

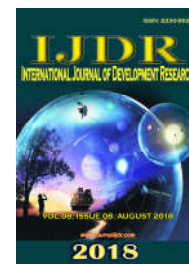


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A BRIEF STUDY ON WOMEN PROBLEMS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Women in the Indian society have been considered as inferior than men for many years. Because of such type of inferiority they have to face various issues and problems in their life. They have to go extra miles than men to prove themselves equivalent to men. People in the middle age were considering women as key to destruction so they never allowed women to go outside and participate in the social activities like men. Still in the modern age, women have to face many more problems in their daily life and struggle a lot to establish their career. Still there are many parents who prefer to have only boy baby and allow education to boys only. Women for them are only medium to keep family happy and healthy. A woman is seen in the society with more intense ridicule sight and become at higher risk of honor killing if she is involved in the love marriage or inter caste love marriage. Women face a lot of challenges because of the existence of patriarchal society, child bearing and family care roles, deep rooted cultural norms, etc in the Indian society. Women in India do not have equal access to autonomy, mobility to outside the home, social freedom, etc than men. Some of the problems faced by the women are because of their domestic responsibilities, cultural and social specified roles, etc. Safety of women matters a lot whether at home, outside the home or working place. Last few crimes against women especially rape cases were very dread and fearful. Because of such crimes, women safety in India has become a doubtful topic. According to the statistics of National Crime Records Bureau, highest rate of crime against women was recorded in the Chennai in 2000 (around 4,037 incidences). Chennai is the capital of southern state of Tamil Nadu however has been marked as city with high rate of crimes against women. However, it was seen some decrease in the crime rate against women in the subsequent years (around 838 by 2013). It has been recorded as the largest fall in the crime rate than other cities in India. It was just opposite in the capital of India, Delhi. Crime rate against women in Delhi was 17.6/100,000 females in 2000 (2,122 incidents) and 151.13/100,000 females in 2013 (11,449 incidents). Some of the most common crimes against women are rape, dowry deaths, sexual harassment at home or work place, kidnapping and abduction, cruelty by husband, relatives, assault on a woman, and sex trafficking. Thus now a day's women have faced so many problems. The government has taken so many initiative programmes. The legislations role also very important. The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the women Problems in India and its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Issues and problems faced by women The Research Work includes I. Introduction II. Methodology III. Problems. IV Conclusion etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Taking birth as a woman in the Indian society can be said as curse for the women. Women in India face lots of social issues and problems all through the life which are big struggle for them right from their beginning of life. Female infanticide is the most common practice of killing girl child in mother's

womb in the Indian society. Women in India are considered as burden for their parents and husbands as they think that women are here only to consume money whole life without earning a little bit. Another common problem for women is sex discrimination which they face from their birth and continues till their death. Illiteracy, lack of proper education, responsible for household works, rape, sexual harassment at workplace, etc are some big issues for the women in India.

However, a lot of positive changes has occurred in the women status as the number of educated people is increasing in the country. There are various issues and problems which women generally face in the society in India. Some of the problems are mentioned and described below:

- **Selective abortion and female infanticide:** It is the most common practice for years in India in which abortion of female fetus is performed in the womb of mother after the foetal sex determination and sex selective abortion by the medical professionals.
- **Sexual harassment:** It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
- **Dowry and Bride burning:** It is another problem generally faced by women of low or middle class family during or after the marriage. Parents of boys demand a lot of money from the bride's family to be rich in one time. Groom's family perform bride burning in case of lack of fulfilled dowry demand. In 2005, around 6787 dowry death cases were registered in India according to the Indian National Crime Bureau reports.
- **Disparity in education:** The level of women education is less than men still in the modern age. Female illiteracy is higher in the rural areas. where over 63% or more women remain unlettered.
- **Domestic violence:** it is like endemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to the women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.
- **Girls have no property rights like boys forever.**
- **Child Marriages:** Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
- **Inadequate Nutrition:** Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor families.
- **Domestic violence and status in the family:** It is the abuse or violence against women.
- **Women are considered as inferior to men so they are not allowed to join military services.**
- **Status of widows:** Widows are considered as worthless in the Indian society. They are treated poorly and forced to wear white clothes. In the ancient Indian society women were adored and worshiped as goddesses. However in the middle age, the status of women got down to a great extent. Women are considered in the society only to perform duties like bring up children, caring every family member, and other household activities. There are old and traditional faiths of people coming out for years that men are for thy field whereas women are only for the home. Now-a-days, women are breaking all the barriers of social issues and problems against them in the society. They are getting ahead and enjoying equality of status in almost all fields because of being financially independent and economically sound.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study is Purely Theoretical. The study is based on the secondary data sources.

The necessary information about the Issues and problems faced by women and its various components are collected from various books, journals, internet source of related topics.

Problems: Earlier to this women were facing a lot of problems because of male dominated, patriarchal society system, practice of old traditional believes, etc. Women were only responsible to the traditional roles like child bearing and child rearing. In the modern world, where women status has been improved a little while, still they are facing problems. They have to perform both family and professional responsibilities together without the help of their husbands. In some cases, the condition of women becomes more embarrassed when they get tortured by their family members instead of getting help. Sexual harassment is more common at homes as well as in the offices by the family members, relatives, neighbors, friends, boss, etc. They have to suffer a lot in their daily life to nourish their career as well as saving their family relationships.

