

## THE PROCESS OF INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF WOMEN TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY INTO DESIRED OUTCOME

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### ABSTRACT

*Women's contribution to social reform in 20<sup>th</sup> century enhanced their knowledge, self-respect and self-dignity. They created and strengthened women's groups and organizations. Improving women's status is essential to realize their efficiency in economic, political and social. In Tamilnadu, women consist of half of the total population. They were treated as inferior to men because of a lack of education and the prevalence of social evils. Women and men are equal before the constitution. They are equally facing challenges in almost all spheres of jobs and power and are similarly winning their goals. To get equal status and promote their level, they participated in a social movement. Social reformers were showed their deep interest over women's problems such as female infanticide, widowhood, child-marriage and Devadasi system. The origin of social movements gave new social life to women. Changes in the social structure within a process of cultural evolution through which new ideas emerge in the minds of individuals gave a new path. A social movement grows and develops when a feeling of dissatisfaction spreads, and insufficiently flexible are unable to answer. Constant participation of women in social reform uplifted their life. At present women are achieving in all fields because of their active involvement in all work. This paper disseminates the problems faced by the 20<sup>th</sup> century women and their participation in social movement and its outcome.*

**KEYWORDS:** Devadasi System, Child Marriage, Female Infanticide, Widowhood

## INTRODUCTION

Society developments depend on the contribution of men and women. Men always considered superior to women. During 19<sup>th</sup> century women faced various social evil. That was more or less corrected because of the involvement and participation of women in the social reform movement. The genesis of social movements is within the co-existence of contrastive price systems and teams in conflict with one another. This square measure considered distinctive elements of social life. Changes are perfect measures that always give very good standards. The cultural evaluation took place in a country because of changes. Once ancient norms now not achieve providing a satisfactory structure for behavior, the individual is forced to challenge the social order through varied kinds of nonconformity. Once changes spread among the people, insufficiency and discontent also spread. That unhappy situation leads to opposition. Once opposition arose automatically, people think to have reform through a movement that gave a result of what they expect. The following lines speak about how women suffered because of social evil and how they participated in different events and how they participated in the national movement and what was the result of it.

Women are the pride of the nation. They, with the support of men, can change the world. But in the early period, they suffered a lot because of evil practices prevalent in society. The women's participation in society took everything in their hands and gave a new dimension. Suppression always leads to another awakening. Social evil in society made women participate in the reform movement and made them understand their efficiency. Among the much participation of women reformers in the devadasi system gave them a good result.

## DEVADASI SYSTEM

Dancing young ladies who were devoted to the sanctuaries were called as Devadasis.<sup>1</sup> Enrichments were made to the sanctuaries for the support of Devadasis.<sup>2</sup> Devadasi System was a typical element in practically all major Brahminical sanctuaries, especially the Saivite ones. It involved glory for the sanctuaries to utilize Devadasis in a decent number.<sup>3</sup> The well-known Rajarajeshwara Temple at Tanjore had 400 Devadasis and the sanctuary of Palakol had 500 devadasis amid the rule of the Imperial Cholas.<sup>4</sup> During the Vijayanagar organization in Tamil Nadu, the Devadasi framework preceded with indistinguishable energy from it did in pre-Muslim

days.<sup>5</sup> They additionally presented significant social acknowledgement on the Devadasis.<sup>6</sup> Society did not think about their omissions, just similarly the Greeks and Romans had endured those of their vestal virgins.<sup>7</sup>

During the medieval period, this calling was upheld by the rulers for income. Those ladies who engaged with this calling had delighted in an extensive societal position and position. They were permitted to meet the spouses of the rulers and were even allowed to remain with them. It appears that they were also permitted to bite betel with them a thing no other individual may do, regardless of what his rank may be.<sup>8</sup> They drove a real existence of social ease and joy and gave entertainment and scholarly friendship to the individuals who could bear the cost of the luxury.<sup>9</sup> After the deterioration of the Vijayanagar Empire, they lost their social position and impact because of the absence of support without which they moved toward becoming casualties of delight in the succeeding hundreds of years. In 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in Tanjore, Pudukottai and different spots, they kept on getting a charge out of illustrious support. In the Chingleput District, it was a custom among the weavers to devote the oldest little girl to be a Devadasi.<sup>10</sup> Now, the pregnant ladies to get a sheltered conveyance made a promise to commit the kid if it ended up being a young lady to the sanctuary benefit.

