

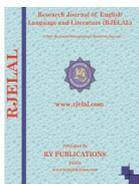


THE CHANGING STRUCTURES OF THE SOCIETY AND WOMEN: A SPEICAL REFERENCE OF THE CORPORATE SECTOR

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Abstract

Women in the India have been represented differently in different phases of the development. The descriptions and shifting viewpoints of women also have been considered differently in different periods of the progression. The existence and conditions of the women is found very dissimilar in different situations and periods as far as India and its social structures are concerned. If it is taken seriously to explore then one can find that they have different conditions and identities in various areas of the society which can be separated into various periods. In fact, such conditions of women indicate the valid portrait of the nation or a culture of a particular nation. The present paper is an attempt to explore the journey of women through different structures and phases of the society and their today's existence. The reference of the corporate field has been taken for study and the portrait of women has been sketched.

Keywords: Corporate, Colonialism, Race, Gender Discrimination, Ethnicity, Superiority, Inferiority, Convention, Hierarchy, Jobs, Existence, Identity, Equality, etc.

If one wishes to know something about the nation and its soundness then he must try to look for the status and existence of the women in that particular country. It could be the reason the first Prime Minister of the nation, Late. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women" (Lalnehzovi, 17). Up to the last decade of modern era and first two decades of post-independent era the portrait of Indian women was somewhat disturbing and alarming. Today's admirable phase of the women can be analysed properly, if it is considered right from the early period. In earlier period of the history of women, it has been recognised by many researchers that as far as the position and treatment for women are concerned they had the equal place in the society and there had not been any kind of difference between men and women.

The fact about women who had got proper education the early period cannot be denied by anyone. It shows that the women had really a very positive ambience in the early periods and they had been treated properly as far as the education is concerned. The women had been given freedom in not only in the area of education but they had also been given their individuality and rights. They had been given their liberties so that they can choose their life partners and spend their lives happily for the rest of the life. They had not been forced to follow certain rules and regulations of the society. This fact has been presented through the Vedas like Rigveda and Upanishad in which the women figures like Gargi, Maitrevi, etc. have been depicted properly. It might be the reason it is stated that, "Women enjoyed equal status and rights during the early Vedic period" (Jayapalan, 01).After the Vedic

period there are many instance and incidents which show the decay of the existence of women because of the psychological domination of the ideologies mentioned in *Manusmriti* and some Islamic invasion.

In true sense the definition of history is also changed in due course of time. The history is the strong the evidence and it cannot be rejected by anyone. In fact, the history is a branch which contemplates the past along with the circumstances of the present and explores about the future. While exploring the status and existence of women in the medieval period, it is found that there were many anti-social elements like Child Marriages, Devdasis System, Purdah System, Castism, Superstition and obligations to participate in cultural, religious, political activities, etc. and the same had come into stream and it had become the strongest reason to suppress their identities, existence and individuality.

Moreover, in such chaotic and harassing circumstances of the society some women stand out successfully in different areas like literature, education, politics, and religion. There are many names which can be mentioned with great respect and it won't be wrong if it is said that today's women also might be trying to take the inspiration form there uncommon and extraordinary women who played quite vital role in the history of the country. Raziya Sultana, Queen Durgadevi, Chand Bibi, Nur Jehan, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's mother Jijabai, etc. truly paved the way for women to fight for the equality and achieve their goals with the status and identities in their lives. This fact should also be taken into account while exploring the thread of the plight of women.

Women had to face different harms, different psychologies, different approaches, different suggestions and multiple stream of thinking of the society in every period of the development of the nation. One more instance of such crisis can be mentioned here where the British Government brought various anti-social and chaotic elements for them. They established the poisonous roots of the colonialism, race, gender discrimination, ethnicity, superiority and inferiority complexes, introduction of English language with ill-intension, etc. and started to dominate the Indian people. Their

every invasion is defended by the Indians under the leadership of the legends but simultaneously there was one more social movement which was trying to eradicate these anti-social elements from the society. There were many society reformers who devoted their lives for the sake of nation and upliftment of the maginalised stream of the society and women. It rightly includes: Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Jannalal Bajaj, Dhondo Keshav Karve, B.R.Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Swami Vivekanand, Vitthal Ramji Shinde, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, etc. These legends can never be forgotten and they will ever be remembered for their deeds and appreciable contribution for the society and nation as well.

