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Women in every sphere of society

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ABSTRACT

Women are the main basis of society. I think, women are playing their key role significantly in every sphere of society. Actually, many institutions and organizations are there in our society. Women are involved in these institutions and performed their activities very well. Women are taking care of their family members as well as they are taking part in many areas such as politics, government offices, sports, professional training jobs, business, religious and cultural events etc.

Role of women has changed tremendously and is making its greatest impact in our society today. In ancient period, women are controlled by men. Gender based discrimination still the ugly face of society, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment in workplace or home, female infanticides, rape in public arenas etc. it's a universal phenomenon. But there are some changes has been occurred now. UNICEF and many other country like India, have taken all appropriate safety measures for women. Now they are standing high and are playing a major role in many important areas like in sports, education, parliament house, media house etc. They are educating themselves and concerned with their improvements. Possibilities have opened in the era of globalization. In India, the socio-economic status of women is much higher than before. Today they are enjoying many more social and legal rights and have greater freedom.

Women can participate more freely in public affairs today. For example, many women are reading news as anchor, taking participate in international games and employed in various fields, ranked better than male in educational fields. Women are holding very prestigious position in every sphere of society.

KEYWORDS: Women in the Sphere of Education, Work-force and Empowerment, Politics, Environmental Conservation, Women Entrepreneurs, Women in the Sphere of Sports, Governmental Programmes in Support of Women in India.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women are the real architects of society. Every women are executing their own duties and responsibilities for society in a proper manner. We know that women's life is more complicated than a man's life. Yet they have to take care of their own personal life. As a basis of society, women are playing their key role significantly in every sphere of family as well as society. In modern era, women are engaged with their profession in many important areas such as school, colleges, government offices or private concerns. They are acting their vital role in socio-cultural and sports events. Thus, role and status of women has changed today and is making its greatest impact in our society through the worldwide.

The type of the status assigned to women in any society reflected the nature of its cultural richness and the level of its civilization standards. However, I have discussed about women's position, role and status in every sphere of Indian society. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the few millennia. With a decline in their status from the ancient to medieval times, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, their history has been eventful. Women's rights under the constitution of India mainly include equality, dignity and freedom from discrimination.

Though women in India continue to face numerous problems such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry and gender inequality. But women's status is much higher than before and they played their role in various important field. Women have served at several top posts in the Indian government, including that of the President of India, the Prime Minister of India, the Speaker of Lok Sabha. Today, the importance of women in the society is beyond any suspicion. Women with their ambitious, intelligence and strength have proved themselves as a superior to the society.

Well, in this paper, I would like to give my optimistic view of women's position to the society and their importance in every sphere of Indian society.

Historical context of women in India :

In ancient India, women were almost the equal of men. During Vedic period, women enjoyed a position which was on the whole much more satisfactory than in the later periods. Women were educated in the early Vedic period. Women studied the Vedic literature like men and some of them are like Lopamudra, Apala, Indrani, Gargi and others. Women had the right to select their life partners through Swayamvara practice.

But the medieval period proved to be highly disappointing for the Indian women for their status further deteriorated during this period. The Muslim invasion of India changed the direction of Indian history. The influx of foreign invaders and the Brahmanical iron laws were the main causes for such degradation. Women in this period had to face a number problems such as practice of child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, practice of sati, purdah system etc.

Notwithstanding, Indian women are almost assigned an equal status with men today and their position went on improving during the British period and after independence. All their political, economic, educational and other disabilities have been removed legally. This does not, however, mean Indian women are completely free from problems. But the situation has changed tremendously now. Through my study, I would like to point out that women are standing high and playing a major role in every sphere of society. Socio-economic and cultural status of women is much higher than before. There is an also an attempt to look ahead into the future prospect of the position of women.

Women in the Sphere of Education:

Education is the driving force of any society. It is fundamental human right. In the history of women, we have seen that women received education like men in the Vedic period. But education of women was neglected in Medieval times. Women from royal family could get some education. But the need of women education emerged during the British period. A girls' school was started for the first time in Bombay in 1824. The Hunter Commission on education, 1882 also emphasized the need for female education for the society welfare. After that, there has been continuous progress in the extent of education among women. Pandita Ramabai Saraswati founded Sharada Sadan for women education in Bombay and Poona in 1889. Theosophical Society encouraged female education.

