

## **Chapter-V**

### **IMAGINING MODERN INDIA BY NEHRU- RESPONSE OF WOMEN AND ITS HORIZON**

“We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.”

Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru occupies a unique place not only in the history of India, but also of the world. His charismatic leadership which was the result of his multi-splendoured personality, undoubtedly led to the emergence of Nehru as a leading figure and leader of the world. It may be said that the two most radiant sides of his multi-faceted personality were a ‘brave heart and wise head’, which was clearly discernible in his determined courage as a fighter for India’s independence and his profound wisdom as an architect of modern India. As he stated in a message to the press on 15 August, 1947 that in order to built a better future for his country he endeavoured:

“To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.”<sup>2</sup>

Nehru’s vision for India had already been shaped during the days of the Indian freedom struggle, and following independence after becoming the undisputed leader as well as the head of the state and Prime Minister of free India, he got the opportunity to translate his visions into practice. Though it was a period of trial for Nehru and India as a country was just a newly born nation with the travails of partition leaving its distinct mark on it and a huge and herculean task lay ahead in

building the nation, yet Nehru, a man of myriad vision showed great statesmanship and foresight in moulding and steering the destiny of the nascent country. Therefore after independence Nehru symbolized the hopes and aspirations of free India and as a maker of modern India his services were unparalleled. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan the second President of India and a great Indian philosopher and statesman once said about Nehru, “No homage is necessary for him. Modern India is the greatest monument which he has built for himself.”<sup>3</sup> In this respect, this chapter is a humble attempt to delve into the great vision of Nehru and his efforts in building of a powerful and prosperous India through the various policies he established and formulated so that India might have a “place of honour and equality in the comity of nations.”<sup>4</sup> And in this regard, it would also be interesting to deal with the role and response of women towards Nehru in influencing, guiding and helping him in the process of nation building.

After independence, Nehru symbolized the forces of the resurgence of a newly born nation. He had great vision for his country and when the country was under British rule, he had always imagined and visualized the dream of a free and independent India and wanted India to occupy an important position in the world affairs. After the dream of independence was realized, again Nehru was faced with the onerous task of building his newly founded nation. But before proceeding further towards building India of his dreams and ideals, he had to face a grueling and harrowing time dealing with the communal violence which was unleashed as a result of partition that came with independence. Partition saw an orgy of murder, arson, looting and violence. Therefore in order to build up a modern India, Nehru had to first divert his attention towards the disruptive communal forces which had marred

the nation. And in this connection, it may be relevant here to point out the role women played in assisting Nehru in this task of dealing with communal violence, migration problem and the rehabilitation of the refugees.

Women came up forward in a remarkable way to undertake the task of relief amongst the refugees. In this context the outstanding work done by Edwina Mountbatten amongst the refugees is well known which is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter. She worked with great vigour and enthusiasm amongst the partition victims. Mridula Sarabhai tried and protected the Muslims in Amritsar and East Punjab and arranged for their safe evacuation, while at the same time helped to rehabilitate the Hindu and Sikh refugees who poured in from West Punjab and she kept the Prime Minister informed of the developments in Punjab.<sup>5</sup> Lady Mountbatten together with Mridula Sarabhai visited the transit camps in Amritsar and Jullundur districts. The special problems presented by uprooted women and children required urgent attention. In order to solve these problems, many women organizations particularly All India Women's Conference and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) mobilized active workers and contributed substantially.<sup>6</sup> To formulate and enforce a proper policy on the rehabilitation of women refugees, a small Advisory Committee of women social workers in the Ministry of Rehabilitation had been appointed with Rameshwari Nehru as the honorary Director. This Committee was charged with the responsibility for the care, maintenance and rehabilitation of uprooted women and children from Pakistan. Mridula Sarabhai through a network of activities also worked for rehabilitation of Hindu refugees who had been uprooted from their homes in the Pak-held territory of Jammu and Kashmir state. In 1950 when Hindus in East Bengal were under

increasing pressure to leave their homes and migration started, followed by Muslim migration from West Bengal, Nehru showing full faith and confidence on Mridula deputed her to visit Calcutta and start relief work under the auspices of the United Council for Relief and Welfare (UCRW). She plunged into relief work with great vigour and devotion in face of stiff opposition from the Hindu mobs. Besides, many other Indian women like Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kripalini, Rameshwari Nehru, Indira Gandhi and many others, also contributed greatly in the relief work amongst the refugees as has been discussed in the fourth chapter, and in this way it can be said that through their work and activities one can gauge the horizon of women's response in helping Nehru build up the tattered nation into a strong and unified nation as conceived by him

It can be seen that apparently the reflections of Nehru's vision of India was clearly visible in the process of Constitution making. Prior to independence itself, Nehru had already visualized the need of a Constituent Assembly which would satisfy the Indian aspirations and had pressed constantly on having its own broad-based representative Constituent Assembly for framing a Constitution for new India. Criticizing the British Government's proposal for constitutional reforms in India in 1933 embodied in a White Paper<sup>7</sup>, Nehru forcefully articulated for a representative Constituent Assembly for India and writing an article from Lucknow for the Daily Herald, he said on October 2, 1933: "A political solution of the struggle can only come when the Indian people can settle their own Constitution in a popularly elected Constituent Assembly....."<sup>8</sup> This was how he introduced the concept of Constituent Assembly in the Indian political system as the vehicle of national will.<sup>9</sup>

Reiterating the need by the people of India to frame the Constitution of India without outside interference he said:

“The National Congress stands for Independence and a democratic state. It has proposed that the Constitution of free India must be framed, without outside interference by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise.”<sup>10</sup>

This reflected the deep desire and innate feeling of Nehru of the need for the achievement of Independent India and that she should have her own Constitution. With this cherished dream for his country, the first task Nehru had to carry out for building up modern India was to frame the Constitution for India and his role in the process of Constitution-making was decisive. The Constituent Assembly which opened on 9 December 1946 was a truly unique occasion in the long history of India as representatives of the people met for the first time to determine the future Constitution of India.<sup>11</sup> For Nehru also it was day of fulfillment as his cherished dream had come true and equally unique was the historic Objective Resolution which was moved by Nehru on 13 December 1946 which reflected his political acumen and his vision of new India. The Objective Resolution stated thus:

1. “This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution;
2. Wherein the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India, shall be a Union of them all; and
3. Wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the Law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom; and
4. Wherein all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people; and
5. Wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law;

- freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and
6. Wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes; and
  7. Wherein shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilized nations; and
  8. This ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.”<sup>12</sup>

According to Nehru, the Constitution had been the ‘nation’s dream and aspiration’. For him the Constitution was not just a resolution but it was much more than a resolution. It was a Declaration, a pledge, an undertaking and a dedication for everyone. Appealing everyone to look at the spirit behind the Resolution he said:

“Words are magic things often enough, but even the magic of words sometimes cannot convey the magic of the human spirit and of a nation’s passion. And so, I cannot say that this Resolution at all conveys the passion that lies in the hearts and the minds of the Indian people today. It seeks very feebly to tell the world what we have thought or dreamt of so long, and what we now hope to achieve in the near future.”<sup>13</sup>

He maintained that the integrity and welfare of the nation should be uppermost in the mind when the Constitution was being framed and he appealed to his fellow men to rise above party and think of the nation and also, of the world at large of which the Indian nation was a part. He said:

“When I think of the work of this Constituent Assembly, it seems to me the time has come when we should, so far as we are capable of it, rise above our ordinary selves and party disputes and think of the great problem before us in the widest and most tolerant and most effective manner so that, whatever we may produce, will be worthy of India as a whole and will be such that the world will recognize that we have functioned, in this high adventure.”<sup>14</sup>

As Nehru himself was a great internationalist, he had a vision that India would play an important and vital role in the world affairs and to him India had already ‘begun to play an important part in world affairs’. Hence he wanted the

Constitution makers to bear the larger international aspect in mind while framing the Constitution. In this age of turmoil in the world, a New India “taking birth-renascent, vital, fearless”<sup>15</sup>, Nehru referred to the heavy task of constitution building and he wanted to give a world perspective to the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly. He remarked: “In this Constituent Assembly we are functioning on a world stage and the eyes of the world are upon us.”<sup>16</sup> The Constitution which the Constituent Assembly was going to make for India and it was obvious that what was done in India was going to do, would ‘have a powerful effect on the rest of the world’.