In fact, the development of women in pre-independent period had no frontier and they had been subjugated from every aspect and corner of their lives. Their freedom and identities had been taken away and they had been used as they had no any existence on the earth. Every bad convention, tradition or hierarchy had been imposed upon them and they had been forced to carry such inconceivable weight for rest of their lives. They had been ensnared in some anti-social issues like Sati, Jauhar, Child Marriage, Restriction on Widow Marriage, Purdah System, Girl Education, Working experience, etc.

In the Post-Independent period, the newly established Government of India started to bring changes in the educational system and to do so they formed different commissions under the chairmanship of certain stalwarts like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The *University Education Commission* (1948-49) under the Chairmanship of Prof. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is the product of such decision and convention breaking stream of thinking. The said commission worked a lot in the arena of Higher Education and finally submitted its report. But in that report the specific comments and views about the women and their education are quite praiseworthy and noticeable. It states, "Women's present education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste but often a definite disability. The present system of women's education, based as it is upon men's needs,

does not in any way make them fit for coping with the problems of daily life” (Aggarwal,31). Besides, it also highlights the social facts of the women and how they have been manipulated in such stupid structures of the society. It is mentioned as, “The modern educated Indian women is neither happy nor contented nor socially useful. She is a misfit in life. She is highly suppressed, and needs opportunities for self-expression. The new education must provide this opportunity” (Report of The UEC, 401).

Therefore, it has become the first step towards the empowerment of the women in the independent India and this is the point from which some conventional minded people have also been started to think positively as far as the women’s education and their place in the society are concerned. It is followed by the policies like *A National Committee on Women’s Education* (1958), *The Education Commission* (1964-66), *National Policy on Education* (1968), etc. from which the Indian government has made certain successful attempts to establish the positive and optimistic enlightening impression for the stakeholders and as a result of the same between 1951-1981 the ratio of female literacy enhanced estimably. As per the data which was published by the 2011 Census, India has managed to reach an effective literacy rate of 74.04 per cent in 2011. In the 2001 census the country’s literacy rate stood at 64.8 percent. If we try to look the female literacy ratio comparing to male then it will be clear in front of us. The female literacy rate of some of the states in India is: Delhi (80.9 %), Gujarat (70.7%), Maharashtra (75.5 %), Punjab (71.3%), Kerala (92.00%), etc. On the other hand one shocking scenario is there which shows the pathetic plight of women as, “Women make up 48 percent of the Indian population but have not benefitted equally from India’s rapid economic growth. Female child mortality is still a grave concern, with over 239,000 girls under the age of 5 dying each year. Sixty-five percent of women are literate as compared to 80 percent of men. India has amongst the lowest female labor force participation rates in the world. Less than a third of women – 15 years or older – are working or actively looking for a job” (www.worldbank.org).

But today it can also be observed that there is not a single field which is without participation of women and now they have been actively participating in all lines of the activities. In every field of the society like Social Services, Administration, Police Administration, Law, Medicine, Education, Industries, Air Services, Transportation, Politics, Sports, Science and Technology, Corporate Sectors, Army, Domestic Jobs, etc. can be mentioned here where women are there and working nicely. There is no space for any kind of discrimination and anti-social mentalities as far as the opportunities and jobs in different sectors are concerned. It is true that still some pastoral and conservative approaches are there in the society which pulls them away from their rights and individuality. They still think that these are not the things made for women and they should not cross the threshold of their houses and indulge in such stupid activities of the employment and all.

Today, the entire world has become a small village where such anti-social approaches and tendencies are bound to eradicate and very soon it will be there in the society. Besides, the revolution in the field of science and technology has paved the way for development and it involved every minute element of the society. It made available innumerable job vacancies for the qualified and scholar students. In almost every part of the world, it brought unbelievable changes and it brought together various streams of development and made only one major stream having no discrimination and any kind of dispute. Among such various fields the corporate sector is one of the prominent industries which gave an ample scope for the employment of women.

