

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In any society, the individual is the real and unique center of life. Each individual may have unique nature. But all individuals in the society are having inseparable relationship with one another. In this regard by nature both man and woman have inseparable relation with each other. They can't lead their lives comfortably alone. Both of them are complementary to each other. The contemporary world is experiencing rapid changes in all fields. The Indian society is also undergoing metamorphosis due to these influences. One of the conspicuous features in the 20th century is: empowerment of women in various professions. The advancement of science and technology lead to the conspicuous changes in the field of industrialization, urbanization, higher education and new value system. The changes initiated during last two centuries have uplifted the position of women. Of late Women's empowerment became the center of attention. Presently the trend has been changed from emancipation to empowerment which is a multidimensional process and permits them to become conscious of about their complete identity and power in all fields of life. It is made up of substantial explosion to knowledge and resources, larger freedom in decision making sanction them to have significant skills to plan their lives. Many restrictions exploit them through customs, beliefs and practice.

One of the vital tools for empowerment of women is the participation in political activities and administrative roles together with tracking the standard of political performance are too essential for the sustainable economic and social developments. Hence "The word women's empowerment essentially means that, women have the power or capacity to regulate their day-to-day lives in the social, political and economic terms – a power which enables them to move from the periphery to the center stage."¹ Women's empowerment provides advantages to the society like productive mainstream one half of

¹ R. L. Panigrahy and Dasarathi Bhuyan, *Women Empowerment*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2006, p.18.

a nation's population. "Women by their very nature are better and more effective agents for social change than man."²

In the philosophical area of research the topic selection has two ways: the thinker based and concept based. The researcher selected the topic of thinker and concept based subject. Therefore in choosing topic, researcher made every effort to understand Gandhi and his philosophy of non –violence and the concept of women as he honestly considered that devoid of the upliftment and consequent spark off boundless gathering together of women the real swaraj won't be acquired. Through his continuous hard work for empowering women lead to the light for their participation in the nationalist movement and help to elevate the spirit of dignity, self respect, social equality and individual freedom to women.

Now a days the world is becoming an asylum where people are suffering with numerous social evils and anarchy that exists in the society and particularly the violence against women. In the recent past plenty of research has been done on the issue of violence against women. It clearly focuses on the unleashing of violence against women in the modern Indian context. Our constitution itself has guaranteed equality to all, irrespective of gender and it is disgusting that still violence against women is increasing. The researcher focuses on this point and has made an attempt to analyze the status of women in the contemporary world, keeping Gandhi and his various concepts as the background for the study. Mahatma Gandhi worked for gender equality and was successful in bringing positive change in the lives of many women of his time. Hence in the present thesis, the researcher would like to study how Gandhi's concept of non-violence is influential and effective in bringing women's empowerment. He has worked not only for the upliftment of society but also put more efforts for the upliftment of women. One can't ever ignore the fact that for breaking the chains of injustice and restrictions in India many great leaders have sacrificed their lives. Among them a few opted the path of violence to achieve their goal. But Gandhi followed the theories of non-violence, non-cooperation and civil disobedience to liberate India. He has also adopted

² Barati Thakur, *Women in Gandhi's Mass Movements*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publishing House, 2006, p.220.

these techniques for women's empowerment. It throws light on the greater need for retaining peace today which has been destroyed by scientific developments that has prompted the mankind to shed non-violent mentality and to possess new destructive methods and weapons for security.

It is well known that, there had been a series of people who gave valuable contributions to religion and philosophy. The achievements of the Indians in the fields of Economics, Politics and Social Science are also very notable. There are many Indians who are great leaders and rulers of the world. Gandhi was also a world leader who prescribed *ahimsa* to the whole world. He was very well aware of the fact about the goal of human life and how it can be achieved. It is a great thing that, with the help of *ahimsa* he was able to defeat the Britishers from the nation and Indians can be proud to say it. He felt that all Indians are his flesh and blood. All his actions and experiments are appreciable. In fact one has to study the first lesson of *ahimsa* from the domestic school which implies that, by practicing non-violence in our daily life we will get the capacity to avoid abuses and at the same time it helps to keep order in each and every walk of life.

Needless to say, before Gandhi also social reformers raised their voice for women's emancipation. Indian Renaissance has been started by Raja Rammohan Roy (1774 - 1883), Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820 – 1990), Keshub Chandrasen (1838 – 1884), Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1827 - 1883), Swami Vivekanand (1863 - 1902), Gopal Krisan Gokhale (1866 - 1915) and so on. Raja Rammohan Roy was the topmost moral crusader of modern India and also the strong proponent of women's rights. He deeply criticized the dominating character of men towards women and totally against the unfavorable thought about women was inferior to men in intellect or in a moral sense. He was the founder of '*Brahmo samaj*', "Freedom and equality of women and widow remarriage were included in the teachings of *Brahmo samaj*."³ For strengthening the status of women he asked authoritatively for given the right of inheritance and property and in 1822, for the purpose of getting these he published a booklet in the name of "*Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Women*."⁴

³ Ibid., p.5.

⁴ Ibid.,

In the year of 1818 he get started to awaken public opinion for abolition of *sati pratha*, in addition to this he himself went to England for convincing the privacy council to eliminate this heinous custom . Because of his grate efforts, “Lord Bentinck abolished sati in Bengal by promulgating 17th Regulation Act on December 4, 1829.”⁵

Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar was the next notable figure who took his full effort for widow remarriage and female education and advice the British Government to pass legislation for making possible Widow Remarriage of Hindu women. By the fruits of his sincere efforts “The Government Act I of 1856 was passed legalizing the remarriage of Hindu Widows.”⁶ With the presence of Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar and the upper castes persons in Calcutta on December 7, 1856 celebrated the first lawful Hindu widow remarriage. “He was largely responsible for Government to found the first school- *Hindu Balika Vidyalaya* for the girls of high caste families in Calcutta in May 1849 and for establishing forty more girl schools in Bengal between 1855 and 1858.”⁷

Another noteworthy person struggled for women’s upliftment was Keshub Chandrasen. He also worked for women’s education, in this regard; he founded ‘Indian Reform Association’. In favor of advancement of women education he also found Victoria institution and Bharat Ashram. “His Courage and perseverance went a long way in the passage of Civil Marriage Act III of 1872, which brought the Hindu many good things such as abolition of child marriage(minimum age for marriage was fixed at 14), permission for widow remarriage and inter caste marriage and the penalizing of polygamy (applicable only at *Brahmo Samaj*).”⁸

An outstanding reformer Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the first reformer to have designated a comprehensive ideology of peaceful coexistence with a well defined place for women in it. He was the founder of *Arya Samaj*, he founded it with the intention of “giving Equal opportunities to all men and women, to acquire knowledge and to qualify themselves for whatever position in life they would like to fill. It admits the rights

⁵ Ibid.,

⁶ Ibid., p.6.

⁷ Ibid., p.7

⁸ Ibid., p.8

of every person to choose ones environment, fight for it and rise high in the scale of humanity as he or she would.”⁹ He actively worked for eliminating the evil customs of early marriage, purdah and the worst practices of dowry system. In addition to this, he gave petition to British Government for women’s rights to divorce and the right’s of widows in property. Swami Vivekananda was the founder of *Ramkrishna Mission* and he was also genuinely worked to fight against and also to wipeout superstition, illiteracy, purdah and early marriage and so on. He powerfully commended that “when at the time of limiting the age of consent, religious leaders argued that it would lead religion in to danger, as if religion consists in making a girl mother at the age of twelve or thirteen.”¹⁰ He strongly believed that, educated women will have the capacity to resolve their own problems and also he believed that if girls are educated, their freedom will be in their hands and they have the courage to choose or to raise up their good position. Hence he gave more importance to women’s education and actively worked for the same. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was also profoundly worried about women’s education. In a speech made before the education section of the Victorian era exhibition in 1897, he said, “...education is the only means of emancipating their (women’s) minds from the degrading thralldom of ideas inherited through a long past and such emancipation will not only restore our women to the honored position which they at one time occupied in India, but will also facilitate more.... The solution seems to be simple, but requires a delicate and patient handling.”¹¹ In fact throughout his life he worked for getting the rights of women education. From the above passages it can be understood that, the social reformers made relentless efforts to abolish the inhuman customs and social evils concerning women nevertheless the question of women’s political power or equality between the sexes was not on their agenda and none succeeded in breaking down discrimination to the extent that Gandhi did.

As far as human beings are concerned non-violence is the greatest force. Battering things in a violent manner is not the appropriate way to be followed by human beings. Each and every type of injury, murder or whatever it may be or for what cause it has been

⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹ Swami Vivekanand, *Our Women* Calcutta: Advaita Asharam, 1970, pp.31-32.

imposed to others is to be considered as a crime against humanity. Belief has got the power to criticize all the human weaknesses. In reality, the real belief is a stream which flows in the human heart from God being the mixture of all great powers of absolute truth. But for Gandhi, this stream is really a great river which endlessly flows to him. This belief was the base of Gandhi's confidence, courage, love and sympathy. That's why he was considered as a man of piety. Gandhi was really a mystic in believing God and approaching God. Mahatma Gandhi constantly was one of the sincere and greatest historical figures of India, he seized a unique position in the public life, hence people called him as the "Father of the Indian Nation". Basically he was a journalist and writer. In addition to this he was passionate towards spinning and weaving. He was a lover, teacher and also an orthodox religious believer who struggled for the social liberation of women; he gave more importance to human welfare, actively worked for the same. Because of this reason, he was given the title of "*Mahatma*", which entails "*Great Soul*". Through the theory of *Satyagraha* and purity of means, he tried to apply changes to our society. He persuaded that, the real social change should come in our values, culture and beliefs. Through external or physical force one can change the mind of the individual but it is totally non intellect thinking. Indeed through the psychic forces people always create irritation, anger, hatred, revenge and bloodshed. Hence through violence one can't gain anything except exploitation, this exploitation injures the personality of the individual. It creates non growth of the country. Indian independence moment Gandhi was the foremost person and also the originator of civil disobedience. Mahatma Gandhi's great task was upgrading India, to achieve it worked out constructive programmes in which many issues exist with a sensible picture of genuine efforts.

To understand Gandhi's appreciative character one must understand about his background and the family. There is nothing strange in Gandhi's life and message. Because of this reason one can say that, he was not a great scholar, fighter, good speaker, and writer. He was not a spiritualist and did not hold superhuman powers. He regarded himself as a common man with standard abilities. In his character one can notice sincerity, honesty and truthfulness beyond that he was a humble seeker of Truth and it is his one and the only leading star in his life. Gandhi was a religious man in search of God. From the beginning till the end of his life he strictly followed the path of truth. He stated

that, the best way to find out truth was through the practice of active, faith-based non-violence. In fact violence is a clumsy weapon. It will always raise to conflicts rather than solving issues. Here genuine reconciliation is impossible to achieve. “Nonviolence provides us with tools, the positive means to oppose and stop wars and preparations for war, to resist violence, to struggle against racial, sexual and economic oppression and discrimination and to seek social justice and genuine democracy for people throughout the world.”¹² He was born in a middle class Bania family and average, shy and nervous student. Gandhi believed that oppressed and depressed people were the glow of the divine light. Hence he tried to see God through the oppressed and depressed people. As far as Gandhi is concerned the source of the greatest power was soul-force. He tried to make great effort to arouse the soul-force contained by himself and within his fellowmen. He was of the belief that, the ability to build up the soul-force does not have any limit, to awaken and strengthen the soul-force. Gandhi intended to express his eleven vows, technique of *Satyagraha* and his constructive program, to certain extent he successfully awakened and aroused a nation from semi-consciousness.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, born in Poorbandar, in Kathiawar, on the western coast of India. He was the prime minister of Kathiawar and his father Karamchand Gandhi was the chief minister of Porbandar and member of the Rajasthanik Court. His mother was Putlibai. His father passed away when he was sixteen after four years he lost his mother also. Gandhi was born and brought up in a Hindu family atmosphere. He belonged to the Vaishnava sect of Hinduism a theistic cult in Hinduism and Vishnu as the supreme deity. Gandhi’s mother, in her entire life perfectly engaged in religious beliefs and worship and not at all encouraged for finery or jewelry. She used her maximum time to take care of her family and beyond this devoted to God which helps for forming Gandhi’s virtuous life. Because of the nature of saintliness and religious nature in his childhood he was deeply influenced by his mother Putlibai. She was the most religious personality moreover devoid of offering daily prayers she won’t took meals. His mother used to go to this temple daily without caring her illness Vaishnava temple called Haveli. Hence in framing his religious thought to certain extent his

¹² Jude Thaddeus Langeh Basebang, *How relevant is Gandhi's nonviolence?*, Jalgaon: Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal.

mother Putlibai took foremost place, which paved the way to put self- restraint into practice in his life, further more as a result the fundamental code of belief in religion like Hinduism , Buddhism and Jainism were first pass on his mind through his mother, which formed the base of his spiritual thoughts and helped him to enjoy an unquenchable trust in God, The figure of women he took from his mother was that of love and sacrifice. As an ethical reason, he bothered about each and every ones problem, received with great commitment and took full effort to solve them in the purest potential way which is the fundamental reason of the success of his life. Because of this reason it every one can be admisable that, his family was the chief influence of his early life. He had inherited two great qualities from his parents namely righteousness and uprightness.

During his youth period, Gandhi assimilated a lot from his father, Kaba Gandhi in a sensible manner while assisting him. He resolves lot of complicated social and political issues related to life. It helped him to become a practical idealist in the later period. He learnt the lesson of *ahimsa* or non – violence at the feet of his father, Kaba Gandhi; Gandhi during his youth, stolen his elder brother armllet from his home. Even though he himself decided to do steal his brother’s armllet, due to prick of conscious he decided to reveal about this to his father. Because of fear he didn’t reveal it to his father. Hence he wrote about this on a paper and gave it to him. His father moved to tears of love and forgiveness. In this regard Gandhi wrote in his Autobiograhya “Those pearl drops of love cleaned my heart and washed my sin away. Only he who was experienced such love can know what it is. As the hymn says this was, for me in object lesson in *ahimsa*.”¹³ This was his first object lesson in *ahimsa* which went deeper in to his mind as year went by and finally it became a weapon to fight evil and un truth in every department human life and action. During his childhood stage, he was scared of ghosts and sprits. His family nurse Rambha suggested him to recite the name of Rama which helped him as a medication kept away from the fear of ghosts and evil spirits. Therefore he said “I think it is due to the seed sown by that good woman Rambha, that today ‘Ramanama’ is an

¹³ M.K Gandhi, *An Auto Biography or the story Of My Experiment With Truth*, Ahmadabad: Navajeevan Publishing House, 2013, p.21.

infallible remedy for me.”¹⁴ Because of the tireless service, infinite self-control, endless patience and illimitable love, his wife Kasturba Gandhi too occupied significant role in his personal life. According to Gandhi “ Kasturba has been my mother, friend, nurse, cook, bottle washer and all these things we have come to a reasonable understanding that I should have all the honors and she should have all the drudgery.”¹⁵ Harishchandra story also had an effect on Gandhi’s life and he said that “why shouldn’t all be truthful like Harishchandra was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through, was the one ideal it inspired in me.”¹⁶ The story of Harishchandra overwhelmed Gandhi’s thought and religion. Devoid of the least uncertainty in his whole life he spends for the sake of his country’s upliftment. According to him “I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the entire world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non violence.”¹⁷ In his school days he was an average student and he never forgot to hold on the truthful character. The ideals of truth and non-violence were of great influence from his father. Accordingly he never spoke a lie to both teachers and his schoolmates. While he was at high school, an educational inspector visited the school and told the students to write the word ‘kettle’. But young Gandhi couldn’t write that word correctly because of the spelling problem .His class teacher tried to prompt Gandhi without knowing inspector, and tried to help him to write spelling in a proper way. But the young Gandhi was opposed the art of copying. Hence he didn’t pay attention to the teacher’s order. As a result the entire students except Gandhi spelt all the five words correctly. This incident does not mean that he won’t care for other words especially teacher’s command but it implies that, in his childhood itself he tried to keep his truthful character. This reveals his extraordinary personality, his childhood experiences that influenced him to a greater extent, beyond that his whole life is dedicated for the social, moral and religious activities of the people.

¹⁴ M.K Gandhi, *My Religion*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958, p.6.

¹⁵ D.G Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol .II, New Delhi: Publication Division Government of India, p. 298.

¹⁶ M.K Gandhi, *Op.cit.*, p.4.

¹⁷ M.K Gandhi, *India of my dream*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962, p.4.

Almost twenty years Gandhi continually stayed in South Africa for protesting injustice. He dreamed the concept of *Satyagraha* before he came back to India. When Gandhi arrived from South Africa, the conditions of Indian people were most horrible and they have been striving for the emancipation. By executing non-violence and civil disobedience Gandhi get actively participated in India's freedom struggle for independence from British rule. Many world leaders especially Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela followed his great concept of non-violent protest to the maximum extent for their own struggle. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence protected and liberated the hearts and thoughts of people every part of the world. The position of non-violent power situated in the spirit of the human being certainly Gandhi is the supreme designer of this spirit and spirituality which is also called as non-violence. In his Constructive program he gave foremost importance for women's emancipation. Because of his efforts most of the women came out from their homes and actively participated in the freedom struggle. The Upper caste women discard their ornaments and optimistically participated in the freedom struggle. The prominent leaders like Kamala Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Anasuya Sarabhai and Sushila Nayyar are some of the memorable women participated in Gandhi's mass movement. The positive change of the women paves way for political awakening in pace of national life in all spheres for instance the picketing of liquor, opium closing of and foreign cloth shops.

I.1. Review of Literature

K. D. Gangrade¹⁸ (2011) in his article refers about the Empowerment of Women with Special Reference to Mahatma Gandhi, in that he pointed out that the meaning of empowerment is to give equal status and equal opportunity to men in all fields of life. He must control the urge of sex and must be allowed to develop herself. In this article he critically analyzes the discrimination and preferences for son over daughter. Dr. K. D. Gangrade believed that it is a "wake up call" for women activists to get in action to uplift their sisters. If women come to a close to inferiority complex, men won't change their superiority complex.

¹⁸ K. D. Gangrade "*Gandhi and Empowerment of Women- Miles to go*" Jalgaon: Gandhi Research Foundation, 2011.

Anima Bose¹⁹ (1987) in her book mainly focuses on the scope of peace and non-violence as Gandhi recognized them through a profound understanding of the political, human dilemmas and social dynamics existing in India. In this book he referred Mahatma Gandhi's viewed that, peace is not an end of wars, through one person peace wont assured for all. More over devoid of better strength of unity and devoid of the power of controlling, peace won't be achieved. If one does not have the broad mindedness and sympathy *ahimsa* can't get have future.

Madhu Kishwar²⁰ (1985) in his collection of essays on Mahatma Gandhi's ultimate contribution of women's issues - of methods which he used for drawing women into the freedom movement and women's role and involment in Gandhi's ideology of *Satyagraha* in addition to this The essay gave overview about the challenging issues of mass mobilization, Gandhi aware of women not only in terms of their problems but also as a powerful potential force in the society, hitherto overlooked and suppressed.

Nirmal Kumar Bose²¹ (1968) in his lecture on Gandhi's concept of the role of women in society (delivered at the University of Delhi on 28 – 29 October, 1968) Nirmal Kumar Bose tried to analyze that Gandhi's greatest contribution to the modern civilization was an attempt to introduce those qualities which women represented the best and which had never before been allowed to exercise their due influence. He summons up the immense solitude with which Gandhi tried to enlist women in his band of civil registers. Bose recalls that, the call which Gandhi gave to the women of India was of such a nature that they responded to it in a manner which they had never done before.

Sujata Patel²² (1988) in her Article examines the enlargement of Gandhi's judgment regarding the matter of women. The author took the effort to reveal and articulate the center and core statement underlying Gandhi's views on women, In the

¹⁹ Anima Bose, *Dimensions of Peace and Non-Violence – The Gandhian Perspective*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1987, p.120.

²⁰ Madhu Kishwar, *Gandhi and Women*, Economic and Public Weekly, Vol.XX , No.41, 1985, pp.1753-1758.

²¹ Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Lectures on Gandhism*, Delhi: University of Delhi, 1968, p. 74

²² Sujata Patel, *construction and reconstruction of women in Gandhi*, Economic and Political Weekly Vol. 23, No. 8 , 1988, pp.377-387.

family, marriage and politics Gandhi visualized a important role of women in Indian society.

B.S.R Anjaneyulu²³ (2003) in his article primarily furnishes thoughts about hate, violence and brute force ought to be put back through love, sacrifice and soul force. As far as Gandhi is concerned the meaning of swaraj is self-rule. It led to the foundation to self-restraint and non-violent persuasion of others, the group-living too be converted into self-ruled and self-sufficient. As a result of the ultimate objective of this article is to look at generally the content of the basic argument of Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj* through analyzing the process motivated for Swaraj as Gandhi imagined more over this Article also projected to briefly refers to the require for the look back over of 'Hind Swaraj' in the present day context deals with the main social crisis.

M.K. Gandhi²⁴ (1937) in his Journal *Harijan*, pointed out Education enables women to uphold their natural rights. Men and women are inter related subject's and man's duty will be outside home so women should know about thereof and at the same time women always doing work inside home so she has more knowledge about domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children. If there is no discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.

I.2 Objectives of the Study

There are numerous types of issues related to women, hence devoid of understanding about all those problems it is not easy to reach to conclusion. The scholar has pinpointed out some of the issues which are related to the women's empowerment. The important issues are:

- To examine the prevalence of violence in the society.
- To investigate the concept of Non-violence
- To analyze the nature of violence against Women

²³ B.S.R Anjaneyulu, *Gandhi's Hind Swaraj- Swaraj, The Swadeshi Way*, Indian Political Science Association, Vol. 64, No.1/2, 2003, pp. 33-44.

²⁴ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 1937.

- To enlighten how Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Non – Violence is applicable towards the Empowerment of the women in the contemporary society.

I.3 Methodology

The methodology executed in this study is mainly descriptive, analytical and there are certain practical guidelines also. Therefore to certain extent it will also be a problem solving one. It is historical and at the same time applied one. Historical because it tries to find out the status of women in all the periods: past and present. Applied: because it suggests certain solutions to the problem, though not exhaustively.

I.4 Sources

The researcher has referred the primary and secondary sources which include textbooks, journals and other electronic and web sources.

I.5 Need of the Study

This research exclusively deals with two fields one is Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and another one is violence against women in India. It is a fact that, women play an important role in all the fields of development and if she is strengthened by giving support, then she will definitely create wonders. Women contribute directly and indirectly to the economic development. Hence violence against women is not a trivial matter to be ignored and it is high time that, we implement certain measures to wipe off completely. A girl bears lot of challenges and sufferings starting from the womb up to the tomb in the forms of female foeticide in the initial stages, child abuse, domestic violence and also during adulthood. Freedom and equality are granted to women only in printed papers, documents and laws but they remain ineffective and not practical in real life. Violence influences women in different ways depending upon various factors like occupation, income, caste and religion and social status. Due to the influence and emphasis of old customs and beliefs, in the present period even the independent women have been undergoing and experiencing torture and suffering. So, empowerment of women, gender discrimination and violence against women are becoming the serious subjects of research in contemporary period. From the above mentioned issues the

researcher discusses this issue in the context of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and his teachings. He had dynamic vision on the harmful practices like female foeticide, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood, sexual harassment of women, domestic violence against women, discrimination against girl child, denial of education to women and dowry system. He was very keen towards women's suppression and tried his level best to improve their status on par with men. The present study attempts to highlight various factors that lead to the marginalization of women and also suggests the possible ways to empower them.

I.6 An Overview of all Chapters

The First Chapter presents introduction highlighting Mahatma Gandhi's philosophical thought in general with special emphasis on the twin principles of Truth and non-violence which formed the fountain head of Gandhi's life and message. This chapter looks at Mahatma Gandhi's life history and his great contributions towards humanistic philosophy. The researcher also explained the factors helped to mold his character in general and basic introduction about his contribution towards women's emancipation. He was a staunch follower of *ahimsa* and he has uncompromisingly followed non-violence till his death. It was his childhood experience that has turned to become the turning point for him to start practicing non-violence. So in this chapter researcher has studied various reasons that led Gandhi to assimilate the practice of non-violence. His life itself has proved to be best experiment with truth. Gandhi profoundly believed that violence can only create troubles for the mankind. Gandhi believed that it is the duty of each and every individual to fight against injustice through *ahimsa* as a weapon. He also advised people to lead a truthful life following their own religious ideals and leading a harmonious life sharing respect and love among people from all religions. The researcher dearly disclosed in this chapter with regard to the need to study and its importance.

The first chapter is followed by the Second Chapter which mainly deals with the philosophical outlook of Mahatma Gandhi in general. The philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi stands on truth and non-violence. These are the twin cardinal principles of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy which he has practiced and preached throughout his life. By going through his writings and speeches one can understand all his thoughts that are

unified and inter linked. He remained himself as a disciple of Truth, lived his entire life by speaking truth, acting truthfully and realizing the truth in each and every action and also in his life. So in this chapter the researcher tries to relate the philosophical outlook of Mahatma Gandhi in all walks of his life. Here the researcher briefly discussed about Mahatma Gandhi's Metaphysical concept about the relation between Truth, God and Soul. His Views about Hinduism and social reformation, discussed about sarvodya philosophy in short, his vision about internationalism through nationalism and also discussed about his political and Economic ideas in general. In Gandhi's perception the main cause that destroys this century is due to the lack of optimism that arises from the discord between human thinking and action. Mahatma Gandhi gave more emphasis on the personal development and individual freedom. He said that, an individual should sacrifice himself for the sake of family, Family for the sake of village, village for the sake of district, district for the sake of state, state for the sake of country, and country for the sake of the world. Whenever godlessness arises, man becomes violent, cruel and devoid of love. Gandhi realized that, the mechanical routine is more dangerous than bestiality. That is why he was against the mechanical and industrial culture. Gandhi stood for the principled politics and moralization of economics which he has extended to other departments of life as well. Through this one can understand the depth of his ideals and philosophy and also his innermost power. He involved in politics in order to prove that society, individual and the universe are one. According to Karl Marx only a change in the social structure will bring a social change. But Gandhi opposed this view, for him the change in human mind can ultimately lead to change in the society. An Individual makes the society. Thus the transformation should happen initially within the individual.

The Third Chapter deal with the variegated dimensions of Mahatma Gandhi's much celebrated concept of non-violence. Here an attempt is made to analyze what Mahatma Gandhi really meant of non-violence. Without clear knowledge, misunderstand it. Proper understanding can make non-violence an unfailing weapon in its praxis. So the depths of non-violence have to be explored and find how it is applicable for all types of development in our society especially in the case of women. So in this chapter the researcher discussed about the real meaning of non-violence, origin of non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi followed and practiced non-violence in his entire life, in his point of

view the practice of non-violence is the only way to understand it. Mahatma Gandhi discovered the potential of collective, non-violent action which could act as a moral weapon for the physically weak to fight against the strong and powerful. This is the reason why his message has created a mass appraisal in India and elsewhere.

Our culture is a mix of various castes, creeds and religions. Gandhi assumes the connecting link of all three as the religion of *Ahimsa*. Each and every religion in this world teaches us non-violence and not violence and at the same time non-violence and co-operation remain the essences of our culture. Hence *ahimsa* occupies a fundamental position in every aspect of our life. Jainism and Buddhism were the most important influences that lay behind the foundation of Gandhi's non-violent theory. Hence, the researcher here disused about religious influences of Mahatma Gandhi. In religions like Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam one can find the most explicit enunciation of *ahimsa*. They also teach us the importance of practicing non-violence in speech, word and action. By analyzing all these religions the importance of non-violence can be traced by moving down the lanes of ancient history. Despite Indian culture Gandhi also got influenced by various prominent western thinkers like Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin and Henry David Thoreau in his philosophical and practical life. The researcher earnestly attempted to understand his Western influences. Tolstoy stood against the practice of owning private property, capitalism, machinery, police and military force, payment of taxes and compulsory military services. He was not in favour of pre-controlled society. Gandhi also believed in non-violence and he was against modern civilization based on force and exploitation. Both of them supported people's inner self purification that is attained through love but both have differences in their method. Tolstoy was a pacifist where as Gandhi was a satygrahi. The influence of Thoreau on Gandhi consequently made deep and powerful influences in numerous respects. For Gandhi 'civil resistance' was a passive one whereas Thoreau's civil disobedience meant both active (violent) and passive resistance. Under the influence of Ruskin's '*Unto this Last*' he believed that differential wages should not be paid for intellectual work in preference to manual work since intellectually poor should not be treated as superior to manual labor. Mahatma Gandhi adopted the technique of *Satyagraha* to get rid of the slavery and to attain freedom. Gandhi describes *Satyagraha*

as ‘a ruthless hunt for truth and strength of mind to reach truth. In this light researcher also discussed about the concept of sathyagraha and highlighted how it can be practiced in our daily life. Researcher also disused about the relation between truth and non-violence, methods of non -violent action and training of non violence .It is based on the principle of love and believes in ‘love for all’ and ‘suffer for all’. It eliminates each and every form of violence. Gandhi believes that, *ahimsa* is Love. Complete *ahimsa* is the condition in which one never shows anger towards any living being. Gandhi regarded *ahimsa* as a good attitude and believed in real love towards all living beings and the love which is encouraging to do good avoiding sins. Non–killing (human or non-human), non–injury, love and *Satyagraha* comprises the concept of non-violence. Gandhi struggled to change and tried to make non-violence more real and truth. Negative thoughts like anger, envy and grudge kill truth. Love can only be borne in heart though the annihilation of these negative thoughts. By discussing all of these the researcher tried to highlighten importance of practice of non-violence in our day today life.

The Fourth Chapter mainly focuses on violence against women in India from ancient to the modern period and various changes with regard to the status are to be necessarily understood for projecting the present study in to its proper contact. So in the first section of this chapter the researcher tries to examine the status of women from ancient to modern period. In the Vedic age women enjoyed a high position in Indian society. They had full freedom for spiritual progress and intellectual development but under the British rule the position of women had reached to the lowest level in India. However it is beyond doubt that the efforts of many social reformers let to the a long awaited awakening among Indian women as a result, of which women attempted to organize themselves in strong units and began to demand their rightful place in society. In modern times it can be observed that the exploitation of women has undergone a drastic change from noticeable to imperceptible. Presently Indian constitution guaranteed liberty, equality and fraternity to all but still women encounter so much of violence in contemporary period. Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. Hence the researcher here discussed about present status of women in all fields of life. Even at the very beginning of life, a girl may be the target of sex-selective abortion or female infanticide in cultures where preference

to son is prevalent. During childhood, violence against girls may include enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and education, incest, female genital mutilation early marriage, and forced prostitution or bonded labour. Some go on to suffer throughout their adult lives – battered, raped and even murdered in the hands of intimate partners. Other crimes of violence against women include forced pregnancy, abortion or sterilization, and harmful traditional practices such as dowry-related violence, sati (the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband), and killings in the name of honour. And in later life, widows and elderly women may also experience abuse. The researcher discusses all these types of violence in detail and critically analyzes the above mentioned things descriptively. This study points out that, changes are occurring both in the status and also in the role of women and in the attitude of society towards her.

