

The Makers of Home And Public Life Women's Position in Public Life in Ancient, Medieval, Modern, and Millennium Interpretative Gender Study

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ANCIENT ERA-MOTHERHOOD

The woman's life is represented in three different stages and aspects of the life cycle. In Ancient era world civilizations like Greek civilization the religion described divine feminine show herself in 3 primary forms, all of which corresponded to women. The 3 ages of Women are such as Maiden, Mother, and Crown. In Ancient India a group of Goddesses recognized as Nine Durgas.¹

The Nine Durgas further, signify the different phases of the Goddess the extension of a Woman's life cycle. Likewise, each religion has its depiction of Women as Goddess and Mothers. The religion of Christianity in Egyptian and Roman civilization has included motherhood, Mother Mary the Virgin mother of Jesus Christ. Scripture depicts the mother of love, affection, sacrifice, and painfulness in various places and situations of Mary Joseph and Jesus of the holy family. ² As a divine mother Mary had a simple life with Joseph, Carpenter earned money and led a peaceful life in BCE era (Holy Bible, St.Luke, chap. Ver.

Furthermore, there are three Gunas or qualities of women which are 3 components of the created universe, sattva (purity), rajas' (energy), and Tamas (ignorance). These are all the qualities of human nature. This corresponds to the three Ancient Goddesses. According to John Woodroffe the thantra of Kamadhenu Tara is identified with yogic bliss. The three Gunas as explained relate to the colors Sattva white pure, rajas red, and Tamas black. The Tamas Goddess Kali is angry. ³ (David Kinsley, Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine, University of California, 1998p.40-42)The Tamas quality is also referred to as a sign of the ultimate knowledge in several texts. Tamas Gunas is associated with laziness, desire, and illusion. This research paper indicates the nature of Goddesses which may apply to women in various life situations. The women must learn to react differently to day-to-day life challenges. Each Goddess reveals that women must make themselves strong in every aspect of life. The women right from Ancient times to the Present prove themselves to be equal with other genders. The equality of gender is a gradual progress in women's

development. During India's independence, the State was under growing pressure to provide health and educational facilities, while volunteer organizations handled the majority of the administration of social welfare programs.

Ancient monuments also show that women were very good in art and embroidery and the nature of beautifying themselves in the Indus Valley civilization and also in the Sangam era or the Dravidian civilization. The very recent survey and evidence made by the Archaeological shreds of evidence proves that Kizhadi gives authentic data about the culture of Ancient Tamilagam and Indus Valley civilization.⁴ (Archaeological Evidences Kizhadi State of Tamil Nadu 2020 – 2023). The women of the Sangam Era wanted to beautify themselves by using gold armaments of the finest designs which did not even compare to the Present women. Likewise, the women of Ancient Egypt, Roman, and Greek civilization women do the same culture in ancient times

MEDIEVAL INDIA - WOMEN

Muslim Women Status

The Women's status in Medieval Indian History indicates the Islamic law and its growing nature. According to the Muslim law is common to women and men in society. The laws of Islam have frequent amendments taken place for the family of Muslims. Particularly, the divorce and marriage. It is equally crucial to find out what Muslim women think of these rules and how they have influenced their status. There are a lot of controversies in this regard because Muslim women are ignorant of their laws related to marriage. Marriage in Islam is based on a civil contract which has two important consequences dower (mahr) and maintenance. Mahr is a promise between Husband and wife. In this context, many Muslim women in India are affected by personal laws. In the case of maintenance, they are affected to a larger extent. ⁵

Moreover, the status of women is a problematic situation. The family did not teach or allow them equality which is the basis of human dignity. (Faridi. F.R.and Siddiqui M.N Islamic Research Circle, Aligarh, Muslim Personal Law, Delhi, 1985, p. IV)

The Muslim women in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka the Muslim women are not allowed to enjoy equal rights with the other gender. Very few women prove themselves as successful in their activities of life. Comparatively, less percentage represents the Muslim community. For its believers, Islam offers a comprehensive code of behaviour. Muslims live both their religious and secular lives under the guidance and control of their faith. Isla. has a strong influence when it comes to personal laws, notwithstanding Independent India's secular orientation. The Muslim community as a whole, and Muslim leaders in particular, resort to traditional rigidity to satisfy their need to uphold the group's religious and cultural identity while simultaneously advancing their interests because they are a minority. ⁶

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The advent of Islam came into existence from the 8th century onwards. It was during the conquests of Sindh by Mohammad Bin Qasim 7th century A.D. Mahamud of Ghazni 1000 to 1025 A.D. The creation of Dehli Sultanate by Iltutmish from 1211 to 1236 Century A.D. During this Rule of Delhi Sultans, only one woman participated in active politics Razia Sultana. Even though as the First Woman ruler she was

able to rule for very few years. The research paper mentioned that Muslim Women represented in lower percentage in Politics in Delhi Sultans Times.⁷ The above information shows the status of women in Delhi Sultan's rule.

This is why the representation of Women in politics is less than 1 percent. Until the Decline of Delhi Sultans in the mid-15th century A.D only one woman became an heir to rule in Delhi Sultans time.

