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SOCIAL LIFE OF WOMEN IN SARAN

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Abstract

Geography is a culmination of physico-socio-economic characteristics of any region. Social life and economic life cannot be separated from each other social life influences economic activities and similarly economic activities influence social life Both are inter-dependent upon each other. However, there seems to be some separation between them. Social life starts its journey from birth of children to the end of life in a very systematic way- steps by step. Social geography deals with complexities under current in the society which are found between two classes or two caused by factors prevailing there and also in relation to happening elsewhere also. A famous sociologist namely Benno Werllen opines that social life manifests the coherent picture of society's local constitution and local expression of social processes. But in social geography concept of societal background is expressed in terms of socio-economic status of the family. Social-economic status of a person cannot be seen in isolation but it is in relation to different classes existing in the society. Social-economic characteristics of Saran district may be determine one's whole life. Low educational level, poverty, mal-nutrition, poor health conditions, child marriage, conservatism, dogmatic behaviour etc are on sequences of lower socio-economic conditions of an individual or society.

Introduction

In every society of the world social background has not remained the same. Educational and technological development, though, play pivotal role in determining socio-economic life but its development has been very asymmetrical. Except a very few regions in India growth of education and development of technology are not the same. Among all factors having bearings on social life of the people in general and women in particular education plays lead role. Clarke, a great social geographer has opined "social background greatly influences not only educational manifestation and educational avenues but its impact is very clearly visible in capacity building. It is also visible that students having greater avenues and facilities, have shown better results and have gone ahead in comparison with students having lesser avenues and facilities. Relation between family background and educational achievement is more pronounced in developing country like India than the developed society. Developed society has almost achieved 100% educational level while as in our state it is still very low even lower than expectation in Saran.

Social and caste structure act as obstacles in our society to a greater extent. Thus, educational achievement and credibility are important factors for access of adults. Sister Nivedita, a famous disciple of Swami Vivekanand has stated in her discourse namely, "Bharat Darshan" (Indian Philosophy) - "Education plays a dominating role in reproduction of social inequality". Some other hierocrats believe that education is a form of social capital that has changed wealth transfer between "haves" and "haves not". Education has brought about slow but steady changes in capital formation and capital transfer. The people of upper strata of the society used to take it granted that their progeny would get well placed with the help of capital. This attitude is not imaginative but education and social changes have also played havoc on the upper strata of the society. Are I.A.S. I.P.S. and other officers and politicians of haves not society not members of elite groups? They have become elites. Classes changes have taken place due to education. But those people of "haves not" group who have not well education and numbers of them are also very vast they are socially down trodden. Thus education has played pivotal role in transforming social status of the people but it has also caused class-division in the same class. Hence education must be widespread so that its positive impact may be felt by every section of the society and it may bring more changes in the societal status of woman.

FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL LIFE OF WOMEN

There are various factors which have great bearings on the social life of women. These factors may be summarised here:-

- I. Effect of patriarchal system of the society.
- II. Matrimonial sanction in which women have to go with husband after marriage.
- III. Less importance in family decision.
- IV. Low literacy rate.
- V. Lack of facilities to pursue higher education and technical education.
- VI. Discrimination on health front.
- VII. Lack of viable employment opportunity.
- VIII. Prevailing menace of child marriage.
- IX. Women as a means of recreation for males.
- X. Dowry menace
- XI. Widow worship.
- XII. Negligible participation in political activities.

A fortuitous combinations of aforesaid factors affect social life and social interactions of women. Famous classical poet like Jai Shankar Prasad's couplet may be quoted here which manifests factors influencing social life of women

"Abla Jeevan hai Bas Yahi Kahani,

Anchal me hai Dudha Bas Anakhoun Me Pani.

(You are weak and mean you have milk in your breast and drops of water in your eyes.)"

