

Vol 2 Issue 9 June 2013

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

Chief Editors

Ashok Yakkaldevi
A R Burla College, India

Ecaterina Patrascu
Spiru Haret University, Bucharest

Kamani Perera
Regional Centre For Strategic Studies,
Sri Lanka

Welcome to Review Of Research

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

Regional Editor

Dr. T. Manichander

Sanjeev Kumar Mishra

Advisory Board

Kamani Perera Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Mabel Miao Center for China and Globalization, China
Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Xiaohua Yang University of San Francisco, San Francisco	Ruth Wolf University Walla, Israel
Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Karina Xavier Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA	Jie Hao University of Sydney, Australia
Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania	May Hongmei Gao Kennesaw State University, USA	Pei-Shan Kao Andrea University of Essex, United Kingdom
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Marc Fetscherin Rollins College, USA	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania
	Liu Chen Beijing Foreign Studies University, China	Ilie Pinteau Spiru Haret University, Romania
Mahdi Moharrampour Islamic Azad University buinzahra Branch, Qazvin, Iran	Nimita Khanna Director, Isara Institute of Management, New Delhi	Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai
Titus Pop PhD, Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania	Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain
J. K. VIJAYAKUMAR King Abdullah University of Science & Technology, Saudi Arabia.	P. Malyadri Government Degree College, Tandur, A.P.	Jayashree Patil-Dake MBA Department of Badruka College Commerce and Arts Post Graduate Centre (BCCAPGC), Kachiguda, Hyderabad
George - Calin SERITAN Postdoctoral Researcher Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi	S. D. Sindkhedkar PSGVP Mandal's Arts, Science and Commerce College, Shahada [M.S.]	Maj. Dr. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director, Hyderabad AP India.
REZA KAFIPOUR Shiraz University of Medical Sciences Shiraz, Iran	Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	AR. SARAVANAKUMAR LAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI, TN
Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur	C. D. Balaji Panimalar Engineering College, Chennai	V. MAHALAKSHMI Dean, Panimalar Engineering College
Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya	Bhavana vivek patole PhD, Elphinstone college mumbai-32	S. KANNAN Ph.D , Annamalai University
	Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary, Play India Play (Trust), Meerut (U.P.)	Kanwar Dinesh Singh Dept. English, Government Postgraduate College , solan

More.....

Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.oldror.lbp.world



STATUS OF THE WOMEN: ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIOD IN INDIA

Meena Gaikwad

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science of Gulbarga University,
Gulbarga.

ABSTRACT:

Status of women refers to the role of the women in the society. Women in India have always been topics of concern. The family and society at large consider women as second class citizens. Though there is growing respect, worship and devotion on female goddesses such as Durga, Saraswati, Parvati and Kali, there is no respect for women. There are some kingdoms in ancient India, which had customs such as 'nagarvadhu' i.e. the bride of the city. According to this custom women competed to win the prestigious title of 'Nagarvadhu'. Amrapali is the most famous example of a 'nagarvadhu'. Women in fact had superior position than their male counterparts.

Keywords: Women, Ancient India, Medieval, Vedic and post-Vedic period

INTRODUCTION

In India, the families are always 'Patriarchal' i.e. male dominated. Women were never given any "Rights" of liberty and equality. They were always treated as inferior as an item or showpiece in the house. In many households, women were considered as 'Machines' for giving birth to children. The condition of women was so bad that if she gave birth to a girl child she was treated in a humiliated manner. The boy child was seen as 'kul-ka-deepak' (taking the family name ahead in generations). Women were not only refrained from being educated but also not allowed to step out of the house. They were asked to eat after their husbands and other males have eaten. They were given the remains of their husband's food to eat as a convention in many families in the society. This is the situation of the women in India. Of course, these status and role of women has changed and is changing since Vedic period.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIA (2000BC TO 500 AD):

The status of women in ancient India can be better studied in the following stages. That is women in the Vedic and post-Vedic period. The classical name for India, however, as usually employed in Sanskrit races, is "Bharate" or "Bharata- Varsha", the country of Bharat', - a king who appears to have ruled over a large extent of territory in ancient times (Shrivastava, 1999). It is emphasized that India is recognized as "Mother India" by all the Indians, which shows the importance given to women.

