Reflections of Vivekananda's Views on Women and Womanhood

Dr. Anita Rani Rathore Asso. Prof., English K.M.G.G.P.G. College, Badalpur

"All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future."

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), a great philosopher, thinker and reformer of India received a three minute standing ovation from thousands assembled at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, when he began his address with the words, "Sisters and Brothers of America". However, few know about his life and teachings. Fewer still know of his views on women in India.

Born as Narendra Nath Dutta, Vivekananda felt, "the thermometer to progress of a nation is its treatment of its women, and it is impossible to get back India's lost pride and honour unless Indians try to better the conditions of women. He considered men and women as the two wings of a bird and it is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing. As he says, "there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing". His father was an intellectual, generous, progressive person who strongly supported re-marriage of widows. His mother was his father's peer in every respect. Exceptionally intelligent with an unusual memory, she was highly respected. She read aloud the Ramayana and Mahabharata to young Naren,