MUGHALS RULE AND MUSLIM WOMEN

The Mughal Empire began to rule India by the Battle fought in the year 1526 at Panipat. Babur founded the Mughal rule through this victory. From the conquests and victory continues the rule. From this point of view, Muslim Women's representation in active politics is for example 5 percent. Compared to the Delhi Sultanate the number of women rulers increased in number in politics. The Mughal Empire began to rule for three centuries from the 15th century A.D. to the 17th. century A.D. Akbar's wives, Jahangir, and Shahjahan allow their wives to participate in politics. This ratio shows the Women's position in Medieval Indian History. Unlike the fewer women in Delhi Sultan rule, nearly 5 percent of women were actively participating in politics.⁸

MODERN ERA AND PROGRESS OF WOMEN IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE

Modern history sources had given evidence about the Women in progress. They began to get their basic education from the primary level. Though the British Government ruled for nearly 3 centuries been organized many Educational institutions from primary level to higher education. Before the advent of Europeans in India especially in Tamil Nadu Women were not allowed to get a basic primary school education. Only the upper caste women have been sent to school in smaller groups. The majority of OBC community women were completely denied even primary education. This situation continued until the European missionary came to Tamil Nadu in the 17th century. The research paper has the evidence of modern era about the development of Education in the Madras Presidency. The Madras Presidency includes Madras city and other districts of South Tamil Nadu. The Women of the Brahmin community have enjoyed educational rights and are allowed to get primary to high levels of Education. Women from other communities are not allowed to get an education. With the advent of Europeans mainly Danish missions arrived in India and they settled near Tranqubar Tarangambadi in Thanjore district Of the early Madras Presidency in the 17th century. There is no evidence available for Tamil Medium school for primary education for girls in Tamil Nadu. Thus, the first primary school was started for girls at Tranqubar by 1717 A.D. This was the first school started by Christian Missionaries in the Madras Presidency. The Christian Missionary's activities in founding the school led to gradual progress in women development of Indian Women of the OBC community. ⁹

Europe had significant political, social, and scientific changes during the nineteenth century. The British made the same advancements to take place in India as in the colonial period. (JAMES MILL, History of British India 1826). According to this book, the status of women can serve as a gauge for societal progress. James Mill, i expounded on how societies progressed, with the "weaker sex's position steadily improving, until they associate on equal terms with the males, and assume the post of willing and valuable conductors." From reading "Halhed's Code of Gentoo Laws", a translation of the Code of Manu, certain

religious texts, and traveler's tales, I gained knowledge about Hindu culture. According to these sources, Hindu women are treated with the worst denigration. 10

The status of disunity was because of low women status in India. At the same time, Few countries are strong because of women's high position in society such as Israel, Rome, and Western Europe. Later, the gradual growth of Education led women to a high position in India.

The British rulers and their ideas of Humanitarianism, Utilitarianism, Social Darwinism, and Nationalism created a new society in India. The Indian society also believes that regeneration is possible. In any case, any meaningful reform would need a shift in gender theory and how women are treated in real life. A mix of new foreign thoughts, native beliefs, and the reaction of Indian women and men to their newfound foreign presence resulted in the ideology that evolved to redefine gender relations. The Indian intellectual realized the position of women in India with European women.11

The end of the 19th century, witnessed the women's development possible through the Christian Missionaries and Government Aided Schools of primary, Secondary, and Higher education in Tamil Nadu and the Indian States. The recommendation by the Reformists also led Indian Women to reform society. The reformers are Ram Mohan Roy Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Swami Dayananda Saraswati. From this new beginning the Hindu classics and recovering from the dark age. There was a “Golden Age started and women occupied high positions and high status. During this Golden Age women were educated and got married after they reached maturity moved freely and also participated in social and political life. (Literature of the Ancient and Medieval Periods: Reading against the Oriental Grains,” Women Writing in India vol. I p.49.). 12

RISE OF WOMEN IN INDIA BY EDUCATION

There were many schools started exclusively for women in Calcutta and Madras. This laid the foundation for further women's development. Missionaries began the first Girls' schools with Government financial support. The encouragement of the Girl's basic school education and formal education was increased to a certain extent. The professional elite also joined to provide education to Girls. With the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the 20th, women were gradually prepared to create curricula and establish schools for girls.13

Likewise, the establishment of the Calcutta School Society to advance female education came shortly after the commencement of Hindu College in 1816. The formal education of Girls. Many unmarried women came from Britain as missionaries to provide education. When Mary Anne Cooke arrived in Calcutta, she was unable to obtain the necessary funds to start school. The Church Missionary Society assisted and opened 30 schools in Calcutta for so-called Hindu Women and the instructors were Brahmin pundits who were not able to attract the high caste Hindu women to bring schools. This is how presents of clothes and other commodities were used to open up educational chances for students in lower levels. Additionally, the Church Missionary Society had greater success in South India, where in 1821 it opened the first girls' boarding school in Tirunelveli. The Scottish Church Society established six schools and 200 Hindu girls by 1840. 14 (The Bengalee Journey 13,1863, p.13)

The Social Reform movement and the leaders supported Women's education. Religious institutions like Brahma Samaj, Prathana Samaj, Theosophical Society, and Arya Samaj all encouraged and supported female education in 19th century. Thus, the root has been set up for women's education in the early 19th century in Modern India.

