

GANDHI'S NOTION TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Ishpreet Kaur Saini*

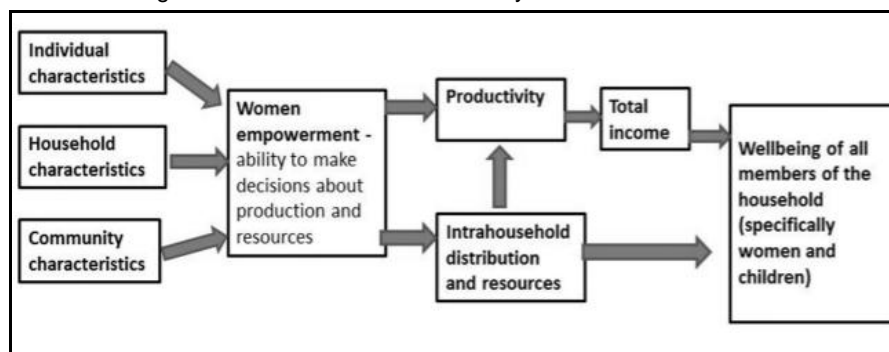
ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is an important concern with respect to the growth of the Society as well as the country. Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that empowering, encouraging and involving women in every field is one of the major needs of the country. Gandhiji felt the inner strength of the women and want the women to recognise the same. The objective of the paper is to understand the viewpoint of the Gandhi ji in empowering women and the need of women empowerment in the country. The methodology of the study is that it is a conceptual paper to conceptualize the concept of women empowerment in the Gandhian era. As per Gandhi beliefs human beings are the formation of God with the similar mental capabilities of both men and women and therefore they deserve equal rights. It can be said that Mahatma Gandhi is a boon companion for women in India as well as in world. A women herself is a combination of power or strength to build, encourage or modify. The participation of women in national movement was encouraged by Gandhi ji as it was the need of the hour. Gandhiji believed that women are not the weak section of the Society if talking about the strength then women are superior to men in right minded strength.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Gandhian Era, Mental Capabilities, National Movement.

Introduction

Women once were considered the weaker section of the Society which led to the evolution of empowering women. women empowerment basically refers to the ability of woman to see their worth, develop their self esteem, be independent, work towards their development build their self confidence, manage risk and overcome it, work towards their economic development and welfare. Mohandas karamchand Gandhi popularly known as Gandhi was not only a freedom fighter but also a great leader of social reforms. The social thoughts, views and devotion of Gandhi ji led to the importance of the magnification of the position of women in India. Mahatma Gandhi is really a good scorer if ranked for the concern he had for the women in society. Gandhiji was the one who helped women to build their self esteem. Gandhi ji also contributed towards spreading the awareness to large number about the requirement of enhancing the level of women in the Society.



Source: What factors explain women's empowerment? Decision-making among small-scale farmers in Uganda by Mila Sell, Nicholas Minot

The above diagram represents the conceptual framework of women empowerment. The individual, household and community characteristics are the components of women empowerment which further leads to productivity and Intrahousehold distribution and resources which generates income and help in welfare of the family and society.

Review of Literature

Dr.Manisha Bhattacharyya (2016); This is a study regarding the economic development of women who are involved in Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (MGNREGA) in the goal para district, Assam. It concluded that economic development is the backbone of the women empowerment that would lead to training, employment and generation of income as well by making women self reliant and economically independent.

Shail Mishra (2017); women empowerment is an important tool that has to be worked on at national as well as international level. Having a believe on government activities for accomplishing this objective would not be sufficient. society needs to change itself to make an environment in which their won't be any discrimination and women would be able to feel their strength and grow with having a feeling of equality.

Akhilesh Kumar (2003); There was a disclosure that apart from the liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation there was also a social revolution wherein there was a change in the mindset of the Society and a movement towards equality.

Vipin Kumar Singhal (2012); women empowerment in build up society is same as other structure where many women are not involved in it, especially in the framework of decision making. It is really difficult for women to participate in the public domain due to cultural differences, low literacy rates and other problems.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to understand the Gandhi's view in empowering women and the need of the women empowerment in the country.

Methodology

This paper is a conceptual research paper to conceptualize the viewpoint of Mahatma Gandhi in relation to empowering women in India.

Analysis

Mahatma Gandhi was not only a freedom fighter but also had some very relevant social thoughts, views, beliefs that led to the importance of the women and increasing the status of women not only in society, in India but all around the globe. There is a markable difference between the thoughts of Gandhi and other social reformers for women.