Thus Nehru’s Objective Resolution served as guiding principles to the Constituent Assembly and “philosophy that was to permeate its task of constitution-making, his eloquent and inspiring address, full of the spirit of hope, determination and defiance, set the tenor and tone for future Assembly deliberations.”<sup>17</sup> Incidentally, though Nehru did not take direct part in the drafting of the Constitution, yet he contributed immensely in laying down its fundamental principles and giving it shape and spirit. Indira Gandhi rightly observed: “The spirit of our Constitution bears the imprint of his (Nehru) inspiration even though the forms might have been devised by professional lawyers.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore “Nehru’s vision of India were clearly embodied in this seminal document of national identity.”<sup>19</sup>

In this connection it would be important to look into the active part played by women members in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly who also played a significant role in the framing of the Constitution, and in this way was responsive to the Objective Resolutions and the ideals as laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru. They

participated and debated on the various clauses of the draft Constitution with full vigour and great enthusiasm. Simultaneously, this in a way also reflected that they were equally empowered like men to decide on the future of the nation. There were 15 women Members of the Constituent Assembly. They were Ammu Swaminathan, Annie Mascarene, Begum Aizaz Rasul, Dakshayani Velyadan, G. Durgabai, Hansa Mehta, Kamla Chaudhri, Leela Ray, Malati Chowdhury, Purnima Banerjee, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Renuka Ray, Sarojini Naidu, Sucheta Kripalani and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

Hansa Mehta, infact strongly supported the Objective Resolution moved by Nehru. In the House firstly, describing the plight which the women of India faced over the centuries and emphasizing on the point that the women's organization to which she belonged never demanded for reserved seats, quotas or separate electorates, and what they have asked for was social justice, economic justice, and political justice and that India could not attain its rightful and honoured place without the co-operation of women, she graciously welcomed the Resolution of Nehru for the great promise which it held and that the objectives embodied in the Resolution would be transformed into reality.<sup>20</sup> On 14 August, 1947, Hansa Mehta while presenting the National Flag to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the women of India and as a gift from the women of India remarked: "We pledged ourselves to work for a great India, for building up a nation that will be a nation among nations."<sup>21</sup> Moreover her reflections on the constitution in a speech given on 22 November, 1949 could be seen when she said: "nowhere in the Constitution have we defined 'minorities'."<sup>22</sup> Further she pointed out that the Constitution has made every effort to guarantee equal protection of law, equality of status, equality of

opportunity and religious rights.<sup>23</sup> She also expressed her sense of satisfaction and pride when she said: “the abolition of untouchability is the greatest thing that we have done and posterity will be very proud of this.”<sup>24</sup>

In the Constituent Assembly, Dakshayani Velayudan strongly appealed that the Constituent Assembly not only frame a Constitution but also give people a new framework of life. She expressed her strong belief that power came from the people. She also appealed to the Harijan delegates of the Constituent Assembly that they should not harp on separatism as moral safeguard instead of safeguards would give real protection to the underdogs of the country. She was confident of the fact that the “only an independent Socialist Indian Republic can give freedom and equality of status to the *Harijans*.<sup>25</sup> Expressing confidence on the historic Objective Resolution passed by Nehru she hoped that “every provision is made for the development of the every individual in this land”<sup>26</sup> and with this she strongly hoped that “in the future independent India the Harijans will have an honoured place as every other citizen of this land.”<sup>27</sup> She gave a very defining speech in the Constituent Assembly on her own views on how the minorities should be represented. Her strong arguments against separate electorates and reservation system “was in support of a nationalist narrative that sought economic and social upliftment rather than looking to politics as a means to eradicate the system of untouchability.”<sup>28</sup> In her speech on 28 August, 1948 she pointed out that:

“As long as the Scheduled Castes, or the Harijans or by whatever name they may be called, are economic slaves of other people, there is no meaning demanding either separate electorates or joint electorates or any other kind of electorates with this kind of percentage. Personally speaking, I am not in favour of any kind of reservation in any place whatsoever.”<sup>29</sup>

Since Purnima Banerjee was of the firm belief that unless one member of the state appreciates the religion of another, it would be impossible to built up a united India. Therefore in a debate in the Assembly on 30 August, 1947, she insisted that a new paragraph should be included which read as:

“All religious education given in educational institutions receiving Statewide will be in the nature of the elementary philosophy of comparative religions calculated to broaden the pupil’s mind rather than such as will foster sectarian exclusiveness.”<sup>30</sup>

Therefore she debated that Government should take upon the responsibility to ensure that through approved curriculum, proper appreciation of all religions should be inculcated into students for the sake of unity of country.<sup>31</sup> The other issues which she discussed in the Assembly related to composition and qualifications of those holding offices in the Upper House, demand for humane treatment of those detained or arrested and return of women in the seats vacated by women in the Constituent Assembly, mention of the word sovereignty of the people in the Constitution and so on.

Only the contributions of few women have been highlighted in brief above as it is difficult to discuss the role of every women members in the present context. However it may be pointed out that: “the presence of women members in the Constituent Assembly has been described by Professor Grenville Austin as the most important event after Philadelphia Convention of the US in 1787.”<sup>32</sup> Their speeches in the Constituent Assembly reflect that: “they were aware of the retardation suffered by India due to colonial rule and the new opportunities available to Indians, particularly the women, to enjoy equal rights enshrined in the Constitution for them.”<sup>33</sup> Their active participation by highlighting the various issues and debating on various clauses and amendments “added the verve and elan to the debates in the

Constituent Assembly.”<sup>34</sup> This also clearly reflects that in the making of modern India by Nehru through the framing of the Constitution, he received a vibrant response from the women members and their notable role in the Constitution making also marks an important chapter in the history of India.

Another area where Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of modern India was clearly reflected was the honoured and rightful place he wanted to give women in the society and the nation, for women were “one of the most important living symbols of India’s new beginning” according to Nehru.<sup>35</sup> Nehru, who strongly advocated equality of both men and women in every aspects of life, was able to realize this vision through the Constitution which was framed which provided for equality before law (Article 14), that the state would not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them(Article 15(j)), equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article16) and the State would direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood(Article 39(a)) and equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d) and many more. In this way through constitutional guarantee, Nehru was truly successful in his cherished dream of bringing women at par with men. Therefore women also now had an important role to play in Free India. The All India Women’s Conference, one of the oldest women’s organizations in India, in fact provided a very useful platform for women to exchange their ideas and formulate programmes for much needed nation-building activities, particularly in the field of welfare of women and children.<sup>36</sup>

Nehru had also been concerned of the plight of the Hindu women prior to independence. The Hindu women suffered from serious inequities in social law and custom. The evils of child marriage and dowry prevailed. There was dowry, and divorce was not allowed. Women were not allowed to inherit property. This had made the condition of Hindu widows very pathetic. Nehru had seen the plight of his own sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, when after the death of her husband Ranjit Pandit, all the property went to her husband's younger brother. Therefore Nehru was bent on to do something to improve the status of the women in regard to property rights. The Hindu Code Bill which has been discussed in detail in the sixth chapter (of the dissertation) will also be touched here in the light of the response of women towards the passing of the Bill. In a note prepared by the All-India Women's Conference on the Planning Commission's Draft outline of the First Five year Plan it pointed out that:

"Removal of inequalities among the different strata of society, raising the status and position of women, establishing equality of the sexes before the law and generally bringing society on a pattern comfortable with the needs of modern civilization, have now become urgent..... The Hindu Code will fulfill this need to some extent."<sup>37</sup>

