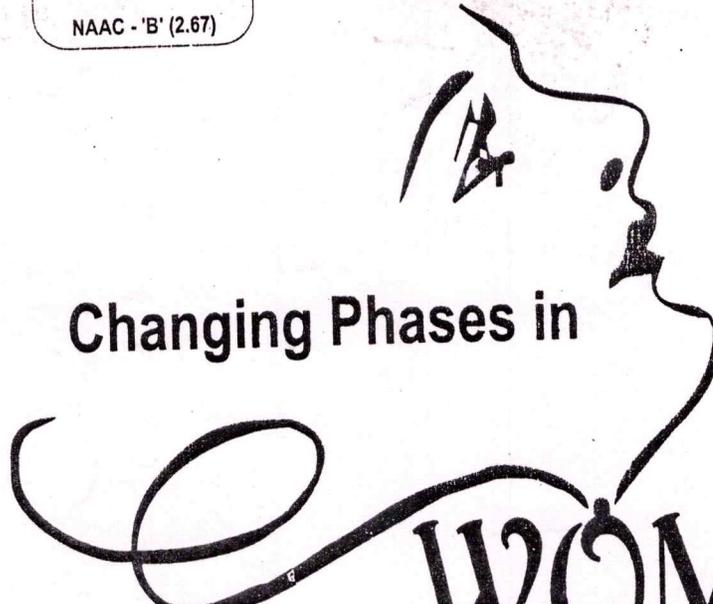




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Changing Phases in

# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

*A Proceeding of UGC Sponsored National Conference*

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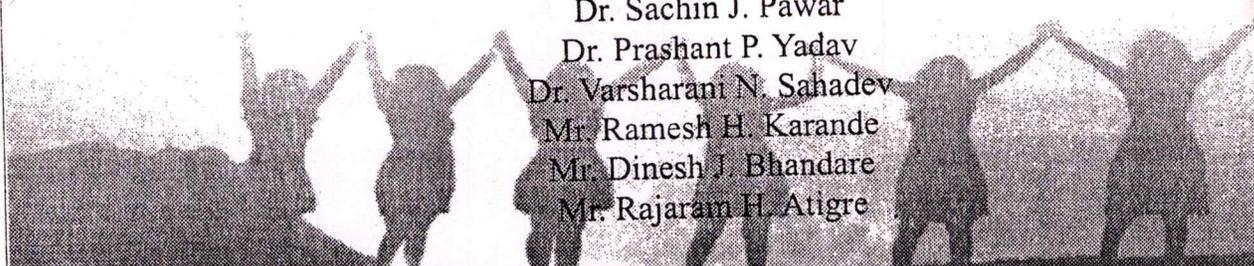
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## CHANGING PHASES OF WOMEN FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN PERIOD

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### Abstract

The present paper focuses on the changing phases of women from ancient period to modern period. It also emphasizes on the ways to empower women such as Education, Social Activities, and Participation of Women in Economical Growth of Nation. To create the political awareness and to change the psychology of inferiority in male-dominated society. If these suggested ways will be implied by women then I assure that there will be real Empowerment of women. The present paper also focuses on equality of gender and it expects the strong democratic nation through the above suggested ways.

**Key Words:** Women Empowerment, Social, Education, Economic growth.

### Introduction :

**T**he Position of Indian Woman in Ancient Indian Society.

In Indian culture, there is hierarchy of four varnas and they are Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Kshudras. It is said that Kshudras means foot of Lord Brahma. It is the bottom or lowest phase of varnas. The people who belongs to the down-trodden societies are considered as Kshudras as well as women in means those people who have to serve Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya and also Kshudras are those people who have no dignity in society. This is the main reason of destroying the "Manusmriti" by Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

But in Ancient period we have an ideal example of intellectual woman called 'Gargi'. She was well educated woman and served as a sermon. It means that in Ancient period Indian woman was strong in the process of education and decision making.

