

CHAPTER- VIII

CONCLUSION

From the perceptions of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx and from our observations and experiences it can be concluded that the issues relating to women emancipation have been drawing the attention of everybody. In today's world the issue of women emancipation has become the issue of general concern in every nook and corner of the society. The issues concerning women have been encoded in different terms, viz. women emancipation, women empowerment, feminist struggle, women liberation etc. Among the terms, the term emancipation has been specifically used by the philosophers and social thinkers basically to mean all the philosophical psycho-social, socio-religious, socio-cultural and socio-economic concerns of the womenfolk. From times immemorial there has been discrimination against women in all the societies of the world. Throughout the world women have been facing many problems more or less in all spheres of life.

Discrimination against women generally takes many forms. They are mainly-discrimination in social, religious, educational, economic, political and social opportunities; inequality in family life (in health care, marriage and reproductive decision making) and gender based violence (including violence in family life, in the community, by states and armed forces). In a sense women are not emancipated from all kinds of obscurantism and superstitions, from the narrow confines of outdated thoughts and habits.

Discrimination against women has created many problems in various sectors of societies and such problem has become the cause of slow progress of societies of the globe. Human rights of the women have also been violated in most of the societies. They are deprived of their basic human rights, as a result of which they have been suffering in all the vital areas, viz. socio-religious situations, literacy, education, health environment, cultural situations, employment and politics. Even the women's human rights are recognised very lately. Because of such delay, some basic human rights, such as social, economic and cultural rights have taken a long time to be recognised as important human rights. Such attitude of the people of upper socio-political hierarchy have done many damage not only of the upliftment of the womenfolk but also of the society as a whole. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 by United Nations has unequivocally included social, economic and cultural rights as basic human rights. Thus the whole world has gradually become more conscious about the socio-psychological, socio-cultural, socio-religious, socio-economic, socio-political positions of women. The international convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), clearly stated that 'discrimination against women "violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, and is an obstacle to the participation of women on equal terms with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries.'¹ Discrimination is a social malady which hampers the process of growth and development of family as well as social life. It also hampers the process of complete development of the potentialities of the women. As a result they find it difficult to offer requisite services for

the prosperity of personal, social and national life with an understanding of the importance of human dignity. Thus, emancipation of women has become not only an issue of philosophical concern but also an issue of sociological, political, cultural and economic concerns of the whole human society. Such multi-dimensional areas of importance has well been found in all the ideas of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx. Such areas and ideas as well and may systematically be pointed out and placed for better and thorough understanding of the problem and finding out the means of solutions as the given below:

After thorough analysis of the remarks of Vivekananda it may logically be interpreted that there has been many similarities with the perceptions and views of Marx. In a sense, the views of Vivekananda and Marx have close resemblance in many cases. As for example, Vivekananda used the term 'man' to mean the human being in general, i.e. both the sexes. He used the term in broad perspective which included both male and female of the human being. Likewise, Marx used the term 'people' in a more general way. This term was used to mean both male and female of the human being. For the universal good of man and people both Vivekananda and Marx thought and fought in two different ways. Vivekananda's views regarding life, society, culture, civilization, education, religion, etc. were very wide extensive. He used these terms in broader perspectives of human life without the influence of narrow dogmatism. Marx was also free from such narrow interpretation of the concepts of life, society, history, culture, civilization, education, religion etc. In the views of Marx and Vivekananda many similarities, from the point of view of common good, have been

noticed. Both these personalities, in two different times and situations, in different ways thought and worked for the common good of men and people without any narrow outlook.

The views and approaches of Marx and Vivekananda for solving the problems of human life, society, culture, education, and civilization are similar from the point of view of the targeted group. Both Marx and Vivekananda always thought and worked for the universal good of man and society of the human beings. With two different principles and philosophies, Marx and Vivekananda thought and worked for the good of people and man in general without any specific and narrow outlook.

Marx thought and worked for a society without any class distinction. Vivekananda also thought and worked for the good of whole human race without mentioning about caste and other distinctions. Gandhi favoured a society free from artificial social classification among various groups of people living together in the society.

Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx, had strong faith in the worship of the poor, downtrodden and the proletariat to accomplish the religious duties of life. For Vivekananda religion originated in fearlessness, in man's bold attempt to go beyond the limitations of nature. On the otherhand, for Marx religion originated in 'fear' and 'it is the opium of the people.' For Gandhi too, religion is the sum total of the activities of life of men and women. Gandhi treated religion as the best means to serve the humanity. For him service to men and women is the service to God.

Vivekananda believed in God or the eternal power. But Marx did not mention about God or eternal power. Like Vivekananda, Gandhi had also

great faith in God or eternal power. Therefore, the approach of realising truth or establishing reality, Vivekananda and Gandhi accepted the same principles. In this respect, Marxian approach was totally different. He wanted to make men and women free from all dominations by a violent means. Gandhi and Vivekananda accepted non-violence and peace as the means for the common good of men, women and the society. Thus, for the emancipation of the women all these three personalities of the world expressed very positive views. In brief, they wholeheartedly supported the emancipation movement of the society for the common good of the poor, downtrodden and the proletariat.

Gandhi used the term 'Daridranarayan' to mean the sufferer class of people. He fought for the economic liberty of the said class. Marx also fought for the liberty of the poor and downtrodden. He used the term proletariat to mean the poor or downtrodden. Gandhi's way and approach was non-violent whereas Marxian way and approach was violent. But their targeted group was anyway same, i.e. the sufferers or the downtrodden or the proletariat. In brief the basic difference, we do notice in the approaches of Gandhi and Marx is this that one is minus violence and the other is plus violence. Marxism and Gandhism are complementary to each other in realising the problems of human life, society and the crisis of civilization and showing the way of solution to all the problems. The simple difference is observed only in the approach where Gandhism is minus violence but Marxism is plus violence.

Both Vivekananda and Gandhi believed in spiritual power of men and women for the realisation of the truth and establishment of reality. Whereas

Marx never believed in spiritual power as the means for the achievement of freedom or liberty of the workers. All these three social thinkers, philosophers and political workers fought for the empowerment and emancipation of men, women and people to help them to get rid of all social evils and injustices.

Vivekananda and Gandhi believed in religion as the means for the spread of human values, i.e. spiritual, social, economical, cultural and political as well. But Marx did not believe in religion as the means for the spread and establishment of values of life in society.

Vivekananda and Gandhi, more or less touched all the branches, i.e. culture, religion, education, history, politics, economics etc. for the establishment of human values and for achieving freedom. Whereas Marx only touched the economic perspective. Marx believed that economic liberty is the strongest means to help the proletariat for achieving liberty. Marx fought for the economic empowerment of the class of people on whom the production process had to rely.

Both Vivekananda and Gandhi have sometimes specified the need of women empowerment and emancipation for a just and progressive society. Whereas Marx did not specify any special package for women to fight for a liberal society. In a more extensive way Marx included everything in the term people and he prepared his plan of action for the great cause of establishing classless society for the establishment of Communism.

To overcome the problem of any socio-political, economical cultural and religious discrimination, education should be treated as the remedy. Both Vivekananda and Gandhi treated education as one of the strongest

means to overcome the problem of any kind of discrimination that prevailed in society. In this point Marxian Views have also resemblance with the views of Vivekananda and Gandhi.

As the way to fight for the highest good, Vivekananda used and prescribed the intellectual and spiritual power. Gandhi used and prescribed non-violence and truth for achieving the worth for humanity. In respect of service to humanity, Gandhi is in perfect agreement with the views of Vivekananda. In this respect, we find similarity between Vivekananda and Gandhi. But Marx did not believe in spirituality as the means for achieving good for the mankind. He used and prescribed violent movement and organised application of forces for the good of the sufferers, i.e. the proletariat. He always thought and fought for the service of the proletariat. Instead of spirituality or non-violence Marx favoured economic liberty and treated this as the way of getting relief from all injustices and discrimination as well. Thus, the motto of life and works of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx has close resemblance. Simply the philosophy and the way of service of them were different.

