

Dr. Nalin Chirakkara
Anandasrinivasan Deviprabha

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER PARITY



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CHAPTER 1

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: TOWARDS EQUALITY AND PROGRESS

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the topic of women's empowerment in India, focusing on the challenges, progress, and potential solutions for achieving gender equality. It examines the social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to the empowerment of women and the barriers that hinder their progress. The study analyzes various initiatives and policies implemented to promote women's empowerment and highlights the positive outcomes and areas that require further attention. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the importance of women's empowerment for overall societal progress and provides recommendations for future endeavors.

KEYWORDS:

Economic, Education, Employment, Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women in all civilizations in the 19th century were primarily limited to domestic duties, caring for the family, and staying at home. They were often discriminated against in society and did not have the ability to vote or own property. In the latter half of the 19th century, the women's movement began to take shape in reaction to social, political, and economic inequities. The early goals of the women's movement were to provide women the right to vote and ownership of property. Since then, it has grown to include topics like sexuality, families, masculine privilege, fair pay, reproductive rights, and other things [1], [2]. Women today have been able to enter practically all fields of endeavor and play significant roles in all aspects of life because to the efforts of women's movements in the 20th century, whether it be in the fields of education, health, politics, science, social work, or law. But there are still a lot of difficulties. The patriarchal grip on society has been greatly weakened by women's growing self-expression in public. As a result, there has been a sharp rise in violence against women in India. How to combat this regressive patriarchal attitude is the issue that the women's movement in India confronts in the twenty-first century. Women's problems are now very much in the mainstream, as seen by the recent rallies that both men and women participated in in response to the horrifying acts of violence against women in our cities. This has been made possible in large part by the perseverance and commitment of women's activists as well as the impact that women's movements have had on Indian society over the last century. In the unit, you will learn in-depth information on these movements. In addition, the idea of women's empowerment will be covered in this unit.

Women's Empowerment Theory

The most important mechanism for securing the future of women in India is women's empowerment. It is a methodical technique that India has to take more seriously. Long-term reforms may be achieved through empowering women, which has been demonstrated to be the most effective strategy for truly altering systems of prejudice against women. India's former president Pratibha Patil had stated that gender equality and the empowerment of women are the most critical points and that gender equality is not an agenda of women versus men but rather men should be partners in the empowerment of women. In the new millennium, the government of India came up with the declaration of the year 2001 as "Women's Empowerment Year" to focus on a vision "where women are equal partners like men [3], [4]."

The process of allowing or authorizing someone to think, conduct, take action, and control work in a self-reliant manner and take charge of one's own future is known as empowerment. Control over wealth and ideology are both included. Empowerment refers to the growth of a person's resources and ability to exert influence on, control, and hold institutions that have an impact on their life accountable. Empowerment may be seen of as a way to create a social context in which one can make decisions and choices for social progress, either individually or collectively. Through the process of learning, growing, and experiencing new things, it enhances one's natural talent. One definition of empowerment is a process that includes knowledge and consciousness awakening, capacity growth that results in enhanced contribution, effective authority to make choices and carry out power and control, and transformational action. This entails the capacity to inspire others to share our worries and achieve our goals. Family, community, market, and the state are just a few of the many levels at which diverse forces at play in the relationship between women and power. Importantly, on a psychological level, it concerns women's capacity for assertiveness, which is shaped by the gender roles that are ascribed to her, particularly in a society that is resistant to change.

Empowerment is a multifaceted social process that aids individuals in taking charge of their own lives, communities, and societies by taking action on topics they see as important. Empowerment challenges our presumptions about the status quo, the asymmetrical power relationship in decision-making, personal and social rights, access to resources and entitlement, and social dynamics. It occurs within sociological, psychological, and economic spheres and at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. The importance of education and employment to sustainable development is highlighted by the empowerment of women.

Women's empowerment typically consists of five elements

First, a sense of self-worth; second, the right to have control over their own lives; third, inside the home; fourth, outside the home; and fifth, the capacity to influence social change in order to establish a just social and economic order on a national, international, and global scale. For human rights-based approaches to development, the questions surrounding women's empowerment and the status and position of women have now become vital. The United Nations Population Fund (UNDP) developed Gender Empowerment Measures that are targeted at the three variables that are indicators of women's role in society: political power or decision-making, literacy, and health. The Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994 emphasized more focus on women's empowerment as the core issue. Due to certain groups of women becoming more aware of their prejudice in many spheres of family and public life, this trend has been further accelerated. They may also organize on matters that may have an impact on their stance as a whole. If women

can make informed judgments and are educated, empowerment will be more relevant. For a woman to be able to face the obstacles of equality, she must be physically well. Certain quantitative and qualitative markers of women's empowerment were recognised in 1995 at the Beijing conference on women [5], [6]. These are listed below:

Qualitative Measures

1. Increased confidence and self-worth
2. Improved literacy, communication, and understanding of the law, nutrition, and reproductive rights
3. Changes in the amount of leisure time and child care time
4. Workload changes in newly launched programs
5. Roles and responsibilities in the family and society are changing
6. Violence against women and girls is clearly on the rise or declining.
7. Responses to sati, dowry, child marriage, and other societal traditions that have changed
8. Women's involvement in meetings has changed in a noticeable way.
9. Gaining more negotiation and bargaining power at home, in the community, and collectively
10. Increasing access to and capacity for information gathering
11. Creation of women's groups
12. Changing societal attitudes for the better

DISCUSSION

Empowerment of women via education

The main factors in achieving the empowerment of women are educational achievement and economic involvement. Women's political rights are a major topic of debate in many formal and unofficial campaigns throughout the globe since women's empowerment is a global problem. At the worldwide women's conference held in Nairobi in 1985, the idea of women's empowerment was first proposed. The key to women's empowerment is education since it gives them the tools to take on difficulties, question their conventional roles, and transform their lives. Only until the nation's women have achieved true empowerment can India really expect to become a developed nation. India now has the highest percentage of illiterates in the whole globe. India's literacy rate increased significantly from 18.3% in 1951 to 74% in 2011, while the percentage of women enrolled in school also increased significantly, from 7% to around 65%.

Our laws, development strategies, plans, and programs have been designed to progress women in many fields within the framework of a democratic democracy. Women's concerns have undergone a significant paradigm change from welfare to development as of the Fifth Five Year Plan. In recent years, it has become clear that the key factor in defining women's position is their empowerment. In 1990, a law passed by the Parliament created the National Commission of Women to protect the rights and legal privileges of women. Women now have seats reserved for them in panchayats and municipalities thanks to the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, creating a solid framework for their involvement in local decision-making. Education for women is crucial since it is a fundamental human right and is necessary for the development of many of their talents. Education enables women to demonstrate their capacity to participate in all endeavors and seize new chances. These accomplishments in education made by women have the potential to spread over generations and within families. Education spending for females

contributes to fewer, healthier households. Girls and women who are educated are better able to understand their rights and have the confidence to assert them. In addition to educational and economic empowerment, improvements in women's mobility, social contact, and intra-household decision-making are required. However, the majority of programs in India for the education of girls and women have reinforced gender norms, particularly motherhood, both in the curriculum and in its effects on assessment [7], [8].

Financial Empowerment

One of the most important prerequisites for the improvement of women's social standing is the economic empowerment of women. Women cannot be on an equal footing with males in the decision-making process until they achieve economic independence or contribute almost equal amounts of money to the family's maintenance. The issue of gender-based subordination or discrimination against women has a strong connection to men's economic dependency. A country must economically empower women if it wants to see rapid development. Economic empowerment of women strengthens their capacity to improve society. Women are becoming more influential in a variety of professions today, including business, law, medical, education, and politics. The process of empowering women has already started in India. Girls are enrolling in school, universities, and other higher education institutions in greater numbers. Women have been able to break new ground in entrepreneurship as a consequence of globalization and the widespread use of information technology. Urban upper class homes in particular may attest to this. The Wal-Mart President's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative has been established to set goals and implement real measures to improve the situation of women by 2016. The following are a few of the measures the project has outlined:

1. Expand the use of women-owned businesses in sourcing;
2. Educate and Empower Nearly 1 Million Women; and
3. Encourage Suppliers of Professional Services and Merchandising to Be More Representative of Diversity and Inclusion.

Democratic Empowerment

An important step toward empowering women is their engagement in politics. Since its establishment, the Indian Constitution has vowed to bring about political and socioeconomic change. It has undergone several amendments to legitimize programs for the protection of women and underprivileged groups. In particular, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts provide women the chance to enter the political realm. These modifications include a 33% reserve for women in municipal authorities in order to include women in politics from the very beginning. The majority of locations have had great success with the modifications, particularly Kerala, Manipur, and West Bengal.

Women are now eligible to join Panchayati Raj Institutions as members, sarpanches, and members of Block and Zilla Panchayat Adhyakshas thanks to the modifications. Traditional gender, caste, class, and hierarchical roles have been weakened as a result, but there is still a long way to go. For the right to participate in these institutions as more than just the wives of their husbands, women must struggle. In addition, it is very challenging for women to assume leadership positions in local political organizations due to the poor self-esteem they experience inside their own families.

The last ten years of experience have shown that women who have been given access to panchayats and municipalities have done well. Some of them have already built up exemplary service histories and have even received prestigious accolades for their accomplishments. Since they are mostly illiterate, many of them have made learning to read and write a top priority in order to improve their ability to do their jobs. A sizable number of teachers, attorneys, and other community leaders have been successful in winning elections and joining the panchayats.

The proportion of women participating in politics at different levels of political activity has drastically grown as a consequence of the constitutional modifications, rising from 4% to between 25%–40%. Since these women took their expertise in civic society governance with them, the difference is not only quantitative but qualitative as well. The most significant result of these constitutional changes has been the rise of women's authority in states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and other places that were seen as having highly "backward" attitudes about women.

Strengthening of Poor Women

Women have historically been the most vulnerable group in society and make up a significant portion of the people that live in poverty. To obtain education, health care, empowerment, and other opportunities, women must overcome gender-specific obstacles. Focus of microfinance is on women living in poverty. This group of women receives all microloans. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that poor women are the most economically and socially disadvantaged population and lack the means and access to education necessary to lift themselves out of poverty. Despite the fact that women's labor is an essential part of the economy, this issue is exacerbated in emerging nations like India. This occurs as a result of the poor social standing and restricted access to important resources. It has been discovered that lending to women increases the likelihood that the advantages will be shared more widely [9], [10].

Governments put a lot of effort into integrating women into the mainstream of national development because doing so is essential for the socioeconomic growth of a society. The Ministry of Rural Development in India has specific portions in its programs for women. To ensure that there are enough resources for the same, funds are designated as the "women's component." Though slowly, the transformation is definitely taking place. Understanding the levels of women's empowerment in the workplace, a Confederation of India Industry research of 149 Indian firms, found that although there is a good proportion of female managers at lower levels, they only hold 4% of senior management positions. In addition, there are only female CEOs in 1% of the firms. According to the report, even though there are more working women in south India, they only hold 5% of senior management positions. While the west has the largest proportion of female CEOs, the north has the lowest proportion of female managers.

Worldwide Gender Gaps

According to the 2011 Census, there were nearly 586 million more women than males living in India. Thus, India, which is distinguished by significant geographical diversity and a range of cultures, is home to around 15% of the world's women. Regardless of religion, caste, community, or state, social prejudice and economic exploitation on the basis of gender, however, affect everyone. As a result, it may be claimed that India has a significant gender gap. The gender gap is described as the disparity between men and women in a society in terms of opportunity, position, attitudes, and other factors.

Women's empowerment, gender inequality, and violence against women—all major topics of sociological study in the modern era have received little attention in India. There are no matching protective social mechanisms or institutions of social justice to defend the interests of women who have been exposed to an unprotected socio-economic, cultural, or political environment as a result of modern societal developments. Many people have doubts regarding women's abilities to perform an equal role with males and to enjoy equal rights with them. Such fears, however, are unfounded in light of the increased possibilities made available to women as a result of the modernization of industry and agriculture, which has allowed them to effectively compete with males. The discrepancy between men and women related to physical power alone has been eliminated by advances in science and technology. Women can operate sophisticated appliances that don't only need physical strength, but also brains and training. As a result, there are currently many women working in India as pilots, driving buses, tractors, trains, and other vehicles. The role of gender as a determining element in the realm of legal rights has almost vanished. Therefore, assigning women as a collective to a lower status in society is unfair. The Constitution forbids using a person's gender as a basis for discrimination in any aspect of their legal rights and does not recognize gender as a valid categorization.

The roles that men and women play in society have changed and become more flexible as a consequence of modernity. The traditional idea that males provided for the needs of the family while women bore the children and took care of the house is no longer true given the changes in social structure and economic pressures. Rural women including those from Dalit, Tribal, and nomadic tribes have not seen any change despite the advancements achieved in the status of women. The same is true for Muslim women who are among the minority. The latter are a long way from obtaining their fundamental rights. For instance, Muslim women's low degree of political engagement in India is a result of both their standing as Muslim women in the society and a lack of resources. Women in India exhibit less trust in politics since they are underrepresented in the public sphere. Women continue to be exploited in India notwithstanding the provisions of the Indian Constitution and the UN Charter of Human Rights. The idea that males alone are responsible for carrying on and maintaining a family's next generation has diminished the status of women in society. The problem will become a lot worse if careful attention is not given and significant action is not done. As a result, the social context should be the starting point for any effort to evaluate the status and issues facing women in a culture. The social structure, cultural norms, and value systems all have a significant impact in determining the role and status of women. The theoretical potential and their actual implementation are not congruent with the current situation.

CONCLUSION

Although India has made considerable progress in empowering women, there are still many obstacles to be addressed. Not only is gender equality but also social and economic progress dependent on women's empowerment. A number of programs, including those that support education, women's rights, and economic possibilities, have helped to improve the standing of women in society and give them more influence. The complete fulfillment of women's empowerment is still hindered by gender-based discrimination, poor access to healthcare and education, violence against women, and deeply ingrained societal norms. By implementing focused policies, launching awareness programs, and involving the community, these problems must be solved. To achieve gender equality, it is essential to provide a supportive atmosphere, equal employment opportunities for men and women, and encourage women's involvement in

decision-making processes. Women's empowerment can also be considered as a crucial component of a larger social revolution rather than as a stand-alone goal. We can build a more inclusive and just society that benefits everyone by empowering women. To challenge discriminatory conventions, tear down obstacles, and provide women equal opportunity to prosper, it takes cooperation between the government, civic society, and individuals. The empowerment of women in India is a complex task that needs continual dedication and coordinated efforts. We can create a better future where women in India are empowered, appreciated, and able to fully contribute to their families, communities, and the country as a whole by identifying and resolving the difficulties, enacting effective policies, and promoting gender equality at all levels.

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CHAPTER 2

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN INDIA: BREAKING THE SHACKLES OF INEQUALITY

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ABSTRACT:

This paper delves into the pervasive issue of gender discrimination in India, exploring its causes, consequences, and potential strategies for combating it. The study examines various forms of discrimination faced by women in different spheres of life, including education, employment, health, and social norms. It analyzes the underlying factors contributing to gender discrimination and highlights the importance of promoting gender equality for the overall development of the nation. Through this comprehensive analysis, the paper aims to raise awareness about the pressing need to address gender discrimination in India and proposes recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

KEYWORDS:

Economic, Employment, Foeticide, Gender Discrimination, Society, Rape.

INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is socially driven rather than biological. The persistent efforts of social groups, women's movements, and the media may lessen this inequality. In fact, the media has done a lot to bring attention to the problem of gender discrimination. There are several television shows nowadays that focus specifically on issues affecting women. Stories of dowry deaths, domestic violence, and honour murders are also frequently reported in newspapers and on television news networks. These aid in keeping the problem on peoples' minds. In spite of this, prejudice against women still exists in India [1], [2]. These are what they are:

Female foeticide is the act of damaging or ending a female fetus' development. Since as long as anybody can remember, this issue has only existed in the Indian setting. In India, the practice of sex-selective abortion or foetal sex discrimination by medical personnel has developed into a thriving black market. Another kind of discrimination against women is female foeticide, which is said to have resulted in the termination of over 10 million female fetuses. The procedure started at the same time when ultrasound methods were becoming more and more common. Although the ultrasound was intended to examine the foetus' health, it unintentionally evolved into a tool for identifying and aborting female fetuses. At first, the government backed this in a last-ditch effort to slow India's population growth. However, the government outlawed sex-selective abortion in 1994 with the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act. It was changed in 2003, over ten years later, to hold medical practitioners liable. The reason why there are only 940 girls for every 1,000 men in India according to the 2011 Census is due of the prevalence of this disgusting behavior.

Eve-teasing: In India, the most typical kind of sexual violence against women is known as "eve-teasing." It occurs when one or more males make offensive comments or gestures against one or more women in a public setting. It is a kind of aggressiveness that might be as little as a sexually provocative comment or as severe as stroking in public. Generally speaking, it is an issue that is connected to juvenile delinquency, although it is not exclusively so. Unfortunately, eve-teasing occurs practically everywhere and is perhaps the most pervasive kind of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is notoriously difficult to establish in court since it is considered a type of minor rape. The majority of the time, harassers hide their behavior in difficult-to-identify or -prove methods. The law, on the other hand, views this as a criminal offense and classifies it as teasing, varied in severity and character. Oftentimes, taunting and harassment are committed by total strangers. They roam about in public while keeping their motives hidden. In this example, the criminal intent is to use the complex anonymity of the crowd to further their goals. The main defense used by perpetrators to avoid punishment is that harassment often occurs in public settings. Rape is the most severe type of sexual assault against women. Rape is the taking of a woman against her will for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity. In comparison to other countries, rape incidents have recently increased quickly in numerous Indian cities. The Constitution's core principles of equality and the right to liberty are both violated by this horrible conduct, according to the law. Numerous sociologists and psychiatrists have emphasized the grave repercussions of rape [3], [4].

Food discrimination: Academics Kalyani Menon Sen and A.K. Shivakumar discovered that girls in India experienced bias in a variety of ways, including receiving less breast milk, less nurturing and play, receiving less care or access to medical services in case of illness, receiving less "special" cuisine, and receiving less parental attention. As a consequence, females have a lower life expectancy and are far more susceptible to illnesses and diseases than boys. The real cause of girl deaths one that is less overt and subtle but just as tragic as female foeticide and infanticide is this lifelong unfairness in upbringing and care.

Denial of education: Girls aren't permitted to go to school in homes that are struggling. There are two factors at play here. One is that their siblings would be left alone if they attended school. They serve as their family's laborers. The other is that they lack the means to adequately educate their female kid. They choose to save money for their daughter's wedding rather than investing it in their own schooling.

One of the fundamental pillars of Indian social life is marriage. The institution has a strong normative framework that controls the many activities and behaviors that are related to it. A young marriage is one in which the bride is under the age of 18 and the husband is under the age of 21. Girls who get pregnant before their teenage development is finished remain physically undeveloped for the rest of their life and are more likely to have pregnancy problems and lose their mothers. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 was enacted and revised in 1979, 2006, and 2008 in order to lessen the prevalence of child marriage. Premature marriage revokes all of a girl's independence and individuality rights. A significant proportion of weddings in rural community still take place in violation of the rule of age of consent, which forbids unions between children under the age of 12. After being married, a woman feels as if her independence has been taken away, and she is in complete servitude to her husband and daughter-in-law. In reference to this circumstance, Dube argues that a husband is supposed to be an autocratic figure who would always rule the home. This expectation stems from conventional social standards. The woman is the husband's inferior and vice versa. The issue is still troublesome even though the position's

viewpoint has changed somewhat. The social environment is not yet conducive to women's independence.

Dowry: Although the custom of dowry deaths is forbidden in India, it is regrettably still extensively used. Statistics show that the practice of dowry causes up to 5000 women to incur injuries or pass away on average each year. Since many dowry fatalities are not classified as dowry, the actual number may be greater. The poor and lower castes have a greater rate of dowry deaths. Because gendered social norms and social perceptions already exist, gender inequality is a kind of inequality that is separate from other types of economic and social inequality. Due to its negative effects on economic growth, gender inequality has an undesirable effect on development objectives. Because excluding women from participating in social, political, and economic activities may have a negative impact on the whole society, it undermines overall wellbeing.

DISCUSSION

Gender Discrimination's Root Causes

The following are the reasons for gender discrimination in India:

Backwardness in education: According to author Sonalde Desai, the position of women is to blame for parents' reluctance to educate their daughters. There are several reasons why parents should not support their daughter's education. Parents' perception that educating females has little financial benefit and has no influence on their future careers as housewives or maybe farm laborers is the major cause of this.

Caste system: The caste system is still extensively used in rural and some urban areas of India even though it was made illegal in 1947. The major lower-caste groups in India include Dalit communities, schedule castes, and schedule tribes. According to studies, these groups still have the greatest rates of poverty in the nation. The status of women in these areas should be taken into consideration. In contrast to other so-called higher castes where the disparity is wider, Dalit groups have Gross Enrolment Ratios for females that are only somewhat lower than those of the national population. Although their work is mostly centered in the organized casual labor sector, women from lower castes also have greater rates of labor force involvement and are consequently less likely to be engaged mainly in household responsibilities.

80 percent of Indians identify as Hindu, 12 percent as Muslim, 3 percent as Christian, and 2 percent as Sikh. Religion is a fundamental feature of Indian civilization for all people. Religion has a particular impact on women since they are seen as the keepers of religious traditions. In the name of religion, they are also subject to several limitations. In order to understand the causes of women's social and economic position as well as to create programs and policies that will meet their needs, it is essential to comprehend the role that women play in religious communities. In rural India, many people still live conventional lifestyles, claims author Anna-Maria Lind. Many people's lives are still governed by religious customs and rules, particularly women. Even though it is legal for women to possess property and other resources, due to societal and religious pressures, many women choose not to use this privilege in order to avoid upsetting their families. In India, there is a strong preference for having sons, which sets the bar for girls and women throughout their lives. This preference is present in all social groups and communities.

Gender Disparities at Work

Gender gaps in the workplace relate to disparities in pay and employment prospects. Data demonstrates that males often get higher money for doing the same job as women. The disparity may exist because males have held positions of authority in their fields for a longer period of time. The ability to participate in the workforce is a crucial determinant of social standing. Different social and economic variables, as well as conventional role expectations, such as unequal job opportunities, the gender pay gap, the absence of childcare facilities, and others, have an impact on women's engagement in the workforce. In addition, a large portion of their labour has gone unnoticed and unappreciated. Not only is a significant portion of women's job underpaid, but it is also socially unrecognized. This applies to all economic endeavors when women's labor is made invisible by societal attitudes, not simply social reproduction. Because of these factors, academics use the percentage of working women as a gauge of the status of women in society.

Women's Work: Nature, Range, and Patterns

Women have been the primary producers of food, fabrics, and handicrafts throughout human history, according to several anthropologists and historians. Women still contribute significantly to labor when manufacturing is being done on a modest scale for survival even now. Since the bulk of the work that women undertake is either unseen or does not appear in the statistics on labor participation, it is difficult to assess the kind, extent, and size of women's work. The sort of employment that women conduct depends on both their status in society and the social standing of their families. The many jobs performed by women include:

1. Domestic duties;
2. Paid and unpaid jobs associated with hobbies like crafting at home;
3. Family businesses or paid employment away from the house.

The fundamental facets of a woman's employment in a family are connected to the gender-based division of labor. 'Housework' varies depending on age, gender, income, region, and size of the household.

Creating and Reproducing

The nexus between production and reproduction was identified as the core convergence of the human economy in the early years of economics as a discipline of study. Theorists like Malthus, for instance, spoke about the connection between population expansion and agricultural productivity. Reproduction was eventually left out of economic theory and analysis as time went on. Child care, marital sex, and domestic chores like cooking are all examples of reproductive labor. According to feminist academic Nancy Folbre, the exclusion of reproductive work from economic theory was caused by women's lack of economic and sexual autonomy. Reproductive labor has to be given more attention for a number of reasons, not the least of which being the issue of its neglect since it is unpaid. Reproductive work must be given renewed significance since it is essential to achieving gender equality in the workplace.

Women have consistently been barred from all forms of wealth creation throughout human history, including paid employment, owning property, and making investments. Therefore, women have been inherently unprofitable. Because they lack independent methods of generating income, women are compelled to deal with the worst kinds of abusive conditions in their homes, which makes them particularly vulnerable and reliant on males. Furthermore, many traditional

civilizations still hold the view that women are primarily useful for "raising families" nowadays. As a result, many families have neglected to support their daughters' education. A woman would only be suitable for marriage or domestic slavery if she is unable to support herself due to societal pressures and a lack of skill development [5], [6].

Therefore, it is evident that forcing women to remain in their homes and perform reproductive tasks rather than leaving to seek access to all kinds of production has consequences that go well beyond just depriving them of a paycheck. Domestic abuse, enslavement, and many other human tragedies are directly fueled by the fixation on limiting women to reproduction and removing them from production. This practice serves as the brain of a global system that upholds gender inequity.

Work in the home

According to economic theory, there is a difference between output for the market and production for one's own consumption; only the former is considered to constitute labour. Most of the labor involved in caring for the house and its occupants is often performed by women; as a consequence, women are seen as having low value since this task is accorded little to no social or economic relevance. A large portion of the unpaid labour performed by women in domestic services and agricultural processing is not recognized as employment. Additionally, impoverished women in rural families do a variety of tasks including cooking, child care, collecting water and wood, looking after animals, etc. Since this job is performed for self-consumption and is not compensated, it is not regarded as "productive" labour. Activities that have a utilitarian purpose but no monetary exchange value are not considered "work" according to the standard definition. Small and marginal farmer families utilize family labor in the agricultural industry since they are unable to hire labor like large landowners. A significant portion of women labor from home in various rural industries including handicrafts, handloom weaving, ceramics, animal husbandry, poultry, food preservation and processing, etc., but they are not given the status of employees. The significance of women's economic roles is not acknowledged by this undervaluation of women's unpaid domestic labour. Government to measure home labor performed by women in India, written by Rajeev Jayaswal, states that "The government is considering quantifying values silently created by women in India and devising strategies to empower them." The Minister for Women and Child Development, Krishna Tirath, asserts that a sizable portion of the male-dominated patriarchal society undervalued the contribution of women's labor in the home, despite the fact that women perform enormous and extremely labor-intensive tasks in both rural and urban settings, which helped increase the productivity of the men in the home as well. This "invisible" labour must be acknowledged and valued. It is crucial to value such unpaid and unacknowledged labor since it ultimately adds to the economy and human capital [7], [8].