#### • The position of women in Middle Period :

The middle period may be called as a 'Dark Period' for women. This period rejected all the rights of women of education, social, political and her economical rights and she became only a toy in the hands of her husband or her family members. This condition of women is now being changed due to modernization. Modernization of our

thoughts, social change and social dynamics. All there is the great contribution of Mahatma Phul Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve and Ram Mohan Roy of whom dynamic thought changed the life of an Indian woman. They struggled for the gender equality and they always thought that women are also a human-being. They also should be treated as a human being.

#### • The present status of women :-

We are the citizens in 21st century. Today's world is called as 'Networking world'. The whole world is coming together by the internet through the electronic media. We become a partner of this e-world. It made an enormous changes in our life. Our life is now dynamically changed our life. It changed our thoughts and challenged our life so many problems. Today women are working in all the sectors of life. They are aggressive in each and every field such as Education, Politics, Army, Administration, Engineering, Medical etc. they have created dominant partnership in these fields. But on the contrary we are facing simply horrible problems such as imbalance in male-female ratio, rape and harassment of women. These problems in our society should be solved to enable or to empower the women.

#### • What is the meaning of empowerment :

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which women

ions and make choices either or collectively for social n. It strengthens the innate ability by acquiring knowledge, power and

empowerment is the process of enabling or individual to think, take action and in an autonomous way. It is the process e can gain control over one's destiny nstances of ones lives. Empowerment trol over resources (physical, human, and financial) and over ideology ues and attitudes) It is not only a feel of insic control, but also grows intrinsic eater self-confidence and an internal ion of one's consciousness that enables rcome external barriers to accessing changing traditional ideology (into 2001). omen's empowerment is very essential velopment of society. Empowerment viduals acquiring the power to think and rcsises choice and fulfill their potential as al members of society. As per the United Development Fund for women 1), the term women's empowerment

quiring knowledge and understanding of elations and the ways in which these may be changed.

veloping a sense of self-worth, a belief bility to secure desired changes and right l one's life.

aining the ability to generate choices bargaining power.

veloping the ability to organize and e of direction of social change, to create a t social and economic order, nationally and onally.

Thus, empowerment means a psychological personal control or influence and a concern tual social influence and a concern with social influence, political power and legal It is a multilevel construct referring to uals, organizations and community. It is an tional, ongoing process centered in the local unity, involving mutual respect, critical ion caring and group participation through

which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources-

• The way to empower women :-

1. Education as means of empowerment -
2. Active participation in Social Activities -
3. To enable woman for improving Economical Growth -
4. To create the Political Awareness-
5. To change the psychology of inferiority in male-dominated society through the medium of literature.

1) Education as means of Empowerment -

“पिता रक्षती बाल्ये, पती रक्षती कौमार्ये,  
पुत्र रक्षती वार्धक्ये, न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्यमर्हती”

It means that woman is always dependent in all stages of her life. In her childhood she depends upon her father, in her adolescence period she depends upon her husband and in her old age she depends upon her son. It means that she is never independent. But Education is the effective medium for her independency.

Education as means of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. Education can not only help to literate women but also it can create confidence, it help them to develop the divergent thinking and decision making in any process of life and society. She makes herself independent about her opinion and also she can improve her financial condition.

The great thinker and the great educationalist Mahatma Jotiba Phule had quoted a line, "Jichya haati Palnyachi Dori Tee Jagaala Udhari". It means when a woman is educated she transmits her knowledge and culture to the next generation and would be helpful to enlighten the all society full of knowledge and virtues.

According to the Indian census 2011, the percentage of female literacy is near about 65.46%. This percentage shows as the growing power of woman in each field of education, such as in Fine Arts, Commerce, Science, Engineering, Medical, Administration and Law and Justice. Education creates the awareness about her legal rights and it helps to expose her innate capacities which helps to be independent in financial condition as well as her own decision. Woman's own progress or

development is the development of our society and simultaneously of our country.