The Fifth Chapter deals with an exhaustive study of Gandhi's vision and his perspectives about the position and status of women in Indian society. The study is significant because he tried to fight against the inhuman customs and social evils. He was the first person to understand the truth for the growth of humanity in this world in support of a better tomorrow. Men and women are equal and no one is greater than others, they are like two sides of the same coin. He suggested new pride to women by linking women's issues with national struggle and involving them in a manner not known before. He said that women undoubtedly have an optimistic role to offer in the renewal and rebuilding of the society. He additionally perceived that, if women do not share men's tasks the country is bound to remain in a wretched state. Hence the Researcher focuses on the constructive role of women performed during various non-violent mass movements. These non-violent mass movements marked the beginning of mass participation of women from all strata of society in the freedom struggle. Lastly in this chapter the researcher analyses the distinct possibilities of applying Gandhi's concept of non-violence eradicating violence against women and thereby bring Empowerment of women.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK OF MAHATMA GANDHI

To understand Mahatma Gandhi's life and work one has to first understand the character of his innermost mental power. Mahatma Gandhi was a straightforward and modest person. It is possible to classify the opinions and ideas of Gandhi unconnectedly. Through his writings and speeches one can understand that all his thoughts are unified and inter linked with one another. He has not made any effort to write an efficient text book on his own philosophy. His strong will, together with his miraculous energy was the causes of infinite wonders to the millions within and outside the country. During his period, he did countless activities. He kept himself as a disciple of Truth, therefore without second thought one can infer that, in his entire life, he gave more importance to speak and realizing the truth in each and every actions of his life. In this chapter the researcher tries to analyse the philosophical outlook of Mahatma Gandhi in all fields of life. One can observe that the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi stands for Truth and Non-Violence. These are the twin cardinal principles of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy. He himself said that "My life is dedicated for *ahimsa*...."²⁵ His life itself was an Experiment with truth. From the bottom of his heart Gandhi believed that violence brings trouble for the mankind. Without touching human life Gandhi's philosophy won't be complete.

Gandhi was influenced by various types of religious, religious scriptures, and Political thinkers of both Eastern western and world. These influences helped him to mould different types of social and political theories and it also helped to shape his personality as a political reformer. In fact he was a profound philosophical thinker. He was a strong believer in Indian tradition. He pointed out that God was truth above all conditions. He was a grand spiritual and political head and the father of the nation and freedom fighter of Indian independence movement. His countless actions writings and speeches revealed that he was a karma yogi of his period.

²⁵ Ravindra Kumar, *Theory and Practice Of Gandhian Non –Violence*, New Delhi: Mittal Publishing House, 2002, p.2

He worked not only for the upliftment of society but also took more effort on the upliftment of women. One cannot ever refuse the fact that for breaking the chains and restrictions in India, many great leaders sacrificed their lives. To achieve this number of people followed the path of violence. But Gandhi opposed violence. He was a living soul who followed the theory of non-violence, non-cooperation and civil disobedience for liberating India. He also used these techniques for women's empowerment. As a human being he gave more respect to women. Through his effort's women able to participate in freedom struggle. His entire life was devoted for the service of the motherland and humanity. It is a fact that his contribution in the Indian independent movement was very significant. That is why he turns out to be so famous. He had very high faith in women's power. He was a man who practiced what he preached. Considering his enormous efforts in various realms of our country, he can be undoubtedly called as a national hero. He was the path founder for the ideas of Truth, Non- Violence and *Satyagraha* without fear. Gandhi not only fetched independence from the powerful British Empire, but also "out of dust he made us in to men."²⁶ Prior to get freedom, Gandhi struggled for the ethical renewal and social support of Indians. In his opinion, human character is undoubtedly a static unchallengeable substance but it is a plastic organism. He said that, "My belief in the capacity of non- violence rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of human."²⁷

To certain extent philosophy is exclusive together with its methods and in the nature. It is the complete study of the life and the world naturally it is the cerebral hunt and try to clarify our ideas and experiences which are different from at all other fields. Out of all aspects of human life Philosophy chases the questions and its process attempt to make an effort to apply to the problems in every field of study. "Philosophy is neither an intellectual diversion nor an academic pedantry overlooking the facts of experience in the world; neither a feat of empty scholarship nor a mere hobby of the care-free mind; but the intelligent analysis of the immediate facts of life as a whole, an examination of the implications of experience, and a scientific theory evolved out from such wise meditations for the purpose of regulating the functions which are responsible for the

²⁶ D.G.Tendulkar, *Mahatma Gandhi*, Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Vol.1, p.57.

²⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 10-8-1938, p.428.

various phenomena of the individual's consciousness.”²⁸ Mahatma Gandhi in his own journal *Harijan* pointed out that “I don’t claim to have originated any new principle. I have simply tried in my own word to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. Well, all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is continued in what I have said. You will not call it “Gandhism”; there is no “ism” about it. And no elaborate literature or propaganda is needed about it.”²⁹ From the above mentioning quotes it can be understood that, Gandhi was not an inventor of new ideas, and also his ideas not at all comprised as a system of new philosophy in the intellectual sense of the term. In the introductory part of his auto biography Gandhi wrote “What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years - is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksa* (literally freedom from birth and death. The nearest English equivalent is Salvation) I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.”³⁰ Mahatma Gandhi has interpreted various concepts of metaphysics, political and social philosophy together with moral and religious philosophy.

II. 1. Metaphysical Concepts of Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi’s metaphysical ideas are based on truth, God, soul or mind. Primary metaphysical conception of Gandhism is an all-pervading spiritual reality “An all embracing living light, it can be called *sachchidhananda* or *Brahman*.”³¹ Gandhi disclosed *Sachchidananda* as the highest theoretical formulation of reality. He has experimented on truth and found that truth is as powerful as a weapon. As far as Gandhi is concerned, on the subject of the difference between the pantheism and theism was irrelevant. Hence we can understand that the theistic beliefs of Gandhi were, basically ‘*vaisnava*’ type. Besides this Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of god also is strictly theistic in its character. The central ideology of Gandhism is eternal, non-contradictory all

²⁸ Swami Krishnananda, *Studies in Comparative philosophy, The Divine Life Society* Rishikesh: Sivananda Ashram, 2015, p.174.

²⁹ M.K. Gandhi, *Op.cit*, 28 -03 1936. p.250.

³⁰ Chris Morre Bachman, *The African American Freedom Movement Through the Lens of Gandhian Non-Violence*, Lesley University, 2011, p.6, cited from *An Autobiography or The Story of My experiment With Truth*, 1957, p.xxvi.

³¹ Verinder Grover (ed.,) *Gandhi and Politics in India*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication, 1996, p.9.

pervading principle of truth. His philosophy was basically similar to Advaita. In addition to this he has discussed about *nirguna* character of the real. As a matter of fact, Gandhi thought that one needs God for providing power and consolation. The belief on God gives possible strength to an individual and peace in the world.

Gandhi deeply believed in the existence of god and totally criticized the illogical arguments of an atheist. In his point of view the world is the liberated reality from men and unseen power. According to him "There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it Power that pervades everything. I feel it though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent."³² He had firm faith in His countless love, these eternal, all pervading unseen powers protect our world and environment and that unseen power he called it as God. His fundamental statement was that "I can see that in the midst of death life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence I gather that God is life, truth, and light. He is love. He is the supreme God."³³ In our daily life we can find out God in one way or other but it not at all able to be seen in person but in actions. As far as Gandhi is concerned it is not an outside entity but it is an abiding presence in every human heart. Gandhi not at all opposed the universe as maya. Since beginning the human thought pursuit of 'truth' was spiritual, material, transcendent and immanent. Where as in Gandhian thought the pursuit of thought was the means of quest of truth, devoid of exception, non-violent in thought, word and deed. The whole life of Gandhi was a life of unchanging actions and experimentations, and he tried to understand about what is really truth and he lived with truth till his death.

II. 2. Social Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

Man is not only a sophisticated machine with soul and body but also a social being that loves and co-operate with others around. The thriving force behind man's struggle is his

³² M.K. Gandhi, *young India*, 11-10-1928.p.320.

³³ A. Jayabalan, *Mahatma Gandhi's Discovery of Religion*, wardha: CMF International Seminar on Gandhi and the twenty first century, 1998, p.24.

inner most desires of love and accommodating nature. Man is a thinking animal and thinking leads to action. Action and thinking go along. If it's not so it won't be fruitful. "The problem of the relation of man to society is central to his thought and action."³⁴ In Gandhi's perception the course that destroys this century is lack of optimism that arises from the mismatch between human thinking and action. Mahatma Gandhi gave importance and value to the personal development and individual freedom.

Mahatma Gandhi thought that man is not only a collection of flesh and bones, but a bit more and beyond this. Behind all this noticeable but ephemeral and unconscious matter, there is a spirit, a soul, indivisible, eternal, all pass through and self conscious. It is an element and parcel of God. So this idea of Gandhi made him hate the sin, not the sinner. In this respect Gandhi said that "My creed is service of God and there for of humanity."³⁵ He highlighted that "His ultimate end in view of life is to serve in humanity in order to serve God truly."³⁶ Gandhi himself accepted the reality of one supreme God. He said that "whatever we come across is an expression of the one god. Man in the view of Gandhi, is also an expression of that one reality."³⁷ He believes that the religious characteristics of man symbolized man's superior and true nature as it is similar to divine nature. Gandhi states that, if the divine element present in each and every man is used in the correct way, man can bring heaven or paradise on the earth. Gandhi believes in equality between man and man. His concept of the equality of man is derived from the concept of the universal soul.

Gandhi's world view is deeply rooted in his humanism and as Sri Aurobindo pointed out "The fundamental idea of humanism is that mankind is the godhead to be worshiped and served by man and that the respect, service, the progress of the human being are the chief aims of the human spirit."³⁸ He felt that man is a multifaceted creature. Man is not only a physical being but also has many characters like consciousness, reasoning, conscience and emotions. He is closer to the characters of good

³⁴ Suresh Misra (ed.), *Gandhian Alternative Towards Gandhian World Order*, New Delhi: Concept Publication Company, Vol. I, 2005, p.105.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Lala Gopal Prasad, *Religion morality and politics according to Mahatma Gandhi*. New Delhi: Classic Publishing Company, 1991, p .88.

³⁸ Suresh Misra (ed.), *Op. cit.*, p.105.

and bad or evil. This cannot be limited to just physical activities. These are all the expressions of a real man containing the spirit of the soul that exists in with. As a consequence of dissimilar influences, the entire human character can be considered as high-ranking. All these instances reveal that, Gandhi gave prime importance to the individuals than society as a whole.

II. 3. Religious Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

Since childhood Gandhi was a staunch believer of religion. He was brought up in a society that has given prominence for Jain's religious philosophy. Historical epics like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bagavad Gita* also proclaimed the importance of *Ahimsa* as dwelt in Jainism and its religious philosophy. By going through the texts of the western writers like Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy, he has strengthened those beliefs. Gandhi believed that it is the duty of each and every religious person to fight against the injustice using *Ahimsa* as a weapon. The Holy Bible has also left its great influence upon him even though his fundamental perspective was that of a Hindu and he proclaimed himself as a Sanatana Hindu.

It was Gandhi's wish to wipeout discrimination between haves and have not's still existing in the present caste system. He put forwarded the idea of eliminating untouchability to achieve the goal. He also advised to wipe out the evil practices of untouchability to purify and strengthen Hinduism .Though he was a follower in Hinduism he never refute the ideas of other religion. In addition to that by propagating the ideas in Quran and Bible through his speeches and prayer gatherings he equally respected the features diverse religions. He also advised people to lead a truthful life following their own religious ideals to harmonious life sharing respect and love among people from all religions. The Britishers who hailed the slogans of Independence, Democracy and unity for the social reformation in their country failed to implement it in India. They tried to propagate socio- political slavery. They also encouraged all kinds of ill practices and anarchy to establish their empire in our country. Based on the divide and rule policy they fuelled the fire of the religious fundamentalism and caste discrimination from which the regional Land Lords and aristocrats took the advantage of it to retain their position in the society . Gandhi and his followers fought in this prevailing situation.

II.3.1. Sarvodaya Philosophy of Gandhi

Sarvodaya was Gandhiji's most important social movement. The term Sarvodaya is a combination of two terms, 'Sarva' and 'Uday'. The meaning of sarva is one and all, and the meaning of Uday is welfare or uplift. Thus the combination of sarvodaya means Universal uplift or good of all. It is a self motivated concept and an ideal vision was originated from this concept through Mahatma Gandhi. It demands upliftment of humanity in any society. Through Sarvodaya, Gandhi tried to bring back the spiritual heritage of India, which was inherent in the villages and it was aimed for building the nation. In his point of view even if a person is a harijan, tribal, rich or poor he should have equal rights in the society. The central part of Sarvodaya was the 'welfare of all', commitment to all kinds of sacrifices, even unto death, for the welfare of others. For the achievement of this goal, Gandhi dedicated his whole life. While he was travelling to South Africa, Gandhi read the book of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. He wondered that some of his deepest convictions were revealed in this book. "The title of the book was translated to Gujarati as *Sarvodaya* or *the welfare of all* but the idea of welfare of all formed a part of his mental makeup even before he read this book."³⁹ Ruskin's book according to Gandhi had three lessons for him.

1. "That the good of the individual is contained in the good for all.
2. That a barber's work has the same value as the lawyer's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life laborer of that is the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living."⁴⁰

Gandhi had the extensive wish to see the welfare of all. Through "*unto this last*", he encouraged this desire and dedication to give his life for its sake. This concept envisioned a well developed nation without any difference among the haves and have not's, privileged and under privileged, ruler and ruled. There is no place for the creed. It is a redeemer's philosophy of social and political orientation, where suffering is for the

³⁹Prabodh Kumar Rath, *Gandhian Sarvodaya, Bhubaneswar*: Orisa Review, 2010,p. 38, cited from M.K Gandhi: *The story of My Experiments with Truth* P . 224

⁴⁰Ratana Dasa, *The Global Vision Of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons,2005 p-226, cited from M.K Gandhi: *Autobiography: The story of My Experiments with Truth*, Courier Corporation ,1958, p .225.

sake of sarvodaya and also it is a result of human emotional incorporation and the utmost intellectual goal. It is the highest expression of love and tries to change the minds of the people. Gandhi was not an originator of sarvodaya. Indeed before Gandhi this concept was found in the religious books of *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *The Ramayan* and also in *The Gita*. Indian western saints also preached this concept. However to these old principles and ideals Gandhi gave a comprehensive meaning and application. Sarvodaya society is free from exploitation, discrimination, inequality and violence it is also free from the evils like “‘politics without principle’, ‘wealth without work’, ‘knowledge without character’, ‘comers without morals’, ‘science without mankind’ and ‘service without sacrifice.’”⁴¹ To overcome all these problems, Gandhi used the concept of sarvodaya.

The character of sarvodaya social order infers self -sacrifice. It implies for the sake of others one must be ready to sacrifice the happiness and also ready to pursue only to give policy and not to take anything. Without expecting anything Gandhi tried to work for others and rebuild the society through sarvodaya. “The great contribution of sarvodaya in the present century lies in the reassertion of the Gandhi’s moral approach to the problems of mankind and a vision that looks forward to the creation of a welfare state and society.”⁴²

Another important aspect of Gandhi’s social view is regarding the role of women in society. According to him woman is man’s helpmate. She has the same mental capacity like man. She has the right to participate in every minute details of a man’s work. She has the same freedom, power and has the same right for equality in her own field of activity. The terms used in our literature to describe a wife are ‘other half’ and ‘partner’. There is nothing wrong in a husband calling his wife as ‘Devi’ or Goddess. But time has come where the rights and powers of women are being usurped. Rama would not have any powers without the independent and emancipated sita. It is a shame to call women frail and injustice to them. If the definition of strength is brute strength, then women indeed are weaker than men. But if the spiritual powers are meant by it, then definitely women are stronger. Man doesn’t have an existential value without her. If the

⁴¹ Surjit Kaur Jolly, *Reading Gandhi*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2006, p.153.

⁴²Ratana Dasa, *Op. cit.*, p.162.

whole humanity practices non-violence, then the future is women's. Gandhi told women that they are the epitome of sacrifice and hard work. Men can never match up to the selflessness and humanitarianism which nature has bestowed upon women. She has a benevolent heart which melts for other's problems. Gandhi said that, he is uncompromising when it comes to women's rights. In his opinion, women should have no special legal weakness which men don't have. He considers that both girls and boys as equals. The more women become aware of their strength the more they will become aware of their inequality. A woman, who realizes her duties and fulfills them, dignifiedly realizes her position. A woman is the daughter of her family, not a slave. Though men and women are equal, they are not different. They are a pair that compliments each other. They help each other. Hence it is unthinkable to consider ones existence without others. To quote Gandhi "--- to call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women. If the strength is meant through brute strength, then indeed is a woman less brute than man. If the strength is meant through moral power then women is an immeasurably man's superior. Has she not great courage? Without her, men could not be. If non-violence is the law of being, the future is with our women."⁴³ Throughout his life and political career he interacted with many women like Annie Besant, Oliver Schriener, Millie Graham Pollock, Sarojini Naidu and Sarala Devi. To certain extent they helped in framing Gandhi's vision of women. Gandhi's uniqueness of mass movement helped to get good courage for thousands of women as part of freedom struggle in countless forms.

Gandhi is mainly a 'karmayogi'. He never preached a philosophy or compartmentalized them by conforming to a system. Whatever Gandhi had presented in a concrete form was not to give shape to his thoughts but to justify his actions. He issued through his words. His philosophy of life is therefore not limited to the printed words, which forms only a small part of his vision. All these facts revealed that Gandhi aspired for self-fulfillment and God realization.

⁴³ Anub Taneja, *Gandhi Women and the National Movement, 1920-47*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication PVT. LTD, 2005, p.58.

II.4. Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi revealed some dispositions. He was not a system builder and political philosopher. All his writings and speeches infer his deep feelings and sincere realization of truth. He was an all-around personality and he had clear cut idea about the complex political issues in our society and he eagerly tried to wipeout all social evils like caste system, untouchability and exploitation of the poor of his time. Indeed Mahatma Gandhi believed that, the required government has to take care of the peoples necessities first. As a practical politician he pull full efforts for wiping out the evils of politics and through this he tried to improve the standards of the Indian society. For this he had struggled hard to discover the ways and means by which he could not only steadily uproot the undesirable social customs and relations but lift the people from the moral degradation that they had fallen in to –a phase of life that became inevitable under the oppressive foreign rule.

The essence of his political philosophy was based on morality because an immoral man will do evil practices in politics. So personally and publically every where one should maintain morality. If one wants to achieve a goal or to reach the ambition he must be morally purified. Moreover for the betterment of life and growth of a nation, if a person has moral courage to fight for a cause, of course he is bound to be successful today or tomorrow. That is why he stressed much on the purity of heart and soul combined with moral strength. Girilal Jain said that “--- the moral impulse Gandhi brought in to India’s political life is not dead. The Indian ruling elite may indulge in self – aggrandizement but the Indian people continue to ask for rulers who are guided by moral consideration. Indeed the crises of legitimacy cannot be resolved so long as morality is not accorded to its proper place in the country ‘s public life.”⁴⁴

One can infer Gandhi’s political philosophy from the presidential address at the annual session of the Indian national congress held at Belgaum in 1924, in the concluding session of which he said that “sathyagraha is search for truth. *Ahimsa* and non-violence is

⁴⁴ Sekhendu mazumder, *Politico Economic Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi: their Relevance in the Present Day*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 2004, p.18.

the light that reveals that truth to me. Swaraj for me is a part of that truth.”⁴⁵ He was the man of the millennium. According to him “political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their conditions in every department of life. Political power means the capacity to regulate the national life through national representatives. If the national life becomes as perfect as to become self regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbor.”⁴⁶ In this context, the scholar would like to mention about the social customs and conditions of the majority of the people – the Hindus were intricately connected with their religious rites and rituals. So Gandhi had to redeem the people from their superstitious and obnoxious customs in which they had implicit faith. The essential characteristic of Gandhi’s personality and his life was its continuous growth and evolution. He always is experimenting with truth. From the title of his autobiography one can understand this. Louis Fischer says of Gandhi: “He allowed truth to lead him without a map. If it took him to an area where he had to discard some intellectual baggage or walk alone without past associates, he went. He never impeded his mind with stop signs.”⁴⁷ No other political thinker has made such a great contribution to the realm of political ideologies as Gandhi. Being a polymath, Gandhi viewed his political activities as a path to self satisfaction. That’s why his political philosophy was built upon the foundations of truth and non violence

For the betterment of nation, Gandhi used two powerful tools that was Truth and Non- violence. He didn’t do any mistake by applying these powerful tools to achieve independence from British people. Because of the active efforts the British had forced to leave India. Even though Critics tried to highlighten irregularities in his statements Gandhi never cared. Indeed Gandhi did not try to change his basic principles. In the process of achieving perfection, he continuously tried to modify and improve himself from time to time. Horace Alexander commented in his book *Social and Political Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi* that “I believed that in every human being who is not seriously

⁴⁵ M.k Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Publication Division, Ministry of information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Vol.24,1958,p.258.

⁴⁶ M. K Gandhi, *Young India* 02-07-1931, p.162.

⁴⁷ M.K Gandhi, *Harijan*, 3.10.36, p.265.

limited in his personality, there is some element of most, if not of all, of these seemingly contradictory attitudes to life. In my own experience, at least I have noted again and again that men who are extremely radical in their politics may be ultra conservative in art or in some aspect in their personal life--- now the great merit of Gandhi is that he is such a complete man that he can identify and recognize the need for some element of every one of these principle in the life of the community. Without being whole, he does strike a balance among them all.”⁴⁸

II.4.1. Ideal Country or Ramarajya

Gandhi was not merely an idealist; he was also a charismatic political leader. Gandhi reached various practical means for attaining a goal based on an ideal. Consequently the novel concept of ‘ramarajya’ emerged from his thought process. Gandhi called his ideal state as Ramrajya. It can also call as ‘heaven on earth’. It is also called the best possible political organization that can be formed out of the existing limitation of swarajya. He was not attempting to provide the complete details of ideal country or democratic country. He attempted certain guide lines for building up an ideal county or how to create well functioned democratic country. He realized the fact that, the existing political philosophical thought is strictly based on the Marxist philosophy, Democratic system, centralization of power and illegal proceedings. He desired for the formation of a political system that is based on Truth and Non-Violence. To achieve the ideal state he aimed at complete removal of violence from the premises. Despite the fact that, all the societies are mostly inflicted with violence, he struggled to bring down the violent activities through various measures. The followers of Gandhi didn’t accept the earnest idealism of Gandhi and his goals in its complete sense. His ideal to some extent was failed to establish sound influence on the posterity. The present generation does not make any effort to look in to Gandhi’s theory and praxis. Gandhi called his ideal country as ‘Ramarajya’ gained many criticisms and some of them even considered him as a Hindu racialist. And some people believed that Gandhi was trying to drag our nation back to some past imaginary golden era. Gandhi used the word ‘ramarajya’ for the simple reason that it will be easily understood to both educated and the unlettered. By using the word

⁴⁸ Sekhendu Mazumder., *Op.cit*, p.17.

‘ramarajya’ he also meant the country of God. He called his ideal country as god’s country because he strongly believed that the whole humanity can possibly attain the completeness there by creating the possibility to build up the god’s country.

II.4.2. Non -Violent Democracy

Politically Gandhi’s ideal state can also be called as absolute democracy. This ideal state will be devoid of any kind of inequality. There won’t be any inequality based on caste, class and religion or economics status. All will be equal irrespective of their gender difference and the whole nation belongs to its citizens. There will be absolute freedom of press, speech and religion. No one should interfere in other’s privacy and activities. Duty based self control will be the only authority that controls human action in this kind of a society. Such kind of an ideal nation exists nowhere in the world. But that doesn’t give the idea that, it is an unrealistic one. In his point of view, even a small country with a group of people with same goal, courage and unity of mind can strike against well armed forces for saving their country’s pride. There comes the power and beauty of non-violence. This can be called as a non -violent method of defense. Gandhi believed that, a nation or a group which pursues the method of non-violence can never be destroyed or conquered even with an atom bomb. He was a strong believer and practitioner of non-violence till his death.

Gandhiji was not only an idealist but also, a pragmatic and intelligent political leader. His idealistic mindset was never a hindrance in making things practical and his idea of swaraj was a byproduct of such an idea about an ideal nationhood. His conception of ideal nation was given the name ‘ramarajya’ where as ‘swaraj’ epitomizes the best political setup that can be concretized within the limitations of the present scenario. According to Gandhi, simple life and high thinking should be the motto of all political leaders who rule the country. Whether it is at the panchayat level or at the national level, a ruler should practice this in their real life rather than proclaiming it simply before the public. He has given an elaborate account of law a ‘governor’ should live as a representative of the people. ‘Rulers’ should be the embodiments of goodness. He should be a ‘global citizen’ with a simple life style living in a small house, but foreign delegates can be provided with better amenities, he should be a person devoid of class, caste and

religious prejudices. These are some of the features of Gandhiji's conception about the ruler of his nation. With the help of these descriptions he tried to stipulate guidance for an ideal and democratic nation. Gandhi vehemently rejected materialistic societies which discarded the spiritual values and all the existing political ideologies, be it democracy, based on centralized power. So Gandhi dreamt for a political setup based on truth and *ahimsa*. According to him "there is no human institution but has its dangers. The greater the institution, the greater will be the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and therefore it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not an avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to minimum."⁴⁹ He believed in an ideal nation where there is no violence at all. Here quite naturally one question comes up in our mind regarding how Gandhian concept of democracy becomes possible. In his point of view "public opinion alone can keep a society pure and healthy."⁵⁰ Gandhi considered that the public opinion is the necessary condition to maintain the society as pure and healthy and he also thought that we should have ruling hand with the public opinion. He believed that "A popular state can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed."⁵¹ Gandhiji was well aware of the violence that is inherent in each nation so he aimed for a nation where violence was reduced to minimum with the principles of truth and non-violence.

II.4.3 Panchayat Raj

The concept of Panchayat Raj system was an important element of Gandhi's ideas of decentralized polity. Here each village should be measured as little 'Republics'. "Gandhiji was in favor of a broad-based pyramidal structure of decentralized power with numerous village panchayats at the bottom. He subscribed to the view that village based governments and non-violent agrarian self sufficient, autonomous village communities act as the custodian of power and authority exercising the legislative, judiciary and executive function of the authority of the state."⁵² Therefore Gandhi gave very much value to nationalism however his vision is not exclusive. Nationalism does not means

⁴⁹ M.K Gandhi, *Young India*, 07-05-1931, p.232.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-12-1920, p.4.

⁵¹ M.K Gandhi, *Harijan* 30-07-1931, p. 199.

⁵² Bisha. C.M, *Mahatma Gandhi's Conception of Decentralization and People's Empowerment – An analysis*, Shodh Ganga publication, 2009, p.32.

isolated independence but inter dependence. Gandhiji wrote, “Isolated independence is not the goal of world states. It is voluntary inter-dependents.”⁵³

Gandhi’s ideal democracy includes the federation of rural communities which are self-reliant, self-governing and *Satyagraha* based. Every village must be a self governing republic in the form of Panchayathi raj. It should be powerful enough to resist even if the entire world comes in its way. In this kind of society both women and men must realize what they actually want but here there is no competition in job or economic sector. The government of the village consists of the panchayat of five persons “annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.”⁵⁴ The unit of local self-government is the unique caretaker of the entire authority. Authority is decentralized and it begins from bottom to upwards. It functions in a three-tier manner- the village level- the block level and district level panchayats. It is the law of non-violence that rules him and his government.

Gandhi was both a nationalist and an internationalist. He gave much importance to the individual’s duties towards their swaraj but in doing so he never ignored the right interest of the human kind. He was successful in proving that, his prime aim was to serve the people of his own country. In this way Gandhi can be called as a nationalist by taking in to the account of the above mentioned ideals. In his view, nationalism is not a course of modernity. His speeches and writings revealed on his views on human psyche which considers man as a social being. Human beings live together in groups. But that doesn’t mean that one should love only his country. To love mankind is the duty of every individual. To reach international sympathies one should go through nationalism. No one can love mankind without being in contact with people of other countries. In Gandhi’s view, nationalism is not only the love for the people of one’s own nation but also for the people of other countries also.

⁵³ M.K. Gandhi., *Op.cit*, 17.07.1924, p. 236.

⁵⁴ M.K. Gandhi., *Op.cit*, 26.07.1942, p. 38.

II.4.4. Swaraj

Gandhi's concept of SWARAJ does not simply refer to the liberation from British Raj. He used the term Swaraj in association with the ideas of self control. Thus Swaraj doesn't merely refer to freedom but it refers to the freedom from self control. This is clearly mentioned in *Brahadaranyaka Upanishads* about swaraj. Gandhi dreamt of a swaraj devoid of any distinction based on race, religion, caste and Gandhi's swaraj is not two words for highly educated and wealthy. Instead the swaraj is for everyone including the destitute and the poor ones who toil hard to win their daily bread. In one point of view, Gandhiji's swaraj is a safe haven where every citizen is able to meet his basic necessity of life. This does not mean that every citizen must be in possession of palatial buildings because one can never presume that those who are residing in palaces are happy and content. Gandhiji's concept of swaraj comes to its completion only when everyone is contented with the basic necessities in their life.

II.5. Economic Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

The basis of Gandhi's economic philosophy was individual's dignity and the welfare of the poorest of the poor. He felt that a man earns his dignity by working and earning his bread and livelihood so that the economic system must be planned to give employment for each and every person in our society. His economic ideas molded three distinct segments. First segment was between 1919 and 1934. In this stage he didn't accept western civilization. He also opposed industrialization because he said that industrialization can fully destroy local industry and villages. Therefore he developed an anti materialistic approach to different problems. Second segment was between 1934 to 1948. In these segments he aimed at the development of an alternative to the western civilization. The third was a practical one in which he evolved the ideal of sarvodaya and prepared a concrete program for the regeneration of village economy, revitalization of village industries and decentralization of productive organization.

