



## PREFACE

All over the world the issues related to women have drawn the attention of the social scientists, human rights activists, researchers, politicians, academicians and academics. At the present time all issues related to women have come to the forefront in every part of the globe. Social scientists, philosophers, thinkers, and media persons have been raising their voices for the empowerment and emancipation of the womenfolk. Experts are of the opinion that to understand the cultural upliftment and the excellence of human relationship of the global society women issues are to be well counted and thoroughly be checked. Gender issues are very sensitive issues which help to know the progress of a society from various dimensions. Gender has always been shaping the foundation of social life and the legal as well as cultural landscapes of the societies. In terms of positions, rights, power and influence women of the global social order in general and in some developing and underdeveloped countries of the world, though numerically more or less equal, are the most unfortunate and minority group.

In most of the societies and countries in today's world women have been playing various roles for the progress of the societies from all directions. Women have been shouldering every possible responsibilities like their male counterparts. The physical differences that nature has

endowed can not be the factor to show discriminatory feelings and attitude towards the women. The progress of a country can not be made if half of its total population is deprived of their basic human rights. Therefore, the question of empowerment and emancipation of the women has become the most crucial issue at the present juncture of globalization.

✓ Empowerment means giving power or imparting authority to accomplish something. Women empowerment means giving power or imparting authority to the women folk to accomplish various activities of life without any interference. It means the power to enjoy life in an orderly manner without any unexpected harassment and outside or illegal curtailment of rights to lead peaceful and democratic life.

✓ The term emancipation is more philosophical than the term empowerment. It means freedom, especially from legal, political or social restrictions. Emancipation means freedom from any illegal and inhuman bondage because of simple differences from physical, mental and spiritual aspects and socio-cultural, socio-religious, socio-economic power and positions. Emancipation of women, thus means freedom of women from the socio-cultural, socio-political, socio-religious, ethical, moral and spiritual bondages. This also emphasises on the equal socio-cultural status for all without any gender discrimination.

✓ The movement to achieve the targeted goal of empowerment and emancipation of women from all injustices and bondages are fairly recent western phenomenon. Against the inequalities such as gender

oppression, domination, violence and socio-political suppression, a historic beginning of protest was made at Seneca Falls, New York, which formally made the women of the globe aware to fight for their own rights. Thus, the goals of feminist movements all over the world became very clear and they started to move in their own tracks. The question of gender equalisation, which refers to both equality in numbers and in relative power of the status and roles of the women in societies has become very urgent issue in the global society.

✓ The issue related to women emancipation has a long history. More or less in every nook and corner of human society the question of equal power and position has been the basic issue of leading life peacefully. Both in the West and the East the issue, concerning to the positions and rights of women has been drawing the attention of the social scientists, thinkers and philosophers. In ancient India, the Indian women occupied a very strong and just social position. However, the decline of Indian women's social status began with the arrival of foreign invaders. But with the emergence of the spirit of Indian nationalism a new trend of thinking for the revival of the original socio-political positions of women in Indian society started to grow.

In this new development Vivekananda and Gandhi in the East and Karl Marx in the West added new dimensions with their very liberal and radical standpoints. Thus, the study - **Women Emancipation : A study of Vivekananda, Marx and Gandhi** has been treated as the most urgent need to know in details the concepts and ideas that are manifested in the

philosophical ideas of Vivekananda, Marx and Gandhi. In the words of Vivekananda, "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 the 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."

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. Gandhi 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 setup work would be respected and the dignity of labour would be upheld and raised.

Karl Marx who was the great proletarian theoretician and revolutionary, founder of dialectical and historical materialism and Scientific Communism was against the enslavement of any people. Thus, Vivekananda, Gandhi and Marx was in favour of women emancipation for the progress of human society, for the excellence of culture and advancement of civilization of the human race. To study the whole problem in details it has been chapterised in an orderly manner.

Thus, the present work has been divided into eight chapters. **The First**

**Chapter** is the introductory part of the study and it offers a bird's eye view on the concept of women emancipation, life sketch of Vivekananda, Marx and Gandhi. Hence this chapter is the backbone of the whole work. **The Second Chapter** contains the concept of Women Emancipation from Indian and Western perspectives. **Chapter Third** is on Women and Culture, **Chapter Fourth** is on Women and Education, **Chapter Fifth** is on Women and Religion, **Chapter Sixth** is on Women and Social change, **Chapter Seventh** is on Women and Politics, and **Chapter Eight** is the Concluding part of the study.

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