

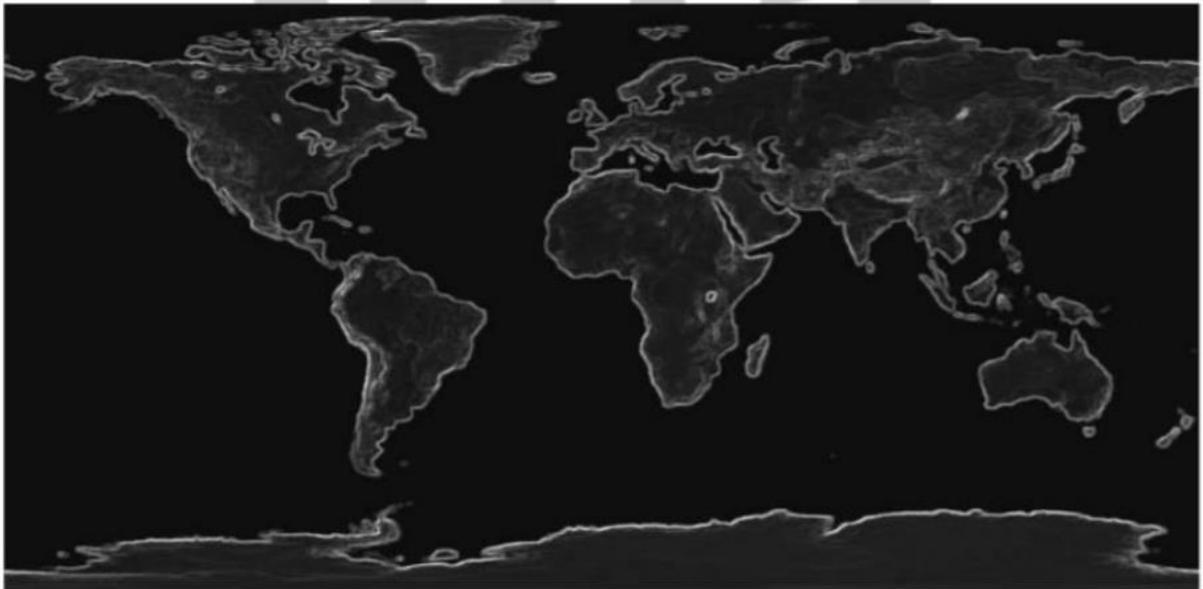


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# **MAHATMA GANDHI AND FEMINISM**

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*Veritas et Aequitas*



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# Mahatma Gandhi and Feminism

Mahatma Gandhi was a freedom fighter, social reformer, politician, thinker, author, leader, and undoubtedly one of the greatest Indians of the 20th century. The life of Gandhi is an idea, an idea that has bonded this nation together, weaving a diverse tapestry of language, culture, thought and religion. If India today is a country where Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, and several other religions find home, it is because of Gandhian ideals. But can we add another feather to his cap? - Feminist?

The 21st century is a period of contradictions for Indian women. Women are breaking the glass ceiling in almost every field, and India is one of the few countries in the world which has had a female Prime Minister and also a female President. Several Indian states have had powerful women Chief Ministers and women participation in electoral politics has never been higher. The Indian Parliament in 2019 had the highest number of women Parliamentarians in its history<sup>[1]</sup> Indian women are reaching the zenith in other spheres like science, art, sports, education, literature, social activism, medicine and law as well, Indian women have even outdone their male counterparts in several fields.

On the flip side, the country has witnessed several cases of violence against women, cases which have shaken our conscience India ranks 127th out of 160 countries on the World Inequality Index. Nearly half of India's women do not have a bank or savings accounts for their own use, and 60 percent of women have no valuable assets to their name. Women comprise almost 40 percent of agricultural labour but control only 9 percent of land in India.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The shocking statistics are plenty but action on ground seems to have fallen short. In this context can Gandhi's views on women be used by third wave feminist movements to create change?



