

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH EFFECTIVE SOCIO –LEGAL REFORMS

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Abstract: “*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (save the daughter, educate the daughter)” why we need this kind of awareness catchphrases to protect and empower the girl child? This research paper is an attempt to examine the prestige of women in India on the basis of different signs such as uppermost standing in various administrative positions in academics, politics and corporate sectors, fiscal independence, political involvement, decision making power in domestic matters, acceptance of challenging roles equally, access and exposure to education & media etc. based on collected primary and secondary data from different sources. Findings of the research mainly focus on the influential status of women in India. In India from very ancient time we worship women and there is a renowned proverb “*yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devta*” means where women are respected, Gods make their home, nevertheless, the poor condition and backwardness of woman is also identical because of some major social apprehensions, hitches and lots of constraints against women. The research concludes by an observation that to remove these kinds of social abuses and for women empowerment, the nation is stepping out with new and effective socio-legal reforms like new constitutional amendments, judicial activism and amendments in laws related to women.

Introduction: “*Empowerment ... refers to the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them*”

Are our women really empowered? Women empowerment is not a new topic to discuss now a days. We have number of examples from both the side that in favour and against the motion. But in this research paper researcher wants to highlight the extents of real women empowerment. Our women are empowered enough. Empowered in the sense of education, empowered in the meaning of awareness about their rights whether domestic, political, economic or related to health & education. Here are some illustrations of consciousness and boom for fighting for their legal rights:

“Talaq Talaq Talaq” and a muslim marriage ends. In muslim law only husband has right to pronounce talaq or if he wants, can delegate his right. “It is a totally unilateral, one-sided, instant form of divorce, and uttered by men, the wife need not be present, she need not even be aware” says Zakia Soman, an activist from Gujarat state.

As we know that muslim law is not codified and in that community the role of kazi and imam is not questionable. Triple talaq is a matter of great debate from decade. But an improved discussion has come through a questionnaire circulated by the Law Commission where it posed the question of whether triple talaq should be abolished or modified, The Supreme Court in *Shamim Ara v. State of U.P.* struck down a claim of divorce by triple talaq.

In *Najmunbee v Sk Sikander Sk Rehman*, the Bombay High Court repeated this position and held that a Muslim husband cannot repudiate his marriage at will. He has to prove supporting reasons for his decision and it cannot be based on a mere whim. Muslim law mandates pre-divorce reconciliation

between parties through the intervention of arbitrators.

We have many other examples related to women initiated awareness cases such as In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* the Supreme Court said that “Gender equality includes protection from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity which is a universally recognised basic human right.”, In *Gaurav Jain v. Union of India* The Supreme Court issued directions for the prevention of induction of women in various forms of prostitution. In case of *Air India v. Nargesh Meerza* The Supreme Court struck down the Air-India Regulations relating to retirement and the pregnancy bar on the services of Air-hostesses as unconstitutional on the ground that the conditions laid down therein were entirely unreasonable and arbitrary.

In a study conducted by Bina Agarwal, women were given a place in a forest conservation group. Not only did this drive up the efficiency of the group, but the women gained incredible self-esteem while others, including men, viewed them with more respect.

Before giving the examples of leading ladies from well-known sectors researcher wants to through light upon some deciding factors of women empowerment. Researcher has conducted a survey in nearby area of her working place regarding the impact of women literacy rate upon their empowerment survey was conducted basically from three categories of age groups from 5-20, 21-35 and 36-89 including three series of classes ie. upper middle class, middle class and lower middle class (as per their income and living condition).

The result was according to the expectations means more literacy more awareness. A female from the age of 5 to 89 those who are literate are in better condition in their family, they have right to choose their education place and academic course, they are

equally participating in earning of livelihood, in important decision making and even in political affairs.

Women are now entering in high-level decision making positions in the world: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right of every person to take part in the government of his or her country. Equal access of men and women to power, decision-making and leadership at all levels is a necessary precondition for the proper functioning of democracy. Now researcher wants to share some doctrinal research data of her research to enlighten the position of women in different echelons.

Women judges in High Courts: Strange it may sound, but the Supreme Court of India has seen only six women judges on its august benches since its inception in 1950. The first woman judge was Justice Fathima Beevi, who was appointed to the Supreme Court around six months after her retirement from the Kerala High Court in 1989.

As on 17.02.2017 there is only one female justice in Supreme Court Hon'ble Mrs. Justice R. Banumathi. But still at least women are showing their power in granting justice. Women in Politics: Female participation in elections has gone up from 56% in fifteenth General Elections to 66% in the latest one (sixteenth) in 2014.

The average representation of women MPs (11.23%) is higher than the national average of women MLAs in state assemblies, which stands at a dismal 9%. While the numbers have increased over the years, the percentage of women that make up the Lok Sabha even today is not a figure to be proud of, especially when the ideal number should be at 33% at least. We still have a long way to go.

