



STATUS OF WOMEN THROUGH EONS

Ankita

Research Scholar Dept. of Psychology, Tanta University, Sri Ganganagar (Rajasthan)

ABSTRACT

Life in the 21st Century has changed, developed albeit rather slowly evolved to a higher dimension with the advancement of technology and education. However, one thing that has been dragged from the medieval ages into this new era is the status of women in the society. Women in the new eon are still ill-treated, and it is not astonishing at all. However, when a deep study of the subject is made in history, we understand that it is surprisingly a newer concept. In the ancient India, somewhere around the Vedic period, women were respected and valued highly in the society. A woman could fight wars, take part in philosophical discussions, join in festivals along with men, or even remain unmarried if she desired so. So, how and why did such concepts of inequality and discrimination arise in the past are interesting studies which are yet less-known to people. Later on, around the eleventh century, women lost these perks, and consequently their status in the society due to some social, political and economic changes. The rise in evil customs and traditions like female feticide, dowry deaths, sexual assault, rape enslaved women to the boundaries of their houses. Women were mentally threatened and emotionally handcuffed from being active participants of discussions, hence their role in the society became passive in nature. The process of reawakening of the human conscience begun in the 19th Century. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayanand threw light on the need of eliminating all forms of gender discrimination and biasedness. The logic behind this activation of mind was simple- without women, life on the planet wouldn't have sustained. A woman is the source of creation, she bears a child and hence the progeny maintains the continuum of life. For the species to survive, both the genders were to be conserved equally. Hence, the society started acknowledging this perspective of mind, though with a steadier pace this time. This change wasn't easy to accept for most of the people who now considered men to be on the cliff, i.e. above and higher than a woman's position. This paper displays the status of women and her empowerment in the 21st Century in all aspects of life due to the rise in education.

KEYWORDS : WomenEmpowerment, Education, Discrimination, Inequality, Mental Health, Emotion.

Introduction:

In the Vedic Period, around 1500-1000 BC, a woman was regarded as the mother goddess (Shakti) because it was well understood that the woman was the source of creation of all lives. She was highly valued in the society for contribution of sustaining the human species. She was respected for her sacrifices and affection. However, in the late Vedic Period, the rights of women got shrunken as they were treated as a man's property or a substance for quenching her spouse's desires. This led to women being less respected, yet some part of the society still valued women in the society.

According to an original Sanskrit verse in Manusmriti, the life of a woman has been bounded to her relations with men around her and never considered as that of an independent individual. "The father guards her during virginity, the husband guards her in youth, the son guard her in old age; the woman is never fit for independence." Here, 'guarding' is used as an indication of protecting her from all troubles in life and helping her make greater decisions. It is said that a girl is her father's responsibility till marriage, then of her husband and if her husband has passed away, it is the moral duty of her sons to guard or support her in all spheres. Thus, the essence of these lines is so deeply rooted to chain a woman's life to man, as if she can never stand on her own feet. A woman must be considered independent and should be given the right to make a decision on her own. Why does her decision need a validation from another individual, however close that man may be? Why can't she have the right to voice her own opinions freely without any judgements or comments from a man? These are questions that arise in our minds when we read such ancient texts that date back to 3500 BC, or even 6000 BC according to some historians. Fast forwarding to an early 19th Century's perspective of the great French military commander and political leader Napoleon, "Give me good mothers; I will give you a good nation." Women were ill-treated in this eon, yet the importance of a mother and the significance of a mother in the life of her children were understood well by all. A mother's lessons and learnings are imparted in the child, and a good mother always passes on good morals to her children and consequently, a better nation.

In this era, begun the tortures on the lives of women, they became the slaves of their husbands, veils were considered an utmost important aspect of a woman's attire in almost all areas.

The impurity associated with menstruation restricted women from joining religious ceremonies and hence strengthened the view that they were naturally inferior to men. Unacceptable social behaviors like eve-teasing, sexual harassments and sexual assaults begun in the 20th Century which were overtaken by female feticide, increasing cases of rapes, domestic violence and abuse which persisted through all eons.

