

The Consciousness of Indian Women and the Protection of Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Women and men are fundamentally distinct creatures, not only by their organic activity but in their desideratum, functions and abilities to perform any act. Women and men also have a difference in the way of creation and their social functioning assigned to them by the nature. Women normally are also much more challenged educationally in comparison with men, and education is for those women who are having the privilege of some special class or community. A woman has been recognised as very low and wrongly in comparison to men and thus construction is not natural given by any divine force, but it is a societal construction. Women in India had good status in the book of constitution and law, but on the ground, the discrimination is very peak and women are considered weak and helpless in the Indian mindset. This discrimination increased after the 2014 Lok Sabha elections when the right-wing BJP comes into power in the Indian politics and justice becomes only a word for the women victims and only the privileged class took the benefit of the law as per their modification. The rape victims are being blamed instead of given justice. In this paper, I will investigate how to increase the value of women empowerment in Indian society and what are the possible challenges from which we have to overcome and need to be addressed in our daily life so we got a society of justice and empowerment, where we will be having the same privilege for everyone with equal dignity and honour.

Keywords:- Empowerment, Societal construction, Discrimination, Constitution, Privileged

Introduction

All we all know is that no human exists without women, Women are the cause of every culture, custom and moral. Whatever comes to us is always by the interference of human influence and every man had a relation and duty towards the opposite gender whether it is a mother, sister, daughter, and wife. Everywhere Man is bound with the opposite gender and it is the duty of one to consider another one equal and dignified. In daily life, we always speak about the rights of women, but when it comes an implementation our focus remains only on the males because the majority of the decision-makers are men in most of the institutions of law and enforcement places, where any empowerment for women is being considered very regardful towards the site of upliftment for women by men, who have occupied the places of justice and power. The attitude of getting rewards from society is never appreciable for

anyone who thinks that we are doing something great by implementing the laws for the welfare of women. Even it is the duty of one who is holding a chair of the decision to do justice for all and provide a virtuous state, where everyone is being treated the same before the institutions of the state, irrespective of their gender, race, community, region and religion. One should not forget that it is men who have occupied the places of women through the societal construction of patriarchy and misogyny, where women are being considered very helpless and weak in comparison to men by the constructions of society and nation. It is very strange when we claim that a woman needs to be addressed equally to men on every platform irrespective of their gender identity. Women empowerment is not that men will decide the status, it is that women should be so empowered that they can decide for their personal development as well as their social and political development. Women empowerment should be as encouraging as she will address her life on the lows of society and needs to be so confident that she can face any difficult time and incite her active participation in various socio-political development endeavours. The male dominant society had restricted the women only to doing household tasks and had kept the women completely unaware of their political and moral rights. Women should be always treated as frictionless in comparison to men to do social justice for the upliftment of any nation, society and community. The financial independence of women is very necessary to get rid of the social atrocities done by the construction of societal institutions.

Women Empowerment and its challenges in India

India is giving a lot of effort to address the status of women on the ground level. The Indian government had introduced various schemes like; the “Beti Padhao Beti Bachao Scheme”, “Swadhar Greh Scheme”, “Working Women’s Hostel” and many more for the upliftment and empowerment of women living in India. But the schemes and laws cannot do justice alone to the women of India until the societal and cultural constructions should be eliminated by our positive and equal status of mind towards women irrespective of any gender, social and cultural differences. The way a society treats our women is very disheartening and a big challenge for all of us to allow women at the same status as men are holding in the system. Women empowerment and its implementations on the level of economic, political and social rights had challenges. Because the current position of women's status in rural areas depends on a variety of factors, such as cultural family elements, educational and cultural level indicators, traditional mentalities and many other problems facing our society. In agricultural practices of Indian rural life, the women had the main contribution to the agricultural economy and housekeeping which is very important for the family welfare, income and the facing of rural life.

