of the status of women in India. Women under his aegis took a milestone step towards reestablishing their identity in the society. Gandhi's inspiring ideologies boosted their morale and helped them to rediscover their self - esteem. Not only there was a general awakening among the women, but also under Gandhi's leadership, they entered into the national mainstream, taking parts in the National Movements. In Gandhi's words, "To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women. " Gandhi's reformist spirit

seasoned the role that he played in uplifting the status of women in India.

Status of Women in Pre Independence India

The position and status of women has been changing 'from age to age'. Sometimes, even within the same century, diametrically opposite views about the worth and importance of women have prevailed. While one school calls women 'the highest gift of God to man', and other asserts that 'the best way to reach God is to avoid women'. Much of modern Indian literature continues to portrait women as if they were unfeeling beings Created just for man's lust and service. In the 1st half of 18th century Indian's social reform movement began with the first modern man Ram Mohan Roy and was dominated besides him, by Ramkrishna, Vivekananda and host of societies and institutions which were founded by them for socio - religious reforms. The cause of women was significant ingredient of their multi - faceted social reform movements. There appears to be a near identity in their perception of the condition of women from which they were convinced that they had to be rescue. Ramkrishna specifically wanted to save woman from her depiction as *kamini* – a symbol of sex only, so that he worshiped his wife Sarada as a *God* (mother) to break the myth that women were the doorstep of hell. He wanted to high the status of women and society should be respectful to the woman, as a human being. In this perspective of 19th century India to understand in depth the role that Gandhi played in improving the position of women in society, it is essential to look at women's status, prevalent at that time. When Gandhi emerged on to the political scenario in first half of 20th century, social evils like child marriage and dowry system were rampant. Indian women had an average life span of only twenty - seven years. Death of women in labor was a common phenomenon. The percentage of women with basic education was as low as two percent. The patriarchal nature of the society confined women to the status of an inferior sex subordinate to their male counterparts. The purdah system was in full vogue in

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Northern India. Unless accompanied by their male guardians, the women were not permitted to venture out on their own. Only a handful few could avail of education and attend schools. Gandhi took the responsibility of shouldering a social crusade that led to a major re-orientation of the common notion of women in the Indian society.

Gandhi's Voice against the Social Evils

According to the Mahatma, social reforms were essential for the restructuring of the societal values that had so far dominated the perception of Indian women. Although, he had great reverence for the traditions of the country, he also realized that certain customs and traditions of the Indian society were antithetical to the spirit of development of the women of the nation. To quote Gandhi, "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide". The custom of child marriage became a target of his criticisms. In his opinion, child marriage is a source of physical degeneration as much as a moral evil. The system of dowry could not pass unnoticed from his critical eyes. He defined dowry marriages as 'heartless'. He opined that girls should never marry men who demand dowry, at the cost of their self-respect and dignity. Actually, the practice of dowry deserves to be abolishing as it leads to inequality between men and women. As Gandhi believed that the basis of marriage is mutual love and respect, he urged people to solemnize inter-communal marriages between the Harijans and caste Hindus.

Gandhi was extremely perturbed for the plight of the widows, particularly child widows. He put forth an earnest appeal to the young generation of the country to marry the widows. He was also quite hopeful about the immense potentials of the widows in furthering national issues. The predicaments of the devadasis, a part of the lower, untouchable segment of the society, had an indelible effect on the sensitive mind of the Mahatma. The pathetic conditions of the child prostitutes disturbed him immensely. He left no stone unturned for rehabilitating this segment of the society, as for him guarding the honor of women was no less than protecting cows. According to Gandhi, one of the first tasks that need to be accomplishing as soon as the country won freedom was to abolish the system of devadasis or temple women and brothels.

Gandhiji was very disturbed by the plight of this low caste untouchable section of the society, namely the *Devadasis*. He was hurt for the miserable way the children of brothels were treated. He had made elaborate plans for their rehabilitation. His book "Women and Social Injustice" contains discussions of very deep thoughts and solutions on the topic. He felt that after India became free, the system of temple women and brothels must abolish. Even though on paper we have abolished the system of Devadasis, rampant exploitation of women as sex servants has continued. There was no way Gandhiji could have predicted modern ways and means of prostitution (call girls, phone sex etc) but he certainly identified its social evil and tried to fight it.