Earlier women were facing problems like child marriage, sati pratha, parda pratha, restriction to widow remarriage, widows exploitation, devadasi system, etc. However, almost all the old traditional problems have been disappeared gradually from the society but given rise to other new issues. Women are continuously facing many problems even after having self-confidence, individuality, self-respect, personality, capacity, talent, and efficiency more than men. They are facing problems in their daily life even after they are given equal rights and opportunities like men by the Constitution of India. Some of the major problems modern women are still facing mentioned below:

- **Violence against women:** Women are getting affected by the various violence almost every day which is disrupting the society. Women are being victims of violence at huge level day by day because of increasing crimes against women (according to the report of Crime Record Bureau of the Central Home Ministry). Woman is getting kidnapped at every 44 minutes, raped at every 47 minutes, 17 dowry deaths every day, etc. They may face violence within the family (dowry related harassment, death, marital rape, wife-battering, sexual abuse, deprivation of healthy food, female genital mutilation, etc) or outside the family (kidnapping, rape, murder, etc).
- **Gender discrimination:** Women are considered as weaker section of the society than men and given less importance. Girls children are becoming real victims of the discrimination. There are also discrimination of power and work between men and women because of the patriarchal system families in India. Gender discrimination affects women in the areas like nutrition, education, health, care, decline of female population, job, public life, etc.
- **Problems of female education:** Women education percentage is low in India especially in the rural areas because they are discouraged for higher education like professional and technical education.
- **Problems related to unemployment:** Women are getting more problem in searching their suitable work. They become more prone to the exploitation and harassment in the work areas.
- They are given more work and hard tasks by their boss intentionally. They have to prove their devotion, seriousness and sincerity towards work time to time.

- Women who are uneducated more prone to divorce and desertion by their husbands on any stage of life. They have to live whole life with fear of divorce. In some cases they have to finish their life because of unbearable conditions.
- **Dowry system** is another huge women problem in the society which is increasing day by day. Women are ill-treated, man-handled, disrespected, tortured and suffer other cruelties (violence, murder and suicide) because of the lack of dowry at the time of marriage. It cause degradation of women status to a great extent.

Role of Government regarding Women's Safety: There are various rules, regulations, act and laws made by the Indian government regarding the safety of women in India. However, a new act (Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015) has been passed by the Indian government by replacing the earlier one of 2000 (Indian juvenile delinquency law of 2000) to reduce the juvenile age from 18 to 16 years especially in case of heinous offenses (after Nirbhaya case). Safety of women in India is a vast topic now-a-days. We cannot say that women are safe in India by seeing the last few year crimes against women especially in the national capital. Women generally feel frightened while going alone outside to the home. It is a very sad reality of the country that its women citizens are living with fear all time. Personal safety of women has been the topic of importance for every Indian citizen. In order to improve the condition regarding women safety in India, following are some points as tips for women safety:

Women Safety measures

- Self defence techniques are the first and foremost thing to which each and every woman must be aware of and get proper self-defense training for their safety. They must be aware of some effective defense techniques such as kicks to groin, blocking punches, etc.
- Generally most of the women are gifted with sixth sense which they must use whenever they become in some problem. They should at once avoid any situation which they feel bad for them.
- Escape and run is also a good way to reduce some risks of women whenever they become in problem. They should never go with any unknown person alone at some unknown places.
- Women must understand and feel their physical power and use accordingly. They never feel themselves weak than men and take some self defence training.
- They should be careful while communicating with someone on internet in the cyberspace.
- Pepper spray can also be proved as a useful self-defence tool however it has a drawback that some people cannot be harmed through it even after full-face spray. It may not stop the attacker so women should not depend on it completely and use other techniques also.
- They must have all the emergency numbers with them and whatsapp also if possible so that they can immediately tell to their family members and police.
- Women should be very conscious while driving the car and going to any trip. They must lock all the doors of car while travelling with own or private car.

Women safety is a big social issue which needs to be solved urgently by the effort of all. It is inhibiting the growth and development of the country and most

importantly hurting the half population of the country in all aspects (physically, mentally, and socially).

In the past few years, the safety of women in India has been down because of some continuous and terrible crimes against women. There has been decline in the women status from ancient to medieval period which is continued in such an advanced era. Women of India have equal rights as like as men of this country as they occupy almost half population of the country and involved in half proportion in the growth and development of the country. It is true that women in modern India are joining high offices (President, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Union Ministers, Leader of Opposition, Chief Minister, Governor, etc) however on the back of curtain they are being exploited too. According to the Constitution of India, they have equal rights of dignity, equality, and freedom from gender discrimination. Indian women are continuously facing numerous problems such as sexual harassment, violent victimization through rape, acid attack, dowry deaths, forced prostitution, and many more.

