

Political Modernization and Its Impact on Women

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Abstract—Political modernization, it refers to the change in the political culture and political institutions, as a result of the process of modernization. It is a process which is based upon the rational utilization of resources aiming at the establishment of a modern society. The term modern society stands for a society which is characterized by the application of technology, by extensive social interdependence, urbanization, literacy, social mobility and many such other factors. In the context of western societies, modernization has involved a breakdown of traditional society and the rise of a completely different society on its ashes. A society, that is based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for justice in the public matters. According to the concept of a modern society, a modern man is he who has the attributes of compassion, humanness and universalistic world view, the one who possesses a secular outlook and who is committed to the values of unity, mutuality and harmony.

Political modernization impacts the women in any society. In our study of the past, we find the position of women has been affected by progressive or reactionary. This paper mainly discussed the political modernization and general trend of the development of women's status.

Index Terms—Position, political, society, status, women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Political modernization is the change in political culture and political institutions that combine together and leads to the acceleration of a process through which the performance standard and achievement can be obtained by the less developed societies. Like political development it is very difficult to give a precise definition of political modernization. E. Welch, Jr. suggests as "it is a process based upon the rational utilization of resources and aimed at the establishment of a modern society." This term stands for the transformation of the political culture in response to the changes in social and physical environments in view of this essential fact that political change "is intricately related to a wide

spectrum of social and economic factor". The process of modernization leads to the emergence of some crucial problems and challenges that a political system has to face and cope with so as to create the situation of development.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are- to know about the political modernization, position and status of women in different phase of the pre- British period.

III. METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the above objectives, we use descriptive and explanatory way in the study. We can try to highlight on the basis of secondary data collected from books.

IV. POLITICAL MODERNIZATION

A study of political modernization shows its inter-connection with social mobilization—" a process by which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are broken down and the people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior." Social systems of the world may be through varieties:

1. Primitive and backward social system: This category includes highly backward social systems of the world where traditional responses, customs and rituals still carry the authority with them.
2. Developing social system: The countries coming in this category show a dichotomy of tradition and modernity that may be visualized most clearly those parts of the world where people have lived under the colonial gold of some European power.
3. Western or development social system: This category includes those countries where the people are efficient and highly educated, the country is well urbanized and industrialized.

V. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE VEDIC SOCIETY

The Vedic society was a patriarchal one and hence father was the head of the family. All effort is therefore made to secure the birth of a son. The birth of a daughter was looked upon with disfavor.

In spite of the attitude of indifference towards the female child and marked partiality for the male child, once born, the daughter was, it is very probable, entitled to all the privileges given to a son. In the matter of education, the daughter was not distinguished from the son. No less than twenty women were among the composers of the Rig Vedic hymns. Gargi and Maitreyi were the leading philosophers of the times. We also find a class of women known as Brahnavadinis, who continued their studies even for the whole lifetime.

It is to be noted that as the society was just evolving from a primitive stage and stood at the lower level of economic development, the nature and form of property during that period are still not quite clear. But stray reference to gifts given to wife are made and also to the right of a brotherless daughter to property is established by Yaskacharya in Nirukta.

In the matter of religious life, which was all important and very absorbing aspect of the daily life of the people during this period, we are definitely informed that women actively participated in it. The Sama hymns were chanted by women. If the husband had gone on a journey, the wife was required to perform the sacrifices. Further, there are special sacrifices like Seetayagna, Rudrabali and Rudra yaga which were exclusively performed by women.

As regards the other aspects of women's life, we are told that she used to move about freely in the public. There are references, in the Vedic texts, of women attending fairs, festivals, and meetings. The great popularity of the institution of "Samanas" an universal festival in which women participated, reveals that women enjoyed freedom of movement with men.

Even in the matter of selecting the partner, she seemed to exercise a good deal of influence. Marriages were entered into when girls were mature and evidently they must have been done with their consent. Evidences of previous courtship are well known. There are also references to marriages which were of gandharva form in which one's choice played an important part.

VI. POST VEDIC SOCIETY

Regarding the first phase in the post-vedic society, we cannot adequately describe the whole process of change since Manu Samhita and Mahabharata, the main available reference sources, were not the works of one writer written at one time. Manu invests the Brahmins with new privileges. He deprecates the Shudras and women and concedes to them an inferior status. He thus lays down a theoretical basis for the social and legal subordination of women. The theoretical degradation of women got strengthened Ideologically when in the Bhagvadgita the new path of Bhakti was shown to be the way for liberation to the Vaishya, the Shudra and women

VII. WOMEN IN BUDDHIST SOCIETY

Buddhism rose as a protest against the steadily rigidifying Brahmanism. In the post Vedic period the domination of rituals increasingly grew, thereby giving indomitable power to the Brahmins, Buddhism emphasized the superfluity of any intermediary between God and man and further opened the portals of religion to all human beings without any distinction. The spread of Buddhism, was mainly restricted to the eastern zones of India in the first phase of its advance, but during the first centuries of the Christian era, its influence had considerably extended to other zones of the country also.

Though women, according to Buddhism, can reach the highest state, she is however considered inferior in status to a male Bhikkhu. In spite of this distinction in the status of the Bhikkhu and that of the Bhikkhuni, Buddhism brought great freedom and equality for women in the sphere of religion, till now a closed circle for the elite. Now any women could enter it.

The age of marriage is generally believed to be between sixteen and twenty. The relation of the husband and wife is that of mutual respect though the status of the former is superior. If the unmarried daughter wishes to join the order, the consent of both parents is necessary. This is a very significant right given to the mother who now gets a privilege to opine on the most vital matter in the life of her daughter.

VIII. POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE PURANIC HINDU SOCIETY

The puranas were composed, it is believed, for securing the recognition of the Brahmins as the highest caste group carrying with them supreme authority in the pyramid of the Hindu society. The growing influence of Buddhism and Jainism which declared that between God and man there need not be any intermediary and that even a woman could join the religious order and become a nun, threatened the dominant position of the Brahmins in the Hindu society. They, therefore, started the movement “to re-establish the Varnashrama Dharma, the authority of the Vedas and moral rules among women. Shudras and those members of the upper three castes who, being influenced by the faiths other than Brahmanism, disregarded the Vedas and violated the rules of the Varnashrama Dharma.” This resulted in the increasing rigidification of the Hindu society. Whatever mobility castes possessed was destroyed and rigidly demarcated castes with unequal rights were established. The position of women became more and more servile.

IX. BASIC PROBLEMS ON THE EVE OF BRITISH RULE

When the Indians came in vital contact with the British in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the position of the Indian woman had reached the maximum degree of deterioration. Ideologically woman was considered a completely inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality, socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right, suppressed and oppressed. She was further branded as basically lacking an ethical fibre.

The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygyny and its concomitant koolinism the purdah, the property structure, early marriage, self-immolation of widows [sati] or a state of permanent widowhood, all these contributed to the smothering of the free development of woman.

This leads us to the third side of the picture, viz., moral. As regards her moral nature, women was considered as a temptress, a being whose sole aim is to divert man from the right path. The daughter is considered by the father as a burden to be disposed off

as quickly as possible through her marriage. For her husband she is an object for having male children. She is further regarded unfit for participation in social, political or religious functions of any significance. She is not even worthy of receiving education. The Indian women on the eve of the British rule had not only lost her independence but her sense and urge for freedom and consciousness of independent personality.

X. CONCLUSION

A new society based on new socio-economic relations and a new liberal democratic ideology was necessary for making woman conscious of her subjection, for realization of her real role in society, for the growth of woman's freedom movement in all spheres of life as also for a great advance in the direction of her complete freedom.

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