Discrete Work

As you are aware, regardless of the degrees of progress and development in various nations, there is a fundamental difference between the labor performed by men and women in every region of the globe. These disparities have some biological roots, but they have also been influenced by societal and economic influences that have formed gender roles, behaviors, and features. Men are typically the primary breadwinners and revenue producers in the majority of developing, undeveloped, and to some degree, industrialized nations. On the other side, women are responsible for a variety of tasks such as childrearing, housekeeping, home management, and community leadership. The primary driver of women's employment in many developing nations is their desire to fulfill socially and culturally prescribed duties.

The kind of employment women conduct has an impact on their status. Work generally refers to paid employment in the economic sense. Since housekeeping makes up the majority of the labor done by women historically and even now, it has never received the respect it deserves. Most of the time, women devote the majority of their working hours to home tasks that are neither acknowledged nor financially compensated. Over the last four or five decades, the issue of women's unpaid domestic labour has become more prominent and attracted the attention of several academics and intellectuals who have sought to explain why this status quo is continually maintained [9]. The economic position of the woman as a breeder-feeder, or as the carrier and caretaker of children, is one of the justifications offered for this continuance of the role of the woman as a housewife toiling ceaselessly over domestic duties. Women are seen in this capacity as being crucial to the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force. Marxists contend that all economic systems, particularly capitalism, are supported by the unpaid labor of women.

They contend that housewives' labor really supports capitalism, which would not have existed without the wife's unpaid labour as a breeder and feeder. Women's domestic labor is often unnoticed, although it is very necessary for the survival of the family and society as a whole. The worth of women's labour in the home is difficult to quantify; one needs to know how many hours women spend on chores. Both in developed and emerging economies, the hours are lengthy. It is highly challenging to evaluate and come to a end on the worth that should be assigned to that task and what would be considered appropriate or fair compensation or salary for housekeeping. Feminist economists have sought to come up with a strategy to value invisible tasks like housekeeping. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women at the UN favors one of the solutions discovered. This method bases the market worth of labor performed inside a home on the price of commodities and services that are equivalent to the labor produced there. These outcome-based analyses predict that adding unpaid home output will increase the gross domestic product of industrialized western countries by 30–60%. For underdeveloped countries, the proportion would be far larger.

The inputs of home production, such as the labor involved in cooking, cleaning, childcare, and other domestic tasks, are examined in a second method of analyzing household invisible work. People that adopt this strategy apply the following techniques:

1. Based on the salaries women may have made if they had worked an equal amount of hours outside the house, or opportunity costs.
2. Estimating the cost of hiring someone to do the task, either a general laborer like a domestic worker or a specialized like a chef, and then allocating those costs to household labor. This approach has been shown to be the most logical technique to estimate unpaid invisible labour inside the home.
3. Understanding the value of unpaid domestic work has a huge impact on how people see women's economic contributions to society. Governments may have implemented quite different development plans and programs and given the undervalued labor of women the respect and significance it deserved if domestic production had been included in the system of macroeconomic accounting.

A major problem is the undervaluation of "so-called women's work." There is undoubtedly labor done at home in the sense of energy used on activities like cleaning, cooking, child care, and more [7], [10]. This load is heavy to the degree that it rests on the woman worker who already has a job

outside the house. But regardless of whether they leave the home for work or not, women appear to be stuck with the hard fact that they must do the majority of the household chores.

CONCLUSION

In India, gender discrimination continues to be a pervasive problem with deep roots that impedes women's advancement and general well-being. It takes many different forms, including restricted access to education, uneven job chances, violence against women, and damaging cultural norms. In addition to violating fundamental human rights, these discriminatory actions obstruct the social and economic progress of the whole country. A multifaceted strategy that include legislative changes, educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and community involvement is necessary to combat gender discrimination. Focus should be placed on abolishing discriminatory legislation, enacting laws that advance gender equality, and ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality healthcare and education. Furthermore, it is crucial to promote a societal transformation that challenges preconceptions, conventions, and attitudes about women. The advancement of society is sped up by the empowerment of women, which is not merely an issue of justice. Women may offer their abilities, knowledge, and views to society when they are allowed equal opportunity to engage in all aspects of life. Men must be included as allies in this endeavor since gender equality benefits everyone and calls for group effort. The government, civil society groups, and individuals must all make consistent efforts to eliminate gender discrimination in India. We can build a culture where everyone, regardless of gender, may flourish and advance the country by eliminating discriminatory behaviors, advancing gender equality, and cultivating a positive atmosphere. The first step in transforming India into a more inclusive and equitable society is to acknowledge the significance of gender equality and take decisive action to remove discrimination in all of its manifestations.

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CHAPTER 3

ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: STRIVING FOR EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the topic of women's rights, focusing on the challenges, progress, and ongoing efforts towards achieving gender equality and empowerment. It examines the historical context of women's rights movements, highlighting key milestones and struggles faced by women around the world. The study analyzes various aspects of women's rights, including political, social, economic, and reproductive rights, and explores the intersectionality of gender with other forms of discrimination. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the importance of women's rights as a fundamental human right and catalyst for societal progress, offering recommendations for advancing gender equality on a global scale.

KEYWORDS:

Economic, Employment, Women's Rights, Society, Social Movement.

INTRODUCTION

Rights of Women; Global Perspectives

By treating women with the respect they deserve, all countries have achieved greatness. The nation and the countries that do not respect women have never been great and will never be. Since the beginning of time, women have faced discrimination. Women have endured centuries of discrimination and the denial of equality due to patriarchal systems and other cultural reasons, and they still do so today. This has resulted in their enslavement in almost all realms of human activity, which has negatively impacted their position and self-esteem. It is quite concerning that women have such a poor social, economic, and political standing as a result. Even though the 20th century saw considerable gains, there are still many important problems, particularly in the areas of education, equality, health, safety, and security, as well as reproductive rights [1], [2].

The Preamble to the United Nations Charter reiterates belief in basic human rights, in the value and dignity of the human person, and in the equality of men and women in terms of their rights. One of the stated goals of the UN is to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to, among other grounds, sex, according to Article 1 of the UN charter, which deals with the purposes of the United Nations. All people are equal in worth and rights from birth, according to Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Article 2 of the UDHR, gender equality is further reaffirmed.

States parties have a triple duty to uphold, respect, and implement the rights of women. The State must refrain from any actions or inactions that violate human rights for them to be respected. In

order to protect, the State must stop non-State actors including people, organizations, institutions, and businesses from violating the law. The State must take all necessary steps to advance the full fulfillment of women's human rights in order for this obligation to be fulfilled. The CEDAW defines equality and outlines methods for achieving it [3]–[5]. By doing this, it creates a global bill of rights for women as well as a plan of action for nations to ensure the fulfillment of those rights. The Convention openly notes the widespread discrimination against women that still exists in its preamble and highlights how this prejudice contravenes the ideals of human dignity and equality of rights. States which ratify the Convention agree to take a number of steps to abolish all kinds of discrimination against women, including:

1. Should enact suitable laws forbidding discrimination against women, repeal any laws that are discriminatory, and integrate the idea of equality of men and women into their legal system;
2. Create courts and other governmental institutions to provide adequate protection for women against discrimination; and
3. To guarantee that no one, whether individuals, organizations, or businesses, ever discriminates against women.

Gender Discrimination Definition

Any differentiation, exclusion, or limitation based on sex in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other sphere is considered gender discrimination. In order to guarantee that women can exercise and enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men, Article 3 of the Convention calls on States Parties to adopt all necessary measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women. The fourteen articles that follow outline the equality agenda. The Convention has a three-pronged approach to addressing the plight of women. It goes into great length on civil rights and women's legal standing. The Convention also addresses the issue of human reproduction and the influence of cultural influences on gender relations, in contrast to previous human rights accords. The Convention lays the groundwork for achieving gender parity by guaranteeing women's equal access to and opportunities in political and public life, including the right to vote, the right to run for office, and the right to education, health, and employment. States parties agree to implement all necessary steps, including legislation and short-term exceptional measures, to ensure that women may fully exercise their basic rights and human freedoms [4], [5].

The right to vote, to hold public office, and to perform public duties is guaranteed to women. According to Article 8, this includes equal rights for women to represent their nations abroad. The 1957-adopted Convention on the Nationality of Married Women is included into Article 9, which guarantees the Statehood of all women, regardless of their marital status. As a result, the Convention calls attention to the fact that women's legal status has often been tied to marriage, making them reliant on their husband's nationality rather as independent persons. The rights of women to be treated equally in work, education, and other economic and social activities are affirmed in Articles 10, 11, and 13, respectively. Regarding the plight of rural women, who face unique challenges and make significant economic contributions, as mentioned in Article 14, their requests are accorded considerable weight. Article 15 demands that any measures intended to limit women's legal ability be ruled unlawful since it declares the complete equality of women in civil and commercial concerns. The Convention returns to the topic of marriage and family relationships

in Article 16 and affirms that men and women have the same rights and duties with respect to choosing a partner, having children, exercising personal autonomy, and controlling property.

DISCUSSION

Biological Rights

The Preamble of CEDAW sets the tone by declaring that the contribution of women to reproduction should not be used as a justification for discrimination. Concerns about the relationship between discrimination and women's reproductive roles often come up during the conference. For instance, it calls for a correct view of motherhood as a societal duty in Article 5 and totally equal parental responsibilities for both sexes. As a result, the Convention's provisions for maternity protection and child care are declared to be fundamental rights and are included in all domains, including work, family law, health care, and education. The responsibility of society includes providing social services, particularly child care centers that enable people to juggle family obligations with employment and civic engagement. Special pregnancy protection precautions are advised and must not be seen as discriminatory. The Convention also upholds women's freedom of choice in reproductive matters. It's noteworthy because it's the only human rights agreement to bring up family planning. States parties are required to incorporate family planning advice into the educational process and to create family codes that protect women's rights to make decisions about the number and spacing of their children freely and responsibly, as well as to have access to the knowledge, education, and resources necessary to exercise these rights [6], [7].

The Convention is the only human rights pact that upholds women's right to abortion while also focusing on how culture and custom shape gender roles and family dynamics. It upholds women's rights to choose their nationality, as well as the nationality of their offspring. Additionally, States Parties Agree to Take Appropriate Action Against All Forms of Women's Trafficking and Exploitation. The third main goal of the Convention is to broaden our understanding of the idea of human rights by formally acknowledging the role that culture and tradition play in limiting women's ability to exercise their fundamental rights. These pressures manifest as preconceptions, traditions, and conventions, which give birth to a wide range of restrictions on women's development in the legal, political, and economic spheres. The preamble of the Convention emphasizes the necessity for a transformation in both the traditional roles of men and women in society and the family in light of this interaction in order to achieve true equality for men and women. States parties are obligated to work to change social, cultural, and other patterns of behavior in order to eradicate prejudices, customs, and any other practices that are based on the idea that one sex is inferior to the other or that there are stereotyped roles for men and women. Also, Article 10.c. requires the rewriting of school curricula, textbooks, and teaching strategies with an aim to eradicating stereotypical ideas in the realm of education. Finally, all of the provisions of the Convention that affirm the equal responsibilities of both sexes in family life and their equal rights with regard to education and employment strongly target cultural patterns that define the domestic sphere as a women's domain. Collectively, the Convention offers a thorough framework for combating the different factors that have led to and continued sexism.

Maintaining CEDAW

The Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women keeps an eye on how the Convention is being applied. The Convention's Articles 17 to 30 specify the role of the Committee

and how the agreement would be handled. The committee is made up of 23 specialists who have been nominated by their governments and chosen by the States parties as people of high moral character and subject-matter expertise in the Convention. The States parties are required to provide the committee with a national report at least every four years outlining the steps they have taken to implement the Convention's provisions. The committee members review these findings with the Government officials at its annual meeting and look into potential areas for further country action. Additionally, the committee provides general advice to the States parties on issues pertaining to the abolition of discrimination against women.

The 25 broad recommendations have been approved as of January 2004 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Those enacted during the committee's first 10 years were brief and unassuming, covering topics like the reports' contents, convention reservations, and resources. The committee clarified the state parties' responsibilities with regard to, among other things, issues like gender-based violence, equal pay for work of comparable value, women and AIDS, measuring and quantifying the unpaid domestic work of women and their inclusion in the GNP, disabled women, equality in marriage and family relationships, and women's health. The optional CEDAW protocol, which was established in 1999, aims to provide individuals or groups of individuals who have used all available national remedies the opportunity to directly petition the committee on alleged CEDAW breaches by their governments. Additionally, the optional protocol enables the committee to look into serious or repeated breaches of the convention in nations that are signatories to both the convention and the optional protocol. These processes are optional and are only accessible in states that have agreed to them. India has not ratified the CEDAW optional protocol.

Movements for Women

Social movements may be seen as collaborative endeavors to create a new way of life, according to American sociologist Herbert Blumer. They often emerge during times of upheaval and take their motivation from a combination of desires and aspirations for a new way of life and unhappiness with the way things are now. People organize social movements to call for social change. Sociological definitions of movements emphasize traits like group innovation and behavior, flexible and fluctuating membership borders, and members' desire to upset the status quo. Whether they take place in the 'First' world or not, social movements are often seen as a phenomenon of the modern age and industrialized civilization. People may now work together to demand change and challenge the legitimacy of the current system thanks to urbanization, industrialization, technological breakthroughs, and the strengthening of democracy. Five criteria, according to authors Gerlach and Hine, are operationally crucial and serve as the foundation of a genuine social movement. The following are these five elements:

1. A social movement includes a group made up of various people who are divided according to ideological, structural, or personal relationships.
2. People who are passionate about the subject make up the group and utilize their current social connections to persuade others to support the cause.
3. A social movement entails breaking away from the status quo. An effort made by members of a social movement results in a new set of values and alters people's behavior patterns.
4. As a consequence, an ideology forms that codifies values and objectives and offers a theoretical framework through which objectives may be understood. The philosophy serves as a foundation for the fusion of a divided network of people.

5. Any social movement must also consider how society as a whole or the part of the existing order from which it has emerged will react to it. Actually, it is this resistance that ties together the many groups taking part in a social movement.

A social movement starts when a problem or a group of problems that significantly impact a large percentage of people appear. These concerns grow to acquire relevance over time, which encourages widespread engagement and group action. Collective movements, as defined by Smelser, are efforts made by a group of people to change norms and values that typically take place over a longer period of time. Collective action and movements vary greatly from one another. Riots, uprisings, and revolutions are examples of collective action that entail violent group outbursts. While certain forms of collective action are often unorganized and transient, revolt, revolution, and movements are more organized. Although all collective acts are social movements, not all collective actions must be social movements. A social movement could inspire or develop into a revolution. A social movement may or may not entail violence, and it may or may not involve the mobilization of people against the state or system of government. They often organize participants or members to fight for certain aims and objectives or to seek redress of a grievance. They typically only affect certain groups of people and show up in certain sectors of society. The many women's movements that have evolved around the globe during the last century may be categorized as social movements [8], [9].

Movements for Women

The phrase "women's movement" does not relate to one particular movement or organization. It is made up of several feminism-related movements that address a variety of concerns, including those related to sexual harassment, domestic violence, equitable pay, women's suffrage, and reproductive rights. In acknowledgement of the fact that each of these movements has been contributing in some manner to the liberation of women, they are collectively referred to as "women's movements." These movements strive for a complete change of society via reformulation of public life, the educational system, the workplace, and the family. Thus, women's movements work to address a variety of issues and requirements unique to women. These requirements or issues result from a sociocultural framework that categorically disadvantages women in compared to males.

There have been three waves of the movement since its start in the West in the late 19th century. The "firstwave" of the women's movement focused on women's education, voting rights, and the position of middle-class or upper class white women. The 'second wave' of the women's movement, which started in the 1960s, aimed to do more to fight against social and cultural injustices. The second wave of feminists broadened the debate to include topics like sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, and other topics, while the first generation of feminists concentrated primarily on suffrage and adopting laws to promote gender equality. The 1990s saw the start of the 'third wave' of the women's movement, which is still going strong today. The second wave feminists' alleged "essentialist definitions of femininity," which often posited a universal female identity and overemphasized the experiences of upper class women in the western world, are challenged. Third wave feminists are also of the opinion that terminology that has been used to define women has to change as well as stereotypes of women, how women are portrayed in the media, and these things. Rajendra Singh contends that the following ideas have to be part of any theoretical framework for analyzing women's movements and their tactics:

1. Typically, the oppressions themselves are where resistance and demonstrations against unfair power structures, patriarchal institutions, and patriarchal oppression of women begin. These injustices are pervasive and constant.
2. Resistance to oppressive behaviors and conscious rejection of injustice often go via latent and open manifestation stages. These stages are influenced by cultures' historical experiences.
3. The tactics, strategies, and procedures used by women to fight for their identity, dignity, self-defense, and social justice are influenced by these latent and visible forms of resistance. Women's movements may include a "zone of silent war" in which women fight to dominate males in daily life.

Because of repressed sentiments of rejection and gender inequality in patriarchal countries, women's movements have emerged. These circumstances have prompted women to fight against the blurring of their distinct identities, which may lead to a concerted eruption in the shape of manifest women's movements. They may not be active in terms of organized movements, but they are engaged on an individual level, using a variety of strategies including arts, ruses, and moves against males. These techniques are often used by women against males to deal with oppression on a daily basis [10].

Any form of individual resistance must go through many phases of growth before it can become an organized, public movement. Sharing personal stories of resistance with others who are in comparable circumstances in life is a part of this process. This involves a stage in which the resistance is exposed or becomes an external problem and a unified group forms. There develops an ideology that opposes the ways in which power, leadership, mobilization, and communication are negatively characterized. It is unequal and challenging to transition from a private, insular form of resistance to a public, active women's movement. Additionally, it might be difficult for a lone resister to join a formal movement. Although there may be competing behaviors and processes between them, women may act as opposition in a patriarchal society on an individual level as well as at the level of organized collective movements.

CONCLUSION

Women's rights have been a pillar in the fight for social justice and equality. Even while there has been a lot of progress, there is still a long way to go until there is complete gender equality on the planet. The empowerment and well-being of women as well as the growth of society as a whole depend on the acknowledgment and defense of women's rights. Political representation, economic empowerment, education, healthcare, and the abolition of gender-based violence are important areas of emphasis for increasing women's rights. To protect women's rights and dignity, it is essential that they participate equally in leadership positions, economic possibilities, and decision-making processes. To end the cycle of poverty and inequality, it is also crucial to ensure that all women have access to high-quality healthcare and education. It is important to recognise and address the intersectionality of gender with other types of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic position, and sexual orientation. It's important to acknowledge the many struggles and experiences that women from all backgrounds confront and to make sure that the fight for women's rights is inclusive and intersectional.

It takes a team effort from governments, civil society groups, and people to achieve women's rights. Women's rights are widely promoted and protected thanks to international frameworks, agreements, and laws. Challenges to patriarchal norms and social change are also made possible

through grassroots movements, campaigning, and awareness campaigns. Achieving gender equality and creating an equitable and inclusive society need fundamentally strengthening women's rights. Fighting against gender stereotypes, eliminating discriminatory behaviors, and fostering an environment where women can fully exercise their rights and contribute to society as a whole are common responsibilities. We can build a fairer society where everyone, regardless of gender, may prosper and realize their potential by defending and advancing women's rights.

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CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A JOURNEY TOWARDS EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the women's movements in India, their historical development, key milestones, and the impact they have had on advancing women's rights, equality, and empowerment. It explores the diverse range of women's movements in India, including the women's suffrage movement, the feminist movement, and grassroots movements led by marginalized women. The study analyzes the challenges faced by women in India, the strategies employed by women's movements to address these challenges, and their role in shaping social, cultural, and political landscapes. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to highlight the significance of women's movements in India and their ongoing contributions to the fight for gender equality.

KEYWORDS:

Empowerment, Education, Feminist Movement, Gender Equality, Women's Movements.

INTRODUCTION

When compared to women's movements in Western and European nations, the history of women's struggles and movements in India against patriarchal structures of gender inequality has been limited. Instead of engaging in any type of overt opposition or uprising against the pervasiveness of patriarchy and gender inequities, the majority of the works by women in the 19th century show disgust with these issues. The elite educated class was absorbing the western ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity throughout the 19th century via the study of English. Western liberalism intended to include the issue of women and result in awareness of their situation. This knowledge, nevertheless, did not result in a direct and well-planned battle. Despite the injustices women endured, there were sentiments of deprivation and fury that were generally latent and, at best, sometimes faintly exposed. Only during the independence struggle did women begin to organize themselves, both for the sake of national liberation and to raise awareness of women's concerns [1], [2].

The Indian women's movement may be considered as generating three waves, similar to movements in the West. The first wave, which aimed to eradicate social ills in Indian society, began during the British colonial era and the liberation fight. A significant number of women joined the nationalist movement at this period. Social reformers from the educated elite developed to combat the flaws of the patriarchal system. The campaign succeeded in ending the Sati, granting widows the ability to remarry, the child marriage restriction act, and other readily apparent horrors committed against women. After it, there was a break in women's political activity for more than ten years. Women's political engagement increased throughout the post-independence era, which

is known as the second wave of the feminist movement. They worked for policies that would improve the status of women via affirmative action, child care and maternal health services, equal pay for equal labor, and other measures. The third wave of the women's movement in India began to take shape in the late 1970s, with an emphasis on organizing women to fight against issues such as rape and other kinds of sexual violence, alcoholism, the representation of women in the arts, and domestic abuse. Women's studies began to take off in the 1970s, changing the way that women's concerns were seen from a standpoint of amity, marriage, socialization, or social standing to seeing women as autonomous human beings. Today, the focus is on women's subjectivity, identity, and the bio-psychological underpinnings of their personalities. In the next part, you will learn about the "three waves" of the Indian women's movement. Let's now examine several women's movements in India, beginning with the first women's movement [3], [4].

DISCUSSION

Indian Women's Movements Prior to Independence

Readings of religious, political, cultural, and social writings as well as oral tales, mythology, folklore, fables, songs, jokes, proverbs, and sayings show that women have been subordinated in various ways from the beginning of time. Of course, there have been instances of patriarchal opposition throughout Indian history, although on a sporadic basis. The actions of Razia Sultana, Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi, Ahilyabai Holkar, Muktabai, and others personify innumerable tales of women who challenged and rebelled against the status quo. Women have worked to liberate themselves from the constraints of oppression they had to endure due to their birth throughout history. The Bhakti Movement was a significant social movement throughout the medieval period. The Bhakti movement was an inclusive movement that transcended caste and gender prejudices. Numerous ladies from different castes joined the campaign. The saints of the Bhakti movement fought for the equality of men and women, and they encouraged women to participate in the Kathas and Kirtans led by different saints of the movement. This contributed to the liberation of women from the shackles and constraints of home life. Mirabai, Akkamahadevi, and Janaki were a few notable women who participated in the Bhakti movement; all of them went on to become well-known poetesses and are now regarded as poet-saints of India. There is a sizable body of literature written in the local languages by these poet-saints. Saints promoted the veneration of female versions of masculine deities, which indirectly improved the position of women in medieval society.

Women in the Social Reform Movement

There were two different progressive movements that worked to emancipate Indian women in the 18th and 19th centuries. Both parties acknowledged how repressive and oppressive societal norms and structures were. One faction objected to these practices and institutions because they went against the libertarian and free-market tenets of democracy. The Reformers were the name of this group. The other faction, which claimed that the resurrection of Vedic civilization in contemporary India was democratic, called for the democratization of social connections and the elimination of damaging customs. The Revivalists became the name of this group. The social reformers upheld the values of individual liberty, freedom, and equality for all people, regardless of their sex, gender, color, caste, or religion. In an effort to free Indian women from their restrictions, they created social reform initiatives and targeted a variety of conventional, authoritarian hierarchical social structures. The reform movement sought to improve the position of Indian women, despite the fact that many of the reformers were males.

One of India's greatest social reformers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was troubled by a variety of pernicious practices that plagued Indian civilization. 'Sahamarana' or Sati, female infanticide, polygyny, infant marriages, the purdah system, the dearth of education among women, and the Devadasi system were among them. Raja Ram Mohan Roy launched a fight against the depraved and inhumane Sati tradition, in which a widow was compelled to commit suicide by setting herself ablaze on her husband's funeral pyre. In various regions of India, sati was practiced, and it was approved on the grounds that it would provide widows "Moksha." Additionally, it was thought that if a woman lived on after her husband passed away, she may be misled. Roy and the other social reformers firmly disagreed with Sati's claims, labeling the procedure a terrible deed. The Prohibition of Sati Act was passed in 1829, outlawing Sati as a result of the social reform movement and anti-Sati campaigns headed by Lord William Bentick [5], [6].