Now a days, women of India are going for higher education. The educational performance of girl students particularly at high school, technical institution, college level, is proving to be better than that of boys. In India, we have some universities exclusively meant for women, such as Padmavathi University for women in Tirupati, Mother Teresa University for Women at Kodai Kanal in Tamilnadu. Girl students are taking admission to the renowned technical colleges, medical colleges in a relatively bigger number during the recent years. As per the Census of 2011, an affective literacy rate for women was 65.46%, while world's average literacy rate is 79.7%. So we can say that there exist a ray of hope in Indian society for women's education.

The right to Education Act, introduced in 2009, making 'elementary education free and compulsory for all' in India, has been shot in the arm for many. A federal government programme, 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and West Bengal state government programme, 'Kanyashree', offer incentives to parents who facilitate the education of their daughters. It is time that women's education in India transcends the social and economic disparity rampant in the country, India. We must say that the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women.

Women in the Sphere of Work-force and Empowerment :

Empowerment as a concept was first brought at the International Women's Conference in 1985, at Nairobi. It included that empowerment is a redistribution of power and control of resources in favor of women through positive intervention. Broadly, women empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. Women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources which will assist them to increase their self-reliance and enhance them to assert their independent rights, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender based discrimination against women.

The 73rd constitution Amendment Act was made an effort to give some special power to women in all the three tiers of panchayat Raj. Women in the villages and towns are enjoying some political power and one-third of seats are reserved for women along with scheduled caste and scheduled tribes

There has been remarkable increase in the number of women going out of four walls of the household and becoming workers. In the employment market, they are giving tough competition to menfolk. In various field, the number of women employees are steadily increasing. For example, women working as teachers, doctors, nurses, advocates, clerks are to be found in almost all sphere of society. They are working in banking sectors and IT sectors also.

India is one of the world's fastest growing economies, with women mainly from the middle class increasingly entering the work-force. Urban centres like Noida, Bengaluru have seen an influx of young women from various parts of the country, living alone and redefining themselves. On equal economic opportunities and women's participation in the labour force, India ranked well. Moreover, in rural areas, Self-Help-Groups' are widely practiced model for social and economic mobility by NGOs and the government. It provides women with the opportunity to manage loans and savings that can be used by members for varying needs. So it is now widely believed that

empowerment of women, that is, providing equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to women, will go long way in removing the existing gender discrimination.

Women in the Sphere of Politics :

During the Independence movement, women were visible and active as nationalists. Sarojini Naidu was famous Indian freedom fighter and she served as the first female Governor of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in India. Sucheta Kripalini is one of the important names in the struggle for freedom and she played a significant role in politics.

The Indian Constitute has sanctioned women two important rights : female enfranchisement and eligibility for the legislature. After the independence, the number of women voters and women representatives in assemblies and parliament has increased sufficiently. Some of them have attained very high position in political parties, legislatures and cabinets. The nation witnessed in smt. Indira Gandhi, one of the most powerful Prime Minister who gave her leadership to the country for than a decade. In 1950, universal suffrage granted voting right to all women in India. In 1992, an amendment(73rd) was brought to the constitution according to which one-third (33%) of seats were reserved for women at panchayat level. The Women's Reservation Bill has been introduced in the National parliament to reserve 33% of women in Loksabha, Rajyasabha and State Assembly house, Vidhansabha. In 2007, India elected its first female President, smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil. Sumitra Mahajan has played her role as Speaker of Loksabha, smt. Nirmala Sitaraman is playing her role as Finance Minister of Indian present Union government. In federal government system, smt. Mamata Banerjee has been elected as Chief Minister of West Bengal since 2011. Thus we can say that political awareness is present among the women in India.