The Hindu Law Committee under B.N. Rau was established by the Government in 1941 and 1944 to look into the question of codification. The Hindu Code Bill was debated during 1943-44 in the Central Legislative Assembly. However there was a strong opposition from the orthodox group. But the Bill was supported by most of the representatives of women's organizations like All India Women's Conference (AIWC), Bombay organizations such as the Gujarati Stri Mandal and Seva Sadan, and Calcutta organization such as Nari Siksha and All Bengal Women's Union.<sup>38</sup> "The AIWC in its journal Roshni pressed strongly for a Hindu Code in which men and women would have equal rights in inheritance and

marriage.”<sup>39</sup> The specific demands of the AIWC included equal rights of inheritance, marriage, and guardianship, requirement of the consent of both parties for marriage, prohibition of polygamy, and legalization of divorce.<sup>40</sup> When the draft code of the Hindu Bill was prepared by the Rau Committee, the AIWC responded very positively to it. In an article written by Muthulakshmi Reddi, she stated that “it was necessary to give mothers an equal legal status in order to regain the full dignity of Hindus.”<sup>41</sup> Incidentally the central point of argument of women’s organization was that “gender equality in Hindu Law was a necessary measure for national development.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore in this way there was mass support from the women’s organization to the Hindu Code Bill.

Since Nehru strongly asserted saying that: “I am personally anxious to do everything in my power to advance the cause of women in the country”<sup>43</sup>, therefore after independence he became very keen to have the Hindu Code Bill passed. Incidentally, he received great support from women in this respect. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Durgabai Deshmukh, Ammu Swaminathan, Sucheta Kripalani, Begum Aizaz Rasul and others “supported the social reforms and made great effort to push the Hindu Code Bill through.”<sup>44</sup> When the Bill after some modifications was referred to the Select Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Law Minister, and some delay occurred in submitting the report of the Select Committee, Kitty Shiva Rau<sup>45</sup> and Renuka Ray followed up the matter with Nehru and other Congress party members and reminded them of party’s commitment to women’s equality and to the principles of the Code.<sup>46</sup> In this regard the role of the AIWC in mobilizing the support to the Hindu Code Bill was also noteworthy. The AIWC drew up memorandum and circulated it among the members of the Constituent

Assembly and also gave good publicity in the Delhi newspapers and when the Congress Legislative Party met to consider the issue some 120 women waited in a deputation outside the room.<sup>47</sup> These efforts of the AIWC led to the government giving assurance that the Code would be taken up in the Budget session.

When the Bill was introduced by BR Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly one of the women members Hansa Mehta referred to the Bill as a “revolutionary one even though ‘we are not quite satisfied with it, it will be a great landmark in the social history of the Hindus’.”<sup>48</sup> However, there were strong protests from Congress leaders like Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhai Patel , Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Purshottamdas Tandon, The AIWC, however did not lose hope and continued to carry on its propaganda, and a special portfolio for the Hindu Code Bill was created which was held by Purnima Banerjee and a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly and later by Mithan Lam.<sup>49</sup> In order to mobilize support, meetings were held everywhere and resolutions and telegrams were sent to the Members of Parliament by the branches of AIWC. Renuka Ray also narrates in her book “*My Reminiscences*”, when the orthodox group resorted to filibustering to oppose the Bill, she and Durgabai Deshmukh told Nehru “of the manipulations and manoeuvrings that were being resorted to for delaying the enactment of the Bill.”<sup>50</sup> However Nehru told them to have faith in him and strongly assured them that the social legislation would be made an election manifesto of his Party and that he would not leave any stones unturned to get the legislation through.<sup>51</sup>

Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray while narrating the activities of the AIWC in support of the Hindu Code Bill writes:

“The branches were very active during the years 1953-5, arranging meetings to mobilize public opinion for the Hindu Marriage and Succession Bills and other government Bills of social importance. An All-India Day for the removal of legal disabilities was successfully held on 19 April 194. In September 1954, Roshni, the journal of the AIWC, published a special issue on Women’s Legal Disabilities. It included articles by Prabhudas Patwai, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court and MLC, K.Rajan Iyer, Ex-Advocate General, Madras, Mithan Lam, Lakshmi Menon and others.”<sup>52</sup>

Finally during 1954-56 a series of Act collectively known as the Hindu Code Bill was passed viz., (a) The Hindu Marriage Act (b) The Hindu Succession Act (c) The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (d) The Hindu Adoption and Guardianship Act.

The Madras branch of the All India Women Conference positively responded to the passage of the Hindu Code Bill and offered its whole hearted support to the Hindu Code, the Special Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Law and to all those measures in Parliament that aimed at giving the women property of inheritance, of adoption and maintenance.<sup>53</sup> Thus Pandit Nehru’s strong support of women’s rights was clearly demonstrated as a result of the passage of the Hindu Code Bill. Nehru’s strong endeavour and true spirit to get the Bill passed also had the overwhelming support of the women which truly acted as a moral force on him in overcoming all the hurdles and hardships which he had to go through till the Bill finally became a reality. In this way Hindu Code Bill stands out to be symbol of women’s response in helping Nehru in the building of the nation, where he wanted to see women at par with men in all fields.

Next area where Nehru’s vision of modern India was clearly manifested was in the field of planning. Through planning, he wanted to bring about modernization of the country in all the three spheres of life-political, social and economic. The most important goal of planning was removal of mass poverty. His ideas on

economic planning had developed long before independence. His held the strong conviction that economic planning was born out of his passionate concern for the poor and his commitment that Government must ameliorate the sufferings and improve the lot of the masses. Nehru's "authoritative and comprehensive statement on economic planning came to be embodied in the resolution on social and economic matters adopted by the Congress at its Karachi session in March 1931."<sup>54</sup> His presidential speech to the Lucknow session in 1936 clearly reflected his ardent faith in economic planning for the social and economic development of the country.<sup>55</sup> Moreover the National Planning Committee appointed in October 1938 with Nehru as its Chairman, aimed at formulating comprehensive scheme of national planning for industrialization of the country. A plan for securing women equal opportunity for training and employment was also included in its plan economy. The immediate objective of the National Planning Committee was to attack the appalling poverty and unemployment in India and thereby improve the standards of people. This implied greater production and equal distribution, which in turn meant rapid co-ordinated growth of industry, scientific agriculture and the social services directed towards the betterment of the people as a whole.<sup>56</sup> Though the National Planning Committee included scientists, economists, businessmen and industrialists and comprehensive reports were being forged out from the twenty-nine Sub-Committees which had been appointed, but the first planning effort had to be ended because of the arrest of Nehru on 31 October, 1940. However this "gave considerable experience to the future architects of national planning in independent India, and thus helped speed up the pace when the country was really in a position to adopt planning as a part of the process of development."<sup>57</sup>

The Five Year Plans initiated by the Planning Commission under Nehru heralded a new era which changed the face of whole India. It not only dealt with industry and agriculture, but also with such other important matters as irrigation, power, communications, transportation, education and social welfare.<sup>58</sup> As far as the women issues were concerned the First Five Year Plan was mainly welfare oriented towards them, as a sequel to which The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was set up in 1953 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Durgabai Deshmukh<sup>59</sup> during the First Five Year Plan. Commendable assistance was received from the Women's Panel set up by the Planning Commission in finalizing the proposals in the field of social welfare. Pioneer efforts were also made by women in the formulating, processing and execution of the Plan schemes of National Planning in India.<sup>60</sup> In this way women also responded positively to the welfare oriented schemes developed by Nehru's Government and also took an active part in assisting the Government in the successful running of the schemes.