Numerous young ladies were coercively evacuated to the sanctuary under their outstanding excellence and appeal to be used for the administrations of God. Amid the period under survey, this class framed a different position, having its very own laws of legacy, its very own traditions and tenets of behavior and its own panchayats.<sup>11</sup> Some of them served in the sanctuaries for which they got instalment in real money, which was unreasonably pitiful for a better than average living. Consequently, the lion's share of them was compelled to win their bread by methods for prostitution.<sup>12</sup> In the course of time; it has turned into "an incredible bit of bad form, an extraordinary wrong, an infringement of human rights, training very repulsive to human instinct and countenance". Under this framework, young ladies were committed to the sanctuary and they were sustained under undesirable ideas of religion and educated to view prostitution as their castes obligation and dharma.<sup>13</sup>

Muthulakshmi Reddi, the Veteran champion of the devadasis says, this dedication became identical with the associate evil profession. It grew to the extent of shopping for and

adopting innocent young children and coaching them for associate sinful life, at associate age when they could not o.k. see the long-standing time before them. Again, she required scores lots of them from enforced crime and brought home the particular indisputable fact that state and religion need to guard the morality of the people and improve the moral tone of society. Muthulakshmi Reddi felt that standing of Devasis could also be improved by relieving them of mandatory temple service and so the knowledge of the community improved, by giving education to their sons and daughters and by encouraging their marriages. The effort of Muthulakshmi Reddi gave the Hindu religious Endowments Act which was passed in 1929<sup>14</sup> in Madras general assembly, giving the result of realizing the Devadasi community from temple service and giving Inam lands of the temple to their families. Devadasi Act XXXI. Finally, this act was passed in 1947 to abolish the system.

### **CHILD MARRIAGE**

Another cause which curbed the free growth of women was child marriage which fortunately was least prevalent in the Madras Presidency. The practice of child marriage was common among Brahmins and other high castes Hindus. Among the Brahmins, the usual age of marriage was between 7 and 10.<sup>15</sup> The average age of marriage for a female among Brahmins was between 6 and 7. In addition to the Brahmins, among the non-Brahmin castes like Kapus and Komatis, child-marriage was in vogue. The plight of married children was very pathetic. The child marriage crushed the victim out of shape, made them bleeding profusely and in some cases crippled them totally despite surgery.<sup>16</sup> The early marriage led to early maternity and early maternity was a great evil. Dr. Mrs. Muthulakshmi Reddi referred that child marriage would take away their brightest girlhood and youth and would be brought mental disorders.

### **FEMALE INFANTICIDE**

Female Infanticide was in practice in Tamil Nadu from earlier time.<sup>17</sup> One of the evil consequences of this practice was that a sizable number of young girls became victims. This cruel practice was prevalent among the Maravas of Tinnevely District and the tribal people of Nilgris.<sup>18</sup> Much of the miseries of women were mitigated by Missionary activities and social legislations of the British Government. Sati, Child Marriage, Female Infanticide, etc. were mercilessly put down by the British. The Missionary ladies did much for the emancipation of the secluded women. They also started schools for girls. In women's liberation, the Christian

Missionary ladies were great pioneers. In this regard, Amy Carmichael,<sup>19</sup> the founder of Donavur Ashram in the Tinnevely District deserves special mention. Even though secular historians have failed to place on record the single-minded devotion with which these Missionary ladies worked for the emancipation of Indian women, their services cannot be suppressed.<sup>20</sup>

