

IMPORTANCE OF REGENERATION INDIA AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN TO BUILD IDEAL SOCIETY ACCORDING TO M. K. GANDHI

Author

Dr. Juhi Routh, Assistant Professor, DDENBU, NBU, Darjeeling, WB, India

Soumitra Chakraborty, Reasearch Scholar in Philosophy, NBU, Darjeeling, WB, India

ABSTRACT

Before and after freedom Gandhi's main focus was to regenerate India as Civilization. During colonial period the structure of Indian society was spoiled. To regeneration India Gandhi introduces Civic Virtues as non-violence, satyagraha. The role of women was very important in colonial India. Not only this, after freedom, their participation was not ignorable according to Gandhi. Gandhi showed how women was important in the area of social, political and Economic. Actually empower them means no doubt empowering nation.

KEY WORDS: *regeneration, Civilization, participation, Khadi, Non-violence, Satyagraha, Swaraj, Civic Virtue*

1. INTRODUCTION

M. K. Gandhi was the man of action. He always tried to practice non-violence and truth into action. So his believe was on Satyagraha to regenerate India as a nation. During colonial rule India was spoiled in the every sector social, political and economic. India as a civilization was the worshiper of truth and non-violence from the early Vedic Yuga. But colonization dehumanized Indian. To regenerate India as nation, the role of women also was important. Gandhi realized that without women the circle of real development can't possible.

2. AGAINST STUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Gandhi was deep against of any exploitation. He always wants to break the structure of the violence of the society. Before freedom the structure of the society was not good for ideal state. Not even after freedom. In Parekh's words that 'British rule in India was a relationship of economic and political domination between an imperial power and its colony' (p. 11). Parekh further emphatically mentioned-

For Gandhi British imperialism dominated India at three related but different levels. At the political level the arrogant colonial government oppressed the Indian people and denied their right to run their affairs themselves. At the economic level it exploited and impoverished them, destroyed their indigenous industries and subordinated their interest to those of the British economy. In

Gandhi's view this was far more disturbing than political oppression and could continue even if India became independent. At the most disturbing moral and cultural level, British imperialism destroyed the identity and integrity of Indian civilization and turned the Indians into brown Englishmen. (p.18)

Gandhi was afraid that after freedom from British rule Indian could not escape from imperialism. Because it affected not only political and economic status but also spoiled moral and cultural heritage of India. So Gandhi's main focused was to survive Indian civilization. Gandhi believed that Indian civilization is plural and non-dogmatic. It has unity-in-diversity. So he was against of these all structural violence institution. Men according to him are soul or atma and state 'soulless machine'. Traditionally India had a spiritual civilization, but structural violence like state dehumanized, destroy morality. For Gandhi, national regeneration could not be brought about by adopting modern civilization. Our culture worship truth and non-violence, but state worship violence. Indian civilization always gave important to its citizens. In ideal state citizen should enjoy their freedom, and at the same they need to perform their duties and responsibilities, without exploitation. That's why Gandhi's main aim was to build a new type of society. In Parekh's words that '...Gandhi argued that independent India should evolve a new type of non-statal polity. Ideally he preferred 'enlightened anarchy' under which socially responsible and morally disciplined men and women never harmed one another and did not need any kind of polity' (p.113). Gandhi was against of violence institution and advocated for 'enlightened anarchy'. Pakrekh very well mentioned his view regarding its conditions, nature etc. he said that-

Gandhi opted for 'ordered anarchy' under which citizens enjoyed maximum freedom consistent with the minimum necessary orderd. The guiding principles of such a polity were obvious. It should be based on non-violence; should place man at the centre and help him recover and develop his moral and social power currently surrendered to the state; build up courage, autonomy and a sense of power among its people; break the statist political culture by fostering strong and vibrant local communities.(p.113)