Gandhi was against the institution of both polygamy and polyandry. He rejected the unhealthy, unlawful and immoral institutions of polygamy and polyandry. Gandhi pleaded for the abolition of dowry system, which he thought was an evil

practice, to be abandoned forthwith. The system of purdah also came under Gandhi's attacks and he questioned the very foundation of this practice. For him, the purdah system was no less than a "vicious, brutal and barbarous" practice. He also believed that purdah helps not the maintenance but the destruction of morality². When purdah could have been justifying the times of women were regarded as chattels and were often kidnap. But in nationalist era, in northern India most of the respondents had been in purdah at some stage in their lives, whether as unmarried girls in their fathers' houses or as married women in their husbands' houses, though the degree of restrictions could vary across households.

Role of Women as Envisaged by Gandhi

According to Gandhi, the role of women in the political, economic and social emancipation of the country was of overriding importance. Gandhi had immense faith in the capability of women to carry on a non-violent crusade. Under his guidance and leadership, women shouldered critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. Women held public meetings, organized picketing of shops selling foreign alcohol and articles, sold Khadi and actively participated in National Movements. They bravely faced the baton of the police and even went behind the bars. Gandhi's urge to women to join India's struggle for independence was instrumental in transforming the outlook of women. Swaraj uprooted age-old taboos and restrictive customs. Through their participation in Indian struggle for freedom, women of India broke down the shackles of oppression that had relegated them to a secondary position from time immemorial.

As far as the economic emancipation of women was concerned, Gandhi felt that men and women had different spheres of work. In his opinion, women could take to economic activities to supplement the income of her families like spinning, which he believed to be a good option available to the women. In the social realm, Gandhi envisaged a critical role for women in doing away with the forces of communalism, caste system and untouchables.

It can be said that without an iota of doubt that Mahatma Gandhi was indeed one of the greatest advocates of women's liberty and all throughout his life toiled relentlessly to improve the status of women in his country. His faith in their immense capabilities found expression in his decisions to bestow leadership to them in various nationalistic endeavors.

Gandhi expected women to contribute to the political cause primarily from within the domestic sphere through their role as supportive mothers and wives. Introducing the charkha as a political symbol, he enabled women in the domestic sphere to participate from within the home. However, women could participate only after giving up sex, reproduction and family life³. It may be the charkha was the concept of swadeshi and aligned with the political liberation of the country but charkha was not a way of economic independency of women and not giving empowerment and it was not possible also.

Gandhiji and Empowerment

Empowerment may mean equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop them. It is a state

without oppression - an environment of freedom, choice, equality and respect for individuals – a life with dignity. Societal behavior, which is enforced through customs, tradition and culture on the one side and legislation and state on the other, does, not always, satisfy this condition. There is lack of recognition. They tend to become oppressive in the exercise of control. The struggle against oppression has been a continuous one in the history of the world. For the empowerment of the discriminated, it is essential that the society recognizes their inalienable worth, their basic human rights, learns to respect, and enforces them. Therefore, the key to women's empowerment is recognition and enforcement of women's human rights.

Empowerment is the process by which the disempowered or powerless people can change their circumstances and begin to have control over their lives. Empowerment results in a change in the balance of power, in the living conditions and in the relationship. It essentially means decentralization of authority and power. It aims at getting participation of deprived sections of people in decision-making processes.

Empowerment of women in all spheres, in particular the political sphere is crucial for their advancement and the foundation of a gender-equal society. It depends on the achievement of the goals of equality, development and peace. Women's political empowerment is premised on three fundamental and non-negotiable principles⁴: (a) The equality between women and men, (b) Women's right to the full development of their potentials, (c) Women's right to self-representation and self-determination. In empowerment, the key indeed is power, power to access, control and make informed choices.

Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration; it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in the political arena and in decision-making roles is an important tool for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance⁵. To effectuate feminization of politics a critical mass of women in the decision-making bodies is yet to emerge. The substantial gains made by the women's movement over the decades, are not adequately reflected in the representation of women in positions of power.