Education and Economic Development: Number of women heading the households in India is found decreased though female literacy rate is still less than male literacy rate. Urban girls are nearly equal in education like boys however in the rural areas there is still a big gap. On the other hand, some Indian states (like Kerala and Mizoram) have achieved universal female literacy. So, women in such states have high social and economic status. Women literacy rate in India is still less because of the inadequate school facilities, sanitary facilities, increasing crimes against women, shortage of female teachers, gender discrimination in the society, etc. According to the statistics of 2015, it is found that women (above 15 years or older) literacy rate is 60.6% whereas male literacy rate is 81.3%.

Crimes against women in India: There is a big list of crimes against women in India such as acid attack, child marriages, domestic violence, forceful domestic work, child abuse, dowry deaths, female infanticide and sex-selective abortions, child labour, honor killings, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, forced for prostitution, and many more.

Safety Laws for Women in India: There is a list of safety laws for women in India working in the field to provide safety to the women from all type of crimes against women. Some safety laws are Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, Special Marriage Act 1954, Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Hindu Widows Remarriage Act 1856, Indian Penal Code 1860, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, Maternity Benefit Act 1861, Foreign Marriage Act 1969, Indian Divorce Act 1969, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971, Christian Marriage Act 1872, Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, Equal Remuneration Act 1976, Married Women's Property Act 1874, Births, Deaths & Marriages Registration Act 1886, Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act 1986, Muslim women (protection of rights on divorce) Act 1986, Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987, National Commission for Women Act 1990, Prohibition of Sex Selection Act 1994, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place Act 2013, etc. Another Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015 has been passed replacing the existing Indian juvenile delinquency law of 2000 (Juvenile

Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000). This act was passed by the Lok Sabha on 7th of May in 2015 and however, by the Rajya Sabha on 22nd of December in 2015. This act is passed to lower down the juvenile age from 18 to 16 years in cases of heinous offense (especially after the release of Nirbhaya's case accused juvenile).

Constitution of India and Women Empowerment: India's Constitution makers and our founding fathers were very determined to provide equal rights to both women and men. The Constitution of India is one of the finest equality documents in the world. It provides provisions to secure equality in general and gender equality in particular. Various articles in the Constitution safeguard women's rights by putting them at par with men socially, politically and economically. The Preamble, the Fundamental Rights, DPSPs and other constitutional provisions provide several general and special safeguards to secure women's human rights.

Preamble: The Preamble to the Constitution of India assures justice, social, economic and political; equality of status and opportunity and dignity to the individual. Thus it treats both men and women equal.

Fundamental Rights: The policy of women empowerment is well entrenched in the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our Constitution. For instance:

- Article 14 ensures to women the right to equality.
- Article 15(1) specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Article 15(3) empowers the State to take affirmative action's in favour of women.
- Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.

These rights being fundamental rights are justiciable in court and the Government is obliged to follow the same.

Directive Principles of State Policy: Directive principles of State Policy also contains important provisions regarding women empowerment and it is the duty of the government to apply these principles while making laws or formulating any policy. Though these are not justifiable in the Court but these are essential for governance nonetheless. Some of them are:

- Article 39 (a) provides that the State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- Article 39 (d) mandates equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- Article 42 provides that the State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Fundamental Duties: Fundamental duties are enshrined in Part IV-A of the Constitution and are positive duties for the people of India to follow. It also contains a duty related to women's rights: Article 51 (A) (e) expects from the citizen of the country to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Other Constitutional Provisions:

Through 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment of 1993, a very important political right has been given to women which is a landmark in the direction of women empowerment in India. With this amendment women were given 33.33 percent reservation in seats at different levels of elections in local governance i.e. at Panchayat, Block and Municipality elections. Thus it can be seen that these Constitutional provisions are very empowering for women and the State is duty bound to apply these principles in taking policy decisions as well as in enacting laws.

Specific Laws for Women Empowerment in India. Here is the list of some specific laws which were enacted by the Parliament in order to fulfil Constitutional obligation of women empowerment:

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.
- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.
- The Medical termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.
- The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013.

Specific Laws for Working Women

- Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition
- Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
- Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- Factories (Amendment) Act, 1948
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- Plantation Labour Act, 1951

Above mentioned and several other laws are there which not only provide specific legal rights to women but also gives them a sense of security and empowerment.

Conclusion

According to the provisions of the Constitution of India, it is a legal point to grant equality to women in the society in all spheres just like male. The Department of Women and Child Development functions well in this field for the proper development of the women and child in India. Women are given a top place in India from the ancient time however they were not given empowerment to participate in all areas. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. Empowering women is the main motto of the development department because an empowered mother with child makes the bright future of any nation. Despite of formation of various effective rules and regulations by the Indian government to handle and control the crimes against women, the number and frequency of crimes against women are increasing day by day. Women status in the country has been more offensive and dreadful in the last few years.

It has decreased the confidence level of women for safety in their own country. Women are in doubtful condition for their safety and have fear while going anywhere else outside their home (office, market, etc). We should not blame the government because women safety is not only the responsibility of government only, it is the responsibility of each and every Indian citizen especially men who need to change their mind set for women.

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