The challenges the women are facing in current India are at a very peak because of the male dominance that the women have a piece of limited knowledge of the business transaction and general business knowledge; this affects clients’ business performance in terms of price negotiations and dealing with customers. Indian society had a very need for women empowerment on the ground level because empowered women can exert power to shape their families, communities and countries. There are inequality and vulnerability of women in all spheres of life, so Indian women should be respected as well as their needs and aspirations as

they can only give their best to society, they need to be empowered in all walks of life. Without the active participation of women, the establishment of new social order may not be a successful one because women constitute half of the population. It is the duty of one to get realise to the women that they had equal constitutional rights to health care, economic security, and access to education and political power.

The status of women in Indian society is very challenging because the female gender has faced subjugation and systematic oppression throughout history, and the situation calls for improvement in their condition in society. On one side we speak a lot about the rights of women, but on the other side, the right-wing and extremist groups are putting anti-feministic arguments and claiming that women need to be under the protection of men and need to follow men for their survival and justice, they also claim that women should be dependent on men for her rights to claim.

The justice for women in India also seems very biased and differentiating, because the judicial institutions remain silent and non-vibrant when comes to the minority or low-class people. The gang-rape victims of the September 2013 violence that happened in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts of Uttar Pradesh witnessed one of the most disturbing and destructive communal rights of recent years. The women who are being gang-raped are losing faith in the Indian judiciary system because still they are struggling and fighting for justice which hasn't been delivered yet. Several women who come forward to file a complaint of gang rape in 2013 with the help of activists and lawyers have told to Amnesty International India that they have faced harassment, threats and intimidation from the accused men and their relatives. Some of them changed their statements following threats. One died in 2016 during childbirth. In two cases trials have not even begun. Neha Dixit, who is a journalist and reported that the victim woman told her, that the police are always questioning their statements, their accounts, and kind of moralising each time they say something very disturbing to make them feel guilty for speaking against the rape. And within the community there is the kind of stigma that they are rape survivors, the accused come and pressure them every single day.

Ghazala, one of the gang-rape victims applied for her case to be transferred out of the district. She told a trial court in January 2016,

“I am extremely apprehensive of coming to the Muzaffarnagar District court as the accused persons and their family members who all belong to the dominant community wield considerable influence in this area. I fear that harm will be caused to me and my family when I go to give my evidence in the Muzaffarnagar district court.”

Amnesty International India also urges the state government of Uttar Pradesh to ensure that the investigations and prosecutions into the gang-rape cases are pursued vigorously without undue delay and that those responsible are brought to justice. They also urge the state that the survivors should be provided adequate rehabilitation, compensation, and other measures of reparation and that their economic and social needs are met.

The judiciary had become an instrumental tool for the state to suppress the voices of minority and down caste/class/community women and make them realise that the institutions of the judiciary stand by the side of the state and power holders that can be modified as per the needs of state not as per the demand of virtue and justice. This attitude of injustice and immoral structure of the state needs to be revisited with the modifications of a good and balanced system, where everyone irrespective of any gender, caste, class, community, region and religion should be treated equally with full honour and dignity with tolerance and acceptance for the diversity for which democracy, secularism and equality stand.

Constitutional Protection for Indian Women

Article 16 of the Indian Constitution guaranteed equality of opportunity in matters of public employment or opportunity to any office under the state and prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex. Article 14 also stands for Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15(1) also prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc. Article 15(3) also Special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women. Article 16 also Equality of opportunities in the matter of public appointments for all citizens. Article 23 also Bans trafficking in human and forced labour. Article 39(a) stated that The State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood. Article 39(d) says that Equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 42 mentions The State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. Article 51 (A)(e) also renounces the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Article 300 (A) also uplifted women for their property rights. 73rd and 74th Amendment Act 1992 provides the Reservation 1/3rd of seats in local bodies of panchayats and municipalities for women.