CHANGING SOCIAL LIFE OF WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA

Before the advent of Muslim and Christian culture on the land of India, our society was governed by Manusmriti, the Hindu law book. Few non-sense so called sociologists and caste-ridden scholars launched a vicious campaign against Manusmriti with a logic that in Hindu society

"shudras" (downtrodden) untouchables. This is a more than 100% baseless arguments. With the progress of time people ignored prescription advanced by Manusmriti and Manusmriti was made scape goat. Manusmriti clearly says that there are four 'Varnas' (psychic plate) based on deeds and needs of the people. Manusmriti says—"Chaturbarnyam Maya Shristam, Gun-karma Bivagsah"

All members of the society have been grouped into four psychic plates-'Brahmin, 'Kshatriya' 'Vaisya' and 'Shudra' all these classifications are based on individual's traits and his deed.

It means that every person is by birth equal and one becomes Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra by virtue of one's deed and traits. It is a right dictum that every philosophy turns into heresy with the passage of fast rolling wheel of time. Is Manusmriti a standing soldier to protect the continuity of system? A society is called living if it brings about changes in its system with reference to time, person and place. Woman, once considered to be diety around her god himself aspires to live. How can women be a neglected lot in the Hindu society? Muslim and Christian rules tried to break down our social system which has been in prevalence since immemorial time. Marriages of Shri Ram and the king Bharata took place at Swayambar (Self decision of couples). What do these Swayambar manifest? This clearly shows that there was no caste system in prevalence in ancient India. Both male and females were equally important and stood at equal footing.

But later on this system was converted into patriarchal system and men started to dominate females but with a sense of dignity. However, woman face vicious circle of patriarchal approach. Hence it is an important factor which influence social life of women. This practice is in prevalence not only in the study area but almost in the whole country. Likewise patriarchal society, matriarchal society is also in prevalence in which males occupy inferior position to women. If patriarchal system goes against women then matriarchal system also guest against males. Thus, we can say that system should be workable in that discrimination should not happen at all. System is an absolute term, and its followers are living beings. Hence system's health depends upon the behaviour of its followers.

Similarly, matrimonial system also works in either ways. In patriarchal system, that is mostly followed in the Hindu tradition, after marriage female has to go with her husband leaving her parents house in practical form. This practice certainly goes against favourable social life women. Family members feel that girls will not remain with them like male child, hence more attention is towards male child than girl child. Though this practice is undergoing changes with the progress of education and changes in economic conditions of the family. Changes which are undergoing slowly in speed must be hastened to remove behavioural discrimination.

BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

Some people believe that females are biologically weaker than men and it is supposed to be the important factor responsible for exploitation of women. Nature has created every creature in twin-male and female so that the wheel of creation goes on unhindered without any pause. It does not mean that females are weaker than males. There are numerous examples of boldness, wonderfulness, bravery and outstanding deeds done by women in every sphere of social development and progress. But it does not mean that women will do everything like and similarly

men will do every thing which is being done by females. Genetical science is an devouring its best to equalize both males and females biologically. It has happened to some extent but this process of equalization may be responsible for dooms awaiting for us. Without losing time the thought of equalization of both sexes must be stopped for the sake of humanity. Practically, it has been seen that women have immense capacity or adjust with situation quickly than males. More working capacity, more tenderness, more lovely attitude, more kindness and more feeling of sacrifices-all these traits make women superior to males. Hence to exploit females in the back ground of physical weakness is a heinous crime and it will go against the preaching rendered by our saints and scriptures.

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND FEMALES POSITION

Family structure existing in our society influences social life of women. Traditionally joint family structure has been in practice in our society. In joint family structure those females who are soft and adjustable, they have to bear more brunt of domestic works at the cost of their health. By nature females themselves neglect their own health. But golden aspect of joint family is that it acts as protection in case of any miss-happenings. The researcher has done sample study of women of different villages and towns under the jurisdiction of the study are and its result reflects good sign for females. Data gathered in this connection has been shown in Table No. 1.1

