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A ROLE OF WOMEN IN CHANGING SOCIETY

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Abstract:

In most of the underdeveloped countries the girl child is discriminated against and Indian is no exception. The causes are economical, social and religious. To find a solution to the prevailing deplorable condition of girl children, the UNICEF has declared 1990 as "The year of The Girl Child." The intention is to focus the attention of Governments and social institutions on the plight of the girls and to work towards the end of discrimination among children on the basis of sex. However, most of the efforts of the Government of India and social institutions doing surveys etc. Not much has been done to change the situation at the ground level for the girl child. A real change in the condition of the girl child can be brought about only when the economic situation and social outlook of the family are radically changed and enough money to send all children to school, there will not be any question of discrimination against the girl child. And the spread of education will dispel superstition & religious orthodoxy that bind women in general & restrict the development of girl child.

KEYWORDS:

Changing Society, economical, social and religious.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars have attempted studies on the role of women from the dawn of history to modern times concerning social, economic, political, religious & educational fields. Since the end of the second world war it points out that there has been a rapidly increasing concern both with the role & position of women. Sushila Mehta, in her study. "Revolution & The status of women In India", "says that", "As far as traditions & cultural values are concerned no independent status for women had been recognized by traditional Indian society". And her expression about women & her roles are important in so far as they are complementary to man. A woman in traditional Hindu society has no independent existence. She has no rights as a citizen in her own independent status.

The basic rules for women's behaviour as expressed in the Laws of Manu insist that a woman must constantly worship her husband as a God. Women should be kept in dependency by her husband because by nature they are passionate and disloyal. Manu says about women, "The father guards them in childhood, the husband guards them in youth, in old age the sons guard them. A woman ought not to be in state of independence."

In Vedic times, women were often looked down upon, had no share in property & were dependent. During vedic period, the woman's affairs were restricted. Her concern was to serve her husband & that she could perform other observances or undertake fasts and pilgrimages only with the permission of her husband. Till the time of Yajnavalkya, women had no rights of inheritance, for the first time Yaj attempted to

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adorn her with property rights. Vrihaspati advanced her status. He states that the wife on the death of her husband is essentially entitled to succeed his property.

The ideal women of Indian Mythology who have been extolled as paragons of virtue like Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, Damyanti, etc. are women who have been dutiful, truthful, chaste, self-sacrificing women of unswerving wifely devotion whatever the temptation. The legends associated with them consistently refer to their purity and selfless attachment to their consorts. At one place wives have been mentioned as restraining all their sense and keeping their hearts under complete control, regard their husbands as veritable gods. By serving their husbands only they will go to heaven. If we see about value structure of women in Indian society, there is a dual concept of female in Hindu philosophy on the one hand woman is fertile, benevolent, bestower of prosperity; on the other hand she is considered aggressive, malevolent and destructive. This dual character manifests in the Goddesses also as there are dangerous, aggressive, malevolent, Goddesses like Kali and Durga; there are equally important Goddesses like Laxmi, Saraswati, Mariamman who are benevolent.

The women throughout the world have been considered the second sex inferior sex. In our society from the dawn of history, women's primary roles have been family-oriented. We see women's roles in the family as daughter, wife, mother, sister, etc. The family life of Indian society is striking, to understand the women's individual life cycles in relation to men. Women's activities and roles within the family played by them through different stages and these stages throw light on their position in society. The family is an institution which denies the fundamental rights and constitutional guarantees to women.

Family relationship to a child is important for this begins her role as a daughter which is vital for understanding her place in the family and society. Female child is still treated as a curse and financial liability. Because of dowry system, parents always prefer sons to daughters. It is generally believed that daughters are a burden to their parents due to the marriage problem. A daughter is described as Paraya Dhan (another's Property) so any investment in her development is regarded as fruitless. In contrast a son is the support in old age. If wife gave birth to a female child all members in family feel very much upset. The attitude towards female child is very unhappy.

A married life is a very important period in the life of a woman. Before marriage, her life is different. After marriage, she has to suffer new roles. A woman's childhood depends upon her parents. This is an important period to a daughter. Her life depends upon the social & cultural milieu in which she finds herself. In our Indian society. There are many families in which women have to surrender to men. Women are under the control of men and depend on them in our society. A "Good" woman is one who should complain about her own home and her husband and in-laws. Parents are heard saying that a girl should prefer to die in her husband's home rather than go back to father. Before marriage, she has been controlled by her father. If father dies, her brother though he is elder or younger, controls her sister. After marriage, husband has all control over her and after husband's death it is the son. Thus, her duties and rights are fixed by the society. Women, in our Indian society are treated as more chattels with no freedom of movement, speech and action and are controlled by their men. A woman did not have much of a role to play outside the home and even if she did, this was definitely secondary and subject to the demands and exigencies of her role within the home. There are many crimes which specifically directed at women, women-rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse as in prostitution, domestic violence and pornography. In addition to these there are the murders of young married women for non-fulfillment in dowry demands. All these forms of violence have increased greatly in recent years.

Till the starting of the 20th century women, in India were crushed under the weight of evil customs like infanticide, child marriage and Sati. They were socially weak, economically dependent and politically powerless. There are few examples of powerful women rulers like Lakshmi Bai or Razia Sultana in history. Then Sarojini Naidu and Indira Gandhi achieved glory and fame in political life. Indira Gandhi was a powerful Prime Minister. Sucheta Kripalani, Nandini Satpathy and Shashikala Kakodkar have shown their merits in political affairs of their states as their Chief Minister. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sushila Nair, Mrs. Amrita Kaur, Renuka Ray were members of Nationalist Movements.

Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar to Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru have been highlighting the importance of women's education and freedom. But still the picture is gloomy. Thus, movement for emancipation of women in India began in 19th century, when the social reformers initially were critics of outmoded social practices and they attempted to change some of these practices by applying the rational and humanitarian criteria to the problems. These social reforms laid great stress on the education of women as a liberalizing activity.

Today, there are more opportunities for women than before. On one hand women, however, are entering into professions with men. On equal terms there are women engineers, architects, managers, administrators, diplomats, even politicians and ministers. On the other hand poor illiterate women work in the unorganized sector, whose contribution is necessary to the survival of the family. While economic

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participation of the labouring class women also gives them more or equal power in decision making in their families. Women have started protesting in there different milieu in an organized manner the peasant women, the factory workers, the college teachers, the housewives are reacting against injustice.

CONCLUSION:-

Today, women wanted to change their role in traditional society. Difference in cultural background, political perspective and attitude towards the problem of women created many obstacles. The education of girls and women is very essential. Education is that weapon which cut out the evils of illiteracy, broadened the minds, changed the attitudes of the people and increased their knowledge and equality. Dowry is a social evil and must be cured. We should think about marriage, guardianship of children, abortion, maintenance and inheritance, criminal law for the protection of women, restraint of child marriage, remarriage of widow's, matrimonial property,etc. Women's employment should be encouraged. There should be no discrimination against women taking up jobs in any fields. The curse of ignorance is the worst. Ignorance born out of illiteracy should be taken as our main enemy against social progress and economic development. Women's must be allowed to choose their educational course according to their interests and capacities. Proper sex education and family planning measures should be made suitably available to the girls early in their life. What women need most is not sympathy but deserving support. The young women of today need not forget their female identity nor should they be obsessed with it.

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