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**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF GANDHIAN APPROACH TOWARDS
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. We observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. Undoubtedly the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi Experimented in this field a century age and he had shown the way for empowerment of women and the development of the status of women. Gandhi was of the opinion that until and unless women, on the basis of education and knowledge do not find their proper place in social and economic fields, they could not achieve self-respect for themselves. Nor they could become self-dependent in any of the walks of life. In his life time Gandhi inspired Indians to take concrete and practical initiatives regarding women education which will bring them out of these centuries's old conservatives regarding women education which will bring them out of these centuries's old conservative customs and rules, which were responsible for their mental and social slavery.

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi, as a major social and political reformer, played an important role in attempting to eradicate the social wrongs committed against the women of the country through ages. He strongly believed that a society can develop rapidly if takes all actions of the people together into its fold, rich and poor, high society people and low caste people and both men and women.

Gandhi's political ideologies are strongly based on humanitarian values, which were a reflection of his spiritual self. For him, politics could not be divorced from social factors. To Gandhi, Social emancipation was as critical as political

emancipation. Gandhi, throughout his life, struggled very hard for upliftment of the socially downtrodden, making significant contributions for the development of the status of women in India. Women under his ages took a milestone to step towards re-establishing their identity in society. Gandhi inspiring ideologies boosted their morals and helped them to rediscover their self-esteem. Not only was there a general awakening among the women, but 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 injustice to women." The views expressed by the Mahatma and the actions undertaken by him may not go entirely with the current times because the times have irreversibly changed but the honesty of the Mahatma, the love and respect he had for the women, can never be doubted. He is truly the best friend of the women of the world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study about the Gandhian's views in relation to women.
- To study about the Gandhian approach towards women empowerment.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on secondary datas. The secondary datas are collected from books, journals and from the relevant website also.

GANDHIAN CONCEPT ON WOMEN:

Gandhian concepts on women are discuss in relation to the following terms:

Gandhian Concept of Women in Society:

According to Mahatma Gandhi rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual cooperation and consultation women must realize her full states and play her role on par with men. (Selections from Mahatma Gandhi constructive program PP. 17-18).

Gandhian Concept of Women Education:

Gandhi always favoured women education. The educationally ill-disposed should be educated by their husbands. The customary and legal status of women is bad and demands radical change. (Selections from Mahatmas' Constructive program, PP. 17-18).

Gandhian Concept of Women Equality:

According to Mahatma Gandhi women are gifted with equal mental capacities and therefore she has equal rights. However, due to the force of custom, ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying superiority over women. (Selections from Speeches and Writings of mahatma Gandhi, PS. 424-425).

Gandhian Concept of Self-Reliance:

Gandhi had invented a portable spinning wheel which he professed to be used by women for their living. (Selection from speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi). This was a strategy to include discipline and dedication to weeding out the unwilling and ambitious and to include women in the movement at a time when many thought that such activities were not respectable activities for women. (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Women Emancipation:

According to Mahatma Gandhi women should be emancipated from all types of slavery. He favored the emancipation of women he opposed purdha and extreme oppression of Hindu widows and Sati System. By allowing women to participate in no tax campaign salt-Satyagraha he made women to involve themselves in politics. Ultimately women will have to determine her needs with authority. He acknowledged that the determined non violent resistance technique came from his wife. (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Dowry:

According to Mahatma Gandhi dowry taking is a sin. He preferred girls to remain unmarried than to be humiliated by marrying men who preferred dowry. He called dowry as a heartless demand. He wished for mutual consent, mutual love and mutual respect between husband and wife. (Selections from speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of women in Social Service:

Gandhi worked not only for political emancipation of nation but also for the liberation of all the suppressed and oppressed sections of society. He could awaken women to shed their deep rooted sense of inferiority and rise to dignity and self esteem. (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Child Marriage:

According to Mahatma Gandhi child marriage was a moral and physical evil. He thought that it undermines morality and induces physical disintegration. It was vicious, brutal and barbarous. (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Prostitution:

According to Mahatma Gandhi prostitution as moral leprosy. The beast in man has made the detestable crime a lucrative profession; he appealed to them to give up their unworthy profession and become sanyasinis. (Selections from Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Marriage:

According to Mahatma Gandhi marriage was a sacrament imposing discipline on both the partners. He insisted on monogamy in his opinion woman was a companion of man gifted with equal mental capabilities. Gandhi very clearly said that women should cease to consider herself as the object of man's lust. (Selections from Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Sexuality:

According to Mahatma Gandhi sexuality should be kept inside the marriage limits. He said all sexualities outside the marriage should be banned referring to his own life he observed that he began to enjoy his married life only after abandoned sex. For him, "the conquest of lust is the highest endeavor of a man's or a woman's existence." (Selections from Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhian concept of Widowhood:

According to Mahatma Gandhi the miseries for a woman as a widow. Gandhi saw widows as strong reservoirs of energy. For him, It is worth considering carefully in what way the country can avail itself of the services of hundreds of widows, young and old." (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi). As Gandhi respected widowa who dedicated themselves to the service of humanity, he had great regard for women who chose the path of staying single to serve society and the nation. In his opinion, not every Indian girl is born to marry. There are many girls willing to dedicate themselves to service instead of servicing one man. (Selections from Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi and Andrews, C.F (2008). The teaching of Ahimsa Mahatma Gandhi's ideas).

Gandhian concept of Women in Political participation:

Gandhi had visualized a great role for women in eradicating the civil of communalism. His appeal to women was to refuse to cook, and to starve themselves in protest so long as their men "do not wash their hand of these dirty communal squabbles". (Selections from the collected works of Mahatma Gandhi).

Gandhi's appeal reached women everywhere in India. He expected great things from them in the areas of work concerning purity of life, removal of untouchability, propagation of Khadi, Communal harmony and Swadeshi. (Selections from Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi Andrew's C.F 2008. The teaching of Ahimsa Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas). He said, "In my own opinion men and women are but one their problems are one in essence the soul in both is the same the two live same life have the same feeling each is a complement to other one can not live without one's active help." He was painful when he observed that "of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible none is

degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of his better half. He was of the opinion that women were the embodiment of the sacrifice silent suffering humility faith and knowledge.” These were the qualities he expected for his Satyagrah and Ahimsa hence he thought women could best fit in as the Satyagrah followers. The soul force or the truth force could emanate only from women he thought. Even in South Africa he could make his women followers to fight for their civil rights, embark upon the police with fortitude and get imprisoned without resisting.

CONCLUSION:

Gandhi perceived the problems of women and considered them as great reservoirs of energy. He could pursue them and take part in the National freedom struggle. He pleaded with the women to understand their potentialities and to act accordingly. He condemned all vices concerning women and propagated virtuousness and purity.

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