## Influences on Gandhi

The earliest woman to influence Gandhi was his own mother- Putlibai. He said, “The outstanding impression that my mother has left on my memory is saintliness.”<sup>[4]</sup> She was a resilient woman and would take the hardest vows and keep them, illness wasn't an excuse to break them. She imbibed in him a strong sense of morality, compassion, duty, ethics, and discipline. When he moved to England for higher studies, he was asked by his mother to take the famous three vows - abstaining from meat, women and wine.

Most Indian communities favoured child marriage in the late 19th century-early 20th century. Following this norm, Gandhi too was married at the young age of thirteen to Kasturba (although he lashes out at this practice later on). Of course, both of them had their fair share of frictions and fights. They fought, learned, compromised, worked together and soon became the first couple of the Freedom Movement. In one instance during the Civil Disobedience movement, Gandhi had decided to raid the salt depots at Dharasana. The Government, however, knew of his plan and arrested him. Gandhi then asked Kasturba to lead the March in his absence. She too was arrested soon after and sent to prison for three months but nevertheless this was a symbolic move, to show the Indian people that women were capable of leading the country, even in the absence of men. Kasturba wasn't someone who bowed down to her husband, she was persistent, vocal and always voiced out her opinions. She even went on fasts to protest any decision of his that she didn't agree with. In a letter written to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 21 October 1936, Gandhi writes, "If you women would only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full use of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But man has delighted himself in enslaving you, and you have proved willing slaves till the slaves and slaveholders have become one in the crime of degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make women realize her dignity. I was once a slaveholder myself, but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus opened my eyes to my mission. Her task was finished. Now I am in search of a woman who would realize her mission. Are you that woman, will you be one?"<sup>[5]</sup>

Gandhi was also influenced by a plethora of other Indian women freedom fighters- Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya to name a few. But the most important influence on Gandhi's views on women were millions of ordinary Indian



women who suffered untold hardships and were the most affected by Colonial Rule especially by the skewed economic policies of the Raj. They were shackled with age-old superstitions and customs and lived in a patriarchal society where even the birth of a girl child was considered bad luck. This sorry social and economic condition of early 20th century India ensured that women had no room to empower themselves and move vertically in society. His feminism is for these women, for those on the periphery of Indian society.

When he was in Champaran for the famous Indigo Satyagraha, he asked Kasturba and other women volunteers to go around and find out the condition of women in the district and see what help could be provided to them. Gandhi noticed the filthy state of the women's clothes and asked Kasturba what could be done about this. When Kasturba had gone to a woman's house to find out what could be done, the woman replied to her- "look, there is no box or cupboard here for clothes. The sari I am wearing is the only one I have."<sup>[6]</sup> This small incident sums up the condition of women in Indian society during the Freedom Movement. His feminism therefore, was largely connected to self-reliance, economic empowerment, Swadeshi, and eventually, Independence.

### **Gandhi- The Social Reformer**

Gandhi spoke, wrote, and protested against several anti-women practices which existed in early 19th century India. He believed that customs and rituals are necessary in people's lives, but these customs and rituals should not overrule morality and humanity. He says, "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide."<sup>[7]</sup>

The institution of child marriage was a powerful one and most marriages in the country during the early 20th century were child marriages. It is important to note here that Gandhi himself was a victim of child marriage. He supported legislation which prohibited child marriage like the **Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929** and was a vocal critic of this institution. Gandhi wrote a chapter on child marriage in his autobiography with a solemn and apologetic tone. He writes - "Much as I wish that I had not to write this chapter, I know that I shall have to swallow



many such bitter draughts in the course of this narrative."<sup>[8]</sup> In the same chapter he points out that most child marriages didn't happen with the consent of the girl and she was forced to leave her home and adapt to new conditions in a quick span of time. Her aspirations and wishes were irrelevant. Moreover, most child brides are not physically or emotionally ready for childbirth and as a result the infant mortality rate skyrocketed.