Table No. 1.1

Family Structure and Social life of Females in Selected villages, 2017

S.N	Name of sample village	Respondents views					
		Yes		No		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Didauli	20	66.7	10	33.3	30	100
2	Nurpur	12	40	18	60	30	100
3	Masuri	14	46.7	16	53.3	30	100
4	Bhojpur	18	45	22	55	40	100
5	Atrouli	10	33.3	20	66.7	30	100
6	Lalpur	12	40	18	60	30	100
7	Bodarpur	16	53.3	14	46.7	30	100
8	Dehra	8	26.7	22	73.3	30	100
9	Himat nagar	16	53.3	14	46.7	30	100
10	Osado	13	43.3	17	56.7	30	100
11	Buxar	8	26.7	23.2	80	40	100
12	Muradpur	10	33.3	20	66.7	30	100
13	Athsani	17	56.7	13	43.3	30	100
14	Pattapur	12	40	18	60	30	100
15	Abupur	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100
	Total	215	43	285	57	500	100

Source:-Based on Researcher's Sample village survey.

Sample data are related to both joint family and nuclear family. Females belonging to joint family face more problems, this is a generalized view while females of nuclear family face less problems. But sample survey data do not support the views in prevalence 57% respondents

females or both the categories feel that they are not neglected lot in the family. All amenities and facilities are provided to them by family. Besides it, more care is taken for their security and safeguard.

During sample study it has been found that females seem to be more bold today in comparison with period of preceding century. One point is to be noted that poverty is the main factor in assessing the social status of females. Female of down-trodden family are liable to family neglect to some extent.

EDUCATION RELATED PROBLEMS OF FEMALES

It is a wrong perception that females are neglected lots. One starting life cycle from the womb of mother and passing through childhood to youth to old dies ultimately despite no one wants to die. In Indian society assessment of females cannot be done in the light of other civilization. World at large has realized the mystery of Indian social system. To the last breathe, dying members - whether male or female, get maximum services rendered by not only by the family members but by other member of the society." It is not necessary that what is good today that should be good in the past. One should do better what is considered to be better today. Manusmriti period's evaluation must be in the context of the then circumstances. We cannot compare the need of a diseased person to the needs of a healthy person. If system has developed snags, that should rectified without condemning the previous episodes. This argument can't sell that males do less works than females. But interest of female must be safeguarded from social evils. These are not new However, education may bring about changes not only in males but in females also.

Right from the ancient period to date, perception between males and females have been undergoing changes .During ancient period system of education was ashram based. Hence girl's education was restricted due to circumstances. No other discrimination was between them. Our country remained for very long period under Mughal slavery and females were subjected to torture. British period, however was positive for spread of education. But poverty has been the main reason in imparting education equally to male and female. Even today poverty spoils the situation. Urban outlook favours education of boy and girl equally and it is due to this that both boys and girls are getting co-education and both are doing technical study. Urban people are relatively richer than rural people. This is why illiterate rural people do not give equal importance to their sons and daughters. Some prevalent social evils like dowry and early marriage of girls are two most important reasons which inhabit them to treat (boy & girl) them in equality. Dowry money is to be deposited for girls not for male child. In my opinion dowry and departing daughter with her husband are two main reasons. If these problems are addressed, then, even in the rural area partition tendency will evaporate sooner or later purple down is to set in favour of females.

Though perceptible changes have taken place in the context of females education but legacy still lingers in the society. It is reflected in literacy rate of males and females. Table 1.2 shown literacy rate of females in rural as well as urban areas.

Education status of Females in surveyed villages

To understand the ground reality of female education random sample study of 16 villages selected from sixteen C.D.B's of Saran district in early months of 2018.

Hence figures may or may not tally with census report, 2011.