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a notable social reformer who advocated for widow remarriages in order to better the situation of widows. He made a vow that he would let his daughters study and married all of them once they were 16 since he believed that his own life should serve as an example for others to follow. Additionally, he promised to support any of his daughters who were widowed and wished to remarry. He also opposed the widespread practice of polygyny. The National Social Conference, an all-Indian organization that will continue the fight for social change, was founded in large part thanks to Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. The social reform movement was initially carried on collectively, in an organized manner, and on a national level by this organization. He extensively pursued the issues of widow remarriages. He was also excommunicated by Shankaracharya for participating in the first widow remarriage in 1869. In 1884, Ranade and his wife also opened a school for girls. Some of the revivalists contributed to improvements in women's position as well. Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

He said that women should be able to attend school till the age of 16 and that men and women should be treated equally. In addition, Swami Vivekananda emphasized the need of education for women, believing that it would enable them to effectively address their issues. He was also against females being married off young. He believed that a woman should be liberated from the current harmful conventional institutions and taught the virtues of equality and freedom. He identified the historical factors that contributed to the decline in women's position in India and emphasized the need of ending their societal oppression. He also underlined the value of education for women, not only for their individual advancement but also for that of the whole nation. The social reform movement led to the creation of several institutions and organizations. The institutions established by the reformers operated across the whole nation. The Deccan Education Society promoted women's education in Maharashtra, the Ramakrishna Mission established homes for widows and schools for girls, the Seva Sadan sought to unite enlightened women from various communities who desired social change, and the Gujarat Vernacular Society sought to reduce the widespread illiteracy and superstitious beliefs that were a feature of Gujarati society [7], [8].

Indian Post-Independence Women's Movements

Women's movements in India may be divided into pre- and post-independence periods. Prior to independence, social change was the main focus of the women's movements, which were mostly started by males. They resisted oppressive societal customs such child marriage, widow remarriage, sati, and purdah and were influenced by Western liberal principles. The higher castes and classes were primarily the focus of campaigns to end female illiteracy and get them out of the

home. Overall, neither patriarchy nor the division of labor based on gender was questioned. In contrast, the post-independence movement pushed for gender equality, questioned the division of labor based on gender, and emphasized how oppressive the current patriarchal system was. Because they now controlled their own destiny, it was thought that women's position would significantly increase along with that of other oppressed groups during the post-independence euphoria. However, when this was not accomplished, there was a rise in a number of groups that highlighted concerns about a variety of topics, including equality, salaries, job security, and land rights. The battle against rape and other kinds of sexual assault, equal treatment at work, population policy, and other concerns brought women together.

In 1947, when India was freed from British rule, the Congress party took control and established the government. In the early years following independence, as well as during the pre-independence era, the government made some efforts to keep the promises it had made to women. The equally fundamental principle of treating men and women equally in all sectors of life was taken into consideration while India's Constitution was being drafted. According to Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, "The State shall not deny to any person within the territory of India, equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws." According to Article 15, "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen solely on the basis of religion, race, sex, or place of birth." Nothing in Article 15 "shall prevent the State from making any special provision for Women and Children," according to the text. All citizens shall have equal opportunity in issues pertaining to employment or appointment to any position under the State, according to Article 16. The drastic divergence the Constitution made from ingrained societal ideals, in the words of Veena Majumdar, "represented to women of that generation its greatest intrinsic quality." For the females. The inclusion of gender equality in the constitution was a realization of a desire for women, who had clear recollections of pre-independence society and the liberation struggle the right to an autonomous identity. In order to increase chances for women, a variety of administrative organizations were established. There were several women appointed to government positions.

Following that, in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a decline in feminist activism and the women's movement in India. However, women began to understand that the Constitution's guarantee of equality did not, in and of itself, address the issues of equality, particularly in a nation as varied as India, which is home to many different faiths and traditions. Even today, eliminating gender disparity is a difficult task. The women's movement has failed to 'decommunalize' the problem. Feminists and women's organizations were unable to address the issues that women from various religious backgrounds faced. Minority identities had already started to solidify by the time the feminist movement began to address the issues facing women from the minority group in the 1970s. Muslim women were particularly impacted by this polarizing climate. Fundamentalists in religion attempted to put the responsibility of maintaining religio-cultural identity on women. The identity syndrome that put women at its center distracted attention from the harsh reality of Muslim women and the departures from the true teachings of Islam. The women's movement, which had previously been a secular movement, was presented with a challenging situation that it was ill-equipped to manage. On a conceptual level, Indian feminists faced a conundrum: how to include Muslim women's difficulties into more general feminist themes while also preserving their cultural and religious identity. The most striking example of this is Muslim Personal Law. Placing Muslim women's difficulties within the parameters of religion has further marginalized them and made secular feminists reluctant to address their challenges out of concern about offending religious sensibilities [9], [10].

The Indian Left Front divided throughout the 1970s as well. This raised some concerns about their past interpretation of revolution. There were new Leftist movements and ideas. A few other feminist movements also emerged, such as the Shahada Movement, which was an uprising of tribal landless workers in the Bhil tribe against non-tribal landlords. It started out as a grassroots demonstration but became violent when the new left party joined in. Women were allegedly more militant in the movement and sought immediate action on problems that were particular to them as women, such physical assault and abuse brought on by alcoholism. Women in groups would visit bars and smash liquor pots and containers as they traveled from town to village. All other women would surround the husband, beat him up, and demand him to publicly apologize to his wife if any woman complained that her husband had physically abused her. The Self-Employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad was possibly the first effort to establish a trade union affiliated with the Textile Labor Union. Founded in 1972 on Ela Bhatt's initiative, it was a group of women working in various trades who had a number of things in common, including low pay, extremely unfavorable working conditions, harassment from superiors, and little appreciation for their efforts as socially beneficial work. Through education, technical assistance, legal literacy, collective bargaining, and the promotion of Gandhian ideals like as honesty, decency, and simplicity, SEWA sought to improve the working circumstances for women.

The drought and hunger circumstances that hit rural Maharashtra in the early 1970s directly contributed to the anti-price hike protests in Maharashtra. In metropolitan Maharashtra, this caused a significant price increase. To organize women against inflation, the United Women's Anti-Price Rise Front was established in 1973. It quickly became a large-scale women's movement for consumer protection. The campaign urged the government to set minimum pricing and requirements for the distribution of basic goods. Large groups of women 10,000–20,000 strong would demonstrate outside of government buildings, parliamentarians' homes, and the residences of businesspeople. Those who couldn't leave their homes would show their support by hitting thalis with lathis or belans. Gujarat adopted this initiative, which there came to be known as the Nay Nirman initiative. The movement used pretend tribunals where corrupt politicians and state officials were sentenced, sham funeral processions, and processions to celebrate the start of a new age as its strategies. The Naxalbari movement in West Bengal saw an increase in the number of women participating since it addressed issues of daily brutality and patriarchal dominance as well as the freedom of the landless. In Andhra Pradesh, the Naxalite movement aided in the empowerment of women by giving them opportunities to perform a variety of roles, including those of peacemakers, activists, and politicians. The Navnirman youth movement in Gujarat, which was set up to fight corruption and nepotism, as well as the Chipko movement, emphasized issues of environmental protection and public safety. During this time, groups like the Mashila Samata Sainik Dal, the Progressive Organization of Women, and the Shramik Mahila Sangathan arose.

Indian Women's Movements of the Present

The modern women's movement in India is the result of the fusion of several ideologies and forms of activity. The 1975 UN Year of Women declaration, commonly known as the "International Women Year," served as the catalyst for these initiatives. The Status of Women Committee Report was also published during the year. The report contained a sizable amount of information that had been gathered on the many indicators of the status of women in India. The misconception that women in post-independence India were "progressing" was openly refuted in this research. It was discovered that the majority of Indian women experienced discrimination "in both the domestic

and public spheres," in addition to poverty, illiteracy, and poor health. This led to protests and campaigns by middle-class women against the worst examples of sexism and patriarchy.

The year 1975 also witnessed the growth of a variety of feminist initiatives throughout the nation, particularly in Maharashtra. Maoist women founded the Puregami Stree Sangathana in Pune and the Stree Mukti Sangathana in Bombay as a result of the Progressive Organization of Women in Hyderabad. Both party-based and independent groups in Maharashtra observed the inaugural International Women's Day on March 8, 1975. A Devadasi conference was planned for September. A convention for the United Women's Liberation Struggle took place in Pune in October. It was determined that feminism and the anti-caste Dalit movement were related. Due to the work they did, such as drying leather or cleaning feces, the dalits were categorized as untouchables. The dalits have been campaigning against the Purdah regime, for social recognition, for women's rights to education, widow remarriage, and other rights. The Mahila Samta Sainik Dalam was founded by female members of the Dalit struggle. It highlighted women's oppression and equality, particularly the repressive nature of religion and the caste system.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi proclaimed a state of emergency throughout the nation in 1975. The growth of the women's movement was halted as a result. As a result of persecution and arrests, several political groups were driven into hiding. Activists' attention at this time was focused on civil rights, including the right to freedom of expression and association, the right of political prisoners, the right to freedom and liberty, and other issues. The Emergency was revoked in 1977. Some of the women's movement that had been put on hold by the declaration of Emergency saw a resurrection as a result of this. Most regions of the nation saw the formation of women's organisations. The women's movement underwent a change in the 1980s. Organizations turned their attention away from one or two concerns and toward more comprehensive problems. Feminist perspectives might be divided into three main categories: The liberal stream focuses on calling for improvements in areas of the political system that have a direct impact on women. The Leftist stream argues for the unification of various social change groups in order to bring about the revolutionary transformation of society and situates the oppression of women within a comprehensive study of the broader structure of oppression.

Self-Teaching Resources

The radical feminists experimented with restoring historic sources of women's power, inventiveness, and other attributes, focusing on the development of femininity and masculinity as basic polarities in society. Women's groups were affiliated with political parties beginning with the post-independence liberation movement. In the 1980s, groups or organizations that were unaffiliated with political parties began to form. These groups or organizations have come to be known as "autonomous." Many of the members of the new women's organizations that emerged in the late 1970s had Leftist ideologies. Despite having links to many political parties, they considered themselves to be independent. Despite having different ideologies, they quickly formed networks. The majority of these organizations' members belonged to the urban educated middle class and were leftists, which had an impact on the feminist movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The groups of the 1970s were ill-defined, lacking in formal organization, and unsupported. Many organizations chose independence and sought to exist independently as women-only organizations without any ties to political parties. Feminists believed that political parties were competitive, hierarchical, and based only on self-interest. Feminists did acknowledge the

significance of party politics despite their criticism of it. They believed political parties might aid in the implementation of reforms and the accomplishment of feminist objectives.

CONCLUSION

In India, women's movements have been essential in opposing patriarchal conventions, promoting women's rights, and bringing about social change. These movements have changed and grown with time, embracing intersectionality and addressing the issues of women from various communities, classes, castes, and geographical areas. The women's movements have played a significant role in bringing attention to issues such as gender-based violence against women, uneven access to healthcare, education, and employment prospects. They have fought for the development of women's support networks as well as legislative and policy reforms. They have affected public opinion and drawn attention to women's concerns that were previously disregarded or stigmatized via their efforts. Women's movements in India have battled for changes in laws and regulations as well as social attitudes and mindsets. They have fought against gender norms, supported women's political engagement and leadership, and pushed for their economic independence. These movements have established forums for debate, solidarity, and group action by elevating the voices of women. However, despite the advancements, issues still exist for women's movements. In Indian culture, there is still prejudice, violence, and deeply ingrained patriarchal standards. Caste, religion, and financial inequities are intersectional challenges that make the fight for women's rights even more challenging. To solve these issues and guarantee that the women's movements remain inclusive, varied, and reflective of all women, continued efforts are required. As a result, the battle for gender equality and empowerment in India has been fueled by women's movements. Their influence is seen in changes in public views, legislative developments, and governmental improvements. The task is still far from finished. To get beyond the remaining challenges and build a society where women have equal rights, opportunities, and freedom from discrimination, more cooperation, advocacy, and mobilization are required. Hope for a future in which gender equality is upheld and all women are empowered to reach their full potential is inspired by the tenacity and tenacity of the women's movements in India.

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CHAPTER 5

BREAKING THE CHAINS: THE MOVEMENT AGAINST DOWRY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on the movement against dowry in India, examining its origins, objectives, strategies, and impact. It delves into the historical and cultural context that perpetuates the dowry system, its detrimental consequences for women and their families, and the social norms that reinforce its existence. The study analyzes the efforts of activists, organizations, and community-driven initiatives that aim to eradicate dowry and create a society that values gender equality, dignity, and justice. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the movement against dowry, its significance, challenges, and the way forward for a dowry-free India.

KEYWORDS:

Dowry, Harassment, Empowerment, Education, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

The modern feminist movement's first struggle was against dowry. Dowry is the total amount of gifts made by the bride's family to the groom and his family, including cash and other assets like jewelry, a vehicle, furniture, a home, etc. The Progressive Organization of Women conducted official dowry protests in Hyderabad in 1975. The Emergency that was imposed in 1975 prevented these demonstrations from developing into full-fledged campaigns. In 1977, once the Emergency was abolished, a fresh anti-dowry campaign emerged in Delhi. This movement centered on the abuse of women, such as bride burning and aiding in suicide, as dowry. The center of the ongoing protests against dowry and related concerns has been Delhi [1], [2]. This might be as a result of the many dowry murders and dowry harassment cases that have occurred in Delhi. In Delhi's modern feminist movement, the Mahila Dakshata Samiti was the first women's group to raise the subject of dowry abuse and dowry deaths. Another women's organization, Stri Sangharsh, organized a protest in June 1979 in response to the death of Tarvinder Kaur, who had made a statement in her final moments accusing her in-laws of killing her because her parents were unable to meet their ever-increasing dowry demands. This action brought attention to the issue of dowry and dowry-related crimes. This rally attracted a lot of attention and sparked many more against dowry killings, including a sizable one led by the Nari Raksha Samiti. These protests spurred debate in the public about dowry and crimes connected to it.

Women who died in fires were said to have committed suicide, and many of these incidents went unreported. Even suicides were not thought to be the consequence of dowry-related harassment. The authorities did not classify or conduct any investigations into these fatalities. Authorities did not get involved in such family disputes since they were regarded as private family concerns. However, this issue was brought to the notice of the government and the general public as a

consequence of the protests and agitations in Delhi and other regions of the nation. This helped the general public to discover that many reported female suicides were really dowry-related fatalities. The number of dowry harassment allegations filed with the police increased. Feminist groups made an effort to assist by documenting the last statements made by women, hearing from family members, and encouraging neighbors and friends to testify and provide proof. In order to raise public awareness of the issue of dowry, dowry deaths, and dowry harassment, feminist organisations developed initiatives. This included planning debates, holding open rallies, and staging street plays. Numerous open forums were arranged by the feminist journal *Manushi*, which is located in Delhi. Men and women were urged to publicly declare that they would never accept nor give dowries [3], [4].

In 1980, the government established a legislation outlawing dowry and associated offences. This statute designated dowry demands-related suicide abetment as a distinct offence. It mandated a police inquiry into any woman's death within five years of marriage. The legislation did not identify the kind of evidence that may be used to show harassment, nor did it make abetment a punishable offense, even though it acknowledged that dowry harassment could be interpreted as abetment. The first affirmative ruling on this statute occurred in 1982. Two persons were convicted guilty of dowry murder by a Delhi sessions court magistrate, and they were given the death penalty. The Delhi High Court overturned this ruling in 1983. Widespread protests and rallies were held in opposition to this ruling. The Supreme Court maintained the judgement in 1985 but changed it from a death sentence to a life sentence. The Criminal Law Act was enacted in the same year. As a result, mistreating a wife became a cognizable, non-bailable offense that may result in up to three years in jail and a fine. The Act expanded the definition of cruelty to encompass both verbal and physical abuse. The Evidence Act's Section 113-A was also changed to allow the court to infer aiding suicide. Technically, this lowered the burden on the complaint by shifting the burden of evidence. The Criminal Procedure Code's Section 174, which mandates a post-mortem examination of a woman's corpse if she passes away within seven years of marriage, was likewise altered by the Act.

Despite the passage of these regulations, it has been difficult to get convictions for dowry deaths. Evidence obtained via hearsay cannot be used to support a conviction. Even the wives themselves are reluctant to file complaints against their husbands and in-laws. Additionally, post-mortem exams may not always reveal proof of murder. It is challenging to demonstrate that kerosene burns are the product of murderous intent. Additionally, there are still a lot of dowry law flaws, and the majority of offenders avoid being caught. Feminists learned that, although being able to mobilize large public support for campaigns against specific crimes against women, it was exceedingly difficult to get the backing of the judicial system for their initiatives [5], [6].

DISCUSSION

In both rural and urban regions, there was a campaign against the rape of women by police, government employees, and landlords. The Rameeza Bee incident in Hyderabad brought attention to this problem. Several police officers sexually assaulted Rameeza Bee. The rickshaw puller who was her husband was killed after he objected to the rape of his wife. In response, a large number of people descended on the police station, lay the man's corpse on the veranda, erected barricades, stoned the structure, and set fire to some of the cars. Armed forces were sent, and the unrest was only subdued when the state administration was removed and a commission of inquiry was established to investigate the rape and murder.

Numerous protests against police and landlord/employer rapes took place around the nation. A 16-year-old girl called Mathura was raped in 1980 by neighborhood police officers in Maharashtra. On the grounds that Mathura had a lover and was a loose woman who by definition could not be raped, a complaint was filed against the officers, who were cleared by the Sessions Court and Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's decision was the target of an open letter from four experienced attorneys, which sparked a feminist group's campaign. The feminist organization Forum Against Rape with headquarters in Bombay made the decision to advocate for the case's reopening. A retrial of the case was urged during protests staged on March 8, International Women's Day, and feminist organizations from all around the nation were contacted. Additionally, it was demanded that the Indian Penal Code's pertinent portions be put into effect and that the rape statute be modified. To organize the campaign, members of the socialist and communist parties created joint action committees. In fact, this was the first time feminist organizations had planned a nationwide campaign [7], [8].

A second instance occurred in 1980 when police detained Maya Tyagi in Baghpat, Haryana, stripped her nude, sexually assaulted her, and then paraded her around the streets. Political parties and women's groups throughout the nation protested vigorously as a consequence. A judicial investigation into the occurrence was ordered, and a legislative conversation on the sharp rise in rape and other crimes against women took place. The Criminal Law Act 1983, a law sponsored by the government, defined the categories of custodial rape, established a mandatory 10-year jail sentence, and shifted the burden of evidence to the accuser. This provision transferring the burden of evidence to the accused caused a lot of controversy since it said that if the woman could show that the accused engaged in forced sex with her at the reported time and location, the accused would be assumed guilty until he could show otherwise. The matter was politicized, nevertheless, and many political parties tried to use it for political clout. However, a different judgment highlighted several aspects of rape, including the stigma attached to it and the challenges in obtaining medical evidence to demonstrate that a woman had been raped. Due to the victim's actions she had been having a sexual connection with a man the rapists' punishment in the 1988 case of Suman Rani was reduced. This ruling sparked a fresh conversation over what constitutes rape. The technical definition of rape, according to feminists, downplays the reality that it is a violent assault against a woman's right to privacy.

Movement of Chipko

In 1971, the Chipko movement, an environmental movement, had its start. To defend the Himalaya, it was mostly spearheaded by women in the Uttarakhand area. The movement, however, was influenced by economics just as much as the environment. This is due to the close connections between Uttarakhand's economic and ecological interests, making it hard to separate the two. It was known as the "chipko movement" because people in Uttarakhand hugged the woods to defend them from the axes of contractors.

Caso Shah Bano

Shah Bano, a Muslim lady from Indore, Madhya Pradesh, was 62 years old and the mother of five children. Her spouse filed for divorce from her in 1978. The husband is permitted to do this without his wife's consent under Muslim personal law. Seven years after she first attempted to get support via the Indian legal system, the Supreme Court of India heard her case. In terms of the law, the personal codes govern maintenance, and Muslim law does not provide women the right to

continued maintenance. Muslim women who are divorced are entitled to their mehr and three months of support. Following that, she could get assistance from her family and community.

In 1985, when Shah Bano's case made it to the Supreme Court, the justices looked to Article 125 of the penal law, which is applicable to all people. Divorced women who are in need of maintenance are entitled to it under this criminal statute. Despite Muslim personal law, the Supreme Court applied this clause to give Shah Bano continued maintenance. Additionally, the court continued to make the case in its ruling that "a common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties in laws which have conflicting ideologies." Despite widespread support, the judges' comments on "national integration" and the "loyalties" of the people gravely concerned India's Muslim minority, especially in light of the political climate of escalating anti-minority agitations and violence. The court and its detractors both found support for their viewpoints in the somewhat paradoxical Indian Constitution, which both defends religious freedom and promotes equality before the law, which heightened the debate around this ruling.

The Shah Bano verdict led to a surge of outrage from Muslim organizations. In reaction to this protest, Rajiv Gandhi's administration permitted the passage of the Muslim Women Bill, a statute that, of course, barred Muslim women from using the Criminal Procedure Code to seek maintenance as Shah Bano had done. The Hindu right, who emphasized the necessity for a uniform civil code a key tenet of their election campaign, saw their stance further strengthened as a result. The debate over the uniform civil code, which challenges the unfairness that "personal" rules place on women, has been revived, redirected, and resumed. Following the need of women's participation in panchayats, representation of women via reservations has been established in the federal and state legislatures. The experience of the disaster serves as a permanent background to the debate over population policies, which have become a contentious issue.

Women's Movements of Today

'All concerns are women's issues,' was the catchphrase for the women's movement in the 1990s. The United Nations conferences helped to support the greater globalization of women's rights problems. Women's rights were officially recognized as human rights in 1992 at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. The networking among women throughout the globe was further bolstered by the Beijing International Conference on Women. However, racial tensions, riots, and other acts of violence made a lasting impression on Indian women, and it was shown that women, children, and the impoverished are the groups most often affected by violence worldwide. These days, networks on many causes and campaigns connect the women's movements in India. New strategies for resistance and change-related mobilization are also being deployed, even if certain traditional protest, agitation, and demonstration tactics are still in use. The movements for regional peace, sex workers' rights, and sustainable development are all connected to women's problems. The majority of these movements are collaborating to create a fair society.

The most important mechanism for securing the future of women in India is women's empowerment. It is a methodical technique that India has to take more seriously. Empowerment is a multifaceted social process that aids individuals in taking charge of their own lives, communities, and societies by taking action on topics they see as important. For human rights-based approaches to development, the questions surrounding women's empowerment and the status and position of women have now become vital. The main factors in achieving the empowerment of women are educational achievement and economic involvement. One of the most important prerequisites for the elevation of women's social standing is the economic empowerment

of women. An important step toward empowering women is their engagement in politics. Since its establishment, the Indian Constitution has vowed to bring about political and socioeconomic change. Women's empowerment, gender inequality, and violence against women all major topics of sociological study in the modern era have received little attention in India [9], [10]. Gender gaps in the workplace relate to disparities in pay and employment prospects. Data demonstrates that males often get higher money for doing the same job as women. Not only is a significant portion of women's job underpaid, but it is also socially unrecognized. The Preamble to the United Nations Charter reiterates belief in basic human rights, in the value and dignity of the human person, and in the equality of men and women in terms of their rights. Social movements may be seen as collaborative endeavors to create a new way of life, according to American sociologist Herbert Blumer.

The phrase "women's movement" does not relate to one particular movement or organization. It is made up of several feminism-related movements that address a variety of concerns, including those related to sexual harassment, domestic violence, equitable pay, women's suffrage, and reproductive rights. When compared to women's movements in Western and European nations, the history of women's struggles and movements in India against patriarchal structures of gender inequality has been limited. The Indian women's movement may be considered as generating three waves, similar to movements in the West. The first wave, which aimed to eradicate social ills in Indian society, began during the British colonial era and the liberation fight. Women's political engagement increased throughout the post-independence era, which is known as the second wave of the feminist movement. The third wave of the women's movement in India began to take shape in the late 1970s, with an emphasis on organizing women to fight against issues such as rape and other kinds of sexual violence, alcoholism, the representation of women in the arts, and domestic abuse.

CONCLUSION

An ingrained societal evil that continues to damage women and maintain gender inequity is being fiercely resisted by the anti-dowry movement in India. Numerous terrible instances, including dowry-related violence, harassment, and even bridal deaths, have been brought on by the tradition of dowry. Activists, groups, and communities have banded together throughout time to oppose the dowry system and advance female equality. The campaign has educated people about their rights, promoted awareness of the harmful effects of dowry, and pushed for legislative changes to end this practice. It has spurred debates at all societal levels, enticing people and families to reconsider and reject the idea that dowry is a need for marriage. Numerous obstacles, such as deeply set social conventions, economic inequalities, and opposition from conservative segments of society, must be overcome by the anti-dowry campaign. Additionally, while there are legislative structures in place to handle dowry-related offenses, obstacles still stand in the way of their efficient application and enforcement. A multi-pronged strategy is needed to eradicate dowry, including legal actions, public awareness campaigns, community involvement, and tackling underlying issues including patriarchy and gender inequality.

The fight against dowry must be complemented by larger societal reform that challenges gender stereotypes, empowers women, and creates a safe space for victims. The reliance on dowry as a societal practice may be greatly reduced by emphasizing education, financial independence, and equal opportunities for women. The fight against dowry is a critical step in India's quest for justice and gender equality. We can build a culture where marriages are founded on love, respect, and

shared values instead of monetary exchanges by questioning and abolishing the dowry system. To promote a cultural transformation and establish a dowry-free India, consistent efforts are needed from individuals, communities, civil society groups, and the government. Together, we can free women and families nationwide from the shackles of dowry, ensuring their futures are better and more egalitarian.

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CHAPTER 6

BALANCING HEALTH AND WORK: HEALTH CONDITIONS AND WORK-RELATED ISSUES OF INDIAN

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the health conditions and work-related issues faced by women in India, examining the intersection between gender, health, and the workplace. It addresses the unique challenges and vulnerabilities experienced by Indian women in various occupational settings, including physical health, mental well-being, reproductive health, and work-life balance. The study analyzes the underlying factors contributing to these issues, such as societal norms, gender discrimination, and limited access to healthcare and support systems. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the critical need to address the health and work-related concerns of Indian women and proposes recommendations for creating healthier, safer, and more inclusive work environments.