The names of Lopa Mudra, Gargi and Arundathi as creators of the Vedic rucha/richa have been mentioned. This freedom to follow intellectual and spiritual concerns and to participate in the creation of an ethos was also substantiated by reference to Leelavati and other women who lived in periods ranging from the Vedic era to the seventh century AD. As a substratum of these two streams, participants also mentioned the Ghandarvas and Kiratas, the Vanaras, the Nags, Yadavas and other ethnic groups. According to them, their women shared an equal status with men. They walked, drank and enjoyed the pleasures of life with them even fought alongside them in wars. Chitrangatha, Hidamba, Kaikeyi, Satyavathi, Surpanakha,

Shakuntala and other women were mentioned in this context. According to the participants, in both the Aryan and Non-Aryan traditions, women were considered to be the equal of men socially and psychologically. They could, if they wished, woo men, leave their husbands and even live with another man without going through the sacramental rituals. In the ultimate consolidation of the Aryan and non-Aryan traditions into a more general Indian ethos, this aspect of life was recognized and legitimized. For instance, Manu recognized eight modes of marriage, only one of which was sacramental. Later, Draupadi, Kunti, Tara, Mandodari and Sita, all five of whom had been accused of either an open liaison with other men or whose virtue was suspect, were declared eternal virgins. Thus in this formulation, women seem to have had a wide spectrum of roles, freedom of choice and a comparatively open life-space (Parikh and Garg, 1989).

WOMEN IN THE VEDIC AND POST VEDIC PERIODS

The Indian cultural tradition begins with the Vedas. It is during the Vedic period Indian women enjoyed relatively a high status. In various areas their position was equal to or nearly equal to men. The following aspects examined the status of women in India during Vedic and Post Vedic period.

1. Freedom enjoyed by women
2. Equal educational opportunities for women
3. Position of women in matters relating to marriage and family affairs
4. Economic Production and occupational Freedom
5. Property rights and Inheritance
6. Role in the religious field
7. Role of women in public and political life

WOMEN DURING THE EPIC PERIOD, DHARMASHASTRAS AND PURANS

The status of women during the epic period and during the period of Dharmashastras and Purans is stated as under:

1. Epic period:
2. The Period of Dharmashastras and Puranas.
3. Women in the Buddhist Period:

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL INDIA (500 AD TO 1500 AD):

The medieval period proved to be highly disappointing for the status of Indian women for their status further deteriorated during this period. The Muslim invasion of India changed the direction of Indian history. The influx of these foreign invaders and the Brahmanical iron laws were the main causes for such degradation.

After the death of Harshavardhana (646 A.D) the Brahmanism without the benevolence of the Vedic period took hold of the Indian society with all its severe restrictions and rigidities. As a result women suffered a lot. Their freedom was curtailed, knowledge of scriptures and even of letters was denied. They were made the parasites on men. Caste laws dominated social life. Property laws reduced women to the status of slaves. Widow remarriage and levirate or "Niyoga" were now disallowed. Women could not inherit property. Girls were treated more as burdens or liabilities than as assets. This period is notorious, for the women in this period had to face a number of problems of which the following may be noted.

1. Practice of Child Marriage
2. Prohibition of Widow Remarriage
3. Practice of Sati
4. Purdah System
5. Devadasi System
6. Economic and Political Life

STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN DURING THE BRITISH RULE (1757 TO 1947):

During the British rule, the "quality of life" of Indian women remained more or less the same. However, some substantial progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women in education, employment, social rights and so on. Some social evils such as Child Marriage, Sati system, Devadasi system, Purdah system, prohibition on widow remarriage etc. were either controlled or removed by suitable legislation. Social reformers with patriotic spirit on the one hand, and the British Government

on the other, together took several measures to improve the status of women and to remove some of their disabilities. Number of factors contributed to the change in the status of women during this period. Some important aspects or forces of that change are analyzed here.

SOCIAL REFORMS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ON WOMEN:

The learned Indians who came under the British influence realized importance of women and rise of their social status. A number of reformers led the way in launching social movements to improve the position of women.