Table No. 1.2

Educational status of Females in the study Area, 2018

S.N.	Villages	Education Level						
		Primary (%)	Junior (%)	High School (%)	Inter (%)	Degree (%)	Post Graduate (%)	Technical (%)
1.	Dumra	30	20	13.3	16.7	13.3	6.7	-
2.	Sugaan	40	40	23.3	20.0	10.0	6.7	-
3.	Dubha	33.3	26.7	16.7	13.3	10.0	-	-
4.	Mjhaulia	30.0	23.3	13.3	16.7	10.0	6.7	-
5.	Janar	42.5	22.5	10.0	12.5	7.5	5.0	-
6.	Kushhar	26.7	26.7	13.3	10.0	13.3	6.7	3.3
7.	Dhanour	23.3	30.0	20.0	16.7	6.7	3.3	-
8.	Lakhanpur	33.3	23.3	16.7	13.3	6.7	6.2	-
9.	Banu Chapra	30.0	26.7	20.0	13.3	6.7	3.3	-
10.	Dhamoura	33.3	30.0	16.7	10.0	10.0	-	-
11.	Purusotampur	26.7	20.0	13.3	16.7	13.3	10.0	-
12.	Piprahi	30.0	13.3	26.7	13.3	6.7	-	-
13.	Basbitta	37.5	20.0	10.0	12.5	7.5	5.0	7.5
14.	Madhoul	26.6	20.0	26.7	16.7	6.7	3.0	-
15.	Muradpur	23.3	20.0	23.3	16.7	6.7	6.7	3.3
16.	Pattapur	26.7	23.0	16.7	13.3	10.0	6.7	3.3
	Total	31.2	23.6	17.0	13.8	8.8	4.4	1.2

Source:- Random sample survey of selected villages by self

From perusal of Table No. 1.2 it is clear that 31.2% females of the sample villages have completed primary education, 23.6% females have middle class degree, 17% girls passed secondary examination and 13.8% passed Inter. Percentage share of degree girl students was 8.8% while as 4.4 % girls students became post-graduate degree holders. Out of 16 villages girls of only four villages took technical degrees. The average of technical education is 1.4 per cent. However, over the period of time literacy rate of females in comparison with males remained high (11%) between 2001-2011 and in coming census it would further improve. If trend continues female's literacy rate will equalize with males by 2045.

Table No. 1.3**Growth Rate of Female Literacy**

S.N.	Census Year	Female Literacy rate in the study area (%)	Decal Growth rate of literacy in the study area	Bihar's Literacy rate (%)	Bihar's decades Literacy rate (%)
1	1951	2.95	-	4.22	-
2	1961	4.86	-	8.11	3.89
3	1971	7.10	-	9.86	1.75
4	1981	10.46	-	16.61	6.75
5	1991	15.23	-	21.99	5.38
6	2001	28.66	-	33.57	11.58
7	2011	50.12	19.8	53.30	20.20

Source:- Census of India, Bihar series.

From Table No. 1.3 it is clear that female literacy rate which was 2.95% in 1951 has gone up to 50.12 % in 2011. Between 2001-2011 decadal female literacy rate grow by 19.8%. It means that literacy rate grew by 2% annum. On the basis of average deviation of literacy rate the study area falls in two categories- (i) Positive medium female literacy deviation region. (ii) Low female literacy deviation region. Villages of Chapra and Maker C.D.B.'s belong to positive medium deviation region. Manjhi, Revelganj, Ekma and Parsa C.D.B.'s villages belongs to low literacy deviation region. There are various factors responsible for low literacy rate in the study area. These may be as such:- Study area houses more than 89% population belonging to rural areas. Despite on going improvement females are not allowed to take part in outside activities. In economic activities male dominates hence there is no relevance of female education. There is acute shortage of schools in rural areas. Guardians fear to send girls to distantly located schools. Child marriage has adversely impacted the fortunes of girls'. By reaching 11 to 12 years or even below girls become married and soon undergo pregnancy. This vicious circle has ruined them completely. Dowry is another important social evil. Guardians deposit money for daughters marriage and for them education is not important. Due to paucity of fund separate schools have not been built meant for girls. In co-education institutions guardians do not want to enroll their wards. Besides these there are many other reasons because of that female literacy is low. However, many positive steps have been taken by the govt. under Panchayat Raj system and slowly but steadily improvement is going on.

MARITAL STATUS

By marital status we know the position of unmarried, married, widow and widowers- Marriage is one of the 16 sanskaras depicted in Hindu tradition. Formation of family is the gift of marriage. By marriage age structure and sex ratio come into focus. Without marriage society will become stagnant and human civilization would remain no more. Marriage is necessity for society. Sex is an ordinary attribute of it. As per 2011 census more than 46% females were unmarried, 49% married and 5% widow Remaining population has not been decided. Perhaps, the remaining population is Victim to divorces. Females are better positioned than males in marriage.