## **WIDOWHOOD**

Widows in Hindu society were the casualties of eternal wretchedness and mortification and were not permitted to remarry anyway youthful they may be.<sup>21</sup> Widows were held in considerably less regard than other ladies, and when they happen to have no youngsters, they were by and large viewed with the most extreme hatred. The very certainty of meeting a widow was determined to bring sick luck.<sup>22</sup> They were called Munda, a reproachable term that signifies "shaven-head". A widow must be in grieving till her demise. The indications of grieving were as per the following: she was relied upon to have her head shorn once every month; she was not allowed to wear gems; she should not wear hued garments; she should not put saffron all over or body or stamp her brow. Furthermore, she was illegal to participate in any diversion or to go to family merriments, for example, marriage, the function of Upanayana and others; for her very nearness would be considered as an underhandedness omen.<sup>23</sup> Despite every one of their torments and mortification, they, by and large, were not permitted to remarry.<sup>24</sup> Still, an unforeseen conviction additionally endured among a portion of the non-Brahmin stations that the prevalence of a standing relied on the strictness with which it upheld the recognition of puritan widowhood.<sup>25</sup> It is accounted for that the Kottai Vellalas of Srivaikuntam in the Tinnevely District brutally close the widows inside a high mud wall<sup>26</sup> where no men were allowed to enter. The widows were required to commit themselves to the most extreme severity, so they could understand the high any expectations of meeting their folks immediately. These ladies were prevented even from claiming rudimentary comforts.<sup>27</sup> They were given a little rice, herbs, roots, and some water. No new material or water for the shower was provided. In outcome, the terrible widows never lived for all the more than a half year.

## **INADEQUATE ATTENTION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL ROLE**

Social movements deeply embedded in cultural practices, lifestyles, mental habits of women. It gave the identity of them and encouraged the probabilities for collective action. A

most acceptable example is that the women's interest in the general public and political dimensions of social life, inclined towards the personal sphere, most significantly family life, though they were as lacking the rational skills to act within the public sphere.<sup>28</sup>

The political role of women is a recent origin in the Republic of India. It's important to note that few studies of women's role within the nationalist movement or of the implications social or political-of their significant entry into the general public sphere. Vital works on the national movement largely fail to look at the importance of women's participation within the struggles.<sup>29</sup> Women have received inadequate attention in histories of the Republic of India both before and when 1975 once the necessity to review women's role in history began to be acknowledged worldwide.<sup>30</sup>

### **EXPANSION OF INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN**

The spread of Education extended women's intellectual outlook. It exposed them to contemporary modern concepts. It encouraged them to read dynamic globe and themselves. Women representations in the Calcutta University Commission (1917) vehemently demanded constant info for girls as for men-a demand continued by women's teams through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, till its apparent approval within the national education policy in 1986. The women's education system had to play "a positive Involvement role" in the dynamical social outlook of women to enhance gender equality and 'empowerment.' On the request of the women's movements, the Education Policy came out<sup>31</sup>. The social reformers' tried to change social values through the pedagogy of ladies succeeded in generating a dominant social ideology of gender responsibility. It gave the result of the expansion of intellectual and right freedom and the social responsibility of assorted ladies within the developing social class<sup>32</sup>. Elite and reformist families were answerable for the substantial enlargement of women's education. Proponents of women's education had to adapt to prevailing social norms, patterns of behavior and attitudes. Prejudice, apathy, and orthodoxy were major hindrances, but within these limits, some communities and regions did higher than others. Hindus typically did higher than Muslims, not essentially as a result of purdah hindered the latter as upper caste, Hindu ladies, too, and discovered seclusion, significantly in the North Republic of India that lagged behind Madras and Mumbai Presidencies in women's education.<sup>33</sup> Social reform movement stress was on unity and women's uplift through

education social and legal reform. It conjointly emphasized women's contribution to national development. The All India Women Committee (AIWC) had to get involved with women's political rights and every one query which affected ladies and youngsters still like social issues like untouchability. Although it's major focus and priority remained the women's question and also the elimination of women's mental retardation, and stress was arranged on the well-being of women.<sup>34</sup>

### **WIDER TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY**

The reform movements exposed women's inequality among men and illustrated the domination of the patriarchal family in women's live.<sup>35</sup> The caste, community and spiritual customary were dominated the majority of women's lives. With the increase of feminism across the globe, a replacement generation of Indian feminists emerged. Ladies have developed themselves in keeping with the things and have become advanced in numerous fields. Women were fought for and against individual autonomy, rights, freedom, independence, tolerance, cooperation, nonviolent resistance and diversity, violence, gender, stereotypes, sexuality, discrimination, sexism, no objectification, freedom from social structure, the correct to associate abortion, fruitful rights, control of the feminine body, the correct to divorce, equal pay, maternity leave, infant feeding, prostitution, and education. Medha Patkar, Madhu Kishwar, and Brinda were famous social reformers and politicians who advocated women's rights in post-independent India. Writers like Amrita Pritam, Sarojini Sahoo, and Kusum Ansal advocated feminist ideas in Indian languages. 'Tendencies towards large-scale organizations, population quality, technological innovation, mass communications, and also the decline of ancient cultural forms were all thought-about to be raising conditions pushing people to look for brand new patterns of the system. Collective behavior was in reality outlined as behavior involved with modification and social movements as each an integral part of the traditional functioning of society and also the expression of a more comprehensive method of transformation'.<sup>36</sup>

