



Position of Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Woman being the central figure of the family as well as the society should be given a great importance and respect. But the condition in the society is exactly opposite. Only women those who have power and economically strong enjoy freedom and respect where all the remaining women are struggling to get a good position in the society. The paper projects some of the details of the investigation has done on the position of woman in Indian society. Woman is not treated equally with the man in respect of education, marriage, salaries, employment, responsibility, social status, justice and freedom. Woman is disrespected, ill-treated and harassed physically and mentally in this male dominated society. The paper highlights the position of woman, problems faced by the woman, reasons, consequences, and some of the remedial measures which can bring change in the position of woman. From the ages gender discrimination is there in the society. In spite of the rules given by the Indian Constitution, still in 21st century woman is facing so many problems despite her industry. This makes all the educated people to think and fight for the immense change in the life of woman, which is the dire need of India.

KEYWORDS :

Introduction

Woman, as mother, as wife, and as daughter plays a vital role in giving a shape to the society. When we observe the position of women in India is very low. Once upon a time, in Vedic period women were not given due respect and freedom except in few occasions. Woman being the central figure of the family she had to submit herself to all members of the family. In some cases women were given freedom to participate in the administrative duties beyond their domestic activities. For example, Rani Rudrama Devi, Jhansi Lakshmi Bai etc., were participated in the administration of their kingdoms and areas.

During the time of British rule it was realized that only due to illiteracy women were suppressed in India. People like Hunt and Macaulay took this as serious issue and supported the girl's education in India. Therefore the first girl's school was established in Bombay in 1824. Even before independence people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, PrakasamPantulu, KandukuriVeerasingam, etc., tried their best to uplift the position of women by fighting against the social evils like Sati, Pardah, Child Marriages and etc.,

With the involvement of British missionaries and social reformers women's position started changing. Child marriages were decreased, Sati was abolished, and widow remarriages were encouraged. Women were allowed to go to schools and women were also allowed to work in different places.

But my question to all the readers is, are women completely free and equal with the men? Obviously answer is no. The education and freedom which is given to women did not bring them equal respect and justice with men. Here I would like to give my own example. We are three female and one male child in the family. When we were children, my mother used to attend all my father's necessities like, if he was getting ready to his office she used to arrange lunch box, water to have bath and even very minor things. And she taught us the same when it comes to my brother. Eventhough he is younger to all of us, we have to serve him food, clean his plate, and arrange everything for his bath and studies. Otherwise my mother would scold us for not giving respect to the male. Why I am telling all this because we are living in a male dominated society where women is giving least priority for her industry. Still the same situation prevails in most of the families in India.

Despite the education, knowledge and money she earns, women are not being respected in the society. Justice and equality are just mere baby's talk in India. In one way the education and freedom increased the responsibility of women at home and at work place but not their respect.

Status of women development in India

The current population of India in 2014 is 1.27 billions. Male popu-

lation is 655.8 millions and female population is 614.4 millions. Still there is a difference of 41 millions between men and women population. Education of women is also not improved much when compared to men. (40%-60%)

Even though the government of India has expressed a strong commitment towards education for all, however, India still has one of the lowest female literacy rates in Asia. Today there are more than 200 million illiterate women in India. This will directly or indirectly affect the family status of women as well as the country's economic development.

Today, the government, the politicians and most of the educated people feel proud of women's participation in various fields. For example, KalpanaChawla and Sunita Williams in the field of science and technology; Indira Gandhi, Soniya Gandhi, MamathaBenerjee, Jayalalitha, SushmaSwaraj in the field of politics; ChandaKochhal, KiranMujumdar Shaw, IndraNuyie, Arundhathi Bhattacharya in the field of business, banking, manufacturing, and financial services; SainaNehwal, SaniyaMeerja, P.V.Sindhu, and Harika in the field of sports and games clearly shows the meager participation of women in various fields.

A committee in the status of women in India stated that the "Image of Indian woman is created by a few women holding high position or academic qualification", which serves to conceal rather than reveal the reality of the low status and educational levels of the average Indian woman. (Government of India 1974)

Reasons for the low status of women

Various reasons are responsible for the under development of the women in India. Especially,

1. Influence of traditions, customs and cultures:

India is known for its traditions and customs. Though India is a secular country, most of its values are formed of Hinduism. Ardhashastra, which was written by Manu, gave least importance to woman in the society. It stressed that woman should be submissive to her husband and all other male members of the family.

2. Patriarchal or male dominated society:

India is basically a male dominated society. So man is enjoying utmost freedom. He is considered strong and powerful than woman. Man always dominates woman in almost all aspects of her life. Woman is always responsible and answerable to man even for the very minute things.

3. Gender discrimination:

In India people normally give importance to the male child but not to female. Since ages people believe that male child will bring their parents Moksha. They also believe a girl is a great burden to them. Still in

India we observe cases of female infanticide. That's the reason why there is difference in ratio of man and woman.(1000/940)

4. Poverty:

Poverty is the first and foremost reason for many of the problems faced by India. Basically 70% of the Indians depend on agriculture. They do not have basic education even. People due to their poverty they do not like girl children and everyone expects boys to get dowry, and with the hope that these boys will take care of their parents when they become old. Moreover they think that boys will work more than the girls because they are physically stronger than girls.

5. Lack of awareness and illiteracy:

This is a great hurdle to the development of women in the society. People due to lack of knowledge and awareness they are not encouraging women population or women development. Most of the people are unaware of the equal rights and the justice given by the Indian constitution.

Right to Equality and Freedom (Articles 14 –17 and 19) ensure the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law, prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, caste, religion, race or place of birth, equal opportunity in matters of employment and abolition of untouchability.

Consequences

Due to the above said reasons women are facing lot of problems not only at home but also outside the house. For example,

- Ill-health due to uneducation, early marriages, and poverty.
- Disrespect from the husband, in-laws, and from the superiors and colleagues at work place
- Inequality and injustice in salaries, freedom, respect and responsibilities.
- Harassment from the husband and other men in the society.
- Social problems like dowry, sexual harassment etc.,

Measures to be taken to develop the status of women

- Women should be given equal importance with men
- Proper education should be given
- Awareness programmes must be conducted about the equality of men and women
- Both men and women should change their attitude
- Women health must be concentrated on
- Government should strictly abolish child marriages and practice of dowry
- Female infanticide should be banned
- Women empowerment programmes must be conducted

Conclusion

Finally I would like conclude with the statement that "men and women are equal but men are more equal than the women" which is said by someone sarcastically. This is exactly true in the present day society. Irrespective of the rights given by the Constitution, awareness programmes conducted by the government and education given to various people it is an illusion to expect complete equality between men and women the society.

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