

# DEVELOPING WOMAN WITH TODAY'S SCENARIO

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## INTRODUCTION

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few years. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have held high offices in India including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Leader of the Opposition. As of 2011, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha were women. However, women in India continue to face atrocities such as rape, acid throwing, dowry killings, forced prostitution of young European scholars observed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Hindu women are “naturally chaste” and “more virtuous” than other women. During the British Raj, many reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Jyotirao Phule fought for the betterment of women.

While this might suggest that there was no positive British contribution during the Raj era, that is not entirely the case. This practice was initially met with local resistance, as it flew in the face of tradition. Raja Rammohan Roy's efforts led to the abolition of Sati under Governor-General William Cavendish-Bentinck in 1829. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's crusade for improvement in the situation of widows led to the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. Women in India now participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc. Indira Gandhi, who served as Prime Minister of India for an aggregate period of fifteen years, is the world's longest serving woman Prime Minister. The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), No discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices

derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. (Article 42). Feminist activism in India gained momentum in the late 1970s. One of the first national level issues that brought women's groups together was the Mathura rape case. The acquittal of policemen accused of raping a young girl Mathura in a police station led to country-wide protests in 1979-1980. The protests, widely covered by the national media, forced the Government to amend the Evidence Act, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Indian Penal Code; and created a new offence, custodial rape. Female activities also united over issues such as female infanticide, gender bias, women's health, women's safety, and women's literacy.

### **DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA**

Though it is gradually increasing, the female literacy rate in India is less than the male literacy rate. For fewer girls than boys are enrolled in school, and many girls drop out. In urban India, girls are nearly on a par with boys in terms of education. However, in rural India girls continue to be less well educated than boys. According to the National Sample Survey Data of 1997, only the states of Kerala and Mizoram have approached universal female literacy. According to scholars, the major factor behind improvement in the social and economic status of women in Kerala is literacy. Under the Non-Formal Education programme (NFE), about 40% of the NFE centres in states and 10% of the centres in UTs are exclusively reserved for females. (citation needed) As of 2000, about 3,00,000 NFE centres were catering to about 7.42 million children. About 1,20,000 NFE centres were exclusively for girls.

### **WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION**

Contrary to common perception, a large percentage of women in India work. National data collection agencies accept that statistics seriously understate women's contribution as workers. However, there are fewer women than men in the paid workforce. In Urban India, women participate in the workforce in impressive numbers. For example, in the software industry 30% of the workforce is female. In the workplace women enjoy parity with their male counterparts in terms of wages and roles.

In rural India in the agriculture and allied industrial sectors, females account for as much as 89.5% of the labour force. In overall farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55% to 66% of the total labour. According to a 1991 World Bank Report,

women accounted for 94% of total employment in dairy production in India. Women constitute 51% of the total employed in forest – based small-scale enterprises.

One of the most famous female business success stories is the Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijat Papad. In 2006, Kiran Mazumdar – Shaw, who founded Biocon, one of India's first biotech companies, was rated India's Nobelest women. Lalita. D. Gupte and Kalpana Morparia were the only businesswomen in India who made the list of the Forbes World's Most Powerful Women in 2006. Gupta ran ICICI Bank, India's second-largest bank, until October 2006 and Morparia is CEO of JP Morgan India. In most Indian families, women do not own property in their own names, and do not get a share of parental property. Due to weak enforcement of laws protecting them, women continue to have little access to land and property.

In fact, some of the laws discriminate against women, when it comes to land and property rights. The Hindu personal laws of 1956 (applying to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains) gave women rights to Inheritances. However, sons had an independent share in the ancestral property, while the daughters shares were based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father could effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but a son would continue to have a share in his own right. Additionally, married daughters, even those facing marital harassment, had no residential rights in the ancestral home. Thanks to amendment of the Hindu laws in 2005, women now have the same status as in 1986, the Supreme Court of India rules that Shah Bano, an elderly divorced Muslim woman, was eligible for maintenance money. However, the decision was vociferously opposed by fundamentalist Muslim leaders, who alleged that the court was interfering in their personal law. The Union Government subsequently passed the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights Upon Divorce) Act.