WOMEN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VARIOUS POLICIES

At the beginning of the year 1947, free India and various planning Schemes for women brought a new change in women's development. The Government introduced many welfare programs for women in India. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, said, "We talk of a Welfare State and focus our resources towards its implementation." In India, everyone must share in this benefit, not only the wealthy elites as it is now. It is encouraging that Indian women have a rich history and legacy. While it is true that they endured a great deal of persecution, these must end for them to fully participate in national affairs. (Jawaharlal Nehru, Foreword to Social Welfare in India 1954)

Development has often been viewed by Indian planners as a process that encompasses the entire social system. A portion of the growth brought about by the plan for equality for men and women is anticipated by the overall development process. Women's welfare and development got special attention from the outset as the Constitution emphasizes the importance of fostering with great care the economic and educational interests of the poorer sections of the population. The first five-year plan placed a strong emphasis on the need to develop appropriate services for welfare to fulfill women's rightful roles in the family and the community.¹⁵ Well-organized government development programs helped the women to concentrate on such as Maternal Mortality 2) Child care 3) Nutrition 4) Maternity and Child health centers 5) Family planning

The Second Five-Year Plan placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of giving women's workplace issues special consideration. Since they were physically and socially prejudiced, as well as being somewhat less organized. Because they believed that the women were unfit for demanding work environments, they were also paid less. Therefore, the plan stipulated that women should be shielded from hazardous jobs, receive maternity benefits, and be provided with childcare facilities. Additionally, it recommended putting the equal pay for equal labour principle into effect as soon as possible. extending chances for part-time work and providing training facilities to help women compete for higher positions. This is suitable for married women and also mothers having small children.

According to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, women from low-income households, working women, needy women with dependent children, and women in need of care and protection would all receive priority training. A functional literacy program designed to provide women with the information and abilities needed to carry out housewife duties such as home economics, health care, nutrition, child care, and so on. This program was provided to the age group of 15 to 45. This was understood as an overall development for women. This special scheme helped the women to education and Socio-Economic programs. ¹⁶

The Fifth Five-Year Plan aims to enhance the marketability of commodities produced in various units by introducing management and sales training alongside production-cum-training units. The main goal of the

health programs is to give vulnerable populations—children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers—minimum health facilities that are integrated with family planning and nutrition. The strategy also highlights the necessity of addressing regional disparities and offering services that satisfy the bare basic requirements of the local population. The strategy was created especially for the growth of women.

WOMEN WELFARE

In 1953, the government established the Central Social Welfare Board as a new organization to support volunteer organizations and advance welfare and development services for children, women, as well as other underprivileged groups.

NUTRITION	Actual	Recommended	Actual	Recommended
Calories	1440	2500	1425	2900
Grams	37	55	39	65
Iron marriage	18	40	18	30
Calcium	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.0

Source For data on Pregnant women: Leela Iyengar 1969 3 p.2
 For Nursing Women: Women Annual Report of Nutrition Res. Lab. 1965- 66
 Recommended Allowances report Nutrition Expen. Group (1968) 17

The above report shows that pregnant women and nutrition and also Iron are needed for marrying women to have a child. The government has established many health centers and health education which includes Women’s health as mothers to lead family health and child care to a better society. The Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 also provided women to work after maternity.

Various programs benefitted women to a larger extent. In this context, women's development traveled a long right from Ancient times to the Present days of the 21st century of the Millennium. A new evolutionary change has taken place in this generation. New generation of equal position and equity of gender bias.

CHALLENGING WOMEN IN 21 CENTURY AN OVERVIEW

Divergent inclinations, ideas, goals, acts, theories, and worldviews that conflict with one another are all part of the ideology that is feminism. However, the women proved themselves as successful in this 21st century. According to Sarah Mills' "Feminist Stylistics," no one body is deserving of the label "feminist." A multitude of strategies, actions, and solutions are part of feminism. Feminism and gender are a mixture of many ideologies that continue until today. Feminism’s goal is a social and cultural transformation for women and other genders. 18

GENDER STUDY TODAY

The makers of Home Women achieved the most in the field of education. Literacy and education levels are important markers of a society's degree of progress. The attainment of universal primary education by 2015 is one of the Millennium Development Goals set forth by the United Nations. Wide variations were found among the major Indian States in the female literacy rate of Kerala with 91.98% top most places to

Mizoram, Tamil Nadu 80.33% Literacy rate. 19 Gender Study though has been challenging in many countries and it has come to a new approach in India. There are many political ideology changed the attitudes of its leaders to welcoming women to popularise their politics and encourage them to actively participate. The government in recent years also given importance to women. The Dravidian ideology continued to support women and their personal, social political, and economic aspects. From the 18th century up to the 21st century the Dravidian civilization and its leaders supported Women's education, economic freedom and knowledge, and individuality and uniqueness. Thus, women and gender studies are marching forward to other countries. Today the government also motivates women as entrepreneurs, NGO business owners, professionals, and educationists to lead future advancements.

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