

Women and Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy

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Abstract : Swami Vivekananda played a very significant role in preparing the ground for the Politics of Independence and enriching the country's neo-political ideology through his re-interpretation of Vedanta especially the Hindu religion he managed to uplift the mindset of Indians. He stirred up the soul of India, awakening of which necessarily formed a part of the social programme. However, the contribution of Swami Vivekananda on the issue of Women is an remarkable and relevant for all times to come as swamji has focused on global issue- the relentless discrimination against women, therefore keeping in mind the present day scenario of women, There is a need for for present generation to rethink, re-read, re-evaluate and adopt and practice the ideology on women issues as presented by swami ji. Thus this paper seeks to examine and understand immortal views of swami ji and apply it in 21st century to ensure dignity and respect of a women in India and across the globe with ever inspiring philosophy of swami Vivekananda

Keywords : Discrimination , Gender, Humanity Justice , Vedanta

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Introduction

It is the global consciousness of the relentless discrimination against women and the Consequences of the blatant unfairness and injustice that have focused global attention on gender justice and attempts to find local and global ways to redress it. Women across the global and generally in India suffer from a double jeopardy. Under an iniquitous and unequal socio-economic order, which promotes and sacrifices explanation concomitant attribute of this irrational and unethical order, women, suffer greater subordination and deprivation both at home and in society. Women constitute nearly half of the society and it is unrealistic to think about gender justice without providing the equal rights and status to women in society. In the 21st century, women continue to be vulnerable section of society. Gender crimes, dowry deaths, domestic violence, female feticides and honor killings have exposed the hollowness of constitutional, legal social and political institutions. Our law making, law enforcing and even judiciary have failed to restrain the domestic violence, emotional abuse, acid attack, dowry deaths, rape, sexual assault ever teasing and sexual harassment at work places, molestation, stalking, bride, burning, female genital mutilation, human trafficking, sexual silvery, kidnapping and abduction of women. It seems that constitutional protection proves unreliable and most of the gender equality has become statutory. Gender such a scenario it would be difficult for India to justify its image of rising Asians power and having a potential to be a future super power. Keeping in mind the present scenario of women, there is a need for present generation to re-read, re-evaluate, re-think and adopt all the means as well as practices which has been gifted to us by our enlighten saints and sages ,one of them is swami Vivekananda. His ever inspiring philosophy on variety of subject is not only thought provoking but realistic too. His philosophy and vision of women is of immense importance to mankind and relevant for all times.

Vivekananda on Women

Vivekananda is known as a political thinker and a social reformer, he as an embodiment of patriotism, human dignity and self-relevance, worked for the wellbeing of the masses in general and women in particular. His philosophical understanding of women in the backdrop of social-cultural, religion- political[1] circumstances with that of the western ones that helped provide a holistic approach towards the question of women of the East[2] Swami Vivekananda family environment left a district impression in his means on issues of women, actually Swami Ji was deeply influenced by his mother Bhuvanshwari Devi, who imprinted

eternal values of healthy living[3] according to Vivekananda, society plays a very significant role in shaping a human mind which is well expressed through religion whereby, 'the Hindu must not give up his religion but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow' [4] one may note Swami Vivekananda's overall impression of women, "women is a replica of Divine mother, she is held in the highest esteem as the shakti, women as mother is regarded as the embodiment of a loving and living God[5] according to Swami Ji the central idea of Hindu philosophy is that of absolute ;that is the background of the universe. "this absolute being, of whom we can predicate nothing, has its power spoken of as she-that is, the real personal God in India is she"[6] as far as historical background of women in India is concerned, swami Ji observed, "the Aryan and Semitic ideals of women have always been diametrically opposed. Amongst the Semites the presence of women is considered dangerous to devotion, and she may not perform any religions functions (but) according to the Aryan a man cannot perform a religions action without a wife" [7] Swami in his writing highlighted those fractions of Hindu cult which placed the women on high pedestal and wrote about an era when women shared equality in all the aspects as enjoyed by men.

Keeping in mind the socio-religions conditions of women in his times he deliberately re-created the principles defining Hinduism by creating blind of three distinct traditions viz. the orthodox principles of Hinduism, incorporated in the earliest Hindu religion texts called Vedas, he was proud to note that , "No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the poor and the law in such a fashion as Hinduism [8] Being aware of the practices of discrimination between men and women in the Indian society swami Vivekananda also cautioned that, "we should not allow the sudden influx of European criticism and our consequent sense of contrast to make us acquiesce too readily on this notion of the inequality of our women circumstance have forced upon us, for many centuries, the women's need of protection. This and not her inferiority is the true reading of our customs" [9] more over, "We should not think we are men and women, but only that we are human beings, born to cherish and to help one another [10] Swami Lakshmidharnanda of the Ramkrishna Mission Vidyapith elaborated on swami Ji is views on women in one of the seminar organized by history department of the Kamhi Mamunivar center in Pondicherry in Jan,2013,Swami Lakshmidharmnanda said "Vivekananda was not interested in addressing issue like widow's remarriage or the age when the girls can be married off nor did he like men interfering their affairs he categorically asserted that it is

wrong, a thousand time wrong, if any man dare say, “ I will work for the salvation of this women or child” [11] In fact swami Vivekananda wanted women to have full freedom to understand their problems and to propose solution for their own betterment.

History is a proof that there was no constant social status of women across the global, social status which is more or the less in and civil society in general is always in cyclic order as in 21st century position and status of women is being uplifted and has improved compared to the previous century, the present century on efforts are being made to uplift and improve sound status of women can take help from Swami ji philosophy on women, And it is equality important to enhanced the social status of women not only in India but globally as swami ji has rightly observed, “ there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.

Conclusion

The idea of Humanity is incomplete without gender justice, Humanity is supposed to be equitable redistribution of all the emotions particularly equality, love and respect. Any civilization cannot claim to be civilized unless and until it gets itself rid of the deep rooted gender inequalities and gender bias in a society. Every civil society is expected to create the favorable socio-economic environment wherein women can have a respectable place in society, swami ji teachings and discourses not only highlights the positive aspects of women but he has re-introduced the comprehensive description of a women hood which is indeed a remarkable contribution of Swami jee as far as the role of women in society is concerned. Swami Vivekananda’ quote on women,” the best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women”. This thought is universal and is will be relevant for all times to come. There is another equally thought provoking quote of swami ji in the similar context e.g. “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved” swami ji has way clearly and categorically stated about importance of women in a civilised society and its fear the progress of a nation.

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