As a consequence of Gandhi's overwhelming opposition to child marriage, he refused to approve his eldest son's wishes to marry at the age of eighteen. In Gandhi's collected works published after his death, there is a letter that Gandhi had written to his brother Lakshmidas, expressing his disapproval of his son's wedding. In fact, Gandhi was informed of the marriage after the date was fixed. Gandhi argues that the age of marriage should be fixed at twenty years minimum and not less than that.<sup>[9]</sup>

Another social evil that Gandhi opposed was the isolation and ill-treatment of widows. In Indian societies, widows have always been considered outcasts and remarriage was strictly not allowed in most parts of the country. Gandhi was deeply concerned about the condition of widows in Indian society, especially thousands of child widows who had a dark future ahead of them after the deaths of their husbands. He believed that widows had an important role in nation building and said, "It is worth considering carefully in what way the country can avail itself of the services of hundreds of widows, young and old"<sup>[10]</sup> He openly supported remarriage of widows and allowed them to participate in the freedom struggle. There is no doubt that his views on widows and the role that they played in society was radical and in stark contrast to common norms. In a newspaper article published in the *Navajivan*, a Hindi Newspaper dated May 9<sup>th</sup> 1929, Gandhi explains his stance on widows and widow remarriage and is critical of those who oppose the same and appeals to the conscience of the masses. His most radical quote on widows and their wellbeing mocks society's hypocrisy and attitudes towards women. He says, "We cry out for cow-protection in the name of religion, but we refuse protection to the girl widow."<sup>[11]</sup>

The practice of Sati was another instrument of oppression which was quite common in India in the early 20th century. Women who refused Sati were either physically restrained and forced



to commit sati or risked social isolation. He took a position against sati similar to those of social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Another instrument of oppression was Dowry- the giving of wealth to the groom's family by the bride's family for the marriage to occur. Gandhi linked the dowry system to the caste system. He was harsh on the system of dowry and strongly condemned those who favoured this practice. He argues that the only honourable terms of marriage are mutual love and consent. He believed that the best way to abolish the dowry system was to create awareness about it. Eradicating taboos would prevent people from demanding dowry. To quote Gandhi- "As for you young girls, to you I will only say, that if I had a girl under my charge I would rather keep her a maiden all her life than give her away to one who expected a single price to take her as his wife."<sup>[12]</sup> It is important to note that girls would sometimes be harassed, abused, and sometimes even killed for the sake of dowry.

A grave social evil that Gandhi expressed his views on was Female Infanticide. The common belief was that the birth of a girl child was bad luck and would lead to economic turmoil in the family, who would have to marry her away with a dowry. The birth of a boy child on the other hand was seen as a boon and was celebrated. Gandhi spoke out against an unjust treatment handed out to females in society and argued that the world needed both males and females and the births of both should be welcomed and rejoiced in equal measure. To quote Gandhi, "Man and woman will attain equality only when the birth of a girl is celebrated with as much joy as in the case of boy."<sup>[13]</sup>

He spoke out against domestic violence as well, his concept of non-violence applied to households too - men were not allowed to beat or abuse their wives and had to treat women with respect and dignity.

### **History of Feminism in India**

Feminism in its conceptualization as a social movement arose as early as the 1600's in France, but it only took flight in the 1800's with the abolitionists advocating for social reformation post the oppression of religion. The Era of Enlightenment brought an end to various stigmas and inequalities that pervaded the clerical society. With it came the advent of a feminine representation of a largely patriarchal structure.



The world henceforth faced various waves of feminism, all advocating for the rights of women in different capacities. It is well known that Gandhi was one of the first advocates for women's rights in India at a national scale, championing the cause of the National Struggle in all aspects of resistance.

This essentially entailed that the Freedom Movement was not just limited to the independence sought after from the British but also economic, political and social independence at the very grassroots of interpersonal civil connections. This included gender, caste, community and other forms of diversities to be considered of equal stature. However, the Indian society deeply entrenched in conservative ritualism was too tough an opponent to bring about complete abolitionism.

