

Women Empowerment in India : Primitiveness of the Reformists and Economists



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Abstract

India has witnessed gender inequality from its early history due to its socio-economic and religious practices that resulted in a wide gap between the position of men and women in the society. The original of the Indian idea of appropriate female behaviour can be traced to the rules laid down by Manu in 200 B.C.: "by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house". "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent." Women's lives are shaped by customs that are centuries old. "May you be the mother of a hundred sons" is a common Hindu wedding blessing. The sex ratio according to 2001 census report stands at 933 per 1000 males, to a world average of 100 males to 105 females. Out of the total population, 120 million are women who live in abject poverty. The maternal mortality rate in rural areas is among the worlds highest. From a global perspective India accounts for 19% of all live births and 27% of all maternal deaths. The deaths of young girls in India exceed those of young boys by over 300,000 each year and every 6th infant death is specifically due to gender discrimination. A woman faces discrimination right from the childhood.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Reformists and Economists, Primitiveness.

Introduction

The Constitution of India ensures gender equality in its preamble as a fundamental right but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women by ways of legislation and policies. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights forums to secure equality in its preamble as a fundamental right but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women by ways of legislation and policies. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights forums to secure equal rights of women, such as ratification of Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1993. Women have been finding place in local governance structures, overcoming gender biases. Over one million women have been elected to local Panchayat as a result of 1993 amendment to the Indian Constitution requiring that 1/3rd of the elected seats to the local governing bodies be reserved for women. At present women make up just 10% of the lower house of parliament (Lok Sabha) and significantly fewer in state assemblies. Indian upper house approves women's quota bill. First proposed in 1996, the bill now has support from India's main parties. The bill was passed with 186 members of the 245 seat house voting in favour. Only one member voted against. Several smaller parties boycotted the vote. There are currently 59 women in the 545 member Lok Sabha. Under the proposals their numbers would rise to 181.¹

Reformers and Liberals

A group of people normally educated and intellectual specifically and purposefully united under some common goals of political, economic, and social reforms on the basis of their so called liberal approach. Their main hidden agenda innocently, knowingly or unknowingly is nothing but the exploitation of the capital and natural resources on the name of socio economic level of the most oppressed humans. There exists number of Non- government organisations worldwide in the form the typical reformers and liberals for the advocacy of virtual empowerment of the women.

It may also be seen that their views and ideology are reflection of the capitalistic class.

Legislations for Women in India

There are various legislations relating to women in the Indian democratic system-2-. The government making its efforts based on the feedback received from the researchers and inputs received from the socio- economic strata. Following are some of the important laws imposed by the government time to time for the security and empowerment of the women:

1. The Factories Act, 1948
2. The Special Marriage Act, 1954
3. The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956.
4. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
5. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1956.
6. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961).
7. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956
8. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956
9. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
10. Mines Act 1952
11. Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
12. The Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 (33 of 1969).
13. The Indian Divorce Act, 1959 (4 of 1969)
14. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy TRest, 1971 (34 of 1971)
15. Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
16. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.
17. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
18. Indian Penal Code, 1860.
19. The Christian Marriage Act, 872 (15 of 1872)
20. The Guardians and Wards Act, 1869.
21. The Indian Succession Act, 1925 (39 of 1925)
22. Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923
23. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (19 of 1929)

Legislation on Domestic Violence

In the 1990s, several factors contributed to significant changes in domestic violence legislation in many countries. Women's successful campaigning raised the profile of the issue of violence against women; and several United Nations conferences (Vienna, 1993; Cairo, 1994; and Beijing, 1995) recognized women's rights as an inalienable part of universal human rights. As a result of the new awareness generated, laws on domestic violence were adopted in many countries. To date, around 44 countries have adopted violence were adopted in many countries. To date, around 44 countries have adopted specific legislation on domestic violence, of which 13 are in Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa rica, Ecuador, E1 Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela. The signing of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1994 provided the momentum to enact such legislation. The South African Domestic Violence Act of 1998 contains a particularly innovative feature granting of a temporary Protection Order in cases where the court is satisfied that the actions of the aggressor pose imminent harm to the complainant. This ruling allows

protection of the health, safety and well being of the applicant, and includes provision for the aggressor to be evicted from the matrimonial home while continuing to provide monetary relief to the application. Recently government of India has also passed women safety bill in addition to the prior ones.