Rising of Anti Women Empowerment Approach in India

The rise of right-wing politics on the soil of India is mobilising the masses of India that the women of India need no empowerment and needs to be dependent on men and in this process, especially the women of minority and low-class community got affected very badly. But the women of the privileged class take advantage of this by the support of the state and becomes more authoritative and present themselves as an icon of the generation by putting themselves in the state structure and demanding empowerment for women. This can be better understood when BJP the ruling party of India in the Lok Sabha election gave a ticket to Pragya Thakur, who is accused in the Malegaon blast case and took a stand against the right-wing Hindu extremism.

Crimes and violence against women in India are rising from the time the BJP comes into power and they are openly supporting the heinous crimes done against the women of India. One of the BJP MLA, Kuldip Sing Sengar, is best known for rape accused in the Unnao Rape Case and is still supporting and campaigning against the victim, because of his political

support from the ruling party BJP. Another incident happens in the Jammu region of Kathua Jammu and Kashmir, where the ministers of BJP, one named Chander Prakash Ganga and another Lal Sing took a part in support of the accused and blamed the eight-year-old girl victim named, Asifa which is very shameful and disheartening. Such kind of approach can not be appreciated at any stage, where the accused gets protection from the state and the victim will be blamed because the victim belongs to the minority and low-class status.

This all did not stop here, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, who also belongs to the ruling party BJP do his favour in support of the violence done by the 'Romeo squads' against the women and said that the main job of the squad is to beat up contesting young men and women who cross the lines of community and caste. Hindu women should be banned from entry to Sabarimala Temple is also being supported by the BJP government. The BJP government also passed a law criminalising 'triple talaq'ⁱ in a single setting (talaq-e-biddat) after it had been made illegal by the Supreme Court. And the law has been made by the supreme court of India to jail the accused Muslim men and leave the Muslim women and children with no financial support. This is not an impressive history to define the status of women empowerment in the record book of India.

In the recent election of the Lok Sabhaⁱⁱ, we have witnessed that more than men are likely to have voted in the Indian election. This seems the reason that both the ruling party BJPⁱⁱⁱ and Congress party have dedicated significantly more space to women in their manifestos. The increasing number of women in the Indian elections woken up the political parties that the female voter matter and policies have been introduced for the empowerment of women. But it is very disheartening that the violence against women in everywhere India is on the rise. India has been ranked the world's most dangerous place for women. Most rapes in India happen in villages, and almost 80% of these rapes are against Dalit women. A report by an NGO named National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights says that more than 23% of Dalit women are being raped and many have reported multiple instances of rape. The strange thing is the culture of Indian soil is that we pray and praise the women in the form of goddesses and another side we treat our women as a second and distinguishing gender.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to compare how women are being treated in Indian culture and what approaches are being taken by the Indian government to save the status of women on Indian soil. All data has been analysed theoretically and academically and on that basis, it can be said that the laws and forces are not sufficient to draw the map of women empowerment on the soil of India. Women empowerment can be proved as nation-building and is the way to empower the nation by empowering women. Women empowerment can be done by making the generation aware of the status of women and is the main urgency to make the nation strong. An unbiased nation is the symbol of a virtuous nation, which we did not find in most positions of the world, especially in India. The virtuous nation is the nation where everyone is being treated equally irrespective of gender and community and everyone had faith in the state power of the judiciary and its justice. Women empowerment can be addressed only

when the consciousness of harmony, tolerance and respect arises in our minds towards the opposite gender. So it is all our duty to treat everyone equally and respect each other's point of view and make our generations aware of the importance of women in society to make our future strong and became a state of democracy and secularism for which the state of India has the fight to get liberated from the colonial rule.

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ⁱ Tripple Talaq in Indian tradition can be simply defined an instant divorce just by using an Arabic word Talaq which in English means divorce by an oral or written form three times consecutively.

ⁱⁱ Lok Sabha in Indian Parliament is also known as the House of People and the members of that house is being elected by an adult universal suffrage and the first past the post (FPTP) method is being practides in which the candidate who recives the most votes is being considered as a member of the Lok Sabha.

ⁱⁱⁱ BJP's full form is the Bharatiya Janta Party which in English is called Indian People's Party. It is a right-wing party which has an aim in its policies to historically make India a Hindu nationalistic country.