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प्लॅटिनम या त्रैमासिकात प्रसिद्ध झालेली मते संपादक, सहसंपादक, कार्यकारी संपादक, आणि सल्लागार मंडळ यांना मान्य असतीलच असे नाही. या नियतकालिकात प्रसिद्ध करण्यात आलेल्या लेखातील लेखकांची मते ही त्यांची वैयक्तिक मते आहेत. तसेच शोधनिबंधाची जबाबदारी ज्या-त्या लेखकांवर राहिल.

मेसर्स अथर्व पब्लिकेशन्सच्यावतीने कार्यकारी संपादक श्री.युवराज माळी यांनी प्लॉट नं. १७, देविदास कॉलनी, धुळे-४२४ ००१ (महाराष्ट्र) येथे प्रकाशित केले व झरोका प्रिंटर्स, जळगाव येथे मुद्रित केले. मोबाईल : ९४०५२०६२३०. जळगाव (ऑ.) : ०२५७-२२३९६६६.

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Status of Women in Family and Society

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One is not born, but rather becomes a woman

-Simon De Beauvoir

Introduction

There are biological differences between men and women. But biology is only beginning. Simone De Beauvoir insists that womanhood is a social construct. The subordination of female to male is the result of various social factors. It implies that society plays an important role in deciding the status of women. According to Cambridge English Dictionary a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or in several similar countries, can be referred to as a society. This society is made up of several families. According to MacIver family is defined as "a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. (Rao 2004)

The status of women in family depends on number of factors namely, descent system, family organisation, the process of socialization in that family, economic status of woman and the male members in the family, her reproductive capabilities, the religious-cultural surroundings of that woman.

The determinants of her status in society are the sex ratio, the percentage of literacy, drop out ratio of girl child in education, marital status, her reproductive abilities, her political and economic status, the cultural norms of that society, legal safeguards available to women, violence faced by women, portrayal of women in Media in that society, health rights of women etc.

Need of the Study

Women constitute half of the population. They are an important segment of the population. Therefore finding the status of women is very important. The Government of India, therefore, felt that a comprehensive examination of all questions relating to the rights and status of women in this country would provide useful guidelines for the formulation of social policies. For this purpose it constituted the committee on the 'Status of women' by a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare on 22nd September 1971. The report titled 'Toward Equality' was released in 1974. This Report titled 'Towards Equality' is considered a milestone while considering status of women in India. The report revealed the deplorable condition of women in the country evident

from demographic data, an analysis of socio-cultural conditions prevalent, the legal provisions and safeguards, economic role played by women in all sectors, women's access to education, political participation, the policies and programs for welfare and development, the impact of mass media etc.

An update of the **Towards Equality Report** was brought in 2001 entitled '**The Unfinished Agenda- the Status of Women in India, 2001.**' According to this report much of the recommendations of Towards Equality Report are yet to see light and remain much to be implemented although a more than a quarter century has passed.

Now there has been more than a decade that the earlier report was published. Today at international level also the status of women has become an important criterion to assess the development of the country. The Human Development Report (HDR) is an annual milestone published by the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Program. The report uses a concept called Human Development Index (HDI) to measure development. Women experience many kinds of disadvantage and discrimination in health, education and employment. To highlight these disparities, this Report presents HDI values separately for women and men for 148 countries. Worldwide the female HDI value averages about 8 percent lower than the male HDI value.

It is at this juncture that it will not be out of place to assess the status of women.

Research Methodology

Research is undertaken in feminist paradigm. One of the widely accepted definitions of feminism is given by New Encyclopaedia Britannica. It defines feminism as the movement that tries to change roles of women. Feminism can be referred to as political, cultural and economic movements that aim at establishing greater, equal, or among a minority, superior rights and participation in society for women and girls. All feminists want to redefine the boundaries of the public and the private, the personal and political. Gender is socially constructed that leads to distinctions between men and women, a system for the distribution of power and resources that favours men over women.

The study will be based on an appraisal of articles through Critical Analysis. The study will be based on secondary sources. Different articles published under reputed titles will be referred in order to come to conclusion.

Limitation of the Study

The paper is based on analysis of reputed articles and does not involve any findings based on primary study by the researcher. Secondly due to constraint of time and space only few indicators of status of women will be discussed.