One must acknowledge regional and local efforts to bring about feminist affluence to Indian society before Gandhi's call for collectivized mobility. Manoshi Mitra (1984) and Indra Munshi Saldanha (1986) have analysed women's militant role in tribal movements where they confronted authorities, wielding traditional weapons and maintaining lines of supplies to the rebels in their hidden places. Sunil Sen has pointed out women's participation in struggles launched by trade unions in the iron ore mines of Madhya Pradesh.<sup>[17]</sup> However, it was only when the freedom movement began to take a national appearance under Gandhi that the aspect of feminine strength or 'shakti' was celebrated.

### **Feminism and Freedom**

The Fundamental bedrock of Gandhi's Ideology was Ahimsa or Non-Violence which was aided by other principles like Satya, Sacrifice and Compassion, all of these were fundamentally '*feminine values*' which were seen in women as opposed to the more aggressive, violent and chauvinistic approach of the Colonial rulers. The concept of Motherhood too increasingly became the foundation of his approach. A mother nurtures her child and takes care of all her



children and protects them, wherein the children are loyal to their mothers in a similar way. Unless we view our country and nation as our mother, it would be difficult to foster loyalty and other nations would be waiting to pull us down. He saw no hope for India's emancipation while her womanhood remained un-emancipated. <sup>[14]</sup>

Gandhi was a supporter of more women participating in the freedom movement and called upon women to join the movement in large numbers, he knew by allowing them to participate in the movement and join in huge numbers, he would not only be boosting the freedom movement but also the feminist movement in India, the participation of several women leaders in the movement sowed the seeds of women empowerment in India. Gandhi relied on The Mahabharata and The Ramayana to describe the role of women in the freedom movement and used the popular analogy of Sita-Draupadi to do the same. This analogy was utilized in opposition to Jhansi Ki Rani's form of *shakti* which is more aggressive and outgoing and, in its right a respectful form of resistance- but was not in tune with Gandhi's belief of a peaceful sort of opposition to British brutality by the subtle 'softness and femininity' of Indian women at the time.

He knew that a large number of women in India still lived in patriarchal and oppressive surroundings and majority of them wouldn't be able to easily break social norms and join the freedom movement like their male counterparts. He thus formulated a policy whereby women could participate in the freedom movement from their homes. The main focus of this programme was *Khadi* and the spinning of the wheel, in doing so women didn't have to break convention, yet had the opportunity to take part in the national movement.

Women were also encouraged by him to picket outside liquor stores since Gandhi was aware of the problems that alcohol caused to Indian women through acts of male domestic violence and abuse in intoxicated states. Drowning of money in its consumption and linked alcohol to imperialism were his other reasons. Liquor and alcohol therefore became symbols of patriarchy and foreign rule which lead to the moral collapse of society. In his home state of Gujarat, alcohol remains banned till date. Gandhi had organized a Congress of women at Dandi and



they were given the main role in the fight against liquor and foreign cloth. Kasturba Gandhi led the movement and even spearheaded a movement to cut down Toddy Trees.

The Dandi march which was led by Gandhi saw an increase in women's participation. Out of the 30,000 satyagrahis who were arrested after the civil disobedience movement, about 17,000 of them were women. Women were also the central focus of his constructive programme, which included their training and education in organizing and planning political action <sup>[15]</sup>.

Gandhi even linked the freedom movement in India to the removal of untouchability in the society and was of the opinion that women had the biggest role to play in the eradication of untouchability.

In 1925, Gandhi's choice for the presidentship of the INC was Sarojini Naidu. He shared a very special relationship with her, and she viewed him as her mentor and guide. Sarojini Naidu was undoubtedly one of the greatest ever feminist leaders of the 20th century. He brought women into the decision-making sphere of the INC and his dominant position in the party allowed him to give a larger space to the women leaders.

Following his call for Women Participation in the freedom struggle, several women across the country joined the Gandhian Movement and contributed in their own ways. Nagamma Patil was a popular social worker and freedom fighter from Karnataka who worked for the welfare of the Harijan children. She joined the freedom movement on the call of Mahatma Gandhi and founded the Harijan Balikashrama at Hubli, which aimed at empowering young Dalit women. Sarala Devi Chaudhurani was one of the female leaders who had worked hard in Punjab to popularize Khadi and homespun cloth, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur started the Spinners Association which was also aimed at promoting Khadi. Basanti Devi and Urmila Das sold Khadi products at Calcutta. Manibehn Patel had organized the women in Gujarat under the slogan of 'Swadeshi'. Kamala Nehru was at the forefront of the Non-Cooperation movement and played an active role in picketing alcohol shops.



