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ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE – WOMEN UPLIFTMENT

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Introduction

Vinoba Bave

Vinoba Bhav (born Vinayaka Rao Bhav), a man of RIGHT VISION and TRUE SOCIAL ACTIVIST also known as ACHARYA, witnessed the PRE INDEPENDENT AND POST INDEPENDENT INDIA and not only witnessed but contributed in its journey of being a reality of freedom fighters' dreams, was born into a pious Chitpavan Brahmin family on 11 September 1895 in a small village called Gagode (present-day Gagode Budruk) in Kolaba currently in Raigad district of Maharashtra. His childhood name was and Vinayaka was the eldest son of Narahari Shambhu Rao and Rukmini Devi. The couple had five children – four sons and one daughter, named Vinayaka Balakrishna, Shivaji, and Dattatreya. His father, Narahari Shambhu Rao was a trained weaver with a rationalist modern outlook and worked in Baroda. Vinayaka was immensely influenced by two people in his childhood - his grandfather, Shambhuro Bhav and his mother Rukmini Devi, a religious woman from Karnataka. His mother was having soft corner for shremad bhagwad geeta so Vinayaka was also highly inspired after he realized the Bhagavad Geeta at a very young age also he translated it in Marathi especially as a gift for his mother. Most of his lectures and ideas were based on the philosophy of Shrimad bhagwad geeta.

He used to think about the reason of his birth and his actual responsibilities he is sent on the earth for and while he was in Intermediated, Mahatma Gandhi ji was active in independence movements at high level, vinayak got inspired and destroyed all of his documents then went to Banaras and met Gandhi ji after Gandhi ji's speech at Bhu then at the age of 20 he met Gandhi ji in Kochrab ashram (ahemdabad Gandhi ji's first ashram), here he took the oath of celibacy –and social service for life, later Gandhi ji himself got inspired with him and chosen him as his ideological successor, Vinoba ji proved himself a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi ji, a true nationalist, a true patriotic also a true feminist as well as he raised his voice for Stree Shakti or women empowerment, though most of the people know him for his best achievement in economic and social development by BHOODAAN AND GRAMDAAAN MOVEMENT, but his realistic and honest contribution in India women's life can never be neglected.

Vinoba bhav's thoughts about women: He was a man with true feminist ideas that we are seeing these days in efforts of UN WOMEN ORGANISATION, though his work in this field remains limited but that limited work was full of honesty and on real ground. He believed in empowering women, making them aware of their own strength. He was not satisfied with small actions of bold disobedience or open resistance. He wanted them to realise their own power, and use it constructively. He wanted some woman to be the second Shankaracharya. The great influence of Vinoba's mother on his mind is very clear in all his life-time work. Even in education, Vinoba said, that the mother is the best teacher next to God. As Lord Krishna wanted "Matr hasten bhoojanam" feeding by mother's hand as the highest boon, Vinoba advocated "Matra Mukhn-jaam" means education through the mother. People very rarely note this spiritual attainment for women as a group, as Vinoba's innovation. It has come into existence without noise or opposition, just as the blade of grass grows. It does not make any noise in the process. But it does a lot of good for all living things, in short in his opinion women were perfect to play any role in social, political, religious and economic development.

Acharya's Ideas for women upliftment: It was Vinoba who broke the barriers of women's spiritual liberation. He did not believe in Stree Mukti (women's liberation). Liberation from what? From whom? In a society where the family is still a very strong base of the social fabric, this liberation is basically upper-class talk. Vinoba wanted women to realise their power (Shakti) and he called this idea, awakening of women's power (Stree Shakti Jagaran). Vinoba bhav's ideas were true explanation of the term WOMEN EMPOWERMENT means MAKING A WOMEN CAPABLE ENOUGH TO TAKE THEIR DECISIONS ON HER OWN & ENSURING THAT THEY ARE NOT SLAVE OR THING TO BE CONTROLLED BY SOMEONE.

Acharya's ideas are nearest to the thought that woman is also human she is not bound to wait for someone's permission whatever we are trying to give her is her own that we've had controlled so now we need to take some steps to let them realise that, and for that spiritual, educational and economical upliftment are the important tools to be used.



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He said that when Sita was captured by Ravana and was kept under his surveillance even then Ravana could not bring any harm upon Sita due to her spiritual strength, but this example pertains to the most ideal woman of mythology. As a normal woman who is living in a male dominant society what can she do to protect herself?

He adds that such women can be given the concession of using a pistol to protect her, but these concessions are an exception to the rule of self reliance and nonviolence. The male dominant society has on the basis of violence snatched away her ability for self reliance and made her financially weak. Vinoba talks about handing over the basic primary education system to the women. So also, women should be given a prominent place in the field of literature, education, religion and such other fields.

