

Difference in Women's Rights in Different Countries (With Special Reference to India)



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Abstract

The status of women in India has faced many major changes in the last few centuries. From the status of equality with men in ancient times to the low-level life of the medieval period, as well as the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been quite dynamic. In modern India, women have held top positions like President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition etc.

The condition of women in India has not always been the same. There have been changes in this era. There have been many ups and downs in their situation from the Vedic era to the modern period, and there have been corresponding changes in their rights. In the Vedic era, the position of women was strong, they were respected in the family and society. They had the right to education. They had the right to equal in property. They participated freely in the meetings and committees, however, there are some utterances in the Rigveda that appear against the women.

In Maitriyasamhita, the woman is said to be the embodiment of lies. The Rig Veda states that there should be no friendship with women, as their hearts are the hearts of wolves. In the Rigveda's other statement, women have been called the weapon of the slave's army. It is clear that even in the Vedic period, women were seen with low vision. Yet she was equally respected and respected in every sphere of Hindu life.

They had great contribution in education, religion, personality and social development. Institutionally the decline of women started from the later Vedic period. They were charged with various types of disabilities. Blasphemous words started being used for them. Many types of restrictions were put on their freedom and freedom. Their condition became even more pathetic in the medieval period. Purdah system increased to such an extent that strict solitary rules were made for women. The facility of teaching has completely ended.

In terms of respect, the Indian woman is at the highest place, but in terms rights, she is lower than the women in most of the western countries where the women have the same liberty as the men have.

Keywords: Women's Rights, Different Countries.

Introduction

The history of women's rights is older in the European countries than in India. The women of the European countries have long been conscious and aware of their rights, and if on any occasion, there was the violation of their rights, they did not hesitate in making complaints against the person who violated their rights. As far as the rights of the women of the European countries are concerned, they, having a rich sense of individualism, live for themselves. They do everything keeping themselves in centre. Moreover, they are not ready to make compromise if someone attempts to infringe their rights. Being human beings, they strongly believe that the earth is theirs as much as it is of men.

They have the right to get birth, survive in the world, do what they please without the interference of others, say and express what they wish and move wherever they want to move alone or with mates without any restriction and to enjoy themselves in any way they please. The law does not allow anyone to interfere their privacy or liberty of living.

The women of the western countries exercise the materialistic culture, and are quite practical in approach. As soon as they arrive in teenage, they are allowed by their parents to keep themselves away from home and family members and to seek and build their career in the field they like. Indeed, they are at liberty to feel something like individualistic while enjoying life.

On the contrary, the Indian women are traditional in their approach and attitude. They lack awareness to their rights. Even if they are aware, they fail to avail of them and to exercise them keeping in mind the community traditions and customs. For example, the women have right to equality. Most of the women face gender discrimination at the home of their parents. They are treated in a different way while their brothers are given a special treatment. Indeed, they never demand the rights that are guaranteed to them by the Constitution of India, and even the human rights that they deserve being humans.

Interpretation of The Issue In Terms of The Indian Woman

Improvement in the status of women has also changed the meaning of economic and social reform of the country. The situation of women in our country is much better than other developing countries. Although we cannot say that the situation of women has changed completely, there has been a lot of progress in this field than before. In today's competitive era, women are more conscious of their rights than before. Women are now very much aware of their professional life (social, political, economic) so that they can easily afford the expenses related to their family and daily routine.

At present, many programs and schemes are being run by the Indian government for the upliftment of women, but due to not being able to reach these levels properly, women are not getting the expected benefits. It is true that at the present time there has been a lot of change in the status of women, but still she is suffering from a male-dominated mindset in many places.

In this context, the statement of Yugnayak and national builder Swami Vivekananda is remarkable - "The best thermometer of progress of any nation is the position of women there. We should put the women in a situation where they can solve their problems in their own way. We should not be the savior of woman power, but their servants and helpers. Indian women have the ability to solve their problems like any other women in the world. There is a need to give them suitable opportunities. On this basis, the prospects for India's bright future are embedded."

Objectives

1. To study the rights-status of the women in the world
2. To concentrate on the Indian woman in general
3. To produce the sayings made about the women in general
4. To reflect the status of the Indian woman through the various ages

5. To emphasize those aspects of the personality of the Indian woman that impart her grace and honour in the society
6. To explore the actual practical status of the woman in the patriarchal Indian society
7. To elaborate the special service that are rendered by the Indian woman
8. To compare the Indian woman with the women of the rest of the world
9. To produce the picture of the changing destiny of the modern Indian woman

Review of Literature

Brenda Cossman & Ratna Kapur (1991), in *Trespass, impasse, collaboration: Doing research on women's rights in India*, discuss that developing tenet of feminism is the need to work collaboratively in order to avoid assumptions of universality and embrace differences between women. The authors reflect upon their attempts to put this principle into practice in research on women's rights in India. They highlight ethical dilemmas raised by their project which forced them to problematize and challenge many of their initial assumptions about doing feminist research, particularly those of identity politics which give primacy to women's experiences as a claim to truth. The authors affirm the importance of identity and experience, but at the same time acknowledge the limitations of this affirmation for the development of effective methodological and political strategies.

Symonides, Janusz, Volodin, Vladimir (1999), in *Human rights of women: a collection of international and regional normative instruments*, observe that human rights are great and powerful instruments in the hands of women in the world, and that they should use and exercise them when these rights are violated by others.