There is no doubt that modern day feminist movements can use Gandhian ideals and principles to harness the collective power of all women. A fundamental flaw of 21st century Indian feminism is that it has alienated large groups of women who are uneducated, poor and don't have access to information or resources. Indian feminist movements have to take into consideration the social and economic conditions of country and the local conditions of each state, only then can women play a larger role in the political and economic spheres of our country. The reason why Gandhi was successful in increasing the participants who were women in the freedom movement was because he understood the complex social and political constraints of Indian society. He was able to include poor village women, widows, liberal educated women, peasants and even *Maharanis* into the freedom movement, all fighting for one cause because he knew that one absolute method would never work, all activity had to be local and partial, only then would people relate to it.

### **Women, Economy, and Gandhi**

Mahatma Gandhi's approach was always inclusive of the social, economic and political spheres of life. Gandhi believed in self-reliance and knew that in order to break the shackles of colonial rule, India had to have a thriving local economy. Indian women had long suffered under the economic assault of the Raj. Most rural Indian women were involved in weaving, dyeing, pottery, handicrafts manufacturing and other small cottage industries which were later completely destroyed by the policies of the Raj as the Indian market flooded with cheap large-scale industry made goods from British cities like Manchester. The concept of Khadi and homespun cloth was popularized by him among the masses and he urged people to boycott British made cloth and imported goods as this in turn would aid the ailing village economy which had almost been wiped out by the government's policies. The beneficiary of this were women of the country who would once again be provided with a livelihood.

Gandhian ideals of self-reliance, sustainability and economic empowerment were the foundations of the Self-Help Group Movement (SHG) in India, which still aims at empowering women by providing free or low interest credit without any collateral. The movement allows the women to become self-reliant and also provides them a safe space where they can discuss



issues related to work and family.<sup>[16]</sup> It has seen success in states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and is a valuable example of how Gandhian thought can influence Women Empowerment in the 21st century.

### **The concept of Gandhian Feminism**

Gandhi raised his voice for women's rights and his thinking was feminist in nature. It, however, becomes necessary to understand that feminism is an abstract idea and is a postmodern concept, therefore it carries various meanings in different circumstances and geographical locations as there is no absolute and universal notion of feminism.

However, when we place Gandhi and his views in the socio-political climate of the early 20th century, there is no doubt that his views were ahead of his time. He based the entire freedom movement on the notion that all Indians, both men and women should fight alongside for freedom. To quote Gandhi- "The beauty of non-violent war is that women can play the same part in it as men."<sup>[18]</sup> Apart from increasing the participation of women in the freedom struggle, he wanted women to know their real potential, he urged them to understand their powers and refused to believe that women were inferior to men. Gandhi also championed the cause of female literacy as he believed that only education could make a woman understand her rights and empower her to the maximum. He also believed that it was unfair of men to treat women unequally on the basis of their illiteracy. He writes "I have pointed out from time to time that there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny them equal rights on the ground of their illiteracy; but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them; again the true knowledge of self and to spread them; again, the true knowledge of self is unattainable by the millions we are without such education."<sup>[19]</sup>

Gandhian feminism was most importantly rooted in culture and tradition, Gandhi didn't want to completely shed traditional values and principles and his feminist views often worked around these traditions. He didn't want to absolutely reject traditional conventions of femininity and



gender and at several times agreed with them. He may have done this in order to not ruffle too many feathers in society, we need to keep in mind that the India where Gandhi lived was feudal, patriarchal, rooted in customs and wasn't as liberal as a society that we have today. Gandhian feminism has its basis in the idea of Sarvodaya, which means the upliftment of all sections of the society, including women. His feminist views may not have been a separate sphere of his reform work but was closely interlinked to other spheres of reform and ultimately the freedom movement. As aforementioned, Gandhian Feminism in its genesis was an embracing of the strength and the equal nature of the woman while also acknowledging the cultural and traditional aspects of society and religion. Gandhi was very religious in nature and practiced a very ascetic lifestyle. He derived his beliefs from a sect which his mother was a part of known as the *pranamis* who mingled Hindu and Muslim beliefs and practices. The basic tenets of the sect sought harmony between all faiths and the simplicity of living. The latter involved vegetarianism, abstention from all stimulants and periodic fasting, all of which his mother observed strictly.<sup>[20]</sup>