Vivekananda felt the need of chastity for the enhancement of spiritual power. As the means of acquiring the power to control over self, Vivekananda prescribed continence as the means. Gandhi did not mention chastity, i.e. the state of being sexually pure (especially of young women) as the means of acquiring spiritual power. Instead of this, he favoured truth and prescribed it as the way of achieving common good. Marx neither prescribed and mentioned about chastity or spiritual power nor he mentioned about truth as the way of achieving good for self and for

common good. Instead of this he believed in organised and accumulated power and unity of the proletariat to fight and establish human rights and achieve common good.

Vivekananda strongly voiced for the empowerment of all sections of people. He believed in spiritual power, intellectual calibre, continence, Brahmachary and Shradda as the means of empowering and emancipating both men and women. For Vivekananda continence is the way of achieving intellectual and spiritual power. Brahmacharya is the way of achieving chastity in thought, word and deed. Shraddha is the way of achieving self good and having the solutions of all the problems we do face. Shraddha reawakens everybody and helps to find out the ways of targeted growth. Vivekananda believed in physical power, i.e. sound health of the individuals for the achievement of all the set missions of life and progress of the country. Like Vivekananda Gandhi also believed in physical might. To fight with the mighty English and to win a victory over them, for Gandhi sound health was one of the most important points that we had to well care of. For this, for the time being he even used to take meat which he left later on. Thus, both Vivekananda and Gandhi held the same views regarding the need of sound health for men and women for self and common progress and good as well.

Vivekananda believed in sufferings and painful experiences as the most important ingredients of human character. Education, which has been acquired with the help of sufferings and experiences, makes, men and women confident and help to form strong character. Like Vivekananda Gandhi also believed in the unfoldment of the inner potentialities of men and women with

the help of education. Thus, in this point, both Vivekananda and Gandhi held similar views. Education which depends on life experiences, particularly on miseries can help every man, woman and the downtrodden to find out the ways to get rid of all the suppression and domination of life. It is the means of empowering everybody to overcome all the maladies of life which in other words is the means of emancipation.

Vivekananda treated education or knowledge as the means of overcoming all the problems of life of men and women. Like Vivekananda Gandhi also accepted education as the vital force for the solution of the problems, both men and women have been facing. Marx, on the otherhand prescribed revolution as the means for the solution of the problems that people have been facing.

Vivekanand treated will power as almighty whereas Gandhi treated truth as God or almighty. Will power and truth are the means of establishing justice in society. We can be more powerful if we have strong will power and inclination towards truth. Marx believed in organised force and unity of and among the proletariat for establishing justice in society.

Vivekananda emphasised on the formation and building of strong character to overcome all the evils that prevail in society. Self-realisation, according to him was the best means for the understanding of mistake of a person. The understanding of the mistakes of life is the only way for the formation of strong character. Gandhi also held the similar views and emphasised on the development of the spiritual aspects of man's personality. Marx was not so open regarding the purity of self. He emphasised on self belief and determination to overcome all the odds of life and society.

Vivekananda believed in personality as the most dominating force in impressing man and woman. He believed in spiritual power in bringing changes towards life and society. Like Vivekananda, Gandhi also believed in total development of man, i.e. body, mind and the spirit for bringing changes towards life, society, culture and civilization. Marx, on the otherhand held a different views. He did not believe in spirituality. He believed in physical power to revolt against all injustices to establish justice. His views towards life, education, society, economic liberty culture etc. totally depended on his philosophy of materialism. He had strong belief in the physical world. But Vivekananda never believed in such world separately. For him there is no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. What is, is one. Thus for Marx as well as the Marxists matter is very important; but for Gandhi spirit is more important than the matter.

