

A Comparative Study of Role Played By Women in Medieval India to That of Modern India

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in medieval vs modern hasn't changed drastically owing to the changing of social structures that have taken a regressive stance. The presence is felt purely based on economic conditions of the period. An analysis of both times shows a regressive attitude based on assumption of ability was shown in tasks oriented with women to maximize capital. The agricultural technology was rain-fed and very labour intensive. Hence, the women also worked shoulder to shoulder along with the men, While the men ploughed and tilled the fields, women were involved in sowing, reaping the harvest, etc. Also, women were employed as artisans in producing specialized handicraft for trade and export. In modern India, women compete with men for jobs and are seen as equal contributors for the economy. However, social evils like dowry have encompassed all classes and are a major source of harassment and discrimination for women. Also, sexual violence over women has increased in the current times, as an aggressive reaction from sections of men to stunt the rise of women

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important field where it can cause poverty or growth . In a patriarchal society as such in India women were posed strict restrictions and were mostly confined to the fields and then home. But unlike the women in higher castes who faced strict conditions when it came to remarriage the women in lower castes especially in peasantry society were allowed to remarry and divorce with legitimate reason. In Modern India there is a made in opportunity for women who can choose to self sustain or work in the labour market. Women who comprise half of the work force in the primary sector are faced with safety issues , poverty and lack of education. For example in Rajasthan Adolescent girls are dropped out from school and are made to spend more

time working in the fields. Women are frequently characterized by over-representation, low wages and high job insecurity. But in commercial sector where fresh fruits, flowers and vegetables are in high demand in urban markets which allow women to work and earn. It seems more over women are employed more in seasonal and non seasonal activities than men. In medieval India, women played an important role in the rural economy. As the agriculture was labour intensive, women and men had to work shoulder to shoulder in the fields. Men tilled and ploughed, while women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest. They were considered an important resource in agrarian society because they were child bearers in a society dependent on labour. Superstitions around women's biological cycles continued and menstruating women were not allowed to perform most of the tasks. Women, as a producer of offspring, were accorded high status, as labour was very much needed in the field. Grooms had to pay bride-prices to marry the bride. Re-marriage and widow remarriage were also allowed. However, women had to face draconian punishments in cases of their infidelity or violation of caste rules. Remarriages were also prevalent owing to their importance in the peasant and artisan communities. Things begin to change very slowly in the modern India, with the advent of the improved tools and farming techniques. Before independence, role of women increased in the agriculture with the men started to migrate to cities to work in the industries. Post independence, women were made available of the credit which enabled them to manage the agriculture and allied activities effectively. Tractors and mechanised farming led to the reduction of the men labour, however the women were still important for the sowing, weeding, plucking and sorting fruits and vegetables and animal husbandry. Women have also learning to operate the modern agriculture machinery.

CHANGING POSITION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY SINCE MEDIEVAL TIMES

From a respectable position even with the example of woman seer like gargi and maitreyi in ancient time but with a deteriorated position in medieval india and again with raising status in society; the representation of women in society thus shows a vacillating graph. Role of women in agriculture in medieval india was much more than a contributor as capital. women contributed by sowing ; planting; harvesting in agricultural field. She also Contributed in increasing labour force The fertility of women in medieval india was an added factor to enhance labour force in agricultural field. She also played a minor role in management. Very few women played this role in agricultural production and its related activities. Hindu and Muslim women had the right to inherit zemindary. Even; in bengal there is a evidence of woman zamindar. Her Physical

characteristics sometimes decided her relationship with agriculture. A menstrual woman was barred from touching plough and other agricultural utensils believing it will harm agricultural production. Women in present society played a role as an active labour force but In medieval india women was passive labour force doing for the sake of family. At present time; women comes as active labour force in agriculture with right of equal pay and now they work not only for family but also as a contributor to disposal income. The role which was less due to social prejudice in medieval india comes into forefront in modern india with the advancement of science and technology. Today it is an era of feminism, Not only in agricultural field; but in every field including education; science; administration women plays prominent role at modern india. With the freedom, abandoning age old practices of restrictions on women, modern India has given women additional responsibilities. Today in every field from agriculture to Space sciences, from industry to food processing, women are involved in almost every activity and their contribution is much more valued than that of medieval times. It is in the interest of mankind to support equity for complete growth of world that their encouragement to all fields of work is needed. despite laws, policing and other protection to women there have been many instances of gender prejudice towards women that is hampering the progress of humans as a whole.

Women today are much more aware of their role and responsibilities and these abilities must be encouraged for their all round development inturn for well being of the world. As the era changed from ancient to medieval India, the role played by women also transformed ,especially in agrarian society. Earlier women performed very specified roles and she was more responsible for house affairs, but with the changing dynamics of agriculture in medieval period the women were required to work shoulder to shoulder with men . Moreover, they were not only performing all type work ranging from sowing to harvest in their own fields, they were also performing jobs for their employers Furthermore, hey were also performing all type of artisan works as well.

Al tough women played a very contributing role in the medieval agrarian society but she did not enjoyed dignified status in the society,they were only considered as future source of labor and discriminated on the biological basis in the fields. As women entered in the modern era, the role played by rural women did not change significantly,she is still performing dual roles of assisting men in the fields and managing households at the same time , she is still performing jobs for employers in the fields and at some

instances she is also working as maid in the house to earn extra income. Moreover gender based discrimination is still prevalent in most parts of country. therefore ,the changing eras could not offer much improvement to the tasks performed by rural women and gender discrimination she is facing. Still we can say that the role of women has been changed in modern india in every field including agriculture

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