One must understand that Gandhian feminism is an entirely spiritual and moral concept that shed new light to the very definition of feminism in itself and promoted a nature of shakti which was anti-aggressive and anti-brutalist such as was the nature of the colonialists. That celebration of the femininity of peaceful resistance was a kind of onslaught in nature that brought in a fresh perspective to the fight of feminists and egalitarianism alike.

Thus, one can describe Gandhian Feminism as *feminism rooted in Sarvodaya which is the upliftment of all human beings- both men and women, attained by means of peaceful advocacy and physical, mental and spiritual liberation.*

### **Criticisms against Gandhi**

Gandhi's views on Feminism have often been subject to criticism. There have been multiple articles and essays written by scholars and modern-day feminists alike criticizing the legacy of Gandhi and claiming that he used women as a means of fulfilling political ends. Women's



participation in the freedom movement draws a lot of critique in aspects of casteism and how it was mostly only upper-class women that participated in it. While Gandhi was a believer in the Varnashrama Dharma system, his idea of the Varnas was also quite flexible as imparted by the Early Vedic Civilization's perception of the Varna system.

"If I have my way, the President of the Indian Republic will be a chaste and brave Bhangi girl...If such a girl of my dreams becomes President, I shall be her servant and I shall not expect from the Government even my upkeep. I shall make Jawaharlal (Nehru), Sardar (Vallabhai) Patel and Rajendra Babu her ministers and therefore her servants," Gandhi stated in a public address on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1947.

This statement in itself indicates a clear contradiction to the accusations thrown at Gandhi for being casteist when it came to women's emancipation; certainly, one must see all the efforts Gandhi took to ensure the abolishment of casteism. There was no space for such a divisive concept in his ideal New India, nor had it any place in the freedom movement.

Another major criticism Gandhi faces is on the accusation of stereotyping and essentialization.. His quote on men being more suited to physical labour and women to homemaking has been misinterpreted widely as him condemning the individualistic and independent nature of feminism as is common in today's day and age. This is certainly not the case as while Gandhi did speak in favour of the domestic nature of women, he was prominently understanding of the conditions of most women in 20<sup>th</sup> century India who could not actively be involved with the Swadeshi Movement to the fullest of their capacities. Furthermore, he was always encouraging and not confined to the principle of the woman always remaining at home as during his Salt Satyagraha and Lathi Marches, it was women who were encouraged and inspired by him to pick up the lathis and housewives to come out in protest with their pots and pans and establish salt stations at their own houses to sell salt in small amounts at the Bombay markets.

Even in his ashramas, Gandhi was known to encourage men and women to interchange duties and never confine them to a "man's work" or a "woman's work." He was a proponent of the



ideology that household chores were gender neutral and skills that everyone should learn. As a 20<sup>th</sup> century male, Gandhi was maybe one of the first advocates for gender equity at home.

One of the most controversial accusations Mahatma Gandhi faced was accusation of sexual harassment and exploitation of young women by writers like Rita Banerji who speak of his Brahmana yajna as sexual experiments and exploitations. <sup>[21]</sup> Gandhian scholars like Veena R. Howard and Bhikhu Parekh provide alternative understandings of his lifestyle by highlighting his Brahmacharya yajna as a spiritual journey and a test of control and celibacy. They highlight that through these acts of sleeping with women naked at night time, Gandhi was in pursuit of reaching a spiritual oneness; to be as one with women and to feel as one with women. They offered counter arguments of how there was no essence of private partaking of any kind and that consent was never violated with these women, showing that Gandhi's 'experiments' were purely spiritual in nature and not sexual.

