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A Social Problems, Exploitation, Issues, and Challenges of Urban Women in Maharashtra State, India

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Abstract

The aims of present research to attempts the status of social problems, exploitation, issues and challenges of urban women in Maharashtra. The objectives also included identifying the key socio-economic attributes contributing to women's status, safety and security, and to study women's involvement in various activities/ organizations for improving of family, community and society. Women, irrespective of their class, caste and educational status, are not safe in the modern society women have been the victims of exploitations since long time in different fields in their life both physically, socially, mentally and economically. India is fast developing but women's in Maharashtra continue to be discriminated.

The declining sex ratio in Maharashtra amply portrays the discrimination shown towards women at the stage of birth. They are victims of crime directed specifically at them, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry-related crimes, molestation, sexual harassment, eve-teasing, etc. Women's are not only entitled for survival but also to a life with dignity, grace and equal opportunities so that they can grow to their full potential. There is an urgent need to pay attention to the issues that concern this section of population. The focus should be on poverty reduction, gender justice, health, nutrition, sustained awareness of rights and redressal, eradication of social evils etc.

It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. The study is based on purely from secondary sources. The study reveals that women of Maharashtra are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to women.

Key Words: Women Education, Socio-Economic Status. Crimes against women, Policy implications, Domestic violence, Dowry, Politics, Discrimination etc.

Introduction

In the history of human development, women have been as vital in the history making as men have been. In fact higher status for women work performed by them in a society is a significant indicator of a nation's overall progress. Undoubtedly, without the active participation of women in national activities, the social, economic or political progress of a country will deteriorate and become stagnant. Having a career poses challenges for women due to their family responsibilities. Traditionally Maharashtrian women had been home makers but in the recent decades, proper education and better awareness, in addition to the ever increasing cost of living has made them to go out and choose careers. Although Maharashtrian women have started working outside their homes but still they have a long way to go both culturally, socially and economically, to bring in positive attitudinal changes in the mind-set of people.

It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population but Maharashtra has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female's population has been comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. In the Western societies, the women have got equal right and status with men in all walks of life. But gender disabilities and discriminations are found in Maharashtra even today. The paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as Goddess and at other times merely as slave.

Maharashtra woman bearing the torch of cultured living through self-sacrifice, physical and mental endurance, and compassion is waxing eloquence for retrogressive drudgery. It lends rationale for under-nutrition of girls, unequal health care, inequitable access to resources, and denial of property rights all reserved for women born into a tradition that hails women's capacity for forbearance. The attention required is still not being paid to the issues that concern this section of population the other hand. Maharashtra is fast developing but women's in Maharashtra continue to be discriminated. The declining sex ratio in Maharashtra amply portrays the discrimination shown towards women at the stage of birth. Women may be have stardom in any stream but are getting harassment every day by their surroundings. They are victims of crime directed specifically at them, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry-related crimes, molestation, sexual harassment, eve-teasing, etc. The crimes against women in Maharashtra are growing at a rampant speed. Women, irrespective of their class, caste and educational status, are not safe.

Objectives:-

1. To Examine Social problems in Maharashtrian women.
2. To examine the stages of women exploitation.
3. To understand the different forms of women exploitation in present society.
4. To know the Indian penal and special local laws of crimes against women
5. To examine Issues and Challenges of urban women in Maharashtra.
6. To provide some suggestion to overcome of these issues.

Methodology:-

Data were collected using face to face interviews and through two focus group discussions.

Data collection process

Both qualitative and quantitative aspects have been taken into consideration for the study. The methodology followed was a questionnaire-based survey among the urban women of the selected localities in Maharashtra cities; in addition to face to face interviews have been taken. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items on various aspects of the study in addition to the demographic details of the respondents. A pilot study among 30 of different women of Parli town was initially conducted to test the validity of the questionnaire. Subsequently certain items were dropped and certain others were modified for better elicitation of results.

