
International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

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GRT DEVELOPMENT OF WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract:-After independence, women are participating in education gradually and globalization has become boon for women as many of them are getting professional and higher education. Further, employment opportunities also increased for women in twenty-first century. As a result, there is growth in the number of working women especially in urban areas. However, rural women are continued to perform their role in informal work such as seasonal employment and agricultural work. The paper analyzed the statistics related to the growth and development of working women in India.

Keywords: Working Women , globalization , education gradually , Development.

INTRODUCTION:-

The status of Indian women has radically changed since independence. Both the political and cultural changes that followed independence provided equality of opportunities to women in education, employment and political participation. With the help of these changes exploitation of women, to a great extent, could be reduced. More freedom and better orientation were provided to the women's organizations to pursue their interests. Important researches, national policies and programmes focused on women came to be increasingly realized. Several commissions were appointed by the central and the state governments to study the causes of low status of women and to protect their rights in various fields. The celebration of International women's year in 1975 and the activities of UNESCO also created awareness of the problems of women.

The constitution of India does not discriminate between men and women. All the men and women of India are equally entitled for individual freedom, fundamental rights including the right to participate in the social, cultural, religious, educational, economic and political activities. The constitution provides for equality of sex and offers protection to women against exploitation. It has given the voting right to women and in no way treats women as second grade citizens. To protect the interest of the women, the Government of India enacted several laws and Acts such as the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) for preventing Polygamy and Child Marriage and providing equal status to women in all respects, the Hindu Succession Act (1956) provides women the right to their parental property, the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) for prohibiting dowry during marriage, The Indecent Representation of women (prevention) Act (1986) prohibits the vulgar representation of women in the media, and such other legislations were passed so as to improve the status of women in India.

After independence, the Government of India has taken a number of significant steps which are bound to go long way towards the improvement of women's conditions in India. Thus the constitution provides equal rights and opportunities for both men and women in all spheres of life. It also provides human conditions of work and maternity relief. Further, there are legal enactment relating to women's right against immoral traffic, maternity leave etc. The Hindu women's interests are also protected by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1953, prohibiting bigamy, fixing the minimum age of marriage, for judicial separation or dissolution of the marriage on the specified conditions etc. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 may be considered as landmark in the history of Hindu women in that it recognized for the first time the equality of men and women in respect of property rights. Indian Constitution also assures equality, freedom and non exploitation.

Indian Constitution also assures equality, freedom and non exploitation to all sections of the people irrespective of race, religion and sex. The present day proves to be a big contrast compared to the past. It is now an established fact that women should contribute to the economic, social and national development of the country; women power should be used to enrich the common good; their talents and capabilities should not be ignored; the nation should be enriched by their knowledge.

Many factors have constituted to the improvement in the status of women. The scientific and technological progress all over the world has accelerated the process of change in the position of women in India also. The change in the structure of the

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economy through industrialization offers greater role for women in the productive function.

In both villages and cities there has been a remarkable increase in the number of women going out of the four walls of the household and becoming workers. In the employment market they are giving tough competition on the men folk. In some fields, the number of women employees is steadily increasing. For example, women working as teachers, college professors, doctors, nurses, advocates, judges, managers, administrators, police officers, bank employees, clerks, typists, telephone operators, receptionists, personal assistants and so on are to be found in almost all major cities. In big cities, women do not hesitate to work as bus conductors and drivers, police constables, auto rikshaw drivers and so on. Since 1991, they have been getting recruited into armed force, air force and naval force also. In urban areas, women white-collar workers are on the increase since 1970.

Employment has given women economic independence and the feeling of importance. They now feel that they can stand on their own legs and look after the entire family by themselves. This has boosted their self-pride and self-confidence. In order to give protection to the economic interests and rights of the women folk the government has undertaken various economic legislations which cover areas such as right to property or inheritance, equal wages, working conditions, maternity benefits, and job security.

The globalization becomes a boon also in development of the status of women. The process of urbanization mostly affected the status of urban women. In the urban areas, the status of women may be examined at three levels, i.e., rich women, middle class women and poor women. The rich and the poor have always had a lifestyle of their own. The rich women who are educated and westernized are in an insignificant minority. They normally prefer to live in decent areas and lead a posh life. The poor class women lead a lower-class life in labour colonies, slums, indecent localities, densely populated areas, and so on. Their life is no better than the poor women of the rural areas.