As J. Jordens writes, "he [Gandhi] wanted to feel about women, not as a male, but as a woman, and wanted to be accepted by them not as a male but as a sister or a mother." Gandhi also writes: "I deliberately want to become a eunuch mentally. If I succeed in this then I become one physically also. That alone is true brahmacharya." <sup>[22]</sup>

One can even boldly assume that by adopting this ascetic lifestyle, Gandhi was actually in touch with the roots of the feminist movement - desexualisation, personalisation and deification of the female body and embracing the spirit of the woman in all dimensions. His ascetic and spiritual lifestyle led him to surrender all physical desires and adopt the lifestyle of a celibate, thereby denying himself of all the pleasures that come with the act of 'laying with a woman' in her most provocative state. Thus, in denying himself of this desire completely and ridding himself of the idea that women are inherently sexual objects whose sole purpose is to reproduce or provide physical comfort to a man and therefore are inferior and remain in service to males; his spiritual enlightenment was the very essence and adoption of the empowerment of women.



Gandhi believed in an inseparability between an ascetic's life and a life of social and political involvement. Though he attempted to live as a brahmacharya, he was involved in many worldly political and social matters. He synthesized existence in the ascetic or spiritual plane and in the worldly plane. "...Gandhi was never affiliated with any institutionalized ascetic traditions..."<sup>[23]</sup>

As feminism is a constantly evolving social movement with one of the most diverse crowds, we see various understandings of what feminism means today and the validity behind it is as controversial and political a topic as ever. The truth of the matter is that the definition of feminism and the attainment of what the movement offers has gone through so many changes that there are a number of differences between many feminists themselves over the goals of the movement currently and the means to achieve them.

Radical feminists call for an overthrow of patriarchy and the establishment of a matriarchy and the authority of women, whereas many women are also misogynistic towards other women for having traditionally feminine characteristics and lifestyles, causing them to be hypocritical in their pursuit for feminine superiority. This outlook has essentially distorted the goals the movement was initially purported for.

However, most feminists are still of the simple and original ideology of advocating for women's rights and welfare in all spheres of life considering the oppression they have faced in the past. Despite criticisms in today's age regarding the validity of feminism and the means to achieving its ends, feminism is still required in developing and third world countries to abolish stigmas and save lives from superstitions, beliefs and traditions involving female genital mutilation and female infanticide that still exist to this day. Feminism in first world countries has a long way to go as well, with sexual violence legislation, judicial equity, corporate representation and bodily autonomy being focal points of the feminist conversation.

Certain facets of women's superiority that Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed regularly may be mistaken as a radical view. However, given the age and circumstances those features were



brought to light, one can easily say that they were intended for indelible encouragement and passionate emancipation of women to take up an equal footing in the process of nation making. Gandhian Feminism of soft resistance and peaceful wrath could actually be incredibly useful to modern feminism to adopt in character for it to regain its favour with the masses but could also be quick to be subdued at the hands of faceless oligarchs and powerful profit-motivated governments. Today's future seems bleak with an incessant rise in a politically incorrect culture that thrives hand in hand with the views of conservative political parties.

However, a hope still remains with the unification of all liberal and democratic movements that do essentially still combat the current hate and fear fostering political narratives and creates a climate for political discussion and deliberation at an urgency.

Thus, in this age of intense political activity, the war between the left wing and right wing has impacted feminism. The concept of feminism today benefits from one of the oldest forms of feminism that was true to the celebration of women in every frontier whether domestic or otherwise. One can only hope that Gandhian Feminism finds its way into the hearts of women in India today, and women can take refuge and solace in knowing that their female ancestors fought bravely and fearlessly while at the same time lifting the banner of peace and truth.

With a basic understanding of Gandhiji's feminist principles, we can comprehend the soul, grace and power of any woman on this Earth through his words, ideologies and through the freedom movement. One can also lovingly consider that while he was definitely "The Father of the Nation," Mahatma Gandhi in some sense was also a Mother, in the most understanding and caretaking sense of the word, to us all.

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