The aim of the Central Social Welfare Board was to direct and promote welfare programmes throughout the country on a sound and scientific basis specially for aiding voluntary welfare organizations to improve, expand their activities and for starting new organizations in places where there were none. The Central Social Welfare Board was an interface between the Government and the voluntary sector for social development in the country and it contributed immensely in encouraging, assisting and promoting the growth of voluntary organizations for reaching the neglected women and children of the country. The programmes for women were implemented through the National Extension Service Programmes through Community Development Blocks. Tara Ali Baig, while highlighting Durgabai

Deshmukh's organizing capability and her commitment towards the Central Social Welfare Board remarked: "If the Central Social Welfare Board is one of Durgabai's most enduring development activities, the fact that over 20,000 unpaid workers were mobilized for this work all over the country is a tribute to her rare administrative ability."<sup>61</sup> The Central Social Welfare Board successfully carried out the "Welfare Extension Projects" in rural areas in every district. As a result of her vision and the continued efforts' of her successors even today there exists a widespread network of voluntary organizations that still carry welfare services to the remote corners of the country.<sup>62</sup> In this way she played a vital role in supporting Nehru in his grandiose scheme of welfare measures for women through voluntary activities.

However the All India Women's Conference was also vocal and brought to the attention of the Government some of the limitations of the First Year Plan as it failed to deliver to the rural women the benefits of the Community Development Programmes. In a note prepared by Dr.Krishna Bai Nimbkar, an active member of the AIWC on July 14, 1955 for consideration and adoption by the Ad Hoc Committee set up by the AIWC to formulate suggestions for incorporation in the Second Five Year Plan, Dr.Krishna Bai Nimbkar, pointed out:

"When certain provisions was made in the First Five Year Plans, under Special Services, it was expected that this would suffice to cover the needs of the programme then conceived, and through its implementation, rural women would be drawn into the ambit of Development activity. But since the First Plan went into action..... it has become very clear that rural women, by and large have remained almost untouched, and that the time has now come for the formulation of a special clear-cut comprehensive programme of activity for rural women, wherein their special problems would find special handling, and suitable proposals pertaining to such a programme to be embodied in the Second Plan."<sup>63</sup>

The note pointed out that Planning for women in the First Plan was very deficient and whatever was done was done without reference to the opinion of the

women public of the country on this question. Moreover it was not surprising that “the “voiceless” or the dumb millions of women of the countryside or their few spokeswoman, should go entirely unrepresented as far as presenting their own case before the Planning Commission was concerned.”<sup>64</sup> The note of Krishna Nimbkar suggested that “with the Second Plan in the making, and the task of formulation of programme for these very woman of the rural areas, some attempt should be made to minimize any grievances of this question of securing views of the rural women.”<sup>65</sup> The note demanded the formulation of a special clear-cut comprehensive programme of activity for rural women like combined approach through the teaching of skills, through the provision of services and through educational programmes by which the rural women’s isolation could be broken and her mind awakened to new responses to the Community Development programmes.<sup>66</sup> Krishna Nimbkar thought that the Community Development Schemes were required to be composite in character, multipurpose in outlook, capable of both intensive and extensive application and suitable to the existing needs.<sup>67</sup> In this way it can be seen that women were actively involved and responded widely to the programmes of the Government and gave suggestions for the formulation of policies which could be oriented more towards the rural women. Such was the horizon of women’s response to Nehru’s new India.

Other positive response from women could be seen when the Madras branch of the AIWC wholeheartedly welcomed the provisions made under the Second Five Year Plan for developing the Ambar Charka and exhorted Women’s organizations to avail of this unique cottage industry with its inexhaustible potentialities to provide

additional employment to a large number s of men and women, both in villages and cities.<sup>68</sup>

There were also a number of activities for national welfare in which women came forward to give hand and support at every level for its smooth functioning. One such instance was the band of enthusiastic voluntary workers who dedicated themselves to strengthening governmental effort in securing funds for the implementation of the Plans.<sup>69</sup> They carried to the women of India the message of economy and investment of savings for the national cause. Under the Women's Savings Campaign, Hannah Sen trained hundreds of women workers in a new type of social activity. The response of the women was positive and large number of women came forward to offer their services in this cause. The Madras branch of the AIWC also exhorted women to strive incessantly for the success of Women's Savings Campaign and serve the country and their homes.

In the smooth implementation of the various activities of the Central Social Welfare Board, Durgabai Deshmukh received valuable assistance from various women like Indira Gandhi, Maniben Patel, Hannah Sen, Padmini Sengupta, Smt. Rama Rau, Prova Dutt and so on. At the State level also a large number of women rendered notable service as Chairperson and members of the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards. At the district level also, many women participated for the successful implementation of the schemes for women and children welfare. Therefore in this way the Central Social Welfare Board was instrumental in bringing into existence an integrated network of organizational and individual effort on the part of many women social welfare workers.<sup>70</sup>

This clearly reflected the active response of women from all levels to the government schemes formulated for their welfare, and in this regard the services rendered by Durgabai Deshmukh and the Central Social Welfare Board for the empowerment of women which had been Nehru's grand vision was given shape by women themselves. As a result till today the Central Social Welfare Board is a major national level organization dedicated to the welfare, development and empowerment of women, children and marginalized sections of the society in the country.

Another area reflective of Nehru's vision for modern India was in the field of foreign affairs. Though Nehru left the impress of his outstanding personality on every branch of India's national life, but nowhere more than in the field of country's foreign policy. The newly independent India did not have foreign policy of its own. A foreign office is essentially the custodian of precedents, and independent India had no precedents to fall back.<sup>71</sup> India therefore had to devise her own foreign policy from the scratch and start with her international journey on its own. Prior to independence itself, during his presidential address to the Lahore Congress in 1929, Nehru had visualized and prophesized that India would play a dominant part in world politics. He said:

"No one can say what the future will bring, but we may assert with some confidence that Asia, and even India, will play a determining part in future world policy. The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end. Europe has ceased to be the centre of activity and interest..... India today is a part of the world movement. Not only China, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, but also Russia and the countries of the West are taking part in this movement, and India cannot isolate herself from it..... Civilization today, such as it is, is not the creation or the monopoly of one people or nation. It is a composite fabric to which all countries have contributed and then have adapted to suit their particular needs."<sup>72</sup>

In this way foreseeing the important role India would play in the international affairs in future, the task fell upon Nehru to formulate a bold and a strong foreign policy after independence which would place India in a strong international pedestal. It was after the Second World War that India became independent and at that time according to K.P.S. Menon, India's first Foreign Secretary: "Two super-power, the USA and USSR, had emerged, each with a firm and almost absolute faith in its own way of life as the right way and determined to oppose any extension of other's way of life by propaganda, infiltration, subversion, or cajolery, let alone by war."<sup>73</sup> Though India was militarily weak and economically backward, Nehru chose to keep away from joining any of the two blocs since he was of the opinion that "when a weak country attaches itself to a powerful State, the whole of that country becomes a base for the stronger one to operate in and from."<sup>74</sup> This was how Nehru formulated his policy of Non-Alignment. Incidentally, Nehru's idea of Non-Alignment for India germinated much before she gained her political independence which is evident from the broadcast he made to the nation on September 7, 1946 where he said: "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale."<sup>75</sup> Nehru was confident that the independent line of action he chose for India's foreign policy would earn him respect all over the world and in this context he said:

"I have no doubt that fairly soon, in the course of two or three years, the world will find his attitude justified and that India will not only be respected by the major protagonists in the struggle for power, but a large number of the smaller nations which today are rather helpless, will probably look to India more than to other countries for a lead in such matters."<sup>76</sup>

