



A review on role analysis of women in India and developed countries

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ABSTRACT

In the modern socialist societies equality of status has been assigned to both women and men but still women live in perpetual subordination to the men. Ancient literatures showed evidence that; women are fully the equals of men as regards to access to and capacity for the highest knowledge. As the society got much more settled and was not subjected to the pressure of continuous invasion, the position of women became subject to deterioration. In the modern society, the women are still not given equality in the religious matters and property rights. The position of women in India and other countries has remained subordinate to men. The girl is given secondary position in the household, in respect of food, dress, schooling, healthcare etc. After attaining independence, the Indian constitution granted women equal rights as that of men but they were never been effective to bring a remarkable change in the status of modern women. Gender equality is an important issue of human rights and social justice not only in India but also in the world as a whole. It has been recognized that efforts to promote gender equality between men and women can along contribute to the overall development of human society, despite this consciousness and greater awareness of the role of women; they are treated equal to men in any society. The developments at the international level and plans of action taken by the United Nations contributed significantly towards development of women all over the world. There was also an emphasis on awareness about their rights and privileges, training for undertaking economic activities and providing employment opportunities for women.

INTRODUCTION

In most of the human societies, social differentiation between the sexes, the male and female existed and in majority of the women were assigned an inferior position. In recent times in the socialist societies equality of status

has been assigned to women, but it is often legal than existential. Thus, women accounting for nearly one half of the human population live in perpetual subordination to the other half of the men.

Women are considered primarily as reproducers although they are involved in agriculture and produce about

fifty per cent of world's food. Their role as producers is acknowledged but it is viewed as a transferable role.

During the early stages of human society, hunting was an important economic activity and protection of the community from external aggression, was the most important political activity, was monopoly of men, a result man's aggressive and dominating traits got reinforced. As genetic change is slower as compared to cultural change, the male and female bio-grammer continued even in modern societies.

In the modern industrial societies the status of women deteriorated still further. In pre-modern societies men and women performed different tasks to produce for subsistence and as a specialization in work took place and production became market oriented, men started producing most for selling. The distinction between work and employment became clear. Although women worked at home but they were not paid for it, hence, they were considered unemployed. The terms "working women" and "mere housewife" indicate the importance attached to work outside home and insignificance of work done at home. Thus, man as the main producer of exchange values was called "breadwinner" and woman despite the lot of work being done at home was given the status of "dependent". Man's status was related to power and production while women experienced erosion of these.

According to Banerjee (2013), in India the condition of women was appalling during independence. The hardship of women in getting the comparable level of chances identifying with training, wellbeing, basic leadership as men because of predominance of male centric culture and financial backwardness in India put women at a backstage.

According to Nandal (2013), the status of women is one of vital angles to think about in each time. To understand the status of women in India, the problem in socio-cultural context must be studied. Ancient literatures, such as Rigveda shows evidence that, women are fully the equals of men as regards to access to and capacity for the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of the absolute Brahma. The Rigveda refers to young girls completing their education as brahmacharinis and then marrying. The Yajurveda and Atharvaveda also states that a daughter who has completed her brahmacharya should be married to one who is similarly learned. The Upanishad also emphasizes that, the men and women were equal participants of knowledge.

Rigvedic society was based on monogamy and was patriarchal. The institution of monogamy is the recognition of the high social status of women. As the society got much more settled and was not subjected to the pressure of continuous invasion, the position of women became subject to deterioration.

Hinduism assigned a lower status to women. Manuscript prescribed, "A woman must never be independent". A Hindu woman was expected to be an obedient daughter, faithful wife and devoted mother. Marriage was the single important event in her life and it took place soon after puberty. Earlier woman was not involved in decision making process. In Islamic religion also, women were subjected to polygamy and easy divorce and were not given much independence in decision making process (Omen and Venugopal, 1993).

Thus, the women are still not given equality in the religious matters and property rights. The position of women in India and other countries has remained subordinate to men. The girl is given secondary position in the household, in respect of food, dress, schooling, healthcare etc. They are rarely assigned outdoor responsibility. The type of education, subjects selected, occupations projected as desirable to them lead to reinforcement of an inferiority complex among them.

