

THE JOURNEY OF WOMEN FROM PAST TO PRESENT

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Abstract

Women play an imperative role in any society. The modification of roles of a woman from the past to present is worth mentioning. Earlier they were devoid of many rights. They are no longer in void. Revolutionary changes have taken place in the position of women in India after independence. Besides legislations, education is also an important aspect in raising the status of women in society. The status of the women in has greatly improved which proves that women can be even better than men if given an opportunity to grow.

Introduction

Women are intrinsic part of our society and so cannot be neglected. They are created equal and as companion of men and men have to make them walk with themselves in the track of life. As a nation a shift in their status has been witnessed over the period, with more and more women effective in the carrier, political and social arenas. Women play an imperative role in every society. Women have now become part time to full time work oriented.

“The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” -Albert Einstein

The modification of roles of a woman from the past to present is worth mentioning. Women who were once considered the masters in the art of home making are now considered to be the forces that shape a country.

Women of the Vedic period

Women of the early period enjoyed certain rights and privileges. The view is generally upheld on the basis of the instances depicted in religious texts (e.g., Vedas, Upanishads,

two great epics and other Dharmasastras) that in Rigvedic period, women enjoyed equal status with men. The position enjoyed by women in Vedic period deteriorated in post-Vedic period. A daughter began to be regarded as curse. They were denied the right of legacy and ownership of property. Early puberty marriages came to be practised. The later period witnessed further decadence in the position of women.

Women in pre independent India

The women of the that times faced many problems like Dowry deaths, Child Marriages, Death during Childbirth, Sati and many social problems The awareness was brought about regarding the status and place of women in society by Some social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi and others. Through the efforts and the various movements launched by these great social leaders of the 19th century pre independence, the laws that were passed include -. Abolition of Sati Act(1813), The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act(1856), Civil Marriage Act(1872), Married Women's Property Act(1874), The Child Marriage Restraint Act (Sharda Act)(1929), Hindu Law of Inheritance Act(1929), Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act(1939), Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act (1946).

Women in post- Independent India

After independence Revolutionary changes have taken place in the position of women in India. To improve the condition of women The Constitution of India provided special steps to be taken by the Government and separate institutions.

A quick and effective change in the status of women was contemplated through social legislations. The Constitution of India guarantees certain fundamental rights and freedom such as protection of life and personal liberty. Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as the Indian men. Article 14 ensures equality before law and Article 15 prohibits any discrimination. Article 16(a) forbids discrimination in any respect of employment of office under the state on the grounds only of religion caste, sex, descent, and place of birth, residence or any of them.

In the post-independent India series of laws were passed for the betterment of women and to give equal rights and civil liberties with men, to abolish discriminations against women, remove inequality between sexes, and remove outer barriers coming in the way of their growth and self-realisation. The important Acts that are passed for the upliftment of women are: The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act of 1956, The Hindu Succession Act of 1956, The Hindu Women Right to Property Act of 1973, The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976. . The year 1995, was declared as the International Year for Women throughout the world. Women are no longer in void, slumber but are conscious and moving at a good pace.

Besides legislations, education was also regarded as an important aspect in raising the status of women in society. Dynamic steps were taken to promote women's education. Immediately after independence it was realised that unless and until half of our population are open to the elements of educational process, modernisation of our society would be a remote dream. Therefore Various Committees and Commissions emphasised the need for equalisation of educational opportunities.

In the modern time, women in India are given freedom & right such as freedom of expression & equality as well as the right to be educated. Various esteemed positions now are held by women.

Women are educated about the existing social problems, good position, admiration & image in the personnel and social life, role in making decision in their family and workplace, plan & encourage better education for their children, taking care of health of their aged parents and the children.

Most women are given a chance to finish their desirable education. There are number of women education grants that offer help to women from underprivileged sections of society in order to give them a better chance to be educated.

The government of India sets aside some sound amount of money for women and those

willing to start their business can borrow. Women are encouraged to start small scale business so that they may have their own source of income to become independent. Various non-governmental organizations also offer economic support to women to establish their own source of income. The status of the women in India has greatly improved which proves that women can be even better than men if given an opportunity to grow.

Conclusion

The positive results from women of the nation show that they possess the potential to work in every field. Lot has been done for women and they have used the opportunities to grow and develop and to be at par with men. Women have walked a mile but yet have miles to go and miles to go.

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