



AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE CHANGING ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to analyze the changing role and status of women in India and also highlights the issues and challenges faced by women's of 21st century. Traditionally, an Indian woman had four fold status-role sequence, her role as daughter, wife, housewife and a mother.

The worth of a civilization can be judged by the place given to women in the society. Of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture, one of the greatest is the honored place ascribed to women. A wife's participation is important in some religions such as Hinduism married man along with their wife are allowed to perform sacred rites on various important occasions , thus befittingly woman is also called 'Ardhangani' (better half) of a man.

The study is purely based on secondary sources. The study reveals that women in India are still struggling through issues and challenges due to some social evil practice and dual nature of society and its people.

Keywords: women status, women role, issues, challenges empowerment, social cultural.

Introduction

"As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world." Virginia Woolf God has created everything in pair. He has blessed man with physical erudite and women with the spiritual power. Which make women more emotionally strong caring loving and whizz full person. One must not forget that every legend is once a student of mother as Napoleon said

"Give me strong mothers and I will give you unbeatable army". All over the world, women have played significant roles in the development and progress of countries.

Traditionally women's play four important roles in Indian society, but with the help of various constitutional provision, various schemes of Govt. for girl child and women's her role & status that was behind the four walls of home has been changed to some extent. Now she plays an important role in society as well she is involved in socio-cultural, political as well as economic activities of country.

We are in the era of LPG that is liberalization, privatization and globalization women of 21st century has also stepped up into new world with the rise of educational facilities,

constitutional provisions made by Govt. and new modern thinking. Traditionally she was always playing all essential roles behind the curtains but now situations are been changed and she is also leading with men. Her status and role in society is changing and getting far better. She is actively taking part in social, economic as well as political activities.

Unfortunately, not every society values the role women play and the contribution they make to their country's development. It is important to note, that the challenges women face in society are common around the world. Some beliefs and practices create societies in which males play the dominant role. Religious traditions can contribute to making women second-class citizens. Many times, when women venture out of the home to take part in other types of activities, such as going to school, owning businesses and participating in politics, they are often held back or discouraged. In Indian society, men tend to be the owners of property and the decision makers in the families. Whereas women's perform all house hold works child caring etc still having ignored by males for their contribution in family and society.

Low education levels and the tendency for women to have low self confidence also contribute.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the changing role and status of women in India.
- To analyze the issues and challenges faced by women's of 21st century.

METHODOLOGY

The entire paper is based on secondary sources like different reports of NGOs and surveys conducted by Indian govt. and private agencies. Various journals and articles have also contributed in the findings of this paper. Indian population census (2011) etc. was also helpful in analyzing the following research.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

Census 2011 highlighted the increasingly adverse child sex ratio (0-6 years) in India by showing a 13-point decline to 914 girls per 1,000 boys from 927 in 2001. This continuous decline in girl children over at least the past three decades has been a matter of serious concern female infanticide is very much prevalent when we talk about India thus affecting the female child sex ratio of the country. Gender discrimination, poverty, lack of education, female infanticide, crime against women etc are few major causes for decline in status of women in Indian society. According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Women are responsible for baring children, yet they are malnourished and in poor health. Women are also overworked in the field and complete the all of the domestic work. Most Indian women are uneducated. Although the country's constitution says women have equal status to men, women are powerless and are mistreated inside and outside the home.

Roles of women welfare organizations- among the national level some important organizations are all India women's conference, national council of women, inner wheel, young

women Christian association etc cities organizations like mahila mandal, mahila samiti, and recreation.

Conclusion

Women's status and role does vary around the world, but the key to improve it is universal. That is the message is to start from improving oneself. In any age, place, and time, women, actually all people, should always remember that, one's status might be determined by others, but it's also always needed to be earned, but not given. Empowerment of women is an essential weapon to change the social, economical as well as political status of women besides these many constitutional safeguards for women's are also made that are helping her to some extent improving her status and role in society. Today every law favors women. To recent Amendment to Section 6 of the Hindu Succession Act 1956 gives equal right in coparcenary property to daughters.

Article 14 and 15 of the constitution providing equal status to women and special laws for women. The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 allowing her to take divorce under Section 13(2) giving four special grounds to take divorce exclusively to wife: the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956; the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956; the Dowry Prohibition Act and Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code.1860 specifically relating to punishment for cruelty against wife by her husband and relatives all favors women. There are number of NGOs social organizations and commissions working for betterment and improvement of status of women in Indian society. But unfortunately, she had lost her right to take birth in society, her right to life. The growing inhuman act of female feticide is a glaring example of violation of her right to life. This is the recent condition of women in India.

Women are aware of these laws and rights and are fighting for their rights. The Government is also laying special emphasis on the education of girls. I believe with the likes of Smt. Pratibha Patil who occupy the seat of (first women President of India), Indra Nooyi, Chanda Kocher, Arundhati Roy, Kalpana Chawla, Lata Mangeskar, Kiran Bedi, Sania Mirza, Mary Kom etc. bagging the top most positions it would be long when India would be boosting of its gender equality index (GEI) & gender development index (GDI) erasing the social stigma of women exploitation which have haunted it for many years ago, but still she has to go far ahead as her status is still in making due to evil practices of society.

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