According to Gandhi, education for women was the need of the time that would ensure their moral development and make them capable of occupying the same platform as that of men. In Gandhi's views, women can never be considered the weaker human. In fact, women for Gandhi were embodiments of virtues like knowledge, humility, tolerance, sacrifice and faith. These qualities were essential prerequisites for imbibing the virtue of satyagraha. The capability of enduring endless suffering can be witnessed only in the women, according to the Mahatma. The doctrine of ahimsa as preached by Gandhi incorporates the virtue of suffering as is evident in the women. Therefore, Gandhi envisaged a critical role for women in establishing non-violence. Gandhi invoked the instances of ancient role models who were epitomes of Indian womanhood, like Draupadi, Savitri, Sita and Damayanti, to show that Indian women could never be feeble. Women have equal mental

abilities as that of men and an equal right to freedom. To Gandhi's words, "The wife is not the husband's slave but his companion and his help-mate and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows - as free as the husband to choose her own path."

To the women Gandhi gave a directive to become fearless and courageous and work for their own emancipation as well as for the freedom of their country. Gandhi stated, "The outstanding impression of my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness"⁶. Before his death, Gandhi said to Vincent Sheen that I am one of the (disciplinary resolutions) first to any saintly mother and to my good nurse (Rambha). These were good women. They taught me to tell the truth and not to fear⁷. Man should control the pleasure of senses and not be considering woman just a sex object.

Gandhi believed that the goal of empowerment depends on three-fold revolution⁸. Such as firstly, to change people's hearts; secondly, to change their lives and thirdly, changing the social structure. He wanted that both men and women come out of 'Psychological Trap' in which they have been entangled. Gandhi's main point on women was that women are the incarnation of Ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering⁹.

He deliberately declared that as women have not the same rights in law as men, as long as the birth of a girl does not receive the same welcome as that of a boy, so long we should know India is suffering from partial paralysis, suppression of women is a denial of Ahimsa¹⁰.

The ultimate goal of empowerment of women based on Gandhi's vision is 'Sarvodaya', the welfare of all through cooperation and trusteeship in the economic sphere, equal participation in the political sphere, and mutual aid in the social sphere without regard to caste, creed or class or gender. Therefore, empowerment of village women cannot be imposed from above, it must grow from the bottom upwards. Once he said that the whole civilization lies on the laps of women. To the Indian women he advised the future is on your knees for you will mature the future¹¹.

However, empowering women socio-economically through increased awareness of their rights and duties as well as access to resources is a decisive step towards greater security for them. The 72nd & 73rd Constitutional Amendments on Panchayati Raj & Municipality with 33% reservation for women has created political space for women. In reality, women have never been able to get more than 10% seats in Parliament or other bodies of decision-making¹². This will go a long way to have active involvement and participation in political bodies. We should be ashamed of ourselves that after more than half a century of freedom we have neither been able to clothe our women nor been able to provide them something as basic as secure and adequate number of toilets and shelter even in the capital city of Delhi and other cities also.

Gandhi's Perception of Women

There was a marked departure of Gandhi's perception of women from that of other reformers. The stance taken by other social reformers and leaders, prior to Gandhi created a

helpless image of the Indian women. With the emergence of Gandhi, a new conception of women gradually gained currency. For Gandhi, women were not mere toys in the hands of men, neither their competitors. Men and women are essential endowed with the same spirit and therefore have similar problems. Women are at par with men, one complementing the other.

Gandhiji was a passionate lover of humanity. He had almost an instinctive understanding of women and their problems and had a deep and abiding sympathy for them. An implacable enemy of all injustice and inequalities, he was a friend of the lowly and the downtrodden. Harijans, women and the poor commanded his most tender attention. He had almost an instinctive understanding of women and their problems and had a deep abiding sympathy for them. In a letter written to Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 20 Oct.1936, Gandhiji wrote, "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. Nevertheless, man has delighted in enslaving you, 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 slaveholder myself but Ba (wife Kasturba) proved an unwilling slave and thus 'opened my eyes to my mission' ¹³.

