

WOMEN IN SLUM

Phalrani Shivramsing Rajput , Research Scholar, Department of sociology
Shivaji University, Kolhapur

Introduction

In Indian society, there is a great deal of contradiction in terms of the social status of women. On the other hand, there is the contradiction between the religious glorification of women and on the other hand the exploitation of the secondary position in the society. There is a huge contribution of women behind in giving stability to this society. Cultural level of any society can be understood from the condition of women in that society.

Objective of the Study

- 1) To understand historical background of status of women in Indian society.
- 2) To study the concept of slum.
- 3) To study the women in slum.

Sources of Data Collection

The secondary source method is used for study, which includes Journals, Research Articles, Thesis, Government reports etc

Historical background of status of women in Indian Society

A) Status of women in ancient and medieval period

In Vedic period, the status of women was high. They were living free intellectual and religious life like men. An education, which was necessary for such life, was given to them equally with boys. The examples of such intellectual women are Lopamudra, Vishwabara, Ghosha, Sulabha, Maitreyi, Gargi and Vachaknavi. These women were also working as a teacher. At that time, there was no differentiation between men and women. But post-Vedic age from 600 A.C to 300 A.C., the period which is also known as Mahabharat period, in this age the Siration of differentiation between men and women was created. When Gandhari come to know that her husband is blind, she also puts a strip on her eyes and led a life of blind.

Period of Dharmashastra is from third century to of eleventh century which is also known as Kaalsutra period. In Sutrakal also the status of women was degraded. Her individual personality was eliminated. 'Manu' brought image of low women before society. The women were treated like untouchables. From 16th century to 18th century, in the medieval period, the influence of Muslims on Indian culture increased. So the remaining freedom of Indian women also came in danger. In order to secure from leering of Muslim kings/ruler, Hindu people started putting behind the curtain. Out of it, two baneful traditions like purdah system and child marriage started. Encouragement was given to Sati tradition. (Patil Usha, 11-12).

B) Status of women in British Period

With the arrival of Britishers, the conditions of Indian women started changing. Before their arrival, their condition was pitiable. Being considered as a weaker section of the society women not have their own identity. Once the British rule started in India western concepts and culture came in India which impacted a lot on Hindu society as well as religion with invasion of Britishers and arrival of western ideas made people aware about their own ignominious condition especially the position of women. Despite Raja Ram Mohan Roy, D. N. Tagore, IshwarchandraVidyasagar and in Maharashtra Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Maharshi Karve were the other reformers who started movement for the betterment of women. (Chavan Shivajirao, 2002 : 12).

C) Status of Women in Post - Independent Period

After independence, women in India became legally and politically free from their slavish tradition. The Indian constitution gave equal rights to men as well as women. Gradually, women started participating in social & economic activities go on increasing in all over country. After 1970's government started making efforts to bring women into mainstream for the development of nation. NGO as well government started undertaking

various programmes to enhance social, economic, legal and political status of women. After independence, development of women can be seen in some spheres only but in general, women in them are underprivileged from their legal rights (Kamble Archana, 2000:2).

Concept of Slum

The concept 'slum' came into parlance during 18th century. According to Eric Partridge 'A short etymological dictionary of 'modern English' the slum is probably derived from 'Slumber' which was once thought to be unknown, back street, or alleys, wrongly presumed to be sleeping quiet. Such kind of explanation reflects gloomy image of slum and provides a general concept of its identification.

Slum is an appropriate word that carries the exact meaning whereas other terminologies are invented to define different kinds of poor areas like 'blighted area', deteriorated neighborhood 'gray area', 'lower class neighborhood', 'low income area' (Hunter David, 1968 : 6).

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines slum as "..... residential areas that are physically and socially deteriorated and in which satisfactory family life is impossible. Bad housing is a major index of slum conditions. By bad housing is meant dwellings that have inadequate light, air, toilet and bathing facilities, that are in bad repair, dump and improperly heated that don't afford opportunity for family privacy, that are subject to fire hazard and over crowd the land, leaving no space for recreational use" (A statistical compendium 2011 : 6).

Women in Slum

Socio-economic, cultural as well as political factors given below effect the development of women and women in slum is also not exception to it.

A) Condition of women in slum Areas

The socio-economic condition of women living in these slum areas is not much good. Though they pass through so many problems, they are not getting that much respect as it is given to men. They are leading ignorant life. Though they contribute financially, they are not allowed to participate in decision making, women in slum area have to bear physical annoyance.