He created his economic ideas and principles on the basis of ideal social order. Because British exploited our economy and it resulted in severe poverty and unemployment was prevailing at that time. Due to this Mahatma Gandhi's economic ideas

emerged. The Influences of John Ruskin, Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy helped in formulating his economic philosophy. Man was the centre of his economic philosophy. According to Mahatma Gandhi “I would allow a man of intellect to earn more; I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund. They would have their earning only as trustees.”⁵⁵

In this perspective Gandhi’s conception of the ‘well being of all’ (survodaya) comes out as the term to describe social and economic justice. In his point of view there is a big relationship between economic and moral development. Both are the two sides of the same coin. Devoid of moral progress, man in economics will not last long and it will be immoral and sinful. So he said that, economics must stand for social justice. Gandhi’s approach towards machines and its influence has brought many criticisms. He believed that considering machines as a curse rather than as a boon will help in putting an end to the devilish rule of machine in this world. But he questioned the belief that machines reduce the hardship of manual labor. Gandhi was critical towards the modern economic thinking. Our Production should be taken upon the basis of needs not on greed; it must help us in resolving extreme poverty. Gandhi said that human mind has always been greedy and is in need of one thing or other. So he opposed the unlimited principle of human wants. He said that, these types of human nature will decrease economic progress. He felt that wants were unlimited, and the more you attempted to satisfy them, the more they increase since human mind is like a restless bird.

Mahatma Gandhi gave more importance to economic order which should satiate the basic needs of all people. His wants will have to limit. In his point of view an ethical man’s main goal should be the substance of moral growth, happiness of mind and the health of others. To maintain this, he has to keep Truth, Non Violence and Non possession as tools. He was never against the use of machines. He has only criticized more dependence to machines. He says that “earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need but not for every man’s greed.”²⁷ Gandhi’s economics was thus normative and highly ethical. Diwan and Lutz while pointing out the essentials of Gandhian

⁵⁵ M.K. Gandhi, op.cit, 26-11-1931, p.368.

economics says that Gandhian economics boils down to a simple injunction that “never advocate actions or policies that lead to material advancement at the cost of social, moral or spiritual impoverishment.”⁵⁶

Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of sarvodaya and trusteeship are also linked with Gandhian concept of economics. Its primary aim is to create non- violent and non-exploitative property relationships. In his point of view ownership and private property were the sources of violence. He said that, the possibility of the well being of all people only can make a meaningful economy. The rich people have to be the trustees of the deprived people. Gandhiji never considered destroying the few millionaires as a possible resolution to prevent exploitation of poor. But it is through eradicating the ignorance of the poor and the exploited and through civil disobedience that he wanted to fight back. If the proletariats understand their power and work together for their welfare then the rich people who belong to the minority category will have to pay attention to them. Violent attacks would reveal only our weakness and insecurity. The results of such kind of economic progress are:

1. Excess indulgence in material pleasures deteriorates spiritual development.
2. When the consumption increases it widens the gap between rich and poor and curtails the normal social life of the people.

If we are not self- restraint in all walks of our life not only the social progress but also the existence of our society will be in trouble. This is one of the chief reasons for economic under development. If and only if the working class recognizes their power they will get the money that is belongs to them. Boundless economic progress can hinder real development in Gandhi’s perspective. Gandhiji wrote, “By the non-violent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. The capitalist may regard himself as a trustee on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position

⁵⁶ Diwan & Lutz, *Essays in Gandhian Economics*, Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America, 1987, p.13

to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave.”⁵⁷ For him economy should be based on ethics, we should control our needs, as unsound competition and accumulating wealth will never lead any one to success.

Gandhi worked for minimizing the gap between rich and the poor. when capitalists use their capital for laboring classes welfare and also they act like as a trustees of laboring classes then to certain extent the wide gap in between capital and labor may reduce .According to Gandhi, the Indian as well as world economic structure should resolve the basic needs of every one including food and clothing. For the same production of the commodities that cater the essential needs of the individual should be available to everyone like the air and the water given by god, devoid of exploitation. Since the individuals fails to give due importance to the above mentioned concerns, our nation still remains in the pathetic situation even in the present period. Large scale industries produced innumerable products with the help of highly advanced machines. But it’s a miserable fact that these products are produced not primarily to meet the needs of the customer and it will only help the bourgeois class millionaire to exploit the economically back word people. When other countries are trying to find market economies all over the world, India finds it too hard to find a market in another country to sell its products. Gandhi also realized that though the machines help a lot to increase efficiency of production, it also ends up in a situation where a big percent of laborers lose their jobs. He visualized a nation where every citizen possesses a job of his own which will help him meet the primary needs of his life.

In the words of the British thinker Bradley, Gandhi was not only a contemplative mystic but also an active mystic. His society was not only one which includes human beings but the whole universe, which includes all living and non living beings. It was that universe which he tried to realize his individuality. Gandhi’s aim was the same as the great yogi Sri Aurobindo, who instructed to make this universe divine through the help of ‘*sachidanada*’ who should be evolved through selfless serving and pure love. First step was to elevate mans social and individual life and thereby to spiritualize and make divine this world. Gandhi recognized non-violence as a way of life in order to bring out the

⁵⁷M.K. Gandhi., *Op.cit*, 26.03.1931, p. 49

divine in man. His fight against Untouchability and alcoholism was also for this end. He fought for women's rights and also to release man from bestiality and elevate him to divine status. Gandhi realized that mechanical routine is more dangerous than bestiality. That is why he fought against the mechanical and industrial culture. He became involved in politics in order to show that society, individual and the universe are one. But he did social work through worship of god, love, serving and non-violence. He dreamt to take about a total transformation in the economic area from beginning to the end through his non-violent method. Though there are some lacunas present in Gandhi's philosophy, he thoroughly contributed in achieving our nation's independence. He put tireless efforts to make people aware of their rights immanent strength within and the need to lead a meaningful life. His selfless sacrificial deeds, pursuit of truth and his exceptional charisma consequently led to the emergence of a great warrior who fought for independence along with the weapons of truth and non-violence.

CHAPTER III

MAHATMA GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

III.1. Back Ground of Mahatma Gandhi's Concept of Non-violence

Gandhi's concept of non-violence is the outcome of his vast experiences and experiments which he conducted in the laboratory of his own life. Non-violence is a crucial principle in Gandhi's philosophy. In fact Gandhi's ethics is known to be an ethics of *Ahimsa*. As a matter of fact Gandhi was undoubtedly the greatest ethical and religious thinker of our times. In his writings and speeches he gave more importance to non-violence and Truth. Both are the very fundamentals on which Gandhi's philosophy is based. The word non-violence is very difficult term to define. Without clear cut knowledge, the concept of non-violence can't be understood properly. The practice of non-violence is the only way to understand what the concept is. It can make non-violence an unfailing weapon. There is a need to know the depth of non-violence and all its types. Gandhi said that "*Ahimsa* is the theory which is indefinable as God. But in its working one can perceive the glimpses of the Almighty as he is working in and through us."⁵⁸ In the contemporary world there are many social evils and anarchy. Man is getting deprived of human quality and has become extremely cruel. There is a greater need for retaining tranquility and peace today which has been destroyed by scientific developments that has prompted the mankind to shed non-violent mentality and to possess new destructive methods and weapons for security. In this chapter the researcher attempted to highlight the essential meaning of non-violence that is propagated by Gandhi and its possibility of transforming the contemporary society.

Mahatma Gandhi was not a prophet and saint even though in his whole life, he strictly holds on to truth and *ahimsa*. He was an ordinary man but his thinking is based on high moral values. Gandhi's non-violence is to be applied as a powerful tool for a positive social change. Gandhi's non-violence was not only political but it was also spiritual too. It was the founding principle of Gandhi's spirituality. "Gandhi is not the

⁵⁸ K.S. Bharathi, *Mahatma Gandhi: Man of The Millennium*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Company PVT. LTD, 2000, p.135

originator of the doctrine of non-violence. As a spiritual hearer of India, he inherited the conceptual wealth of *ahimsa* from her seers and philosophers and made an ethical capital out of it for the realization of truth which is god to him.”⁵⁹ Thus *ahimsa* is not the discovery by Gandhi and Gandhi himself accepted the same. His theory of non-violence achieved uniqueness. Gandhi applied this concept in the social, political and economic fields and had proved the validity of this concept by the success gained of it in various situations.

Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of non-violence or *ahimsa* made a vast impact on the contemporary social and cultural life of humanity. It was his firm opinion that love is the law of our being and at the same time non-violence is the supreme law and it was the corner stone of Mahatma Gandhi’s thought. He was the first person who understood and practiced the powerfulness of collective non-violent action as a moral weapon to fight against the strong and powerful for justice. That’s why his message has created a mass appraisal in India and elsewhere.

Without surprise one can rightly say that non-violence is a cultural and religious product. Our culture is a byproduct of various castes, creeds and religions. The connecting link of all the three is the religion of *ahimsa*. Each and every religion in this world teaches us non –violence and not violence. At the same time non-violence and co-operation are the essences of our culture. Hence *ahimsa* occupies a fundamental position in every aspect of our life. In Religions like Jainism and Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam one can look in to the most explicit enunciation of *ahimsa*. They also teach us the importance of practicing non-violence in speech word and action

III.2. Indian and Western influences of Mahatma Gandhi

III.2.1. Jainism and Influence of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi dedicated his whole life for the sake of social, moral and spiritual activities not only in India but also out of the country and nobody can see any dichotomy in his words and deeds. Because of this reason, he got high place in India. Gandhi was immensely

⁵⁹ K. S. Bharathi, *Socio Religious Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi*, Nagpur: Dharshan Publishers, 1989, p. 12.

influenced by the Hindu beliefs and doctrines. In his point of view, the traditional worth of Hinduism is sound and satisfactory. He has not formulated any new principles but he tried to reformulate the pre-existing principles. His concept of Sathyagraha has its basis on the five disciplines of Hinduism that is: *Ahimsa*, Truth, Non Possession, Non Stealing and Brahmacharya. They are absolutely necessary in the pursuit of self- realization. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity gave very high place for the practice of non-violence. They teach us that one has to practice non-violence not only in speech but also in thought and action. Jainism and Buddhism made the significant influences that lay behind the foundation of Gandhi's non-violent theory. By analyzing all the religions one can find that non –violence signify the same as way of life just like the very ancient history and also Jainism is the first religion in the world propagate ‘*Ahimsa*’ par excellence among all others .

Jainism gave more importance to ethical principles of non –violence. It not only discusses morality but also epistemology and metaphysics too. Jainism defines the principle of *ahimsa* as carried out devoid of killing human beings, birds and animals, and plants; such kind of a vow is called real *ahimsa*. It infers that, if a person doesn’t have the power to give life to others, he doesn’t have the right to take away others life. The Important point here is that, in Jainism all members should follow *ahimsa* vrata. They have given exact explanation of *ahimsa* “Within the very first written documents of the Jaina tradition, by contrast, we see a fully developed and quite distinct doctrine of karma that entails strict observance of ethical precepts rooted in *ahimsa*.”⁶⁰ Gandhi had grown up under the influence of the absolute non-violence of Jainism. Gandhi said that “No religion of the world has explained principle of *ahimsa* so deeply and scientifically as is discussed with its applicability in every human life in Jainism.”⁶¹ Jain’s applying non injury even in the smallest insects also. For observing *ahimsa* they followed five rules .The five rules are called ‘*samitis*’. It includes careful movement, speech, eating, placing, removing and careful evacuation. Some of the Jain’s while walking sweep the ground,

⁶⁰ Christopher Key Chapple, *Non -violence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*, Albany: State University of New York Press,1993, p.10

⁶¹ Janardan Pandey (ed.), *Gandhi and 21st Century*, Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1998, p.50

because of the fear of inhaling a living organism, some Jain's used to walk wearing veil. They also reject even the usage of honey.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation was very much influenced by the teachings of Jainism. He followed high degree of morality towards *ahimsa*. In his point of view wipe out angry physical injury, physical harm these types of thinking and acting have to be generated from the bottom of our heart then only one can get the good will. Because of the highest label of life to attain liberation (Moksha) Jaina philosophy agreed non-violence (*Ahimsa*) where as Gandhi's non-violence (*Ahimsa*) was the highest ideal of life and same as the means of achieving self-realization (moksha). There is a difference between Jain's concept of non-violence and Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence. The understanding and implementation of *ahimsa* in Jainism therefore is more radical, scrupulous and comprehensive than any other religion and it also makes a corner stone of their ethics.

III.2.2. Buddhism and its Influence on Mahatma Gandhi

Similar to Jainism Buddhism too advocates virtue of *Ahimsa*. Buddha's ethical life and teachings have largely influenced Mahatma Gandhi's life. Buddhism gives emphasis to the non-killing and of all creatures' non-injury. It has the foremost place in Gandhi's life. During his period people experienced the rigid caste system. He considered caste system as a curse in the society that never brings peace. It can only result in conflicts and struggles. In addition to this, under the oppressive social order, common people encountered more suffering. In this crucial situation he advocates *ahimsa* and peace as an alternative to communal harmony and public advancement. "The central theme of Buddha and his personality was compassion (karuna) which is a means for the welfare of 'sentient being'. For achieving the tranquility of mind one needs a character of friendliness, compassion, pure joy and forgiveness. "For the attainment of equanimity of mind and virtuous life the inculcation of truth, virtue, non-violence restraint and control was enjoined."⁶² It is a fact that Buddhism tried to train the individuals to view at the entire creation with a sense of kindness. The emphasis in Buddhism is on subjective

⁶² Manish Sharma, *Non-violence in the 21st Century: Application and Efficacy*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publication PVT. LTD, 2006, p. 42.

recognition of ethics of non-violence which lead to an inner transcendence of human beings and their final deliverance. He believes that the ethics of non-violence is the central chore of religious beliefs and rituals. Various ethical virtues of Buddha were non-violence and righteousness. According to Buddhism, “life should be governed by the five principles or ‘*Panchsheel*’ namely not to kill, not to steal, not to tell lies, not to commit adultery, and not to use intoxicants.”⁶³ It can be understood that *Panchsheel* which was the cardinal precept of Buddhist *ahimsa*. In fact the Buddhist doctrine of non-violence is more practicable because it is free from extremes. Buddhism teaches the service to our fellow beings without any ego. Gandhi adopted this kind of ethics of non-violence which is followed in both Jainism and Buddhism to each and every field of his life. Gandhi said that “A votary of *ahimsa* will strive for the great good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal.”⁶⁴ Buddha’s consideration of compassion (*karuna*) and friendliness (*maitri*) reveal the idea about the strength of non-violence. He advised that instead of evil one should conquer anger by love. As far as Buddha is concerned the meaning of *ahimsa* is non hatred of all sentient creatures. In his point of view first it should be cultivated in our thoughts, then in the words and finally through our actions.

III.2.3. Bhagavad Gita and its Influence on Mahatma Gandhi

As a Vedantist, Gandhi repeatedly called himself a *sanatan* Hindu and perceived extreme goodness in the Bhagavad Gita. Indeed Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana has greatly influenced, his philosophical thinking. In Hinduism Bagavad Gita is a Sacred Book. Gandhi says that, the study of Bagavad Gita led him to build up a new view of life which helped him to act like a practical person in his entire life. This book also had an indelible impact on Gandhi’s mind. According to Mahatma Gandhi, “the message of the Gita” says “when I first became acquainted with the Gita, I felt that it was not a historical work, but that under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and that physical warfare was brought in merely make the description of the natural duel more alluring. This preliminary intuition became more

⁶³ Kotturan, G. *Ahimsa: Gautama to Gandhi*, New Delhi: Srteling Publishers, 1974, p.13.

⁶⁴ Manish Sharma, *Non-violence in the 21st Century: Application and Efficacy* New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications PVT.LTD, 2006, p. 42.

confirmed on closer study of religion and the Gita.”⁶⁵ In the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita non-violence occupies a very important and central place. The central concept of the teaching of the *Gita* is the concept of ‘*Anasakta karmoyoga*’, it gives the way to self-realization. According to Gandhi “*Anasakti* (selfless) transcends *Ahimsa*. He who would be *anasakta* (selfless) has necessarily to practice non-violence in order to attain the state of selflessness. *Ahimsa* is, therefore, a necessary preliminary, it is included in *Anasakti* and it does not go beyond it.”⁶⁶ As a human being, a person should necessarily have the qualities of determination, firm conviction and righteous action. Mahatma Gandhi inculcated and adores these qualities through the scripture of Bagavad Gita.

III.2.4. Christianity and its Influence on Mahatma Gandhi

While Gandhi was studying in England, he came across the book of ‘New Testament’ from this book he got positive energy. However after reading this book he said, this book “went straight to my heart”. He attracted some sentence from these book that is “But I say to you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matthew 5:39) This message he took his entire life as a purity of path. Indeed Jesus Christ’s self suffering character spreads the light to Gandhi’s life. Truth , Non –violence and self- Suffering are triple pillars’ of *Satyagraha* , these three Pillars’. From Jesus life he found all these three principles. Hence Gandhi said that, “the example of Jesus’ suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal.”⁶⁷ However Gandhi not at all accepted the whole things specified in the Bible. He never considered that, Jesus is the only incarnate son of God and He opposes the faith that through the acceptance of Christ we can only get salvation. Hence Gandhi says that, “Jesus position in my mind as a good teacher and he put into effect a lot in my life.”

⁶⁵ Manish Sharma, *Non-violence in the 21st Century: Application and Efficacy* New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications PVT.LTD, 2006, p. 37.

⁶⁶ M. K. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1960 p.118.

⁶⁷ M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 7-1-1939

III.2.5. Islam and its Influence on Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was very much influenced by the religious teachings of Islam. It had a considerable role in the shaping of his notion of *Satyagraha*. The meaning of Islam is Peace and it never supports violence. Whenever Muslims unite together, they used to utter the words of “Assalamu Alaikum” (peace be on you). If a person who is compassionate and merciful in his thoughts, words and actions would not have any thoughts of violence in him. Allah commands in the holy Quran “be just that is nearer to observance of duty” (5:8). “He also requires that hatred towards others should not motivate you to do injustice to them which would be unjust. Thus in the same verse it is said: oh, you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably.”⁶⁸ So it can be clearly understood that, for molding Gandhi’s concept of non-violence the religion of Islam too holds an important role. Hence his concept of *ahimsa* was a wealthy and multifaceted concept.

III.2.6. Western Influences on Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi influenced not only by the Indian thinkers but also by the western thinkers too. Despite Indian culture, Gandhi also influenced by various prominent western thinkers like Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin and Henry David Thoreau in his philosophical as well as and practical life. Through their literature he has deeply understood these personalities while he was in South Africa. These literatures deeply influenced in his life. To quote him “Tolstoy is one of the three modern who have exerted the greatest spiritual influence on my life; the third being Ruskin”⁶⁹ the work of Tolstoy ‘The Kingdom of God within you’ Gandhi thoroughly read and it was highly influenced on his thought and life. Gandhi himself said that, Tolstoy’s kingdom of God within you overwhelmed me. It left an abiding impression on me--- its reading turned me of my skepticism and made me a firm believer in *Ahimsa*.⁷⁰ Tolstoy in his book says that “love is one of the adequate solutions

⁶⁸ Manish Sharma, *Non-violence in the 21st Century: Application and Efficacy*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications PVT.LTD, 2006, p. 43

⁶⁹ N Jayapalan, *Indian political thinkers, modern Indian political thought*, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers & Distributers, 2000, p.172

⁷⁰Ibid.,

for all human problems.”⁷¹ Tolstoy stood against the practices of owing private property capitalism, machinery, police and military force, payment of taxes and compulsory military services. He didn’t like pre-controlled society. In fact he believed not only in informal co-operation but also desired to bring these types of co operation through love, non resistance and non co operation. Gandhi also believed in non-violence and he was against modern civilization based on force and exploitation. Both of them supported people’s inner self purification attained through love but both have differences in their method .Tolstoy was a pacifist where as Gandhi was satyagrahi.

III.2.7. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was an American thinker, philosopher and an anarchist too. He coined the term ‘Civil Disobedience’ and used the term for the first time in 1849 in his speeches. While he was in jail during the period of *Satyagraha* movement, Gandhi read the book of *Civil Disobedience* written by H.D Thoreau. This book has greatly influenced Gandhi’s mind. He said that: “there is no doubt that Thoreau's idea greatly influenced my movement in India.”⁷² In his point of view if government break the laws and also violate human rights then people can correct the government. The ideas and techniques of civil – disobedience that are put forwarded by Thoreau and civil disobedience of Gandhi were noticeably different. For Gandhi ‘civil resistance’ was a passive one whereas Thoreau’s civil disobedience was both active (violent) and passive resistance. The influence of Thoreau on Gandhi consequently made him deep and powerful in numerous respects.

III.2.8. John Ruskin (1819 - 1900)

The second Western thinker John Ruskin (1819 - 1900) also influenced Gandhi’s life. As a social reformer, as an author and also as an artist Ruskin left indelible impact on the society. His book *Unto This Last* has greatly influenced of Gandhiji's life. According to him, the book was impossible to lie aside, once I had begun it, it gripped me. I have not got any sleep that night. When he started reading to this book, it deeply crushed Gandhi

⁷¹ Ibid.,

⁷² R..R. Diwakar, *Gandhi's Life, Thought and Philosophy*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963, pp. 47-48

and also it transformed his life. Gandhi said that: "The one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was 'Unto This Last'. I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it 'Sarvodaya' (The welfare of all). I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life."⁷³ Because of the ideal of this book Gandhi changed his life and he drew from it three principles.

1. "That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all;
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work;
3. That a life of the labor, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil, and the handicraftsman is the life worth living."⁷⁴

Under the influence of Ruskin's *'Unto this Last'* he equally believed that differential wages should not be paid for intellectual work in preference to manual work since intellectually poor should not be treated as superior to manual labor. After reading 'Unto This Last' Gandhi convinced that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow or by performing bread labor. There is rejection of machinery and tried spiritualized politics- deepened and strengthened his mind and heart. Gandhi believed that, without these western influences, his philosophy would be undoubtedly an Indian touch. Mahatma Gandhi was also influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was an American and transcendentalist who influenced Gandhi's life. While he was second time imprisoned in South Africa, he read about Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gandhi deeply influenced by his writings. Later Gandhi wrote one personal letter to his son on March 25, 1909. In that letter he mentioned, this is the view of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Massins and Ruskin all these people firmly believed that, education not only for developing our writing skills but also for character building. Gandhi also has same comment about Education. In his point of view education is the tool for character formation.

⁷³ M.K.Gandhi, An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiment With Truth, Ahmedabad: Navjeevan Publishing House, 1927, p. 224.

⁷⁴Ibid.,

III.3. Non-Violence and its Origin

Non-violence or *Ahimsa* was one of the most central virtues in Gandhi's Ethics. It is the combination of Sanskrit words 'HIMSA' with the negative prefix 'a'. Etymologically 'Himsa' is derived from 'HIMS' which means 'to injure', 'to harm', 'and to slay'. Therefore the meaning of *Ahimsa* is the renunciation of the will to kill or to harm or to injure. So literally '*ahimsa*' means non killing. The disciple of *ahimsa* aims to get rid of the highest fear in one's mind. In fact the disciple of *ahimsa* should keep fear only towards the ultimate power of God. In Indian religious thought one can understand about the meaning of *Ahimsa* However it is very difficult to find the origination of the concept of non-violence. Going through the historical written evidences, one can find Jainism that follows *ahimsa* but it is still unclear about Upanishads and Vedas whether they followed *ahimsa* or not. "In India *Ahimsa* or non-violence is strongly related with the ideas of karma. As a noun, *ahimsa* is mentioned for the first time in the *kapisthalakatha -sanhita* about 1000- 700 BC."⁷⁵ In religions like Jainism, Buddhism and the Yoga philosophy, they took non-violence as a compulsory norm for attaining their religious development.

In Indian philosophy there are so many types of classical works related to their own observation about war, peace and morality. In Mahabharata, war is considered as a duty, but it didn't give sanction for taking war as an unethical manner. More over when one takes war in to political power it will be treated like as a sin. Sometimes non-violence is perceived just like non killing not only human beings but also other creatures. In fact the actual meaning of non-violence is not only non-killing to others instead of this it also means not hurting physically mentally and psychologically others apart from physical damage, mental suffering and pains is the sign of violence. Excluding materialist and other Indian philosophical schools, all the Indian philosophical schools believe the concept of non-violence as a moral weapon. The yoga school took non-violence as a fundamental basis for the religious or spiritual growth of the individual. Whereas Jainism, make an effort to build a ritual system with in which one could apply the idea of non killing to each living creature correspondingly. Hindu social philosophy stated that any person, who is killed by other at war time, is not considered as violence. "Hence Manu

⁷⁵ Unto Tahtinen, *The Core of Gandhi's Philosophy*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publication, 1979,p.53

pointed out that “damaging was only himsa, when it was unauthorized damaging.”⁷⁶ Hence from this context one can understand that, the idea of concept of non-violence was not typical of the ascetic schools for dedicated to caste.

III.4. Mahatma Gandhi and His Philosophy of Non-Violence

Mahatma Gandhi dedicated his whole life to follow and practice the postulates of *ahimsa*. In fact in his total life non –violence is his breath. Gandhi suggested solutions through “*Ahimsa*” to the problems of modern man by thinking deeply and he showed how to put it into practice through the experiments he conducted among the people of India and Africa. *Ahimsa*, for Gandhi, is not an unacceptable entity and not just an avoidance of violence. It is a sacred love which is creative. It is a worldwide service having no mixture of selfish thoughts. That is not weak, but absolutely powerful, courageous and strong. There is no place for enmity, envy and rebellion. Gandhi exhorted people to treat their enemies as brothers. It is his real concept of *Ahimsa*. It implies to be kind and be lovable to the enemies and also forgetting the cruelty. These are clearly visible in his “*Ahimsa*”. Hence the need for a thorough study is inevitable for the Gandhi’s thought of Non –violence. As an approvable means of national defense, Gandhi intentionally discarded and he also tried to put back it through *Satyagraha*. A non -violent man of course would make over his society. He cannot put up with inequality or any forms of oppression in his surroundings. Regarding this Gandhi said that “We should regard even criminals as our brothers and crime as a disease in need of a cure. We should teach a criminal a vocation and provide him with the means to make an honest living and transform his life.”⁷⁷

The meaning of *Ahimsa* is not just staying away from bloody violence, but a complete absence of selfish thoughts and anger which would hamper the other creatures. “Himsa” and “*Ahimsa*” are antonyms. But keeping away from harming and killing are not practical in every contexts. For instance, a doctor would relieve the pain by giving a bitter brew to drink. But this is not himsa. But a doctor would go astray from *ahimsa* when he does not give us medicine when it should actually be given. The doctor, who hesitates to

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*,p.54

⁷⁷ Manish Sharma, *Non-violence in the 21st Century: Application and Efficacy*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications PVT. LTD, 2006, p.91

cut off the patient's bad body part thinking that it would harm the patient, is really a follower of himsa. Your friend's life must be saved from a killer by killing the enemy when there is no other way to escape. It will be a sin, if he does not do it and eventually there is no good for him. The childish thought of *ahimsa* makes him keep away from the action. According to Gandhi, a hard training is needed to achieve the great level of *Ahimsa*. He has to follow a good discipline like a soldier in his daily life. When there is a harmony between body, mind and speech definitely he will achieve a perfect condition. But this always causes a mental conflict. Gandhi through his life experiences, shows that if one could make the laws of "*Ahimsa*" and love as the law of our life, and if we swear to do so, all the problems would be solved. In his own journal Harijan, he said, "There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins (truth and non –violence) constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and the spiritual, the other physical and the material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end."⁷⁸

May be non-violence was the most appropriate principle of *Ahimsa*. He strictly said that absence of war is not the only way to get peace, when we wish to achieve peace we will have to wipe out all forms of exploitation. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that "*Ahimsa* is not the crude thing it has been made to appear, not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *ahimsa*."⁷⁹ Non-violence of Gandhi's conception is not a weapon of the weak but it is a weapon of the strong. He stated that, it will not make cowards of men but it will instill courage not only among men but also among women. Gandhi strongly believed that, compared to the weapon of *ahimsa* the weapon of the atom bomb is useless. The weapon of *ahimsa* has been much stronger than the weapon of atom bomb. He who follows "*Ahimsa*" is not to be called "weak". Only a person with extra ordinary courage could follow "*Ahimsa*". It is very difficult to accept with whom we develop

⁷⁸ K.S Bharathi, *Mahatma Gandhi Man of The Millennium*, New Delhi: S.Chand & Company PVT.LTD, 2000, p.52.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.136

enmity. That's why Gandhi had accreted that non-violence is not a weapon that can be used by people weak minds. The weapon of "Himsa" is his sword, i.e. gun, sword and dagger. But the weapon of "Ahimsa" is his faith in God. It is out of extreme fear, particularly of death that we adopt violent actions in some crucial circumstances. A person can start following non-violence only through annihilating that fear that burn deep down inside their mind.

Gandhi believed that *Ahimsa* is Love. Complete *Ahimsa* is the condition in which we never show anger towards any living being. Gandhi meant *Ahimsa* as a good attitude and real love towards all living beings, and the love which is encouraging to do good avoiding sins. Non-Killing (human or non-human), non-injury, love and *Satyagraha* comprise in the concept of non violence. Murder, casualties in war and violent revolution, capital punishments, abortion, mercy killing and suicide, these all are related to human killing. The killing of animals and plants included in non human killing. In the case of non-injury it not only comprises non injury of people's body or mind but it also comprises damaging of materials also. "Injuring may be direct or indirect. Any indirect form of injury includes exploitation, injustice and inequality. Therefore, non injury presupposes no exploitation, injustice, and equality."⁸⁰

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence has two sides: one is negative and the other is positive, it is like the head and tail of the same coin that means it cannot be divided and it gives them an ethical color. He said that "In its negative form, it means not injuring any living being, whether by body or mind. I may not therefore hurt the wrong-doer or bear any ill will to him and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not consider the suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural act of mine which do not proceed from ill will... *Ahimsa* requires deliberate self suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong-doer."⁸¹ Again the positive meaning attributed by Gandhi is that "in its positive form *ahimsa* means, the largest love, and the greatest charity. If I am a follower of *ahimsa*, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me, as I would to my wrong

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.137.

⁸¹ Mazhar Kibriya, *Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi: APH Publishing House, 1999,p.10

doing father or son. This active *Ahimsa* necessarily includes truth and fearfulness.”⁸² Here we can say Gandhi is closely associated with the notion of truth and non –violence.