- i) Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of Brahma Samaj played an important role in getting the sati system abolished. He raised his voice against child- marriage and purdah system. It was at his behest the British Government introduced the prevention of Sati Act 1829.
- ii) Ishwar Chandra Vidysagar launched a movement for the right of widows to remarry and pleaded for educating women. He was instrumental in getting the Widow Remarriage Act passed in 1829.
- iii) Maharshi Karve took up the problems of widow remarriage and education of women. He established the S.N.D.T (Smt. Nathubai Damodar Thackersay) University of Women in Poona, the first of its kind, in 1916.
- iv) Maharshi Dayanada Saraswathi who started the Arya samaj advocated equal rights to women as they used to enjoy the same during the Vedic times. Arya Samaj supported education of women.
- v) Swami Vivekanada who launched the "Sri Ramakrishna Mission" gave importance to the education and self-dependence of women. He gave a call to women to come out of seclusion and bondage.
- vi) Other reformers like Dadabhai Nauroji, Gopalakrishna Gokhole, Mahatma Gandhiji and others also played their role in improving the status of women through the congress movement and also at their individual capacities.
- vii) Women leaders with western background such as Nivedita, Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, and indigenous women leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Pandita Rama Bai, Ramabai Ranade, Torudutt and others tried to involve a large number of Indian women in various political, social, cultural and other activities.

ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERS AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS:

Some women leaders also took interest in women's education and welfare. Notable among them were Pandita Ramabai of Karnataka, Ramabai Ranade of Maharashtra, Bengali writer Torudutt, the first Indian female politician Kamaladevi Chattopahyaya, Swarnakumari Devi of Tagore's family, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a great follower of Gandhiji, Annie Besant, the architect of Home Rule Movement, and others.

Some women organisations tried to create awareness among women. Mention may be made of a few of these organizations.

- i. 'Arya Mahila Samaj' and 'Sharada Sadan' (started in 1887 by Pandita Ramabai Ranade and Bhandarkar).
- ii. Bharat Mohila parishad (1904)
- iii. Bharat Stri Mahamandal (1910)
- iv. Women's Indian Association (1917, started by Annie Besant)
- v. All-India Women's Conference (1927, started by Margaret Cousins and others)
- vi. Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.

WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT SECTOR:

By the end of the 19th century, sizeable number of educated Indian women entered for the first time the field of salaried professions. The education commission of 1882 had recommended the employment of women teachers in the schools and the appointment of women as inspectors of the girls, schools. It also recommended that special women entered the newly opened schools and colleges to qualify themselves as nurses and doctors and as teachers. In course of time, women entered other professions to work as clerks, accountants, receptionists, typists and in such other capacities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on the Status of The Women: Ancient, Medieval and Modern Period in India method of research. The maternal mortality in India is the second highest in the world. Only a few percentages of births in the country are supervised by doctors. Most women deliver with the help of traditional nurses in the village who often lack the skills and resources to save the mother's life if it is in danger. Women suffer many health problems because of abuse and other mal-nourishments. The average Indian woman has little control over her own fertility and reproductive health.

CONCLUSION:

It is noted that throughout the Indian history, the women have faced inequality compared to men. To sum up, the women are facing inequality in different spheres even in modern India. But compared to the ancient and medieval status of women, their position is better. This is so because of the efforts, movements and struggles made by several noted political thinkers and reformers, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhiji, Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant, Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, etc. There is need to know about the contributions of these eminent political thinkers and philosophers in the improvement and development of the status of women in India. Hence, the present study is made to know and study analytically these contributions of the political thinkers on the status of women.

REFERENCES:

- Ahuja, Ram (1993): Indian Social System. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1993.
Ahuja, Ram (1999): Social Problems in India. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1999.
Basham, AD (1971): The Wonder that was India. Calcutta: Rupa and Company, 1971. P.36.
Chauhan, Poonam S (1996): lengthening Shadows: Status of Women in India. New Delhi: Manak Publications, 1996. P.22.
Chitkara, MG (2001): Women & Social Transformation. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2001. P. 4.
Chopra, Vipla (2001): Employment and Occupational Structure of Women in India. IN: Women and Employment. Edited by S. Murthy. Jaipur: RBSA Publishers, 2001. P. 1-2.
Forbes, Geraldine (2000): Women in Modern India. The New Cambridge History of India. Vol. IV.2. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Gore, Mrinal (1993): Women in the Political Process: What does it Mean? IN: Women's Participation in Politics. Edited by Susheela Kaushik. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1993.
Jha, Uma Shankar and Pujari, Premlata (1996): Indian Women Today: Tradition, Modernity and Challenge. Volume. 1. Women's Liberation and Social Changes. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1996.
Kaul, Vinita (2000): Women and the Wind of Change. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2000. P.1.

Publish Research Article

International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper, Summary of Research Project, Theses, Books and Books Review for publication, you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed, India

- ★ Directory Of Research Journal Indexing
- ★ International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- ★ OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed, USA

- DOAJ
- EBSCO
- Crossref DOI
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Database
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database

Review Of Research Journal
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-
413005, Maharashtra
Contact-9595359435

E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com