AGE PROBLEMS OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is essential part of life. But untimely marriage below the age of 12 years, now below eighteen years for females is unlawful and adverse to the health. Absence of education is primary factor which encourages such types of marriage. It is the duty of govt. and also other members of the society to discourage this system. With the growth of education and interaction with outside world through telecommunication, televisions, social media etc. great improvement in marriage age has been seen. Educated girls refuse to obey the marriage related decisions of mother-father. But this low age marriage system is still in vogue in poor and illiterate families. To get freedom from this evil ill, vigorous mobilization of social awareness along with support from govt. will create favourable environment. Later or sooner this practice will go away from our society.

WOMEN AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

Nothing is as important as health is. It is common saying that 'health is wealth'. Diseased person becomes burden not for himself but for the whole family. A serious illness in common family ruins happiness and economy of the family. To keep health well needs required calorie to support physiological system of body. Society bereft of health improving facilities impacts adversely the whole system of the society. Prosperous nation is that whom population remains healthy and wealthy. It is said that female members remain uncared in the family compared to male members. This is to some extent correct in low earning family. But perceptible changes are noticeable. Recently "health for all" scheme launched by the present central govt. will act as a milestone in the field of medical care. On sample study done, it has been found that in the area, more than 71% women have health related facilities only 28.8% women do not have proper health care facilities. It is also important that this is also related to male members of the female. Here economy is the main factor to be considered.

Table No. 1.4

Health services rendered to Females, 2018

S.N.	Villages	Yes		No		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Saraiya	22	13.3	8	23.3	30	100
2	Dumra	25	83.3	5	16.7	30	100
3	Sugaan	20	66.7	10	33.3	30	100
4	Dubha	18	60.0	12	40.0	30	100
5	Mjhaulia	34	85	6	15	40	100
6	Janar	21	70	9	30	30	100
7	Kushhar	17	56.7	13	43.3	30	100
8	Dhanour	19	63.3	11	36.3	30	100
9	Lakhanpur	21	70	9	30	30	100
10	Banu Chhapra	20	66.7	10	33.7	30	100
11	Dhamoura	18	60	12	40	30	100
12	Purusotampur	24	80	6	20	30	100
13	Piprahi	32	80	8	20	40	100
14	Basbitta	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100
15	Madhoul	22	73.3	8	26.7	30	100
16	Muradpur	25	83.3	5	16.7	30	100
	Total	357	71.4	143	28.6	500	100

Source:- Sample survey by self.

From analysis of facts put in Table No. 1.4 many interesting revelations regarding female health related problems have come out. Firstly, it is common thing that when wealth is lost, some thing is lost, but when health is lost, life is lost. Hence healthy person can withstand any difficulties which come in the way of person concerned. Unhealthy persons remain mute spectator of events. If life expectancy goes beyond 80-85 years of life, it means that people of such society are leading descent life and their society, state or nation would prosper without any doubt. Prosperity, happiness ableness, enjoyment etc are the endowments of health. Unhealthy persons become burden for the family as well as for the society as a whole. Gita, one of gems of human knowledge, dictates "be the bravest of the braves". Healthy body can only contain sharp brain.

It is common belief that females are victim to bad health due to their own weakness and apathy of the family towards them. In poor family more attention is oriented towards male members of the family with a view that males are bread earner. Hence male's health is above the health of all. But the findings of the sample study depicted in Table No. 1.4 suggest that 71.4% females do not face health problems. Family members remain conscious of their health only 28.6% females do not have sufficient facilities to maintain health. It means that female health related problem is more news than reality but improvement is needed. This improvement should be both for females and males and make without discrimination. Awareness, increase in income and govt. supports - all these together will bring cheers for the whole society. Early marriage, illiteracy, less earnings, efficiency of nutritious foods and nearby non-availability of medical facilities are some of problems which should be redressed at the earliest. Health for all which has been recently announced is a very good step of the central govt. in this direction. Each member of the family below poverty line will get health insurance of Rs. 5 lakhs. If this scheme is successfully implemented health related problems of females will remain non-existent.