Women in the Sphere of Environmental Conservation :

All over the world, women are at the forefront of promoting the Environmental revolution. Whether it be exploring the world's ocean or protecting the Narmada Valley, fearless women are leading the change against the status quo. Here are some of the most inspiring women of all time, all fighting for environmental justice. They are like Warangi Mathai worked tirelessly for both land conservation and women's rights in Kenya. She got 'Nobel Peace Prize' in 200 for her approach to sustainable development, democracy and peace through 'Green Belt Movement'. Marina Silva is a warrior for the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. Medha Patekar is the name who made an environmental conservation movement with the slogan

of 'Narmada Bachao Andolon'. Vandana Shiva, is an Indian environmentalist, has spent much of her life in defence of Bio-diversity through her research institute, "Nandanya", that aims to protect the Bio-diversity and integrity of native seeds.

Across India, women are, traditionally closed connected with natural resources and connection that positions them as key preservers and managers of Bio-diversity. In recent decades, environmental movements have increased as the movement for women's right have also increased Chipko Movement, one of the environmentalist movement which was inspired by women. It was a forest conservation movement, held at chamoli district in uttarakhand state in 1970. Women embracing trees to prevent their felling to safeguard their lifestyles which were dependent on the forest. Gaura Devi, Bachni Devi are female name who was leading the movement.

Women Entrepreneurs in India :

Women entrepreneurs in India have already made their path to the market. These young and successful women are altering the traditional standards of business. They are real model and inspiration for young girls. In this paper, I have discussed those successful women in the business world. They are like Anu Sridharan, the young businesswomen was listed among the leading social entrepreneurs by Forbes. Her "Next Drop" water marketplace connects apartments and businesses with private water tanks that improves access to water for residents in urban India. The main goal of "Next Drop" is to provide residents with access to timely information about piped water supply and establish a feedback circle for a better water utility. Subhra chadda, the CEO of Chumbak, received business icon. Chumbak is a product brand with 150 stores in India and 70 stores in Japan. It sells lifestyle product such as bags, phone covers, key chains, wallets etc. Next name is Ravina Raj Kohli, the prominent media personality. She is India's first female CEO in Television world. Initially, she was the head of the content and communication at Sony Entertainment Television. Later, she headed to STAR News. Beside her, Sweta Singh, Barkha Dutt, Richa Anirudh, Anjana Om Kashyap are eminent female Media personality, who working at Aaj Tak, CNBC, ZEE News Channel of India. Vandana Luthra, Beauty expert, is one of the most successful women in India. She is the Founder of VLCC Health and Fitness Care. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2013 for her contribution in this field. Ekta Kapoor is the women who changed the face of Indian Television and made Balaji Telefilms, a household name in India today. She won the Hall of Fame Award at 6th Indian Telly Award.

Women in the Sphere of Sports :

Women in India are doing their every bit to make their presence self over the male-centric sports. Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, Mary Kom, Dola Banerjee, Bachendri Pal, Bula Choudhury are such names who make India proud in front of whole world at International event like Asiad, Commonwealth, Olympics etc.

The women cricket team has won four Asia Cup and one Twenty20 World Cup. Sania Mirza and Saina Nehwal are two other star Tennis and Badminton players who have become India youth icons for their unbelievable contribution and immense success in the sports at such young ages. Hima Das, who is Indian women Athletics referred as the "Dhing Express" and she got major victories in her career- the first being a Gold for the 400 metres at the World under 20 Championship and second being three medals at the Asian Games. Swapna Barman, is one of them from Bengal, secured Gold in Javelin Throw in Asiad. Mithali Raj, Jhulan Goswami, Harmanpreet Kaur are well known Women Indian Cricketer. Manika Batra won two Gold Medals and one Silver, one Bronze at 2018 Commonwealth Games in Table Tennis. Vinesh Phogat, well known face in Women Wrestling, received Padma Shri Award in 2018. Mary Kom, widely renowned face in International women Boxing. She won six Gold Medals in her life in World Boxing Championships. Moreover, it is announced recently that Reshmi Thapa Chhetri, the first Indian Female Football Referee, recognized by FIFA. She will play her role as match referee for the coming Football World Cup in 2022. Indian women athletics Anjali Bhagwat in Shooting conferred with Rajib Gandhi Khel Ratna Award. Anjum Chopra in Cricket conferred with Arjuna award. Bula Choudhury in Swimming conferred with Padma Shri Award. In sphere of sports, women are playing their vital role and make India proud in the world.