Similarly, Christian women have struggled over year for equal rights in divorce and succession. In 1994, all churches, jointly with women's organizations, drew up a draft law called the Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill. However, the government has still not amended the relevant laws.

## **CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**

Police records in India show a high incidence of crimes against women. The National Crime Records Bureau reported in 1998 that by 2010 growth in the rate of crimes against

women would exceed the population growth rate. Earlier, many crimes against women were not reported to police due to the social stigma attached to rape and molestation. Official statistics show a dramatic increase in the number of reported crimes against women.

A Thomas Returns Foundation survey says that India is the fourth most dangerous place in the world for women to live in. Women belonging to any class, caste, creed or religion can be victims of this cruel form of violence and disfigurement, a premeditated crime intended to kill permanently and act as a lesson to put a woman in her place. In India, acid attacks on women who dated to refuse a man's proposal of marriage or asked for a divorce are a form of revenge. Acid is cheap, easily available, and the quickest way to destroy a woman's life. The number of acid attacks have been rising. Child marriage has been traditionally prevalent in India and continues to this day. Historically, child brides would live with their parents until they reached puberty. In the past, child widows were condemned to a life of great agony, shaved heads, living in isolation, and being shunned by society. Although child marriage was outlawed in 1860, it is still a common practice.

According to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children – 2009" report, 47% of India's women aged 20-24 were married before the legal age of 18, rising to 50% in rural areas. The report also showed that 40% Social opinions in the wake of several brutal rape attacks in the capital city of Delhi, debates held in other cities revealed that men believed women who dressed provocatively deserved to get raped, many of the correspondents stated women incited men to rape them.

### **SUGGESTION FOR STATUS**

The average female life expectancy today in India is low compared to many countries, but it has shown gradual improvement over the years. In many families, especially rural ones, girls and women face nutritional discrimination within the family, and are anaemic and malnourished.

The maternal mortality in India is the 56<sup>th</sup> highest in the world. 42% of births in the country are supervised in Medical Institution. In rural areas, most of women deliver with the help of women in the family, contradictory to the fact that unprofessional or unskilled delivered lacks the knowledge about pregnancy. The average women living in a rural area in India has little or no control over becoming pregnant. Women, particularly women in rural areas, do not have access to safe and self-controlled methods of contraception. The public

health system emphasizes permanent methods like sterilization to long term methods like IUDs that do not need follow-up.

Sterilization accounts for more than 75% of total contraception, with female sterilization accounting for almost 95% of all sterilizations. India has a highly skewed sex ratio, which is attributed to sex-selective abortion and female infanticide affecting approximately one million female babies per year. In, 2011, government stated India was missing three million girls and there are now 48 less girls per 1,000 boys. Despite this, the government has taken further steps to improve the ratio, and the ratio is reported to have been improved in recent years.

In 2011 a “Right to Pee” (as called by the media) campaign began in Mumbai, India’s largest city. Women, but not men, have to pay to urinate in Mumbai, despite regulations against this practice. Women have also been sexually assaulted while urinating in fields. Thus, activists have collected more than 50,000 signature supporting their demands that the local government stop charging women to urinate, build toilets, keep them clean, provide sanitary napkins and a trash can, and hire female attendants. In response, city officials have agreed to build hundreds of public toilets for women in Mumbai, and some local legislators are now promising to build toilets for women in every one of their districts of the world’s child marriages occur.

## **EDUCATION FOR GIRLS**

Educational aspirations were on the rise and were becoming increasingly institutionalized in order to supply the church and state with the functionaries to serve as their future administrators. Girls were schooled too, but not to assume political responsibility. Girls were ineligible for leadership positions and were generally considered to have an inferior intellect to their brothers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our Indian sub-continent is gradually emerging as a powerful land since women began playing significant role for the development of the nation. Role of women in modern India can be called as phenomenal. From the above theory we can very well conclude that our Indian women have made a tremendous development from the early history till now. Today’s Women is marching with Men in almost every field. We have contributed a lot in this huge development.

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