Non-violence and Truth are two important concepts of Mahatma Gandhi’s life. In the modern society there are many types of violence. For eliminating these types of violence one has to decide to make a choice between violence and non violence. In fact Violence means an act to attack .Due to an act of violence our property will get destructed and wars and conflicts will increase. Consequentially, without committing any faults, millions are getting injured and it raises a great threat against human existence. It includes a variety of cruel atrocities like mental torture, bodily harm, loss of property and overall disrespect towards human rights. Without second thought it can be said that, violence helps achieving desired ends or achieving quick results. This is because violence has clear and definite methods, weapons and strategies. Indeed a completely non-violent society is a mere utopia and violence becomes inevitable or unavoidable when it is executed, in order to maintain one’s dignity or when provoked by unbearable oppression. Even Gandhi, who is considered as a modern prophet of non-violence, defended violence in certain situations. However he used violence in a very apt manner “... because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.”⁸³ When violence adapting is as a solution against any problem, that results an extra chain-reaction which creates more violence. Whereas Non-violence on the other hand, puts a stop to violence or any kind of atrocities and it is very difficult to continue violence and sufferings to another. Non-violence by creating a sense of guilt in the evil doer subtly transforms him. Therefore, undoubtedly it can be said that, non –violence not only stops violence but it also makes a shift from evil to good and considerably contributes to peace and kindness. Accordingly it won’t be wrong to conclude that it is much better to practice non-violence in every terrible situation or critical juncture. So we can say that, the teaching of non-violence and violence are diametrically opposed to each other. That means one is different from other. “Violence is needed for the protection of things external” where as “non violence is needed for the protection of the atma, for the

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.10.11

⁸³ B.N Ray *Gandhigiri, Satyagraha After Hundred Years*, New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2008, p.154.

protection of one's honor."⁸⁴ He practiced non-violence in his life till his death. Gandhi said that "for me non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle, it is the rule and breath of my life."⁸⁵ Again he said that "Non Violence is the first Article of my faith. It is also the last Article of my creed."⁸⁶ All these instances reveal that he practiced non-violence throughout his whole life.

In his point of view the character of violence is a desire of man. Though he had lot of challengers he didn't lose his expectation on the success of nonviolence against any forms of violence. "He asserted that in democratic societies non violence is the only means available to settle social racial and national problems."⁸⁷ For him a non-violent action means not to punish and hurt an enemy even if they hurt us and do not cooperate with us. If people intend to do like that "we must make him them feel that in us he has a friend and we should try to reach to his heart by rendering him humanitarian service."⁸⁸ Yet, according to Gandhi, our bad thoughts, unnecessary bustle, lying and contempt are also against *ahimsa*. Capturing another's property is also against the principle of *ahimsa*. Gandhi thinks the power of *ahimsa* is immense. The world will be under control of one who follows *Ahimsa*. He might not have wished it, but it will be so. Even our enemy will start loving us when we give him a love that goes deep into his heart. If we do so, it will bring down the violence that happens in our world, the violence against women.

III.5. Mahathma Gandhi's Concept of *Satyagraha*

During the British rule in India, Indians have suffered a lot due to the slavery imposed on them by the Britishers. Mahatma Gandhi adopted the technique of *Satyagraha* to get rid of the slavery and to attain freedom. The term '*Satyagraha*' is derived from the two Sanskrit words, 'Satya' meaning 'Truth' and 'Agraha' meaning 'determined pursuit' or 'holding on to truth'. So it literally means, 'insistence on truth'. Gandhi describes *Satyagraha* as 'a ruthless hunt for truth and strength of mind to reach truth' is based on the principle of love and believes in 'love for all'. It eliminates each and every form of

⁸⁴ M.K Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers* , London: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2005,p.11.

⁸⁵ Mazhar Kibriya, *Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi: APH Publishing House, 1999, p.7.

⁸⁶ M.K.Gandhi, *Young india* 23-03-1992

⁸⁷ Manish Sharma, *Op.cit.*, p.34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

violence. Searching of truth is the technique of *Satyagraha* through the acceptance of non-violent methods. Etymologically the meaning of *Satyagraha* is truth. Most commonly, political leaders hold back truth at the same time when Gandhiji encourage it in *Satyagraha*, however by peaceful manner he won the anti-colonial campaign in India. That truth which is not applied is useless. The application of truth is *Satyagraha*. It is the upholding of truth. When *Satyagraha* starts acting with all its might, truth, non-violence and tapasya join in one spot. This will help in leading a happy life. Only complete non-violence will arouse real virtues in us. *Satyagraha* is the means by which real virtue is established and non-violence used as a tool to ascertain truth. In order to protest against the evil in the political, social and economic fields, Gandhi started a new spiritual movement named *Satyagraha*. This truth and non-violence based movement was successfully put in to practice in South Africa and then in India.

As a way of life *Satyagraha* seeks self-realization. If we need to get self – realization, we must follow ethical discipline. *Satyagraha* is an innate legacy of a person and it is a sacred duty too. If governments won't resolve people's problems and government try to support dishonesty and terrorism then sathyagraha should break all these rules. But one who wants to prove correct his rights should be ready to bear all kinds of suffering. From the observance of some vows one can furnish ethical discipline. Gandhi said that "A vow is like a right angle. An insignificant right angle will make all the differences between ugliness and elegance, solidity and shakiness of a gigantic structure...Modernization and sobriety is of the very essence of vow taking."⁸⁹ To achieve moral and spiritual strength, Gandhi formulated certain regulations in our life to practice in our day –to –day life. These disciplines are as follows:

- “Truth (*satya*)
- Non-violence (*ahimsa*)
- Continenence (*brahmacharya*)
- Control of Palate(*aswad*)
- Non –Stealing (*asteya*)

⁸⁹ K.S. Bharathi, *Mahatma Gandhi- Man of the Millennium*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Company LTD, 2000, p.132.

- Non –Possession (*aparigraha*)
- Fearlessness (*sarvathrabayavarjana*)
- Bread-Labour (*shareera shrama*)
- Use of things produced nearest to one’s place (*Swadeshi*)
- Equality of all Religions (*sarvadharmasamanatha*)
- Removal of Untouchability (*sparshabhavana*).”⁹⁰

III.5.1. Truth (*Satya*)

The observance of Truth is the first vow of all discipline and at the same time it was the central element of Gandhi’s *Satyagraha*. The voice of truth actually is our inner voice. The word ‘Truth’ originated from the Sanskrit word ‘Sat’ which means being existing living. Therefore the meaning of truth is “That which exists”. As for Gandhi truth is nothing but a law operating in the universe. Gandhi recognized God through truth. For this reason his well-known proposition was “God is truth”. A person can cheat in the name of God, but a person cannot cheat in the name of truth. Because truth is universal and applicable to all. Gandhi pointed out that “I found that the nearest approach to truth was through love. But love has many meanings in the English language. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and even the atheist had not demurred to the necessity or power of truth. And it was because of this reason that I saw that rather than say that ‘God is Truth’; I should say that ‘Truth is God’. Accordingly in our fight for social change, we must hold fast to truth and truth alone.”⁹¹ In fact Truth is the essence of goodness and it not merely means refraining from lies. Gandhi says “Devotion to this truth is the sole justification for existence. All our activities should be entered in truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life.”⁹² Untruth and dishonesty over and over again seem to win, but for time being only, but ultimately truth wins in the end.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.134.

⁹¹ Surjit Kaur Jolly (ed.) *Reading Gandhi*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2006, p.98.

⁹² M.K. Gandhi., *From Yervada Mandir*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1990, p. 3.

III.5.2. Contenance (*Brahmacharya*)

Another notable vow of *Satyagraha* is Brahmacharya. The meaning of Brahmacharya is the “conduct adapted to the search of Brahma.”⁹³ That means “control of all the senses at all the time and at all places in thought, word and deed.”⁹⁴ Mostly the concept of Brahmacharya is misunderstood by people. Mahatma Gandhi points out that “mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observe Brahmacharya. I feel that, this conception is incomplete and wrong. Brahmacharya means control of all the organs of sense. He, who attempts to control only one organ and allows all others free play, is bound to find his effort futile”. In that case Brahmacharya strictly rejects marriage and it also advises not to keep intimate relationship especially physical relationship among men and women. But Gandhi rejects this conventional faith and goes a little ahead in broadening the concept. He himself said that “It is not women whose touch defies man, but he is himself often too impure to touch her.”⁹⁵ Gandhi meant that a person who is single is not the only one who can practice Brahmacharya. When a person develops a relationship of purity and friendship with his wife then in this sense a married person can also practice Brahmacharya.

Without the support of prayers we cannot practice Brahmacharya and it is the most important quality of *Satyagraha*. So Gandhi points out that prayer is the most important weapon of *Satyagraha* which helps us to purify our self. As a human being, to live food is very important. In the same way to purify our mind we should pray daily.

III.5.3. Control of the Palate (*aswad*)

Without observe above mentioning vows this vow can't be observed. Gandhi himself said that, when a person can overcome his thirst for pleasure he can easily practice all vows particularly the observance of Brahmacharya. According to Gandhi “Control of the palate is very closely connected with Brahmacharya. I have found from experience that the observance of celibacy become very easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate. This does not figure among the observance of time– honored

⁹³ K.S. Bharathi, *Op. cit.*, p.139.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁹⁵ K.S. Bharathi, *Op..cit.*, p.140.

recognition... We of the *Satyagraha* Ashram has elevated it to the rank of an independent observance and must therefore consider it by itself.”⁹⁶ One must have food just like a medicine. When excess amount of food is taken the body will be injured and through fasting to some extent one can overcome this problem. Gandhi’s slogan was a proclamation to eat food for living and not to live for eating. Gandhi experimented this vow in his entire life and he gained success in it. He believed that “One who is desirous of serving his country must daily regulate and purify his diet and gradually abstain food, which would stimulate animal passions.”⁹⁷ When one eats more food it is not possible to control the sense organs and become slave of the sense organs. However he tries to remind us that, food is meant only to maintain the physiological functions.

III.5.4. Non-Possession (*Aparigraha*)

As an outcome of Truth and *Ahimsa*, non-stealing directs the way to non-possession. Possession is a very big obstacle in the search of truth. Gandhi said that, thirst for acquiring more property and things are the consequences of materialism. He asserted that, if one holds of anything without any need that is a sinful practice. For Gandhi, the possession of unessential belongings is not a good deed. It is just like a crime against humanity and God. “God never stores for the morrow: he never creates more than what is strictly needed for the movement.”⁹⁸ It also includes the idea of voluntary poverty, which, according to Gandhi entails decreasing ones desire and wants. In a wide sense can discover that if rich people have an unnecessary store of things which they don’t really need, it will affect millions who suffer from starvation. Gandhi stood against the idea of people belonging to a particular class accumulating all the wealth leaving other section in the hands of extreme poverty. Stealing others’ property is a violation of *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha*. To possess a thing means also being possessed by it.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p.147.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p.139.

⁹⁸ Joy Kachappilly, *Gandhi and Truth: An approach to the Theology of Religions* New Delhi : Akansha Publishing House, 2005, p.126.

III.5.5. Fearlessness (*Sarvathrabayavarjana*)

Truth and non-violence are the core concepts of *Satyagraha*. For pursuing this we must possess the quality of fearlessness. If a person's mind has fear he cannot follow Truth and *Ahimsa*. So that a *satyagrahi* has to be liberated from the fear of kings, people, caste, families, thieves, robbers, even death. Gandhi found that our India is seized with a paralyzing fear. To getting rid of this fear, Gandhi prescribed the vow of fearlessness to people. A non violent fighter necessarily follows cultivation of courage and willingness to sacrifice and also all these things demand fearlessness. "He who has not overcome all fear cannot practice *ahimsa* to perfection."⁹⁹ He can only defend himself against others through the force of truth. If one has non attachment to body he will be fearless. His point of view attachment to the body is the reason for all fear in human being. We should fear only God and not other things. "When we fear God then we shall fear no man, however high placed he may be, and if we want to follow the vow of truth then fearlessness is absolutely necessary."¹⁰⁰

III.5.6. Bread –Labor (*Shareera Shrama*)

The meaning of bread labor refers to the act of laboring with hands to earn one's bread and also to meet the primary needs of life. "Bread labor is a veritable blessing to one who would observe non-violence, worship truth, and make the observance of Brahmacharya a natural act."¹⁰¹ Without working no one has the right for eating food. This concept was first introduced by the Russian writer T.M. Bondaref and after that Tolstoy gave wider publicity to this concept. Once Gandhi read the essay of Tolstoy and those principles and his concept came greatly influenced Gandhi's mind. According to Gandhi "the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita where we are told that he who eats without offering sacrifice here can only mean bread labour."¹⁰² Mahatma Gandhi believed that, the universal form of bread labor is hand spinning so that he recommended hand spinning to all. The word 'bread labour' Gandhi means that to lead a life as a human being in this world we need to work hard. The worker should have the leadership quality

⁹⁹ Surjit Kaur Jolly (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p.101.

¹⁰⁰ M.P. Mathai, *Gandhi World View: A Study*, Kottayam: Mahathma Gandhi University, 1992.

¹⁰¹ Surjit Kaur Jolly (ed.), *Op.cit.*, p.101.

¹⁰² M.K.Gandhi, *From Yeravadha Mandhir* London: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2005, p.35.

of management. When the vow of bread labour advantages is observed there are many. They are: The universal conflict between the capital and the labour, between the rich and the poor would come to an end. This vow also reminds us that in this world each and every type of work is important and has its own significance.

III.5.7. Use of Things Produced Nearest to Ones Place (*Swadeshi*)

The meaning of Swadeshi is the spirit, “which restricts persons to the use of services available in the immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.”¹⁰³ Gandhi stood against the factory goods and he promoted locally produced goods. As part of it, he tried to promote and popularize the consumption of locally produced goods. He said, “I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom nature has made my first care.”¹⁰⁴ At women’s meeting in 1919, he pointed out that “Swadeshi is that spirit in them which required them to serve their immediate neighbors before others and to use things produced in their neighborhoods in preference to those more remote. So doing they served humanity to the best of their capacity. They could not serve humanity neglecting their neighbors.”¹⁰⁵

III.5.8. Equality of all Religions (*Sarva-dharma-samanatha*)

The meaning of equality of all Religions is admiration and worship for all religion. Gandhi never appreciated the act of tolerance. Tolerance can bring unwarranted inferiority in between one religion and the other. Hence one can admit the imperfections of one’s own religion. When one accepts the doctrine of equality of all religions that cannot collapse the distinction between religion and non religion. However when a person seeks truth and love he won’t feel hatred towards an irreligious person; “instead help that person to see the error of his /her ways, or he/she will point out our error, or each will tolerate the others differences of opinion.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Joy Kachappilly, *Gandhi and Truth: An approach to the Theology of Religions*, New Delhi : Akansha Publishing House, 2005, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 12 -03-1925.

¹⁰⁵ Romesh K Diwan and Mark A Lutz, *Essays in Gandhian Economics*, America:ITD Group of North America, 1987, p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ .” Joy Kachappilly, op.cit.,p.129.

III.5.9. Removal of Untouchability (*Sparshabhavana*)

It is yet another type of vow. In fact Untouchability is a plague of Hinduism. It is a very inhuman concept and hence the humanity must fight against this evil practice. “Untouchability means pollution by touch of certain persons by reason of his birth in a particular state or family”. As far as Gandhi is concerned untouchability as an “excrescence”, an untruth, a major blemish on Hinduism and at the same time it is a great lie. To eradicate this evil one must first consider it as a sin. It always opposes the practice of truth and non-violence and thus for Gandhi removing untouchability is the greatest service for the whole world. In fact “A seeker after truth treats everyone as equal by loving him or her as he/she loves his/her own self. He/ she should visualize the removal of untouchability from a spiritual standpoint and should worry about its material or political consequences.”¹⁰⁷

Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* was also known as Passive Resistance, civil disobedience and non cooperation at the beginning. According to Gandhi, one who gives up Himsa or violence completely could use and grow the power of *Satyagraha* as it is based on fortitude. Because violence is against fortitude. Only one who understands there is something more than the animal power in man could effectively become a follower of non-violence or *Satyagraha*. It is an important fact that, a person should not follow *Satyagraha* for a thing which is not reasonable. There should not be violence in one’s words and deeds. Our target must always be reasonable and must avoid violence. One must be ready for imparting self- torture and it was the success mantra according to Gandhi. But all the individuals could not absorb complete self sacrifice when participating in a movement. If self sacrifice is made compulsory, the protest is impossible. In fact for Gandhi removal of untouchability is not only aiming at the purity of Hinduism but it also is spreading love and service to the whole world .The leader of our protest must be ‘Rama’. The leader must strongly practice self-sacrifice. He must realize the mysterious power in himself. He must be able to transform the visions of his followers. He must also be humble in his attitude and initiate and stop *Satyagraha* according to the circumstances. Otherwise he will feel contempt on himself and

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.128.

Satyagraha. This would be the reason for the failure of many *Satyagraha* movements. But it is a fact that, real *Satyagraha* is sacred. Gandhi said that it is like a sword edged in all sides. The user and the used would get blessings from it. It will create many farfetched advantages without any bloodshed. *Satyagraha* is deep rooted in truth and non violence. A coward is not a good follower of *Satyagraha* as it is the art not only of life but also of death. The one and the only goal of adhering to the vows according to Gandhi is individual moral and spiritual progress along with community living.

III.5.10. The Purity of Path and *Satyagraha*

Another important principle of *Satyagraha* is the purity of path. Our aim and path should be sacred. Gandhi observed that the religions and politics are ignoring this concept. So he gave much importance to this principle. The religions questioning the middle age Europe and the communist violence's are examples for this. Though the aim was good, the path they opted was unethical so that they could not fulfill their aim. Gandhi was the only courageous political leader who exhorted people to have purity in aim and path. It is already mentioned that, *Satyagraha* is based on pure fortitude. A *Satyagraha* follower should have self control and self purity. He must not forget that, there is difference in 'sin' and the 'sinner'. No unnecessary bad words must be used against the sinner even if the sin is very hard. He must believe that everyone can be transformed with love and kindness. He tries to put down evil with good and himsa with *ahimsa*. There is no other way to make this world devoid of evils. So he must have a careful self introspection on whether he was completely away from anger and sins. Half of the success of the life depends upon this. According to Gandhi, a satyagrahi would become more powerful and effective when he practices real *Satyagraha* believing that he was very powerful.

Gandhi suggested the followers of *Satyagraha* to follow complete brahmacharya and lead a simple life. He believed that there will not be a powerful mind if his body and mind is interested in sensual thoughts. He could not perform great actions if he surrendered to animal instincts. A satyagrahi should not be interested in money and should not be greedy. He should have a healthy body and mind. Faith in god is also important for satyagrahi. As he might not be powerful if he does not have the help of god.

The leader of our protest must be 'Rama'. The leader must strongly practice self-sacrifice. He must realize the mysterious powers inside him. He must be able to transform the visions of his followers. He must also be humble in his attitude and start and stop *Satyagraha* according to the circumstances. Otherwise he will feel contempt on himself and *Satyagraha*. This is the reason for the failure of many *Satyagraha* movements. But real *Satyagraha* is sacred. Gandhi said that, it is like a sword edged in all sides. The user and the used would get blessings from it. It will create many farfetched advantages without any bloodshed. *Satyagraha* is deep rooted in truth and non violence. A coward is not a good follower of *Satyagraha* as it is the art not only of life but also of death.

In the contemporary world the peace making method of *Satyagraha* can be measured as the unique contribution of India. Through the method of *Satyagraha*, Gandhi believed that, one can attain political, social and economic goals. According to him "My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of *Satyagraha*. It is not, claimed that all the laws of *Satyagraha* have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of *Satyagraha*. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. *Satyagraha* can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral".¹⁰⁸ Gandhi points out that, the main point of *Satyagraha* is to wipe out the evil and transform the opponent. Without practicing any concept he never preached it to others. Another important principle of *Satyagraha* is the purity of path. Our aim and path should be sacred. Gandhi saw that, the religions and politics are ignoring this concept. So he gave much importance to this principle. The religions questioning the middle age Europe and the communist violence's are the example for this. Though the aim was good, the path they selected was unethical so that they could not fulfill their aim. Gandhi was the only courageous political leader who exhorted people to have purity in aim and path. It is already mentioned that *Satyagraha* is based on pure fortitude. A *Satyagraha* follower should have self control and self purity. He must not forget that there is difference in 'sin' and the 'sinner'. No unnecessary bad words must be used against the sinner even if the sin is very hard. He must believe that, all people can be transformed with love and

¹⁰⁸ M.K Gandhi, *Harijan*, 20.07.1947, p.96

kindness. He tries to put down evil with good and himsa with *ahimsa*. There is no other way to make this world devoid of evils. So one must have a careful self introspection whether he was completely away from anger and sins. According to Gandhi, a satyagrahi would become more powerful and effective when he practices the real *Satyagraha* believing that he was very powerful. Gandhi suggested the followers of *Satyagraha* to follow complete brahmacharya and lead a simple and poor life.

III.6. Methods of Non-violent Action

Non-violent action has quite a lot of methods, which sort out into acts of protest and persuasion, non-cooperation and nonviolent intervention. These methods help to win over the enemy in a non-violent way with the intention of bringing about modification or reassessment of the matter under consideration with fruitful, positive and humanitarian framework. The main methods of adopting non violent actions are:

- Protest and Persuasion
- Non –cooperation
- Civil Disobedience
- Picketing
- Strike
- Fasting

III.6.1. Protest and Persuasion

Through this method, the protestors try to protest or demand something like pending a bill with the legislature or concerned authority. Moreover through this method the protesters used to criticize the social or a political issue which violate human rights. The main aim of this method is to influence the opposition or legal government or authority in order to bring the change, or to communicate the rightful message to the larger masses, or to induce the sufferer to do something to achieve justice. This method includes parades, mourning, public meetings, open discussions, group lobbying, picketing, and marches and so on. An important example of this method is the picketing of opium and liquor shops, law courts and government buildings in 1930 during the Indian freedom struggle.

III.6.2. Non-Cooperation

Non-Cooperation is another method of non-violent action. It is the primary step of non-violent action. It was launched all over India under the guidance of Gandhi. Non-violence is a very important part of non-cooperation. This occupies a purposeful denial of cooperation with the opponent. It is argued that due to the cooperation of sufferer, violence in the society is pulling off. Without the cooperation of victims the mistreatment of others is impossible. However if one wants to stop exploitation, he has to leave co-operation by the victims. Gandhi argued that, the existing social system is the resultant of the fear and greed in one's minds. In difficult times they accept their exploitation and they try to believe that, everything is happening according to destiny. This helps to increase exploiter's power. According to Gandhi, "fear including its concomitants, is at the root of oppression, exploitation, violence and the powerlessness to say 'no'."¹⁰⁹ Hence both the exploited and exploiters must remove the fear and greed. Without much training Non co-operation cannot start. "The result of hasty non cooperation can lead only to harm."¹¹⁰

Non-violence is the basic characteristic of non-cooperation. Non-violence is not a negative conception, because it always inhere cooperation. In his point of view non cooperation must follow non-violent manner. The unity of mankind is the base of the method of non cooperation. Our society has been facing social, economic and political problems. To eliminate these issues Gandhi has adopted non-cooperation technique. Hence it can be understood that, through this method he tried to raise social noncooperation, economic non-cooperation, or political non-cooperation. Social non-cooperation includes boycott of an individual or a group that is considered unjust or wrong. Economic non-cooperation means showing negative response in forming economic relations with the opponent and it is mainly adopted in labor struggles or national independence movements. Political non-cooperation includes denial of having normal political participation in the company of illegal working group. An important example of this kind includes civil disobedience movement headed by Gandhi during

¹⁰⁹ Parmeshwari Dayal, *Gandhian Theory of Social Reconstruction*, Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 2006 p.295

¹¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 01-8 -1925.

1930-31, which included the violation of number of laws. The fundamental basis for all these was non – violence. Non –Violent, non cooperation does not seek the past. Gandhi says that “In a non -violent fight one has certain measure, to conform to the tradition and conventions of the system he has pitted against. Avoidance of all relationships with the opposing power, therefore, can never be a Satyagrahi’s object, but transformation and purification of that relationship.”¹¹¹

Some of the Stages of Non-Cooperation.

Guiding the moment when launching the non cooperation movement it is very necessary thing. The leader should take all necessary decisions from time to time. The use of the weapons of non -violent non cooperation many change from one situation to the other. However seeking the help of the experienced members of the committee one should take all decisions. People shall not participate in government loan schemes. The lawyers suspend their practice in the government courts. Parents boycott the government schools and colleges which are meant to produce the civil servants to run the administration. The representatives of the people shall not participate in the legislative institutions. People boycott functions organized by the government. The social boycott must be civilized and does not prevent the people from rendering humanitarian service to the government officials. The people shall refuse to join civil or military service. In the last stage of the non- cooperation moment , the civil servants and the military will quit the government. *Satyagraha* was also known in the name ‘ non- cooperation’. Initially Gandhi used the terms ‘*Satyagraha*’, ‘non cooperation’ and ‘civil disobedience’ which mean the same. But when he realized the possibilities of ‘ *Satyagraha*’ he thought it is more deep and powerful. It can be used in politics and family. But ‘non cooperation and civil disobedience are limited to the political level. Both of them are used according to the democratic principles.

¹¹¹ Parmeshwari Dayal, *Gandhian Theory of Social Reconstruction*, Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 2006, p.296.

III.6.3. Civil Disobedience

The non-violent method of civil disobedience was first introduced by Thoreau. For depicting the laws of slave, state and resistance used this method. About the duty of civil resistance he has written a treatise. Actually the meaning of civil disobedience is the opposition to obey certain laws on the basis of majority rule devoid of resorting to physical violence; it is a form of democratic oppression. In seeking an active form of civil disobedience, one may deliberately break certain laws, by forming a peaceful blockade or occupy a facility illegally. Protesters practice this non-violent form of civil disorder with the expectation that they will be arrested. Others also expected to be attacked or even beaten by the authorities. Protesters often undergo training in advance on how to react or to attack, so that they will do so in such a manner that quietly or limply resists without threatening the authorities. For Gandhi, civil disobedience should be based on non-violent manner. For opposing some organization and rules he used this method. Gandhi said that "it (civil disobedience) should be civil in the sense of being well-mannered and also it must be based on non-violence." Civil disobedience and criminal disobedient are difference in nature. If disobedience has to be civil, it must be sincere respectful, restrained, non-violent and never defiant. Criminal disobedience leads to anarchy and government can very easily gives critical remark through dint of power. But in the case of civil disobedience these types of things are not possible. If people take civil disobedience as a sacred duty our state will become corrupt, unjust, and oppressive. To respect the laws of state this method can be used. It can also be used for opposing the rules of some organizations or institutions. According to Gandhi "The use of civil disobedience will be healthy, necessary and effective only if we otherwise conform to the laws of all growth. We must therefore give its full and therefore greater value to the adjective civil, than to disobedience. Disobedience without civility, discipline, discrimination, and non violence is for certain destruction. Disobedience combined with love is the living water of life. Civil -disobedience is a beautiful variant to signify growth, it is not discordance which spells death."¹¹² Civil disobedience is the inherent right of any person. Civil disobedience can give strength to the state. Each state critically remarked criminal disobedience by

¹¹² Parmeshwari Dayal, Gandhian theory of Social Reconstruction, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 2006, p .300.

force. Criminal disobedience shows the way to anarchy whereas civil disobedience shows the way to purify and imparting strength to the state and it can also able to hear the voice of the public opinion and wash out itself of evil and immoral laws. Civil disobedience depends on the nature of the state, it is of chief importance to decide which rules are to be broken .civil disobedience should be willful and non violent too. According to Gandhi “I can clearly see the time coming to me when I must refuse obedience to every single state – made law, even though there may be certainty of bloodshed. When neglect of the call means a denial of God, civil disobedience becomes a peremptory duty.”¹¹³ “ Gandhi considered it the duty of evry satyagrahi to resist and disobey all those laws which he considered to be unjustice and immoral.”¹¹⁴but he stated that this type of disobedience should be civil in the sense of being polite dutiful and non violent. “civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion a refusal to obey every single state made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion, for it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardship. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering”¹¹⁵ The following are the techniques of civil disobedience:

- Rejection of those things that have an attitude on the compliance of the law.
- Actual breaking of the law worried by transport out the extraordinarily things that are prohibited under the law e.g. Gandhi broke the salt Act by making salt.
- Holding of public meetings for educating the people about the purpose of civil disobedience and to enlist their co operation in the movement.
- Publication of articles that do not incite violence, defying any ban on their publication.
- Peaceful picketing undertaken with a view to wean peole away from objects related to the law
- Carrying out constructive activities particularly those that have a bearing on the movement.
- Courting arrests without protest.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, p .301.

¹¹⁴ M.K.Gandhi,*Young India*, 01- 21- 1920.

¹¹⁵ M.K.Gandhi, *Young India*, 08 -4 -1921.

III.6.4. Picketing

Protest against the evils is the main aim of picketing. Mainly it was organized to wipe out liquor and foreign cloth. It is the main form of sathyagraha. For boycotting liquor shops and foreign cloth he had undertaken picketing, considering women's complacent nature. He advised women to join picketing. Because Gandhi considered women as the symbol of moral strength, courage and self-discipline. With this intention, he handed over the work of picketing liquor and foreign cloth to women. The main aim of picketing "to convert the addict or the buyer of liquor by a change of heart and wean them from the habit of drinking liquor."¹¹⁶ This idea was not only to impart awareness to government about liquor and punish the drinkers and the liquor shop owners but also to give a sense of right and wrong about the use of alcohol to the sellers of the drink. He handed there actions for women. In fact non-violence demands sacrifice and suffering. Through this one can achieve self purification and also economic progress. Moral and economical developments are the essential aims of peaceful and non-violent picketing. Speech is the only weapon of picketing. But the speech should be inoffensive. Through this one can gain moral and economic improvement. Moral in the sense that, it will be helpful to realize the drunkards about that disadvantages of drinking habit. Economic in the sense, if they realized about this they will stop the drinking habit and they give their salary to take care of their families. Moreover through picketing shopkeepers will have to close their liquor shops and it will pave the way for the starting of cottage industry to our society. In the leadership of Gandhi peaceful picketing started with twenty five women, they attacked liquor shops directly and they talked with every customer about the bad consequence of using liquor and they tried to stop the consumption of liquor. They also ventured to talk with the shopkeepers to stop this immoral traffic and motivated to perform good job. They picketed foreign cloth shops in the same method. And they encouraged increasing the production of khadi. For the success of picketing there are certain rules to be followed. Some of them are:

¹¹⁶ Parmeshwari Dayal, *Gandhian theory of Social Reconstruction*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 01-01 -2006, p .307.