According to Mahatma Gandhi the laws, rules and regulations that were framed by Society suppressed the women and in framing these women were not involved. He believed that the rules and regulations of the Society must be framed by the mutual understanding and cooperation with consulting both men and women. Women were taught to think in a way society wished i.e as a labour of men. Women slowly realised their individuality and status in the Society and worked equally with men.

According to Gandhiji women as wives must not be considered merely as toys of satisfaction but as an esteem companion for life. The women who were unable to study before the marriage must be provided education by the husbands. The social and legal status of women is not good and it calls for a good change.

Even in the Gandhian era; the participation of women in the national movement was witnessed in a large scale. While there was a struggle for country's freedom, women worked for their own freedom and achieved it to an extent that was hardly believable.

Gandhi had a believe that the real self governance won't be achieved by India until the women are encouraged and uplifted therefore the issues faced by the women cannot be ignored in strategizing the country's freedom. With this thought he involved women in the national movement.

He had a great belief in the inner strength of the women. Here cognised that women are filled with the quality of love, non-violence, forgiveness and sacrifice. Therefore Gandhi wanted that women must recognise their inner goodness and empower themselves against the superiority of men and participate in national movement as well.

Gandhi was also influenced by women in his life. His mother (Putlibai) influenced his life and left an impression of holiness and spirituality. She was a spiritual person. She even not had the meals of the day without praying.

Gandhi's wife (Kasturba) was an independent woman. They got married at an early age and still she was very active and supportive partner. Gandhi said that his wife opened his eyes for his mission. He learned a lot from her and even much more from his mother.

According to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, there are three crucial elements which are necessary for the promotion of women empowerment these are education, employment and change in social structure. All these three elements are interdependent and equally important.

Requisites of Women Empowerment

- Discrimination and gender difference cannot be eliminated from society without women empowerment.
- To enjoy security and safety in life women must be empowered.
- Women empowerment leads to the development of a environment which is safe for women's working.
- Empowerment is a strong device against ill treatment and pressure faced by women.
- It also provides a legal security for women.
- In order to develop their own identity women must be empowered.
- Women hold a major portion and are a wide section so they must be employed and empowered or else the economy will be affected globally.
- If given equal opportunities to work women will construct a growing society.

Aids of Women Empowerment

- Women will be able to lead their life on their own with nobility and liberty.
- It adds on to their self respect and self assurance.
- They can develop their separate identity of their own.
- With the help of women empowerment they will be able to acquire reverent status in the Society.
- It helps women in their economic development and makes them financially independent.
- Women will be able to contribute to their best towards the welfare of the Society.
- Women empowerment makes women capable of adding on their contribution towards the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.
- They will be able to access the resources of the country equally.

Conclusion

Human beings are the formation of God. Men and women have similar mental capabilities and therefore they deserve equal rights. We can say that Mahatma Gandhi can be observed as a boon companion for the women in India as well as in the world. The Gandhi's principle of Non-violence must be adopted in every family and society which will help in no discrimination and equality in India and here lies the Gandhian views and thoughts. Mahatma Gandhi believed that there is no instance when a woman would feel inferior or minor than men.

Suggestions

- Importance to literacy in the women section must be realised and worked upon. Education to women is necessary as it will go to generations.
- Women must be encouraged to work and go for their economic development. They must receive the support and positivity in this aspect from the family as well as society.
- It is the need of the hour to spread awareness about the health maintenance and health issues faced by the women. It is important to encourage and help women to work towards their health.
- Women must have proper knowledge about the rights available and ways and situations to access these.

References

- ~ What factors explain women's empowerment? Decision-making among small-scale farmers in Uganda by Mila Sell, Nicholas Minot
- ~ Drawing a Link—Women's Empowerment and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A Study Conducted in the Goalpara District, Assam Dr Manisha Bhattacharyya
- ~ M. K. Gandhi: Village Swaraj; Navjivan publishing House, Ahmedabad
- ~ R. P. Mishra: Rediscovering Gandhi; Volume I: Hind Swaraj-Gandhi's Challenges to modern Civilization; Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi
- ~ J. C. Kumrappa: Economy of Permanance; Sarva Seva Sangha Prakashan, Rajghat; Sixth Edition 1997
- ~ https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/women_empowerment.htm
- ~ <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-articles/gandhiji-and-empowerment-of-women.php>
- ~ <https://www.mapsofindia.com/personalities/gandhi/gandhi-and-women.html>.