KEYWORDS:

Harassment, Empowerment, Education, Gender Equality, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

A vital component of human life is health. Healthcare ideas, knowledge, abilities, and infrastructure have evolved with human civilisation in a variety of nations. But in many customs and civilizations, men and women have had distinct health priorities as a result of gender prejudice. India is one of the few nations in the world where women and men have birth expectancies that are almost equal. Given that India lacks the traditional female advantage in life expectancy, there may be underlying issues with women's health. Indian women die young and often throughout their reproductive years, which contributes to their high mortality rates [1], [2].

One of the key goals of planning in India has continued to be the improvement of the population's quality of living and health. The five-year plans contained long-term goals that were in line with international ambitions, to which India had also signed up. The National Population Policy and the National Health Policy both place emphasis on these long-term objectives. These objectives must be met through enhancing access to and use of nutrition, family welfare, and health services, with an emphasis on underserved and underprivileged populations in particular.

Health Issues

Indian women's social standing and health are inextricably intertwined. According to studies on women's status, Indian women's contributions to their families are often disregarded in favor of being seen as financial liabilities. In India, boys are strongly preferred since they are expected to take care of their aging parents. Due to this predilection for sons and the large dowry expenses for girls, it sometimes happens that females are mistreated. Indian women also have low rates of

formal labor force involvement and education. They often have limited independence, living under the rule of their sons before their spouses and dad. The health condition of Indian women is negatively impacted by each of these issues [3], [4].

A woman's poor health affects not just her but also her family. Low-weight babies are more likely to be delivered by women who are ill. Additionally, they are less likely to be able to provide their kids healthy food and proper care. Finally, a woman's health has an impact on the household's financial stability since a sick woman will be less effective in the workforce. Despite the fact that women in India have numerous major health challenges, this section only addresses the most important ones, such as HIV/AIDS, violence against women, nutritional status, and uneven treatment of boys and girls. It is not unexpected that women's health varies widely from state to state given the enormous range of cultures, religions, and degrees of development across India's 29 states and 7 union territories.

High infant mortality rates and women's strong predilection for having sons drive women to have more children in an effort to have one or two sons live to maturity. Numerous pregnancies and closely spaced deliveries degrade a mother's nutritional state, which may have a detrimental impact on the pregnancy's result and raise the likelihood of health problems for moms, according to research. Unsafe abortions that end unwanted pregnancies have detrimental effects on women's health. The general health of Indian women may be improved by reducing fertility. One strategy to lower fertility is to take contraceptives more often. In India, awareness of family planning is almost ubiquitous, yet only 754% of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 utilize it nowadays. Over two-thirds of married women who use contraception have had female sterilization, which is the most common method of contraception. Both fertility and the usage of contraceptives are substantially correlated with place of residence, education, and religion. Compared to just one-third of illiterate women, more over half of married women with a high school degree or above use contraceptives [5], [6]. The overall fertility rates for these two groups are noticeably different, as expected:

There is still an unmet demand for contraceptives in India despite a significant rise in the number of women taking contraceptives and reducing their fertility. In India, about 20% of married women either desire to put off having children or decide not to. Younger women have a greater need for birth spacing than birth restriction, which is often unmet. This suggests that alternatives to female sterilization, which India's family planning program firmly supports, should be taken into account. Because most of these fatalities might be avoided if women had access to sufficient health care, the high rates of maternal mortality are particularly upsetting. In actuality, poor access to healthcare is the main cause of India's high maternal death rates.

Prenatal care is seldom given to pregnant women

In the four years before the study, 37% of all pregnant women in India did not get any prenatal care, according to the first National Family Health study, which was carried out in 1992–1993. By educational level and location of residence, the percentage of people getting no care varied significantly. Compared to only 13% of educated women, over 50% of illiterate women got no care. Compared to women in metropolitan regions, women in rural areas were substantially less likely to obtain prenatal care. The majority of pregnant women who did not seek medical attention indicated they did so because they believed it was unnecessary. Therefore, it is important to educate women about the value of health care in order to ensure healthy pregnancies and risk-free deliveries. Lack of suitable healthcare facilities is another factor contributing to the low levels of

prenatal care. According to current estimates, 16% of people who reside in rural regions are more than 10 kilometers from a medical center.

DISCUSSION

In India, the majority of births occur at home.

Maternal health and mortality are impacted by the place of birth and the sort of help used during labor. Negative outcomes for the mother and the child are more probable in deliveries that take place in unhygienic settings or that are not attended by skilled medical staff. According to the NFHS study, over three-quarters of births occur at home and two-thirds of births are not attended by qualified medical professionals. Although healthcare is crucial, a number of other variables also have an impact on maternal mortality and health. According to medical study, a woman's health suffers when she gives birth young and has several children overall. As previously mentioned, India's fertility has been falling, yet several regions of the nation still have high rates. Two states in 2013 had average fertility rates of more than three children per woman. High fertility rates are often associated with high maternal mortality ratios.

One in Five Maternal Deaths Are Linked to a Curable Issue

Another aspect of maternal health and mortality is anemia, which is treatable reasonably easily and affordably with iron supplements. According to studies, anemia affects between 50 and 90 percent of all pregnant women in India. In India, 20% of all maternal fatalities are caused by severe anemia. Additionally, the risk of dying from a hemorrhage during labor rises with severe anemia.

A violent crime against a woman is reported once every five minutes

Heise's research has revealed that violence against women is a health issue that is often disregarded by authorities because they believe that such behavior is beyond the scope of their authority. Similar to how many donor organizations avoid working on this issue because they see it as culturally sensitive. Violence, such as hitting a wife, is seen as 'natural' or as a husband's right in certain civilizations. Heise argues that, on the other hand, violence against women is bad for economic growth because it prevents women from fully participating in the economy by draining both their emotional and physical resources. Children of victims of violence against women may suffer detrimental effects as well. Although violence is a significant health concern for Indian women, the lack of data makes it impossible to estimate its prevalence. Data available at this time indicate a rise in the reported volume of violent crime against women. However, since many occurrences, especially those involving domestic violence, go unreported, these numbers may not accurately depict the true prevalence of these crimes.

According to the facts that are currently available, a large portion of the violence that women experience takes place at home or is committed by family members. For instance, family members often perpetrate the bulk of reported rapes. Many of the victims are young women; in 1995, females aged 16 or younger were the target of 30% of all recorded rapes. There have been more cases of torture and other harsh treatment by the spouse and the husband's family members recorded in recent years. Between 1990 and 1994, there were 93% more documented instances of torture than there were in 1990. In 1994, there were 5.9 occurrences of torture per 100,000 females. Women are often subjected to torture by other women, such a mother-in-law.

Malnutrition Affects More Than Half of Indian Children

Malnutrition is another significant health issue that Indian women confront, according to several research. Both their children's and their own lives are in danger. Heavy labor demands, poverty, pregnancy and rearing, and specific nutritional requirements of women all contribute to the detrimental impacts of malnutrition in women, increasing their susceptibility to sickness and, as a result, their death rates [7], [8]. While there is widespread malnutrition in India across all demographic groups, women's poor nutrition starts at a young age and lasts their whole lives. Women and girls often eat the least in a household; as a result, they suffer the most from a lack of food. The NFHS reports that malnutrition rates among Indian children are among the highest in the world. More over half of all boys and girls under the age of four were underweight, and a comparable number were stunted. According to other research, many women never reach their full physical potential. This physical underdevelopment raises the chance of difficult births, which puts women at significant risk.

Children's Undernourishment is Strongly Associated with Mothers' Education

According to the NFHS, there is a strong correlation between maternal education and the severity of child malnutrition. In comparison to kids whose moms have at least finished high school, children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to be undernourished or stunted. When severely undernourished youngsters are taken into account, the differences are much more pronounced. In comparison to children of mothers with at least a high school education, children of illiterate moms are three times more likely to be seriously undernourished. Children's nutritional status varies by state as well. The percentage of undernourished children is greatest in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, while it is lowest in Kerala, which is consistent with the states' varying degrees of socioeconomic development.

Female Deaths in Excess

According to a number of studies, the unequal treatment of girls and women in India compared to that of boys and men is one of the causes of their bad health. The vast number of 'missing women' is the most horrifying proof of this. According to Amartya Sen, an economist, there are around 60 million of them. In other words, there are 60 million girls and women who ought to be citizens but are not. The lower number of girls than men in every age group up to age 30 is caused by greater female than male death rates. One of the causes of increased female mortality is different treatment of girls and boys in terms of eating patterns and access to healthcare. Women face discrimination in the distribution of household resources, such as food and access to health care, as a result of their general lower status. Average breastfeeding duration for boys is 25.3 months compared to 23.6 months for females. Girls are less likely than boys to be transported to the hospital for treatment when they are unwell. Girls die from accidents and injuries, fever, and digestive illnesses at a greater incidence than boys do for children between the ages of one and four, according to causes of death, all of which are linked to living circumstances and neglect.

The treatment of boys and girls differently differs by state, much as other indices of health condition. One indicator of unequal treatment is the infant mortality rate by gender. Males are more likely than girls to die in infancy in the great majority of nations. Therefore, higher female rates are seen to indicate prejudice against females. Only 7 of India's 15 main states have male newborn death rates that are higher. In the remaining states, female rates that are equivalent to or higher than male rates imply that girls are neglected more. Sex-selective abortion is one of the son

preference's most severe expressions. Over 90% of aborted babies are female, and the use of medical technology to identify a fetus' gender is growing in India. With a sex ratio at birth of around 105 boys for every 100 girls, boys are born more often than girls in all nations. The sex ratio at birth has climbed to 112 boys for every 100 girls, according to data on hospital births from different regions of India.

India's HIV/AIDS Epidemic Is Little Recognized

In the next years, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in India will have an increasingly negative impact on women's health. According to a recent research, there are presently 2.1 million HIV-positive Indians. The demographic groups with the greatest incidence of infection exhibit certain high-risk behaviors. However, the general populace is likewise becoming more infected. For instance, the seroprevalence of HIV among pregnant women in Tamil Nadu increased fourfold from 0.2 to 0.8 percent between 1989 and 1991. Both married and single males visiting sex workers who have high infection rates are a major contributor to the pandemic. Truck drivers and migrant laborers have significant roles in the transmission of HIV. According to some surveys, 5 to 10 percent of truck drivers nationwide are HIV positive.

Despite the epidemic's worrisome expansion, most Indian women know virtually little about AIDS. According to the NFHS, most Indian women had never heard of AIDS. There were a lot of misunderstandings regarding the ways in which the illness was transmitted, even among people who had heard of it. A stronger national HIV/AIDS education campaign and intervention initiatives focusing on those most vulnerable to HIV infection might help Indian women. In our ancient civilization, women had significant authority and significance. All of the texts and even our legendary tales include evidence of this truth. We revere numerous goddesses, including Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Durga. That demonstrates how Indian culture valued women. However, recently, things haven't stayed the same. The social fabric has expanded in all directions. Despite the fact that women are seen as being less significant and powerful than males, things are not completely hopeless. There has been a significant improvement as a result of the efforts of the government, NGOs, social welfare groups, and many other institutions. The outcomes of the intense interest shown by several private business organisations in enhancing women's economic standing are quite positive.

Gender Ratio

Sex ratio is one of the obvious indicators of gender equality. It may be defined as the proportion of females to men per 1000. Prior to Independence, the sex ratio in India was not concerning. The proportion of females per 1000 men has been on the decline since 1947. The fact that there are many fewer women than males in certain areas is particularly concerning. According to Census of India 2011, which revealed a major improvement over the last ten or so years, the female to male sex ratio has shown indications of improvement after demonstrating a troubling trend for decades. The sex ratio increased somewhat from 933 to 943 in 2011, but there is still a long way to go before a desired level of gender equality is attained. In contrast to Haryana and Punjab, which have much lower sex ratios than the national average, the southern states are leading the transformation with the greatest progress.

An increase in the sex ratio among Indian women and men indicates a healthy growth rate. There are just two areas in India where the female to male ratio is more than or equal to 1000, and those are the state of Kerala and the union territory of Puducherry. Mizoram, Assam, and Nagaland are

three more states whose sex ratio has significantly improved. The ratio of women to males has improved in the densely populated states of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Sikkim. In Chandigarh and Delhi, the sex ratio increased significantly between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. However, Jammu & Kashmir and Haryana have also seen encouraging indicators of a general improvement in their sex ratio. In fact, during the last several years, the sex ratio in these two states has increased positively. Recent estimates from the Haryana Government indicate that in December 2015, the state's child sex ratio exceeded the 900 threshold for the first time. The child sex ratio in Haryana has now surpassed the 900 threshold for the first time in the previous 15 years. Beginning with the Indian Census in 2011, the sex ratio in different Indian states has generally begun to increase. Here are some intriguing statistics on the sex ratio in India:

1. According to the Census of India, Kerala has the greatest sex ratio with 1084 girls for every 1000 men.
2. There are only 818 girls in the Chandigarh union territory for every 1000 men.
3. Punjab's child sex ratio increased by 48 percent, going from 798 to 846.
4. Daman and Diu has the lowest female sex ratio among Indian Union Territories, whereas Pondicherry has the highest.
5. The reduction in the female ratio in India is partially a result of gender prejudice, although in the previous ten years, there has been some progress.

Causes of India's Declining Sex Ratio

The desire for a boy over a girl is the fundamental indication of gender inequality in India and one of the most potent indicators. In India, this was reflected in the insufficient birth and survival of females. The main causes of a poor sex ratio in India are selective abortions and female infanticide. Only under precise conditions specified by the MT Pact does the Indian government permit the legal termination of pregnancy. These consist of:

1. The circumstance in which a pregnant woman's bodily and/or mental wellbeing was at jeopardy.
2. The circumstance in which a mother is expecting a kid who may be deformed or disabled.
3. The circumstance in which a woman becomes pregnant after being raped.
4. Unmarried girls under the age of 18 who get pregnant may have their pregnancies terminated with their parents' permission.
5. A guardian's permission is required to terminate pregnancies in "lunatics."
6. Risk to the pregnant woman's health resulting from her real or fairly predictable surroundings.

As a result, it is clear that although the government prohibits prenatal sex determination, it does permit abortions under the previously described conditions. Finding a physician or sonographer who can identify the sex of the fetus is, however, rather simple. Depending on one's financial situation, this may be a costly surgery, thus many people would prefer to wait for the female child to be born so they could later murder her. A reduced sex ratio is the result of a number of additional factors. These are what they are:

Illiteracy: Education is crucial in affecting the gender ratio. In certain Indian civilizations, child marriage or underage marriage is still common. Girls are prevented from attending school because they are forced to do home duties at a young age. They are ignorant of their own abilities and functions in the modern world because they lack literacy.

Widespread poverty: According to studies, the sex ratio is greater in states with lower levels of poverty. On the other hand, undernourishment of children, particularly girls, is more common in states with higher poverty levels.

Poor social position of women: Women are still seen as less important than males in a sizable portion of Indian culture. When a female child is born, parents are often faced with the difficult process of making dowry arrangements. Therefore, because of their beliefs and their dire financial situation, parents would rather have a boy than a girl. Lack of women's empowerment has made the issue worse, particularly in rural regions. Because they lack the same authority as males and a lower level of education, women are unable to hold positions of greater responsibility in society.

Male dominance: Indian culture is mainly patriarchal, with a belief that men are superior to women. Men are still expected to provide for their families' financial needs. As a result, techniques like female foeticide and prenatal sex determination are used to increase the number of boys in the household. In northern Indian states, this is mainly to blame for a fall in the sex ratio.

Infant mortality is a major factor in the deaths of young girls, which has led to a sex imbalance. Infant mortality is the term used to denote the number of infant fatalities. This age group also has a low sex ratio since parents prefer male offspring. The falling sex ratio is also significantly impacted by maternal mortality. Many women lose away during or after delivery as a result of inadequate healthcare being provided to them. The following are the fundamental causes for why girls are seen as liabilities:

- a. She will get married and move out, so she can't be depended on to help you out in your latter years.
 - b. You must pay a sizable dowry.
 - c. It is challenging for both parents to work since it has to be safeguarded much more.
 - d. If anything goes wrong, there is a far greater danger of bringing "disgrace" to the family.
1. The impoverished are often connected with point 'c' above. The aforementioned points are universal across all economic and geographical barriers.

Government initiatives to boost the sex ratio

The Indian government has advocated for a number of steps to stop the decreasing sex ratio. Here is a quick conversation of a few of these measures:

The government under Narendra Modi launched the significant initiative "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" to raise awareness and improve the effectiveness of social services for women. On January 22, 2015, in Haryana, Prime Minister Modi announced the program.

Sukanya Samriddhi Account: On December 2, 2014, the Ministry of Finance announced this program. A new account will be opened for the female kid as part of the campaign. After turning 10, she may manage the account. The account may be established at a public sector bank or a post office.

The female Child Protection Scheme: By defending the rights of the female child, the program aims to abolish gender discrimination. Additionally, it aims to reduce discriminatory behaviors and attitudes against girls. According to Aapki Beti, Humari Beti, Haryana has India's lowest sex ratio. The government of Haryana introduced this program to address this problem. The state government will deposit Rs 21000 into the account of each newborn girl. The plan would be put

into action in both urban and rural regions. It would specifically target girls from households with low incomes and scheduled castes [9], [10].

Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act: The PCPNDT Act was enacted by the Indian government in 2004 to outlaw and penalize female foeticide and prenatal sex screening. Currently, it is prohibited in India to ascertain or reveal the fetus's sex to anybody. There are worries that the PCPNDT Act has not been properly implemented by the government.

CONCLUSION

Numerous health issues and workplace difficulties that Indian women deal with might have a negative influence on their general wellbeing and quality of life. Gender discrimination, resource scarcity, and patriarchal cultural norms intensify these problems, making a comprehensive approach to solving them imperative. Women in a variety of occupations are disproportionately affected by physical health difficulties, such as workplace dangers, excessive hours, and insufficient safety precautions. Due to the demands of the workplace, gender inequalities, and the many jobs that women are expected to do, mental health issues including stress, anxiety, and depression are also common. Another critical area that needs attention is reproductive health, since women sometimes have trouble getting access to services for managing menstrual hygiene and family planning. Maintaining work-life balance is already difficult due to a lack of supporting laws and resources including maternity leaves, daycare centers, and flexible work schedules. It takes a multifaceted strategy to solve these problems. By developing gender-sensitive workplace rules, granting access to healthcare services, and fostering work-life balance-friendly work settings, employers must put a high priority on the wellbeing of their female workers. Government programs should include improving the healthcare system, making sure that legislation reflect gender equality, and enforcing occupational safety laws.

The cultural norms and prejudices that support gender discrimination and have an adverse effect on women's health may be challenged via educational programs and awareness campaigns. Women's economic independence may be increased and their ability to make wise choices regarding their health and employment can be increased through empowering them via education, skill development, and entrepreneurship. Improving the health and employment situations of Indian women is essential for both their empowerment and the advancement of society as a whole. We can promote a more fair and encouraging society by fostering gender-inclusive work settings, supporting women's health and well-being, and addressing the structural impediments that obstruct their advancement. To guarantee that the health and employment-related problems of Indian women are given priority and are properly handled, it needs coordination amongst stakeholders, including employers, policymakers, healthcare providers, and communities.

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CHAPTER 7

FAMILY PLANNING AND WELFARE: PROMOTING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the importance of family planning in promoting reproductive health and overall welfare. It examines the various dimensions of family planning, including access to contraception, comprehensive sexual education, and reproductive healthcare services. The study analyzes the benefits of family planning for individuals, families, and society, emphasizing its role in achieving sustainable development goals. It also explores the challenges and barriers that hinder effective family planning programs and proposes recommendations for enhancing access, awareness, and utilization of family planning services. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to highlight the significance of family planning in ensuring reproductive health and welfare for individuals and communities.

KEYWORDS:

Fertility, Family Planning, Reproductive Health, Sexual Education, Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

With a population of over 1.2 billion and still growing, India is only second to China in terms of population, making the need for effective family planning and welfare measures one of the most pressing problems facing the nation right now. In addition to the primary objective, which is birth control, family planning and welfare places emphasis on health and child care, prevention of pediatric illnesses, care for expectant mothers, providing for wholesome food, and education. It is crucial for India to implement numerous family planning programs that educate people about the advantages of having fewer children, encourage them to adopt family planning practices, and emphasize how population control is the only way to improve the general population's standard of living [1], [2].

Family Preparation

Family planning often refers to intended parenthood to the average person. Family planning is not intended to destroy families; on the contrary, it is intended to save them, according to former World Bank President Robert McNamara. India's National Family Planning Programme defined family planning as "reducing birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirement of the national economy" in 1952. Family planning is a social movement that emphasizes the family's overall development in India. The concept encourages couples to use birth control techniques and have children on purpose rather than by accident in order to reduce the size of their family. The family planning campaign's catchphrase, "Chhota Pariwar, Sukhi Pariwar," has gained a lot of traction over time. In India, family planning has been repurposed as a program for family welfare that strives to provide resources, child health care, and

contraceptive options. If we are not allowing ourselves to die naturally, we should not allow birth naturally, the 1951 Census Report declared.

The Indian Need for Family Planning

India's population has steadily increased since gaining independence in 1947 and is currently over 1.2 billion, making us the second most populated country in the world after China. Over 1/6th of the world's population lives in India, which has just 2.5% of the world's geographical area. The need to severely slow down the pace of population increase is critical given the country's limited resources and high population density of 383 persons per square kilometer. The progress of the nation is hampered by the population's exponential growth. A high rate of population increase tends to stifle all social and economic progress since it changes the population's age distribution and consumes a lot of the resources invested in expanding access to food, jobs, health care, and other natural resources, among other things. A high population growth rate also makes it difficult to improve peoples' quality of life. Therefore, limiting population growth via the implementation of family planning techniques is crucial for a general and sustained expansion of the nation's economy [3], [4].

India's population has to understand that smaller families result in fewer dependents in each family, which lessens the strain on the nation's resources. Children would be better cared for, nourished, and educated if there were fewer dependents. It is common knowledge that a family's level of living rises as the number of members decreases. Therefore, family planning is necessary for the family's general well-being as well as the lifespan and health of a mother and her kid. Therefore, when family planning raises a family's standard of living and every family in the community does so, the quality of life for everyone in the society rises. Family planning may also help a country's economy flourish quickly. The per capita income rises as population growth declines. Additionally, the absolute rate of labor force growth will also slow, leading to an increase in per capita income. The job situation in the nation will improve as a result. Smaller families with fewer children may afford to provide a better living, better food, better healthcare, better education, and a more productive workforce for their offspring. As a result, families and the nation as a whole see an increase in production and income. Higher income leads to higher investment, capital development, and savings, all of which contribute to the nation's economy growing more quickly.

Therefore, the importance of family planning and welfare cannot be overstated. On the one hand, family planning improves people's standards of living and quality of life while also promoting economic growth in the nation. On the other side, economic expansion increases salaries and job possibilities, while family welfare promotes standard of living. In India, family planning and welfare are necessary for the reasons listed below, in brief:

1. For the country's enduring and quick economic growth.
2. To improve the quality of life for Indian citizens.
3. To reach and sustain the population at the ideal level for our available resources.
4. To maintain the mother's and the child's health holistically.
5. To increase public awareness of the small family norm and the facilities related to the reproductive and child care programs that are available.

DISCUSSION

Family Planning: Methods and Results

The nation has developed family planning and welfare strategies over the last several decades, including neutrality, experimentation, population control, maternal and child health care, etc. The following sentences will explain these tactics and their associated results:

1947–1951: The post-independence era, which ran from 1947 to 1951, was characterized by neutrality and a lack of technology for disease diagnosis and management. The majority of India's healthcare services were provided by private organizations and general practitioners, who offered comprehensive, integrated, and high-quality healthcare services. Healthcare services before then were mostly located in metropolitan areas, were costly, and were out of the reach of the poor. Due to the fact that the majority of government hospitals were primarily located in metropolitan regions, the majority of the poor living in rural areas lacked access to healthcare services. As a consequence, there was a very high death rate among mothers and children.

1951–1961: Between 1951 and 1961, experimentation was prevalent. In 1952, the first National Family Planning Program was launched at this period. The goal of the program was to "reduce birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirement of the national economy," however owing to the low reach of family planning services and programs in India, neither fertility nor mortality rates were affected. The population increased by 21.5% throughout the course of the decade. Between 1961 and 1970, the family planning program's expansion approach phase focused on the implementation of an educational approach to family planning. The Panchayat Samitis and Village Development Committees worked to influence people's attitudes regarding family planning with a particular emphasis on rural areas. In order to lower the birth rate to 25 per 1000 people by the year 1973, the government employed the cafeteria and camp approaches. To efficiently implement the family welfare program, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning established a Family Welfare department in 1966. These efforts, however, were found to be ineffectual in producing the expected outcomes due to a lack of infrastructure and skilled labor.

1970–1979: The Fourth Plan saw the government launch a number of fresh projects with an emphasis on:

1. The acceptability of smaller families in society.
2. Educating both the rural and urban populations about family planning techniques.
3. Creating numerous tools and equipment for couples to use for family planning.

For this program to be successful, a selective strategy was used. Couples between the ages of 25 and 25 who were fertile were advised to think about sterilisation as a means of birth control. The MTP Act of 1972 also gave women the option to end undesired pregnancies. The National Family Planning Programme was established under the Fifth Plan to slow population increase. During the Emergency in 1976, up to 82.6 lakh people were forced to be sterilised. After the emergency, the Family Planning Program was changed to the Family Welfare Program, and attempts were made to better integrate family planning services with those for nutrition, child and maternal health, and family planning. The Family Planning Program was held somewhat by the focus on voluntary sterilisation. Sterilizations decreased as a consequence, from 82.6 lakh in 1976–1977 to 9 lakh in 1977–1978. The government placed a strong emphasis on family planning and maternity and child

health programs from 1980 to 1991. The National Health Policy was created in 1983 to provide a comprehensive framework for the development, implementation, and monitoring of MCH services. Additionally, the government began the Universal Immunization Program in 1986 with the intention of reaching all districts by the end of 1990.