The earning women members also do not have the full freedom to spend their money in accordance with their own will and wish. Most of the women do not prefer to take decision. Thus, still women are not completely free from the hold of the tradition. In the unorganized sector, exploitation of women continues, for they are illiterate, ignorant and unorganized. In most of the homes, male-children are still being preferred to female children. If appears that the societal approach towards women, their role and status has not radically changed. Hence, bringing about more and more legislations to ensure better opportunities to grant more rights and concessions is of no benefit unless there is a basic change in the people's attitude towards women and women's role in society.

It is emphasized that the employment of women, generally living in rural areas, most of the work that women do, such as collecting fuel, fodder and water, or growing vegetables, or keeping poultry for domestic consumption, goes unrecorded in the Census counts. It is well known that women and children work in huge numbers in beedi-rolling, agarbatti-rolling, bangle making, weaving, brassware, leather, crafts and other industries. Yet, only 3 percent of these women are recorded as labourers. They are forced to work for pitiable wages and are denied all social security benefits. A study by SEWA of 14 trades found that 85 per cent of women earned only 50 per cent of the official poverty level income.

The Distribution of Main Workers by Sex according to Education Level in India in 2001 is shown in the following table.

Table No. 1. Distribution of Main Workers by Sex according to Education Level in India (2001)

Education Level	Population (In Million)			% Main Workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total	1028.6	532.2	496.5	30.4	45.1	14.7
Illiterate	467.9	195.6	272.3	24.3	35.3	16.5
Literate	560.7	336.5	224.2	35.5	50.9	12.5
Literate but below Matric/Secondary	381.8	220.6	161.2	29.8	43.8	10.7
Matric/Secondary but below Graduate	117.4	76.1	41.4	43.4	61.0	11.3
Technical Diploma or Certificate not Equal to Degree	3.7	2.9	0.8	60.9	64.6	46.8
Graduate and above other than technical Degree	32.6	21.9	10.7	57.0	73.4	23.5
Technical Degree or Diploma Equal to Degree or Post-Graduate Degree	5.1	3.6	1.4	65.6	72.2	48.6

Source : Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India.

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It is noted that now women are increasingly participating in all the sectors and industries along with the agriculture. The industry category-wise distribution of main workers by sex in 2001 is presented as under.

Table No. 2. Industry Category-wise Distribution of Main Workers by Sex in India (2001)

Industrial Category	Percentage Share		Percentage Share of Different Industries in Female Employment
	Female	Male	
Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry; Fishing	36.7	63.3	14.5
Mining and Quarrying	13.8	86.2	1.1
Manufacturing and Repairs	21.6	78.4	36.1
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	4.4	95.6	0.3
Construction	9.2	90.8	4.3
Wholesale and Retail Trade	6.9	93.1	7.4
Hotels and Restaurants	9.1	90.9	0.9
Transport, Storage and Communications	2.9	97.1	1.5
Financial Intermediation; Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	12.4	87.6	3.0
Public Administration and Defence; Education; Health; Community and Social Services; Pvt. Households; etc	24.9	75.1	31.1
Total	17.1	82.9	100

Note : Figures for 2001 exclude those of three sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur.
Source: Compiled from the statistics released by : Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India.

The statistics also revealed that the women of all the age groups are participating in employment now. Following table disclosed the age group-wise work force participation rate by sex and sector in india in different years.

Table No. 3. Age Group-wise Workforce Participation Rate by Sex and Sector in India in Selected Years

Age Group Year	Rural						Urban					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	1993 - 94	1999 - 00	2004 - 05	1993 - 94	1999 - 00	2004 - 05	1993 - 94	1999 - 00	2004 - 05	1993 - 94	1999 - 00	2004 - 05
5-9	11	7	9	14	7	3	4	3	3	4	2	3
10-14	139	93	70	142	96	75	71	52	53	47	37	35
15-19	598	532	529	371	314	331	404	366	381	142	121	144
20-24	902	889	981	470	425	435	772	755	769	230	191	250
25-29	980	975	982	528	498	530	958	951	957	248	214	261
30-34	988	987	988	587	557	593	983	980	987	283	245	308
35-39	992	986	991	610	578	642	990	986	984	304	289	340
40-44	989	984	985	607	586	627	984	980	983	320	285	317
45-49	984	980	982	594	566	616	976	974	976	317	269	269
50-54	970	953	963	543	515	562	945	939	939	287	264	259
55-59	941	930	931	468	450	509	856	811	832	225	208	218
60 & Above	699	640	645	241	218	254	443	402	366	114	94	100
All (0+)	561	540	555	331	302	333	542	542	570	164	147	178

Source : Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India.