- At least ten women must be there to conduct picketing. For leading this picket there should be a leader.
- As the first step they must send an appeal to the liquor shop dealers regarding the need to put a check on the negative effects of this business.
- In case of their reluctance to receive the appeal, picketers must gather to block the entrance of the shop to stop the customers entering in to the shops.
- Picketers must hold placards on their hands that contain messages regarding the negative effects of excessive intake of alcohol and the use of foreign made clothes. It would be appreciable if the picketers are wearing uniform clothes while picketing. They should sing suitable songs concerning picketed articles at regular intervals.
- They should collect information about the buyers and go to their houses to convince them about the evil effects. They must give a patient hearing to the buyers and sellers and try to understand their problems.
- They should maintain a diary, record the progress and failures of picketing and try to find out the ways and means to overcome those failures.

III.6.5. Strike

Strike is also a non violent method of non -co –operation. It is an active, powerful and well known weapon of the working class. Actually men and women can execute strike to securing justice. By creating a huge public inconvenience to public utility services, ex: railways postal service. Such type of strike would succeed because behind that, there is a fixed strength of mind not to slip back to work. If one has a fixed strength of mind by not slip back to work, such types of strike only will succeed. Gandhi pointed out that, it is the movement of purification which benefits both the parties. According to Gandhi, “strike is a movement of purification, which benefits both the parties. If the strike is not based on a

just cause and does not employ the right measures, it may bring down both the parties and may even lead to the destruction of both.”¹¹⁷

The following are the guidelines for a successful strike:

- ❖ Devoid of complaint one should not conduct strike
- ❖ Strikers won't ask help from public subscription or other charity.
- ❖ Before starting strike, strikers should fix the minimum demand and also before embarking on their strike they must declare it
- ❖ Strikers may fail despite a just grievance and the ability of the strikers to hold on indefinitely, if there are workers to replace them. They will not strike for increase or other comforts, for they can be easily replaced.
- ❖ There is no room in a non violent strike for violence in the shape of intimidation, rioting or setting property on fire. In a non violent strike, the idea of gaining anything by embarrassing the opponent must be rigidly avoided.
- ❖ Before resorting to the method of strike, all the steps of *Satyagraha* process as discussed earlier, should go through.¹¹⁸

III.6.6. Fasting as Weapon

Fasting is considered as the most important one in many *Satyagraha* policies. It is the most powerful weapon and it is the last weapon of a satyagrahi. Gandhi said that, there is a specific boundary for fasting in *Satyagraha*. We could not use it against a tyrant as it will be violent against him. Fasting can be done against a person who has a loving mind. It is for not capturing anything but for changing him for good. Gandhi said that in real fasting there is no place for selfish thoughts, anger and impatience. In fact it is a strong weapon but while fasting one has to necessarily maintain some limitations. According to Gandhi, “one general principle of fasting is that, it is the

¹¹⁷ Parmeshwari Dayal, *Gandhian theory of Social Reconstruction*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 01-01 -2006, p .310

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p .311.

last resort, when all other avenues of redressing the problem have been explored and have failed.”¹¹⁹ Without inner strength one can't observe fasting. According to Gandhi, “fasts undertaken with spiritual motives always influence those who are with in the zone of their influence. It invariably exerts a purifying influence on those, on whose behalf it is undertaken.”¹²⁰ A satyagrahi should stand for doing well to others and at the same time he should hold on to truth and ready to suffer even when he is encountering. Fasting is a part of *Satyagraha* and stick on to truth. When a person took fasting at a right path he must be free from animal passion. In Gandhi's point of view. “Like all human institution, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used. But as a great weapon in the armory of *Satyagraha*, it cannot be given up because of its possible abuse. *Satyagraha* has been designed as an effective substitute for violence. This use is in its infancy and therefore not yet perfected.”¹²¹

Through the assistance of *Satyagraha*, Mahatma Gandhi innovated a fresh era of civil resistance in the modern scenario of the world. The word was coined suitably to define the mode of non-violent resistance that the Indians at South Africa were building against the tyrannical British colonialists. The word has been vividly interpreted, but factually it is a combination of two words such as truth and force. By implication, it means as an unshaken faith in truth, unwavering even in the face of difficulty. Gandhi successfully experimented *Satyagraha* in south Africa and India. The path towards material gains is temporary and narrow. But the path of *Satyagraha* provides permanent results because for *Satyagraha* failure is unknown. As long as sins remain on earth *Satyagraha* will continue. It is the cure for all the world's miseries. Its application is varied. It can be used against friends and foes alike. A satyagrahi should work with his life in his hands and imploration on his lips. *Satyagraha* is that weapon which can vanquish the enemy through truth and tolerances. From the above mentioned things, it can be understood that, Gandhi's *Satyagraha* was really a hard one. But now days there are many kinds of *Satyagraha* in the world. Even people who do

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p .312

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 9 -10- 1933.

not know the 'harisree' of satygraha can conduct it. People with selfish thought, people who do not believe in God, truth, non-violence and fortitude are becoming a part of it.

III.7. God, Truth, Non-violence

Before examining the truth, it is essential to examine what is the nature of truth. It is very difficult to give a proper definition to truth. But truth always functions according to one's words and thoughts. Sins and miseries increase in this earth because man acts in opposition to his words and thoughts. From ancient times, great people have always stressed on the importance of truth that cures world's problems. Truth exists when a person acts according to the ideals. Truth lies in everyone's heart. Actually the sanctity of purity of heart and soul itself is truth. Gandhi's parents Puthli Bhai and Kaba Gandhiji always followed truth. Hence Gandhi inherited truthfulness from them. It is also important to explore the background to Gandhi's passion for truth. Gandhi was greatly influenced by Raja Harish Ghandran and his commitment towards truth and he once happened to see a play based on the various hardships experienced by Harish Chandra. This influenced Gandhiji and made him to think and adopts the same path of truth followed by Harish Chandra. This resulted in the development and fulfillment of the natural instinct for truthfulness present in his heart. In his point of view, the affection towards truth is the core rationalization for human life. He declared that to be a votary of truth right from his childhood.

Gandhi accepted this Mantra as the base of his belief. The meaning of this Mantra is God and Universe: they are not two but one. It states that all beings are centered on God. Gandhi gave an explanation to this Mantra. God is the totality of all the things created by the Creator, the totality of entity and all substantive things are God. In another words, there is no existence other than God. If God is Truth, if only God is the Truth, then there is nothing true except the God. That means the assumption about God is a real Truth. But humans have individual limitations. So it is not possible for humans to understand God completely. But the presence of God can be felt by everyone. In reality, in one situation or the other, the clear presence of God is possible to each of us. By and large, when this limitation is removed, an individual understands the truth, that is God. In this way attaining completion is called self-actualization that is Moksha. Gandhi's

thought about God is also the same God is not just a Truth, but it absorbs entity, which means, the truth about God is real. According to Gandhi, where there is no truth, there will be no real knowledge. That's why the word knowledge or thought is associated with God. If there is real knowledge, real happiness is possible. There is no room for sorrows. Truth is immortal. It is also the same with the happiness arises from truth. Truth, knowledge and happiness united in God. Gandhi's vision is that, God appears in different forms to different people. He said, "When we see the single truth differently, that becomes the relative truth. But it is just like the diversity of leaves in a single tree. The real experiment with truth is not easy. About this Gandhi says, there are certain conditions to follow to make a pilgrimage to Himalaya a successful one. As the conditions are difficult to follow, it will not be an enjoyable one. That increases the joy and enthusiasm to experiment. The dignity and pleasure of discovering God or Truth is greater than Himalaya mountaineering. Gandhi emphasizes that if one does not feel much enthusiasm, it is because of the lack of our belief.

III.7.1. Non-violence and Truth

Truth is the result to right deeds. One may reject god, but no one reject truth because at least some element of truth is there in every person. Before Gandhiji, people like Socrates, Mahavir, Buddha, Asoka, Jesus Christ, Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin have upheld the importance of truth. But only Gandhiji was able to formulate a plan to establish truth. For Gandhiji, truth was the end and *ahimsa* the means to that end. In one word, truth means something that is 'realistic' and 'actual'. It is the accordance of words, thoughts and action. One's life is one's action. Only truthful actions are real actions. Individuals are the rays of that truth and the combined effect of these rays is the unknown truth called god. God can be realized only through true prayers. Before Gandhiji, violence or war was adopted to establish truth. After an interval of nearly two thousand years, following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, Gandhi adopted the path of non-violence to establish truth.

Non-violence consists of love and respect for one's enemy. It is the means to find truth and end to establish truth. Non violence means the mind set not to hurt anyone. This follows the fifth rule in bible, which is 'thou shall not kill'. Broadly speaking *ahimsa*

means an all inclusive love. Gandhi gave prime importance to truth in all his actions. The foundation for Gandhi's ideal is the accordance to truth and non-violence in one's life. Greed creates violence and the breaking of truth. The best way to sustain truth and non-violence is through the control of one's desires. Weapons or atom bomb have no importance in such a situation. It is true that Gandhiji was able to free an oppressed country and create history through his nationwide non-violent protests.

Several religious texts uphold the importance of truth and non-violence. For Gandhiji, truth and non-violence are two sides of the same coin. The combining of truth and non-violence was one of the greatest contributions of Gandhiji. This paved way for the discovery of *Satyagraha* which is the combination of truth, non violence and self sacrifice. The concept of *Ahimsa* is a fundamental concept. Mahatma Gandhi was an apostle of non-violence. His concept of non-violence is intimately related with his other notions like, love, truth, God and *Satyagraha*. All these notions are closely associated with non-violence. According to Gandhi, Truth is not only an attribute of God but it is also God and it is truth. He says that, Truth is the most important regulating force in the universe. Nothing else exists but the Truth alone. Truth and Non-Violence are the two key elements of Gandhi's thought. Without one the other is impossible to pursue. Therefore Gandhi beyond any doubt said that “ Truth and Non – Violence are the two sides of the same coin. Both have the same value. Difference lies in approach only. On one side there is non-violence, on the other side is truth.”¹²² As far as human beings are concerned their minds have no uniformity. That means what is truth for one person may not be truth for other. Gandhiji is a truth seeker. Truth has no boundaries. Hence, truth and rigidity will not go hand in hand. Only a mind which is wide like universe can accept the truth completely. Here the law is not emitting but understanding. If we do not understand what Truth is, we could not understand Gandhi. Only two concepts are enough to understand Gandhi well, i.e. “Truth”, “Experiment”. That's why he named his autobiography “*My Experiments with Truth*”. He sought for Truth throughout his life and revealed it to the world about the known Truth from it. He tried to use the Truth in his individual and social life. His life was led by a value base that is inclined with Truth. He

¹²²Ravindra Kumar, *Theory and Practice of Gandhian Non – violence*, New Delhi: A Mittal Publication, 2002, p.27.

wished to make this Truth also important for other individuals, societies and to the whole world. He wanted to achieve “Moksha” through it. He toiled for getting it done throughout his life.

Gandhi’s vision of life moves forward with the principles of Truth and Non-violence. Non-violence can move the heart of the world. It demands us to encompass a complete love. These are his basic beliefs. There is no need of resistance to truth. Our protest must be strong with truth. A truth finder does not seek power from an external source. Hence, self-reliance is the law for civil protest. Nothing is expected from others. There are no leaders and followers. All are leaders and all are followers. In such a state one has to sacrifice for anything. Even death cannot make us retreat. Self-reliance is self-sacrifice. This sacrifice is needed all the time. Because truth grows forever. It will be so till life exists in earth. One has to essentially interfere in the normal evolution of truth, he has to be alert to stop the historical phenomena. Gandhi gave examples for this alertness. Vows are pure and self-confident guards. Their function is to guard the truth and freedom. An unanchored ship becomes wrecked by hitting on huge rocks. The condition of man is also like this. Gandhi transforms his concept ‘God is Truth’ to ‘Truth is God’ during his life time. Gandhi tried to redefine his God from the rigidity, of diverse Gods of Hindu, Muslim and Parsi. There arises confusion when common Indian peasant and weavers compare truth with God. In order to avoid this rigidity God is named as Truth. Even for an atheist truth is inevitable. So no one can avoid the influence of truth when truth is God. Gandhi experienced truth in his life, not from the Science “Manusmritis” and theories were nothing for him. Gandhi was aware of reality. He was not a day-dreamer. The individuals are all painted with the same brush. All are sons of a single creator. Belittling one is equal to the belittling of the world. We are protesting against ourselves when we protest against the creator. So the base of experimenting with truth is non-violence. Where there is truth, there is knowledge. Where there is knowledge, there is always joy. Our life is the revelation of truth. If we have to fulfill our creativity, we have to be free from all the connections like sins, other values, concepts and enterprises. One can show the creativity with our hard work without becoming an obstacle to the other powers. If there are such powers, we have to patiently fight against without injuring them. We can feel freedom and joy through this.

To Gandhi, truth and non-violence are not just self-values, but they are social and cultural values. Truth is not telling truth, but it is the function of society. Exploitation is not truth. Torturing is not truth. Not only killing and bloodshed but exploitation and torturing are also violence. Gandhi's life grows not from the basis of an economic policy. He was against all the policies. But all his beliefs and concepts are deep rooted in the naked truth of Indian society other than any other concepts and beliefs. Gandhi struggled to change the world completely and to make it more real and truth. The concept of *Ahimsa* is a fundamental concept. Gandhi was a religious man in search of God. From the beginning up to the end in his life he strictly followed the path of truth. He stated that, the best way to find out truth was through the practice of active, faith-based non-violence. In fact violence is a clumsy weapon, which always raise problems, conflicts rather than solving any issue. Here genuine reconciliation is impossible to get. "Nonviolence provides us with tools, the positive means to oppose and stop wars and preparations for war, to resist violence, to struggle against racial, sexual and economic oppression and discrimination and to seek social justice and genuine democracy for people throughout the world."¹²³

In his entire life, Gandhi kept his truthful character. Truth was his constant companion. By noble thoughts human beings can improve their character. Through intellectual inquiry one cannot reach the world of truth. In fact it is an all comprehensive process where knowledge places an important part. It can be strictly said that, man can search for truth, harmony or cooperation between thought, word and deed, is an essential feature in the search for truth. "To think one thing, to speak a second and do a third is a lie. Untruth leads to discord in the personality, Truth results in harmony."¹²⁴ Sustaining truth was his goal of life. Through non –violence he can achieve to this goal. That means devoid of truth one cannot attain non-violence. Both together are called intertwining principles. Each and every religion grasps this value as worthless. For this reason it is an essential value in the trans religious spirituality of Gandhi. "*Ahimsa* is a moral and spiritual weapon; it can be used for attaining salvation and also achieving contentment in

¹²³ Jude Thaddeus Langes Basebang, *How relevant is Gandhi's nonviolence*, Jalgon: Gandhi Research Foundation, Gandhi book center, Gandhi Sarvodaya Mandal.

¹²⁴ K.S. Bharathi, *Mhatma Gandhi: Man of The Millennium*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Company PVT. LTD, 2000, pp 3-4.

life. Likewise truth is a social and moral weapon which could be used for attaining real satisfaction and attaining mukhti.”¹²⁵ The former is a quality of the soul and the later is a quality of both mind and spirit. Indeed *ahimsa* is a power of the soul and strength of the mind. If a person wants to follow true non-violence he must follow the path of truth. In the case of each person the lesson of *ahimsa* must start first at home. Gandhi teaches the lesson of *ahimsa* through his personal experience. Politically, mentally and spiritually all the beings have the feeling of oneness. Negative thoughts like anger, envy and grudge kill truth. Love can only be borne in the heart though the annihilation of these negative thoughts. Sometimes truth may be with one’s enemies. But truth is permanent. Truth has two faces- absolute truth and relative truth.

Truth has two meanings in Sanskrit- truth and nobleness. For an ordinary man, truth means to abstain from lying. Truth is a definition for our soul. Here absolute truth relates to god Himself. This resides in every man’s heart. Relative truth is the minute form of absolute truth. Only through the annihilation of negative thoughts like anger, envy and grudge can a man eliminate the bestial qualities in him and evoke the innocence of heart. For this it is essential to accept the fact that sometimes truth may be in our enemies’ side. This is the reason why nobody should hate one’s enemies. He believed that there are two types of truth Absolute truth and Relative truth. In his point of view truth is the regulating principle of this universe. Devoid of truth one can’t observe anything in our life and also without this nothing exists. So Gandhi pointed out that absolute truth is God and at the same time relative truth means it is the reality which is preserved by individual, through our own perception and ability. Gandhi upholds that the realization of God is the aim of life which is absolute reality. Due to imperfect character, individual cannot gain absolute truth immediately. Hence they have to adopt relative truth as attaining the absolute truth.

III.8. Training of Non- Violence

Basic training of non-violence includes:

¹²⁵ Rosamma Mathew, *An Investigation in to The Development of The Concept and Practice of Non - Violence in the History of Indian Thought*, Kotayam: M.G University, 1997,p.51,

- ❖ Non absolutism in thought
- ❖ Faith in essential goodness of man
- ❖ Change of heart
- ❖ Faith in spirituality in action

III.8.1. Non absolutism in Thought

When absolutism is included in our thinking, it will make violence. Probably absolutism in thought is the queen mother of violence. Most of the people think that we know each and everything in this world. Actually this thinking is wrong. Nobody is omniscient and also life is multifaceted. Hence one can't argue to know about all dimensions about one thing. For this reason rationality insists on absolutistic method of thoughts. Non absolutism does not oppose truth nevertheless it opposed relative truth. Hence non absolutism is systematically a rational approach. Devoid of non-violence in thought it is very difficult to follow non -violent action. In fact when the supporter of non absolutism does not completely stick on to it while depending on their own code of belief, they can't arrive at the top most glory of this. Hence in the development of non-violence one has to accept the gift of non absolutism. Here one question may raise: how one can attain non absolutism in thought “unless we are prepared to cast off our attachment with our own ‘dogmas’; commitment ‘sectarian principles’, non absolutism will come in to conflict with our perjuries and bias. For this, one has to reduce ourselves to zero. Truth is truth and no institution or person, no religion or ideology can claim to have the monopoly of truth.”¹²⁶

III.8.2. Faith in Essential Goodness of Man

Faith in essential goodness of man is the second kind of training in non-violence. In our society there are thieves and robbers, killers and murderers. Due to the liberalised social system and structural violence these types of people grow in numbers in our society. Hence we there are many types of violence existing in the society. If man is like evil it

¹²⁶ Ramjee Singh, *The Gandhian Vision*, Delhi: Manak publications PVT.LTD, 1998, p.147.

will be useless even if he is educated. It is an insult to the whole mankind. So there should be faith in the goodness of men then only non-violence will be fruitful.

III.8.3. Change of Heart

If the essential goodness of man is not understood then it is a failure to believe in the doctrine of men's heart. So one has to understand the goodness of man and his change of heart otherwise the training in non-violence will be useless.

III.8.4. Faith in Spirituality in Action

Non-violence grows beyond faith in spirituality. Indeed spirit is common to all people and so god's presence can be felt in man. If we believe in the fatherhood of god we have to agree to the brotherhood of man. "Advaita Vedanta goes even beyond this idea and identifies god with man in to doctrine of That Thou Art. This ideal of identity between God and man, reflects in the doctrine of divinity of man."¹²⁷ The meaning of non-violence refers to an active love however it is also an active spirituality. In the true sense spirituality is to be sought not in the other world, instead find it here and now. Non-violence and non absolutism in thought go simultaneously hand in hand. Hence non-violence and non possession, non-violence and human rights, non-violence and social justice go together.

III.8.5. Culture of Non-violence

In the last 10, 000 years of human civilization these were a culture of violence where many weapons were used. There was a very strong foundation for cultural sports in ancient times. The sports cultures like bull fight or pigeon- fight which has strains of a kind of cultural violence in it. Education alone can bring wonders through molding our minds making it aware of the extreme power of non-violence. Thereby it might become a part of our culture to avoid any kind of violence from our thoughts and deeds. The initiation must begin from the grooming of children making them aware of non-violence and its infinite possibilities and positives. It will help us in framing a new generation whose deeds can change the whole scenario.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.148

For Significant social change Gandhi used it however non-violence turned out to be a vibrant concept. If real change is needed in our society, we will have to change our values, culture and ideologies. History is a proof that through violence we have experienced great loss and the atmosphere of the whole society is surcharged with hate, jealousy fear and desire to revenge .and at the same time we can't get peace, freedom, progress and development in the society. In this case the power sometimes rests in the hands of powerful cruel junta and also it leads counter revolution and at the same time it won't end. If one follows non violence this type bad consequences won't happen. It is a safer way and success becomes permanent too. There is a greater need to understand non-violence in its depth to explore its possibilities in framing our world in a new light that makes this world safer for women. The concept of 'to live and let others live' is based on the notion of love, tolerance, forbearance, fortitude, sacrifice, sympathy, courage, selflessness, forgiveness, spirituality, compassion, brotherhood, righteousness and understanding to achieve a world based on harmony, peace, justice, equality, freedom, mutual co-existence and unity.

CHAPTER IV

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

IV.1 Historical Status of Women in India

Women stand for the foundation in the curve of Indian civilization however devoid of the study of the status of women any study won't be complete. It is necessary to gather knowledge about the historical status of women to trace the changes that have come up with regard to the status of women. Women were not only considered as a link in the life cycle of human beings by giving birth to offspring for retaining human life on earth for centuries together but also played active roles as catalysts in the declaration of wars, annihilation of civilizations and evolution of communities. History of Indian civilization gave quite a lot of examples about the positions and conditions of women from time immemorial. From the study of Indus valley civilization it can be found out that, woman folk got high value in the society throughout the period. During that period, women were worshipped like a mother goddess. The position of women was very high.

Traditionally women in India have agreed from beginning to end two phases of their life – one is the period of suppression and the other is the period of emancipation. From the Vedic age till today, her status has been fluctuating within a short period of time. In fact the separation and subjugation of women can be perceived in the entire world. In this context, it is essential to understand the status of women in the different ages to judge her actual situation in the contemporary period. However in this chapter researcher mainly focuses on violence against women in India from ancient time up to the modern period and various changes with regard to the status are to be necessarily understood for projecting the present study in to its proper context. So in the first section of this chapter the researcher tries to examine the status of women from ancient to modern.

IV.1.1. Status of Women During Pre Aryan Period (3000 B.C - 2000 B.C)

In Indian society women are considered as *Shakti* (energy). It can be known through our ancient texts women as the force underlying the creation and divinity and named like

jaya, mahila, stree, Ardhangni. Women are high in rank of the position of glory and grace. A number of ideologists, foreigners, philosophers and reputed personalities have studied about Indian womanhood from a variety of perspectives. They wondered at the Indian ideology. Basing on the available sources in this period women's position in our society was very high. During this period women enjoy the equal status on par with men. During Pre Aryan period, women participated in the social and other functions along with men. During that period women wore same dress like men. In pre Aryan times, there is neither written literature nor archaeological residences to assess their position. The Indus valley civilization is pre Aryan, then the material evidences found at *Mohenjo-Daro* and *Harappa*. Archaeological surveys have verified certainly from the excavation, revealed that pre- historic man worshipped *Matru-Murthy*. She was imagined as the *sakthi*, which is all-encompassing, universal mother. When the ideal is superb, society began to think that the ideal women are a meek, submissive person and a 'bundle of sacrifices' (*Tyagamayi, lajjavathi, Seelavathi*). If she fought, she will loose all her respect. Perhaps this apprehension of social customs that kept women dumb and voiceless for many years. Consequently broad gap between the principle and the practice developed. Certain religious conceptions also kept women always from the mainstream of life. As a result women had to stay limited to the four walls of the house.

IV.1.2. Status of Women During Vedic Period (2000 B.C – 600 B.C)

There is no historical evidence of the human activities in India up to 300 B.C. So one need to depend on Vedic literature as a valid document of Indian social, political and religious history. The historians divided the Vedic age in to two. The Early Vedic or Rig Vedic age and Later Vedic age. "It was during the Rig Vedic or early Vedic age; most of the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed. It was in the later Vedic period that the Brahmans, the three other Vedas and the Upanishads were composed."¹²⁸ Women during this period enjoyed honor and equal respect along with men. During Early Rig Vedic age the birth of a son was more important. In Rig Vedic ages women enjoyed freedom from social evils like female infanticide, sati and child marriage.

¹²⁸ D.N. Jha, *Ancient India: An introductory outline*, New Delhi: Purples Publishing House, 1981, p 11.

Marriage was well established as an institution in the Vedic age. In that period marriage was considered as a sacred bond. Women can select her own groom. There was no social stress to be performed at all costs. Widows are permitted to remarry. In addition to that, there was the system of 'Gandharva Vivaha' in which men and women can select their life partners of their own concurrence. It reveals that, a fairly high level of freedom and equality existed between the opposite sexes and it can also be traced that caste system was not at all strict. Inter caste marriages were also acceptable during that age. To certain extent women had economic independence. The women belonging to lower strata took up the spinning, weaving and needle work. She can attend any celebrations and festivals with her husband. Thus during the Vedic period, under the patriarchal social structure, women enjoyed respectful place in the society. Even with regard to education, there was no discrimination between the son and the daughter.

During this period, Co-education of boys and girls was the existing rule. Women got more chances to gain education. She played the role as a friend as well as co- worker with men and worshipped as a mother goddess. Without the participation of women no religious ceremonies could be performed. Throughout this age there was the emergence of many women poets and philosophers. Through this it can be understood that by giving equal opportunities to women they can prove their skills and talents on par with that of men. Moreover she got equal status not only within the home but also socially, economically and politically she got equal rights along with men. Ex: freedom of attending the fairs, festivals, assembles conferences and marriage functions. So it can also be considered as the golden period of women.

IV.1.3. Status of Women During Post Vedic Period

The caste system put women under dreadful condition. It began in the post Vedic period. The political misfortune and anarchy were the obstacles to the development of women. There were two types of ideal women who lived in that period. One is *Brahmavadinis* and the second is *sadyovadhu*. "*Brahmavadinis* was of an ascetic type striving for the highest philosophical knowledge. Her ideal of life is spiritual well being. A *sadyovadhu* on the other hand is of a domestic type dedicating herself to the welfare of her family and

spending her time mostly in the regular domestic duties of an ordinary kind.”¹²⁹. In this period recitation of hymns was prohibited to women. She could not select her life partner on her own. Her responsibility was totally undertaken by her parents. “While the writers of the Dharmasutras who flourished from 400 BC to AD 100 began to advise that marriages of girls should not be delayed long after puberty.”¹³⁰ Dowry system as a Economic transaction ended up in treating women as a commodity. Thus parents started to think that the birth of a girl child, as a source of misery. They believed that, if women get more freedom she will break the limits and so early marriages became the order of the day. Because of the practice of patriarchy, the status of women got marginalized within the society. This practice also restricted most of the reformation activities of women. The important point to be noted here is that, her status in the Rig Vedic age was utterly changed in the post Vedic time.

“Hindu scriptures, such as the Manusmriti, prescribed a dependent position for a woman during her lifetime: initially she is dependent on her father, then on her husband during successive periods of her life. In the four stages of life-student, householder, hermit and wandering ascetic- women were excluded from the last two and were supposed to focus on their role as a mother and house keeper, while men to be concerned with economics and politics during the house holder stage and spiritual salvation during the last two stages.”¹³¹ Social customs and traditions disgraced the women’s status in the society. It was contributed to the inequality between men and women. Women had no appreciable place in society and it was revealed through the laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, property rights and also right of inheritance. During that period, early marriage was a curse to women. These early marriages affected women’s health status .Number of Child widows have also increased in course of time and Society has treated the child widows very badly. She has to live a life full of restriction that affects her physically and mentally. From this it can be deduced that, child marriage is totally damaged the girl’s health. This evil practice unfortunately continues in many parts of India despite the

¹²⁹ Krishna Reddy, *Indian History*, New Delhi: Wizard Modern World History for General Studies Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2009, p.236.

¹³⁰ A. S Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1956, p.53.

¹³¹ Jana Matson Everett, *Women and Social Change in India*, New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1979, p.38.

passage of centuries. This kind of practice makes Women's life like a caged bird and lowered her self confidence. She completely identified herself as a subordinate individual. She was forced to suppress the resisting voice and thus there arose a firm – rooted belief that, majority of women was only capable of producing children and managing the households affairs.

IV.1.4. Status of Women During Medieval Period (1200 A.D – 1757 A.D)

Women's position in India again became worse during the medieval period. In this period women are considered as mere objects for reproducing children and attending the daily chores. Social evils like sati, child marriage, purdha system, dowry system and ban on widow remarriage became a part of social life in India. The entry of Muslims to India has resulted many changes in women's status. In this period purdha system and polygamy were being practiced in the society. These two systems played an important role in collapsing her status. In this period women were politically, socially and economically were inactive without those who engaged in farming and weaving. This inaction was also one of the reasons for their subordination. Most of the time women accepted their proper place at their home. They were fully engaged with cooking food, feeding and taking care of children and other members of the family. In the system of devadasis girls were dedicated to temples in the name of gods and Goddesses. The girls were subsequently known as 'Devadasis' that means the servant of God. These Devadasis were supposed to live as unmarried girl. The glorification of Pathivratya and the unhappy life as a widow made many women to follow Sati. Sati refers to a practice in which the married women used to follow the funeral pyre of their husbands along with the wish of attaining "sadgathi" or "moksha". Actually the evil practice of sati was an old traditional custom, but step even by step if she is not interested also she had to follow her husband's death .On this occasion married women are compulsorily pushed into the funeral pyre of their husbands. Thus, throughout the medieval period, Indian women were abandoned by their previous status and were placed at the lowest ebb.

During medieval period, Bakthi movement was popular. It also influenced the status of women. The "Ideals of humanity and equality encouraged the women to adopt the 'Bhakti Marg' to achieve the God, the ultimate object of life, consequently many

women saints also become famous as the religious leaders, out of whom the Meera Bai, Jana Bai and Mukta Bai are specifically mentionable”. In Hinduism great luminaries such as the Mahanubhav, Varkari, Gurunanak and many others have openly advocated social justice and equality between men and women. Gurunanak was the first guru of Sikhs. He preached the message of equality between men and women. However because of polygamy and purdah system along with the control of the ideals of fundamentalism of Hindu society led to the darkest period for women. Step by step their status drop off and it was continued till the establishment of British government in India.