With this principle of Non-Alignment, Nehru steered the ship of his foreign policy for his country and though there were criticism from various quarters, yet this did not deter him from the line of action he adopted. In this context of Nehru's foreign policy it may be relevant to discuss the role of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister in conducting India's foreign affairs in the capacity of ambassador to Moscow, Washington and High Commissioner of London. Nehru had faith in the capability of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and based on her experience on lecture tours in the USA and as head of the Indian delegation to the General Assembly on October, 1946 in New York, Nehru was confident that she was efficient enough to discharge the duty as India's first Ambassador to Soviet Russia. Nehru said to her: "You have proved you are good at making friends of strangers."<sup>77</sup> Again he said to her: "the kind of work you have to do abroad cannot easily be entrusted to someone else."<sup>78</sup> In this way she represented India's first mission abroad and opened up India's relationship with the world. In a letter dated 23 January, 1948 Nehru instructed Vijaya Lakshmi to speak frankly to the Soviet Foreign Office that India was not

"tied to the apron strings of England or that we attach ourselves to the U.S.A..... We have no desire whatever to be caught up in America's foreign or economic policy. But situated as we are we do not wish to quarrel because such quarrelling would do us a lot of harm. We want above all, sometimes and some peace to build..... We want to be specially friendly with Russia because we are convinced not only that we can learn much from her but also because she represents in our views, in many ways the future pattern."<sup>79</sup>

In Moscow, she reverberated the foreign policy of her country by saying:

"The impression we have been trying to give is that there is no question of antagonism against anybody, but we must have a period in which we can build up our own country economically..... As for foreign policy, there is no reason why we should align ourselves with anybody. Certainly, the West has not made such a good job of it in the past, nor are its prospects for the future so very bright. We have our own independent foreign policy, and we have our own way of life--though we are willing to adapt certain good features whether in Russia or in the West."<sup>80</sup>

However as India was still evolving her political policies and as there was no problem between Soviet Union and India, Vijaya Lakshmi's work was limited.<sup>81</sup> Moreover at that time, as Vijaya Lakshmi writes: "Stalin era was at its height and foreign envoys, except those from the eastern European countries were not favoured people."<sup>82</sup> Though she could not achieve much in establishing vigorous diplomatic relations with Russia as she had anticipated before coming to Russia but the difficult task which was handed over to her by her brother with confidence was handled by Vijaya Lakshmi gracefully and with dignity. It can be said that she was successful in establishing the Indian Embassy in the diplomatic life of Moscow and was able to make Hindi the language for all state communications from India to Russia as Russian was to India.<sup>83</sup> According to Anne Guthrie, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit "created a deep impression on all she met and everywhere inspired confidence, so she soon became an asset to the diplomatic community... Her culture and her social graces made her a welcome guest and a charming hostess."<sup>84</sup>

The next diplomatic task which was assigned to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was at Washington where she had to play an important role for her country and in this way keep up to the hopes and aspirations of Jawaharlal Nehru. She had to undertake the critical task of making U.S.A. understand India's stand in the international arena which was indeed tough as she faced volleys of question on India's policy in many places after she delivered lectures. She was frequently asked questions on Kashmir. She replied "that India had agreed to partition into two countries because failure to do so would have perpetuated foreign rule."<sup>85</sup> Justifying her stand she asked "if it were not true that the United States had had border disputes that it had taken time to settle and urged her listeners to be patient and to let India and Pakistan work out

their own solution.”<sup>86</sup> Again explaining India’s non-alignment policy she said India “did not want to tie herself in advance to the present or future policy of a particular group of nations, that India needed a little breathing space to find its equilibrium as a world power.”<sup>87</sup> In the early fifties, India was going through disasters and calamities resulting in semi-famine like conditions. Thus there was an awful need of foodgrains. Apprising Vijaya Lakshmi of the condition of India, he directed her to approach U.S.A. for getting wheat loans for India. It was a challenging task for her of “obtaining the much-needed grain without loss of prestige so important to a newly independent country.”<sup>88</sup> The U.S. Congress kept delaying action in the Senate. However Vijaya Lakshmi received sympathetic response from the people of U.S.A. through contributions and donations. Finally after long delay the bill was passed and the foodgrains were eventually sent to India on liberal terms. In this way, as an ambassador of India she was able to assist Nehru back home from U.S.A to tide over the food crisis by her “judiciously-worded note asking for the wheat, but not specifying whether a gift or loan was expected”, and this was what Nehru exactly wanted, since he did not want to beg the U.S.A. for foodgrains.

When prolonged discussion on the Japanese Peace Treaty was going on Nehru directed Vijaya Lakshmi from Delhi to convey the message to the U.S.A. that it would not sign the treaty as India was not in favour of the reparations that the United States wanted to impose on Japan. For Nehru it meant “a submission, under pressure or fear, to American policy in the Far East and Asia.”<sup>89</sup> Though it would create ill-will in the United States, yet Nehru did not want to sign the treaty. He wanted a simple bilateral treaty with Japan. On behalf of India she conveyed her government’s view that her country could not go along with U.S.A. to John Foster

Dulles, American Secretary of State. In this way, the judicious presentation of India's stand by Vijaya Lakshmi to the United States must have been a great help and relief to Nehru's government back in India.

Vijaya Lakshmi also served as High Commissioner of Britain for nearly seven years. Verra Brittain remarked that "Her period as High Commissioner both symbolized and typified the changed relationship between India and Britain which had followed Independence."<sup>90</sup> In Britain she echoed Nehru's voice saying: "it was not the British people but the colonial system that she and her country had opposed."<sup>91</sup> Again Verra Brittain pointed out that Vijaya Lakshmi also played an important role in replacing "the old traditional images of British India with the image of a re-born country ready to share in new varieties of co-operation."<sup>92</sup> Nehru had chosen India to remain with the British Commonwealth of Nations and Vijaya Lakshmi was instrumental in cementing the bond between India and Britain that Sir Ifor Evans, Public Orator described her work as High Commissioner as "a symbol of the forgiveness and reconciliation which united India and Britain after Independence."<sup>93</sup>

It could be clearly seen that at one instance, Vijaya Lakshmi strongly played a very vital role in keeping the relation between India and Britain intact despite of the crisis that arose in 1956 on account of the Suez Canal crisis. On July 1956 President Nasser of Egypt announced and effected the nationalization of the Suez canal which resulted in an international uproar arousing fears and passions among the users of the Canal. Nehru had earlier on April 6, 1955 signed a treaty of friendship in Cairo with President Nasser and on the other hand, India also had close

relations with Britain and other Western Powers. Nehru in the Lok Sabha on August 8, 1956 clearly stated that:

“I have no desire to add to the passions aroused, but I would fail in my duty to this House and the country, and even to all the parties involved in this crisis, and not least of all Britain and France, if I do not say that threats to settle this dispute or to enforce their views in this matter by display or use of force is the wrong way. It does not belong to this age and it is not dictated by reason.”<sup>94</sup>

In a Conference of twenty-two nations summoned by Britain on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1956 to discuss the Suez Crisis at London, a strong delegation led by Krishna Menon was sent by India. In the Conference Krishna Menon tried to recognize the sovereign rights of Egypt by proposing for ‘the association of international user-interests with Egyptian co-operation for the Suez Canal’. But India failed in its endeavour to get the support of Western Powers. However on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1956 Israeli forces attacked the Suez Canal which was soon joined by the British and French forces. The British people condemned the action of their Prime Minister Eden and demanded for his removal. Under such adverse situation there were rumours that India was considering withdrawing from the Commonwealth and this had greatly perturbed Lord Pethick Lawrence the former Secretary of State for India. According to Verra Brittain, Vijaya Lakshmi was “able to reassure him that the Indian Government did not propose to desert those British people who had protested against the ‘disgrace’ of the Suez crisis.”<sup>95</sup> On behalf of Nehru she was further able to impress upon Lord Pethick Lawrence and Britain that in India people were heartened to know that the British government’s action in Egypt was not supported by its own people and that Nehru had made it clear that India did not wish to leave the Commonwealth and India believed that her continued membership would not only benefit India but also United Kingdom.<sup>96</sup> This clearly reflects that Vijaya

Lakshmi Pandit was able to safeguard the Commonwealth status of her country despite the Suez Canal crisis that threatened the peaceful atmosphere between India and Britain after independence.