There are different sectors in the society which can be defined differently but as far as the corporate sector is concerned, it can be defined as, a business or entity which has separate legal personality, with limited liability or unlimited liability for its members or shareholders, who buy and sell their shares/stocks depending on the performance of the board of directors. It can be put as “business” - is “the part of the economy made up by companies” (www.quora.com). This sector may involve the organizations like: Multi-national

Companies, Banking, Insurance, BPOs, Call Centers, Pharmaceutical Back Offices, Information Technology Companies, Management, Human Resources, Health Organizations, Tourism, Banking, Out Sourcing Organizations, Educational Institutions, Factories, etc. It has been found that since certain years the plight and atmosphere of the corporate arena has been changing swiftly and it is also true that before this dynamic stream of change the status of women rather inferior or poorer in such organizations. This stream of change has become the greatest opportunity for women and they also have proved that they can also perform the equivalent jobs as men have been performing since long back. We can have many names to take here who have proved that with the help of consistency, dedication and hard work one can achieve anything and in this path of success the gender can never become the obstacle. The renowned corporate figures like Preetha Reddy (Vice Chairperson of Apollo Hospitals), Shweta Punj, Kalpana Morparia (CEO, JPMorgan India), Shobhna Bhartia (Chairperson and Editorial Director, Hindustan Times Group), Renu Sud Karnad (Joint Managing Director of HDFC), Leena Nair (Executive Director, HR, Hindustan Unilever), Ritu Kumar, **Naina Lal Kidwai** (Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of HSBC Securities and Capital Market), **Sangeeta Talwa** (Executive Director, TATA Tea), **Chitra Ramakrishna** (Joint managing director, national stock exchange), etc. and many more names can be taken here with a great respect and honour for these ladies who have proved their identities in such throat cut competitive world. Besides, in retrospect, it is found that the Indian corporate sector is being run and handled by men but still there are some women who have chased them and achieved their identity and places. It includes: Chanda Kochhar, Naina Lal Kidwai, Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi, Indu Jain, Swati Piramal, Mallika Srinivasan, Preetha Reddy, Priya Paul, Sulajja Firodia Motwani and many more. All these women have worked nicely in their respective organizations and achieved success, fame and identity in the corporate world.

Moreover, when one tries to evaluate women in comparison with men in the lights of job profile, salary, designation, potential, consistence,

sincerity, concentration and result, it won't be wrong if it is said that women can easily take over men in every aspect mentioned above. If one just thinks to compare men-women's ratio of job like Banking, Insurance, BPOs, Call Centers, Pharmaceutical Back Offices, Information Technology Companies, Management, Human Resources, etc. then, one can find a very dynamic growth in the quantity of women in the last six to seven years. It seems to emphasize that willingness to perform the actions in certain sectors of the corporate world may provide innumerable opportunities for women without having any concern with the gender issues and discrimination. The sincerity, caliber, dedication, quality and positive outcome is always appreciated by this emerging arena and it strongly requires the quality employees to achieve the summit of success.

Today, it seems rather shameful when we find the review of the companies about the fact of the participation of the women employees. There are still some companies and organizations which have the diseases of women. According to Catalyst India Benchmarking report for 2010 it has been found that "only 17% of Indian companies offered target leadership development programmes for women" (<http://indiatimes.com>) whereas the Indian companies such as Tata Consultancy, Zensar, Tata Steel and JSW Steel had 5-6% women in senior positions, multinationals such as PepsiCo, KPMG, Citigroup, GE, and Pfizer had 15-20% women at the same level in 2010, the WILL study shows.

The former President of the nation, Dr. A.P.J. Kalam constantly talked about the Vision 2020. It seems, this vision is not possible without creating more job opportunities for Indian women and eradicating the conventional approaches which have been strongly rooted in the society. There must be ample opportunities for women to develop their skills of leadership. It is quite essential to get them involved in the main stream or men dominated services from which it would be rather easier to achieve the dream of 2020. On the other hand, it is also required that one should not try to restrict them and keep away from services and jobs. They also have the same rights and quest for identity as men have. In short, in retrospect it can be found that

women had little bit equal status with men. In the medieval period again it had eradicated and declined and the same had continued up to the end of British Raj. After independent, its intensity gradually decreased and women have started to come into main stream. It happens only because of education and awareness.

Therefore, it seems true that there are various issues and elements from which the various innovative ideas have come into force and simultaneously the revolutions in the field of science and technology took place which also assisted a lot to change the conventional approaches of the society. It is quite appreciable that the women have been suffered a lot due to certain anti-social approaches and conventions but ultimately they have broken all the fruitless restrictions and involved themselves in the main stream of the development and prosperity.

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