IV.1.5. Status of Women British Period (1757 A.D - 1947 A.D)

Before the British rule in India, the status of women was reaching its maximum degrees of deterioration. The lower status of women in the initial years of 19th century was the most terrible part. M. Fuller observed that “the girl child from the moment of her birth till death undergoes continuous life-long suffering as a child, mother and very often as a child widow.”¹³² Throughout the medieval time and thereafter, Indian women were treated as commodities and she is considered as a mere object for reproducing children and gives support to continue the family chain. Women were given minimal rights; they were hardly provided any education and were mostly restricted within the four walls of their houses.

The inspiration of imparting education to women comes out in the British time. During the beginning stage of their supremacy, the Britishers were not ready to give public education to the Indian people, women were least of all. In the Charter Act of 1813, East India Company had to accept the responsibility of education of Indians. They did not want to educate women for doing administrative work because of this, women education was tactically avoided, moreover their strategy was to educate only a small number of people belonging to the superior caste. As a result, the Indian women on the eve of the British rule had not only lost her independence but be sense and urge for freedom and consciousness of independent personality. The Calcutta, Bombay and Madras institutions did not give sanction the right of entry to college of girls till 1875.

¹³² Pratima Asthana, *Women Movement in India*, Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974, p.6.

After 1882 only few girls were permitted to go for higher education. From this time onwards, there has been an incessant improvement in the extent of education for females. However the number of girls studying at various levels was very low, yet there has been a noticeable increase in the number of female students at each level from 1941 onwards. “English education opened the flood gates of the western ideas. It proclaimed supremacy of reason over faith, individual conscience over outside authority, brought in its train new conceptions of social justice and political rights.”¹³³ The usage of English language as a medium of instruction considerably exaggerated the educational system. More over it offered the opening to the ideology of freedom. It upheld the value of liberty, equal respect for the individual and secularism. However the applications of the values were limited to some extent. Social reformers reveal the worry about the subject of the problems of sati, ban on widow re-marriage and refutation of right to property, child marriage and education to women. As far as reformers are concerned by allowing women to education and by introducing effective legislation social reform in respect of women can be achieved. In order to raise the status of Indian women, the British led number of socio religious reforms in the country. It is important to note here that social reformers and the British government took positive attempts to educate the Indian girls. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and P.C Banarjee were the eminent reformers in this field. However most of the Hindu widows had to face the restrictions on widow remarriage and strict discipline made their life unhappy. During British period widows couldn't attend festivals, celebrations and marriage function. As a widow, during this age she forced to practice very high level of simplicity in food and dress.

The nationalist movement drew the awareness of a great number of people and helped to develop self-confidence among women to raise their voice against cruel system. In 1927, all India women's conference was held and it proved to be crucial movement with regard to the right of equality. As a result the liberation of women in the 19th century was a furthering step for the 20th century .Nevertheless increasingly women's social position was enhanced because of the emergence of social movements. During this

¹³³ Shashi Jain, *Status and Role Perception of Middle Class Women*, New Delhi: Puja publishers ,1988, p.110.

period, number of great reformers including Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Joythirao Phulai took more efforts for women's upliftment based on a new value system which recognized women in their own rights. Rajaram Mohan Roy took more effort for abolition of sati practice in 1829. Majority of the people never liked to practice this system. Rajaram Mohan Roy was successfully eliminated this practice of Sati. Iswara Chandra vidya sagar played an important role to improve the condition of widows that led to the widow remarriage act of 1856. The hard work of women reformers like Pandit Ramabai also helped for the empowerment of women in India. Ramakrishna Mission was formed by Swami Vivekananda in 1897. Hindu reformers also debated over the matter of the age of marriage. So that during 1860, the age of marriage was increased to ten years and in 1891 it was raised to twelve years. The efforts of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, resulted in passing of Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1929. Mahatma Gandhi called upon the young men to marry the child widows and tried to convince people to stay away from child marriages. Numerous legislations like widow remarriage act, child marriage act and Hindu women's right to property act were enacted to eliminate the social evils. The establishment of crèches, decrease of working hours, ban on night working hours and limit to work in mines were brought under the banner of nationalist movement.

IV.1.6. Status of Women Post Independent Period (After 1947 A.D)

After India turned to be independent, the condition of women got distorted altogether. The downward of independence makes a latest expectation and exact judgment in the hearts of the masses of India. Indian constitution permitted equality of both sexes. While guaranteeing certain fundamental rights like freedom of speech and expression, our authority too offered certain safety measures, treating women as a weaker division of society. As a matter of policy, from 1950-70, that is for almost for two decades, women's movements were sluggish. A legislative assembly was created after independence consisting of important constitutional lawyers, thinkers and activists to reform the Indian society. The Indian constitution was emerged in 1950. It made significant provisions for the safety of the rights of women. It agreed women's equality in all fields of life. It gives provision for the protection from harassment, declare the dowry system illegal and so on.

Women got opportunities for education. She can be a part of the democracy through voting, stand for any office and to hold any other administrative position just as men. More over the government of India had started five year plan scheme basing on Russian model. Five year plans were set and put into practice by government. The priority and main concern of the fourth five – year plan was on education, health care and rural welfare service. Proposals were created for “development of women” and they were not treated as partners in progress of women. Here they put forward certain aims which were to be achieved at the end of each five year period. The vital issue among these plans was the abolition of illiteracy of women. These aims were motivated and planned to end the illiteracy among women as early as possible. But unfortunately these aims were not fulfilled. Illiteracy in women has been made less but it was not totally extinct. More than 50% women are still illiterate and confined to the villages. It implies that, removing illiteracy the village areas was too difficult. Due to Illiteracy, women rights were abandoned. It also prohibited their freedom. Their status continued in the same manner like the previous centuries. It is only during the period of the seventh plan, the planners understand that, if women are not developed, it is not possible to develop the society. During the last decade of twentieth century, women’s groups turn into active to fight against violence, dowry death, sati, alcoholism, trafficking in women, prostitution, devadasi system, communal and class conflicts. The literature on women’s issues was shaped and many independent women’s groups have come forwarded, to take up the responsibility of the women’s movement’s. A great number of them were able to appoint for the employment. So to certain extent women are identified with a value for the family rather than burden. Discrimination among men and women was sought to be removed in all aspects. Women considered as inferior in certain states also to certain extent reduced. There is a notable change in the fields of industrialization, urbanizations, higher education and new value system. The science and technology developed all over the world. Indeed women became the inherent part all these progress .Unfortunately this awakening among women is limited to urban areas only. In the villages women didn’t get education as in urban areas. They are still uneducated moreover they don’t even know what is going on in and around the world. Because village people still believe that women should sit inside the home and should not go outside. There are significant

changes during the last two centuries with regard to the position of women even though there are some adjustment problems.

IV.1.8. Status of Women During Modern Period

Undoubtedly in the contemporary period women's status has progressed economically socially and politically. They were fighting to gain equality of gender with regard to employment opportunities and improvement in the existing law. Presently Women in India are able to undertake most of the social activities on par with male. They represent half of the population and have played a vital role in every walk of life. A good number of Indian women are occupying various admirable positions in different offices. The Government of India considered 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. As part of celebrating International Women's day, Rajyasabha passed women's Reservation Bill which has ensured 33 % reservation for women in parliament and state legislative bodies. The Bill has been framed in 2010 March. After granting reservation also women continue to suffer due to the existing customs and traditions. Still the evils practices like dowry, female infanticide, sex selective abortion, domestic violence are happening in Indian society. To eradicate all these evils government has passed many enacted Acts. Our Indian constitution has ensured equality to men and women and it also made provisions for special protection of women. Exceptional laws were passed to stop the usage of offensive symbols of women in the media and sexual harassment in work places. It also provides women equal rights in the issues of adoption, maternity benefits, equal pay, good working conditions and so on. Presently in India, women have been working in high offices of the President, Prime minister of India, Chief Minister of states, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and also in the Leader's of the Opposition. In the contemporary period, women are walking confidently with their heads high and are talented to work along with men. It means that, their self –confidence has increased extremely high. Even though Law has forbidden gender discrimination and injustice in the present era, it is broadly practiced in the society. Illiteracy and lack of awareness about the arrant problems are the main causes which lead to discrimination against women everywhere. Her freedom rests only on written records and they are denied it in their real practical life. She experiences an inferior status in the society.

IV.2. Crima Against Women

Now a day's crime against women occurs every minute and every second throughout the world. Obviously it infers the faltering moral and mental states of men in the society. Indeed most of the time lot of such crimes goes unreported. Directly or indirectly physicaly or mentally whoever doing cruelty to women this is what we called semantic meaning of crime. Due to the gender discrimination women were ill-treated from all the angles. The national capital New Delhi is the most dangerous city in India. Rape cases have increased steadily in these days. Rape is the fastest growing crime in the country today and nearly eighteen women are getting assaulted in some form or the other every hour across India. Over the last few months cases of rapes and assaults have put on the headlines with alarming frequency. In modern times women are subjugating through domestic violence at their workplaces. Education has contributed a lot to the empowerment of women. Previously women were denied education but now it became more accessible for them. Indian constitution ensures free education for both boys and girls up to the age of fourteen. A few parents have been thinking that educating a daughter is unnecessary and educating a son is a mandatory thing. In rural areas most of the women even from their childhood undertake agricultural and domestic work. After getting educated women have become more independent but their responsibilities have increased. At time of marriage a woman's family background and property still play a most important role for getting a good alliance. So here normally one question rises whether women actually get liberty through education. In fact education makes us aware of our rights; at the same time social conditioning makes us to consider the unacceptable customs of the society to be our duties. In spite of the Dowry Prohibition Acts, receiving and giving dowry is still rampant in Indian society. Because for certain reasons the bride grooms marriage is like a matter of profit gaining because it might be an easier way for them to collect wealth from the brides home. Due to the existing practice of dowry, parents of a girl child educate their daughter first and have to busily amass wealth for finding a "better groom" for her. A girl child is supposed to possess enough property, good education and income to get a good marriage proposal. These situations reveal a clear idea that in spite of full freedom, still women is living in a male dominated society. Even workplaces also one can witness these types of gender discrimination. Child

marriage and Sati are still in practice states like Rajasthan. Denying a girl's right to live and to live happily are terrible crimes of the same nature. However sorrowfully, still in the 21st century in India, women have to take great effort to find their right place to live. The changes that have happening is only that the real picture is kept hidden, sometimes behind the close doors and sometimes underneath a dark region imperceptible to the naked eye.

The modern woman is so skillful and self-sufficient. Without any doubt women are moving far ahead. She is proving her caliber not only inside the home but also at the work places. Undoubtedly presently women in India are rising up in all fields of life like engineering, medicine, politics and teaching. Any nation's progress and prosperity can be judged through the way it treats its women folk .In addition to the progress, women also expected to carry out their roles as wives or mothers, prioritizing home against anything else. Still number of women remains uneducated and getting married before attaining the age of 18. Statistics say that, close to 245 million Indian women lack the basic ability to read and write, which is a larger number. Only 13.9% women are employed in the urban sector, 29% in the domestic and agriculture sector, where majority of women are exploited by the men. The sex ratio of India itself is a good proof to realize that the Indian society is yet narrow-minded against females. From these aforementioned facts it can be understood that, by comparing women in the past with modern, modern women have achieved a lot but the fact is they still have to travel a long way to achieve equal identity.

Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. Even at the very beginning of her life, a girl may be the target of sex-selective abortion or female infanticide in cultures where preference for son is prevalent. During childhood, violence against girls may include enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriage and forced prostitution or bonded labour. Some go on suffering throughout their adult lives – battered, raped and even murdered in the hands of intimate partners. Other crimes of violence against women include forced pregnancy, abortion or sterilization and harmful traditional practices such as dowry-related violence, sati (the burning of a widow

on the funeral pyre of her husband) and killings in the name of honour. And in later life, widows and elderly women may also experience abuse.

IV.3. Types of Crime Against Women

To understand the knowledge about the deepness of violence against women it is necessary to consider some of its component parts. In different circumstances crimes against women will be different in their nature. Each type of violence against women is nightmarish and should be criticized one. The following are the major types of violence against women:

- Female Foeticide and Infanticide
- Sex Trafficking
- Rape
- Honour Killing
- Domestic Violence Against Women

IV.3.1. Female Foeticide and Infanticide in India

Sex selective abortions and increase in the number of female infanticide have been a major social trend in several parts of India. This evil practice exists regularly in each and every class, caste and communities. For being born as a girl, even in her mother's womb she starts getting attacked by others. India's legal framework specifies the same rights for everyone, regardless of gender. Even then women are tackled with lot of challenges. The girl child always has been a sufferer in the most horrible forms of discrimination. The struggle for a girl child starts the day her existence is known in her mother's womb. The fear and struggle to survive swallow most of the girl's life even if she is 'allowed' to live in this cruel world. Gender bias, deep-rooted prejudices and discrimination against the girl child have led to many cases of female foeticide in the country. The girls are treated as sex objects and more than half of such cases go unreported. Strong male preference, the extreme consequence of elimination of the female child has continued to increase rather than decline even with the spread of education and economic development. Female foeticide is possibly one of the most horrible types of violence against women where a woman is deprived of her most basic and fundamental right that is "the right to live".

IV.3.1.1. Factors for Choosing Female Foeticide

There are many factors mostly that lead to female foeticide : one is economic factor second one is Sociological factor , the third one is technological factor and the fourth one is legal factor . In rural areas especially in South India even though the women does same or more work than men she never entitled for the same wage that of men. Women choose for female foeticide not they were unfeeling but because they were actually worried about the molestation, sexual harassment and after marriage, exposed to the risk of bride burning and dowry death, the unending demand for dowry from the emerging consumerist Indian society. This calls for a critical look at gender issues in all consequences in our increasingly dysfunctional society.

IV.3.1.2. Socio Ritual Factors

Whenever men try to be brutal against women in the form of physical, mental and sexual she will be helpless to defend herself against these brutalities. Due to the patriarchal social structure she is subjugated, condemned and depressed in life. During the funeral ceremonies, if son is not lightening the funeral pyre for parents, there is a belief that they won't get moksha. For such reasons son is looked as a boon in Hinduism and thereby parents used to do prayers for having a male child .These types of traditional practices are also one of the reasons behind giving preference for sons to daughters.

IV.3.1.3. Technological Factors

Through ultrasound scans and amniocentesis tests, sex of the fetus can be identified and the fetus will be aborted if it is a girl. In fact the doctor's responsibility is also very crucial in this regard and he should take good care of the patient .In this world their position is next to God. By conducting ultrasound scan and also illegal practices, they are forgetting their duties and moral obligations to muster the money. In fact, most of the time it is mainly due to the practice of dowry that parents try to think about instigating this brutal crime.

IV.3.1.4. Legal Factors

The law of abortion got controlled by IPC (The Indian Penal Code) in 1970. In the year 1860, it got legally permitted but one has to follow it without any criminal intent and for saving the mother's life only abortion should be done. For population control also liberalisation of abortion was permissible during this period. In July, 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed and it was in 1972 that came in to effect. Through this law, women can to choose the number of frequency of children and this law also allowed to exercise the right to make a decision of having or not having the children. This law indirectly leads to the forceful abortion of the children. So Indian Pinal Code (IPC) again passed a pre natal diagnostic test in 1994 and it came in to effect in January 1996. This Act banned the purposeful testing of the sex of the foetus and at the same time if one breaks this law he has to undergo punishment. This law also strictly states that we should make compulsory pregnancy registration at clinics and hospitals. Even though this test is prohibited officially, it is being continued done in the society.

IV.3.1.5. Impact of Female Foeticide

It is a fact that without women reproduction and giving birth to a child won't happen at all. The United Nations' World Population Fund pointed out that, the highest sex disproportion in the world is in India. Due to the unfavorable sex ratio, in the coming next 20 years there will be scarcity of brides. Actually female deaths will create other complications like female trafficking and kidnappings. The raise of physical attack and rape against women and human trafficking has become common practice in various states of India.

IV.3.2. Sex Trafficking

Before discussing about the practice of trafficking there should be proper understanding with regard to this practice . In fact it stands the second among the fastest growing crimes against women in India. In Indian society trafficking is a criminal practice and it is a grave issue spreading all over the world. Indian constitutional law prohibited the activity of trafficking but still trafficking is practiced all over the world. It has become a modern day equivalent of slavery and exploitation. Victims are always women and they

are mostly treated like a property or a commodity as a source of earning money after which they are subjected to long term exploitation. “What this amount to is millions -27 million, at the highest estimate of men, children and mostly women, coerced or misled in to appealing conditions, far from home and often with no opportunity to communicate with the outside world”¹³⁴ (jstor human trafficking the wound that shames our present p 29). And also “the crime of human trafficking for any purpose is both under-recorded and under-reported, the 2004 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report estimated at least 600,000 to 800,000 women and children being trafficked across international borders every year, the majority being trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation (US DHHS, 2004).”¹³⁵

From many studies it can be understood that, the brokers bring victims to foreign countries for domestic assistance, forced labour , hotel work or as restaurant staff. These migrations have a tendency to course from east to west. However there is no doubt that, the victims of traffickers exist everywhere in this world. Through agents victims are taken to different places and are exploited. From this business, the agents muster a good amount of money to lead a luxurious life out of it. Mostly girls from families with low financial background are trapped in their rackets believing in the false job oppurtunities that the agents offer them. Poverty and illiteracy are the main reasons leading to the increasing trafficking in our country. Approximately 80% of trafficking is aimed at using the victims for sexual exploitation and for bonded labor. Shocking news report reveals that India is the central point of trafficking in Asia.

Trafficking of Women and Children is a serious kind of abuse and mistreatment of human beings. “General assembly of the United Nations stated that, the gendered nature of trafficking is evident and derives from the universal and historical presence of laws, policies customs and practices that justify and promote the discriminatory treatment of women and girls, and prevent the application of the entire range of human rights low to them.”¹³⁶ The statistics of the Government reveals that, in our country every eight minute one child is sold for prostitution. This child’s age ranges from four to seven. It is

¹³⁴ David. A, *Human Trafficking the Wound that Shames our Present*, 2005, p. 29

¹³⁵ Eira Mishra, *Combating Human Trafficking: A Legal Perspective with Special Reference to India*, Bhopal: National Law Institute University, p.1.

¹³⁶ Divya Singh, *Piercing the Veil on Trafficking in Women*, South Africa: Institute of Foreign and Comparative Law, Vol.37, No.3, 2004, p.341.

surprising that according to the statistics only 30 % of the cases are reported. From different studies it can be known that, in India, New Delhi is the center point of trafficking. Though Government of India has legally banned trafficking still it is continuing as a brutal practice against women in our society.

IV.3.2.1. Classification of Trafficking

Trafficking of human beings can be classified into two -one is sex based trafficking and another one is non sex based trafficking. The sex based trafficking includes trafficking for prostitution , commercial sexual exploitation , pornography and cyber sex, while non sexual based trafficking includes domestic labor, industrial labor , adoption and organ transplant . A good number of trafficking starts from poor family and most of the time they trafficked for pornography, forced labor, begging and camel jockeying. Young girls from South Asia and other developing countries are also trafficked to the Arabian Peninsula for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Kids from north east are also being sold by their parents by trusting the false assurance from agents who offer good education for kids. Due to extreme poverty parents can't give good education for their children, so they helplessly send their kids to another state. The agents sell these types of girls or women for forced labour and prostitution.

IV.3.2.2. Impact of human trafficking

The end result of human trafficking is very serious. Victims always will have to go through severe physical abuse and physical overtiredness. Sometimes most of the inflicted serious injuries will cause lasting health problems. These serious health problems require long term treatment. It is high time that raising our voices of protest against these heinous crimes that are rampant in the society. "According to the international labour organization there are more than 11.7 million people working as a forced labour in the asia pacific region."¹³⁷ The most pathetic thing is that these victims are thrown into the world of mental disorders, depression and anxiety more over great chances of affecting by HIV and other STDs.

¹³⁷ Ramandeep Kaur, *Human Trafficking in India must End*, 2013.

In certain places forced marriages, trafficking of girls is a common practice especially in the states of Punjab and Haryana. From different studies it is revealed that, there is a well-established market in Uttar Pradesh for 'purchased' Bangladeshi wives. "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines trafficking of persons as: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."¹³⁸

Child trafficking has a distinct definition which is given by the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crimes which states that "child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation." (Combating human trafficking: a legal perspective with special), Due to the limited government intervention and poverty most of the time conflict –ridden areas are typified by the presence of sex workers and child soldiers. Gender inequality means male preference to women, lack of correct legislation, and lack of correct administrative functioning machinery and deficiency of effective judiciary are the major reasons of human trafficking. Uneducated people are unaware of their fundamental rights and types of laws available to protect them. If any problem is caused he is unaware about where to go for filing a complaint and whom to approach to seek the justice. Due to the influence of tradition mostly women are considered as a secondary category to men in certain societies. This kind foolish thinking always leads to the offensive treatment of women. As far as men are concerned, culture acts as a tool to prove their superiority to oppress and abuse women. The huge and quick development of commercial sex industry is a key factor for the increased trafficking of women. For studying data concerning the trafficking of persons in the country with the help of two officially responsible persons the Indian government formed an anti-trafficking law enforcement "nodal cell" in September, 2006. "Its duty also includes the action taken by the central and state governments to combat the evil of trafficking. In 2007, three state governments

¹³⁸ Eira Mishra, *Op.cit.*, p.1.

established anti-trafficking police units, the first of this kind in the India. The Central Government in 2007 banned the employment of child labour in domestic work.”¹³⁹

IV.3.3. Rape

Rape is another kind of violence imposed on women. Rape means a person is severely forced to take part in intercourse with the opposite sex. Most of the sex related crimes are mixed in nature in which rape is measured to be the most horrible crime and social evil in numerous societies. It is also human rights violation in India. “United Nations Documents on Population Fund and Violence against Women indicates that approximately 1 out of 5 women experiences rape or attempted rape during her lifetime”.¹⁴⁰ Most of the times rape is caused by a stranger, a friend or members of the family. Due to rape, most of the victims will be in the stage of traumatized position and forcibly impregnated and/or HIV positive stage. From this it can be deduced that the position and situation of women in the contemporary world is heart breaking. Worldwide, rape is taking place as a very heinous crime affecting not only women but also includes children and men who are also victims. Intentionally or purposefully touching someone’s vagina, breasts, buttocks, male organ, mouth or other parts of the body also considered as rape. It is illegal hence rape is the violation of human rights too. Different studies revealed that, every ten minute one out of three women get raped in our country. “A study by Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2007 revealed that, out of 12,447 children across 13 States in India, 20.9 per cent of the children surveyed had suffered severe forms of sexual abuse, which includes sexual assault, making a child fondle private parts, making a child exhibit private body parts and being photographed in the nude”¹⁴¹ In addition to this, lot of women and young girls are also becoming the victims of incest rape. Incest means sexual relationship between male and female in the close relations for example father ,mother and uncle . In fact our law has prohibited this practice. Incest rape is the cruellest and the most powerful kind of inflicting male chauvinism. 369 cases of incest rape are reported in 2001 which sharply rose to 396 in 2012 in India. Because of shame connected to it, most

¹³⁹ Eira Mishra, *Op. cit.*, p.5.

¹⁴⁰ Satvinder Kaur, *An Analysis of Lacking Security and Increasing Rape Crime in India* ,Panjab: Guru Hargobind Sahib Khalsa Girls Colege, 2013, p.1.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

of the incest rape cases are unreported and at the same time as for reported crime courts have not taken a progressive observation about this problem. From this it can be understood that, in spite of the existing number of unique legislations that are framed for safety of women, the rate of rape cases are go on increasing in India. The unreported number of rape cases are very high than this. Most of the rape cases are not reported mainly because the traditional society puts all the blame on the victim not on the attackers. Secondly they always attempt to turn away from publicity given through the media having the fear of losing marriage opportunities, revealing lost virginity, reluctant to talk about a sexual act in the public. These are the main reasons due to which most of the rape cases are left unreported.

In every part of the world for shaping the society the tradition of religion has been playing the major role. Through this tradition one belief is emerged that, women are only made for the pleasure of men not only that it made to believe that man is superior to woman. In these circumstances if a woman is misjudged/abused/raped by a man she will be blamed for misunderstanding him. It will bring down her image and position in front of others. Hence a small number of people only get justice. Mentally, physically, socially and economically women have been exploited. Hence it is very much difficult to deal with this crime than other crime. Thus the threats encountered are unending on women and they keep on increasing day by day in the society.

IV.3.3. 1. Myth about Rape Victim

Social myths always compel people to put blame on women. Because of blaming, survivors of rape are afraid to talk about what has happened to them. Sometimes people think that the victim herself is the reason for rape. For instance she will be blamed for the attire and also the behavior for getting raped. In addition to that, if the accused hails from an affluent family, they easily come out of the legal procedures safely through illegal means. It makes the survivor feeling completely lost and she can't overcome the trauma of the rape. The victim loses the self-respect and confidence in leading further life. It is very important to note that, each and every one of us in society should oppose these types of negative attitudes.

IV.3.3. 2. Different Types of Rape

There are many types of rape. The investigator would like to mention some important types of rape. These are:

- Acquaintance Rape
- Marital Rape
- Stranger Rape
- Statutory Rape
- Gang Rape
- Drug related Assault/ Rape

Acquaintance Rape

Date rape and acquaintance rape are forms of sexual assault involving coercive sexual activities perpetrated by an acquaintance of the rape survivor. A good number of the acquaintance victims are women. Another name of Acquaintance Rape is Date Rape. It is defined as the “Unlawful sexual intercourse accomplished through force or fear with a person known to the victim who is not related biologically or through marriage”. It may happen through the boyfriend, co worker, neighbor and friend of friend. Some victims won't be aware of acquaintance rape.

Marital rape

Marital rape means sexual attack by one partner on another without the indignation. Marital rape can happen in many marriages even though most of the times this crime goes unnoticed. Due to marital rape survivors become physically, mentally and emotionally weak and affected with mental problems like depression, trauma and inability to trust a person.

Strange Rape

Women are also forcefully sexually attacked through the variety of sexual behaviors of the attacker and it is known as a strange rape. Here the important thing is that women mayn't have any idea about that attacker. Commonly before committing rape rapist try to study about the victim. In this case .sometimes it can even be in a park that he has seen her and noticed.

Gang Rape

It is generally an extreme and cruellest category of male sexism. If a girl is attacked by more than one person that is called as gang rape. Sexual pleasure, sadism , anger , alcohol and drug usage are the reasons behind the rape. Mostly Gang rape survivors used to experience fear to speak out about their experiences fearing that it might sound like 'dirty porn' or 'made-up horror stories.' So it will be the reason for the increase in this crime.

Custodial Rape

Custodial rape is an another variety of rape which takes place at the same time as the victim is "in custody" here one thing to be understood is that, the victims will be in the custody of the rapist or all agent. Whenever it occurs in prison, it can be called as a prison rape.

Digital Rape

Digital rape is manual manipulation of clitoris, vulva, vagina or anus for purpose of sexual arousal and stimulation through the fingers, sticks, bottles and objects. In one of the cases of digital rape, where a 19-year-old used a wooden stick to criminally assault an 80-year-old destitute woman, a Sessions court awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment to the convict, while exhorting the legislature to expand the definition of rape to include digital rape, male rape, oral rape, anal and rectal rape. Digital rape has been included in the definition of rape recently by new amendment in criminal law.

IV.3.3.3. Victim's Experiences With Police and the Scarred Hearts of Rape Victim's

Gang rape victims' parents mostly give complaints against rapist in the police station. The main objection is getting justice and protection. It will be shocking that the behavior of the police when the complaint was given against the rapist police behaves very ruthlessly. They used to have very bad experiences when summoned to the police station for enquiry. Mostly 90% of these types of cases are being closed by police and proper action won't be taken and justice is not ensured. In hospitals also the rape victims are denied the justice at times. The people who are supposed to give us extreme care and treatment are denying it to the victims under the compulsion from highly influential accused ones. When victim goes to doctors sometimes they won't get support and are treated like accused. There are only two finger test in hospitals for the rape victims that give mental strain for them. In fact Supreme Court has mentioned about this test as an encroachment upon victim's honour and pride. People go to the court for justice but pathetically they undergo greater humiliation and tortures from the rumours.

IV.3.4. Honour Killing

Honour killing or customary killing is a cultural crime. Now a days in India vast number of honour killings are occurring and its rate is shockingly high. "Human Rights Watch explains that honour based violence, including honour killing, are committed by male family members against female family members, who are supposed to have made the family embarrassed through establishing pre-marital, extra-marital intimate relationships" (Honour Killings in India: A Study of the Punjab State). It is for various reasons she is attacked by family members while rejecting arranged marriage, being the victim of sexual assault, looking for a divorce from an inefficient husband. This practice is going on in every part of the country. United Nations Population Fund estimated that "as many as 5,000 women and girls are killed by the members of their families and/or relatives each year for the sake of honor around the world" (Honour Killings in India: A Study of the Punjab State). All these instances revealed that women have no choice in her life. In the states of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh the northern part of India honour killing is still very rampant. Perpetrators are doing this crime not for economic

motivation but for retaining social status they are doing this crime. It means whoever is bringing dishonor to the family is killed for bringing back honour to the family.

It is mainly due to the rigid caste system and unchangeable attitude towards the institution of marriage honour killings are increasing day by day. Also because of the existing patriarchal society protecting family's honour and male honour from shame men look forward to put in force such norms and tradition. This notion of the understanding gives legitimacy to all forms of social regulations of women's behavior and also to the violence committed against them. The Indian constitution has legalised the inter caste marriages but still parents think that if their daughter marries a person from another caste it will bring down the status of the family image in the society. Our patriarchal culture also has played a great role to degrade women inside the society. Because of this system most of the time women can't have the choice of right to take their own decision inside the family. Due to this reason boys dominate girls and they behave like powerful persons than women since their childhood. Hence automatically they tend to exhibit the same at the later years also. There are various disbeliefs with regard to the practice of honor killing. The first misunderstanding regarding the honor killing is that, the practice of honour killing can be witnessed only in rural areas. Infact this practice can't be narrowed down into one place instead it spreads all over the world. Because it is also widely practiced in the metropolitan cities like Delhi and Chennai. Thus this practice can be perceived both in rural and urban areas. The second misconception regarding honor killing is: it has religious roots. Even if a woman commits adultery, there has to be four male witnesses with good behavior and reputation to validate the charge. Furthermore only the State can carry out the judicial punishments, but never an individual vigilante. So, it can be clearly revealed that, there is no religious backing or religious roots for this heinous crime.