Shadia Sharmin and Farhanaz Luna (2015 : 26-32), has found out by studying socio-economic condition of women in selected slums of Dhaka city of Bangladesh. The socio-economic condition of women in Dhaka city is not good. While doing job outside the house and also have to carry all the responsibilities of house, still they have to psychological harassment done by their husband. Which is but common in slums of Dhaka city. They are not much aware about their own rights, still girls are away from facilities like medicine, education. They get married at an early age and consequently become mother at an early stage. The socio-economic condition of women in Indian slums is not much different. Women in slum area are still exploited and deprived. They are away from development.

Generally the social status of women in slum area is low. They do not have fundamental facilities like well –built house, clean water, electricity, toilet facility, etc. They are more ignorant and indigent. Being an illiterate, they do not have good job opportunities. As a result their economic condition is not much good.

B) Socio –Economic Status of Women in Slum Area

Slum area is a place which is damp and unhealthy where people over there do confront with the atmosphere around them. The reason behind it is poverty which is part and parcel of their life so they remain. So their socio-economic status remain rearward. By earning money, women in slum area support their family financially and in same family they remain head of the family.

Now a day, the work which is available in informal as well as unorganized sector. In which no skill is needed to work especially domestic work, laundry work and ayah which women generally do. They find doing works like tailoring, retailer shopkeeper, home maid, labourer in construction, alcohol retailer and other illegal things (Pawar D. H. and Mane Vaishali, 2013 : 69-72). Tripathy (2003: 26-82) found that 'women do work till the last day of

their delivery and delivery is also done by relatives or other women or midwife'. Most of the slum women living in urban area finds problems of illiteracy, low financial condition and as a result low standard of living.

C) Material surrounding of slum areas and Health status of slum women

As compared to men, women are treated as interior all over the world. Due to lack of fundamental facilities, the health issue are found in women in slums. In India either a pregnant women or a child dies in every seven minutes. The reason behind these deaths are, infections after delivery, hemorrhage, complicated condition of abortion, low education and awareness etc. The health of women in slums is deplorable which is unhygienic due to lack of education as well as low social status which remain responsible for their degraded health condition. Sarode Vijay, (2010 :82-94) has shown through his study done on how illiteracy creates pregnancy complication among women in slum in greater Mumbai. In his study he has pointed out that women in slums do not take antenatal care. Particularly illiterate mothers do no take care during pregnancy and delivery.

Kadam Anusaya (2015 : 48-51) has taken a review of research articles based on female health in slum areas published in various Indian journals during 2010 to 2014. By studying all these papers she finds out the conclusion that women in slum area are careless and illiterate hence their status is also low.

Summary

In India there is inequality towards men and women. Women have to sacrifice, they are noble and of courageous nature but still they have to bear inequality and discrimination. Women in urban slums are leading life of poverty on one side and on the other side life of marginalized and exploited. Not only young but also elder women are also included in it.

References

- 1) Patil Usha; 2012; *Paritakthya :Vyatha Ani Vastav*, Kolhapur; Akshar Deep Prakashan; p. 11-12.
- 2) Chavan Shivajirao M.; 2002; 'A Study of Role Conflict Among Working Women in Solapur City'; Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis; Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur; p. 12.
- 3) Kamble Archana R.; 2000; 'Women Leadership in Panchayati Raj : A Sociological Study; Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis; Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur; p. 2.
- 4) Hunter David R.; 1968; *The slums-challenge and response*; New York; The Free Press, Collier-Macmillan Limited, p. 6.
- 5) A statistical compendium 2011, Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, National Buildings Organization, New Delhi, p.6.
- 6) Sharmin Shadia and Luna Farhanaz; 2015; 'The Socio-economic conditions of female slum Dwellers : A study on slums in Dhaka'; *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*; Vol. 20, Issue -3, P. 26-32.
- 7) Pawar D. H. and Mane Vaishali ; 2013 ; 'Socio-economic status of slum dwellers with special reference to women : Geographical investigation of Kolhapur Slums'; *Research Front*; Vol. I, No.1, P. 69-72.
- 8) Tripathy N.; 2003; *Women on Informal Sector*; New Delhi; Discovery Publishing House; p. 26-82.
- 9) Sarode Vijay M.; 2010; 'Does illiteracy influence pregnancy complications among women in the slums of greater Mumbai'; *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*; Vol. 2 (5), P. 82-94.
- 10) Kadam Anusaya M.; 2015; 'Female Health in Slum Areas : A Review'; *International Journal of Advanced Research*; Volume 3, Issue 2, P. 48-51.