Bina Agrawal (2002), in *Are We Not Peasants Too? Land Rights and Women's Claims in India*, writes that millions of women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America depend critically on land for a livelihood. The typical process of agrarian transformation under which labor shifts from agriculture to nonagriculture has been slow and gender-biased. In many countries, those who have moved to nonfarm work are largely men, while women have remained substantially in agriculture. Hence a disproportionate number of those still dependent on land are women. In India, for instance, 58 percent of all male workers but 78 percent of all female workers, and 86 percent of all rural female workers, are in agriculture

Jogendra Kr. Das (2003), in *Reflections on Human Rights and the Position of Indian Women*, concludes by saying that India's progressive development depends and its mission towards building up into a developed nation may be fulfilled on and with protecting human rights of men and women and we assume that it may be impossible to protect women human rights unless we save them from ongoing crimes and that the accessibility of women to their human rights within the four walls of the family has to be ensured first and only then we could think of a prosperous women in the new millennium.

Veena Poonacha (2003), *Women's Studies in Indian Universities: Current Concerns*, discusses that feminist scholarship has acquired a degree of acceptance in academia. Increasingly influenced by post-modern thought, women's studies scholarship has questioned previously held definitions of power/powerlessness, sexuality and fixed gender identities. The challenge to 'grand' theories has generated a rich understanding of the heterogeneity of human experiences. Nonetheless the fear is whether this legitimate critiquing of the shortfalls of the theories of the 1970s has undermined the political vision of feminism's original project.

Report on Case study: Women's rights in India (2014), under the title *A case study on women's rights in India from the 2013 Human Rights and Democracy Report*, says that the UK government has continued to be involved in a range of activities to support women's rights in India. This has included a number of projects focusing on empowering women, the legal status of women, and combating sex trafficking. The UK works with other partners to support women who are primarily the victims of trafficking. This includes the "Stop Trafficking" web portal. This portal was launched two years ago, and has registered hundreds of trafficking cases, resulting in a number of victims being found. The site is improving the exchange of information between various bodies dealing with combating trafficking, including government, law enforcement agencies and NGOs.

Sutapa Saryal (2014), in *Women's Rights in India: Problems and Prospects*, concluding the theme, writes that the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality and women's empowerment can be realised in India only when the traditional practices like female infanticide, dowry deaths, honour killings by khap panchayats, domestic violence, or sexual abuse is eliminated. It is only then that gender equality and women's empowerment can become a reality.

Indira Sharma (2015), in *Violence against women: Where are the solutions?*, discusses that violence against women is a social, economic, developmental, legal, educational, human rights, and health (physical and mental) issue. It is a preventable cause of morbidity and mortality in women. The relationship between violence against women and mental illness has not been adequately explored. Application of laws related to violence in the setting of mental illness is difficult. Despite the social and religious sanctions against it in all cultures, it has continued.

Salagare B (2015), in *Status of Women's Rights in India*, focuses on violation of woman rights in India, woman identity in India, woman rights perspectives, Patriarchal Shadow on Question of Equality and Law and the Status of Women. And also discuss the constitution provision woman rights and gender discrimination in male dominated society. Paper is developed on the basis of secondary data and adopted descriptive research methodology for this purpose.

Hypothesis

1. In terms of rights guaranteed to her by the Constitution of India, the Indian woman is fortunate, as the Constitution treats both the men and women equally, and guarantees them the same rights.
2. The destiny of the Indian woman is miserable
3. Both the positive and the negative sayings and statements about the women are found in literature.
4. The status of the Indian woman in the various ages was not same
5. There are several distinct aspects of the personality of the Indian woman that imparts her an honourable status
6. The actual status of the woman in the society is of being subordinate to man
7. The Indian woman leads a dedicated family life and keeps herself limited to her family members
8. The Indian woman does not have as much liberty as the women in the other countries of the world have
9. The picture of the modern Indian woman is a changed one
10. Rigid measures need to be taken to ensure safety and self-respect of the Indian woman

Methodology

The research paper that falls in the category of descriptive and interpretative research, is theoretical at root, as the contents explored through the various research studies and papers published in the national and international journals provide and supply the required stuff. The method of the study is inductive, while a simple research design that proved it to be helpful to the author to develop the thought quite systematically, was adopted. The scientific spirit of the work is ensured through the adoption of the scientific method that focus the definition of the problem, formulation of hypothesis, objective-determination, analysis of contents, collection, classification and interpretation of data. The findings were arrived at after following all the specified steps of scientific method and the steps involved in the process of social research.

Findings

1. The Constitution of India makes the Indian woman fortunate by guaranteeing her the same status as is guaranteed to the Indian man
2. Theoretically, both the men and women are equal and have equal rights and status, but practically, the things are different.
3. The life of a common Indian woman is too miserable, and she spends her whole life living as a complete dependent on the male members of the society
4. There are different opinions and sayings about women. Some of the thinkers and writers pay them honour saying high words for them. On the contrary, some others impart them disgrace using shameful words and language for them
5. The woman in the Pre-vedic and Vedic age was better than the woman in the Medieval Period when the Purdah system was imposed on her for the fear of the Mughals

6. The status of the modern Indian woman is better than the woman in all the previous ages of history
7. The aspects that win her respect include her whole-hearted dedication and devotion, her sense of humanity, tolerance, discipline, caring attitude and sacrifice
8. The Indian Patriarchal society does not allow the woman to enjoy her life in her own way and to exercise all the rights that she has being a human being
9. Most of the housewives and working women in India are still dependent on the male members of the family, and are forced to live on their mercy
10. To the Indian woman, her family constituted by her husband, children and other family members, is her entire world and the only priority for which she makes no compromise in life
11. In terms of liberty and the enjoyment of all the rights granted to her, the Indian woman is far behind than the women of the rest of the world who are at liberty to enjoy their lives in their own way, choose their life-partner, to do what they please, to say what they want, and to move where they want to move alone or with others
12. The process of women empowerment is improving the status of the Indian woman.

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