IV.3.5. Domestic Violence Against Women in India

Domestic violence entails when a women get physical or psychological control through the member of family or partner. Physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, economic deprivation or threats of violence are the most familiar forms of domestic violence. Now a days in Indian society, there has been a vast number of

incidences of domestic violence. Each out of three women have been experienced violence in the close relation in her life. In addition to this, numbers of people are in great danger for unfair treatment. It affects the individuals, families and society in wide-range. Even though women are educated along with men, because of traditional practices she is encountering lot of controlled and stressful life directly or indirectly. Physically or emotionally hurting a person by others includes in 'violence', at the same time 'Gender Violence' is defined as "any act involving use of force or coercion with the intention of perpetuating promoting hierarchical gender relations". In the World Human Rights Conference held at Vienna, first recognized gender- based violence as a human rights violation in 1993. United Nations declaration 1993, defined violence against women as an "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".

Indian Constitution recently guaranteed certain rights for women protection titled protection of women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. Indian constitution guaranteed it in the Article 14,15, and 21. In India, there are many types of domestic violence against women. Slapping, tearing hair, pushing and pulling, kicking, hitting with an object these are the regular types of domestic violence. Apart from these, there are other types of violence considered as the most serious type the violence committed by family members with in the family.

IV.3.5.1. Forms of Domestic Violence

In the past two decades, the domestic violence rate is increasing day by day. In addition to this, the numbers of people who are victimized are in bigger risk. In fact generally Domestic violence can create always unfavorable effects on individuals, families and society. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and emotional abuse: these are the different types of domestic violence. Violence perpetuated by family members inside the family is a very serious form of domestic violence against women. Women physically and psychologically abused by family members or husband called as family violence. The place wherever she has the right of complete safety, there also she will have to loose her identity power and trust. The second form of domestic violence is

Rape and Sexual Abuse. Through relatives and family members she is undergoing these types of brutal violence. The helplessness mentality of women is the main reason for the increase of these crimes. The evil practice of dowry system is the important reason behind the domestic violence. Even though the practice of dowry is illegal, it is existing in our society. For more dowry the grooms parents always used to torture the bride. Always this will be the main reason for bride burning and murder. Sometimes it used to end up with brides suicide. Because of the sudden emotional imbalance she may be killed by the husband. Pushing, hitting, slapping, choking or using an object to hit are the examples of physical abuse. Sexual abuse refers to any kind imposition of sex on another person without his/her permission or against their knowledge where as psychological abuse refers to any kind of abuse to a person where he/she suffers with psychic thrashes due to some hurting or actions. Emotional abuse is also same like psychological abuse .Due to the child marriage this type of the domestic violence prevails against the wife who is under 18 years. Because of economic in sufficiency, parents can't and most of the girls try to bear this torture and stick on their marital life. However they suffer a lot and thinking of committing suicide as a last resort .During the pregnancy period women need high care and nutritious food but in this period also she used to undergo torture by the family members even from husband also. Some times it will be effected the unborn child and may be the chances of the death of the baby and at the same time it will create more pysical problem to that mother that is : miscarriage, infection and pre mature birth.

IV.3.5.2. Reasons for Increasing Domestic Violence

Violence is the unnecessary application of physical power in opposition to a person to cause an injury. For this purpose people used to use physical force, offensive talking and troublesome action. Not only physical violence but also emotional, psychological and sexual violence too. When a person directly or indirectly mistreats and humiliated by others that can be called as physical violence. Hitting, pushing and burning are the main examples of physical violence. Verbal opposition, threats of future ill-treatment, mocking, shouting and separation are the examples of psychological violence.

There are two forms of violence: one is self inflicted and the other one in interpersonal violence. Self inflicted violence when an individual harms or causes injury

to oneself, when violence takes place in between the individuals that is interpersonal. It includes violence within the families in opposition to spouse, children and elderly people in the family. The usual form of violence within families is the 'domestic violence'. In a patriarchal society not only women but also men and children will be the victims of domestic violence in a family. Women and children are at a larger risk of domestic violence than men. Hence domestic violence is a global phenomenon in which women always experiencing violence outside the home that is in railway station, bus stand and other public places that are supposed to be the safest. In this context, there won't be any exact reason for domestic violence. However sometimes by using high level of alcohol of male partner, unemployed, sometimes if bride is well educated the male partner maybe jealous .This kind jealous charter sometimes will be the main reason of ego clash. If women have good jobs than men also this kind of jealousy feelings come, that lead to the reason for the domestic violence against women. If the partner is more religious, even if she is of same caste also lead to the violence against the co -partners. Thus the feelings of inequality and patriarchal tradition are the major causes of increasing domestic violence against women.

IV.3.5.3. Types of Domestic Violence

There are many types of domestic violence that can perceived, first is psychical violence and the second is verbal violence, it also called emotional , mental or psychological violence , and the third one is sexual violence , and the fourth one is economic violence and the fifth one spiritual violence . Whenever the male partner physically attacked to female partner like ranging from pinching, hitting or slapping to choking, shooting and stabbing these are called as physical violence. Verbal abuse means when a partner using words to criticize the female partner to decrease the confidence levels of the wife or intimate partner victim. Sexual violence is described that whenever intimate partner doing sex with co partner without their permission this is called sexual violence. Financial violence refers as limiting the victim's financial freedom or security. Spiritual abusers either force the victim to participate in the batterer's religious practices instead of their own or to raise mutual children in a religion that the victim is not in favor of. Stalking refers to repeated harassing and threatening behavior, including showing up

at the victim's home or workplace, placing harassing phone calls, voicemail, email or postal mail messages or objects, or vandalizing the victim's property. It is usually committed by perpetrators of other forms of domestic violence.

IV.3.5.4. Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women

Domestic violence creates various kinds of immediate and long term health problems to women including unwanted pregnancy. Such kind of violence also contributes to the unwanted pregnancies. The forceful sexual relation will be the main reason for spreading the infection. In addition to this, during pregnancy period, there will be increased risks of miscarriage, preterm labor, fetal distress and low birth weight. From this one can deduce the fact that, domestic violence not only violates human rights it also create serious health problems to the women. Prolonged impact of domestic violence leads to head ache, back pain, gynecological problem, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, sleep disorders, homelessness, suicide and homicide.

Numerous women associations and groups, journals and magazines offered to extend their help. In various different issues related to women repression like “violence in family, wife battering, sexual discrimination of women at work places and so on.”¹⁴² Moreover, government has been promised innumerable steps to offer constitutional protections for developing the cause of women empowerment. “The Indian succession Act, 1925, subsequently modified in 1997 concerning intestate and testamentary succession as applicable to non- Hindus , for example , Christians, Parsis, etc.... does not recognize women’s right to succession.”¹⁴³ In 1997 the Supreme Court agreement instruction in opposition to sexual harassment at work place in a notable punishment on a writ petition for administrate of basic right to working women. “The court held that sexual harassment at work place would be violative of Article 19, which guarantees right to practice any profession, trade or business; that the right to work is dependent upon a safe working environment and right to life with dignity.”¹⁴⁴.In 1999 The Supreme Court “recognized the natural and unconditional guardianship of the mother in the context of a

¹⁴² Bharti Thakur, *Women in Gandhi’s Mass Movements*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt Ltd, 2006, p.220.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

legal challenge of exclusive guardianship of the father under the relevant guardianship law.”¹⁴⁵ In addition to this, government has formed essential institutional organization to give strength to the movement for women’s empowerment. In 1985 the Department for women and child development (DWCD) was organized for allowing the necessary support to the progress of women and children. The department articulates plans, policies and programmes and enacts/amends legislation and brings together with the efforts of governmental and non-governmental associations working to make betterment of women and children in the country. Public interest litigation (PIL) is a further cunning plan during which obtaining justice on the part of the deprived sections, mainly women, is facilitated, reported by Justice Bhagwati as a strategic arm of legal aid movement in India. “It tried to expose the exploitation of women and all the disadvantaged sections of society and deprivation of their rights and entitlements by the vested interests of administrative deviance”.¹⁴⁶

As a matter of fact, progress of women had been the foremost focus in development planning since independence. The year 2001 is celebrated as the year of women empowerment, for empowering women, government took numerous initiatives in which the central goals of national policy on empowerment of women 2001 were:

1. Generate an environment of positive economic and social policies in favor of comprehensive growth of women to allow them to become conscious of their full potential.
2. The same explosion to contribution and decision-making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation in addition in health care, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment safety and so on.
3. Getting rid of differentiation and each and every type of violence against women and girl child.
4. To build up legal system for elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.223.

But unfortunately despite these legislative measures, laws, enacted policies, movements and campaign in favor of women's amelioration and empowerment, handful of women only occupy important positions in the professional, social and political arena, additionally they are not at all active participants in the endeavors of the government in the building of nation. Their representations in the legal political organization stand insignificant.

The above study reveals that, in the modern world technology is developed, globalization and commercialization exists however women's position in Indian society is getting worse. If women suffer by any kind of violence it will be the reason of long-lasting physical and mental symptoms moreover the symptoms not only affect women but also the family and society too. The children of these types of violence create larger amount of violent behavior and suffer it to a greater extent. Hence there is an urgent need to wipeout these kinds of violence against women. One can undoubtedly say that, women are one wheel of a cart or one side of a coin. The cart can move fast and safely too, when both of them pull it in the same direction and with equal strength. Therefore women ought to be appreciated equally at the home as well as in the nation. There is a saying that, behind every successful man, there is a woman. "A women's emotional strength is a true measure of her beauty and power. Women are gods most beautiful creation on earth and she can uphold that beauty and grace of god by internally empowering herself by building up a strong character."¹⁴⁷ There is an urgent need for a continued, complete attempt at all levels to attack this dilemma of gender bias from all sides in a focused approach. "WHEN woman, whom we call abala becomes sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerful" this is the message of Mahatma Gandhi In 1936, All India Women's Conference he revealed this grate message. It infers that, the importance given by Gandhi to the women's freedom and strength and also to build a humane and exploitation free society. As a self conscious person, woman is the guide and guru of human destiny. Gandhi not only encourage women to undertake the tasks of their own 'uplift', but also squarely attacked the scriptures and the social customs and conventions

¹⁴⁷ P.R. Panda, Women and Empowerment, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication PVT.LTD, 2009, p. 4.

that had devalued women's status and struggled to uphold women's social, political and legal equality.

CHAPTER V

GANDHI'S VIEWS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The empowerment of women is the significant concern of the 21st century. However there are lots of hurdles on its pathway to materialism. The Previous chapter has discussed in detail about the mistreatment of woman. Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation, the social and political reformer has greatly contributed for wiping out of the social evils against women. He strongly believed that, if people of all classes and genders work together, they can strengthen the society. He took great efforts for the upliftment of the socially downtrodden and also made noteworthy attempts for the improvement of the status of women. His great efforts helped women reestablish their identity in society. Unlike other reformers, Mahatma Gandhi's observations about women were outstanding and unique. To portray Gandhi's views on women one must necessarily aware of Gandhi's common understanding of the nature of dominating women in India. Also to know deeply his visions on the role of women in society, one has to understand the participation of Gandhi in taking a great number of women in to the mainstream national movement and politics. Gandhi undoubtedly believed that, for the renewal of the society women can actively play a positive role. With the aim of bringing about social justice and recognizing the impartiality of society towards women he stayed himself rigid in the idea of assuring women's rights. Under Gandhi's guidance and appreciation women have brought into mainstream and they started taking part in the national movement.

V.1 Mahatma Gandhi's Concept of Indian Woman-hood

He was a practical thinker though he tried to know the evils and suffering of women. Hence he took great efforts for finding practical solutions for their troublesome lives. By revealing the examples of powerful ladies from ancient period namely "Draupadi", "Savitri", "Sita" and "Damayanti" he tried to prove our Indian women's strength . And at the same time he also believed that whatever mental abilities men possess they also present in women, she has equal rights to freedom. According to Gandhi "to the impartial outsider, the legal and customary status of women is bad enough throughout and demands

radical alteration”¹⁴⁸ This could happen because Gandhi understood that in our society 85 % of the people totally lack involvement from what is going on around them. Hence he asserts that “It is our primary duty to have some very hard thinking on these points”¹⁴⁹

Gandhi realized that, each and every woman encompasses the amazing capacities for giving broadminded guidance in peace making. He strongly believed that women are God’s best contribution to humanity. He thought that the world is under the control of masculine violent character and there is a need for change, for that feminine quality has to come to the fore. Following this idea Gandhi apprehended that primarily men and women are one “the soul in both the same. The two lives the same life, have the same feeling.”¹⁵⁰ One can’t say that any power is more than the other. Nevertheless, he thought even at the same time that both are basically one, where differentiation in their profession and responsibility are to be predictable and customary. Gandhi had immense faith in the capability of women to carry on a non-violent crusade. Without any doubt he believed that women can occupy an energetic role in a non-violent political movement. Under his guidance and leadership, women shouldered critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. Women held public meetings, organized picketing of shops selling foreign alcohol and articles, sold Khadi and actively participated in National Movements. Gandhi pointed out that morally and spiritually women are superior to men. Moreover they have the honors of great self-sacrifice and suffering. If she realizes this she will be capable of acquiring infinite strength. He strictly says that bravery and courage is not at all the monopoly of men. In his point of view even though women couldn’t turn out to be the Rani of Jhansi at least they could follow the ideals of a Sita. Even the mighty Ravana dared not to touch. Through obtaining fearless character women can obtain complete freedom from all types of violence. A fearful character will always keep women as a secondary citizen inside our society. "Let no one dismiss the example of Sita as legendary ... It was that higher type of valour which he wanted Indian womanhood to cultivate ... women in our country were brought up to think that she was well only with her husband or on the funeral pyre. He would far rather see India's women trained to wield arms ...

¹⁴⁸ M.K Gandhi, *Constructive Program*, Ahmadabad: Nvajivan Publishing House, 1945, p.17.

¹⁴⁹ M.K. Gandhi, *Speeches and Writing of Mahatma Gandhi*, Madras: G.A Nadeshan & Co, 1922 p.423.

¹⁵⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 1940, pp.24-02.

than that they should feel helpless." ¹⁵¹ Gandhi understands that, through armed movement it is not possible to overthrow such a powerful state. Gandhi realized that the Indians must discover the ways and means to decrease the crash of the status and power of the colonial state. He had strong belief that merely a powerful, mass movement based on the principle of non-violence on a big scale all the way through mobilization of people during the length and breadth of the country could rattle the British authority. "The uniqueness of the Gandhian mass movement is underlined by the fact that thousands of women were able to take part in it in myriad forms." ¹⁵²

To build a non-violent society moral strength is very essential. She possesses qualities like the power of patience, sacrifice, love and non-violence than the man. "if non-violence is to be law of the future, the future belongs to the women." ¹⁵³ In such a non-violent society women are capable of implementing socio-political activities for bringing change in the society on fresh lines. Moreover she can very well know how to convince the addicts to stop the drinking habit. Hence they can organise strike against liquor shop. Thus they can take part in the role of bringing moral and peaceful change. Gandhi held that if women form organization they can compete with men in giving their contribution to society. "They could choose to run the race but they could not rise to the great heights which Gandhiji believed women were capable of achieving." ¹⁵⁴ Gandhi always looked upon women as a living form of *ahimsa*. He believed that it is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world. He justified his belief by stating that *ahimsa* needs infinite love, great courage and a capacity to suffer willingly when the occasion arises. Gandhi pointed out that the practice *ahimsa* of needs endless love, Great courage and a capacity to suffer willingly when the occasion arises.

He understood the great ability of women suffering with patience, especially in India, in the family she used to work silently for happiness of the family. Everyone is aware that it is known from the influence of his mother, Putlibai, and wife Kasturba,

¹⁵¹ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 27.10. 1946

¹⁵² Anup Taneja, *Gandhi Women and National Movement 1920-47*, New Delhi: Har-Anand PublicationsPVT. LTD, 2005, p.51.

¹⁵³ M.K.Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The story of Experiment With Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, p.233.

¹⁵⁴ Anima Bose, *Mahatma Gandhi- A contemporary perspective*, Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation, 1932, p.78.

Gandhiji had trained the advantage of practicing non-violence. He says that, “if non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women.”¹⁵⁵ He was not paying lip service to the potential strength of women because he fully believed that the future of the world lay in accepting non-violence as the way of life and not just in cessation of wars.

If men and women hold equivalent mental capability there is some certain difference in their respects. Gandhi noticed that in women, she has the high power of holding *ahimsa* than man. If we consider women as a mother, she shows the signs of high degree of suffering, sacrifice and love and at the same time she will take larger attention for the supervision of the house. Gandhiji advised that “the women should not be called upon to take up rifle for the protection of the hearth and should not be induced to take up to violent activities when she symbolizes non-violence and love”.¹⁵⁶ Gandhi didn’t encourage women to take work in factories to earn their livelihood. In his point of view after finishing their house work, they can engage in a number of constructive activities. When compared to men, women are physically not active. Man is the main source of income and must keep heavy work. Mainly he is working other surface than the home. Here he tried to confirm that, it is not the issue of equality of sexes identical in occupation. Through their physical nature men and women should pursue their profession then only the work will be better performed. He was displeased that “many of the movements stopped half way because of the condition of our women, or did not yield appropriate results because women-power and the source of its strength were neglected.”¹⁵⁷

In this regard it is very important to know about his understanding of his wide-ranging social views on women. More over like other leaders he tried to live his personal life as publicly as possible. Even if he had supported the traditional practices of the country, he understood that, some customs and traditions of the Indian society were anti-ethical to the strength and progress of the women of the nation. He said that “It is good to

¹⁵⁵ M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 10-04-1930.

¹⁵⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 16-04-1925, p.133.

¹⁵⁷ Anima Bose, *Mahatma Gandhi – A Contemporary Perspective*, Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation, 1977, p.78.

swim in the water of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide.”¹⁵⁸ Hence he strictly opposes the evil customs such as child marriage, widowhood, the dowry system, purdaha system and prostitution.

Mahatma Gandhi analyses that, some Hindu traditions and age old customs are the main root causes of women’s deterioration in the society. According to him “Hindu culture has erred on the side of excessive subordination of the wife to the husband, and has instead on the complete merging of the wife in the husband. This has resulted in the husband’s sometimes usurping and exercising authority that reduces him of the brute.”¹⁵⁹ Because of these customs men take wrong sense about women position. Hence Gandhi says “by sheer force of various customs even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women.”¹⁶⁰ Gandhi has deep admiration for Indian tradition and he believed that, India must save all that is sacred. He asserted that, we should read *shastras* and recognize the right spirit. If they enclose any clashing declarations on any particular issue, what he suggests was to follow the ones which were favored through reason. Gandhi’s observation is that one need not take every scriptures published in the name of God like the word of God, in the view of the fact that they often include fake interpolations. He argued that these types of fake interpretation will always create conflict with true ethics not required to be followed .Actually, “Gandhi even went to the extent of suggesting the expurgation by some authoritative body of all those texts in the *smritis* which were repugnant to the moral sense.”¹⁶¹ Nevertheless for the improvement of the status of women, Gandhi required and found support from the classical tradition. He often highlighted the historical evidence which recognized that women’s lives were less controlled in ancient times. Not surprisingly the ideal women figures which Gandhi consistently invoked for Indian women were Sita, Savitri, Damyanti and Draupadi and the perfect model for men and women relations which he advocated that of Rama and Sita. In addition to this when he wished to declare the supremacy of women’s innate personality for instance spirit of potency and bravery and

¹⁵⁸ M.K Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVII, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1925, p.308.

¹⁵⁹ M .Maharajan *Mahatma Gandhi and New Millenium* , Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2010, p.86.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,p.86.

¹⁶¹ Bharty Thakur, *Women in Gandhi’s Mass Movements*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications,2006, p.15.

the power of self-sufficient thinking and initiative which activate the women of ancient India. Gandhi pertinently used these Indian traditional ideals, images and symbols to convey modern and revolutionary message, to impart strength and courage among women, to draw upon the deep resources available within women themselves and to rebuild action where women from remaining passive spectators would gradually but inexorably become active participants and play a vital role in the struggle for *swaraj* and in the quest for *sarvodaya*.

V.2. Influences which Shaped Gandhi's Vision of Women

Gandhi dreams were to put up a society which stands on cardinal virtues of justice, peace and equality. As a prominent political and social reformer, he thinks that from beginning to end India has to be made stronger. He paid special attention to the sorrowful condition of women in the Indian society. He takes Indian women outside their homes. Gandhi gain knowledge of the technique of non –violent passive resistance from his mother and wife, Kasturbas passive resistance against Gandhi's unreasonable attitudes can change Gandhi's character from forceful husband to understanding husband. Through this way he became conscious of the spirit of equality and performing the principle of mutual deliberation. In his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, he discussed about the change from demanding husband to an understanding companion. Gandhi's own admission on his immense faith in women's *Shakti* (power) comes from his experience of his mother and his wife. In his home itself he studied the worth of women moreover he understood women are not only wives and mother but also that she is an equal partner inside the home. He confidently said that, the freedom was a inheritance of each and every human being moreover he did not comprise women in his concept of 'human being'.

According to Gandhi, "to call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed women is a less brute than man. If strength is based on moral power then women are immeasurably man's superior. Has she not great intuition, is she not more self- sacrificing, she not great powers of endurance, and has she not courage? Without her, man could not be. If non –violence is

the law our being, the future is with women.”¹⁶² Gandhi’s inspirational thoughts have helped in tackling many issues to support women to participate in country’s freedom struggle. Definitely in framing Gandhi’s perspective and attitude towards women his mother Putlibai has played a main role. According to him “If you notice any purity in me, I have inherited it from my mother, and not from my father.....The only impression she ever left on my mind is that of saintliness.”¹⁶³ Gandhi was also influenced by his wife Kasturba for molding his vision about women. Despite the fact that he passes on his carnal desires, Gandhi honestly confesses that he had imposed countless tortures upon his wife “who bore them with remarkable forbearance and fortitude.”¹⁶⁴ Moreover during his political career, Gandhi had worked together in the company of great women who were his close associates, example Annie Besant, Oliver Schriener, Millie Graham Pollock, Margaret Cousins, Sarojini Naidu, and Sushila Ayyar and so on. To certain extent the above mentioned women have contributed greatly for molding Gandhi’s perception on women.

Religion has also played significant role in shaping Gandhi’s ideas about women. D.V. Athalye in her book *The life of Mahatma Gandhi* pointed out that “Gandhi was mainly influenced by Vaishnavism liberal Jainism and his deep respect for Christ.”¹⁶⁵ B.N Ganguli in his book *Gandhi’s social philosophy* pointed out that “it was Buddhism and Islam that had influenced Gandhi.”¹⁶⁶ Even Gandhi’s basic philosophy of *Satyagraha* is said to go against the violent, male stereotypes of human potential while incorporating the gentle, passive and communitarian features usually associated with women. The variety of influences formed Gandhi’s vision of women, “it seems that religion was the major factor which becomes evident from the fact that the ideals of womanhood emphasized by him were chiefly Sita, Savitri, Damyanti and Draupadi.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Aloo J. Dastur and Usha H Mehta, *Gandhi’s Contribution to The Emancipation of Women*, Mumbai: Sangam Publishing House, 1991, p.20.

¹⁶³ Krishna Kripalini, *Gandhi: A Life*, New delhi: Navajeevan Publishing House , 1968, p.2.

¹⁶⁴ Anup Taneja, *Gandhi Women and National Movement 1920-47*, Har-Anand Publications PVT.LTD, 2005, p.59.

¹⁶⁵ D.V.Athalye, *The Life of mahatma Gandhi*, Pune: Swdeshi Publishing Company, 1923, p.142.

¹⁶⁶ B.N Ganguli, *Gandhi’s Social Philosophy*, New York : John Wiley and Sons, 1973, p .120.

¹⁶⁷ Anup Taneja, *Gandhi Women and National Movement 1920-47*, Har-Anand Publications PVT. LTD,2005, p.60.

V.3. Gandhi's Views on the Social Evils

If we want to be aware in depth about how Gandhi took part for improving the position of women in society, we should know about the position of women during that period. Traditional practices like child marriage, dowry system and sati. All these evils rampant during the time when Gandhi involved in the political scenario. In that time, the life span of women was only twenty seven years. Women labor death was a general trend. Most of the women did not have basic education. Wearing pardha was common practice inside the Muslim community. Only a handful of few could avail education and attend schools. It was in such a dismal milieu, that Gandhi took the responsibility of shouldering a social crusade that led to a major reorientation of the common notion of women in the Indian society. Devoid of a companion or guardian, she is not allowed to go out on her own. In this crucial situation Gandhi took the liability of women that shows the way to most important reorientation of the ordinary notion of women in the Indian society. Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi strongly held Indian traditional practices and at the same time he opposed evil practices of child marriage, enforced widowhood, sati, dowry and prostitution.

V.3.1. Child Marriage

Due to immoral and inhuman act and at the same time damaging our moral and psychical degeneration Gandhi criticized, in clear terms, the customs of child marriage, which he measured as 'a wicked and brutal act' for it damaged our ethics and encouraged physical degeneration. His preserverence "by countenancing such customs we recede from God as well as swaraj."¹⁶⁸ Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that child marriage is an uncultured activity in addition to this simultaneously it is a crime against God. Because of this evil practice children will happen to be a widow in their childhood itself, and usually it will create "a child mother". In addition to young mothers dying in child birth, such marriages injured the mother and child too. That is the main reason Gandhi raised his voice against this evil practice very strongly. "Gandhi's severe and vehement criticism was further directed cawards the 'ill -matched union' of delicate young girl with

¹⁶⁸ M.K.Gandhi, *Young India*, 26-08-1926.

much older men who looked upon marriage as a mere license to perpetrate all sorts of atrocities on young girls in their teens.”¹⁶⁹ At the age of 13, Gandhi was the victim of child marriage. So he personally knows the difficulty of this harmful practice. “He asked people not to believe this fetish, early among girls because of our hot climate.”¹⁷⁰ Gandhi’s viewed that, whenever boys and the girls are mentally and physically developed then only they can choose their life partner. Without any doubt Gandhi says that when women are committed to child marriage she can’t progress much in her life time. It will create the refutation of educational opportunity deprivation of joys of girlhood. Nevertheless it creates mental and emotional cruelty and also makes them submissive to their husbands. Hence he advocates recruitment of well-built public opinion and hold agitations by the local people against such happenings. To wipeout these evil practices, people genuinely worked together. It would be the reason of legislative development .In 1929 our central legislative council approved the child marriage restraint act known as Sarda Act after the name of its author. “According to this Act the age of consent of for marriage was set at 18 years for boys and 14 years for girls .This Act has been amended from time to time later to raise the age of marriage for girls now to eighteen years and for boys to twenty one years.”¹⁷¹

V.3. 2. Widow Remarriage

In fact, child marriage and widow remarriage is an interrelated thing. The dream of Gandhi was to build a society through the foundation of social justice, peace and equality. In our Indian society the sad situation of widows and the traditional servitude of ‘enforced widowhood’ was an imperfect. Gandhi had three sets of values for widowhood. One is for child widows, second one is about voluntary adult widowhood and the third one is regarding enforced adult widowhood. He was profoundly worried about the subject of the position and circumstances of child widows. Gandhi said that if a girl widows did not experience married life she would not be considered as a widow in the true sense .The tradition of eliminating child widow remarriage be mainly nonsensical and brutal.

¹⁶⁹ Bharty Thakur, *Women in Gandhi’s Mass Movements*, New Delhi:p-15.

¹⁷⁰ R K Sinha, *M K Gandhi: Sources, Ideas And Actions*, New Delhi: Prabhat Prakashan Publication, 2009, p.191.

¹⁷¹ M. Maharajan, *Op.cit.*, p. 90.

Without delay it should be eliminated. He remarked that: “we cry out for cow protection in the name of religion, but refuse protection to the human cow in the Shape of the girl widows.... There is no warrant in any shastra for such widowhood.”¹⁷² For attaining justice to the child widows, Gandhi advised parents that, these ‘miserable beings’ must be given permission to find their partner. Before marriage parents must ask the opinion about marriage to their daughter .This points out that marriage be supposed to be act upon for mature girls . These matured girls can understand the meaning of marriage, for what purpose we are doing marriage and which types of husband she wants. At the same time he also said to educated men to vow to marry not any other than a girl widow. He repeatedly says that “if there be even one child widow, the wrong demands redress.”¹⁷³ For attaining moksha or eternal bliss Gandhi suggested that the widow for doing brahmacharya way of life .He believed that “voluntary widowhood is a priceless boon in Hinduism, enforce widowhood is a curse.”¹⁷⁴ Gandhi opposed the system of diverse laws and regulations for both men and women. He required equal laws and rules for both men and women. If our law gives permission to remarriage of widower, the law must given permission the right to remarry a widow.Gandhi was strongly against publishing of photos of exposed women in news papers, advertisements and journals. Likewise abuse of a women’s physical structure in literature was also strongly opposed by Gandhi. According to him, it is insupportable custom of necessary widowhood through religion. He forcefully supported that, if we want to save Hinduism, we should liberate ourselves from the poison of compulsory widowhood. In fact throughout Vedic period this kind of encouragement is in practice. He advocated complete equality to men and women. Women must have a good judgment about widow remarriage. Because of this reason he advocated that if a widow is interested to remarry society would not look her down.

V.3. 3. Dowry System

Gandhi considered the evil practice of dowry as a cruel and objectionable practice. It dishonored the purity of the marriage tradition and also it makes marriage a

¹⁷² M.K Gandhi, *Young India* 5-07- 1926

¹⁷³ M.K.Gandhi,*Young India*, 2-09- 1926

¹⁷⁴ Anil Dutta Mishra ,(ed.,) *Gandhism after Gandhi*, New Delhi :Mittal Publication Private Limited, 1999, p.248.

market business. Here women are positioned mere as a domestic animal to be bought and sold “which gave nightmarish experiences, for the parents who had marriageable daughters.”¹⁷⁵ In fact dowry system is the product of caste system. Due to this ‘custom’, to the educated man, women is just like a bidder and in the name of dowry they start asking huge amount of money from girls parents, due to the poor background parents found it very difficult to make huge amount of money. Because of this reason, this cruel practice makes gender discrimination at the very birth of the girl child. In his opinion whenever our cast system is negalted, then only the dowry system can be wiped out. He advised the girls whoever demands dowry for the purpose of marriage, with self-confidence and self-respect one should reject that proposal. His advised to people that mutual love and respect is the foundation of marriage in addition to this parents should welcome and celebrate inter communal marriages between the Harijans and Hindus. He never supported wasting huge amount of money for the marriage ceremony. Hence he recommended that, marriage ceremony should be simple and noble thing. In his journal young India he pointed out that “Any young man,” who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonors womanhood”.¹⁷⁶ It is worth mentioning here that because of his efforts weddings at the Gandhian ashrams were celebrated with marked self-control, good manners and somberness at the same time as normal ceremony and traditional dealings were obvious by their absence more over lot of educated people started supporting simple, ritual free weddings, which came to be known as ‘Gandhi Lagan’. This category of wedding concerned just the “exchange of garlands by the bride and groom while their friends and relatives blessed by clapping their hands.”¹⁷⁷

V.3. 4. Pardha System

Gandhi worked for eliminating the evil practice of pardha system. In his point of view the custom of pardha denied women’s free movement inside the society just like a caged bird. Because of this practice women can’t enjoy “the free gift of God like light

¹⁷⁵ M.K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publication Division Government of India, Vol. xxxix, 1960, p.415.