Through preoccupied with heavy responsibilities his views in this regard would educate the public to accept women as equal partners. Gandhi said that I am uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. In my opinion, she should labor under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality. He thought that it is man's injustice to call women the weaker. If by strength is meant moral power, then women is immeasurably man's superior. Without her man could not be. If non - violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman ¹⁴.

Women could play a significant role in the freedom fight under his inspiring leadership. Gandhi offered to women in his 'War' against British domination of India. It proved that to the hilt that woman was as much able as man to the resist evil or aggression ¹⁵. Fundamentally man and woman are same, their problems must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help. Feminist researchers differ widely in their assessment of Mahatma Gandhi's theory and practice of women's emancipation during the Indian Nationalist Movement ¹⁶.

Madhu Kishwar asserts that "Gandhi saw women not as objects of reform, ...but as self - conscious subjects who could, if they choose, become arbiters of their own destiny. In this way, Gandhi represents a crucial break from the attitude of many of the leaders of the reform movements of the late nineteenth century. . . The main contributions of the Gandhi to the women were lay in his absolute and unequivocal insistence on their personal dignity in the family and society"¹⁷. In other hand, Ketu Katrak opined, "like other Indian social reformers, Gandhi reinforced British liberal and imperial policies since he did not challenge women's subordinate position in patriarchal

family structure" ¹⁸. Geraldine Forbs writes that he used a 'Simplistic religious model' to transmit his ideas and Rumina sethi finds that Gandhi's religious philosophy is oppressive to women ¹⁹.

It took several years for Gandhi to overcome the forms of sexism, classicism, and racism that he internalized as a young man. Nevertheless, from the perspective of social feminism, he made enormous progress. The new women (women engaged in feminist movement) loved Gandhi because he spoke their language, he did what they wanted men to do, and encouraged other men to follow suit. Given the stark contrast in Indian society between man and women's cultures broadly speaking men is more bellicose rigid, controlling culture and woman's more relational, egalitarian, fluid, opened peace - loving culture, it is not surprising Gandhi chose the latter. The extended family, even with its patriarchal modes of dominance, gave many women a wide scope of expression than either the British or the Indian public spheres. Gandhi's effort to model Indian public life on the joint family brought thousands of women into social and political institutions of the nation. Equity - feminism, on the other hand, seemed foreign to women during the Indian Nationalist women with the exception of a small number of middle - to - upper class woman who lived primarily in cities.

Women have to be conscious and aware to feel and realize at every step of their life that they are the builders of their nation and the peaceful world. Despite the fight for gender, equality there has not been a perceptible change in the perception about women. Women are still considering weaker and inferior. We empowered our women through education of girls. Education that inculcates human and spiritual values is of great significance for the empowerment of women. These are not only in educational institutions but also in every lifestyle and throughout the world where humanity exists. Empowered women would be economically independent, be self - reliant, have a high self - esteem, be confident, be there in developmental process, be there in various professions, participate in decision - making process and participate in social change ²⁰.

We need to work against prejudices, practices, customs and traditions that lower the status of the girl child. The girl child who is an indispensable part of our society for its normal social development is considering as a liability. The general societal concern has been lacking because the society has been conveniently giving its sanction to the neglect of and atrocities committed on girl child and on everyone who tries to eliminate the girl child. Urgent need is to humanize our dehumanized society that gives sanction to an act, which will bring survival of our country to a questionable point. Sensitization seminars need to be organizing at the national, state and district levels. Therefore, survival of girls will lead to empowerment of women also.

Empowerment is the desire of women who feel powerless to have more control over their lives. Powerlessness causes fear that their lives might be crushing or destroy or reducing anytime. It kills the human spirit. In India, a woman is never introducing herself by her own name but as someone's wife or mother. Self - reliance at an individual level means

building up the internal and external self - sufficiency to be an individual in her own right ²¹.

There are dangers looming large on the empowerment process for women in the new world with free market economy, on the other side in the emerging struggles women have an opportunity to come forward to take on the challenges and strengthen themselves. Women's empowerment depends largely on ensuring them their Human Rights. While the average woman is, still a long way from true empowerment, many middle and upper class activists have succeeded in self - empowerment by becoming experts, consultants and leaders of the movement.

