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History

THE TOOLS OF EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN EARLY PERIOD OF 20TH CENTURY IN TAMILNADU

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals about some tools, It how helped for the change of the status of women i.e. thinker, press, Education, Government Act. etc. in 20th century in Tamilnadu. For numerous centuries women in India had been subordinated to men and socially oppressed. The various religious practiced in India as well as the personal laws based on them consigned women to a status inferior to that of men¹. Women had been got status during Sangam period. Men respected women. They got equality in society. Women got education. Educated women had been lived in Sangam period. They gave importance to charity and adorned Arts and culture. But in due course of time women have been oppressed in society. The following are oppressive action against women. The women have not got equality in the society.

A woman could only marry once among Hindus, a men were permitted to have more than one wife. Among Muslims too this custom of polygamy prevailed. The custom of early marriage prevailed, and even children of eight or nine were married. The widows could not remarry and had to lead an ascetic and restricted life. In many parts of the country, the horrifying custom of sati or self-immolation of widows prevailed. Hindu women had no right to inherit property, nor did they enjoy the right to inherit property, nor did they enjoy the right to terminate an undesirable marriage. The benefit of education was denied to most of them².

At the time of independence, the Hindu Women in particular, suffered the following multiplicity of social injustice. No right to choose one's own spouse, No right to divorce, no right to marry after husband death and share in ancestral property, Tyranny of dowry, inequality in public career soon after independence, urgent attention was paid and adequate attempt made to secure legal. Constitutional and political rights.

Another important development was the birth of a women's movement in the country. Upto the 1920's enlightened men had worked for the uplift of women. Now self-conscious and self-confident women under took the task. They started many organizations and institutions for the purpose, the most outstanding of which was the All India Women's Conference founded in 1927.

Constitution of Independent India gave impotence to the equality to women. But there was no women even a member in the constituent assembly and draft committee. Articles of constitution of India 14-35 speaks rights and duties³. Articles 16 assures equality to women in public service. So constitution of India give rights to women rights of equality, freedom, property, against exploitation, religion, culture, marriage law, dowry, divorce, remarriage etc⁴. So constitution and enacting laws give guarantee complete equality to women.

Women struggle for equality took a bid step forward with the coming of independence. Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution (1950) guaranteed the complete equality of men and women⁵. The Hindu succession Act of 1956 made the daughter an equal co-heir with son.

The constitution gives women equal right to work and to get employed in State agencies. The Directive Principles of the Constitution lay down the principles of equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Of course many visible and invisible obstacles still remain in putting the principles of the equality of sexes into practice. A proper social climate has still to be created. But the social reform movement, women's own movement, and the Constitution of free India have made a big contribution in this direction.

Press:

The prejudices against women's education which very much prevailed in the early 19th century were slowly overcome. The new

education fundamental turning points in the social philosophy of the Tamil people public opinion were expressed through the press the press became a famous political and social instrument for change. The Hindu, swadesamitran are earliest news paper of Tamilnadu, number of other journal, periodicals, and dailies constantly feeding the public mind with news⁶. Sudeshinmidren, India, Desapakthan, SuthenthiraSankuy, Navasaskthi, Gandhi, VantheMatharam, MatharManovansani, Soupakiyam, Kalaimegal, Manikodi, Jan Sakthi, Suthebumidran, Dinamani, MakkalChinthanai, Kudiyarasu, Vedulhatai etc.

Poets: The famous poets of Tamilnadu Thriu. V. KalyanaSundaranar, SubramaniyaBharathiyar, Bharathidasan, NamakkalRamalingam Pillai, KavimaniDesikaVinayagam Pillai, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Periyar. E.V.Ramasamy, KundrakkudiAdigalar etc. They had been served for the development of women and Thiru. V. KalyanaSundarm wrote a book "PenninPerumai". It published 1927 by there was oppose to the publication of revolutionary ideas. But in 1949 this book was again 7th publication issued there was a great change in the attitude and minds of people towards women. There have been some genuine Socio-religious movements promoted the status of women.