¹⁷⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 21-06- 1928.

¹⁷⁷ Madhu Kishwar, *A life given to a cause: interview with Indumati Patankar*, *Manushi*, Vol.IV, 1984, p.6.

and fresh air which had ruinous effects on their personality, narrowed their vision, stunted their interests to petty things and hindered their advancement and their capacity for doing useful works for society.”¹⁷⁸ He painfully said that due to lack of bravery and revolt nation this evil exists even in the educated families as a cruel practice.

His point of view is that, we interference with the gratis increase of womanhood of India we should interference through the growth of open and independent spirited men. Gandhi confidently said that, “it was not pardha but purity, which works as a shield and gives protection to a woman against malicious intentions.”¹⁷⁹ He commented that “chastity is not a hot house growth, it cannot be super imposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of pardha, it must grow from within.”¹⁸⁰ He underlined to say that people will remain diminished when women are limited in their houses. For this reason Gandhi requested the people to remove the pardha with one powerful attempt and suggested them to come out of their isolated shells. He pointed out that, chastity must grow from within and should have the ability to survive any temptation. In fact the real pardha one has to wear inside the heart and not on the body and the face. During on these grounds Gandhi opposed this system and pleaded for continued public education in opposition to this practice.

V.3.5. Prostitution and Devdasi System

Gandhi strongly opposed the sinful practice of prostitution. He made an effort to work against the practice of prostitution. He called it a “life of shame”. He stated that men who visit these places for “sexual sleep” are in the same way responsible as women for perpetuating this evil. He further criticized that, the married men who visited these types of deadly places consequently committed double sin. “They sinned against their wives to whom they had sworn allegiance and also against the sisters whose purity they were bound to guard with as much zeal as that of their own blood sisters.”¹⁸¹ Gandhi thought that these types of sexual urges are likely looked upon as a bigger crime than the

¹⁷⁸Bharathi Thakur, *Women in Gandhi's Mass movement*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication Division, 2006, p.22.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.23.

steeling of a banana through the hands of a hungry man. He opined that these types of evil practices must be wipeout legally. Gandhi asked each married or unmarried young man, to think more on the sin of prostitution and also he gave guidance to them to do what they could to purify their area of this social disease. He declared that “it is an evil which cannot last for a single day if we men of India realize our own dignity”¹⁸² To throw away this evil practice Gandhi gave some suggestions to women, which was spinning and weaving which all could take up without congestion . Hence he stated that “ they must therefore become the true *sannyasinis* of india having no caries of life but service , they can spin and weave to their heart’s content.”¹⁸³ Gandhi said that it is our responsibility to taken care of these sisters. In his point of view fallen girls must gain knowledge of any worthy profession for their livelihood. The girl who is forcefully kidnapped, has not steadfast to any crime. These girls have the right to be get kind, affectionate and considerate treatment in the society. Whenever girls got rid of their fear from death then she will be able to protect herself, then she can get the quality of moral courage for facing assault fearlessly. Through the character of Chastity and moral courage, one can save the girl from any physical assault. Gandhi opposed, in the name of custom, offering little girls to temples for service of the god. But in reality, basically these little girls most of the times are used for wrong purposes. A woman who dedicated to the lord of temple stays there as a single is called a Devadasi. In fact, parents offer their daughters to temple to appease God. Nevertheless she is continually exploited by the wealthy for sexual pleasure. As a status symbol most of the time rich people celebrate with devadasi’s dancing in front of them. Hence he says that “in the name of religion we commit a double crime by degrading women and involving worship of God along with it”¹⁸⁴ As for Gandhi, this system, he felt like “sinking in the earth below.”¹⁸⁵ In His book "Women and Social Injustice" gave detailed discussions and solutions on the topic. He strictly says the temple women and brothels should be vanishing out, after India be free. More over “All I can say is that, if we will have swaraj through self purification, we may not make women a prey to our lust .We will not have a unregenerate India unless we

¹⁸² M.K.Gandhi, *Young India* 16-04-1925.

¹⁸³ M.K.Gandhi, *Young India*, 15-10- 1921.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Angadi Ranga Reddy, *Gandhi and Globalization*, New Delhi:, Mittal Publications, 2009, p.125.

learn to respect our mothers sisters and daughters.”¹⁸⁶ Possibly Gandhi was the first supporter in opposition to this evil practice. Devdasi system originated in the rendering of dances before the shrine by skilled performers, in return they were allotted some lands for maintenance and it was also a condition that they remain unmarried.¹⁸⁷

V.3.6. Molestation

In his point of view from escaping from the offensive behavior, the girls must have to train in the art of protecting themselves. Whenever women are assaulted by men she doesn't want to think about non violence. He says that self protection should be her primary duty. She has complete freedom to protect herself along with all her power and if need be die in the effort.

V.3.7. Female Infanticide

Gandhi totally opposes the brutal practice of female infanticide. He understood that the birth of a girl child was unwelcome, due to the practice of dowry system. The practice of dowry was a burden for his parents. Whenever girls get married, she will have to live in her marital home. This also will be the reason of female infanticide. Hence he says that the birth of a child which may be boy or girl should be celebrated. The world wants both. Society won't make difference between these two. Both should be welcomed alike. Moreover he was not in favor of the dreadful practice of dowry as a reason behind female infanticide.

V.3.8. Female Illiteracy

Gandhi believed that in our society the majority of the women don't have adequate education and also they don't know what is going around the world. This is the reason behind a good number of evil practices against women. Hence education is essential for women. He undoubtedly understood that education is important to make possible for women to declare their natural rights, to exercise them wisely and to work for their development. Low level of education is not used for women for the power of

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ AngadiRanga Reddy, *Op.cit.*, p 125

knowledge. “He stood for proper education for women as he believed that after receiving education they become sensitive to the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.”¹⁸⁸ He considered the illiteracy of women as a curse of the human society. Because of the ancient norms and customs most of the women forced to be illiterate by the patriarchal society. As Gandhi quoted in *Harijan* “As for illiteracy among the women, its cause is not mere laziness and inertia as in the case of men. A more potent cause is the status of inferiority with which an immemorial tradition has, unjustly branded her. Man has converted her into a domestic drudge and an instrument of his pleasure, instead of regarding her as his helpmate and better half the result is a semi paralysis of our society. Woman has rightly been the mother of the race. We owe it to her and to ourselves to undo the great wrong that we have done her.”¹⁸⁹ The women should cease to consider herself to be the object of mans lust for physical enjoyment.

Gandhi’s believed that, it is a waste of time when women decorate themselves with cosmetics and jewellery. In our society people are miserable and lack food and shelter. In these circumstances women from high-class family won’t give themselves up to beatification of their bodies with the gold ornaments. He says that the variety of desire and passion for beautification show the way for women to slavery. If she stops using these types of things she can get good and equal partner with men and also she can create a center of attention to whole mankind. These types of rich ladies should lead simple life and moreover engage themselves in the useful activities. Gandhi was highly confident about the internal power of women. He held that women are able to produce the qualities of love, non-violence, forgiveness and an extraordinary skill for sacrifice. Gandhi once remarked: God only knows who invented the word *abala* for the women of India. To call them *abala* is to condemn the inherent strength of women, in my view. It is an insult to them. If we pursue the history of the Rajput, Mughal or *Mahabharata* period of our country we shall come across marvelous instances of bravery women. They not only exhibited their bravery through arms, but by building up their moral courage they developed immense strength. If women resolve to bring glory to the nation, within a few

¹⁸⁸ Jain, Simmi, *Encyclopedia of Indian Women through the Age*, Vol .III, Kalpaz Publishers, Delhi, 2003, p. 76

¹⁸⁹ M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 18-2-1939, p.420.

months they can totally change the face of the country because the spiritual background of an Aryan woman is totally different from that of the women of other countries.

It is the woman only who has painfully and blissfully given birth to a child; she works hard day and night and when she watches her baby grow step by step her experiences extreme happiness and fulfillment. Gandhi urges that this unmatched love and pain should be transferred to the whole humanity. “Let her transfer that love to the whole humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man’s lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. She teaches her the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in *Satyagraha* which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.”¹⁹⁰

Gandhi positively considers that women are more worthy of non-violence than men, in mental power. A man understands the dharma of non-violence but a woman, the extreme personification of renunciation and understanding, has imbibed non-violence even prior to her birth. Without second thought Gandhi said that when women and men coordinate and move forward equally, then mankind will recognize happiness. We have to think of each one as friend of the other. Indeed devoid of the energetic help of one another one is alive. As an equal partner their souls are equal. But in his point of view equality doesn’t mean the equality of occupations. Women’s occupations are additional favorable to peace than war. The ‘practical’ philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is that he attempted to improve the society from a deeper level. The change has to be brought from within, this is what he thought and worked upon until his last breath, thereby setting an example for the generations to follow.

. Gandhi thought that in support of empowering women, economic independence is a must. He always inspired women for spinning yarn and weaving cloth. Once in a lecture to women at Nadiad, in 1919, Gandhi recommended that before spending a lot of time in temples, women at least must spin for few hours each day. Gandhi’s point of view is that serving the motherland is the genuine *bhakti*. He said that, if we required the success of

¹⁹⁰ .M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 24-02-1940. p.240.

Swadheshi movement women will have to spin yarn and weave cloth in large numbers. Spinning yarn not only makes possible economic independence of women, but would also add to the resources of middle class, sometimes even the sole source of subsistence for lower class families. Gandhi mentioned that, men and women should be given the same wages. It is a fact that equal wages for equal work is an important aspect of feminist thought. He remarked, "The times have changed when man was regarded as woman's master. That we do not admit this is a different matter. God has made man and woman one complete whole. One must not lord over the other. An endeavor is being made to establish this truth through Khadi."¹⁹¹

Gandhi's analysis of social evils, his unfailing efforts in support of the emancipation of women and his immense faith in women's honest strength made an impact on women's fight for rights and equal opportunity as an important part of the struggle for national freedom. Women contributed in great numbers in 'mass' movements guided by Mahatma Gandhi. This helped in changing the perspective of other nationalist leaders. Women must be designated into 'sisters of Mercy' through helping the poor and unfortunate. Women were asked to relate the movement for their own emancipation with that of all the oppressed people and to make a common cause with them. Thus, by directly linking women's ambitions with national goal, he gave the movement a wider viewpoint, and a greater legitimacy. He never perceived marriage and motherhood as the only task in life for every young woman. For the purpose of helping society which is the ever woman wishes to remain unmarried it will be a grateful ideal for self-realization. He repeatedly says that whenever girls are dismissed from school and colleges then the greater part of the girls fade away from public life. Nevertheless, he did not totally refuse the tradition of marriage for the reason that he understood that sexuality might not be eliminated, despite he propagated that marriage at the same time as merely existing, though inadequate, self-control on sexuality." Marriage is a fence that protects religion. If the fence were to be destroyed, religion would go to pieces. The foundation of religion is restraint and marriage is nothing but restraint."¹⁹² Gandhi's first meet by means of woman

¹⁹¹ .M.K.Gandhi, *Harijan*, 24-02-940.

¹⁹² Madhu Kiswar, Gandhi on women, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.20, No.40, 1985, p.1692.

power took place in Africa. There he understood how women could turn out to be the leader in *satyagaha*.

V.4. Difference in Traditional Roles between Man and Women

Mahatma Gandhi's viewed that for both women and men, there is some basic difference with regard to their social roles and functions. Despite the fact that they were to play special roles, so far these were not contradictory. This estimation is that, the women's place is at home, whereas the responsibility of men is providing necessary means for women to allow her to run the home capably. Indeed, man is the bread-earner. The foremost duty of women is to take care of her husband, after that family and finally the country. According to him "Sita personified the spirit of sacrifice, fidelity, suffering and moral strength typical of Indian womanhood."¹⁹³ While highlighting the opposite position of men and women, Gandhi made it clear that women were in no way inferior to men. He believed that man's lust for power and prestige had shown the way to the suppression of women and moreover to the deterioration of the society. There is traditional role disparity among men and women, in addition to this he wanted to break the customary typecast. This he did by advocating equal rights for both, by highlighting that women were in no way substandard to men and by encouraging women to fight for their rightful place in society. Gandhi believed that, "Non- violence and passive resistance were basically feminine traits which women had imbibed as a result of long tradition of sacrifice and suffering with in the home."¹⁹⁴ He thought that women were possibly suited for taking part in the national movement. *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* were the fundamental thoughts of it. According to Gandhi, "progress in civilization consisted in the introduction into human life and social institution of a large measure of the law of love or self- suffering which women represented best in her own person. This was a profoundly transformed projection on the broad canvas of social life of attitude, which had come in to being in the privacy of his personal life."¹⁹⁵ If the women were interested in taking part in the national movement, their husbands willnever give permission to do so. Mahatma Gandhi advised

¹⁹³ Anup Taneja, *Gandhi Women and the National Movement-1920- 47*, Har Anand Publication Division, p.65

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.66.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.66

that, even if husbands prevented, she should disobey and forcefully stick together in this movement. Gandhi suggested that, if required, women should not hesitate to join the civil-disobedience stands on *ahimsa* and truth in opposition to the irrational limitations forced within the home. Thus Gandhi accomplished the political recruitment of women on a mass scale.

Gandhi did not support co-educational institutions. He believed that there have to be stipulation for separate arrangements designed for the education of women after attaining a certain age. They must be trained in the supervision of their homes, the things that they should or should not do throughout the pregnancy, the nursing and care of children. For this reason, Gandhi always felt that even though both men and women were basically one and the same, there is a vital dissimilarity among the two. For this reason the professions of the two have to be different. Due to this she is the concierge in all sense of the term.”¹⁹⁶For Gandhi women is a living form of *ahimsa*. He saw in women love and unlimited capacity for suffering. He observed his wife and mother silently oppose their utilization. He acknowledged that he gained the knowledge of the technique of *Satyagraha* from his mother and wife. In this manner he put it into practice as a non – violent approach to revolt against mistreatment by the British.

V.4.1. Education for Women

Gandhi gave special importance to the requirement of mandatory education for girls bearing in mind it as an important means for ‘enabling women to assert their natural rights, to make use of them wisely and to work for their development and also to release from male supremacy. In his point of view, “A human being without education is not much different from an animal.”¹⁹⁷ He emphasized the requirement of education which would certainly support women to think on their own. He pointed out that “today few women take part in politics and most of these do not do independent thinking. They are content to carry out their parents or their husbands behests.”¹⁹⁸ Gandhi believed that in our society majority of women don’t have much education and they don’t aware what is

¹⁹⁶ Purushan Thesis p.4.

¹⁹⁷ Anup Thaneja, *Op.cit.*, p.27.

¹⁹⁸ M.K. Gandhi, Harijan 21-04-1946.

going around the world which is the reason behind a good number of the evil practices persist against women. Hence education is essential for women. He undoubtedly understood that education is important to declare their natural rights, to exercise them wisely and to work for their own development. “He stood for proper education for women as he believed that after receiving education they become sensitive to the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.”¹⁹⁹ Gandhi recommended the creation of powerful public opinion on the subject of the dealing with the problems for many of the social evils. He similarly recommended the institution of legislative enactment by the government against these evils. Hence he believed that legal judgments were not to be required and resented the idea of being completely depended on them. “If any change in the condition of women were to come” affirmed Gandhi “it would come through their own enlightenment, their capacity for resistance against injustice and self confidence.”²⁰⁰ Women must stop to reflect on her to be the object of mans passion for physical enjoyment. Gandhi’s believed that, it is a waste of time when women decorate herself with cosmetics and jewellery. In Indian society lack misery for food and shelter .In these circumstances women from high-class family won’t give up themselves to butification of their bodies with gold ornaments. The variety of desire and passion for beautification implied women to slavery. Through his writings and speeches he envisaged women’s struggle to vanquish the barriers limiting the comprehensive progress of their human potential from two perspectives. “On the one hand, he told that female weakness is only superficial, if women would but draw upon their inner reserve of strength, no obstacle could block their progress.”²⁰¹ Simultaneously Gandhi identified that a organization of social reform to give women with basic human rights like physical mobility and access to learning was required to encourage in them in the desire for progress.

Thus contribution of Gandhi towards the upliftment of the Indian women has been gigantic and extensive as he bothered himself “not only with social reforms designed to get rid of the atrocious customs that were weighing heavily on women, but he also gave philosophical consideration to every aspect of the problem of women’s emancipation and

¹⁹⁹ Anup Thaneja, *Op.cit.*, p. 28.

²⁰⁰ M.K.Gandhi, *Young India* October 27,1927

²⁰¹ Bharti Thakur, *Op.cit.*, p. 28

worked for it.”²⁰² Gandhi’s significant stress on women’s moral supremacy over men, wipeout the age old dishonor of women’s inferiority and motivated and empower them with self confidence.

V.4.2. Gender Equality

Certainly Gandhi clearly asserts his rigid stand in the subject of gender equality and he assumed that as an individual like as men she has the right to use the freedom for her own moral claims. But unfortunately she is dominated by men from ages past and manipulates them with the view of inferiority, which had turned to become helplessness and dependence. As a matter of fact Gandhi was against this kind of ‘excessive subordination’ of the fair sex and he desired ‘mutual consultation and cooperation’ between men and women. Gandhi observed that, a woman is not only equal to man, but in several ways she is superior to them. Men have to agree her high moral principles of the suffering, sacrifice, humility, penance and tolerance. Gandhi observed that the meaning of bravery is not in dying and killing but it is in the best sense of suffering and real sacrifice in dying for a honest cause and in this manner women is everyday superior to man. In addition to this, he considered that spiritually and mentally men and women are equal whereas there was slight difference in between emotionally and psychologically moreover he never mentioned equality of sexes means equality of occupations and realm of work and power. “The duty of motherhood or a caretaker and the household work is the basic task of women and these are in no way less significant than the works done by men.”²⁰³He believed that if they involve they put great effort in a every work. In fact Gandhi dreamt of women to have strong, purifying and controlling influence on family and society. Consequently through the conditions of natural differences between men and women Gandhi justifies social, cultural, economic and political roles of men and women. He has a tendency to think about certain culturally conditioned patterns of behavior be included in the everlasting and unchallengeable fundamental nature of women and simultaneously stand up on the sacredness of the personal dignity and self-

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.26.

sufficiency of women which ought to act towards as honored comrades in common service.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The researcher earnestly clarified in the above five chapters about Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence with all its implications and also discussed in detail about how he applied this concept for the development of women. If one follows non-violence in the proper way from the researcher's point of view to certain extent all types of atrocities can be overcome especially in the case of women. The above chapters revealed that Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent action bring positive changes with regard to women, and can expect a good change in to the betterment women. Chapter one discussed about Mahatma Gandhi's life message and childhood experiences in general along with special emphasis on the twin principles of Truth and non-violence. By highlighting this researcher tried to show how his childhood experiences influenced for molded his character and also the importance of the study of the lessons of *ahimsa* from the domestic school. By practicing non-violence in the daily life one will get the capacity to keep away all abuses and at the same time it helps to maintain order in each and every walk of life. The second chapter highlighted the philosophical outlook of Mahatma Gandhi in general, In this chapter researcher tried to highlight Mahatma Gandhi socio, political, economic and religious philosophy in general and discussed about the importance of keeping morality, an immoral man always will do evil practice at any time. So personally and publically every where one should maintain morality

In the third chapter researcher made an effort to discuss about the real meaning of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence and its origin and importance. In this chapter researcher try to bring awareness about the importance of following non-violence, here the researcher explained about the consequences of following violence. In the fourth chapter the researcher mainly discussed about historical status of women from ancient, medieval and contemporary period researcher mainly highlighted the present status of women and how psychologically and mentally violence affected her in day to day life. Here the researcher critically analyses the crimes against women in the modern India .In fifth chapter researcher highlighted about Mahatma Gandhi's attempts for the women empowerment, the amount of progress she attained from the fruits of his earnest

attempts on women. From this analysis researcher observed that, Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *ahimsa* is the best alternative. By adapting violence as a solution against any problem, it results as an extra chain-reaction which creates more violence. Whereas Non-violence on the other hand, stops violence or any kind of atrocitys and it is very difficult to continue violence and sufferings for a long period. Non-violence by creating a sense of guilt in the evil doer subtly transforms him. Therefore, undoubtedly we can say that, non-violence not only stop violence but it also makes a shift from evil to good and considerably contributes to peace and kindness.

The women empowerment is of late occurrence and their centers of attention presently has been transferred from emancipation to empowerment which is multidimensional process and permit them to become conscious about their complete identity and power in all fields of life. The vital tool for empowerment of women is the participation of political activities and administrative roles together with tracking the standard of political performance, which is also essential qualification for sustainable economic and social development. Our constitution itself has guaranteed equality to all irrespective of gender and it is disgusting that still violence against women is rapidly increasing. A girl child bears lot of sufferings from womb to tomb in the forms of female feticide in the initial stage, child abuse, domestic violence and the like. At times , the world remain ignorant of these forms of violence thrust upon women folk due to the silent suffering of women . Even though the sufferers trust out at the peak moments of suffering, the elders may advise them to be more patient since it is needed for the secured social life. Actually they give such kinds of advices only to save their faces from the rumors and accusations of patriarchal society. Unfortunately this silent suffering makes the condition more worse and end up in the suicide of the woman or brutal killing of her. These things compel us to think that, women are still treated as 'the other' and she is in chains in a so-called independent India.

Gandhi's hard working and insightful move took in to women in the nationalist movement undoubtedly made a big deal in the history of the country. Without no doubt one can say that no one has done more than Gandhi did in women empowerment. He overwhelmingly worried about the worse situation of Indian especially in the case of

different types of domination, dehumanizing and unfair social practices like child marriage, sati pratha, ban on widow remarriage, pardha system, prostitution, devadasi system and sincerely worked for wipeout all these evils from Indian society. Mahatma Gandhi was the first person who understood and practices the collective non-violent action as a moral weapon to fight against in justice. This is the reason for which his message has created a mass appraisal in India and elsewhere. It was his firm opinion that love is the law of our being and at the same time non-violence is the supreme law and it was the corner stone of mahatma Gandhi's thought. Traditional ideals will make women as a dependent ,weak , lost their courage , strength and self confident due to this he never support traditional ideals . Here the researcher also supports Mahatma Gandhi's views about Indian tradion. From the scholar's point of view, keeping silent is the main reason for the increasing violence against women. If they want to get empowered first they should break their silence. In fact Women have the honoars of great self-sacrifice and suffering. If she realizes this, she will be capable of acquiring infinite strength. The examples of powerful women from ancient period namely "Draupadi", "Savitri", "Sita" and "Damayanti" proved the Indian women's strength. At the same time he also believed that, whatever the mental abilities possessed by men, also present in women too, she has equal rights to freedom. Hence Women should understand their inner courage and potentiality then she will automatically became courageous to break the silence.

People are living in patriarchy where women are treated as a second rate citizen which create gender discrimination against women. Through the traditional patriarchal system women had to limit domestic department. Under the guise of patriarchy, women undergo severe hardships, physical and mental tortures. Women are often treated as a property or a machine to carry out household works and they are often a shadow behind their male counterparts. Due to this ill-treatment, women lose their individuality, personality and confidence to lead an independent life. Hence patriarchy system is the root cause of gender inequality in India. The BBC sponsored documentary on the issue named 'India's Daughter' was a shock to the whole country. The documentary featered an interview with Mukesh Singh, one of the rapists with the utter non sensorial statement of the interviewee shattered all the sensible concepts about morality of the country. Mukesh Singh exhorted that, the victim of the rape was more responsible for the incident

than the rapist. According to him women of character and morals would never travel during nights. He even talked to the extent of saying that had she being co-operative during the rape without any resistance she could have saved herself. This insensitive and insensible comment put forward by Mukesh Singh is a clear cut characteristic feature of the patriarchal mentality of our society. Though documentary has been banned by the Indian government, there will no change in the basic thought process and attitude of our people. The differentiation between sexes is forcefully feeded to the minds of every person in our society from childhood itself. Thus each and every person has to think that both men and women are equal that can remove the gender discrimination against women. More over they are like double side of the same coin without one side other side has no worth. Certainly Gandhi had clearly asserts his rigid stand in the subject of gender equality and he assumed that, as an individual she has the right to make her freedom of own moral claims. But unfortunately she was dominated from ages past and the view to manipulate along them with the idea inferiority, had turn to become women in the condition of helplessness and dependence. As a matter of fact Gandhi was against this kind of 'excessive subordination' of the fair sex and he desired 'mutual consultation and cooperation' in between men and women. With regard to women Gandhi said that ,she is not only equal to men, but in several ways she is superior to them. Men have to agree her high moral principles of the self- suffering, sacrifice, humility, penance and tolerance.

It is a fact that Gandhi's attitude concerning about women libration is an integrated one encompassing economic, psychological, social and political directions of human life. He mainly dreamt to change our social structure in support of women through peaceful means, because in his point of view both emancipation and empowerment are inter related concepts moreover the ultimate aim of empowerment of women was bound to fail without emancipation of women from bottlenecks of social structure. Hence emancipation is a necessary condition for fighting against oppression and for empowering them. Gaandhis innovative views laid a starting point of a new tradition, from this woman get the freedom to come out in thousands from their sheltered homes and contribute to the nationalist movement. Women's equal contribution with men in the freedom struggle of India not only made difference in their self image but also bring confidence to lead their own fight against patriarchal domination which further resulted

in to their empowerment. With regard to the legislative measures, laws, Acts policies, movements and campaign in favor of women's amelioration and empowerment : only handful of women occupy important positions in the professional, social and political arena, additionally they are not at all active participants in the endeavors of the government in the building of nation. Their representations in the legal and political organizations have insignificant. As Gandhi said, in Indian society the majority of the women don't have education and also they don't aware what is going around the world. Because of this reason a good number of the evil practices exist against women. Hence education is very much essential for women. Education is important for women to ascertain their natural rights and exercise them wisely to work for their development. Indian Society needs value based education. Today's education is not sufficient to mould the character of the individual. Because the real education has to improve the thoughts and skills. Rape is another variety of violence imposed on women. Most of the sex related crimes are mixed in their nature in which rape is measured to be the most horrible crime and social problem in numerous societies. It is also coming under human rights violation in India. Different studies revealed that, in every ten minutes one out of three women gets raped in our country. Social myths always compel people to put blame on women. Because of blaming, the survivors of rape are afraid to talk about what was happened to them. Sometimes people think that, the victim herself is the reason for rape. For instance she will be blamed for the attire and also the behavior for getting raped .In addition to that, if the accused hails from an affluent family they easily come out of the legal procedures safely through illegal means. In this context, the scholar reminded the Delhi gang rape of December 2012 as a perfect example for this. A twenty three old girl by name Jyoti Singh was brutally raped by six men while she was travelling in a bus in the night of 16 -12-2012. Though Jyoti Singh was accompanied by friend and her resisted the attack with all their strength they could not withstand brutality. After prolonged rape by the six men in a moving bus she was thrown on the road. She was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi with severe injuries .The earnest effort of the doctors of Safdarjung Hospital did not worked out and later she was shifted to a very advanced super specialty hospital in Singapore but their efforts could not save her life because all her body organs were totally damaged because the iron rod was inserted in to her vagina

and she passed away in Singapore. This incident threw light on the predicament of women in India. It was an eye opener for the social conscience of the whole country. Tens of Thousands of people united all over the country forgetting all the differences and voiced their protest against the inhumanness of the rapists and demanded that the culprits should be punished to the maximum extent. The mass protests staged all over the country brought about many significant changes in our law and order eventually all the six rapists were sentenced to imprisonment. From this we can deduced the fact that the power of unity or togetherness will be immense and if we dare to stand and act against all social evils like rape together as a unified force victory is sure.

There is no point in keeping silence and remaining inactive and one should have enough courage to raise his/her voice against unlawful activity. The meaning of *Ahimsa* is not just staying away from bloody violence, but a complete absence of selfish thoughts and anger which would hamper the other creatures. “Himsa” and “*Ahimsa*” are antonyms. But keeping away from harming and killing are not practical in every context. If anybody going to encroach others life, and there is no way to escape from that situation surely one should defend in that crisis to protect his life and there is nothing wrong in killing that person also. But behind that killing there is no ill will , no selfish intension and the action is being guided by a pure un attached sense of duty at the same time killing is not himsa, killing and resisting can be considered as a moral duty.

Generally Society has the tendency to isolate the rape victims. Why they are being isolated and blamed the rape victims in our society? The victim of rape led to the state by the human monsters even without her own knowledge. The act of seducing rape victims from the society is a bigger sin than done by the rapist .It is our duty to rehabilitate the rape victims in the society and provide them new hope in life. The best example in this context is the renowned social activist Dr. Sunitha Krishnan , who herself was a victim of brutal gang rape. She is the founder of Prajwala group which is an NGO for the rehabilitation of women and children who have been sexually exploited. The society today is in very much need of people like her for the progress and development of our country. Because the victims do not find a reason to be alive and it leads them to force themselves in to prostitution and other such business. This really hampering the growth

of the individual and the society as a whole. To the existing troubled system of our society, Mahatma Gandhi persuaded that, devoid of the support of legislative measures, the status of women won't be changed which would be required to be supported by changes in women's social circumstances. The actual fact is that, when the discrimination between men and women is stopped then women can contribute their maximum towards the reconstruction of the society. Women dedicate sometime for social work and create the environment that enhances their self-esteem. Through this she can overcome feelings of powerlessness. It helps to gain confidence and courage to enjoy her rights. If the condition of women viewed entirely one can firmly say that Education and economic independence are the essential and important factors to empower women and solve the problems against women in our society. Through education one can have the awareness of what is happening around the earth. Beyond this, change of the attitude in the society, cultural transformation and paradigm is very important to wipeout all the evils against her. In addition to this women must become conscious about their inner potential and inner strength as highlighted through Gandhi, who believed that 'if she learns sathyagraha she can be perfectly independent and self supporting. She will not have to feel dependent upon others. This does not mean that, she shall not take any help from others. She will certainly but such help be not forth coming, she will not feel destitute'. Through this awareness, women can become stronger along with their inner revolution for moral fight against injustice. And finally one must have to remember one thing is that, change which should come from within, that is transformation of heart not only from one person but from all will bring justice to women socially economically and politically and there will be enough scope for their empowerment.

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