As Nehru was of the strong belief that his sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit would be the right individual who could represent his ideals and aspirations of his country abroad, he assigned her the prestigious job of representing the newly born India to the outside world. Being the sister of Nehru, according to Michale Brecher, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was “a completely trustworthy aide and a person with more ready access to India’s Prime Minister than any other member of the ‘inner circle’.”<sup>97</sup> It is likely that she might have influenced his judgment on many matters of foreign affairs. Like that of every ambassador, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was also no doubt directed from Delhi for conducting the affairs of the country. But it was not possible everyday to wait for the directives from Delhi in all the daily effort of representation and negotiation and therefore there was a constant demand upon qualities of heart and head in applying these directives to the situations the ambassador met.<sup>98</sup> In this respect Vijaya Lakshmi was known to have possessed the skill, grace and charm to perform efficiently and adapt to that special work. This could likely have been the reason why Nehru perhaps valued her judgement and laid his trust and faith in her in directing the foreign affairs of the country.

Since Nehru wanted India to play an important part in the Asian affairs, he played a key role in convening the Asian Relations Conference on March 1947. Nehru asserted that a time had come for the people of Asia “to meet together, to hold together and to advance together,”<sup>99</sup> and consequently the Conference materialized and it symbolized the emergence of a new order in Asian history. In his

speech at the opening plenary session, Nehru strongly pointed out that: “one of the notable consequences of the European domination of Asia has been the isolation of the countries of Asia from one another. India always had contacts and intercourse with her neighbor countries..... With the coming of British rule in India these contacts were broken off and India was almost completely isolated from the rest of Asia”<sup>100</sup>, with her “chief window to the outer world looked out on the sea route which led to England.”<sup>101</sup> Therefore he was now confident that as the barriers between India and the Asian countries were broken, the Conference would express the deeper “urge of the mind and spirit of Asia.” According to Dorothy Norman:

“The 1947 Inter-Asian Relations Conference in Delhi was called to review the position of Asia in the post-war world, to exchange ideas about problems common to all Asian countries and to study ways and means of promoting closer contacts, as well as to serve as a sounding board for Asians, many of whom were conferring with one another for the first time.”<sup>102</sup>

Sarojini Naidu as the President of the Asian Relations Conference with queenly dignity and grace delivered an eloquent speech to hundreds of dignitaries and representatives from all Asian countries which astonished them. In her Presidential address she pointed out that:

“..... this friendly gesture, which I have made on the part of India, to the peoples of Asia, will bear great fruit. Our ideal is to establish in Asia, as a preliminary step.... Peace, Harmony, the co-operation in the great purposes of service to humanity..... we are concerned only with the common ideal of progress of Asian countries, social and economic progress, on which alone can there be enduring political success.....We shall move together, the people of Asia, undefeated by disaster, not discouraged by anything... for I believe..... that nothing can die that is good.”<sup>103</sup>

In this way Sarojini Naidu with her cherished dream of a united Asia and above all a united world, was able to voice out Nehru’s vision of new phase of Asian development. In the Conference, the delegates decided to form a permanent organization and the following resolution was passed moved by a Chinese delegate:

“The members of the delegations from the Asian countries assembled in the first Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, firmly believing that the peace of the world, to be real and enduring, must be linked up with the freedom and well-being of the peoples of Asia are unanimously of the opinion that the contacts forged at this conference must be maintained and strengthened, and that the good work begun here must be continued, efficiently organized and actively developed. They accordingly resolve to establish an organization to be called the Asian Relations Organization with the following objects:

- (a) To promote the study and the understanding of Asian problems and relations in their Asian and world aspects.
- (b) To foster friendly relations and co-operation among the peoples of Asia and between them and the rest of the world, and
- (c) To further the progress and well-being of the peoples of Asia.”<sup>104</sup>

Rameshwari Nehru also through her multifarious activities played a notable role in promoting world peace by participating in peace movements and in this way also assisted Nehru in the establishment of world order. In one of the letters to Nehru she wrote: “Wherever we go and whatever we do, you can be sure, we shall always try to strengthen the great peace policies of India, which you have enunciated, and to support the great principles which you yourself have taught us.”<sup>105</sup> Rameshwari Nehru’s most significant contribution in the international field was her pioneering work in the movement for Afro-Asian Solidarity and World Peace.<sup>106</sup> She was closely associated with the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS) since its formation in 1952. During the Second ISCUS Conference held in Delhi in 1954, she was elected Vice President of its National Council and President of the Delhi state ISCUS. She proved to be a great asset to the Indo-Soviet friendship movement. Sometimes she had to personally argue the matter with Prime Minister Nehru. She was able to convince him of the need to popularize Indo-Soviet friendship through ISCUS. Nehru responded to it positively and himself promoted Indo-Soviet friendship. In one of the letter dated March 1, 1956, Nehru replied to Rameshwari Nehru in his characteristic style.

“.....Of course I am not annoyed with you. If you want to go to Moscow for this meeting, you can go there.”<sup>107</sup>

Moreover when the United States- Pakistan Military Pact was first signed in 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru sharply denounced it. From the beginning the Indian peace movement drew attention to this menace. A National Convention against US-Pak Military Pact was organized in February 1954 on a popular level to mobilize the entire patriotic forces of the country to explain and oppose the sinister imperialist conspiracy against India’s security.<sup>108</sup> Rameshwari Nehru as head of this national protest and anti-imperialist campaign made it a turning point in the history of the Indian peace movement.<sup>109</sup>

Rameshwari Nehru also led a 12-member Indian delegation in the World Conference for Relaxation of International Tension held in June 1954 at Stockholm. Dr.Saifuddin Kitchlew, President of the All India Peace Council was so inspired by Rameshwari’s address to the plenary session that he said to her: “Bravo! You swayed over the whole conference.”<sup>110</sup> During the First Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference held in Cairo during 1957-58, Rameshwari Nehru personally met every single delegation and contributed greatly to India’s high prestige among African and Asian countries. In this Conference, speaking on the lines of Nehru’s foreign policy, she said

“We believe in the principle of the well-known Panch Sheel of mutual respect and equality, freedom and peaceful co-existence in national and international affairs. We stand for self-determination and non-interference in other people’s countries. We are against 1) imperialism of varieties-subtle or gross, political or economic, 2) racial discrimination, 3) colonialism, 4) military pacts, and 5) above all and most of all, against nuclear weapons and the armaments race.”<sup>111</sup>

In the Second Conference of the Indian Association for Asian Solidarity held in Calcutta in 1959, Rameshwari Nehru as the President warned India of the imperialist US-Pak Military Pact. The Afro- Asian became a people's platform for all peace forces of the world to unite against war and aggression, against imperialism, racialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.<sup>112</sup>

Next, "science was crucial to Nehru's concept of a modern nation, and to the making of the modern mind."<sup>113</sup> The far-sightedness and wholehearted support of Nehru has been greatly responsible for the large, diverse and strong base of science and technology that exists in India today. He considered a scientific attitude an essential component of nation building. Nehru as it is well known possessed a scientific bend of mind and had an inherent love of science and its application and after independence, his most outstanding contribution lay "in the matter of securing the growth and progress of science in the country."<sup>114</sup> It is stated that in fact "from independence until the time of his death in 1964, he gave the fullest support to the development of science and technology in a conscious way as a major force for social and economic change."<sup>115</sup> He himself took the initiative of laying the foundation for a strong quest of scientific and technological proficiency. Nehru's participation in the Indian Science Congress sessions every year reflected the importance Nehru attached to science and technology. He provided all the facilities to Dr. Homi J. Bhabha, nuclear scientist to build the necessary infrastructure for the growth and development of science and technology in India. The several national laboratories and institutes of science which were set up during Nehru's time reflects his desire to make India modern, scientifically and technologically. E.V. Ganapathi Iyer who was the Director of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore from 1947 to