The 21st Century witnessed a change in this contemporary image of a woman by the tools of education, yet the changes were not yet digested by many people. In the very recent times, menstrual equity became a hot topic of discussion, especially in the last two years when Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu from India was crowned as the Miss Universe in 2021. She beautifully threw light on the necessity of having conversations about menstrual health and education. Women throughout the eons have witnessed a tsunami of troubles in social, political, religious and economic spheres, and they still do. Yet today, we see women in all spheres standing tall and tough to portray the equality of thought and decision.

Objectives of the Study:

- i. To study the status of women in society through the eons. It deals with the past struggles and overcoming of them. Also, this study throws light on present day challenges and their impact on the status of women in the society.
- ii. To identify the role of education in women empowerment.
- iii. To highlight some suggestions for the improvement of status of women.

Limitation of the study: -

The study has been limited to a particular area, Panchkula, Haryana, and hence maybe affected due to the same community belief.

Hypothesis of the study: -

Women empowerment is directly proportion to the rise in education field of the eon.

Method of study:**Sample:**

Thirty girl students of Govt PG College, Sec-1, Panchkula were selected for the sample.

Questionnaire:

A questionnaire was developed. In this questionnaire, objective type and same suggestive questions were included.

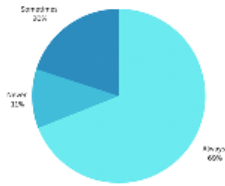
Interviews:

Interviews were also organized with working staff (Teaching and non-teaching staff of Govt PG College Panchkula.)

Findings of the Study: -

The women of Haryana, no doubt, are strong and bold, they have a mind to sacrifice themselves for their families as well as the betterment of society. Yet, in the family, girls are given a secondary position and they are obliged to take part in the household chores with their mothers

more than their brothers. The study shows that 69% women are ALWAYS involved in domestic decisions, followed by 20% who are sometimes involved and 11% who are NEVER involved in domestic decisions.



92% girls expressed the view that there is partial attitude for women in our society. The majority of them stated the following reasons as the root cause of this problem: Lack of education, Dowry System, Superstitions, Orthodox and some rigid religious views.



Conclusion:

Education and awareness is indeed the only weapon that can bring a revolution to the mindset of the society. The woman of 21st Century is independent and has spread her tentacles in all spheres, whether it is politics, business, medicine, banking, forces of navy, army and air. The woman of this eon has shown us how she has transformed into an independent individual. Programmes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', 'Apni Beti Apna Dhan', 'Balika Samridhi Yojana', 'Mahila Mandal Scheme' etc. have been launched for the upliftment of the status of the girl child and women. Yet she faces social evils which persist in the society.

Suggestions:

Though there has been an improvement in the status of women in the society, there are miles we still need to walk on this path to make the world an equal half for both, the males and females. The following suggestions can be implemented for a better tomorrow:

- i. Skill-development programmers should be organized for housewives especially, so that they can also earn on their own and be independent financially. Trainings like sewing, candle making, Paper-bag making etc.
- ii. Self-aided workshops and webinars for should be conducted exclusively for women free of cost, so that they can get exposure to various fields like science and technology.
- iii. Including menstrual hygiene and equity based topics in the curriculum of schools and colleges to understand the basic struggle of every women's life.
- iv. Highlighting women's contribution in the developmental process and convince policy-making authorities to provide more resources to women development.

REFERENCES:

1. https://srujna.org/donations/?gclid=CjwKCAiA5sieBhBnEiwAR9oh2sAFdXpYycumAFcXqUnTIMVtBKw8okQW8nEWxBxxNawoeYkP7B2A8hoCjbgQA vD_BwE
2. <https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/manusmriti-with-the-commentary-of-medhatithi/d/doc201361.html>
3. [file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/571_positive+psychology+Sonal+Malik%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/571_positive+psychology+Sonal+Malik%20(2).pdf)
4. https://naarisamata.org/women_empowerment/?gclid=CjwKCAiA5sieBhBnEiwAR9oh2gzoqzjVBylLPE9tN1PKsQyNwY5G0DofpncclqNjrj9Ubuq7RarcPBoCD3sQA vD_BwE