

An Analysis On Dalit Women's Awareness And Attitudes Towards Their Rights In Dindigul District

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ABSTRACT

The notion of human rights has immensely attracted the attention of entire humanity. We have had never witnessed such an amazing concern for this issue as we are witnessing today. Thus it is a subject of profound importance for every body including the academicians. Further the notion of human rights is dynamic as it adapts itself to the needs of the day. Therefore, it is imperative to examine and analyse its genesis and development. The present study aims to an analysis on dalit women's awareness and attitudes towards their rights in DINDIGUL district. A samples of 100 respondents selected randomly were studied. Primary data were collected by using a structured interview scheduled. All the respondents were asked the some questions in the same fashion and they were informed the purpose of study. Percentage analysis was applied. The findings and observations are the result and outcome of the interpretations made during the study of analysis.

Key words : Dalit women's, Awareness, Attitude, Rights and Demographic Variables

INTRODUCTION

At the very outset it is pertinent to mention that rights are those essential conditions of life without which man cannot be at his best. Precisely, rights lead to the development and fulfillment of human beings. Therefore, these are the claims based on general moral standards on the part of human being, which are recognized and guaranteed by the state. The rights are innate and inherent in all individuals irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex, and etc. since the rights are integrally and inextricably interwoven with human beings and that is why these are called as human rights.

Though the international concept of human rights has its origin in the twentieth century yet the Western idea of rights can be traced back to the ancient Greek period. Plato stressed equality of men and women of guardian class in functions and social status. He favoured equality of opportunity to men and women in the matters of administration and

public service. However, he restricted this right to the women of guardian class only and excluded the women of appetitive class. Aristotle and Thrasymachus have also talked about right of citizenship and justice respectively, in which the former defended Athenian slavery and denied the rights to the slaves. The latter believed that justice is the interest of the stronger only. It is worthwhile to mention here that the nature of their notions of rights was not all embracing and comprehensive but exclusionary as it led to the denial of rights to a large section of society. Cephalus, however, defines justice as 'giving to every man what is due to him' sounds a concern for all human beings. Another Greek Philosopher Protogoras while emphasizing 'man is the measure of all things' explicitly shows his concern for the fulfilment and development of man.

Humanism brought an extensive change almost of the nature of mutation in ideas, beliefs, art and architecture, institutions, etc. Precisely it led to both the processes of deconstruction and construction. Deconstruction in a sense that it demolished the practices, beliefs, structures and institutions of Medieval period and construction in a sense that led to the creation of new ones. The emphasis was on man and his development. To the humanist man is not only a measure of all the things but also a creator of things as he is endowed with reason and infinite capacity to solve his problems and determine his destiny. Humanism with such an understanding served as the substratum and base for the emergence of the notion of rights in the form of freedom and autonomy of man. It ushered in a new era of Modern period. Since liberalism arose as a reaction to the authoritarianism and absolutism of both the Church and Monarchy therefore, it emphasized on freedom of man in all the spheres of life. State according to it was a necessary evil, which worked on the principle of lessize-fare. Man ventured freely without any restraint in all the spheres of society and most particularly in the economic field. The concept of free market and open competition prevailed, which led to a virulent profit seeking urges. The principal of the survival of fittest dominated the society that led to the exploitation of weaker sections. Capitalism reached as its climax and the society got divided into two classes: privileged haves and unprivileged have-nots. Consequent upon this the rights of the latter proved to be a misnomer.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mukherjee (2015) had made significant contribution in the area of status of women. A sample survey was conducted in Haryana, Tamilnadu and Meghalaya and reached a number of Conclusions regarding the status of women. Despite improvement in the legal status of

women over the last centuries equal rights and responsibilities were still denied to them. Status in the home was found to be positively related to educational level of the respondents. Substantial proportions of women in the survey were found to be unaware of some of their basic rights. It called for a familiarization programme. There was a significant relationship between gainful employment status and self perceived status at home. The final conclusion emerged out of the survey was that although a substantial position of married women were gainfully employed the traditional definition of the female role has not changed much.

Jafri, S.N.A. (2015) described about the inferior status of women in the days of paganism. In the early ages women were considered as symbols of evil and in the Rigveda they were said to be 'unmanageable, incorrigible, and wanting in gray matter.' The author reveals that women in early Hinduism were considered as necessary evils and that they have absolutely no status in society. Divorce and widow remarriage were ideas absolutely unknown. Also he narrates the efforts of some legislators who helped in giving Hindu widows the rights of inheritance equal to a son. The article is also informative of the progress made by women's organizations in the political field since 2015 to the present times.

According to Iyer, K.V (2016) women in ancient India enjoyed an important and noble status which deteriorated with the advent of the Muslim period and the coming of the uplift of women's status in society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were described. He listed famous women in political, social, legal and economic fields and statistically described the growth of women's employment and women job seekers in almost every field of economic activity. He indicated the obstacles in the employment of women and predicted the increasing role of women in the future social, political and economic lives of the Indian society.

Agarwal (2016) stated that the Dowry Prohibition Act has failed in its aim of paralyzing the dowry system. He suggested that if men have no inhibition of being ready to be auctioned in the marriage market women have to refuse to buy them as husbands. Finally he also recommended that it will be good to make the act more strict in its provisions. So that every offence under the act may be made cognizable.

Hooja (2017) highlighted that higher education of the bridegroom leads to an encouragement of dowry instead of discouraging it. The study suggested strict action to enforce the dowry legislation and indicates the need for awakening of social consciousness

against the dowry system and recommends that voluntary associations should be induced to make the necessary propaganda. Finally he recommends to the encouragement or provisions for the education and the economic independence of women as measures for checking dowry practice.