In this respect, Pulla Rao (2007) remarked that although women work for longer hours and contribute substantially to the family income, they are not perceived as workers by either the women themselves or the data collecting agencies and the Government, as all of them do not recognize the multidimensional functions of women which include their productive and

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reproductive labour. Women quite often are the major bread earners for their families. This also goes unrecognized" emphasizes Shramshakti, the pioneering report on women in the unorganized sector. Evidently women's work continues to be invisible and women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in the field of employment. The result is the non-recognition of their multiple roles and devaluation of their status in the household and in the family.

There is an increasing trend among educated women to seek gainful employment in offices, schools, colleges etc. Studies on career choices of girls revealed that most girls employed before marriage, resigned their jobs as per the wishes of their husbands. Employment has given women economic independence and the feeling of importance. They now feel that they can stand on their own legs and look after the entire family by themselves. In the employment market they are giving tough competition on the men folk. In some fields, the number of women employees is steadily increasing. For example, women working as teachers, college professors, doctors, nurses, advocates, judges, managers, administrators, police officers, bank employees, clerks, typists, telephone operators, receptionists, personal assistants and so on are to be found in almost all major cities. In big cities, women do not hesitate to work as bus conductors and drivers, police constables, auto rikshaw drivers and so on. Since 1991, they have been getting recruited into armed force, air force and naval force also. In urban areas, women white-collar employees are on the increase since 1970. This has boosted their self-pride and self-confidence. Women continued in their jobs only when their husbands permitted. But such attitudes were also changed in the twenty-first century.

The recent statistics of the United Nations (2004) as presented by Pulla Rao (2007) on world's women reveal the folio:

1. Women now comprise an increasing share of the world's labour-at least one-third in all regions except in North Africa and Asia.
2. Self-employment and part-time and home-based work have expanded the opportunities for women's participation in the labour force but one characterized by lack of security, lack of benefits and low income.
3. More women than before are in the labour force throughout their reproductive years, though obstacles to combining family responsibilities with employment persist.

According to Muthuraj (2001), the type of work done by women in India can be classified into the following categories:

1. Wage and salaried employment;
2. Self-employment outside the household for profit;
3. Self-employment in cultivation and household industry for profit;
4. Self-employment in cultivation for own consumption;
5. Other subsistence activities in all allied sectors like dairy, other livestock rearing, such as, poultry, goats, pigs, etc., and fishing, hunting and cultivation of fruit and vegetable gardens;
6. Activities related to domestic work, such as, fetching fuel, fodder, water, forest;
7. Producing, repairing of dwellings, making cow-dung cakes, food preservation, etc;
8. Domestic work, such as, cooking, cleaning, care of children, the aged, and sick.

Of course, the working women have already improved the status in the society. But along with the outside work, women have also play social role and family role. Hence, there is role conflict of the working women in the family and at the work place. Women playing only the role of housewife do not have such role conflict, but they have lesser or no economic freedom as their work in the family is considered as unproductive. It is emphasized that even though the services of housewives considered as economically unproductive, their contribution in the care of the family members especially husband and children is precious and valuable. Of course, the working women are also looking after their family members, but they have lack of much attention, due to the outside work.

CONCLUSION:

Education and employment gave women status and respect in family as well as in the society. Further, it also given equality to women with men. But it is noted that still the society thinks that women have to do household work also. Hence, now women have to play dual role in the society. In families, where there are cooperative family members, working women does not much problems, but problems are going to arise for the working women, where there are not cooperative family members. Under such circumstances, working women have to face many problems such as more responsibility of children, frequent conflicts with husband and family members, frequent differences of opinions with the colleagues, lack of peace of mind, ill health due to heavy stress, etc. Of course, employment given women equality, status and respect, but also the negative effects such as stated above. Hence, working women have to plan her office as well as household work for the smooth social life.

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