### **WOMEN AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

Works on women's participation in national movement are less. Studies revealed between 1968 and 1988 do modify numerous aspects and dimensions of women's participation within the national struggle for freedom. There are some factual accounts that the most traditional histories

of the national movement mention women's entry into the direct action Movement.<sup>37</sup> The lives and conditions of the majority of girls or their response to ever-changing historical forces have systematically been undiscovered and so marginalized in history. Many autobiographies of women leaders, principally from elite teams, we all know very little concerning lives, the beliefs or the social background of the mass of girls. Sahgal was born as Hindu in Malabar below Madras Presidency on twenty-four October 1914 Sahgal selected to review medication Associate in nursing received a medical degree from Madras Medical faculty in 1938.<sup>38</sup> A year later, she received her sheepskin in gyneacology and medicine. She worked as a doctor within the Government Kasturba Gandhi Hospital set at Triplicane, Chennai. In 1940, she left for Singapore. In Singapore, she met some members of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army. Sahgal's clinic had been at now that she began to play a vigorous role within India. She fought against colonial rule. She junction rectifier a medical team to Bhopal once the gas tragedy in Dec 1984, worked towards restoring peace in Kanpur following the anti-Sikh riots of 1984.<sup>39</sup> Anjali Ammal was a welfare worker and reformer from Kadalur. She started her political policy in 1921 with the Non-Cooperation Movement and participated in nonviolence, Salt nonviolence and Quit India Movement. His spirit was therefore documented that Mahathma Gandhi referred to as her South India's Jhansi Rane.

Supriya Cherian took to spinning as a part of the Swadeshi Movement. She joined the Indian National Congress in 1923 and was active in organizing the Youth League of the Congress. In 1930, she threw herself into the direct action movement and was one in every one of the leaders of the Vedarayam Salt nonviolence undertaken by Rajagopalachari in the state. Once Rajaji was inactive, she took over leadership of the nonviolence. She was particularly effective in mobilizing ladies. She was captive for a year for her half within the Vedaranyam nonviolence. A fervent follower of Gandhi, she conjointly participated within the Individual nonviolence.<sup>40</sup> Krishnammal Jagannathan was a social reformer. She was born into a landless Dalit family. She had her university education and joined Gandhi's Sarvodaya Movement. She actively participated in post-independence and she participated in vigorous role in Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Movement and managed to distribute around four million acres to landless peasants. She dedicated her life to save poor landless people's life. She wholeheartedly started

the Land for Tiller's Freedom in 1981 to assist the economically-backwards sections of society.<sup>41</sup> Their contribution brought out their desired outcome.

## CONCLUSION

Nations development is in the hands of both men and women. Among these two whoever left out, nations pride and development are not possible. During 20<sup>th</sup> century women faced continuous problems. Devadasi system affected women in society. So they waited for an opportunity to come out from this. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was an eminent personality and became as heroin to remove this system. According to Dr. Mrs. Muthulakshmi Reddi the childhood's brightest life was taken away through the forceful marriage and their enjoyable life thrown away through the physical strain. Though the constitution provides punishments for child marriage, it is continuing some remote villages. After the British entry into India, the evil practices like Sati, Child Marriage, Female Infanticide, etc. were mercilessly put down. Christian missionaries were the pioneer of women's education. Their effort made women fight against their social evil. Widowhood was a cruel social behavior. That was corrected later. Education is responsible to changing human beings life. Education made women participate in the political system. The participation of women in the national movement was not that much to speak. Even though their active work and involvement were impossible to cover with cloth, today's freedom is possible because of the dedication of both men and women.

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