Governmental Programmes in Support of Women in India:

The Constitution of India does not discriminate between men and women. All the men and women of India are equally entitled for individual freedom, fundamental rights including the right to participate in social, cultural, religious, educational, economic and political activities. The constitution provides for equality of sex and offers protection to women against exploitation. The Government of India undertook a number of legislative measures to safeguard the interests of women. These are as follow:

- a) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 : it prohibits polygyny, polyandry and child marriage and concedes equal rights to women to divorced and to remarry.

- b) The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 : it provides a childless women the right to adopt a child and to claim maintenance from the husband if she is divorced by him.
- c) The Special Marriage act, 1955 : it provides rights to women on par with men for intercaste marriage, love marriage and registered marriage. It also fixed the minimum age of marriage at 21 for males and 18 for females.
- d) The Suppression of Immortal Traffic Prevention Act,1956 : it gives protection to women from being kidnapped and or compelled to become prostitutes.
- e) The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 : it declares the taking of dowry an unlawful activity and thereby prevents the exploitation of women.
- f) The Medical Termination Act, 1971 : it legalizes abortion conceding the right of a women to go for abortion on the ground of physical and mental health.
- g) The Criminal Court Law Act, 1983 : it seeks to stop various types of crimes against women.
- h) Protection of Women from Domestic violence, 2005 :
- i) The Sexual Harassment of women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013.
- j) The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act,2019 declares the instant divorce granted by pronouncement of Talaq Three Times as void and illegal.
- k) On December 20,2021 The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill,2021, was introduced in Lok Sabha. It proposes the raising of marriage age from 18 to 21 for girls.

Other Programmes for Women :

1. The Mother and Child Tracking system, 2009.
2. Pradhanmantri Matritva Vandana yojona, 2010.
3. Sabala, 2012.
4. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, 1993.
5. Priyadarshini, 2011.
6. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, 2015.
7. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women.
8. SWADHAR Greh Scheme, 2001.
9. Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme, 2017.
10. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojona, 2016.
11. Maternity Benefit Program, 2017.
12. Sukanya Samridhi Yojona,2015.

13. Kanyashree, Ruposhree, Swabalamban Scheme for women.
14. One Stop Centre Scheme and women Helpline Scheme, 2015.
15. Nand- Ghar Yojona, 2015.

These schemes are providing various type of benefit to women in India. These schemes have made an effort to give some special power to women in every sphere of society.

II. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we can say that status accorded to women in society symbolizes its level of progress. The spirit of a civilization can be assessed by the way in which women are treated by the members of that civilization. Women in ancient India enjoyed a position which was quite better than medieval period. Women held a position of equality with men during the Vedic period. But during the Medieval period, women underwent almost a kind of servitude. Everywhere they were subject to inequality, discrimination and exploitation in this period. Their position went on improving during the British period. Today, Indian women are almost assigned an equal status with men. The status of women has radically changed after independence. Both the structural and cultural changes provided equality of opportunities to women in education, employment and political participation.

Several commissions were appointed by the central and state governments to study the causes of low status of women and to protect their rights in various fields. Girls students are getting admitted to the prestigious colleges and universities for higher study. In India, women are working in many prestigious field like schools, colleges, court, technical universities etc. Employments have given women economic independence and the feeling the importance. Now a days, the number of women representatives in parliament and state assemblies has increased sufficiently. The National Commission for Women was set on 31st January, 1992. The functions assigned to the commission are wide and varied covering almost all aspect relating to safeguarding women's right and promotion of their interests.

In Sociological perspectives, we can say that women in India are given freedom and rights such as freedom of expression and equality. But there are also some social barriers such as dowry, wife battering, infanticides, domestic violence etc. Now several acts have been passed to demolish all these problems. Indian society is now proud of outstanding women achievers. Today Indian women have excelled in each and every field from social work to visiting space station. Today names like Arundhoti Roy, Kiran Desai,

Jhumpa Lahiri can put any other writer to shame. Barkha Dutt, P.V. Sindhu, Nirmala Sitaraman are playing their vital role respectively in Media House, Sports and politics. Women are coming up in all spheres of life. If we really want to see India in future as a country which is economically enriched, politically equipped, socially developed and culturally distinguished, then definitely we have to give women a support in all their respective spheres of activity. Today women are playing their vital role in every sphere of society in India.

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