Data were collected using the personal contact approach. Questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 30 women located in Parli city, out of which 17 valid and complete

responses were returned. Each of these 17 women was interacted with and interviewed face to face. Some related questions were asked of them and the comments noted down. In addition to face to face interviews, two focus group discussions were conducted with eight women in each group. These discussions also elicited information and data that have been discussed. Different methods were used for collecting data on the urban women.

Social problems, Exploitation, Issues, and Challenges:-

Meaning Exploitation: An act that exploits or victimizes someone (treats them unfairly)"capitalistic exploitation of the working class"; "paying Blacks less and charging them more is a form of victimization".

Meaning of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment is "unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive and affects working conditions or creates a hostile work environment."

Incidences like sexual abuse by near relatives, co-habitation with near or dear friends and subsequent decline of marriages and issues relating to illegal pregnancy etc. are the real fact, the information of which remains mostly in darkness. In addition, girl students molested by teachers or repeated sexual abuse by antisocial activists are also an unfortunate reality. Women exploitation in the form of physical and mental torture on wives by husband is also common, mostly where women are simply a house wife and not associated with any employment. As a result, they are compelled to keep their head down in a speechless manner tolerating the cruelty of their husband helplessly. The problems of women exploitation started from early ages and the stages are Pre-birth stage of women, Infancy stage of women, Childhood stage of women, The adolescence stage of women, Reproductive stage of women, Domestic Violence, Female Infanticide and Feticide, Dowry etc. The root cause of this type of attitude lies in the belief that male child inherits the clan in India with an exception of Meghalaya. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. Poverty is the reality of life for the vast majority women in Maharashtra.

The another factor that poses challenge in realizing women's. There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in Maharashtra. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the problems of women in Maharashtra.

Education: The grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. The gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in Maharashtra. The gender bias is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.

Poverty: Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.

Health and Safety: The health and safety concern of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.

Conclusion:-

1. Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio - Economic forces have given some respite to a large proportion of the population. However, there are still quite a few areas where women empowerment in Maharashtra is largely lacking.
2. There needs to be a sea – change in the mind set of the people in the Maharashtra. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. It is better that this is embraced earlier than later for our own good.
3. There are several Government programmes and NGOs in the Country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not.
4. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications, the problems of Women begin with a guarantee of their health and safety.
5. The problems of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings.
6. In order to create a sustainable world, we must begin to develop the strength to Women.

Thus in short, the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality and women's empowerment can be realized in Maharashtra only when the traditional practices like female infanticide, dowry deaths, honor killings by khap panchayat, domestic violence, or sexual abuse is eliminated. It is only then that gender equality and women's empowerment can become a reality. Since ages, women continue to feel to be a weaker section of society. Biologically, it can be said and may be true that woman is not as strong as man, but being physically weak does not mean that she should be sealed within the four walls of home limiting her to the biological role, resulting in lifelong dependence on man. In spite of the opportunities thrown open to her in various fields along with some labor-saving gadgets in the house, she still seeks a place as an independent honorable human being. The concept of equality has exercised a powerful emotional appeal in the struggle of women to free them from age-old oppression. The only long-term solution is to change the mindsets of the people they need to view women with respect and as equal partners in building India's society. We need different strategies to protect women's rights – more efficient application of laws, gender sensitization of police and other officials, a strong and working legal system, direct service provision for women who have survived violence and, most importantly, changing behaviors and attitudes towards women,

Women's issues do not occur on the priority list of most of the urban. Women going to field work are often subject to sexual harassment. Public transport system is overcrowded and men take advantage of the circumstances to physically harass women. Men offer unwanted attention which can still be shaken off but a woman is placed in a difficult situation if the higher range demands sexual favours. If refused the boss can easily take it out on the woman in other

ways to make life miserable for her. There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women. On the other hand if a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues do not hesitate to attribute it to sexual favours. The psychological pressure of all this can easily lead to a woman quitting her job. Most of the problems that beset field working women are in reality rooted in the social perspective of the position of women. Traditionally men are seen as the bread winner and women as the house-keepers, child bearers and rearers. This typecast role model continues to put obstacles before the working women. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

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