3. REGENERATION AS A NATION

Gandhi wanted to see India united. He imagined the new polity consisted of small, cultured, thoroughly regenerated, well-organized and self-determining village communities. He always believed that the development should start from bottom that means from village, where the bindings are natural. Gandhi also thought the village community would build up a "strong sense of local strength and solidarity" and also provide 'meaningful' interpersonal relationship. Not only this they 'encourage a sense of responsibility and the spirit of co-operation, and act as a nursery of civic virtue' (p.114). So it is clear that Gandhi wanted to build an oceanic society, not a pyramid one. He focused on face to face relationship with his fellow citizen. He desired that people will train in the technique of Satyagraha. The nature of state will be 'for Gandhi not consent, nor will nor fear but co-operation was the basis of the state. Every state, democratic or otherwise, depended on the co-operation of its citizens, be silent or vocal, passive or active, willing or unwilling. Since the state was an agency of action, co-operation with it consisted in rendering it specific services such as carrying out its orders, paying taxes, fighting wars and obeying laws. The state did not exist independently of its citizens and was ultimately nothing more than a system of institutionalized co-operation between its members. Its actions were not only made possible by their own actions, but they, as self-conscious moral agents, all were ultimately accountable for its activities'(p.123) so in state the role of citizens are very important and basic. For Gandhi, the moral sense of citizen responsibility will determined the character of the state. The vices and virtues of a state full depend on the environment where its citizens lived. Gandhi mentioned that 'rulers, if they are bad, are so not necessarily or wholly by reason of birth, but largely because of their environment. But the environment is we- the people who make the rulers what they are. If we will reform ourselves, the rule will automatically do so (Iyer, p.355). Gandhi further said that 'most men do not understand the complicated machinery of the government. They do not realize that every citizen silently but nevertheless surely sustains the government of the day in ways of which he has no knowledge. Every citizen therefore renders himself responsible for every act of his government. And it is quite proper to support it so long as the actions of the government are bearable. But when they hurt him or his nation, it becomes his duty to withdraw his support.(YI, 22/07/1920). For regeneration India, in every aspects of the society, Gandhi introduced swaraj-the swadeshi spirit, satyagraha the purification weapon and constructive programme.

4. ROLE OF WOMEN

Gandhi was the architecture of Indian development. He was very aware that to change the society need people from every sector and every caste without any discrimination. Not only this Gandhi emphasized that woman has the

important role in development. Gandhi's thought always was empowering woman. His idea of woman empowerment came out when we found that woman participate in social, political and economical all areas of life.

5. Social Participation of Women

Socially there was no difference between man and woman. According to Gandhi that 'the man and woman live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of each other. The one can not live without the other's active help' (*Harijan*, 24-2-40). Gandhi always advocate for equality of sexes. He further said that 'equality of sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms' (H, 2-12-39). Gandhi was against of any type of domination on woman. Even he wanted to remove those obstacles which were written in the *Shastras*. Gandhiji mentioned that 'woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no hand. In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his' (CP, p.17). He fought against the customs which hamper the development of woman. Gandhi knew that this work is psychologically harder because we have to psychologically remove this concept from our society that woman are inferior to man. Knowing this psychological basis Gandhi mentioned that 'this revolution is easy, if the mind is made up' (ibid). So socially woman's degradation changed depend on human mind. From ages past woman has dominated and so the feeling of inferiority complex develop in woman. From past we thought that there is a difference between them regarding job. But we must support through the value of works.

Gandhi was against of child marriage. He thought that a father is the protector of his child not owner. He supported widow marriage. Even he suggested his son to marry a widow. *Pardah protha* was the briar of freedom and Dowry system was devalued human values. These all obstacles of social development can be removed by spreading education to the women also. Gandhi pointed out that 'there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny them equal rights on the ground of their illiteracy; but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them...' (ID, p.231). To remove untouchability woman's has also great role to play. By social servicing woman will serve everyone from the society including untouchables.

6. Economic Participation of Women

Economically the involvement of woman is very important for development. Gandhi understood that for development especially in village need woman to participate in economic area. Gandhi had prevision that to be self-independent both nation and citizens have to be focused on economic status of villages. Women have enough leisure time after finishing home works, so they can utilize their time to earn more. Gandhi emphasized on village industries like making candle, paper, match, soap, oil etc. And in these productions the participation of women was no doubt essential. He believed that 'if the village perishes, India will perish too'. Industrialization exploited villagers, so to come out this exploitation village has to self-contained. That why Gandhi introduced *Swadeshi* and *Khadi* to revitalize the village economic. *Khadi* was a symbol of unity of Indian humanity including women. Large number of woman was spinning and weaving to make *Khadi*. Only this they ware it as self-reliance. The participation of woman in economic area, was financially helpful to the poor families to earn their daily bread. *Khadi* made woman more active than previous time in the society. We have faith that the handmade product is better in quality and more organic and fresh. And you have the mentality to buy or use local product or own product, so that financially our nation go forward.