Dr. MuthulakshmiReddi:

Dr. MuthulakshmiReddi was well known Social reformer. As a first women member of legislative assembly of Chennai⁷. She initiated many acts for the cause of women. Her effort to abolish Devadasi System is much note worthy⁸. She was well aware of the agony of the women and the various evils and forces enslaved them to do something for their liberations she thought of involving herself in various organizations and movements. She served as president of all India women association and served for the emancipation of women.

KavimoniDesikaVinayagam Pillai:

DesigaVinayagam Pillai was a poet from Kanyakumarai District. His sympathy for the poor and women exploitation and upliftment of the working class are well reflection in his writings. He stood as a champion of women's liberation and exaltation according to him, human survival on the earth is made possible because of women, by her notable actions of bearing and rearing children, caring the poor and the sick and inspiring the perspired men with their warm kiss.

SubramonyaBharathi:

SubramonyaBharathiyar, he was a great poet. Before him Tamil literature and press were dominated by conventional approach and tradition. In which all his revolutionary writings could be released. He stood for social equality Emancipation of women and the uplift of their status in the society was his vision a great passion⁹. Bharathihad been advised fifty percent women should be in the national education committee¹⁰.

Bharathidasan:

Bharathisadan was an outstanding revolutionary poet. He had

association with great leaders of Tamilnadu and he launched a crusade against all social evils and injustice. In his writing he tried to upload the status of women.

Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai:

Ramalingampillai was a patriotic Tamil poet and he was a social reformer and reacted against the social evils of degradation of women and social and economic inequality.

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy:

The vaikkam hero E.V. Ramasamy popularly known as E.V.R. was the founder of the self-respect movement. E.V.R. encourages inter caste marriages, widows re-marriages, his thoughts and ideas had been published in the publication of Kudiyarasu and Viduthalai¹¹. He propagated his revolutionary thoughts through conducting public meetings all over Tamilnadu.

Periyar had expressed that men and women are equal in 1920 onwards. He wrote in Kudiyarasu and spoke in public meetings about the evils of child marriage and supporting widow remarriage. He demanded to provide employment to women and property rights. So he created awareness and asked government to enact law for the upliftment of women.

Kundrakkudi Adigalar:

Kundrakkudi Adigalar was a leading socio-religious reformer of Tamilnadu. He brought resolution in Arul Neri Thirukkotta movement to abolish the slavery of women and decided to serve the development of the women in the society. He opposed vehemently the dowry system. Adigalar said that development of a nation depends upon the development of women. Women are responsible for the progress of the next generation so education is a must for them; they need property rights and separate income. We should provide higher education and vocational education to them. Girls should have the right to select their life partner according to their wishes.

Adigalar's activities for the development of women's association to get empowerment and income. Isai Gnaniar women movement, Annai Indra Nepal weaving centre, Chinna Maruthu Periya Maruthu women co-operating tailoring centre, Periyar cashwnet industry co-operative union at Kundrakkudi has been given employment and empowerment to women¹².

In the history of traditional Tamilnadu girls' education was a neglected one. The school for women started firstly in 1866. Christian missionaries started schools. They were pioneers in formulating various schemes of educational work. In 1921 women got the right to vote up to the beginning of the 20th century. Education was denied. At the end of the 19th century three women colleges were in the state. The number of female education institutions of all categories increased in the 20th century. Now Tamil society attained maturity to liberate the women.

In 1891, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly called 'Sarada Act' fixed the minimum marriageable age of boys and girls at 18 and 14 years respectively. This Act was amended in 1938 to make its provisions more rigorous.

The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act 1856 were instances of daring reforms introduced. The whole question of social change in Tamilnadu revolved around the wider social phenomenon of the conflict between tradition and modernity. The government enacted the following acts: in 1856 widow remarriage act, in 1929 child marriage act, in 1937 women property rights act, in 1940 inter caste marriage act, in 1956 prostitution ban act, in 1961 dowry prohibition act. These have been passed to the emendation of women by government.

The great social change and women that is affecting the society. Women movement, women leaders and political parties which indulge in lip-service to women. The several political rights have been enshrined in the constitution. The reservation for women at the various levels of local government is a significant turning point. The girls' education has been changing the

condition and status of women. Now the Tamil society attained maturity to the extent of sending female children even to the overseas countries for profession and higher education.

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