The above legislation proven to be inadequate and government has force to review and imposing more and more social institutions for women empowerment. In this, series National Commission for Women was come into picture with following objectives.

1. To provide speedy justice to the women.
2. To generate awareness among the public regarding
3. Conciliatory mode of dispute settlement
4. Legal sanctity of Lok Adalats
5. To gear up the process of organizing the Lok Adalat
6. To encourage the public to settle their disputes outside the formal set up.
7. To empower public especially women to participate in justice delivery mechanism.

What is the Root Cause of all Women Related Problems?

Enough is being said and described about the ever increasing crime against feminine gender despite of all the existing legislation and efforts of the reformists and economists. Now, it is high time to penetrate into the root of the problem. Identification of the problem is one step ahead towards its possible solution. The primitiveness of the reformers can be seen in the efforts as they all have been trying to reduce the consequences rather than working towards the finding the reasons and the possible permanent solution. Eventually, without finding the actual reason of the oppression of the women it is impossible to abolish it. Needless to say that, this fact has ignored and kept in abeyance by the reformist and other similar liberal groups since beginning. The capitalistic approach of the civilized society has made numerous propaganda and mystification to keep beneath the reality. The domestication of animals and the breeding of herds had developed a hitherto unsuspected source of wealth and created entirely new social relations.

Finally, "The overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also, the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children." (Ibid 15)

This system of kinship is not only fully accepted by all American Indians as well as by the Dravidian tribes of Deckan and the Gaura tribes of Hindostan, but similar systems must have existed everywhere primarily, as has been proven by investigations that were undertaken since those of Backofen. Consequently the oppression of women was started and become worst during the modern civilization though its root cause still exists in the origin of "the private property". Though it remains in the existence since ages however its shape and nature have changed but the basic concept of the exploitation is continuously carried on.

Here I want to make a request of not hasten howling about my method debating. I have not the least desire to doubt the purity of intentions of the Reformers. As I have said, one may become a demagogue out of sheer political innocence. But I have shown that reformists have descended to demagogy, and I will never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies in the way of women empowerment. The worst enemies, because exploited women is unable to recognize her enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely so, as his friends. The worst enemies, because in the period of uncertainty, when there movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods to mislead the masses, who can realize their error only later by bitter and bitter experience of exploitation.

Indian women are getting educated consistently though she still far behind from the European and developed countries as far as the class consciousness is concerned. Clearly pace of this development is very slow as compared to the developed countries, which is mainly due the socio-cultural limitations. That class consciousness of the women is still far away from the ground level as she found fell down in deep and dark mystification of media and capitalistic approach of the patriarchal society and so called westernization. The term westernization has reached to Indian women in totally brutal for, which indeed harming their awareness towards there class consciousness. The advanced women pass her time in front of the television to watch the family serials, rather than working on the cause of consciousness. A few those are aware are working under the system of primitiveness, system of reformers social welfare groups. There is a need of the development of the organisation that could develop the concept of consistent organizational struggle with the present mode of production.

Conclusion

The crime and oppression of the women has increasing and taking new shaped day by day. The statistics reveals that all the efforts have proven as inadequate and ineffective as far as women empowerment is concerned. All hitherto efforts made by the reformists, social welfare groups, NGOs, world organisations and economists. There is no doubt on the honesty of these efforts, they have affected the women society by and large either in the benefit of the conscious groups or privileged one. While a large section of Indian women still and off course will be forced to live in the terrorized and hazardous living condition of exploitation in its various existing forms. The women is the suffering class same as slaves of old ages, but in the development of civilization slaves have lost there form by there struggles. Increased education level of the Indian women also mystified by the patriarchal and capitalistic mode of production. The mystification and conservativeness of the Indian socio-economic structure plays important role in the group consciousness of the women. It is therefore high time for the women not only in Indian but whole world do develop the concept of the class consciousness so that she could move forward to achieve her prehistoric position in the society as lost

by the father right to mother right.

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