FEMALES AND MENTAL TORTURES AT WORKING PLACE

This is as a new problem which has come out at working place where females work. This problem is mainly associated with females belonging to low and middle income groups. Without any doubt it can be said that the education pattern is completely based on western styles where gossiping, body touch, vulgar talks are common thing and both sexes equally enjoy it. But in our society effect of tradition still exists. In this context one should study the problems at working place. Working place is a place of discharging given duties. This place should not be supposed to be place of romance and love affairs. Ninety nine percent cases of abuses are related to youngsters and opposite sex attraction is not a new thing. This is the main reason of taunting, abuses, and sometimes bodily assault. So until and unless work culture going on is adjusted in the society, this sort of problems may arise time to time. In Independence does not permit one to break all social fabrics prevalence since immemorial past. But these unlawful doing must be discouraged so that problems may not come up in future 100% security and safety can't be provided by any system because one can not foresee what are in the minds of the person concerned. But discrimination in payment between males and female workers is an open injustice. It is felt that females are more responsive towards their works. Management quality in female is inborn quality. How does a female manage her family, is well known thing. Hence payment discrimination must be stopped.

In Table No. 1.5 light has been thrown on this problem.

Table NO. 1.5

Discrimination Against Females, 2-18

S.N.	Villages	Yes		No		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Saraiya	20	66.7	10	33.3	30	100
2	Dumra	23	76.7	7	23.3	30	100
3	Sugaan	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100
4	Dubha	17	56.7	13	43.3	30	100
5	Mjhaulia	25	62.5	15	37.5	40	100
6	Janar	20	66.7	10	33.3	30	100
7	Kushhar	6	20.0	24	80.0	30	100
8	Dhanour	18	60	12	40	30	100
9	Lakhanpur	22	73.3	8	26.7	30	100
10	Banu Chhapra	15	50	15	50	30	100
11	Dhamoura	18	60	12	40	30	100
12	Purusotampur	16	53.3	14	46.7	30	100
13	Piprahi	32	80	8	20	40	100
14	Basbitta	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100
15	Madhoul	20	66.7	10	33.3	30	100
16	Muradpur	17	56.7	13	43.3	30	100
	Total	307	61.4	193	38.6	500	100

Source:- Sample survey by self.

Table No. 1.5 reveals that 61.4% females become victim to mental exploitation at work place. About 39.6% females feel that they are not victim to exploitation. Secondly, at all work places ratio of exploitation is not uniform. Exploitation in corporate houses more manifested because corporate desire to take more benefits at the cost of employees. Male workers are by nature more aggressive and assertive while as females avoid clashes, because females are more responsive to their families than male partners. But in govt. department and public sectors there is no place of discrimination. In this context, findings of Ahmedabad women's Action group (AWAG), a NGO organization may be quoted- "Females are victims to circumstances prevailing at working places. Almost 50% females face oral, physical and mental exploitation, and these exploitations are thrust upon them by their colleagues. In small towns and municipal area females do not complain of sexual harassment due to social complications and fear of job snatching." sometimes in govt. departments and public sectors this sort of happenings happen. But proportion is of miniature level. Females must be protected from these atrocities. Besides these problems discussed above problems of common nature faced by females are not less. Rape, murder, physical assault by counter parts, inhuman behaviour towards widows, early marriage, marriage against will, sale of girls, no social support for widow marriage, child marriage, unmatched marriage due to poverty of guardians, direct or indirect opposition to intercaste marriage, malnutrition, illness, dowry, overwork and very limited choice to take self decisions are other social evils against women.

However, the world of women is not full of darkness. Changes in favour of females are rapidly going on Importance of women has been recognized by the govt. It is reflected in the some doings by the authorities. 50% reservation for females in panchayat Raj system, 33% reservation for women in certain categories of jobs provision of scholarships for study from matriculation level to higher studies, provision of loans for technical studies, provision of loans to start business and setting up industries and many more welfare measures are in pipe line for empowerment of women. One should always keep in mind that there is vast difference between western culture and Indian culture secondly, Bihar, as a whole has become sea of population. Less job and more aspirants have caused social chasm. Division of work is the only noticeable panacea that can act as balance between males and females.

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