Gandhi was keen to free Indian women from their traditional bondage, helplessness, insults, humiliation, suppression and oppression, much of which, he thought, they had to suffer due to highly subjective and discriminatory customs, practices and laws. They should be look in common with men, as essentially good and divine ²². He wanted to sincerely work of Indian Women from their centuries – old oppression and suppression by men, individually and collectively, formally and informally ²³. Gandhi fought for women's liberation in its totality. He was against the institution of female infanticide. He was also against child marriage because he thought it comes in the way especially of the progress of women. As far as the smritis, which sanction child marriage, are concerned, these should deliberately be disobeying and their immoral injunction rejected. The most effective way of abolishing this institution would be to create sufficient public opinion against this institution and once it build to have laws to legally abolishing this custom.

About widow, keeping in view the sufferings of a Hindu widow, Gandhi regarded her as an ornament to Hinduism and a kind of blessing to her serving relations and a glory to the Hindu religion. She should be regarding as a treasure and looked upon as a rare gift of Hinduism to humanity, for she presents herself as a model of devotion and suffering worthy of being imitated ²⁴. Actually, widows were in fact the victims of a male - dominated society. It is much better that they have been allowing to regulating their own lives in their own ways according to their desire. He would like a widow to commit an enlightened sati, rather than a false physical sati, upon the death of her husband. He would expect her to live in her actions the ideals and virtues of her late husband. As he put it, sati hood' is the acre of purity and it can be attained only through constant striving, immolation of the spirit from day to day. It is indicates his remarkable capability to adopt the traditional concepts and give them a new meaning and interpretation so as to allow it to change and reorient itself to the changing situations and circumstances, according to Suman Gupta ²⁵. Gandhi, however, looked at marriage as a relationship between the two souls and since unlike the body, the soul is immortal, it lives beyond the life of her husband and therefore, even upon his physical death she should remain committed and devoted to his soul and adopted the life of celibacy.

During the non - cooperation movement that began in 1920, the first organized mass campaign against the British Raj, Gandhi sought to mobilize a large number of women in the

movement. However, he was acutely aware of the social status of women, and though his approach was pragmatic, he did not shut his eyes to the actual situation of women. He laid stress on that part of the non - cooperation movement in which women could participate without having to attempt to break free of their fetters ²⁶.

The direct participation of women in the non - cooperation movement and women are actively encouraged by nationalist leaders to make their political contributions from within the domestic sphere. Women's public activities were more pronounce during the civil disobedience movement. During the period of nationalism, the 'new women' was the embodiment of the nationalist culture, the upholder of nationalist traditions within the domain of the family, the home. The new women were to be 'modern' but not 'western'. Her primary duty was to preserve the culture of her nation by upholding the tradition and values that constituted that culture.

Gandhi was of the considered view that since women are men's equal in their capabilities, the batter should treat them as their perfect equals, so he would urge men to treat them as their companions, friends and comrade. He also looked at women as the personification of self - sacrifice. Since woman is the better half of man, she should take her place by the side of man and claim her rights and freedoms, rather than remain helplessly dependent on him.

Gandhi did not simply consider women to be men's equal. He would accordingly prefer women to work at home and men going out to earn bread and meet the family expenses. He deliberated upon women's functions that "they have plenty of work in their own homes. They should attend to the bringing up of their children; they may give peace to the husband when he returns home tired, minister to him, soothe him if he is angry, ... It is not for women to going out and work, as men do" ²⁷. Gandhi was also practical enough to recognize the natural differences between men and women, which create a kind of distinction between their respective roles according to Suman Gupta. It is true if women are not economic independent and self - dependent, she cannot spend lifestyle smoothly.

Gandhi's primary concern was to ensure women their socio - educational welfare. He wanted their higher & primary education due to she would able to manage her home, take care of the upbringing, nursing, education & character of her children and understand the things she should do or not do during pregnancy. In the economic field, he would like her to take the now of Swadeshi, his ideal heroic women like Sita & Damayanti who sacrifice her life for their family. Gandhian thoughts were not just utopian; Gandhi viewed every issue from both the ideal and practical angles. Accordingly, one can understand Gandhian thoughts only by keeping them closely linked to the sense of sincerity and truthfulness. Gandhian thought was an evolving entity. Gandhian philosophy has to be a creed to succeed, demanding honest and complete faith on the part of those who apply it for redemption from injustice with malice.