Late childhood in woman life marks the beginning of a deliberate training for how to be a good woman and hence, there will be conscious inculcation of culturally designated feminine roles.

Mainwal (2014) reported that, after attaining independence, the Government of India planned to provide women equal status as men by means of developmental programmes. But, despite much effort, Indian women are still ill treated and occupy a low status as compared to males. The analysis shows that although women in modern India have made a considerable progress in every sphere of life, they still have to struggle against deep-rooted patriarchal mentality of society. The Indian constitution grants women equal rights as that of men but they were never been effective to bring a remarkable change in the status of modern women. Equal footing with men is still an illusion for females because male dominance still prevails in the society.

It is often said that the inherent strength of a society, a culture and a system is judged by the way its women are treated and the role assigned to them by the society. The great socio-religious revolutionary saint, Swami

Vivekananda stated that, the country which had no respect for woman-hood could never become great.

Nayak and Mahanta (2009) reported that, gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. Household decision making power and freedom of movement of women vary considerably with their age, education and employment status. They reported that, women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. More than half of the women believe wife beating to be justified for one reason or the other. Rural women are more prone to domestic violence than that of urban women.

To speak of gender equality is to speak about the world where ideal situation would be that both men and women are treated equal in all respects. Although the Indian religion and philosophy consider womanhood nearer to divinity and our religious scriptures assign respectable position of pride and honor to a woman and womanhood has been worshiped with high respect in our history, still in reality this contemplated equality has remained a myth.

Gender equality is an important issue of human rights and social justice not only in India but also in the world as a whole. It has been recognized that efforts to promote gender equality between men and women can along contribute to the overall development of human society, despite this consciousness and greater awareness of the role of women; they are treated equal to men in any society. Consequently women continue to suffer from various deprivations.

Tsuya and Choe (1991) in their study reported that, urbanization and industrialization, along with increased women's education and labour force participation have helped to improve the overall position of women in the societies.

The year 1975 was adopted as the international women's year. The decade 1976 – 1985 was observed as the United Nations decade for women development and the entire member nations were expected to take necessary steps for promoting the status of women. The developments at the international level and plans of action taken by the United Nations contributed significantly towards development of women all over the world. In India, some of the steps were taken by the government

which include strengthening of women workers organizations and emphasizing equal pay for equal work, maternity benefit and providing crèches for children; promoting women's education as a major welfare strategy and health programmes related to nutrition, family planning and child welfare and promoting literacy among women. In order to analyse the state of women in a country various methods were designed from time-to-time. The introduction in 1995 of the Gender related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) coincided with growing international recognition of the importance of monitoring progress in the elimination of gender gaps in all aspects of life (Mokta, 2014).

Shettar (2015) reported that access to education, employment and change in social structure are only the enabling factors to women empowerment. Bayeh (2016) in his study to uncover the role of empowering women and achieving gender equality in the sustainable development of Ethiopia, reported that unless women are empowered and gender equality is achieved so that women can play their role in economic, social, political, and environmental areas, the country will not achieve sustainable development with the recognition of only men's participation in all these areas. There was also an emphasis on awareness about their rights and privileges, training for undertaking economic activities and providing employment opportunities for women. In recent years, empowerment of women became the primary objective and secondly the attempt was to be made for the convergence of existing services, available in both, women specific and women related sectors.

Conclusion:

Today, women are entering in all the fields and have been successful in improving their status in India as well as globally. To protect the women from atrocities, in India, government had enforced several strict laws and acts and also provided equal constitutional rights. The developments at the international level and plans of action taken by the United Nations contributed significantly towards development of women all over the world. Emphasis on awareness about their rights and privileges, training for undertaking economic activities and providing employment opportunities for women will develop gender equality. Social workers and political and legal environment enabled them to prove themselves as an equal partner in promoting social economic and political development of

the society.

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