## 2) Active Participation in Social Activities :-

Woman can play a major role in social changes and social dynamics. Today we are facing so many problems such as imbalance in the male-female ratio, rape, liquor addiction etc.

According to Indian census the ratio of male-female of today is 913 per 1000 in India. It shows the imbalance which would create such a horrible condition in future because the remaining male will be remained solitary without his life-partner and it will be promote to increase some account of the rape so woman herself can avoid this situation by opposing abortion of a girl child. When she will reject the demand of her family of abortion of girl child then and then only the mission of our Government, "Kanya Vachava Abhiyan" (Save the girl child mission) will be successful. Our Government has announced the award for parents of two girl-children or one girl child.

A woman should be strong both physically and psychologically. A strong body and a strong mind can face the problem of the rape. While facing the problem of the rape, she must know laws related to women-specific Legislations –

### • Laws related to Indian women by Indian Government :-

(Women-Specific Legislations)

1. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
2. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (Amended in 1986)
3. The Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.
4. The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988)
5. Protection of women for Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
6. The Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013.

National and state commission for women reviews the constitutional and Legal safeguards for women, Recommends remedial legislative measures, facilitates redressal of grievance Advises the Government on all Policy matters affecting women.

Our Maharashtra Government has declared "Savitribai Phule Dattak Palak Yojana" and "Ahilyadevi Holkar Free Pass Scheme" for the girls to promote the women for education.

Recently in our Maharashtra, 'Sakal Foundation' have organized many organizations such "Tanishka" and "Jal Saksharta Abhiyan" "Tanishka" is a group of women in a village, town or city. This Tanishka group exposes the problems in their surroundings and try to solve those problems. Such as problems of water, management, problems of dirty surroundings etc. All these activities and innovative ideas are successfully conducted by our women and they have proved their efficiency and capabilities and successful management skills.

## 3) Improving Economic Growth of India :-

Education increases the economic opportunities available to women. It leads to direct economic benefits in the form of higher lifetime earnings for women. Today women have occupied a dignified services in United Public Service Commission and also in Maharashtra Public Service Commission. They have also occupied a permanent places in private sectors in manufacturing companies and Government sectors. It helps to improve economic Growth.

The women who are labour and housewives they also can develop their economic condition by supporting them with short loan supply through the medium of 'Mahila Bachat Gat'. Today Mahila Bachat Gat can provide loan up to 1 Lakh rupees to women due to it a woman can uplift her Economical Growth.

The society and community also benefit from the higher productivity of its labour force. It can also reduces the fertility rate. The lowering in the number of dependents is referred to as "demographic gift". The independent of women in economics would be helpful to increase the income of our nation per personnel per year. So inequality in education is like a distortionary tax that misallocates resources, thereby reducing Economic Growth.

## 4) Political Awareness :-

Women are always neglected in political field. They are like a dumb dall in this field. Though

our former Agriculture Minister and one of the prominent figure in Indian politics Mr. Sharad Pawar has declared 50% reservation for women in the cabinet. **To change the psychology of inferiority in male-dominated society through the medium of literature :-**

In many different religions, women have been victims of male-dominated society. Basically every society is male-dominated and several restrictions have been imposed on women by such societies. Many philosophers have expressed these thoughts alike along with several writers like Rousseau who suggested that women should be educated in order to be useful to men. Even at turn of the twentieth century, the situation was not much different and women had little or almost no 'say' outside their respective homes. In course of time women became conscious of their injustice, exploitation and suppression which caused into the rise of women's Liberation Movement in the beginning of the twentieth century.

A political movement was started by women in England in 1903 and its main objective was to get voting rights for women. It was purely a political movement and foremost amongst the suffragettes were Emmeline Phankrust (1857-1928) and her daughters, Christabel (1880-1958) and Sylvia (1882-1960). As all women's suffrage Bills were rejected, the women's social and political union came into existence surprisingly, the French women did not receive the voting right until 1944 and the Swiss women obtained it into 1971.