Vivekananda believed in the rapid flow of growth, which, according to him can be achieved by the hastening. Like William Shakespear Vivekananda believed that man and woman make their own fate and the fate of the races. Fate does not make men, women and the future of the races. As a means of hastening the growth Vivekananda prescribed perfection in large scale. Like Vivekananda, Gandhi also believed in rapid growth for the solution of all the problems of life and society. With truth and non-violence Gandhi prescribed trusteeship for the welfare and sarvodaya of all. For this, he favoured the development of the spirit of swadesi, i.e. self-reliance. Like Vivekananda and Gandhi, Marx also believed in the rapid growth. For this, as the means, he prescribed revolution. Instead of perfection and trusteeship Marx favoured violent revolution for change in grand scale.

Marx and the Marxists wanted expropriation of the private properties for the benefit of all. Gandhi, in a sense supported the process of liquidation of private properties as like as Marx for the equal development of all. Gandhi propounded the theory of Trusteeship where the question of private property is rejected. Thus, in this point the ideology of Gandhi and Marx has similarity.

In the views of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx the special needs of emancipation of the women from all bindings concerning to the rights and human dignities have well been focused. Vivekananda and Gandhi in the east and Karl Marx in the west added new dimensions with their very liberal and radical views and standpoints. In the words of Vivekananda, 'The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita and that is the only way. Sita is unique. There she always will be, this glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience and all sufferings. She who suffered that life of suffering without murmur, she the ever chaste and ever pure, she the idol of the people, our national God she must always remain.'² He further opined, 'It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same self is present in all beings. Writing down Smritis etc. and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines. In the period of degradation, when the priests made the other castes incompetent to study the Vedas they deprived the women also of all their rights.'³

Vivekananda noticed the sufferings of the womenfolk in domestic, social and academic spheres of life and compared the sufferings with the

chaste Sita. He was in favour of emancipation of the womenfolk from all sufferings and believed that Sita should be treated as the idol of the people and as our national God. In his opinion 'all nations have attained the greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.'⁴ 'The real shakti worshipper is he who knows that God is the omnipresent force in the Universe and sees in women the manifestation of that force. In America men look upon their women in this light and treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. The principal reason why our race has so degenerated is that we had no respect for these living images of shakti.'⁵

Gandhi strongly felt the need of emancipation of women and regarded education as the strongest weapon of its means. Like Plato, Gandhi had also great faith in the worth and intellectual calibre of the womenfolk. Gandhiji envisaged an Indian society which would be absolutely free from exploitation of one by another, and where all people would willingly perform their allotted work. He opined that in such a set-up work would be respected and dignity of labour would be upheld and raised.

Gandhi indicated the way to reach the goal of women's emancipation and expressed, a passion to serve womenkind 'I hold radical views about emancipation of women from their fetters, which they mistake for adornment. If God wills it, I hope one day to place some of my conclusions before the public when the researches are completed. My experience has confirmed me in that real advancement of women can come only by and through their own efforts.'⁶

To explain the role of husband Gandhi opined, 'If I were born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his play thing. I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I resorted to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband.'⁷

He further said, 'of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity to me, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering humility, faith and knowledge.'⁸

Gandhi had some specific views regarding the position of women in socio-cultural life. Thorough analysis of Gandhian perceptions help us to conclude that in the early part of life his views regarding the position of women was same as the ordinary persons of the society. In a sense Gandhi's views regarding women's socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural positions resembled with the views of any ordinary Indian citizens.

After twenty years of age as soon as Gandhi realised the value of Ahimsa and the glory of Brahmacharya, he started to realise his foolishness regarding his views dominated by the instinctive tendencies and became a great fighter for women's freedom from all injustices with rational outlook and views. In the words of Gandhi, because of men's lust women have very worstly been victimised. This has been added with diversity of sufferings because of the infinite love, the inborn psychological nature of women and their non-violent character.

Like Vivekananda and Gandhi Marx always thought and fought for the emancipation of the proletariat from all injustices. He with his friend Engels have very nicely expressed their views in the Manifesto of the Communist Party. They are of the opinion that 'of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The 'dangerous class', the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution, its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property, his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeoisie family relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has

stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.’⁹ Thus Marx prescribed communism and the abolition of the ownership of private properties for the emancipation of every human individual from all socio-political injustices.