Acharya's sarvodaya and women empowerment: The word 'Sarvodaya' was first used by Gandhi in 1908 as the title of Gujarati translation of John Ruskin's "Unto this Last". In Indian political thought, Sarvodaya is a synonym for Gandhian thought. Gandhiji was deeply impressed by Ruskin's book and Gandhi left great impression over vinoba bhav directly.

In short, It can be seen as a synonym of present day concept of INCLUSIVE and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, and even more than that as sarvodaya meant the **DEVELOPMENT OF ALL WITH TRUTH AND NON VIOLENCE, NO CASTE BASED DISCRIMINATION**

Vinoba advocated that the term Sarvodaya indicates a two-fold meaning –

1. Making happiness for all by removing social dogmas and discriminations.
2. Establishing a new society with equality, divinity, and kindness.(8)

Vinoba Bhav, connected this with the Geeta' philosophy as well and explained it as a process of merging oneself in the good of all'.(9) It attempts boosting the human mind with ethical ideas. He considered the sarvodaya as the best dharma ever.

SO in this way when Sarvodaya idea started to be implemented, **it indirectly helped out in upliftment of women** by saving the small & cottage industries of India and by trying to make the villages self reliant and even in post independent India Vinoba bhav continued his Sarvodaya theory that was even adopted by central govt in its policies.

Bramhabidya mandir and women upliftment: The Brahma Vidya Mandir is one of the ashrams that Vinoba Bhav established. It is a small community for women that was created for them to become self-sufficient and non-violent in a community. This group cultivates to get their food but uses Gandhi's beliefs about food production. This community, like Gandhi and Bhav, has been influenced greatly by the Bhagavad-Gita and that is also used to determine their practices. The community performs prayers as a group every day, reciting from the Isha Upanishad at dawn, the Vishnu Sahasranama at mid-morning, and the Bhagavad-Gita in the evening. As of today, there are around 25 women who are members of the community and several men have also been allowed to join the community.(19) Since its founding in 1959, members of Brahma Vidya Mandir (BVM), an intentional community for women in Paunar, Maharashtra, have dealt with the struggle of translating Gandhian values such as self-sufficiency, non-violence, and public-service into specific practices of food production and consumption. The Ashram's existence and the counter-narrative its resident's practice demonstrate how one community debate the practicalities and trade-offs in their application of self-sufficiency, non-violence, and radical democracy to their own social and geographic context. One narrative described by the Ashram and the farmers that work with them is that large-scale agriculture is inevitable, necessary, and the sole possibility of feeding the world. The members rejected the narrative that success in agriculture comes from expensive technology. This Ashram is a small community in India, therefore it does not hold much power in its beliefs and practices. However, India today proudly proclaims its large and growing middle class, and although many see Gandhi as a hero, some reject his views in favor of US-style-consumerism and look for an alternate route in agriculture with technological advancements. The existence of This Mandir provides a counter-narrative on enacting alternate agriculture practices and social practices that were believed by a woman back in the 1960s.(20)

Acharya's literature about women upliftment: He wrote many books and some of his books were compilation of his lectures and notably, In all his speeches, there are several instances of his own development, and of his mother's influence on him. he was in favour of Stree Sakti as a Matri Sakti. He wanted spiritual salvation and self-realisation as a goal for women, through nurturing Matri Sakti.



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Two books were compiled in jail as

1. In nagpur jail he wrote – ishavyasyavritti
2. In seoni jail he wrote – sthitaprajna

But his main book related to women empowerment is “Women’s Power” which includes the most recent ideas of Acharya Vinoba Bhave on this subject. Vinobaji has great faith in the power of women. He is against any discrimination between the status of man and woman. In this age of science it should be considered absolutely unreasonable to keep women enclosed in the four walls of the home. Vinobaji insists on this fact that India can advance only when some women ‘Sannyasis’ come forward who are as detached and as ascetic as Shankaracharya was and have more women imbued with ‘Brahma Vidya’, the spiritual knowledge.

This whole book is replete with new and pungent ideas. Any one going through them will feel inspired. It is a matter of pleasure that we are publishing this book when whole world is celebrating Women’s Year in pursuance of the call of the U.N.O. We hope that the revolutionary ideas certainly help in awakening women’s power not only in India, but also in other countries of the World.

Conclusion: After 1948 Gandhi ji’s death Vinoba ji became his true successor till death, near about on 18 April 1951 – Bhodan movement took place as a part of Sarvodaya movement. He also started Toofan Yatra, at the end he came to Pavnar and started his Sadhna and started fast against Gau Hatya, influenced Govt policies later disconnected himself from active social service and connected himself with spirituality and died on 15th Nov 1982. Also he was first international person to achieve Ramon Magsaysay Award and he was also awarded Bharat Ratna. Though he was also criticized sometimes for his political biasness towards Congress, but his over all contributions to Indian development are memorable and unforgettable, and his concept of women empowerment is truly appreciable.

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