An encouraging consequence of the reservation bill is the subsequent rise in political participation by women, which went up from 4-5 per cent to 25-40 per cent among women, and gave millions of women the opportunity to serve as leaders in local government.

Women in sports: This List of Indian Sportswomen includes the champion sports women that India has ever produced who bought laurels to their mother land by establishing records & winning titles on international stage Adeeba shooting Awards

- Anjali Bhagwat, Shooting - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award.
- Anisa Sayyed, Shooting
- Anjum Chopra, Cricket - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Anuradha Biswal, Track and field
- Aparna Popat, Badminton - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Asha Agarwal, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Ashwini Ponnappa, Badminton - Conferred with Arjuna Award

- Ashwini Nachappa
- Bobby Aloysius, Track and field
- Beenamol, Track and field - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
- Bula Choudhury, Swimming - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
- Chekrovolu Swuro, Archery - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Chhanda Gayen, Mountaineering - first Bengali woman to climb Mount Everest
- Dipa Karmakar, Gymnast - Came fourth in the 2016 Rio Olympics, Conferred with Khel Ratna
- Deepika Kumari, Archery - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Dola Banerjee, Archery - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Divya Singh, Basketball
- Dronavalli Harika, Chess - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Geeta Zutshi, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
- Geeta Singh, Wrestling
- Geetika Jakhar, Wrestling - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Joshna Chinappa, Squash
- Harwant Kaur, Track and field
- Jyotirmoyee Sikdar, Track and field - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
- Jhulan Goswami, Cricket - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Jwala Gutta, Badminton - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Kamaljeet Sandhu, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri
- Kavita Chahal, Boxing - Conferred with Arjuna Award
- Kavita Raut, Track and field
- Koneru Humpy, Chess - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
- Karnam Malleswari, Weightlifting - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award, bronze medal in the 2000 Summer Olympics at Sydney lifting 110 kg.
- Kunjarani Devi, Weightlifting - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award.
- Krishna Poonia, Track and field
- Krushnaa Patil, Mountaineering
- Mary Dsouza Sequeira, conferred with Dyan Chand Award, ((Track and Field)) and ((Field Hockey)) First Double International, winner in First Asian Games Silver and Bronze and Gold Second Asian Games. First Indian Woman Contingent to go to Olympics in Helsinki in 1952.

- Represented India in International World Field Hockey Tournament in Folkstone, UK in 1953, World Field Hockey Tournament in 1956 in Melbourne, Australia and in India vs Japan Test Matches in 1964 in India. Dhyana Chand Award in 2013.
- M C Mary Kom, Women's boxing - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - M D Valsamma, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Prajusha Maliakkal, Track and field
 - Manjeet Kaur, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Madhumita Bisht, Badminton - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Mithali Raj, Cricket - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Neelam Jaswant Singh, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Neha Aggarwal, table tennis
 - Nisha Millet, Swimming - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - P. V. Sindhu, Badminton - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Pinki Pramanik
 - Poulomi Ghatak, Table Tennis - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Pritam Rani Siwach, Hockey - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Priyadarshini, Ultra Marathon^[1]
 - Rahi Sarnobat, Shooting
 - Ranjit Singh Gujjar, Para table tennis
 - Reeth Abraham, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award.
 - Renubala Chanu, Weightlifting
 - Santhi Soundarajan, Winner of 11 International Medals for India and 50 for her home state Tamil Nadu.
 - Saina Nehwal, Badminton - Conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Sakshi Malik, Wrestling - Won bronze medal at Rio Olympics 2016.
 - Sania Mirza, Tennis - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Sandhya Agarwal, Cricket - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Sarjubala Devi, Boxer - 2011 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships gold medalist.
 - Shikha Tandon, Swimming - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Shiny Abraham, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - J. J. Shobha, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Seema Antil, Track and field
 - Soma Biswas, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Stephanie D'Souza, Track and field - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - Sunita Rani, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Subbaraman Vijayalakshmi, Chess - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - P. T. Usha, Track and field - Conferred with Padma Shri, Arjuna Award.
 - Tania Sachdev, Chess - Conferred with Arjuna Award
 - TejSonal Jain, Shooting
- Indian Sportswomen of International fame:** MC Mary Kom, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, PT Usha, Karnam Malleshwari, Anjali Bhagwat, Saba Anjum Karim, Kunjarani Devi, Anju Bobby George, PV Sindhu are few names from a long list of Indian women, though traditionally athletic, shied away from participating in international and even national sporting events and competitions for a very long time. Starting from the 1980s, however, came this new crop of women who not only dared to conquer their dreams, but also put India on the global sports map. Most of them came from rural India and excelled in sports that have traditionally been India's strengths.
- Tanushri Pareek**, 24, joined the Border Security Force Officers Training Academy at Tekanpur where she is the lone woman in the 64-member batch. "She is not only the lone lady officer in her batch but also the only direct entry woman officer in the 2.5 lakh personnel strong force.
- Ms. Irom Sharmila** started her fast at the age of 28 following a massacre in Imphal in which 10 persons were killed. She has been demanding repeal of the draconian AFSPA. Ms. Sharmila ended her fast exactly a month after the Supreme Court judgment questioned the immunity enjoyed by the security personnel under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 (AFSPA) against criminal action for acts committed in disturbed areas. The apex court had said in *Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) & Anr. v. Union of India & Anr.* that there was no concept of "absolute immunity" from trial by a criminal court if an Army man had committed an offence.
- Aung San Suu Kyi** is a Burmese politician, diplomat, and author who is the First and incumbent State Counsellor and Leader of the National League for Democracy.
- Infosys Foundation chairperson **Sudha Narayana Murthy** has been appointed as a member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Trust Board. She is an Indian philanthropist and writer in Kannada and English. Murthy began her professional career as a

