

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

((A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal))

Visit: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 7, July 2017

Status of Indian Women After Independence: A Critique

Dr. Kiran Sharma

Professor of English, Govt. P.G. Nehru College, Jhajjar, India

After Independence, Indian women attained the bonafide citizenship of the new nation. Although the framers of the Indian constitution agreed on the basic principle of equality yet they expressed divergent views when it was applied to the traditional stronghold of male privileges, for eg, the right to property and the overall male predominance in the family. While one group accepted equality as a determining factor in all matters relating to men and women, the second argued that it will not suit Indian conditions. The third group felt that it could not be put into practice. However, it was widely felt that women should be assigned an equal status with men not merely on grounds of justice but also as a basic condition of growth. Much later, Mrs. Indira Gandhi the Indian Prime Minister(1917-84), remarked: "I don't think that any society can progress, if half of its members do not have equal opportunities, and their talent and capabilities are ignored". Thus, the present paper is an attempt to find out the causes of gender discrimination and the measures that can lead women towards empowerment.

The question of gender discrimination and the issue of women's rights gain prominence in the light of available statistics and the day-to-day incidents that reflect great disparity between the two sexes. A fractured world-view dichotomized in terms of male/female paradigm has found its expressions in almost every aspect of life and has offered a ground where vested interests functioned both legitimately and effectively. The western feminists in the 1950s and 60s spearheaded movements that dealt with issues like women's 'personhood' and her role as a citizen. From then, till now, women's issues have traversed long journey. However, it brought about few cosmetic changes affecting only a select few leaving a large proportion of female population in a regrettably low status.

Our legacy is riddled with ambiguities and flux. The low status of women in India dates back to the days of Manu, the law-giver, who placed woman at the lower stratum than man. Such attitude persisted through various historical phases. The Indian woman was treated as an appendage of man and this tendency found its manifestation in the customs relating to marriage, religion, property, widowhood and dowry. With the spread of education among women, they became social and mobilized themselves in their limited capacity. Various acts were passed with an aim to alter the status of women in India leading to the formation of some women organizations.

But a close scrutiny would expose the fact that most of the so-called women leaders belonged to the urban educated families who had a timely brush with progressive ideas and the whole idea of mobilizing women and support in their favour had more to do with their patriotic fervour than their actual interest in addressing the gender-based subject. The real issues thus remained unattended.

Constitutional safeguards were however provided in independent India declaring that all are equal before the constitution and any discrimination based on sex, caste, race, etc. is unconstitutional. Special provisions made for women were incorporated in the constitution keeping in view their position in the society. The general provisions dealing with equality as such were made i.e., Articles 14, 15 and 16, and Article 23 dealing with traffic in human beings. This was followed by Directive Principles (Articles 39 and 42) which deal with equal pay for equal work for women at par with men, and the maternity benefit for them.

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

((A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal))

Visit: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 7, July 2017

The disenchantment of women with the post- independence 'development 'scenario is justified since developmental progress has failed to incorporate women and continues to serve the ends of patriarchy demographic indicators like the marked decline in sex- ratio, increasing gender gaps In life expectancy, mortality and economic participation, or the rising migration rate are disturbing enough. Education of girls suffers further and food scarcity pushes them further causing malnutrition.

Today's world by and large is comparatively a rapid changing one and the changes have been in a variety of directions. Socially, one of the most fundamental changes that has been brought about since India's Independence, is the comparative emancipation of womankind- its emergence from the exclusive seclusion of the home in to activities of the world without. In spite of all the changes, the atrocities on women in India have not reduced. In fact, a look at the statistics in the file of the Bureau of Police Research and statistics, New Delhi, shows that the number of crimes against women has been steadily increasing. Whether this is due to increase in the crime, or the increase of awareness and the people coming forward to report, one does not know.

In India today the most modern techniques of propaganda are used to project women as consumers and reproductive beings rather than producers.

Gender injustices, taking the shape of crimes against women without punishment of the criminal is escalating the world over but in India it has ancient cultural roots and modern malignant of social defense like the police, are often found to be the perpetrators of this crime. Violence is perpetrated through the institutions of the state, community, the family and society at large.

Women as a separated class are subjected to great criminal victimization both inside and outside their homes. Rape, dowry-related violence, female- infanticide and sex- determination test are some of the ugly faces of gender discrimination against women in India.

Political violence on women is carried out in the name of caste, community and region. Given the trend of growing criminalization of politics in India, this form of violence can be crucial in keeping women away from public life In India complex social structures; economic constraints and political opportunism have provided ample breeding ground for growth of revivalist ideologies and identity politics. In India, apart from various other patriarchal structural factors, the legal system happens to be major tool in dividing women on religious grounds as each religion has its respective personal law for the governance of property, family and marital matters of its adherents.

To cope with this situation, there is an immediate need to educate a girl child that in itself ensures a lot of good, legal literacy has to be facilitated to make them meaningful and ensure the enhancement and preservation of the dignity of women. Women's right will be safeguarded in a society where individuality of women are reorganized. Ignoring the upliftment of women's status is a self-defeating exercise since one of the important yardsticks of a nation's progress is the status of women.

REFERENCES

1. Sushila Aggarwal, Status of Women, Jaipur; Printwell Publishers, 1988.
2. Simone De Beauvoir, The Second Sex, London; Penguin Books, 1949. New Delhi:
3. J.M. Everrette, Women and Social Change in India, Heritage Publishers, 1972.
4. C.A. Hate, Changing Status of Women in Post- Independence India, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1969.
5. Neera Desai & Usha Thakkar, Women in Indian Society, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2001.
6. Leelamma Devasia & V.V. Devasia, Empowering Women for Sustainable Development, New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 2004.