Objectives of the Study

1. to understand the dalit women's awareness and attitudes towards their rights in DINDIGUL district.
2. to know about the awareness level of urban women about their rights and their attitudes socio-cultural practices.

METHODOLOGY

Females in India are generally exploited in several ways, some become victims of deprivation and progressive pauperization whereas others victims of rape, prostitution, dowry death and bride burning. The problem of eve-teasing is also very acute. These atrocities on women continue to be on increase. Our social and cultural norms allow a status to female in India and they are treated as inferior beings. We often take the birth of girls child as curse and the birth of boy child as boon. Many parents do not allow their girl child to go for higher education on the ground that it will be difficult to get a highly educated husband for her as for that they have to pay a huge amount of dowry. The participation of woman in political and economic institutions is insignificant. In spite of constitutional safeguards the loopholes in our constitutional laws do considerable injustice to the women victims. There can be no diversification of opinion that the present status on Indian women is not satisfactory nations unfortunately most of the women even in urban areas still do not know about their rights. Thus study intends to understand the awareness and attitudes of urban women towards their constitutional rights. A samples of 100 respondents selected randomly were studied. Primary data were collected by using a structured interview scheduled. All the respondents were asked the some questions in the same fashion and they were informed the purpose of study. Percentage square analysis was applied.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**Table 1****DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR AWARENESS ABOUT HINDU MARRIAGE ACT 1955**

Sl. No	Awareness of Hindu Marriage Act	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	55	55%
2.	No	45	45%
	Total	100	100%

Number of Acts have been enacted to amend and codify the laws relating to marriage among Hindus. Under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, a women has right to monogamous marriage and to divorce. The above table indicates the awareness of respondents about Hindu Marriage Act 1955. Out of 100 respondents 55% of respondents know about the Hindu Marriage Act 1955. 45% respondents do not know about the Act. It is observed that the majority of urban women have awareness of Hindu marriage Act 1955.

Table 2**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR AWARENESS TOWARDS HINDU DIVORCE ACT 1955**

Sl.No	Awareness of Hindu Divorce Act 1955	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	60	60%
2.	No	40	40%
	Total	100	100%

The above table clearly shows the respondents awareness towards Hindu Divorce Act 1955. Out of 100 respondents, 60% of respondents have awareness about Hindu Divorce Act and the remaining 40% of respondents have no awareness about this act. Since the Hindu women are traditional oriented they consider marriage as sacramental and according to them breaking away from marriage is something an imaginable. Even the respondents who are aware of Divorce Act seldom think of applying it in their practical life.

Table 3**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR AWARENESS ABOUT HINDU SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT 1957**

Sl.No	Awareness of Hindu Special Marriage Act	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	38	38%
2.	No	62	62%
	Total	100	100%

The above table clearly shows the respondents awareness towards Hindu special marriage Act 1957, Out of 100 respondents 38 % respondents have awareness about Hindu special Marriage Act and the remaining 62% of respondents do not aware of this act.

Table 4**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR AWARENESS TOWARDS CHILD MARRIAGE RESTRAINT ACT 1929**

Sl. No	Awareness of Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	55	55%
2.	No	45	45%
	Total	100	100%

The above table clearly shows the respondents awareness towards child marriage. Even the respondents who aware that children should not be get into marriage at younger age, are not sure of legal age of marriage and also they are not sure of reason for which this act has been enacted. While 55% respondents know about child marriage restraint Act 1929, 45% of respondents do not know about this Act.

Table 5**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR AWARENESS HINDU ADOPTION AND MAINTENANCE ACT 1956**

Sl. No	Awareness of Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	34	34%
2.	No	66	66%
	Total	100	100%

Hindu adoption and maintenance act 1956 gives a woman the right to adopt a child and to maintain it if she likes to do so. The above table clearly shows the respondents

awareness towards Hindu adoption and maintenance Act 1956. Out of 100 respondents 66 (66%) respondents know nothing about this Act and the remaining 34 (34%) respondents have some awareness about this out.

Table 6

**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR ATTITUDES
TOWARDS LOVE MARRIAGE**

SI. No.	Love Marriage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Acceptable	30	30%
2.	Not Acceptable	70	70%
Total		100	100%

The above table clearly shows that love marriage is not at all accepted by 70% of respondents. According to them arranged marriage is the best form of marriage. This attitude reflects the sentiments of Indian culture. However, 30% of respondents titled in favor of love marriage, because of the increasing influence of mass media and work environment.

Table 7

**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED UPON THEIR ATTITUDES
TOWARDS WIDOW RE-MARRIAGE**

SI. No	Widow Re-Marriage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Acceptable	55	55%
2.	Not Acceptable	45	45%
Total		100	100%

The above table shows the attitudes of the respondents towards widow re-marriage. Out of 100 respondents, 45% of respondents do not approve of widow re-marriage and remaining 55% of respondents are in favour of widow re-marriage. This shows the changing attitudes of women towards their rights and privileges.

Conclusion

Hindu urban women are very much possessive of their husband, which is reflected in our study also. Almost all women respondents are not willing to allow their husband to remarry again, even if they do not have any issue to all. Since most of the respondents are suffering from the evil practice of dowry nearly 12% of them are voiced their disconcert towards this practice. In order to escape from the clutches of dowry practice. Since most of

them are postgraduates respondents accept the importance of education. Even though most of them are educated and come out of their shell to survive, their activities are still under control and bound. To make the matter worse, they are not interested in knowing their rights. They have miles to go to reach the right boundaries! To fulfill our objectives respondents were asked whether they are aware of Hindu marriage Act 1955. Then respondents reveal their attitudes towards socio-cultural practices of Hindu society. Since arranged marriage is accepted practice in Hindu society the researcher wants to know whether there is any change in the behaviour of women towards this practice.

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