Women's liberation movement affected women's literary movement. It was Mary Wollstonecraft who wrote a book 'A vindication of the Rights of Women' in 1792 which is regarded as manifesto of feminism. She says women should be treated as human beings. John Stuard Mill was one of the reporters who, in his article - The selection of women (1869) condemned the domestic slavery of women and further suggested the power of earning as essential for the dignity of women.

A few women writers have immensely provided literature for women's rights and awareness about their rights and treating as male-dominated society. eg. Virginia Woolf, Simon de Beauvoir, Mary Ellman Miller, Betty Friedon and Germaine showalter who stressed on Gynocritics.

Gynocritics. Gynocritics believe that women feel and think in their own peculiar way as their languages, passions, emotions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, expressions, gestures etc. are different that of men as portrayed by male writers thinking that these images of women lack authenticity.

In India also a well known women writers especially after independence period writers such as Kamala Markandya, Kamla Das, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and the Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy have expressed their ideas and thoughts about inferiority in male dominated society.

Kamala Markandya in her novel 'Seive a Nector', Anita Desai in her novels 'A Fire on Mountain', and 'Cry the Peacock' expressed their thoughts of women sufferings and also women Empowerment by using the symbolism such as fire, mountain, peacock, lizard, snakes etc. Shashi Deshpande in her novels, "Roots and Shadows" and "Dark holds no terror" express her views on typical middle-class Indian Society and women's devotion for their families she also gives stress on increasing confidence in women and to establish their existence by using ecofactors such as roots, darkness, bacterias etc.

The Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy in her novel "God of small things" she expresses woman's suppression done by her family and also she insists on social problems such as corruption and pollution done by Ipe family.

Such type of literature is essential for women's rights and independent personalities.

#### • **Welfare Schemes for Women in India by the Government :-**

Welfare schemes for women in India

Under Article 15(3), the Constitution of India allows for positive discrimination in favour of women. The article, under right to equality, states: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children." In addition, the directive principles of State Policy 39(a) state that: "The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood."

The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (National Credit Fund for Women) was set up in 1993 to make credit

available for lower income women in India. More recent programmes initiated by the Government of India include the Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS), the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana Conditional Maternity Benefit plan (CMB), and the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla.

• **Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS)**

The Mother and Child Tracking System, launched in 2009, helps monitor the health care system to ensure that all mothers and their children have access to a range of services, including pregnancy care, medical care during delivery, and immunizations. The system consists of a database of all pregnancies registered at health care facilities since 1 December 2009, and all births since 1 December 2009.

• **Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana Conditional Maternity Benefit plan (CMB)**

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), Conditional Maternity Benefit (CMB) is a scheme sponsored by the national government for pregnant and lactating women age 19 and over for their first two live births. The programme, which began in October 2010, provides money to help ensure the good health and nutrition of the recipients. As of March 2013 the programme is being offered in 53 districts around the country.

• **Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla**

The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for

Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla is an initiative launched in 2012 that targets adolescent girls. The scheme offers a package of benefits for at-risk girls between the ages of 10 and 19. It is being offered initially as a pilot programme in 20 districts. The programme offers a variety of services to help young women become self-reliant, including nutritional supplementation and education, health education and services, and life skills and vocational training.

• **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh**

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (The National Credit Fund for Women) was created by the Government of India in 1993. Its purpose is to provide lower income women with access to loans to begin small businesses.

• **Priyadarshini**

Priyadarshini, initiated in April 2011, is a programme that offers women in seven districts access to self-help groups.

• **Implications :-**

I have suggested the above five ways to empower women. If these ways should be applied by women then I will think that my effort on preparing and presenting this paper in national conference would be successful. Women Empowerment not only develops her own personality but also it becomes an unavoidable part in the process of nation's Educational, social, political and Economical development which is essential for successful democracy.