Through this research project, I have made an attempt to discern how status of women is reflected in public sphere. For this I have selected to specific criteria.

Declining Sex Ratio

Second Chapter of 'Toward Equality' report highlight the demographic dimension. It shows the constant decline in sex ratio from 1901 to 1971. 2011 Census of India has revealed that Child Sex Ratio (0-6 age group) have been steadily declining. It was 971 in 1981. It further declined to 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. In India, there is general perception about low value of girl child in comparison to boys. A woman who has herself bad experience in terms of discrimination and mobility, naturally feels insecure, thus leading to a vicious cycle of gender deprivation and discrimination towards her daughter. The most visible form of discrimination at birth is the practice of female infanticide which has customarily been deployed to limit the number of females or even female infanticide. Several parents in the Satara region of Maharashtra have named their daughter 'Nakusa or Nakoshi' which means an unwanted child. (Shekhar and Shijith)

Electoral Participation of Women in India

In the pre-independence period Mahatma Gandhi played an important role in mobilizing women. He encouraged an average Indian woman to enter political activities. Though women participated on large scale in national independence movement. But did this participation continued after independence? The Constitution of India has guaranteed equal civil and political rights to both, men and women. Article 325 and 326 of the constitution guarantee political equality- equal right to participate in political activities and right to vote respectively. While the right to vote is exercised and enjoyed by large number of women, the right to participate, especially in the national and state level politics, is still a distant dream. The position depicted through the 16 general elections so far reflects a low representation of women in Lok Sabha. Following table shows the representation of women in Lok Sabha.

Thus there has been a very marginal increase in total number of women elected. Except last two elections it has never exceeded more than 10%.

From the above two indicators it is clear that on the one hand girls are deprived of their right to birth and on the other hand they are deprived of their right to governance. Though other indicators are not discussed in this article, generally they indicate subordination of female to male.

Year	No. of Seats	Members of Lok Sabha	
		No. of Women	%
1952	499	22	4.4
1957	500	27	5.4
1962	503	34	6.7
1967	523	31	5.9
1971	521	22	4.2
1977	544	19	3.4
1980	544	28	5.1
1984	544	44	8.1
1989	529	28	5.3
1991	509	36	7.1
1996	537	34	6.3
1998	545	44	8.1
1999	543	48	8.8
2004	543	45	8.2
2009	543	59	10.8
2014	543	61	11.2

Discussion and Analysis

Women participated in national movement as well as in various other movements. But their political participation is low. Is it so that they participated in these movements, that being the call of time? But political participation requires continuous participation. The other reason seems to be that entire educated middle class seems to have distanced itself from political process. Women being part of it remained away from it. The other possible reason can be the politics seems to be male dominated and women kept away from it. Is it because of socialization?

This superior – inferior relationship is accepted by women and girls due to process of socialization. In a patriarchy, roles are allocated not only in accordance with the biological functions but are allocated according to values prescribed to males and females. These values are transmitted through the process of socialization.

There are various agents of socialization. One important of them is family. Even in educated families the birth of male child is more celebrated than a female child. The perception of parents towards male child and girl child is different. For girl it is to inculcate good values in her, to train her for domestic responsibilities and get her married. For a male child, it is to provide good education, to make him economically independent and to train him to take family responsibilities. It is because of this approach that there is son preference. Son will carry the lineage. He will support the family in old age. One has to pay huge

dowry to get the daughter married. If the size of family is to be small, then it is seen that male child is born. Because of these reasons sex ratio is declining.

In last few decades the approach of parents is somewhat changing, at least in the urban areas of the country. They feel that even girls should be educated too, get good job. But still priority is given to the marriage of the girl and to the economic and professional stability of the boys. Such approach conveys the girl child that marriage is the most important event in

If this picture has to be changed, providing legal measures, reservation for women not only at local level but at all levels, inculcating sense of gender equality is essential.

The first institution of socialization to which child is exposed is family. In the family this superior – inferior relationship is conveyed to the child. From the secondary position in family one sees the secondary position for women in society. Therefore it is essential to change the approach towards roles of male and female in the family itself. It is not event. But it is process.

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