As the great proletarian theoretician and revolutionary, founder of dialectical and historical materialism and scientific communism, Marx was against the enslavement of any people. He was against the bourgeois family form which was the family system of the ruling class where women did not enjoy their legitimate human rights. According to Marxism the existence of private property encourages male domination over the womenfolk. So he was in favour of socialist society which basically eradicates private property and class divisions. In such a social system woman’s primary identity is deprived out of her contribution to the society. Marx was against the oppression of the people in general. His philosophy was to liberate people, i.e. men and women from total socio-political domination. In Marx’s views the tendency of domination was encouraged by the artificially created social customs and laws of the society which favoured private property. Thus with the help of the establishment of socialism and communism Marx wanted to liberate men and women from all oppressions.

Gandhi also expressed similar views. According to him with socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural factors, Hindu culture is more or less responsible for the sufferings of the women. It is Hindu culture which has formulated a set of socio-cultural values that has made woman community inferior than their male counterparts.

The set of values of Hindu culture has lowered the positions of women and empowered and prompted the malefolk to exercise their authority over the women which again sometimes encourage them to lower their status to the level of animal.

Gandhi was in favour of equal rights of men and women. He accepted the difference between men and women from biological structure and to some extent psychological dispositions. But Gandhi was against the differences between men and women from socio-cultural, socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious aspects.

In a sense all the views of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx have more or less resemblance and they all were in support of emancipation of women from all the social evils. According to them nature has differentiated the psycho-physical qualities and properties of men and women. Except the differences determined by the natural laws, men and women are equal in all respects. The vicious customs of the society has discriminated women in a greater way. Men, the propagator of the vicious customs, are mainly responsible because of the slower pace of change in socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-religious outlooks. Once these are changed women will be emancipated which will change the fortune of human society as a whole.

Thus on the basis of the present study certain implications and conclusions have been drawn. Some of the important among such implications are :

* The empowerment of women has the urgent need for the emancipation of the women community. All over the world more or less women are victimised with the help of socio-cultural, socio-religious,

socio-political, socio-economic customs, traditions, bindings, rituals, laws, principles, etc. For the emancipation of women everybody should fight unitedly to help the women to lead free and just life without any discrimination. For this there is the need of change in attitude and the philosophy of life of everybody. Everybody should realise the value of life.

*For the emancipation of the women there is the need of the provision of mass education in all parts of the society. Women are to be encouraged to avail the opportunities of education so as to help them to realise the values of their lives. Education is the most powerful means of social change. Thus for the change of the social position of the women provision of education for all should be made. Education helps to realise the value of life. Once the value of life is well realised the process of emancipation becomes very easier.

*Self dependence is one of the strongest means to lead life in peace. To overcome the material problem of life women are to take active part in the process of production in an orderly manner. Without the satisfaction of the material needs men and women can not lead life peacefully. Therefore, for the emancipation of the women work opportunities for every women should be made available in an orderly manner. To lead life in a democratic way women are to be encouraged to take active part in the process of economic change in the society.

* Society should always care for the dignity of life of all. There should not be any gender discrimination in the social setting. Social attitude towards the women should be very positive. Society should always care for the legitimate rights of all without any gender discrimination. For this the philosophy of life should be pragmatic.

References

1. Sing, Sabita. (2001). *Empowerment of women: Miles to Go* (ed.). New Delhi: International Centre of Gandhian Studies and Research, Gandhian Samiti and Darsn Samiti,p.18.
2. C.W.S. Vol.III, p.255.
- 3.C.W.S. Vol. VII, p. 214.
4. C.W.S. Vol. VII, p.215.
5. C.W.S. Vol, V, p.264.
6. Quoted by Aloo J Dastur.(1990). *Gandhi's Contribution to Emancipation of Women. Popular Prakasan.*
7. Young India. 8-12-1927.
8. Young India, 15-9-1921.
9. Manifesto Of the Communist Party. p.47.