1992–2002: Projects including the Child Survival, Safe Motherhood, and Social Safety Net programs were launched under the Eighth Plan with the goal of enhancing broader access to MCH services. The government launched the Reproductive and Child Health project in 1997 with the goal of enhancing quality of life, lowering baby and maternal mortality and morbidity rates, and providing couples with access to reproductive health options. Through secondary and tertiary health care facilities around the nation, it was intended to educate people about reproductive tract infections, safe motherhood, child survival, the universal immunization program, and other important topics. A National Maternity Benefit Scheme was launched in 2001, providing BPL mothers with Rs 500 in cash support for their first two live deliveries.

2002–2007: The Tenth Five-year Plan called for a shift from demographic targets to enabling couples to achieve their reproductive goals, as well as meeting all unmet contraceptive needs to reduce unintended pregnancies. It also called for the integration of numerous vertical programs for family planning and maternal and child health into an integrated program of healthcare for women and children. In terms of centrally specified objectives to community needs assessment, the planned family planning target regime also made a reappearance. During the implementation of the plan, the Department of Family Welfare was united with the Department of Health, and the National Rural Health Mission was established. The National Rural Health Mission's aims and objectives, which also included lowering the total fertility rate to the replacement level, were restated in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for the period 2007–2012. At the policy level, however, the emphasis has deliberately moved away from family planning access and toward universal access to healthcare. Efforts at planned family planning were only allowed to regulate voluntary fertility because they were conceptualized within the context of healthcare.

2012–2017: The approach document for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan acknowledges that the couple protection rate has plateaued and that the overall fertility rate is still above the replacement level that was intended to be reached by the end of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. The study emphasizes the need of population stabilization since drastically disparate rates of population increase in a democracy run the risk of igniting regional conflicts. The strategy paper suggests securing dedicated financing via the National Rural Health Mission for family planning services in high fertility states, together with reproductive and child healthcare services. It is also advised that programs that address the underlying causes of high fertility, such as child mortality, women's empowerment, young marriage, etc., be brought into alignment. However, the approach article does not provide a thorough strategy for population stabilization. For instance, the difficulty of population momentum in the states and union territories of the nation that have either reached or are on the verge of achieving replacement fertility is not mentioned in the strategy paper.

Education: Gender Bias and Literacy

Education is seen as a crucial instrument for the empowerment of women. Their perspective on the world changes as a result of education, which also affects their fertility. It also improves their chances of finding employment and allows them to participate actively in society. According to research, educated women want to have fewer kids and make sure they are socialized properly. Despite the fact that there have been substantial improvements in reading and education, the

overall situation still does not favor women. Only 5.3% of the overall population was educated at the beginning of the 20th century, making the nation as a whole mostly illiterate. The percentage of educated women at the time was only 0.60 percent. 1951 saw the first census, and the results weren't any better. In compared to males' literacy rate of 24.95%, women's literacy rate was 7.93%. According to the 2001 Census, the nation as a whole should have a literacy rate of 65.38 percent, with the female portion of the population having a literacy rate of 54.16 percent and the male portion of the population having a literacy rate of 75.85 percent. Male literacy rates were 82% and female literacy rates were 65.4%, respectively, according to the 2011 census. India's literacy rates are not spread equally. Twelve states and union territories have female literacy rates that are lower than the national average [5], [6].

The states with the lowest rates of female illiteracy are Bihar (53.33%) and Rajasthan (52.66%), respectively. According to this data, a significant portion of India's female population—approximately 35% remains illiterate. To help the millions of illiterate females, sufficient actions must be taken. The fact that the bulk of these women are found in rural and tribal regions of India must be taken into account. Even the fact that women who are literate have not completed school beyond the elementary level cannot be ignored. Even while women actively participate in many professions, including engineering and medicine, the literacy percentage continues to decline as we advance in academic levels. The percentage of females in relation to the number of years spent in school may be used as further evidence for this. At the same time, we must take the necessary steps to reduce the dropout rate, which is much higher, particularly for rural females. The Indian government also understood the need of educating women in order to fundamentally improve their status. Initially, government policy was centered on welfare, which then evolved to development in the 1980s, and is currently centered on empowerment. Education plays a crucial role in the empowering process.

The Effect of Low Female Literacy Rate on Our Society

Disparity by state and region: Different parts of India have reported striking differences in female literacy rates. In India, metropolitan regions have a female literacy rate that is generally greater than rural ones. In Rajasthan's rural regions, the majority of women are illiterate. The greatest female literacy rate in India was found in Kerala, while the lowest was found in Rajasthan, according to the 2011 Census of India. Even India's most populous states, such Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, have low rates of female literacy, at 59.3% and 53.3%, respectively. Infant mortality and the state of one's health are intimately correlated with this. States with high death rates include UP and Bihar, whereas Kerala has the lowest infant mortality rate.

If the nation's overall growth is progressing slowly, it is likely due to poor female literacy rates, which have an impact on every area of development. India is working hard to stabilize its population increase by putting different family planning programs into place. However, these endeavors are hampered by the illiteracy of females. When a girl or woman is illiterate, the effects are not just felt by her; her whole family must put up with the consequences. It has been observed that less educated women have greater difficulties in life. Women who lack literacy have greater rates of all health-related concerns. According to one study, the mother's literacy level and the newborn death rate are negatively related. Women who themselves do not understand the value of education do not place much focus on their children's education. This hinders both the development of the family and the country as a whole. Lack of education suggests ignorance. Women who lack education are unaware of their basic rights. They just have no idea of the many government

programs implemented for their benefit. Women who lack literacy must deal with challenges from life, their families, and even their spouses.

Causes of Women's Low Literacy

The main cause of India's poor female literacy rate is parents' negative attitudes regarding girl children and their right to an education. Compared to the education of a female kid, most families favor males' education. Parents sometimes have the misconception that females do not contribute financially to their families since they would leave their parents' house after getting married. Giving them an education is seen as a complete waste of time and resources in light of this perspective. Parents prioritize males' education above girls' education primarily for this reason.

In India, poverty is a major contributor to a number of issues, including the low literacy rate among females. In India, more than one-third of the population is estimated to be subsistence farmers. Although the government is making significant efforts to improve primary education, there are still a number of obstacles that prevent parents from enrolling their female child in school. Lack of convenient access to education in rural areas is a major factor in the low literacy rate of women. If a girl's school is located far from her house or village, her parents will not send her there. Lack of adequate educational facilities is another barrier to female literacy. Some of the schools lack even the most basic conveniences. According to study results, 80 percent of schools in UP lack bathroom facilities and 54 percent lack access to water. There are certain schools that don't have enough space to house all the kids [7]–[10].

Ineffective female instructors are yet another barrier to female literacy. The gender-segregated society that is India is greatly impacted by this phenomenon. Above all, however, women need to understand and respect how education may genuinely break the cycle of poverty and allow them to live honorably. If nothing else, their education would give them the courage to face any unfavorable circumstances head-on. The government should make constructive efforts to improve school distance and quality. In order to build a harmonious and educated society, we should prioritize the education of girls.

CONCLUSION

In order to promote reproductive health and welfare and to benefit individuals, families, and society at large, family planning is essential. We can allow people to exercise their reproductive rights and make educated choices about their reproductive health by providing them with the information, resources, and access to family planning services. Various dimensions of welfare, such as mother and child health, gender equality, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability, are influenced by family planning. It enables individuals and couples to schedule the birth of their children, ensuring that pregnancies take place when they are wanted, are sufficiently spaced between, and are healthy for both the mother and the kid. Reduced mother and infant mortality rates, the prevention of unplanned pregnancies, and the promotion of safe delivery practices are all benefits of access to contraceptive and reproductive healthcare services. Family planning also significantly affects women's empowerment and gender equality. It gives women the opportunity to further their education, join the workforce, and take part in decision-making processes, ending the cycle of poverty and giving them the capacity to take charge of their life.

Despite the many advantages, putting into practice successful family planning programs still presents difficulties. These difficulties include a lack of affordable access to high-quality healthcare, cultural and social standards, a lack of knowledge and education, and financial obstacles. Comprehensive sexual education, community involvement, and the provision of easily available and inexpensive family planning options are necessary to address these issues. Governments, legislators, healthcare professionals, civil society groups, and people must work together to improve family planning and welfare. This entails the creation of encouraging policies, the distribution of funding, the improvement of the healthcare system, and the promotion of gender equality. We can improve the welfare of people, families, and communities and pave the road for sustainable development by elevating family planning as a vital component of reproductive health and welfare. Family planning is a crucial aspect of the general welfare and health of the reproductive system. We can empower people, promote healthy pregnancies, lower mother and infant mortality, and advance gender equality by encouraging access to contraception, thorough sexual education, and reproductive healthcare services. Family planning policies and programs are an investment in the future because they help people and communities flourish and contribute to a more just and sustainable society.

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CHAPTER 8

BREAKING THE BARRIERS: ADDRESSING WORK-RELATED ISSUES - PREJUDICES, SEX-RELATED VIOLENCE, AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

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ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the work-related issues of existing prejudices, sex-related violence, and gender discrimination, which continue to hinder progress towards gender equality in the workplace. It explores the impact of these issues on individuals, organizations, and society as a whole, highlighting the pervasive nature of gender bias and the challenges faced by marginalized groups. The study analyzes the underlying factors contributing to these problems, including societal norms, stereotypes, and power dynamics. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the significance of addressing work-related issues and proposes recommendations for creating inclusive and equitable work environments where individuals can thrive without fear of prejudice, violence, or discrimination.

KEYWORDS:

Discrimination, Environments, Education, Inequity, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

India has achieved enormous strides in many spheres of life since achieving independence from British control in 1947, including science, technology, commerce, economics, research and development, etc. Indians are seen as very innovative and hardworking individuals who have carved out a space for themselves on a global scale. Our women in India still experience gender-based prejudice in practically all spheres of life, despite our efforts and worldwide success. The patriarchal mindset of the culture still views women as less worthy than males and does not treat them with the respect they deserve. Women have experienced many biases as a result of this mentality, both in their personal and professional life [1], [2]. Women now make up a significant portion of the workforce in both urban and rural locations. However, we still see inequality in a variety of spheres of life, such as in the distribution of money, in racial and religious prejudice, in the educational system, in sports, etc. The most important problem, however, is gender discrimination, which continuously undermines the ideals of the society to which we belong. The most severe kind of prejudice is gender discrimination, which our society has struggled to address for a very long time. Discrimination is a term used to describe inequity. In this context, inequalities between persons of the opposite sex might be used to define gender discrimination. Women's prejudices come in many forms. The following examples illustrate how these imbalances appear.

Financial Disparities

Wages and labor participation: Agriculture employs more than 50% of all workers in India. A significant portion of this labor force is made up of women, who work just as hard as males. However, women earn less money than males do.

Access to credit: The government has made legislation promoting lending and microfinance programs for women, but since they have less property rights than males, women lack the collateral needed to secure bank loans. As a result, they are given less credit than males.

Employment Disparities; Despite being equally competent, women are not permitted to serve in combat capacities in the armed services. Women are not awarded permanent commissions in the Indian army because they have not had the necessary training or opportunities to assume leadership roles.

Real Estate Rights: Despite the fact that there are laws guaranteeing women and men equal standing in property concerns, there is still a significant difference. The fact that males still hold about 70% of the land in rural India indicates that women are not treated equally with men. Laws governing inheritance and property are seldom rigorously upheld.

Inequalities in education

Girls continue to have lower levels of education than boys in school. Even today, males who attend school are preferred over girls who remain at home to assist with domestic duties.

Literacy: Girls clearly have lower levels of literacy than males due to inequality in the educational system. According to the Census of 2011, just 65.46 percent of women are literate, compared to 82.14 percent of males.

Disparities Relating to Survival and Health

- a. **Abortion of female fetuses:** Despite the fact that there is a legislation prohibiting prenatal sex determination, it is often broken because of the country's long-standing preference for males over girls. The female kid is often abandoned or murdered.
- b. **Poor Health:** A 2005 National Family Health Survey study found that girls were undernourished compared to boys and that only 44.7% of girls under the age of two had received their first vaccinations, compared to 45.3% of boys.

DISCUSSION

Gender-based abuse

All forms of violence are directed at women. These include rape, honor killings, dowry-related violence, and domestic violence. Political inequality and the underrepresentation of women in politics persist even over seven decades after independence, in comparison to the rest of the globe. Even if women's standing has improved, there is still more to be done to give them more authority. Since no decision has been made about the 33% reservation law for women, it has remained a distant dream for more than five years.

Workplace Discrimination Based on Gender

In Indian workplaces, gender discrimination has reached an all-time high. News stories about harassment and discrimination against women at work are all over the media. These workplace discriminations may take many different forms, such as treating women differently than males or in an unusual or unfair manner.

- a. There is a perception that males work harder than women, and as a consequence, women get lower pay than men. This is particularly true for female laborers who put in the same amount of effort as male workers but get lower pay. This is a kind of discrimination based on gender.
- b. When women go out to augment the home income after taking years off to care for their children, they are often exploited. As a result, they often get pay that is insufficient for the degree of education or expertise they may have had before taking a sabbatical. As a result, women are compelled to accept lower-paying employment.
- c. Bosses, coworkers, etc. often request sexual favors from women in exchange for referrals, promotions, etc.
- d. Female employees are often picked to entertain customers at work instead of male employees who may be more qualified and competent to address business concerns. Simply objectifying women, in my opinion.
- e. An increasing source of concern is bullying at work.
- f. In contrast to women who may work just as hard and deserve better positions at work, males are often given higher compensation and incentives.
- g. Men tend to get more promotions, particularly in high-level professions. There is a widespread belief that women are unable to handle the demands of leadership and are often seen as less adept than males when it comes to taking risks and making decisions.
- h. Additionally, pregnant women are discriminated against at work.

Traditional classifications of sexual harassment include these two well-known types:

Negative workplace culture

Applying this to sexual harassment, it means asking for sexual favors or advances in exchange for professional benefits like promises of promotion, higher pay, academic advancements, etc. "He seemed to imply that if I went along with his advances, I would get better opportunities to report stories," a victim of this type of sexual harassment said. A less obvious but more ubiquitous kind of sexual harassment is "hostile work environment." It often includes workplace policies or treatment of female employees that make it intolerable for them to work there. Despite the fact that the female employee is never offered or rejected anything in this situation, unwanted sexual harassment nonetheless happens only because she is a woman. Through a comprehensive definition that includes the following, the new sexual harassment standards try to include both of these types of sexual harassment.

The effects and fallout of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment at work may have a domino effect on the whole business; it has various negative impacts on specific women, all of which add up to losses for the organization as a whole. In cases when sexual harassment has gotten to the point that it is terrible for the employee, she would most likely look for new job. For its part, the company will spend a lot of money hiring and replacing

these people. Therefore, it generally serves the interests of employers to ensure that employees are treated with respect at work. Sexual harassment prevents progress toward equality for society as a whole, condones sexual assault, and reduces output and growth [3]–[5].

What ought to you do if you've been subjected to sexual harassment?

Here are some recommendations that, although not always suitable in the workplace, may provide a victim of sexual harassment some guidance as to what to do. Request that the harasser cease. Given our social background and upbringing, it's possible for both men and women to fail to identify when certain behaviors constitute harassment, and many women find it difficult to let a harasser know that their attention is unwelcome. Given this, it is remarkable how well a statement like this may stop harassment before it worsens. It is necessary for an affected woman to express her outrage at the behavior. If the behavior continues, a memo could be helpful [6], [7].

Keep a "diary" of everything he has said and done, including texts, drawings, offensive comments, unsuitable remarks about your looks, etc., even if you are unable to speak to the harasser. Carry a careful, date-stamped record of everything stated and carry it with you at all times. Try to discuss it with a union official if you are unable to retain your record in writing or work in an unregulated industry. Try to speak with his boss or a reliable coworker if the harasser is your superior. Consult an NGO organization for guidance if one is available and knowledgeable about sexual harassment. It is crucial that the precise nature of the harassment and its timing be made apparent in any possible inquiries. Make sure you have copies of any ongoing assessments of your work that have been conducted. Keeping such records will be helpful if your personal file demonstrates that your performance was strong before the harassment and that it afterwards declined. Bring a companion with you when you see the doctor if you've been sexually or physically abused, the getting of a medical report. Should you want to pursue a legal lawsuit, this is crucial. Your employers would be in charge of setting up this once your company has a policy in conformity with the Supreme Court's instructions.

Bring up the matter informally at work. Find out if any other women in the office have experienced similar things at work by speaking with them. It is not unusual to come across people who may have gone through a similar situation but choose to remain quiet out of concern for the social and financial fallout. Encourage them to discuss and support the cause. A complaint cannot be victimized, according to the new regulations.

Register a grievance. If a complaints process is in existence, follow the steps and submit a complaint. If one is lacking, urge your coworkers and other employees to advocate for it by providing information on the procedure for filing complaints and the members of the complaints committee.

At-Work Sexual Harassment

Since a person is targeted for harassment because of his or her sex when it occurs at work, sexual harassment is a sex discrimination problem. It is inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace, which may take on a variety of different forms. It is discrimination against women since it takes away their ability to work in a positive environment. Sexual harassment denigrates the victim, who is often a woman, by making them trade sexual favors for financial survival and denies them chances for advancement and employment that are open to others without regard to sexual

orientation. Victims of sexual harassment are subjected to less favorable working circumstances since it places more emphasis on their sexuality than on their status as employees [8]–[10].

- a. Crime in India, 2002' by NCRB claims as much.
- b. There were reported 44,098 instances of sexual harassment.
- c. Every day, 121 women experienced sexual harassment.
- d. Every 12 minutes, one woman experienced sexual harassment.
- e. Between 1997 and 2002, there was a 20.6% rise in sexual harassment occurrences.

The principles have just recently started to be seen in the workplace, particularly in light of a later ruling by the Supreme Court of India that reiterates sexual harassment's status as a violation of human rights. Strategies in various workplace environments are only starting to develop, but they are not yet sufficiently widespread to provide generic examples. Therefore, whatever the situation, initiatives should involve looking into social signals that don't function in today's workplace. Organizations and employers must take the following crucial actions to achieve this.

1. A strong policy that clarifies and demonstrates what sexual harassment at work is
2. Innovative and efficient preventative measures
3. Education and training programs for all organizational levels and members
4. Creating a committee to investigate sexual harassment claims.

Advancements made worldwide in combating gender-based violence. Recent worldwide conferences and initiatives have significantly increased awareness of gender-based violence and broken the taboo around it. There are various clauses of the treaty on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women that apply to GBV, however as of now, thirty nations have not ratified the treaty. Twenty-four of these nations have expressly rejected Article 16, a crucial clause that ensures equality between men and women in marriage and family life, while a third of these nations have signed with reservations [11], [12].

However, feminist movements and women's organizations have pressured governments all over the world to pass laws and regulations that penalize, prohibit, or shield women from GBV. Concerned non-governmental groups have formed programs and services in response, offering support, care, and education to women who have experienced abuse. The most successful programs have focused on modifying societal attitudes about gender-based violence. Women who have endured partner violence have also benefited from specialized services such as residential shelters and refuges, special courts, women's police stations, and special desks set up at neighborhood police stations.

Laws Against Sexual Harassment at Work

The Indian government has put in place measures to protect women's rights and stop discrimination against them, particularly in the workplace. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, was published in the Indian Gazette on April 23, 2013. To provide: is one of the Sexual Harassment Act's main goals.

- a. Safeguards against sexual harassment at work.
- b. Prevention and resolution of sexual harassment claims.

Sexual harassment is now seen as an infringement and violation of women's basic rights to equality in light of this statute. The Indian Constitution's Articles 14 and 15, which protect basic rights, as

well as Article 21, which ensures a woman's right to life and dignity, guarantee this. In accordance with Article 19 of the Constitution, which contains a right to a place of work free from harassment, sexual harassment is now also regarded as a breach of the freedom to exercise or conduct any profession, trade, or business. According to the Sexual Harassment Act, sexual harassment includes any unwanted physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct that is of a sexual nature. Examples include unwanted advances and physical contact, demands for sexual favors, sexually charged comments, and the showing of pornography.

A woman may not be the target of sexual harassment at any employment, according to the Sexual Harassment Act. According to the law, sexual harassment may occur when there is an implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in the workplace, a threat of unfavorable treatment, a threat regarding current or future employment, interference with work, the creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment, or humiliating treatment that could endanger the health or safety of a female employee.

The Sexual Harassment Act's characteristics

The key components of the Sexual Harassment Act are as follows: The legislation very precisely defines a workplace and provides it a very broad definition, including every location that workers could visit, a source of transportation, a place to stay or dwell, etc., as a workplace. The definition of "employee" is also included, and it covers regular, temporary, ad hoc employees, people engaged on a daily wage basis, either directly or through an agent, contract labor, coworkers, probationers, trainees, and apprentices, whether or not they are paid or not, working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, and whether or not the terms of employment are expressly stated or implied.

Every organization with more than 10 workers must establish an internal complaints committee, according to the law. The Sexual Harassment Act further specifies the composition of the committees and the procedure to be followed for filing a complaint and conducting a timely investigation. In addition to standard statutory or contractual leave rights, this legislation provides the aggrieved women with temporary relief in the form of transfer to any other employment and leave of up to three months. The Act also includes guidelines for handling and punishing baseless, malicious, and fabricated claims of workplace sexual harassment. Women must file complaints of any type in order for laws to be enforced and for action to be done against those who harass and commit injustice.

Indian women's social standing and health are inextricably intertwined. Both formal labor force participation and educational attainment are low among Indian women. High fertility rates are linked to or make a lot of Indian women's health issues worse. High infant mortality rates and women's strong predilection for having sons drive women to have more children in an effort to have one or two sons live to maturity. High levels of fertility are linked to maternal mortality and morbidity, two health issues. Maternal health and mortality are impacted by the place of birth and the sort of help used during labor. Another aspect of maternal health and mortality is anemia, which is treatable reasonably easily and affordably with iron supplements. Malnutrition is another significant health issue that Indian women confront, according to several research. According to the NFHS, there is a strong correlation between maternal education and the severity of child malnutrition. In the next years, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in India will have an increasingly negative impact on women's health. Sex ratio is one of the obvious indicators of gender equality. It may be defined as the proportion of females to men per 1000. An increase in the sex ratio among Indian women and men indicates a healthy growth rate. The desire for a boy over a girl is the fundamental

indication of gender inequality in India and one of the most potent indicators. The Indian government has advocated for a number of steps to stop the decreasing sex ratio. With a population of over 1.2 billion and still growing, India is only second to China in terms of population, making the need for effective family planning and welfare measures one of the most pressing problems facing the nation right now. India's population has to understand that fewer families not only lessen the strain on the nation's resources, but also the number of dependents in each family. The government of India's family planning and welfare programs have produced a number of beneficial outcomes throughout the years.

CONCLUSION

Prejudices, sex-related violence, and gender discrimination at work continue to exist in many workplaces, sustaining inequality and preventing the advancement of gender equality. Not only do these problems violate basic human rights, but they also have significant negative effects on people, organizations, and society as a whole. Stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes lead to prejudices, which obstruct opportunities and prevent people from using their unique skills and abilities to their full potential. Sexual violence, such as sexual harassment, assault, and coercion, harms victims physically and psychologically while also making the workplace unfriendly and hazardous. The idea of justice and equality at work is undermined by gender discrimination, which takes the form of uneven remuneration, few possibilities for advancement and leadership roles, and prejudiced treatment. It strengthens gender stereotypes, maintains power disparities, and limits people's ability to reach their full potential, regardless of their gender. Taking care of these workplace challenges calls for a multifaceted strategy. Implementing comprehensive policies and processes to stop and address prejudice, sex-related violence, and gender discrimination should be a top priority for organizations. This entails creating clear reporting procedures, offering education and awareness campaigns, and promoting an inclusive and respectful work environment. Government engagement is essential, with the establishment and enforcement of strict laws that defend workers' rights, advance gender equality, and guarantee perpetrators are held accountable. Challenge cultural conventions and prejudices by encouraging attitudes that embrace diversity and inclusiveness via education and awareness efforts.

Employers, workers, civil society groups, and governments must all work together to create workplaces that are safe and inclusive. It entails fostering a culture of equality, respect, and complete rejection of prejudice, violence, and discrimination. Additionally, it calls for the elimination of structural impediments and the promotion of equitable possibilities for leadership roles. Tackling biases, sex-related violence, and gender discrimination in the workplace is crucial for developing inclusive and fair work environments. We can realize each person's full potential, advance gender equality, and advance society by creating an atmosphere where everyone may flourish and contribute without fear of discrimination or damage. It is our common duty to question and alter the current conventions and ways of doing things in order to pave the way for a day when workplaces are defined by justice, respect, and equitable chances for everyone.

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CHAPTER 9

POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the political, social, and economic conditions of women and their implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. It delves into the challenges, progress, and persistent inequalities faced by women in various spheres of life. The study analyzes the impact of political systems, cultural norms, and economic structures on women's rights and opportunities. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper sheds light on the importance of addressing gender disparities and proposes strategies for creating more inclusive and equitable societies that empower women politically, socially, and economically.