1949, recollects how in order to expand the Institute's area of work, he "was able to secure the approval of the Government of India for the establishment of some new departments- those of electrical engineering, aeronautical engineering, metallurgy and internal combustion engineering."<sup>116</sup> Nehru also showed his keen readiness "to inaugurate the 'science open day' function which was organized by the Institute for the first time with the object of making the public aware of the Institute's work."<sup>117</sup> Nehru had the vision of making India the most advanced scientific and industrial countries by setting up institutional structure for science and higher education. The establishment of the Indian Institutes of Technology was an important innovation in the field of higher education. According to Nehru the objective was "to provide scientists and technologists of the highest calibre, who would engage in research, design and development, to help... towards self-reliance in technological needs."<sup>118</sup>

Mrinalini Sarabhai, wife of Vikram Sarabhai reminiscing over the scientific activities of Nehru remarked:

"His (Nehru) deep interest in the sciences was always evident and the support he gave to all research projects showed his insight into the future of humanity. In 1962, it was due to his support that Vikram Sarabhai started India's space programme, and the Physical Research Laboratory was the cradle in which it was born."<sup>119</sup>

Nehru's faith in science was clearly discernible in the Scientific Policy Resolution which was passed by the Government of India on 4 March, 1958 at his instance. The Resolution acknowledged the role of science and technology for the well-being of the society. Indira Gandhi commented on this Resolution as: 'Our approach to science was eloquently summed up in the Scientific Policy Resolution of March 1958 which our scientists regard as their charter.' The Technology Policy

Statement<sup>120</sup> (T.P.S.) which is complementary to the Scientific Policy Resolution was provided for the nation by Indira Gandhi in January 1983.

Nehru had a vision of a socialistic pattern of society with its new production relations free from all kinds of exploitation. Nehru believed that India through socialist methods by utilizing science and technology would be able to do away with poverty, hunger, unemployment and attain prosperity and progress and thereby Indian society would develop along economically and socially humane lines which was “central to his vision of the new India.”<sup>121</sup> Emphasizing on science and modern technology as critically important instruments for solving economic and social problems, Nehru said: “It is the scientific method alone that offers hope to mankind and an ending of the agony of the world.”<sup>122</sup> He interpreted this to mean “Five Year Plans, industrialization, scientific development and technology.”<sup>123</sup> So he brought science into planning. Also according to V.D. Patil: “His unstinted commitment to democracy, an implicit faith in democratic means exhorted him to pursue development planning within the democratic framework and by democratic means”,<sup>124</sup> which in the long run proved to be the effective means to Nehru in his mammoth task of nation-building.<sup>125</sup> A man with a scientific and democratic outlook, the Planning Commission under Nehru started the Five Year Plans so that India could be self-reliant with the development of her industry and agriculture. To Nehru “the principle of socialism was an objective necessity for the welfare and progress of the modern world and India particularly.”<sup>126</sup> It was this vision of the future of India that led Nehru to embark into the new phase of India’s economic and social development by starting the beginnings of heavy industries like steel, power, chemicals etc. He also laid the foundation of other big industries, both of economic

and strategic importance such as ship-building, aeronautics, tanks etc. apart from this he also gave importance to cottage industries through Khadi and Village Industries Commission. In this gigantic task of building up the economy of the country, Indira Gandhi observed the development of her father's policies and in a way must have also acted as his adviser and guide in his work. Later when Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India, she came to the conclusion that though a stupendous task lay ahead of her, but she had to execute the unfinished programme of socio-economic development of her father. She gave maximum importance to the public sector. Following the footsteps of her father for the removal of poverty and ignorance of Indian poor, Indira Gandhi "proclaimed and pursued with single-minded determination the earth shaking programme of "Garibi Hatao."<sup>127</sup> Some of the shining highlights of Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership was the nationalization of banks, the abolition of privy purses, production of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 war and peaceful nuclear explosion at Pokhran. Growth of agricultural output as a result of the 'Green Revolution' was another major achievement. In this way it could be seen that Indira Gandhi carried on her father's ideal of building up of a modern India, though her means and ways might have differed to some extent to that of her father.

Indira Gandhi intended to follow the Nehru line in the field of foreign policy. In some important areas she followed Nehru's footsteps also. For instance she remained inclined to her father's policy of non-alignment i.e. she did not remain committed "to great-power alliances but freedom to determine peace or war in the light of India's own interest at the time."<sup>128</sup> But during her time, India had to increasingly tilt on the Soviet Union because of a series of international events and

developments related with the emergence of Bangladesh. She tried to assert India's independence to the extent possible under the circumstances. And moreover she never discarded India's economic, commercial, cultural and other contacts with the West. It could be also seen that Indira's policy in regard to her co-operation among the non-aligned countries did not differ from that of Nehru.

Nehru was proud of India's ancient past and after independence he held the view that India's self respect depended on reclaiming literary, artistic and cultural traditions. With this view he tried to erect a new India based on the foundations of the old. Therefore he gave patronage to art and in this respect, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya greatly responded to the noble efforts of Nehru. Nehru gave her the task of promoting and encouraging the culture of the country and in 1952, she was appointed as Chairman of the All-India Handicrafts Board and Pupul Jayakar as Chairman of the Handlooms Board. It is said that "these pioneering women patronized Indian crafts and textiles because of their genuine admiration for their inherent artistic and artistic qualities."<sup>129</sup> Moreover when the Government Central Cottage Industries Emporium in Delhi was running at a loss, Nehru showing his confidence on the capability of Kamaladevi, directed the ministry to hand over its charge and Kamaladevi also responded to this appeal of Nehru positively by being able to develop handicrafts in a purposeful way by which it came to occupy a rightful place in the economic life of the country. She also represented India in the World Crafts Council in 1964 in New York and she had been the key speaker there and elected as its Vice-President.

Again Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya was also appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1953. She was again able to respond to this responsibility

in a purposeful direction by working for the regeneration of the folk-performing arts from every part of the country. Under her auspices the very first National Music Festival was held on 31 March, 1954 and it was here that “for the first time classical music emerged from its isolation to meet folk music whose inclusion represented the peculiar genius of India.”<sup>130</sup> It is said that under her auspices the Sangeet Natak Akademi’s “most valuable contribution is the visual and audio documentation on films and tapes – an impressive scholarly collection of the old masters and of rare forms of folk theatres and ritual performances.”<sup>131</sup> It was once reported by the Hindustan Times on 2 April, 1954 that there was an absence of programme items representing Indian culture in the Education Ministry’s Cultural Club drama festival in Delhi. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Chairman of the Festival Committee in Delhi took upon the initiative to organize the National Drama Festival in November 1954, where for the first time twenty-two plays in all Indian languages were showcased and appreciated by the audience.<sup>132</sup> It may also be noted that Jawaharlal Nehru also watched the five-hour Shakuntala in Sanskrit. It was also due to the efforts of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya that the National School of Drama came into existence in April, 1959.

These efforts of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya clearly demonstrates her responsive nature towards the regeneration of Indian artistic and cultural traditions as perceived by Nehru and in this way assisted him in making modern India of his dreams.

Two hundred years of colonial rule had left India shattered in all directions, the recovery of which was a herculean task. It was under such a situation that Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of the country had to formulate good

number of policies essential for the reconstruction of the infant nation, and in this direction he persevered to make India a strong and dignified nation at par with the other strong nations of the world. From the above discussion it also appears interesting that Nehru also possessed the calibre to involve good number of women, not only his women family members, but also other women personalities who came in different capacities and helped him in the process of imagining, structuring and forging the nation.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in 'Our Tallest Statesman' a tribute by Raj Bahadur in *Nehru :The Nation Remembers*, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Attar Chand, *Nehru's Vision of Nation Building*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989, p.38.