Today, if Gandhi's agenda has fallen apart, it is due to Indian politics. The continued exploitation of women can be

attributing to the degradation in moral values of the society, and utter poverty of our nation. We ignored the role of social service, job dignity, and self - reliance. Occasionally we run into true volunteers who believe in Gandhiji's ideals and have implemented his programs. We hope that at least a few of the younger generation take up Gandhiji's unfinished manifesto and work to eliminate social barriers facing women.

Gandhiji and feminism

The Government of India has declared the year 2001 as year for the Empowerment of women, but the struggle to reach this stage has been long and arduous. The concern for women's political equality in India first emerged as a political issue during the national movement in which women were active participants. Post - independence, women continued to play a significant role in less conventional political activities such as environmental movement, anti - alcohol agitation, peace movement and even revolutionary activities, which equally affect power relationships as they have the capacity to influence the state.

Having realized the important role women could play in purifying public life Gandhi, a great visionary constructed feminist politics. Himself became an embodiment of feminine virtues, understood the plight of women especially in Indian society, however, remained imprisoned in the mindset of patriarchal values and was unable to subscribe that "unfair treatment of women is a disease as bad as untouchables."

Equity - feminism has been so central among western feminist that social feminism is ignore, marginalize, or seen as an earlier and less radical precursor to real feminism, based on equity feminist, analysis of Indian women in the nationalist era by linking social feminism with nationalizations. Based on an equity feminist analysis of Indian women in the nationalist era, Forbes states of Sarojini Naidu, "by linking feminism with nationalism, she and her colleagues hindered the development of a radical feminist critique of women's work"²⁸.

Today feminism continues to be a major issue among women dedicated to women's liberation. In the west now, the tendency among feminists is to include an analysis not only of sexism, but also of racism, classicism and imperialism. Feminists and other women are engaged in many forms of action that Gandhi may not have anticipated. We have much to learn from Gandhi's theory and practice, but not to the exclusion of modern ideas and movements²⁹.

Present Situation and Conclusion

The present situation is more horrible. Globally about 1.2 million women and teenagers are trafficked and many are trap forever in European countries. Despite 60 years above of independence, atrocities on women continue unabated. The greatest tragedy of present day situation is that even after almost 60 years of our development work we have not been able to feed and cloth our women. Empowerment without sharing is not possible. Sharing requires sacrifice. This is the Gandhian formula sharing and sacrifice. It is clear that only law was not sufficient to restore women their

status of perfect quality. Such effort to be supplement by changing derogatory and differentiating customs, generating political awakening and making everyone economically independent and self - reliant.

Despite the fight for gender, equality there has not been perceptible change in the perception about women. A woman is still considering delicate. Her mild behavior and nature is seeing as a negative point. Let the pursuit of power be not only aim of the women empowerment. It should be "total emancipation". He had attracted so many millions of not only literate but illiterate women without the power of state, without the modern information technology and offering in return only sweat, toil, and pain, is an exceptional feat! His insistence on Women's education is the first step in right direction. We still have miles to go to achieve our cherished goal to empower women.

Nalini Singh's interview³⁰ on the pathetic state of women in Bihar is shocking. Their sub - human existence can be describe, in the words of Rousseau as solitary poor, nasty brutish, stark/ some poor helpless women who live without food, clothes, shelter have thankfully caught attention of Singh. It is perhaps heart rending to learn that the mother - in - law and daughter - in - law in a household wear the same saree without petticoat and choli (blouse) in rotation. Something needs to done on a war footing to mitigate their "suffering".

The remarkable insight that Gandhi had, was blur with the traditional logic. The consequence is that post - Gandhi politics, in the 60 years of independence in India, is witnessing fifty per cent population of marginalized women begging for 33 per cent reservation in the legislative bodies. So that they could have a say in the policy decisions of the country so that the crass politics of corruption and criminalization give way to politics of love, peace, goodwill and non - violence to feminine politics Gandhi strove for it, what a pity?

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