KEYWORDS:

Decision-Making, Environments, Education, Gender Equality, Political Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the position of women has fluctuated greatly. Numerous changes have occurred in the political, social, and economic spheres over the 20th century. All facets of life have improved significantly, with social advancement standing out as the most notable. Equal possibilities for women to compete with males and one another have been granted. Women were mostly limited to domestic duties and taking care of the family throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. For many nations, the 20th century saw a considerable degree of freedom and autonomy. Women become equal freedom warriors [1]–[3]. The key to their success was their demand for and attainment of educational equality. This gender has been able to advocate for their cause thanks to education and the awareness that comes with it. They have adopted roles as additional breadwinners alongside males. Since they are now "Managers" of their house and family in addition to being employed, this has actually resulted in additional work. They have a significant presence in practically every field of endeavor, including law, politics, science, social work, and education.

The political, social, and economic conditions of women are vital aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment. This detailed description aims to provide an in-depth examination of these conditions, shedding light on the challenges, progress, and persistent disparities that women face in various spheres of life. It delves into the impact of political systems, cultural norms, and economic structures on women's rights, opportunities, and overall well-being. By understanding and addressing these conditions, societies can strive towards creating more inclusive and equitable environments that empower women politically, socially, and economically.

Political Conditions of Women

Women's political empowerment involves their participation in decision-making processes, representation in political institutions, and access to leadership positions. Political conditions for women vary globally, with some countries making significant progress in achieving gender parity, while others still face significant barriers. This section explores factors such as legal frameworks, political representation, and societal attitudes that influence women's political participation. It highlights the importance of promoting women's political leadership, encouraging their active involvement in politics, and implementing policies that address barriers to their political engagement.

Social Conditions of Women

Social conditions encompass the cultural norms, attitudes, and practices that shape the roles and expectations placed on women in society. Societal beliefs and stereotypes often contribute to gender inequalities and restrict women's choices, opportunities, and access to resources. This section examines issues such as gender-based violence, discriminatory social norms, and limited access to education and healthcare. It underscores the importance of challenging harmful stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and creating safe and inclusive spaces for women to thrive.

Economic Conditions of Women

Economic conditions pertain to women's access to economic resources, financial independence, and opportunities for economic empowerment. Women continue to face disparities in wages, employment opportunities, and access to credit and financial services. This section explores factors such as gender wage gaps, occupational segregation, and limited representation of women in leadership positions. It emphasizes the need for policies and initiatives that promote equal pay, support women's entrepreneurship, and create a conducive environment for women to succeed in the workforce.

In India, women's position is complicated and conflicting. The Rig Veda and Upanishads, two ancient Indian books, include tales of revered female sages and seers like Gargi and Maitrei, among others. We have had several outstanding women who have been recognized as leaders and philosophers in our society, like Rani Laxmi Bai, Meerabai, Mumtaz Mahal, and Indira Gandhi. Despite these outstanding women, many more female species did not get their fundamental rights. Only Mahatma Gandhi's pioneering contributions contributed to the independence of Indian women. Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Nehru Pandit, the first woman to preside over the United Nations General Assembly, and Shrimati Indira Gandhi, who became the country's first female prime minister in 1966, are only two examples of influential women in India's modern history [4], [5].

Women have often been limited throughout history to the roles of mother, wife, and homemaker. In India, rules that confine women to their homes and specify what activities are proper for women still hold sway, despite significant advances in women's status that have taken place in certain regions of the globe in recent decades. They are mostly shut out of political activity, which by its very nature occurs in a public setting. Even though India has a reputation for treating women with respect and even treating them like goddesses, history shows that women were also mistreated in India. Men and women did not enjoy equality. With the exception of a few revolutionary movements, such as those of Basaweshwara, a philosopher from Karnataka who pushed for

equality, a casteless society, women's standing, and the improvement of the underprivileged, these statements apply to ancient, medieval, and early modern eras. The legal position of women in India was improved through reform movements in the 19th and 20th centuries under the leadership of outstanding social reformers [3], [6], [7].

Political Engagement: Insufficient Representation of Women

Given that it pertains to the act of democratic citizenship the right to vote and elect political participation has long piqued the attention of political scientists and sociologists alike. It is crucial to define the word and comprehend its meaning before digging further into the subject of political involvement and the underrepresentation of women in India. Political engagement or "public involvement in political decision-making" are terms that are often used to describe political participation, even if there may not be a universally agreed-upon meaning. Political participation, according to Riley, is "a set of rights and duties that involve formally organized civic and political activities." Political participation, according to Diemer, is "an engagement with traditional mechanisms in the political system, such as voting in elections and joining political organizations." Munroe defines political participation in terms of the extent to which citizens are exercising their right to engage in political activity. In other words, they clearly establish a frame of reference with the repertoire of political praxis that is available within the conventional political norms, though these norms are not always consistent across nations or over time. Such definitions capitalize on the legal nature of political praxis. As an alternative, some academics simply consider the telos and ignore the praxis, defining political involvement as a collection of actions intended to impact political power. For instance, Verba defined political participation as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies." Huntington and Nelson defined political participation as "activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making."

There are four relevant reasons that may be given in relation to the political engagement of women in India. The first argument examines the political concepts of "empowering women" in the context of political engagement. The second claims that in traditional civilizations like ours, voting rights and suffrage should only serve as symbolic gestures or "political tokenism." The third argument views voting rights as a crucial component in establishing an equitable society. The fourth and final argument discusses how reservations or "quota" rights cannot help women attain social emancipation due to prejudices including gender inequality and a lack of property rights. Arguments around women's involvement have given rise to a variety of perspectives and discourses. One such approach goes under the name of incrementalism and tends to hold that gender equality is a phasal reality. According to this argument, government involvement might help raise gender equality over the long term. Although it is thought that the incrementalist perspective could take hundreds of years to achieve gender equality in politics in a country like India, women's rights groups have protested against this because they believe it goes against the spirit of achieving gender equality in a short amount of time. Since gender bias still exists in India and the right to own property is still a pipe dream for most women, the question of whether our politics can ever become like that of the Nordic countries, a "laboratory for gender equality," is one that is being asked more frequently. The truth be told, incrementalist discourse is currently dominating Indian politics. However, the reality remains that women's engagement in India has a long and colorful history dating back to precolonial times [8]–[10].

It is a well-known truth that in both developed and developing nations, women are still underrepresented in politics as compared to males. Although the proportion of women voting has greatly grown nowadays, they recently had to fight for their right to vote. Women are consequently unable to participate as fully in politics as men do because of the gender gap in political involvement. For every society to advance, there must be gender equality, and as women make up about half of the global population, they must be fairly represented in entities that make decisions. Women's capacity to oppose the marginalization of womankind as a whole is hampered by the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority. To alter the fundamental nature of power, which now tends to exclude them, more and more women must be in politics and in positions of power.

Political participation, in its broadest sense, refers to the process by which a person is given the chance to participate in the political life of a community and has the chance to decide what that society's shared objectives are and how best to attain them. It may also be described as the real engagement in these volunteer activities that allows members of society to contribute directly or indirectly to the formation of public policy and the choice of norms. Participating in politics means taking part in political events as well as the election process. Political participation, however, entails more than just casting a ballot; it also includes things like joining political parties, running for office, attending rallies and protest marches, talking to leaders, holding party positions, voting in elections, and trying to influence policy.

With this knowledge as our foundation, let's look at how many women are involved in politics globally. Evidently, compared to males, their engagement is rather less. With the exception of a tiny portion of the metropolitan elite who are able to attain some degree of decision-making authority, the majority of women have maintained their distance. Women have fought a long battle for equality with males in a number of nations, but no real efforts are being made to include women in politics. Voting is the most frequent form of political participation for citizens of all nations. Equally as important, women did not get the ability to vote until the 20th century, despite the fact that both men and women enjoy this privilege. Women in the majority of the liberal democracies in the West earned the right to vote after a protracted and exhausting campaign for their rights, led by Americans. When women fought for the right to vote at the beginning of 1917, the topic of universal adult franchise was brought up. The British government provided this privilege in accordance with a woman's educational attainment, marital status, and property ownership. The Government of India Act, which was passed considerably later in 1935, gave all women over 21 who met the requirements for property and education the right to vote. However, the Indian Constitution, which went into effect in 1950, granted every person the right to vote.

Women are often underrepresented in legislative bodies in most nations. With the exception of a few European countries like Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, most of the world's nations have failed to provide women with the same opportunity for participation in politics. In the aforementioned nations, women currently occupy important decision-making roles after making significant progress in formerly male-dominated political fields. Ironically, women still make up a very tiny percentage of legislators in some of the most developed countries in Western Europe, North America, etc. Current Global Status of Women's Political Participation and Leadership. Important statistical data about the representation of women in politics worldwide include:

1. The number of women serving in parliaments throughout the world almost quadrupled between 1995 and 2015.
2. barely 11.3% more women are now represented in parliaments than there were in 1995, making up barely 22% of all lawmakers as of today.
3. According to the poll, there were only 10 women serving as heads of government and 11 serving as heads of state worldwide.

DISCUSSION

Expanding Engagement

A criterion for women's representation that is generally acknowledged across the world is 30%. According to the study, 41 of the lower-class, single-family homes had more than 30% female residents. There were as many as 11 African countries and 9 Latin American countries among them. A set quota for women's political involvement existed in 34 of the 41 nations. There were 17 nations that employed legislative candidate quotas expressly. Six nations have reserved seats for women, while in other nations, parties have voluntarily established representation quotas for women. Women had more seats in nations with proportional electoral systems than in those with plurality-majority voting systems, where they made up as much as 25.2% of seats, and as much as 22.7% in nations with mixed electoral systems. Increasing the involvement of women does not always guarantee a democratic, open, and corrupt-free political system. More women may engage in politics in a more favorable atmosphere thanks to democracy and openness.

Women's empowerment became a popular issue of conversation throughout the world in 1995 during the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. Women's equal involvement in political life "plays a pivotal role in the general process of advancement of women," it was announced during the conference. This conference emphasized the importance of women's participation in assuming positions of power and influence not only because they were talented enough to do so and hold valid viewpoints, but also because it was a matter of equality human rights. Women's equal participation in decision-making is a demand for simple justice and necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account.

The manufacturing industry employed the remaining % of women. These statistics demonstrate that women's rates of employment and literacy have increased—but only very slowly. As a result, the primary focus of the majority of governmental and non-governmental organizations in recent years has been on the social, political, and economic empowerment of women. Women must engage equally in political processes and decision-making bodies in order to achieve political empowerment. There are more nations than India where women are underrepresented. To comprehend the condition of women in India, a historical examination of their position throughout Indian history must be conducted.

The position of women in ancient Indian society

One of the main factors that set diverse cultures throughout the globe apart has been gender. In their individual communities, jobs and prestige were ascribed to men and women differently. Men were traditionally the guardians and breadwinners, while women cared for the household and bore the children. The standing of women has changed throughout time, according to historical documents. According to a historical review, their position has been deteriorating over time. Women did not have an equal standing to males in ancient India, according to a historical

examination of that topic. Given that they were solely acknowledged as spouses and mothers, women's status was essentially one of servitude to males. The position of women in faiths like Vaishnavism, Veerashaivism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism has been improved. Despite this, the worst time for women was the 18th century, when they were seen as inferior to males in all spheres of life.

Indian women's political participation across time

The philosophical shifts that resulted in a discernible rise in women's engagement in political processes were preceded by social reform movements that had their start in the 19th century. It was believed that educating women and enacting progressive laws were the only ways to bring about social change. It was also believed that social ills could be eradicated by developing social awareness, empowering women, and addressing injustices committed against them. The reformers of the 19th century were determined to bring back India's lost grandeur and were eager to adopt the democratic and progressive values of western culture. It was natural for a society that had gone through the pain of colonialism to want to embrace change while also ensuring that this transformation was rooted in one's indigenous culture. Ironically, the movements were not fervently committed to the cause of women's liberation; rather, they were constrained by the value system and did not genuinely pursue the goal of gender equality. With the exception of a few small adjustments, these efforts did not significantly alter the position of women in India. The movement, however, is said to have created the groundwork for a much larger and more successful women's liberation movement that followed in the years to come.

CONCLUSION

Women's political, social, and economic circumstances have changed significantly over time, yet there are still considerable obstacles to be faced. Women have battled for and won significant political victories in relation to voting rights, representation, and leadership roles. Addressing the gender gap in political decision-making bodies is still necessary in order to effectively reflect women's opinions and viewpoints. We may encourage inclusive government and policies that take into consideration the various needs and interests of all people by encouraging women's political leadership and involvement. Socially, women continue to experience sexism, violence against women, and unfavorable standards that restrict their possibilities and impair their general well-being. There is a need to confront and alter established norms, advance gender equality in all aspects of life, and provide secure and empowering conditions for women.

In terms of access to school, work prospects, and financial resources, women continue to experience economic disadvantages. Women's economic empowerment is hampered by gender wage inequalities, occupational segregation, and restricted access to financing and entrepreneurial possibilities. To address these problems, it is necessary to encourage equitable access to high-quality education, end workplace discrimination, and provide supportive settings for female economic engagement and entrepreneurship. It is imperative to establish a comprehensive strategy that engages governments, civil society groups, and people in order to better the political, social, and economic circumstances of women. This entails putting gender-responsive policies into practice, ensuring access to healthcare, social safety, and education, as well as promoting a culture of gender equality and respect. It also calls for dismantling institutional obstacles, combating gender norms, and advancing women's equality in all spheres of life. Establishing gender equality and bettering the circumstances of women in politics, society, and the economy are shared responsibilities. We can make sure that women can fully participate and contribute to the growth

and advancement of their communities and countries by acknowledging and resolving the obstacles they confront, supporting their rights and empowerment, and building a more inclusive and equitable society. We can create the conditions for a future in which women's potential is fully realized and their rights are recognized and safeguarded by working together and being committed over time.

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CHAPTER 10

TRAILBLAZERS OF INDEPENDENCE: WOMEN IN INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the significant role played by women in India's freedom struggle, highlighting their contributions, sacrifices, and resilience in the fight against colonial rule. It examines the diverse roles women undertook, from grassroots activism to leadership positions, and their involvement in various movements, including civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, and political mobilization. The study analyzes the challenges faced by women in the freedom struggle, the impact of their participation on societal norms and gender dynamics, and the lasting legacy of their efforts. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the invaluable contributions of women in India's journey towards independence.

KEYWORDS:

Constitution, Environments, Education, Freedom Struggle, Gender Equality, Independence.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of Indian women's political awakening was the liberation movement and the Indian National Congress's decision to allow women to join. Women's involvement in India's liberation fight is ascribed to the Swadeshi Movement of 1905, but Anne Besant's entry into active politics in 1914 sped up the engagement of women. She was also chosen as the INC's first female president. Sarojini Naidu also started participating in politics at around the same period. Since M. K. Gandhi entered Indian politics in 1917 and issued a call to action for liberation, women's involvement in the freedom movement has been a common occurrence all throughout the country [1], [2].

Gandhi discovered via his trials with Satyagraha that women could participate in the fight for India's independence from the British on an equal footing with men. Many women were emboldened and inspired to join the liberation movement with equal fervor thanks to Gandhi's style of Ahimsa, nonviolent agitation, and civil disobedience. Gandhi was able to include women in the independence fight by tearing down the boundaries of caste and class. He believed that while men and women were not exactly same, they were clearly equal in terms of their minds, intellects, and spirits, enabling women to engage in any activity. The traditionally housebound Indian women were transformed into effective agents of change by him. His commitment to the cause of women comes from his adamant and unwavering emphasis on women's autonomy and dignity, not only in the home but also in the larger community. He made the case that a woman's capacity to put her own interests aside for the sake of her family could be extended to her community and the country as a whole, which encouraged women from all across the nation to join his Non-cooperation Movement [3]. The Indian National Movement's effort to expel the British from India was given legitimacy by the liberation movement, which put Indian women from various socioeconomic

backgrounds and occupations in the spotlight. Many women actively engaged in the Satyagraha Movement, the Dandi March, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Non-Cooperation Movement, etc. In the drive to boycott foreign products, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Renuka Ray, Basanti Devi, Urmila Devi, and Kasthurba Gandhi all played significant roles. In the liberation struggles known as the Barsad Satyagraha (1922–1924), Bardoli Sathyagraha (1928), and Salt Sathyagraha (1930), many women took to the streets to support the cause. Among the well-known women involved in the Salt Sathyagraha were Mridula Sarabai, Sarojini Naidu, Muthuben Patel, Khurseedben, Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya, and Avanthikabai Gokhale. Women took part in the Civil Disobedience movement of 1940 in great numbers, risking jail. The first to do so was Suchetha Krapalani, who had been in head of the All India Congress Committee's Women's Department since 1939.

Even more women participated in the 1942 Quit Indian Movement, and many of them became leaders in organizing meetings, strikes, etc. While leading a parade of 500 people, the Assamese girl Kanakalatha Barua was slain by police gunfire. Bombay resident Usha Mehta operated a clandestine radio station that spoke with individuals all over the world. One of the most important female leaders of the Quit India Movement, Aruna AsafAli spent a lot of time hiding out to escape being detained by the British for running Inqulab. There were also a group of ladies who chose to take a revolutionary route rather than Ahinsa's. In the Chittagong armory attack, major participants were Kalpana Joshi and Preeti Waddadar. Chandrashekhar Azad assigned Roopvati Jain, then 17 years old, to run a bomb plant in Delhi.

Despite the fact that women participated in both moderate and extreme groups, there were still far fewer women than males in positions of power and authority. Across the nation, women ran for office in the 1937 elections, and some of them even won and were appointed ministers. In all, 42 women from reserved seats and 8 from ordinary constituencies elected women. Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Ansuyabai Kale, and J.T. were a few notable names. In a number of Indian states, key cabinet roles were held by Sipahimalchi, Hansa Meht, and Begum Shah Nawoy. The involvement of women in the battle bolstered the liberation movement. Despite the fact that women demonstrated their power by bolstering the political movement, gender equality was not a priority for the Indian National Movement [4], [5].

DISCUSSION

Participation of Women After Independence

Women's involvement in the liberation war created the groundwork for what transpired when the freedom fighters overthrew the British in 1947. Women saw independence as a chance to take part in democratic processes. A significant number of reformative initiatives, particularly in India's legal, social, and economic domains, had been launched by the newly elected administration. As political awareness emphasized the reality that their welfare was in their own hands, as they had learnt via their engagement in state and national politics, women had also become more aware of their rights.

Constitutional Rules

The Indian Constitution's following clauses guarantee equality between men and women:

Article 14: According to this section of the Indian Constitution, neither the law nor those who enforce it may discriminate against any citizen of the nation. Additionally, it ensures that all people are treated equally in court.

Provision 15: This provision prohibits discrimination against Indian citizens based on their place of birth, religion, ethnicity, caste, or sex. Article 15 essentially ensures protection from all types of discrimination. Nothing in this article may preclude the state from providing any specific provisions for women and children, according to Article 15.

Article 16: This provision ensures equitable treatment for all applicants for public employment. In particular, this ensures that women will be treated equally to men in cases involving employment or public office.

Article 39: This provision ensures that all citizens, regardless of gender, have the right to a sufficient means of subsistence. Additionally, it ensures that men and women are paid equally for equivalent amounts of effort. Additionally, the protection against harm to the health and strength of men, women, and children is guaranteed by this article. Additionally, it makes sure that people are not exploited for commercial gain.

In line with Articles 23 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 42 protects women's access to maternity leave and reasonable and decent working conditions.

Reservation Policies under Panchayati Raj

Due to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, women are given a reservation within the Panchayati Raj System in India.

Article 243: According to this, women who fall under the SC or/and ST categories shall get at least one-third of the seats designated as such.

Article 243: In accordance with this provision, each panchayat should reserve not less than one-third of the total seats to be filled by elections for women candidates. These seats must be distributed in the panchayat by rotation among various constituencies.

Article 243: In accordance with this article, there shall be a reservation for women from SC and ST groups in the positions of panchayat chairs. According to the state legislation, this is required.

The number of women holding elected office has steadily decreased over the years, despite the fact that the Indian Constitution contains several clauses promoting equality and women's empowerment. The goals of the Constitution changed as the disparity widened in all political sectors and the rights seemed to be nothing more than an illusion. In light of the aforementioned assertion, Articles 325 and 326 protect the right to vote and equality in political participation, respectively. The right to equal political engagement for men and women is still a long way off, while the latter has long been a right shared by both sexes. However, statistics demonstrate that there is a low representation of women in positions of power due to the lack of space for their engagement in politics [6]–[8].

Following India's independence, women have stepped up to lead movements that may seem less traditional, such as those against alcohol, for the environment, and peace, as well as some revolutionary ones that have the potential to change the state and have an impact on power dynamics. Despite this, women have found it challenging to navigate the political landscape due to the lack of representation they enjoy. The appalling level of female representation in Indian politics. Political parties often deny women the right to run for office because they believe they won't be successful. However, the aforementioned data makes it quite evident that, in terms of pure percentages, more women win elections than males [9]. There are a number of factors that have contributed to India's deplorable level of female political engagement. Women actively participated in the liberation movement during the war for independence. Since independence, women's involvement has rapidly decreased as the Nehru-Gandhi ideas have been completely abandoned. Women seem to have fallen victim to long-standing gender-based norms, which seriously impede their ability to succeed in politics. The historic division of labor, illiteracy, economic disparity, an apparent lack of preparation, and our own political system have all prevented women from becoming strong players in politics. In addition to these issues, it is expensive to run for office, and it has shown to be particularly challenging for women to raise money and support. Additionally, widespread corruption has discouraged women from entering what is sometimes referred to as "dirty" politics. As a result, political parties seem to have a general lack of intention to field women applicants, contributing to the problem of gender prejudice. Women today have significantly impacted fields that have historically been dominated by males, like commerce, law, engineering, the arts, medicine, etc. However, they have struggled to advance in politics [10].

Reservation Bill in Percent

The above-mentioned considerations have made it necessary to provide a 33% reserve quota for women in the legislature particular attention. Statistics have previously shown that the proportion of women running for office and winning has hardly increased. The Committee on the Status of Women in India released its findings in 1974 and found that, despite the fact that more women in India are exercising their right to vote than men, the trends in women's participation in elections are actually going in the opposite direction. According to the committee, "the rights guaranteed by the Constitution have helped to build an illusion of equality and power that is frequently used as a justification to resist protective and accelerating measures to enable women to achieve their just and equal position in society."

The recommendations of the National Perspective Plan for Women, which recommended a 30% reservation for women in local governments and other decision-making bodies in 1988 to encourage women to participate in politics at the grassroots level, served as the foundation for the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts of 1992. With the help of this law, more than two million women now hold positions of leadership in local governments, including those of members, vice presidents, and presidents. The 73rd Amendments Act mandated that women hold one-third of the seats in Gram Panchayats, as required by the constitution.

For many women's organizations, the inadequate representation of women in state and federal legislatures and the parliament has been a significant source of worry. The paradox of this democratic nation is that, while making up close to 50% of the population, women are nevertheless subject to the laws and norms that males make. Political parties have a lax attitude toward giving women more chances to be represented in politics. Since women require political empowerment,

33% racial and ethnic minorities must be represented in national and state legislatures, according to a number of women's organizations.

For the Women's Reservation Bill to pass, several governing administrations have proposed a number of amendments throughout the years. However, the opposing parties have repeatedly brought up a number of difficulties. One of them was their call for a lower quota for women from lower socioeconomic strata. The Women's Reservation Bill, also known as the 108th Amendment to the Constitution, is currently a bill that would reserve 33% of all seats in the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies for women. On March 9, 2010, the Rajya Sabha approved the legislation. As of February 2014, the Lok Sabha has not yet discussed or voted on the measure. If the bill is approved by the Lok Sabha and the President signs it into law, it would provide the much-needed push for women's political representation and empowerment.

CONCLUSION

India's liberation war was greatly aided by the contributions of women, who broke social standards and made a substantial contribution to the campaign against colonial control. They actively took part in many types of resistance, showing bravery, tenacity, and unflinching dedication to the cause of freedom. Women had a variety of roles in India's liberation fight, from leading mass movements to planning demonstrations, taking part in boycotts, and promoting social and political reform. They made significant contributions that helped communities become more active, increase awareness, and fight against repressive colonial regimes. Women in the independence fight persisted and made priceless contributions despite several obstacles such as gender-based discrimination, societal constraints, and marginalization. Their involvement not only aided in obtaining independence but also changed gender relations and society standards. Women's participation in the independence movement broke down conventional gender norms and gave them a platform to demand equal rights, establish their agency, and speak their thoughts. Their active involvement helped to establish later campaigns for women's rights, education, and empowerment. Women's contributions to India's liberation movement have inspired future generations and are a constant reminder of the strength of group effort and the significance of female leadership. Their achievements laid the groundwork for development and have shaped the continuing fight for social justice and gender equality. Women in India's liberation movement were crucial in determining the course of the country. Their selflessness, tenacity, and dedication to the cause of freedom established the foundation for a society that is more diverse and egalitarian. To guarantee that these trailblazers' legacy endures and motivates future generations to carry on the battle for justice, equality, and freedom, it is crucial to acknowledge and respect their efforts.

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CHAPTER 11

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: PROSTITUTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DIGNITY AND EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This paper delves into the economic conditions surrounding prostitution, exploring the factors that contribute to its existence, the challenges faced by individuals involved, and the implications for their dignity and empowerment. It analyzes the social and economic contexts that drive individuals into prostitution, the systemic inequalities they encounter, and the impact of stigmatization and marginalization. The study also examines initiatives and approaches aimed at addressing the economic conditions of individuals in prostitution and promoting their rights, safety, and empowerment. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the complex dynamics of prostitution and proposes recommendations for creating supportive environments that provide alternatives and pathways for individuals to escape this cycle.

KEYWORDS:

Empowerment, Economic Conditions, Freedom Struggle, Prostitution.