<sup>5</sup> Aparna Basu, *Mridula Sarabhai: Rebel with a Cause*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996, p.106.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> White Paper on the Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Subhash C. Kashyap, *Jawaharlal Nehru and the Constitution*, Metropolitan Book Co.Pvt, Limited, New Delhi, 1982, p.12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Cited in "Nehru and Constitution-Making Process: A Study in Policy Perspectives and its Relevance in the Present and Future", an article by K.L. Bhatia in I.P. Massey (ed.), *Nehruvian Constitutional Vision*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1991, p.11.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Subhash C.Kashyap, *op.cit.*, p.66.

<sup>12</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru Speeches 1946-1949, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6. Speech while moving the Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi on 13 December, 1946.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Subhash C. Kashyap, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Judith M. Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p.197.

<sup>20</sup> *Selected Speeches of Women Members of the Constituent Assembly*, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, April 2012, p.68.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Priya Ravichandran, 26 January 2016.*wordpress*. Retrieved 15 April Sunday 2016 from <https://15fortherpublic.wordpress.com/>:  
<http://15fortherpublic.wordpress.com/2016/01/26/dakshayani-velayudhan-1912-1978/>

<sup>29</sup> Selected Speeches of Women Members of The Constituent Assembly, *op.cit.*, p.35.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> Priya Ravichandran 26 January 2016.*wordpress*. Retrieved 15 April Sunday 2016 from <https://15fortherpublic.wordpress.com/>:  
<https://15fortherpublic.wordpress.com/2016/04/01/purnima-banerjee-1911-1951.>

<sup>32</sup> Selected Speeches of Women Members of The Constituent Assembly, *op.cit.*, p.v.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Judith M. Brown, *op.cit.*, p.201.

<sup>36</sup> All India Women's Conference (AIWC) File No.562.

<sup>37</sup> AIWC File No.159.

<sup>38</sup> Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *The Indian Women's Movement: Reform and Revival*, Winshield Press, New Delhi, 2015, pp.189-190.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *Women's Struggle: A History of the All-India Women's Conference 1927-2002*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2003, p.65.

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<sup>44</sup> Renuka Ray, *My Reminiscences: Social Development during the Gandhian Era and After*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1982, p.137.

<sup>45</sup> A Hungarian lady married to the journalist, B.Shiva Rau and sister-in-law of B.N. Rau, Chairman of the Rao Committee.

<sup>46</sup> Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *op.cit.*, p.65.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> ‘Jawaharlal Nehru and the Hindu Code Bill’, and article by Lotika Sarkar in B.R. Nanda(ed.), *Indian Women from Purdah to Modernity*, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1990 (Reprint), p. 91.

<sup>49</sup> Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *op.cit.*, p.66.

<sup>50</sup> Renuka Ray, *op.cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, *op.cit.*, p.67.

<sup>53</sup> AIWC File No.279.

<sup>54</sup> V.D. Patil, *A Study of Nehru's Ideas*, Devika Publications, New Delhi, 1998, p. 224.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1983, p.306. A Message to the International Edition o the Textile Journal, 4 October 1940

<sup>57</sup> R.C. Dutt, *Socialism of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1981, p.130.

<sup>58</sup> Beatrice Pitney Lamb, *The Nehrus of India*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1967, p.202.

<sup>59</sup> Durgabai Deshmukh was the wife of C.D. Deshmukh.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Women In Planning’, an article by Durgabai Deshmukh in Tara Ali Baig (ed.), *Women of India*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1958, p.262.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Duragabai Deshmukh’, an article by Tara Ali Baig in B.N. Ganguli (ed.), *Social Development: Essays in Honour of Smt Durgabai Deshmukh*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1977, p.21.

<sup>62</sup> Arun Goel, *Organization and Structure of Women Development and Empowerment* , Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p.231.

<sup>63</sup> AIWC Papers File No.246.

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> AIWC File No.279.

<sup>69</sup> Women in Planning, an article by Durgabai Deshmukh in Tara Ali Baig ,*op.cit.*, p.262.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.267.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Nehru’s Foreign Policy’, an article by K.P.S. Menon in B.K. Ahluwalia (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru: India’s Man of Destiny*, Newman Group of Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p.43.

<sup>72</sup> S.Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Henceforth SWJN), Vol. 4, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1973, p.185. Presidential Address of Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lahore Congress, 29 December 1929.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Nehru’s Foreign Policy’, an article by K.P.S. Menon in B.K. Ahluwalia, *op.cit.*,p.43.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru Speeches 1946-1949, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, p.2.

<sup>76</sup> Cited in R.D. Sharma, *India’s Contribution Towards World Peace Under Nehru*, Sehgal Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p.15.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Hardy Andrews, *A Lamp for India: A Story of Madame Pandit*, Prentice Hall, USA, 1967, p. 248.

<sup>78</sup> SWJN, Second Series Vol.5, p. 569. Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 21 February, 1948.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.541. Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 23 January, 1948.

<sup>80</sup> Verra Brittain, *Envoy Extraordinary: A Study of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Her Contributions to Modern India*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1965, p.86.

<sup>81</sup> Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, *The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1979, p.244.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*,p. 245.

<sup>83</sup> Anne Guthrie, *Madame Ambassador: The Life of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit*, Macmillan & Company Ltd, London, 1962, p.128.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.131.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102.

<sup>89</sup> Nayantara Sahgal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Civilizing a Savage World*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2010, p.36.

<sup>90</sup> Verra Brittain, *op.cit.*, p.123

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011, p. 570.

<sup>98</sup> Vinceny Sheean, *Nehru: The Years of Power*, Victor Gollancz Ltd, London 1960, p. 251.

<sup>99</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru Speeches 1946- 1949, Vol.1, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.300.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Dorothy Norman, *Nehru: The First Sixty Years*, Vol II, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p. 310.

<sup>103</sup> Tara Ali Baig, *Sarojini Naidu*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1974, p.150.

<sup>104</sup> Padmini Sengupta, *Sarojini Naidu: A Biography*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966, p.308.

<sup>105</sup> Madhavan Palat, *SWJN*, Second series, Vol.58, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi, 2014.

<sup>106</sup> Om Prakash Paliwal. *Rameshwari Nehru: Patriot and Internationalist*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1986, p. 49.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Om Prakash Paliwal, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Nehru’s India: In Context’, an article by Nayantara Sahgal in Nayantara Sahgal’s *Nehru’s India: Essays on the Maker of the Nation* (ed.), Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2015, p.13.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Nehru and the Progress of Science in India’, an article by E.V. Ganapathi Iyer, in Sheila Dikshit et al (eds.), in *Jawaharlal Nehru: Centenary Volume*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989, p. 236

<sup>115</sup> Nehru and Science, an article by M.G.K. Menon and Manju Sharma in *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> ‘Nehru and the Progress of Science in India’ in *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Nehru and Science’, an article by M.G.K. Menon and Manju Sharma in *Ibid.*, p.367.

<sup>119</sup> ‘In Remembrance’, an article by Mrinalini Sarabhai in *Ibid.*, p.566.

<sup>120</sup> The basic objective of the Technology Policy was the development of indigenous technology and efficient absorption and adaptation of imported technology appropriate to national priorities and resources.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Nehru and Science: The Vision of New India’ an article by Ward Morehouse in V.D. Patil (ed.), *Studies on Nehru*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1987, p.306.

<sup>122</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India*, John Day, New York, 1941, pp 178-81. Address to the National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad, March 5, 1938

<sup>123</sup> V.D. Patil, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>124</sup> V.D. Patil, *A Study of Nehru’s Ideas*, Devika Publications, New Delhi, 1998, p. 226.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Attar Chand, *Nehru’s Vision of Nation Building*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989, p.108.

<sup>127</sup> P.R. Kyndiah, *Jawaharlal Nehru: The Thinking Dynamo*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, p.19.

<sup>128</sup> Diana Mansergh, *Independence Years: The Selected Indian and Commonwealth Papers of Nicholas Mansergh*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.213.

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<sup>129</sup> Reena Nanda, *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya: A Biography*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, p.126.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.141.