computer scientist and engineer. She is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and a member of public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation. She has founded several orphanages, participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide all Karnataka government schools with computer and library facilities, and established the 'The Murty Classical Library of India' at Harvard University. **Malala Yousafzai** is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

Writer-in-exile **Taslima Nasreen** calls for reining in religious fundamentalism, saying that criticism of religion is not the domain of non-Muslim intellectuals alone.

Pusarla Venkata Sindhu is an Indian professional badminton player. At the 2016 Summer Olympics, she became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal. Olympic Silver Medallist PV Sindhu Gets Job as Deputy Collector in Andhra Pradesh.

Tessy Thomas was Project Director for the Agni V long-range nuclear-capable missile which was test-fired last week. Tessy Thomas has lent a new and unusual face to the secretive world of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Bharti Singh is an Indian stand-up comedian and actress from Amritsar, Punjab, India.

Chhavi Rajawat she is the Sarpanch (elected head of the Village Council) in Soda village, Tonk district, Rajasthan and, is the first woman Sarpanch in India with an MBA degree.

The success story of **Mrs. D Jyothi Reddy** from Warangal in Hyderabad has a narrative arc that pushes the limit of unbelievable. A rural agricultural labourer whose pay was Rs.5 per day till 1989, she is now the CEO of Keys software solutions in USA, creating revenues in the millions. Not forgetting where she came from, she is actively involved in philanthropic endeavours, serving rural India.

For long a fighter for justice **Nauroti** who was born in a poor Dalit family in Rajasthan's Kishangarh district is now the sarpanch of Hardma village, a land that has bred freedom fighters during India's struggle for Independence. Starting with the fight for proper wages when she was working as a stone cutter, her ascend to become a living symbol of women's power is nothing short of astounding. A Dalit by birth, she attempted suicide at a tender age. She was married by her parents when she was just 12. Physically abused by her husband's family, she was rescued from the slums where she stayed with her husband by her father. Starting out working in a garment factory, she later started a tailoring business and then a furniture store, eventually joining the league of successful

Indian women entrepreneurs. The nation honoured this amazing woman who was born in Roperkheda village of Maharashtra with the Padma Shri.

Tegla Chepkite Loroupe is a Kenyan long-distance track and road runner. She is also a global spokeswoman for peace, women's rights and education.

Conclusion: As study shows the empowering position of our women in every field though we are not denying the weak position in judiciary and politics. Women are still a victim of injustice, cruelty whether mental or physical, illiteracy, economically backwardness. To remove these kinds of social abuses and for women empowerment, the nation is stepping out with new and effective socio-legal reforms like constitutional enactments and amendments, judicial activism and amendments in laws related to women. A National Policy for Empowerment of Women was formulated and adopted to bring about advancement and empowerment of women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their active participation in all the spheres of life and activities. According to the National Policy for Empowerment of Women-2001, India has also ratified various International Conventions and Human Rights Instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The government of India set up a National Commission for Women through an enactment by Indian Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women. Beside this there are several provisions in Indian Constitution empowering the position of women like Part III of the Constitution of India consisting Fundamental Rights in Articles 14,15, 16, 21 and 23. Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV of the Constitution Articles 39, 42 and 44- Fundamental Duties (Parts IV-A Article 51-A (e)) and Articles 243 D and T. Some provisions of Indian Penal Code like ss 376, 363-373, 302/304 B, 498-A, 354 and 509.

Enactment of special laws such as The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, The Immoral Traffic (Suppression) Act (SITA) (1956), The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, The Family Courts Act, 1954, The Special Marriage Act, 1954, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995) and many more. So we can hope for the better condition of women in near future.

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