INTRODUCTION

It's believed that prostitution is the oldest profession in existence. In India, a prostitute has been referred to by several titles during the course of the nation's historical development, including tawaif and devadasi. The oldest profession in the world is a \$100 billion business, yet legality varies from nation to nation. It is an industry that is present in all nations and is pervasive on a worldwide scale, and it has a history that dates back 4,000 years to ancient Babylon. Despite its widespread use, one must not assume that women are drawn to it because they enjoy sensual pleasure. The fact is that prostitution is driven by socioeconomic and psychological hardships for women. Prostitution in India is not specifically prohibited by law. However, trade-related activities are forbidden, including soliciting, pimping, maintaining brothels, etc. In India, there may be over two crore prostitutes of all ages, with up to 33.5% of them being under the age of 18, according to a Human Rights Watch assessment [1], [2].

India's history with prostitution

The oldest profession in the world has been a recurring motif in Indian literature for many years. The idea of heavenly demigods serving as prostitutes in our mythical writings is often mentioned. They are often referred to in our literature as Menaka, Rambha, Urvashi, and Thilothamma. These ladies have been praised for their unrivaled femininity and physical beauty. According to certain sources, the prostitute trade in our nation predates that in several other modern-day nations. The genesis of this institution is unknown, although some experts on the issues link it to religious rites that were initially of a customary character, according to one academic. For a while, the root of

shame kept it from deteriorating into license, but the succession of events turned it into a mercenary affair.

The kings of this kingdom have always had a tendency to slow the expansion of this commerce. In the past, municipalities and villages designated zones for listed prostitution as a result of several efforts made via state law or popular opinion. To this end, even Kautilya had established guidelines for policing prostitutes. Additionally, the Mahabharata and the Jatakas make mention to prostitution, and even Hindu Shastrakaras like Gautam, Manu, and Brihaspati advocated for regulating it. The custom of Nagarvadhu, or "brides of town," is also mentioned. Famous instances include Vasantasena, a character in the traditional Sanskrit tale of Mricchakatika, published in the second century BC by Sudraka, and Amrapali, a state courtesan and Buddhist student, both of whom are recounted in Acharya Chatursen's Vaishali Ki Nagarvadhu. The temple prostitutes were called Devadasis from the temple. Despite living the most of her life as a prostitute, Kanhopatra is revered as a saint in the Varkari sect of Hinduism. Binodini Dasi began her career as a courtesan before switching to acting in Bengali theater [3], [4]. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there was a society of Japanese slaves in Goa, a Portuguese colony in India. These slaves were often young Japanese women and girls who had been transported or seized as sexual slaves by Portuguese merchants and their South Asian lascar crew members from Japan. Sanskrit plays have been written on this subject, and many movies still use it as a major plot point. They were treated extremely royally even throughout the medieval era and the dominion of the Mughals. Some of these films have been able to shed light on the situation of prostitutes in our nation. But the real face is still concealed. Since the demise of the Mughal Empire, the situation has been progressively worse. Poverty is the main contributor when examining the reasons of prostitution. India's Muslim sultans maintained harems. Even if efforts were attempted to stop it, industrialisation under British control also made this social ill worse.

Prostitutes were referred to as devdasis in ancient India. Devadasi were once chaste dance females who performed for the aristocracy during temple rituals. The custom of 'dedicating' females to Hindu gods, however, spread and eventually turned into ritualized prostitution starting in the sixth century. Devadasi, which literally translates to "god's female servant," refers to the ancient Indian custom of "marrying off" or "giving away" young pre-pubescent girls to a god or specific local deity of the temple. The girl must become a prostitute for members of the higher caste group as part of the marriage, which often takes place before the girl enters puberty. Real marriage is prohibited between them. Records regarding the devadasi system first began to surface about the year 1000 AD, when Buddhism had already fallen. Devadasis are said to be Buddhist nuns who were reduced to the status of prostitutes when Brahmins took control of their temples during the period of their revival following Buddhism's demise. The Devadasi Security Act of 1934 forbade this practice in India [5], [6].

This prohibition was reiterated in the 1980s, yet the legislation is still disobeyed daily. This dreadful behavior continues because of poverty and untouchability. In Kalidasa's Meghadhoot, a reference to dancing females in temples may be discovered. A peak of devadasi ubiquity seems to have occurred during the 10th and 11th centuries CE. One might see a correlation between the growth and collapse of Hindu temples and the increase and fall in the stature of devadasis. The devdasi system peaked under the Chola Empire and was particularly prominent in southern India. Although the government has made sufficient efforts to address the devdasi issue, even the Devdasi Prohibition Act did not completely resolve the issue in India. The main causes of this form of exploitation are still lack of education, hunger, and poverty. This was the first known instance of

prostitution, although Vatsyayana also made allusions to it in the Kama Sutra, which was composed during the second and fourth century CE. Asia's biggest red-light district is now located in India; under colonial control, Mumbai's Kamathipura was a private brothel for British occupiers, but after independence, it opened to the general public. GB Road in Delhi, Sonagachi in Kolkata, Kamathipura in Mumbai, Budhwar Peth in Pune, and Reshampura in Gwalior are just a few of India's notorious red light districts. In India, the number of prostitutes is always growing. The most recent estimate placed their number at about 2.8 million. The bulk of the ladies were imported from Bangladesh and Nepal.

DISCUSSION

What Leads to Prostitution?

Economic reasons: Although they are not the only contributing elements to prostitution, economic circumstances are unquestionably at the forefront of the list of causes. Not all women who become prostitutes come from underprivileged backgrounds. Even now, a significant proportion of women working in this industry come from wealthy backgrounds. On the other hand, some people are forced into this profession in order to support their families and themselves.

The many economic considerations include:

Poverty: As was already established, poverty is the primary cause of prostitution in India. Women who are unable to obtain jobs for a variety of reasons, such as illiteracy, are often forced into prostitution to make ends meet. They often push their youngsters out of haplessness in order to sexually satisfy their potential employers. Because their employers often expose maid slaves to sexual exploitation, they fall prey to this horrific societal evil as well. However, poverty is a relative term. To maintain a good standard of living, women may also enter this field of work. Examples of women who turned to the flesh trade after their professional careers failed may be found in the film and glamour industries.

Underage employment: It's common for females to get jobs while they're still impressionable in settings like hotels, factories, offices, and stores, among others, where they might easily be persuaded to engage in prostitution.

Unhealthy working conditions: Many women in India might find jobs via middlemen. When an opportunity arises, these middlemen and agents recruit women, keep them under their control, and often succeed in obtaining sexual favors. Once a lady gives in to their passion, they quickly turn her into a professional.

Pollution and corruption in industrial areas: The majority of India's industrial areas have appalling living conditions for the poor, and even in slums, housing is hard to come by and costly. Because of this, women's lives are particularly challenging, and they often fall victim to brothel pimps who seduce and seduce them under the pretense of providing a better life. But the sad truth is that females often wind up at one of the many brothels in these industrial cities. Additionally, labor contractors prefer to hire more women than males as labor force in different industries and construction sites because women are paid less than men. These people often sexually exploit these ladies since they are weak and easy victims. Due to the lack of seclusion in their claustrophobic lodgings, children are also exposed to adult sexual activity inside of their living spaces. The early onset of sex typically pushes women into prostitution. Every year, tens of thousands of young girls

are abducted from their families as part of an immoral trade in females. These children are often forced into prostitution at an early age and end up in brothels.

Social causes: In addition to economic considerations, social factors have a significant impact on the spread of this social ill. The following are some examples of social factors:

Factors related to the family: A UK research found that young people who grew up choosing this route of degradation often came from unstable or broken households and had not gotten much affection, care, or attention as youngsters. They have a tendency to fall love anybody who gives them even the tiniest sign of affection. Additionally, a mother's promiscuity affects the behavior of her kids, particularly her girls. Additionally, there is a propensity for the offspring of criminals to engage in prostitution.

Factors affecting marriage: Superstitions are quite common in India. Some of them compel women to become prostitutes. Since widow remarriage is still frowned upon, a widow who is unable to remarry might satisfy her physical needs by abusing herself and engaging in illicit relationships. They often become prostitutes since these are just mediocre alternatives to sex. Second, extremely young marriages are still rather popular in India. If any of these ladies do end up widowed, it's usually while they're still quite young. Illegal communications are prevalent in houses in India, especially in the poorer villages and rural areas. Even brothers and other family members descend to having sex with their sisters. In reality, no relationship is so precious that it is never sometimes burned by the fire of desire. Children in and near red-light districts are sometimes severely impacted by their environment since they get used to witnessing immoral behaviors frequently. These places are often frequented by brothel proprietors looking for fresh females. **Illegal conception:** It is often observed that women who get pregnant via unlawful relationships and are unable to have an abortion for one reason or another sometimes become entangled in the prostitute industry [7], [8].

Psychological causes: In addition to the reasons already mentioned, there are psychological factors that influence women's decision to choose the prostitute lifestyle. According to research, frigidity has driven women to adopt drastic measures, migrate from one guy to another in pursuit of sexual pleasure, and eventually turn themselves into prostitutes via trial and error. Troilism, a psychological condition, may lead women to engage in this social vice. It may not be feasible to cover all of the psychological factors in this section since there are so many of them.

biological reasons: Individuals with chromosomal abnormalities or overactive endocrine glands may feel motivated to pursue sexual fulfillment with a variety of sexual partners.

Religious and cultural factors: In southern India, the devadasi tradition arose from cultural and religious ideas that a family daughter was destined to serve gods completely. However, in reality, this approach encouraged prostitution to grow under the guise of religion.

Prostitution's Effects

Without a doubt, prostitution contributes significantly to social, family, and individual degradation. Women who work in this industry often have to lead double lives and frequently lose their social standing. They are shunned not just by friends and family but also by society, and they often experience loneliness. As a consequence, individuals often find themselves living alone with others who are similar to themselves. These women are often the targets of various social stigmas and forms of economic exploitation due to their status as being on the bottom rung of society. They

often experience numerous diseases and STDs, and they may even transmit them to their progeny. People who want these services often incur the danger of developing genital infections. If the wives are aware of the illicit and adulterous relationship, it causes conflict in the home and eventually leads to desertion and divorce.

Many young men who had premarital intercourse with prostitutes suffer from "psychic impotency" in married life, according to clinical and psychoanalytic research. Depending on the person, there may be a wide range of causes for this. One of the causes of "psychic impotency" is the person's dislike of the prostitute's sex, which he or she may have formed before, during, or after the sex-union, as well as their dread of contracting venereal illnesses from the prostitute while having sex with her or afterwards. A prostitute serves two purposes in society: the first is commercial, and the second is health-related. The public may enter the brothels and disorderly hotels where prostitution is tolerated as accessible locations for free sex. This generates income for individuals who engage in it while also spreading venereal diseases. By coercing and abducting females, hotel managers, pimps, panhandlers, and prostitutes engage in illegal activity. They turn to a variety of heinous means of obtaining young, virginal ladies and girls in order to make their businesses very successful and lucrative. By doing this, they destroy countless girls' and people's personalities, spread illnesses, disrupt marriages, and devastate families.

Prohibition of Prostitution

There are many rules and regulations in place to counter this threat. Here are a few of them in brief: Prior to independence, the East India Company had established regulations to address sexual offenses. Later, the IPC was amended to include measures to address offenses that violate a woman's modesty and forcible or non-consensual sexual contact. The Code lists penalties include up to a year in jail, a fine, or both for insulting a woman's modesty by speech, tone, gesture, or the display of any item, or by intruding on her seclusion.

Prostitution and the Indian Penal Code

According to Section 354, anybody found guilty of assaulting or using criminal force against a woman with the aim to offend her modesty faces a two-year prison sentence, a fine, or both.

According to Section 366, anyone who kidnaps or abducts a woman in order to coerce her into having illicit sexual relations through criminal intimidation, abuse of authority by anyone, or any other means while the victim is a girl under the age of 18 may face up to 10 years in prison, a fine, or both.

Provision 372: This provision created a criminal offense out of the act of leasing, hiring, or otherwise disposing of or getting control of a girl under the age of 18 for any illegal or immoral purpose.

Provision 375: This provision stipulates a maximum 10-year prison sentence for engaging in sexual activity with a person who is under the age of 16. Despite the possibility that she gave her permission, such an act is still considered rape.

Provision 497: This provision states that having sexual relations, whether they are consenting or not, with the wife of another man without his knowledge or agreement is considered adultery and is punished by up to five years in jail, a fine, or both.

Provision 498A: This provision deals with a woman's spouse or a relative of her husband who treats her cruelly. Anyone who submits a woman to cruelty when they are the lady's husband or a relative of the husband faces a fine and a sentence of jail that may last up to three years. 'Cruelty' has two meanings for the purposes of this section:

Any intentional behavior that poses a serious risk to the woman's life, limb, or health or that is likely to provoke suicidal thoughts in her. Harassment of the woman occurs when it is done with the intention of forcing her or a member of her family to comply with an illegal demand for money, property, or valued security, or when it is done because she or a member of her family has refused to comply with the demand. Failure of anti-prostitution initiatives: The Government of India took such steps, which made the efforts fruitful. for the passage of The Bombay Prevention of Prostitution Act in 1923, the Bombay bench of Maharashtra is credited for successfully controlling prostitution in Bombay. Unfortunately, despite the implementation of these measures, the prostitution issue has not yet been fully resolved. Below is a summary of some of the factors contributing to the unrestrained spread of prostitution:

1. Prostitution was not considered to be a crime as a whole, thus only actions that dealt with activities related to its practice were considered crimes.
2. The enforcement of legislation does not guarantee that prostitution is no longer practiced. The proliferation of prostitution is aided by the fact that it is difficult to catch the pimps, procurers, and property owners who rent out their spaces for this activity.
3. Prostitution has often grown uncontrolled due to poor police, corruption, and a lack of courts devoted to the issue.

The immoral trafficking legislation for the repression of prostitution has been implemented differently in several states, and the law itself has numerous flaws. For instance, there was no prohibition on brothels being located near schools, churches, or other public areas. There were no such particular laws in other states, and the only legal action available was via the Indian Penal Code, which was inadequate to stop immoral commerce.

On occasion, it is also claimed that prostitution is a practice that dates back as far as the earth itself and that it has proven hard to eradicate. Additionally, it was believed that prostitution serves as a safety valve, absorbing the violent urges of the destitute and shielding society from offensive overtures.

Prohibition of Prostitution Programs After Independence

The Association of Moral and Social Hygiene has stepped up its anti-prostitution campaign since independence. With locations in 128 districts and more than 18 states, it aims to do the following tasks:

1. Prostitution rehabilitation
2. Removing Prostitutes from the Industry
3. Sexually transmitted illness prevention
4. Surveying and Studying the Regions

To stop prostitution, there has to be comprehensive regulation that applies to all of India. Without such laws, it would be difficult to introduce further measures. To connect or coordinate efforts throughout the nation, there should be an Inter-State Police Organization. Only reputable institutions and organizations should be permitted to operate in the field of prostitute rehabilitation.

For the execution of this law, a specialized police unit should be established. There should only be women in it. Women who have been in court should be sent to designated locations or remand homes so that probation officials and social workers may get in touch with them. In order to address the social and human sides of the issue as well as determine culpability, special tribunals made up of a few qualified women should be established. Anyone who engages in prostitution at a lodge or other public area should face consequences. Through conferences, workshops, and seminars on the flesh trade, there have been several initiatives to raise awareness of the social ill of prostitution. Regular All-India Conferences were also held before 1951. In Delhi, Agra, and Chennai, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene held multiple conferences on the subject. The group began to host social worker training programs after 1961 [9], [10]. The Association for Moral Social Hygiene held a program and in-depth conversation on prostitution issues in 1978. These conferences held the view that the regulations already in place in many states to combat immoral trade were not strong enough to make a significant difference. The Third All-India Conference, which took place in 1953, suggested outlawing both individual and commercial prostitution. Since India is a welfare state, every effort is being made to curb and end the scourge of prostitution. This is shown by the Suppression of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act of 1956. The interests of women are protected by a number of laws. The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, which came into effect in 1956, made it illegal to operate brothels and attract women for the purpose of prostitution.

This law gives the government certain particular authority to address different elements of prostitution. The appointment of specialized police officers, the ability to search properties without a search warrant, the authority to give instructions for the rescue of girls, the ability to order the closure of brothels and eviction from particular properties, the ability to order the removal of prostitutes from any location, the creation of protective homes, etc. It is depressing to learn that prostitution and immoral trafficking of women continue to be common in India notwithstanding this statute. Prostitution in and of itself is not illegal, and the acts only pertain to certain aspects of its activity. Even if he visits the prostitute at a brothel, the visitor is not penalised. Only for soliciting or engaging in prostitution in an area or on premises that are against the law does the prostitute herself face punishment.

Preventative Steps to Address the Prostitution Issue

There have been several attempts to shut down brothels and other locations that support prostitution. The laws have already been passed. However, the following are some required actions that must be taken:

Sex education: Both men and women should receive information on the dangers of sexually transmitted illnesses as well as their origins. To educate individuals, there are numerous things to take. The importance of self-control should be instilled in children from a young age. Sex education should be well provided for in schools and institutions. The Association of Moral and Social Hygiene is also working in this regard to raise awareness of sex education. Opportunities for employment for women: Because of their terrible poverty, women are compelled to work in this field. Therefore, it is important to provide them the right education and training. The value of women's employability in the labor market will improve thanks to these training capabilities. Therefore, by empowering women economically, this demeaning vocation may be avoided.

Elimination of some social practices: It is not advisable to support the dowry system, which prevented many females from being married. Remarrying a widow should be done often. It is

urgently necessary to reform how society views dowries, widow marriages, and devadasis. Discouragement of double standards of morality is necessary. Double standards of morality should no longer be noted. As Smt. Ranganayaki states, "It is really impossible to have a double standard ethically in areas of sex since female chastity is impossible without male chastity. Since men are expected to behave irregularly while women are expected to stay chaste, there has grown into a permitted vice.

Publicity and propaganda: If any form of annoyances are discovered in the area, urgent action should be made, such as reporting the incidents. Given that the current generation has access to a variety of online resources, parents should be careful about their children's Internet use.

Volunteer groups' role in prostitute rehabilitation: Many volunteer organizations have stepped forward to provide sanctuary to these women. Numerous significant organizations are currently attempting to rehabilitate and reform prostitutes and find them suitable jobs. Examples include The Good Shepherd Home in Chennai, The Women's Home in Chennai, Shardhanand Anath Ashram in Mumbai, The Chris Pins Home in Poona, The Salvation Army Home in Bengal, Khusalbagh Mission Orphanage in Gorkhpur, and Mahila Anthalaya And Varanasi.

As a end, it can be claimed that there are several levels and approaches that need to be taken in order to address the practice of prostitution. A major shift is needed in society. It is required to enact a number of laws that support prostitutes. Economic empowerment, proper education, and systems may help society's problems. This necessitates reorganizing the issue of child care, widow remarriage, the dowry system, and child rearing as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Prostitution is a complicated subject that is intricately linked to society standards, gender inequity, and economic realities. Prostitution is supported by a number of economic reasons, including poverty, illiteracy, a lack of work prospects, and economic inequality. Prostitutes often deal with a variety of difficulties and vulnerabilities, such as exploitation, violence, health hazards, and social shame. Their financial situation may keep people in a loop where there are few exit possibilities and structural disparities make it hard to locate new sources of income. It is necessary to take a holistic strategy to addressing the economic factors surrounding prostitution, one that goes beyond criminalization and focuses on empowering people and developing workable alternatives. This entails giving those in prostitution access to education, skill development, and employment opportunities that may pave the road for independent and sustainable means of subsistence.

Furthermore, it is critical to fight the stigma and prejudice attached to prostitution and encourage a change in how society views those who work in the sex industry. It is essential to acknowledge the agency and dignity of those who participate in prostitution because this enables the creation of supporting structures that put their rights, health, and safety first. Efforts should also include thorough assistance programs that meet the needs of prostitutes on a holistic level, such as access to medical treatment, counseling, legal assistance, and social support. Collaborations between governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and local communities may assist establish an atmosphere that supports people in leaving the prostitution industry and offers chances for personal development and empowerment. As a result, tackling the economic factors that influence prostitution necessitates a multifaceted strategy that places a priority on dignity, rights, and empowerment. We can build a culture that cherishes the dignity and well-being of all people,

regardless of their participation in the sex trade, by addressing the underlying causes, offering workable alternatives, and questioning conventional conventions. We may strive toward a more equitable and inclusive society where people have the freedom to seek honorable and sustainable lives via compassion, understanding, and collective efforts.

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CHAPTER 12

NURTURING EQUALITY: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the social and economic conditions of women, investigating the inequalities, challenges, and opportunities they face in various spheres of life. It delves into the structural and systemic factors that shape women's social and economic realities, including gender roles, cultural norms, discriminatory practices, and limited access to resources and opportunities. The study analyzes the consequences of these conditions on women's well-being, empowerment, and overall societal progress. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the significance of addressing the social and economic conditions of women and proposes recommendations for fostering gender equality, inclusivity, and sustainable development.

KEYWORDS:

Divorce, Economic Conditions, Gender Equality, Nurturing Equality, Rape.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to political and economic factors, societal factors have a role in the underrepresentation of women. Domestic violence, divorce, and other social issues like rape are all directly tied to how women are seen in society. The sections that follow provide explanations for each of these factors. The Latin word "divortium," which meaning "to turn aside" or "to separate," is where the word "divorce" originates. The legal dissolution of a married relationship is divorce. As a result, the term "divorce" or "marriage dissolution" can be used to describe an act of ending a marital union that involves the cancellation of legally recognized duties and responsibilities of marriage, leading to the dissolution of ties of matrimony between two adults who were married in accordance with the laws of that state or country. The rules governing divorce differ greatly from country to country. In the majority of nations, spouses seeking a divorce must first get the court's consent and sanction. This process may also entail debates about problems emerging from the divorce, such as alimony, child support, child custody, division of the ex-husband's assets, etc. A monogamous marriage is legally required in the vast majority of nations before each former spouse is permitted to remarry. A lawfully divorced woman is eligible to marry another male in nations where polygyny, but not polyandry, is permitted [1]–[3]. Divorce is a widespread, age-old event. Interesting enough, there are several nations that still do not permit divorce, like the Philippines and Vatican City. A few nations in Europe and Latin America have lately made divorce lawful in certain regions. The nations and the year when divorce became legal are shown in the table below.

India Divorce Rates

With particular references to the individuals of different religions who are married/divorced under these laws, this section aims to provide a very succinct yet clear overview of India's divorce laws.

An interfaith marriage statute known as the Special Marriage Act was established in 1954 on an all-Indian basis, allowing Indian citizens of various religious origins and religions to wed and divorce without hindrance or repercussion. The Hindu Marriage Act, which was established in 1955, gives Hindus and other people who first wanted to be married in line with its precepts legal authority. The Indian Divorce Act of 1869 is the statute that governs divorce among Christians in India. The country's legal system permits a husband or wife to get a divorce on the grounds of adultery, abuse, two years of desertion, religious conversion, mental aberration, venereal illness, and leprosy. After living apart for at least a year, husband and wife may also choose to get a divorce based on their shared agreement. The law stipulates that the separated spouse must live apart for at least six months before a divorce with mutual agreement may be granted. When one of the estranged partners refuses to divorce the other, the divorce is considered to be disputed. According to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, divorce is only permitted under such circumstances if specific requirements are met. While a Muslim husband has the unilateral power to dissolve the marriage by saying "Talaq" three times in a row. For any of the reasons listed in the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, Muslim women must file a judicial case. Due to the fact that India is a multi-religious and multi-cultural country, each community is regulated by marriage rules that are unique to their religion and obviously different from the Hindu Marriage Act. As a consequence, each community has its own unique divorce laws. They consist of the following:

1. Act of 1936 on Parsi Marriage and Divorce
2. The Muslim Marriage Dissolution Act of 1939
3. The 1969 Foreign Marriage Act
4. The 1986 Muslim Women Act

In India, there are plans to establish a new legislation. The award of a divorce based on the 'irretrievable breakdown of marriage' as claimed by one of the spouses is the subject of this amendment. The Marriage Laws Bill 2010 was passed by the Union Cabinet in June 2010—nearly six years earlier. If approved by the parliament's two chambers, this would create the new divorce ground of irretrievable marriage. According to this change to the legislation, the court would have to weigh the validity of the evidence presented by both parties proving that they had been living apart for at least three years previous to the petition's filing in court.

Divorce rates are rising in India

Divorce rates are increasing in India. Although official statistics on the subject are still pending, it is believed that one in every 100 marriages ends in divorce each year. Indian culture may be going through a sociological transformation since it now seems to be more tolerant of divorce, which was formerly seen as a social disgrace. It has been seen that married couples are separating for a variety of reasons, regardless of their social background or caste. Few divorces caused by infidelity or marital violence were documented only a few decades ago. For the benefit of their children, out of social anxiety, or out of financial dependence on the separated spouse, women continued to suffer in broken marriages in the majority of situations. Today, meanwhile, divorce rates are rising as a result of women's increased independence in many spheres of life. Not only do multi-cultural metropolises exhibit this growing tendency, but also semi-urban communities, rural regions, and small towns. In light of this, it is essential to look at the numerous factors that contribute to women filing for divorce so often.

Reasons for Divorce

The following elements must be met for estranged married spouses to seek for divorce in India's court system:

1. When one or both couples engage in extramarital relationships for sexual purposes.
2. Cruelty occurs when one or both couples endure physical or emotional abuse on one another.
3. **Desertion:** If one of the partners deserts the other and does not live together for at least two years, one of them may apply for divorce.
4. When one of the spouses is compelled to adopt the other's faith, this is known as conversion.
5. **Mental illness/venereal disease:** If one of the spouses suffers from mental illness/insanity or any contagious venereal illnesses, divorce may be filed.
6. **Leprosy:** If one of the spouses has an incurable type of leprosy, divorce may be filed.
7. **Renunciation:** If one of the couples gives up all worldly pursuits, divorce may be sought.
8. **Conjugal rights:** If one of the couples has failed to uphold conjugal rights for two years or more, divorce may be filed.