7. Political Participation of Women

Politically the participation of woman in Indian movements has immense important. Gandhi was shrewd politicians, he knew the involvement of women need to make strong any movement, especially based on non-violent. The participation of woman in national freedom also denotes the equality with man. Gandhi liked the qualities of passiveness, tolerance, self-indulgence, sacrifice etc. He very closely watched her mother, and knew about the strength of woman. He mentioned that he will cancel that legislature which have not proper share of woman. His wife, Kasturba was the first woman *satyagrahi*. He said that 'if the non-violence is the law of our beings, the features with the women'. He further said that 'woman is the incarnation of *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering' (*Harijan* 24-2-40). In South Africa many woman participate *padayatra*. Gandhi inspired woman to participate in freedom movement and Indian politics. He believed when *abala*

become *sabala* then the world will be changed. In 1921 non-cooperation movements Gandhi requested woman to give up mill cloths and donate their jewellery for *swaraj*, and large number of woman responded. He knew that through woman the movement can reach into the home of Indian people. In 1930 Gandhi's *Satyagraha* and salt march showed us the involvement of women in freedom struggle movement. Near about 30,000 thousand people were arrested and among them 17,000 were women. So this indicates the important of women participation. N.K. Bose rightly mentioned that "his civil disobedience movement brought about , in a dramatic manner, the entry of women in large numbers into the public life of India. These became the starting points of woman's emancipation in our land" (Bose,p.74). Somehow it also denotes the concept of decentralization in society. Many researchers that's why called Gandhis non-violent protest as a "feminist" principle. Gandhi had a faith on woman that a woman's nature was really suited to non-violent *satyagraha*. Without any hesitation Gandhi mentioned that 'the women of India should have as much share in winning Swaraj as men. Probably in this peace struggle women can outdistance man by many a mile' (YI, 10-04-1930). The involvement of women in the nationalist movements was not only a political compactness but also a means of restructuring and rejuvenating society. Gandhi did a phenomenal contribution to motivate woman's mobilize in political activities. By participating woman can enjoy their nation freedom and at the same time they can be ready to fight for their own emancipation. Gandhi brought woman out of their homes.

The role of Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya was very impressive. It was Gandhi who drew women in the freedom movement in large number. In constructive works the participation of woman was very active. Saraladevi worked actively in Punjab, Manibehn Patel organized woman organization in Gujarat, Basanti Devi and Uma Das the wife and daughter of C.R. Das was arrested by police for supporting *Swadeshi*. According to Aruna. A. Ali how woman feel a great deal of self-confidence because of the participation in freedom movement. She said that-

'Gandhi's appeal was something elemental. At last, a woman was made to feel the equal of man; that feeling dominated us all, educated and non-educated. The majority of women who came into the struggle were not educated or westernized.... The real liberation or emancipation of Indian women could be traced to this period, the 1930s. Earlier, there had been many influences at work, many social reformers had gone ahead, it was all in the air. But no one single act could have done what Gandhiji did when he first called upon women to join and said. They are the better symbols of mankind. They have all the virtues of a Satyagrahi. All that puffed us up enormously and gave us a great deal of self-confidence' (David Hardiman, p.116).

Gandhi's political end was *Swaraj* or *Enlightened Anarchy* which was domination free, equal, self-ruled state. It demands for everyone equal rights including woman. One thing to mention that Gandhi never compromise with woman's respect. He always put woman's respect in the highest level. No doubt that Gandhi always follows the path of non-violence, but to protect woman respect Gandhi advised that people can use violence as means. This indicates that how much Gandhi gave important to the woman in society. I think this view can remove all the criticism against him regarding the relationship with woman.

One more thing to look into this matter that modern thinkers of political-philosophers like Robert Putnam, Coleman, Tocqueville, Green focused on *Civic Virtue* and *Social Capital* to make democracy more effective. The way to build ideal society through civic virtues and social capital, people need to practice *Civic Engagement*. Civic Engagement is the basis of Civic virtues and Social Capital. And its main aim to produce public good over private good. Gandhi may be aware of this thought that to reach an ideal state the participation of woman is important. Women's active engagement or participation will make modern society into a vibrant one. And only then we will come closer to the real democracy or 'enlightened anarchy'.

8. REFERENCES

1. Parekh, B., *Gandhi's Political Philosophy*, Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1989.
2. Hardiman, D., *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas*, Pietermatitzburg: University of Natal Press, 2003.
3. Gandhi, M. K., *India of My Dreams*, Ahmadabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 2011.
4. Iyer, R., *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, Santa Barbara, CA: Concrode grove Press, 1983.