Recent Divorce Patterns in Contemporary Cultures

Divorce is not stigmatized in today's culture as it formerly was. In the past, families would sweep such incidents under the rug and refrain from bringing up the subject in public. Divorcees are more often accepted nowadays. Families are happy to welcome and assist their divorced daughters in whatever manner they can. The sacredness of the institution of marriage has declined to the point that people's attitudes regarding it have altered as a result of changing times and broader perspectives. Couples who are Double Income No Kids, or DINK, households are more likely to divorce because they are less dependent on one another financially and are not responsible for raising a kid together. Couples can split up due to differences in financial resources and professional competition or incompatibility [4], [5]. Extramarital affairs occur more often as a result of spouses spending more time apart owing to work demands. They also file for divorce as a consequence of this. Recently, couples are increasingly filing for divorce due to sexual incompatibility and a lack of sex activity.

DISCUSSION

Women's Empowerment

As sexist as it may seem, the foregoing arguments indeed support the end that one of the key reasons for the rise in divorce cases is women's empowerment. These days, there are more divorce cases due to ego conflicts between spouses, problems with each other's parents, and professional rivalry as women enjoy more economic freedom and financial affluence. Marriage itself no longer has the same importance, and as a result, several couples now file for divorce for trivial reasons. Women are increasingly open about this, according to recent trends. Those times, when women were confined to their homes and endured various forms of abuse from their husbands or in-laws, are now a thing of the past. Due to their increased independence and perception of their equality with males, women are now more emboldened to speak out and abandon their previous quiet. The ability of women to support themselves financially has also given them the freedom to live their lives as they see fit.

Does this imply that women need to remain at home, quit their occupations, and focus only on domestic duties? No, that's a resounding NO. The need to further empower women is even greater now that they are reshaping our culture. However, empowering women must not be seen as going up against males. By empowering someone, you are ensuring their freedom of speech and expression, their ability to participate in family decisions, and, if necessary, their ability to work and support their family. Men shouldn't be overawed if women make more money than them since they are doing it for their own family and no one else's. It shouldn't result in any ego conflicts. Although women's empowerment may have contributed to rising divorce rates, it cannot be the only factor, and women should not bear the full burden of responsibility. The real answer is to value a relationship, work together through good and bad times, and live as decent roommates. Give your relationship some time rather than filing for divorce right away.

Rape

Any kind of direct or indirect physical or psychological brutality against women is implied by the term "crime against women." Every day, we encounter many kinds of crimes against women. These include, among many other things, rape, bigamy, eve-teasing, adultery, enticement, abduction, dowry, physical violence, mistreatment of children and senior citizens, and molestation. The majority of women in both urban and rural areas today have seen or personally suffered some kind of male abuse [6], [7]. The pace at which these crimes against women are committed is disturbing, and the authorities have mostly failed to stop it. Despite our efforts to transform India into a civilized, forward-thinking, and empowered country, atrocities against women continue to rise.

Women are victims of sexual assault

The widespread occurrence of sexual violence and sexual coercion against the supposedly empowered women of India is but a sobering reminder of this country's staunch patriarchal structure in today's age, which is frequently referred to as rather empowering for women and with such vehement expression as women's liberation, women's body image, and women's sexuality. Rape occurs so often that we see, hear, and read about it in the news every day. Statistics show that a woman is raped every 20 minutes in the biggest democracy in the world. Rape crimes were recorded in 24,923 instances in 2012 and 33,707 cases in 2013, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, a little increase from the prior years. The laws against rape in India are rendered ineffectual by the conventional and rigid ideas on sex and family privacy. Strangely, during the defense attorney's cross-examination of victims in courtrooms, when they are asked explicit questions regarding the rape act, victims are often exposed to significant emotional distress. In addition, the family of rape victims are often shunned by society, and such crimes go undetected. Our nation's rules and definitions are outdated, insufficient, vague, restrictive, and so difficult to prosecute under that they further compound the issue with providing justice to the victim.

What rape is and how it happens

The Criminal Law Act 2013 amended the definition after April 2, 2013, raising the minimum age for minors to eighteen. For the purposes of the Indian Penal Code, rape is currently defined as:

Article 375 states that a man has committed "rape" if he:

- a) Penetrates a woman's vagina, mouth, urethra, or anus with his penis in any way, or compels a woman to do so with him or anyone else; or

- b) Forces a woman to do so with him or another person; or Inserts, to whatever degree, any item or portion of the body other than the penis into the woman's vagina, urethra, or anus;
- c) Induces penetration into a woman's vagina, urethra, anus, or any other portion of her body by manipulating any part of her body, or compels her to do so with him or anyone else; or
- d) In any of the following seven situations, applies his mouth to a woman's vagina, anus, or urethra or forces her to do so while he or another person is present:

To begin with: Against her will. Second: Without her permission

With her permission, when her consent has been won by making her or anybody else she cares about fear for their lives or physical harm. With her agreement, knowing that he is not her husband and that she is giving him her permission because she thinks he is another man to whom she is or thinks she is legally wed. With her permission if, at the time of granting such consent, due to insanity, drunkenness, or the administration of any stupefying or unhealthy substance by him directly or via a third party. She lacks the capacity to comprehend the nature and implications of the action she authorizes. When a woman expresses her desire to engage in a certain sexual act by words, gestures, or any other kind of verbal or nonverbal communication, it is referred to as consent. With the exception that a woman who does not physically resist the act of penetration should not be deemed as consenting to the sexual activity simply because of that fact [7]–[9].

Exception:

1. It is not rape if a medical treatment or intervention is performed;
2. It is not rape when a guy engages in sexual activity with his own wife and she is above the age of fifteen.

Marital rape that occurs while a woman and husband live together was still not a crime in India even after the 2013 revision. Forced sexual contact between a man and his wife, if they are not cohabitating, is now illegal under Article 376B of the 2013 legislation, punishable by at least a two-year jail sentence. Other provisions of the Indian Penal Code, such as Section 498 and the Protection of Women from Domestic Abuse Act 2005, may also make forced sex by a man on his wife grounds for prosecution for domestic abuse. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act of 2012 provides further details and required sanctions for the offense of sexual assault on a child, defined as anybody under the age of 18.

Following the 2013 Criminal Law Reform, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code still considers any sexual actions between people of the same sex to be crimes and carries the same penalties as rape. Rape should be second only to murder in terms of the severity of the crime, but sadly, no one, even social scientists, lawmakers, and those who administer justice, gives it the attention it requires. Women may lack the guts to report every crime committed against them until our patriarchal culture, which is rife with male chauvinism, changes.

Types of Rape

In India, there are several forms of rape that are legal. Here are some of them explained: Rape committed while the victim is being held in "custody" by the attacker, who is a representative of authority, is referred to as custodial rape. 'Prison rape' is the term used to describe rape that occurs in a prison setting. Rape that occurs in these circumstances as a result of prison officials' carelessness may be classified as custodial rape. According to several NGOs, rape in custody or in jail occurs often. Given prior evidence of the abusive behavior of police and the possibility that

many rapes go unreported because the victims are afraid of retaliation and humiliation, the greater rate of sexual assault seems plausible. Nevertheless, it seems that the frequency of custodial rape has decreased as a result of many legislative restrictions placed on the police in relation to the arrest, search, and detention of women.

Gang rape: When at least two guys and at least one other man take part in raping a woman, it is considered a gang rape. Statistical evidence of the scope of this issue is scarce, despite reports of gang rapes occurring all over the globe. According to a research, these victims are often younger, jobless females who have suffered more violence than those who have been sexually assaulted. Compared to victims of solitary attack, victims of gang rape are more likely to seek counseling, consider suicide, or use crisis and police services. Additionally, studies indicate that the offenders were often discovered to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Incest: Incest is the term used to describe sexual behavior between two close relatives, family members, or blood relatives. Incestuous relationships refer to sexual relationships between people who are linked to one another by affinity, marriage, adoption, step-relationships, or bloodlines.

Digital rape is the act of stimulating a female victim's clitoris, vagina, vulva, or anus using things like sticks, bottles, pens, or fingers. According to the recently updated legislation, this kind of rape has been included to the new definition of rape. Marital rape is a spousal rape or a rape committed during a marriage. It simply refers to having sex with one's spouse against their will. Thus, this behavior is rape-like. Up until recently, most people did not consider marital rape to be a crime. However, cultures all over the globe are criminalizing it more and more. Since the second part of the 20th century, domestic violence against women and sexual crimes against women have gained widespread acceptance in society [10]. Despite this, many orthodox communities continue to condone forced sexual activity by the husband on the grounds that it is a man's prerogative and do not punish marital rape.

Factors that make rape worse

There are several things that make rape worse. Here are a few of the more important ones:

Poor Conviction Rate: The poor conviction rate in rape cases is a significant factor in India's rising rape caseload. This may be a result of people's indifference to such atrocities. This is supported by current police statistics, which shows that just 19% of these instances resulted in convictions. Additionally, it was observed that between 2011 and 2013, there was a rise in rape cases of more than 120%. This is a result of the poor investigation work and improper strategy used in such situations. Additionally, the phallogentric culture thinks that going outside after dark and dressing in western style encourages males to assault women.

Police Indifference: Women are often the victims of sexual assault on crowded public transit, especially in northern India. Either women don't disclose these incidents, or the police are often slow to provide assistance. In a few instances, police officers have been found guilty of similar offenses. Rape victims often hesitate to come forward for fear of being held accountable for the crime against them.

Sexual assault is often used in Indian culture as an instrument of power and dominance. The motivation for this is often political, and rape is used as a means of repression. By committing acts of sexual assault and violence against women, it is a powerful tool to terrify whole swaths of society. Women's organizations have not paid as much attention to the use of sexual violence

against women as a political tactic as civil rights organizations have. In order to achieve their political goals, the governing elites often use systematic repression via sexual coercion.

Rape events that go unreported: In India, the bulk of such cases go unreported due to a mostly traditional culture where women are held accountable for the sexual crimes committed against them. According to statistics, strangers are only responsible for 6% of rape cases; most of the time, the perpetrator is well-known to the victims, and up to 60% of incidents go unreported. Rape has become India's fastest-growing crime, with recorded incidents climbing from 2487 in 1971 to 33707 in 2013, according to an NCRB research. Rape incidence has increased by 1255.3% during the last three decades.

Confounded sense of Justice: Our courts' decisions often provide the public conflicting messages. In certain instances, rape defendants who were sentenced to a set number of harsh jail terms had their sentences reduced as compensation in exchange for paying a pitiful quantity of money to the victim. In certain instances, criminals who made a commitment to marry their victims were pardoned.

Wrong Signals Empower Rapists: India is a nation full with paradoxes, where even the Supreme Court justices provide unexpected rulings. The ruling rendered by former Chief Justice K. serves as a prime example. According to G. Balakrishnan, the state and society must support the choice of a rape survivor to marry and live with her own rapist. One can only picture the pain a woman would experience cohabitating with a person who had committed such a horrific act as rape against her. It is comparable to receiving physical abuse and daily trauma for the rest of one's life. Such words just serve to reinforce the idea that marriage is the be all and end all for women since getting married is every woman's top priority, even if it means being married to her own rapist.

Rape Victims' Social Exclusion: Rape victims are often excluded from society. It is necessary to eradicate from society its societal contempt for rape victims. For the victims' recovery, a climate of friendship and warmth must be fostered in its place.

Locating Rapists

In light of the seriousness of the crime and its pervasiveness, it is critical to consider who is really committing these crimes. According to studies, the victim was known to the offender in up to 73% of instances. About 38% of these rapists were friends or acquaintances, 28% were close friends, and 7% were family members. The rape pandemic is becoming worse despite several actions made by the state and federal governments. In India, a woman is raped every 20 minutes. As much as 80% of the victims are between the ages of 14 and 30.

CONCLUSION

The social and economic conditions of women play a critical role in shaping their lives and the overall well-being of societies. Despite notable progress, women continue to face various challenges and inequalities that hinder their full participation and empowerment. Socially, women encounter gender norms, stereotypes, and cultural practices that restrict their freedom, limit their choices, and reinforce power imbalances. Harmful practices, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and honor killings, persist in many parts of the world, denying women their fundamental rights and dignity. Addressing these conditions requires transforming societal attitudes, challenging gender roles, and promoting gender equality in all aspects of life. Economically, women face disparities in access to education, employment opportunities, financial

resources, and decision-making power. Gender wage gaps, occupational segregation, and limited representation in leadership positions undermine women's economic independence and perpetuate economic inequalities. Bridging these gaps requires promoting equal access to quality education, ensuring fair and equitable employment practices, and supporting women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. Improving the social and economic conditions of women is not only a matter of justice and human rights but also essential for sustainable development and societal progress. Empowering women has a transformative impact on families, communities, and economies, contributing to poverty reduction, improving health and education outcomes, and fostering social cohesion.

To address these conditions, a multi-faceted approach is needed. It requires the commitment and collaboration of governments, civil society organizations, communities, and individuals. Policies and programs should be designed to promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and create supportive environments that enable women to fulfill their potential. Additionally, investments in education, healthcare, social protection, and gender-responsive infrastructure are crucial to ensuring the well-being and empowerment of women. Addressing the social and economic conditions of women is fundamental to creating a just, inclusive, and sustainable society. By challenging gender inequalities, promoting women's rights and empowerment, and providing equal opportunities, we can unlock the full potential of women and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous world for all. It is through collective efforts and a commitment to gender equality that we can nurture an environment where women's social and economic conditions enable them to thrive, leading to a brighter future for generations to come.

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CHAPTER 13

BREAKING THE CYCLE: COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on domestic violence against women, examining its prevalence, forms, causes, and consequences. It delves into the social, cultural, and systemic factors that perpetuate domestic violence, including gender inequalities, power imbalances, and harmful social norms. The study analyzes the impact of domestic violence on women's physical and mental well-being, their economic independence, and overall societal progress. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper aims to shed light on the urgent need to address domestic violence against women and proposes recommendations for prevention, intervention, and support systems that can break the cycle of violence.

KEYWORDS:

Advocacy, Cultural, Domestic Violence, Rape, Sexual Assault.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against women is a common and gravely worrying problem that impacts people, families, and civilizations all around the globe. It includes a range of abusive behaviors, including as sexual, emotional, physical, and economic abuse. A comprehensive and multifaceted strategy that tackles the root causes of domestic violence, offers resources and care to survivors, and encourages a culture of non-violence and gender equality is needed to break the cycle of domestic violence. The main strategies for preventing domestic violence against women are explored in length in this overview, which emphasizes the significance of prevention, intervention, support networks, and advocacy [1]–[3]. Domestic violence includes any act of violence committed by an intimate partner or other family members, regardless of where it occurs or how it manifests. Numerous Indian women are affected by this serious problem of domestic abuse. Indian women are known to put up with it in silence out of a desire to preserve the honor of their families and for the benefit of their offspring. The following treaties address the general agreement that domestic abuse should be addressed internationally:

- a. The United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Convention on the eradication of all kinds of discrimination against women.
- b. The Child's Rights Convention.
- c. The program of action approved at the 1995 Beijing Fourth International Conference on Women.

However, because of deeply established attitudes and, to some part, because practical solutions to the problem of domestic violence are still being developed, the pace of improvement has been noticeably sluggish. As a result, we see the suffering of women everywhere, with figures varying from 20% to 50% depending on the nation.

Types of Domestic Abuse

Abuse to The Body: The fact that women experience physical abuse on a global scale—with estimates ranging from 20% to 50% depending on the nation—has been confirmed by several research studies. We may get a comprehensive understanding of this global issue if we examine or compare data from industrialized countries, emerging countries, and transitional countries. The statistics solely show physical assault. The comparable figures on mental abuse, sexual exploitation, and killings of women by intimate partners and family members are few, nevertheless. In actuality, mental and, in some instances, sexual abuse often accompany physical assault.

Intimate partner sexual assault and rape: According to the law in the majority of countries, these crimes are not considered crimes, and in many societies, women do not consider forced sex to be rape if they are married to, cohabiting with, or otherwise living with the offender. The idea is that a man has the right to limitless sexual access to his partner or wife once she enters the institution of marriage. Some nations have started passing laws to prevent marital rape. Australia, Austria, Barbados, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, and the United States of America are a few of these nations. Although the existence of such legislation is a significant advancement, it is sometimes difficult for a woman to file a complaint due to the evidence requirements of the offense.

A complete depiction of the deeper and more deceitful layers of violent conduct opposes it being defined since mental violence is fairly difficult to quantify. Victims who have endured mental and emotional abuse have reported that these forms of abuse are generally more painful and intolerable for the victim than physical acts of cruelty, with mental agony and suffering frequently motivating acts of suicide and suicide attempts. Studies have shown a high link between domestic abuse and suicide in nations including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Peru, Papua New Guinea, and the US. A woman who has experienced domestic abuse is twelve times more likely to consider suicide than a woman who has not. Nearly 35 to 40 percent of mistreated women attempt suicide, even in the US. A startling research reveals that the number of young girls and women in Sri Lanka who die by suicide between the ages of 15 and 24 is 55 times greater than the number of fatalities brought on by pregnancy and delivery.

Femicide, sometimes known as feminicide, is a word for sex-based hate crimes that generally refers to the death of women, however specific meanings might vary depending on the cultural setting. One of the term's early proponents is feminist author Diana E. H. Russell, who now defines it as "the killing of females by males because they are females." Other feminists focus emphasis on the act's aim or purpose being intended especially against women because they are women; yet others include the murdering of women by other women.

DISCUSSION

The more inclusive definition of femicide offered by Russell is as follows: "Femicide is on the extreme end of a continuum of anti-feminist female terror that includes a wide variety of verbal

and physical abuse, such as rape, torture, sexual slavery, incestuous and extra-familial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional battery, sexual harassment, genital mutilation, unnecessary gynecological operations, forced heterosexuality, forced sterilization, When one of these acts of terrorism kills someone, it is called a femicide. When tracking domestic violence, it should be treated as a distinct category. Studies in a number of nations, including Australia, Bangladesh, etc., have shown the prevalence of femicides in the home setting.

Child and teen sexual assault: One of the subtlest types of violence is incest, or the sexual abuse of children and teenagers inside the family, which is frowned upon in most cultures. The basic rights of the child are frequently given up to protect the name and honor of the family as well as that of the adult offender because the crime is typically committed by a father, brother, grandfather, stepfather, uncle, or any other male relative who holds a position of faith and trust in the victim's life. According to statistics, girls under the age of 15 are the ones who experience 40 to 60 percent of all family-based sexual assault, regardless of location or culture. In addition, females are more likely than boys to experience incest. Another kind of violence that women and children experience globally is forced prostitution or other forms of commercial abuse by male partners or parents. Children from poor families who are unable of providing for them often be sold or hired out and may later be coerced into prostitution. Small girls are often moved to other cities to work as domestic helpers, where they may experience physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers.

Indian domestic violence's root causes

Violence against women may be attributable to a variety of factors, not just one. Studies have gradually focused on the interconnectedness of a number of aspects that should improve our understanding of the problem within various cultural settings. Women continued to be especially vulnerable to the violence aimed at them due to a number of social and cultural issues. They are clearly evidence of the historical disparity between men and women when this one is analyzed. Socioeconomic forces, the family where power relations have been established, a sense of fear and exercising control over female sexuality, a belief that men are naturally superior to women, as well as laws and cultural endorsements that deprive women and children of their independent legal and social position, are all factors that can be linked to gender bias. Due to their lack of resources, women are more susceptible to violence. Main Cultural Factors that Promote Domestic Violence:

1. Gender-specific socialization practices.
2. Cultural examples of appropriate gender roles.
3. Expectation of roles to be played in partnerships.
4. Belief in the natural supremacy of men.

Economic

1. Limited access to cash and credit.
2. Discriminatory laws governing property rights and inheritance.
3. Use of common property and upkeep after divorce or widowhood.
4. Limited access to employment in both formal and unofficial sectors.
5. Females have limited access to education and training.

Political

1. Less female representation in leadership positions in politics, the judicial system, the media, and the medical field.
2. Domestic violence is not seen as a serious issue.
3. Believing that family matters are private affairs that fall under private law.
 1. Threats to the existing quo or to religious laws.
 4. There aren't many female political groups.
 5. There are few women who participate in the formal political system.

In India, the position of women has fluctuated greatly. Numerous changes have occurred in the political, social, and economic spheres over the 20th century. Given that it pertains to the act of democratic citizenship the right to vote and elect political participation has long piqued the attention of political scientists and sociologists alike. According to Munroe, political engagement refers to the extent to which people are exercising their right to participate in politics. Arguments around women's involvement have given rise to a variety of perspectives and discourses. One such approach goes under the name of incrementalism and tends to hold the view that gender equality is a phasal reality. Any society must strive for gender equality, and as women make up about half of the global population, they must have a sufficient voice in the bodies that make decisions. According to the 2001 Census, women contributed 25.68% of all labor force participation in India. Women did not have an equal standing to males in ancient India, according to a historical examination of that topic [4]–[6]. The philosophical shifts that resulted in a discernible rise in women's engagement in political processes were preceded by social reform movements that had their start in the 19th century. It's believed that prostitution is the oldest profession in existence. Prostitution in India is not specifically prohibited by law. However, trade-related activities are forbidden, including soliciting, pimping, maintaining brothels, etc. Through conferences, workshops, and seminars on the flesh trade, there have been several initiatives to raise awareness of the social ill of prostitution. Regular All-India Conferences were also held before 1951. In addition to political and economic factors, societal factors have a role in the underrepresentation of women. Domestic violence, divorce, and other social issues like rape are all directly tied to how women are seen in society.

Prevention

The cycle of domestic violence must be broken with the help of prevention measures. Campaigns for education and awareness are essential for questioning established norms, advancing wholesome relationships, and establishing a culture of non-violence. People may be educated on the dynamics of domestic abuse, consent, healthy communication, and gender equality via schools, community groups, and the media. Programs that include all aspects of sexuality education, including power dynamics, respectful relationships, and consent, are very helpful in reducing violence.

Intervention

To provide victims of domestic abuse urgent help and protection, effective action is required. Coordination of services from many industries, such as law enforcement, healthcare specialists, social workers, and lawyers, is required. To guarantee a caring and knowledgeable response, specialized training for professionals dealing with survivors of domestic abuse is essential. In order

to provide full support, it is essential to set up helplines, shelters, and safe homes where survivors may seek sanctuary, counseling, legal support, and medical attention.

Providing Systems

Building strong support networks is crucial to guiding survivors on their path to healing and recovery. This includes easily available and survivor-focused resources including therapy, trauma-informed care, support groups, and initiatives for financial empowerment. In order to provide integrated services that address survivors' physical, emotional, and financial well-being, cooperation between healthcare practitioners, community groups, and social assistance agencies is essential. It's critical to provide survivors ongoing assistance and follow-up treatment in order to help them rebuild their lives and escape the cycle of violence.

Legal Systems

In order to hold offenders responsible and provide justice for victims of domestic abuse, strong legal frameworks are essential. Domestic violence, including marital rape, should be criminalized by law, and protection orders should be available to effectively limit the abuser's ability to act. To guarantee sensitive and effective treatment of instances involving domestic abuse, law enforcement and judicial employees must get adequate training. Furthermore, initiatives should be undertaken to lower obstacles that keep survivors from pursuing legal redress, such as expanding access to free legal aid and simplifying the judicial system [7]–[9].

Awareness and Advocacy

In order to overcome the societal and cultural practices that support domestic violence, advocacy is essential. It is essential to participate in advocacy initiatives at the local, national, and international levels in order to increase awareness, shape policy, and direct funding toward the fight against domestic abuse. Advocacy efforts may work to dispel negative gender stereotypes, advance gender equality, and encourage societal change. In order to raise awareness, demand change, and build a culture where domestic abuse is not allowed, it is essential for government agencies, civil society groups, activists, and survivors themselves to work together [10].

It takes a thorough and coordinated effort from people, communities, governments, and organizations to end the cycle of domestic abuse against women. We can build a culture that cherishes women's rights, safety, and dignity by addressing the root causes, offering assistance to survivors, strengthening legal frameworks, and raising awareness and activism. Together, we can end the cycle of domestic abuse and create a world without fear, violence, or injustice for people to live in.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence against women remains a pervasive and alarming issue that violates their basic human rights and undermines societal progress. It encompasses a range of abusive behaviors, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic violence, occurring within intimate relationships or family settings. The root causes of domestic violence are deeply embedded in gender inequalities, power imbalances, and social norms that perpetuate the subordination of women. It is crucial to challenge these norms and promote gender equality to effectively address and prevent domestic violence. The consequences of domestic violence on women are far-reaching. It inflicts physical and psychological harm, affecting their overall health and well-being.

Women experiencing domestic violence often face barriers to economic independence, limiting their opportunities for education, employment, and financial stability.

Addressing domestic violence requires a comprehensive and coordinated response. This includes prevention strategies, such as education and awareness campaigns, aimed at challenging societal norms and promoting healthy relationships. Early intervention is critical, involving accessible and confidential support services for survivors, including shelters, hotlines, counseling, and legal assistance. Efforts should be focused on strengthening legal frameworks, ensuring their enforcement, and providing comprehensive training for law enforcement personnel and judicial authorities. Collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders is crucial to creating a holistic response that addresses the needs of survivors, holds perpetrators accountable, and promotes a culture of non-violence and respect. Supporting survivors of domestic violence requires a survivor-centered approach, providing a safe and empowering environment where women can rebuild their lives. This includes access to comprehensive healthcare, trauma-informed services, economic empowerment programs, and social support networks. Combating domestic violence against women is a pressing social issue that demands a collective response. By challenging gender inequalities, promoting gender equality, and implementing comprehensive prevention and support systems, we can break the cycle of violence, protect women's rights, and contribute to a society where everyone can live free from fear and violence. It is through concerted efforts, awareness, and a commitment to justice and equality that we can create a safer and more equitable world for women.

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