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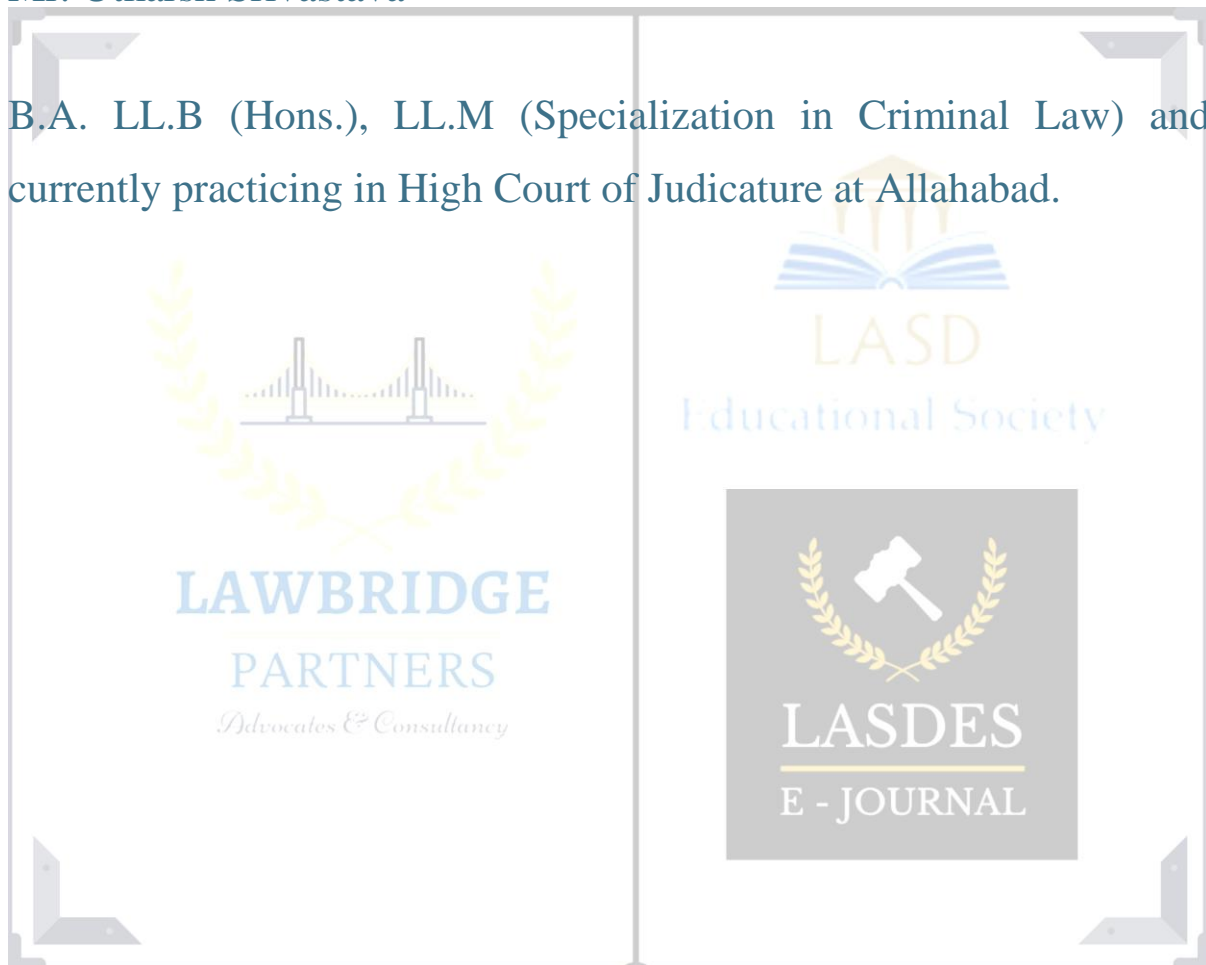
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A RESEARCH WORK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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## A RESEARCH WORK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

What a beautiful topic it is! Okay so let me clear the fact that why am I calling this topic a beautiful one. Actually, the fact is that this topic contains the word 'WOMEN' in it and it is a very well-known fact that women are treated like a goddess. It is very truly said that, "WOMEN ARE GODDESS, THE PLACE WHERE A WOMAN LIVES IS TREATED LIKE A TEMPLE AND HENCE WORSHIPPED". The place where a woman lives is considered very pious. Piousness resides where a woman lives. But despite of all these things various questions arise that ARE REALLY WOMEN TREATED LIKE A GODDESS? ARE REALLY THEY WORSHIPPED? ARE REALLY THEY TREATED EQUAL? These are the various questions that arise and yes the answer to all of these questions is a big big NO. All these slogans are made by the people but they themselves do not follow it. After giving all these beautiful sayings they do not care about it. So the thing is that after giving such great sayings WHO CARES THAT IT IS NEEDED TO BE FOLLOWED. HOW SHAMEFUL THIS THING IS! Why the answer to all these questions is NO is needed to be discussed. The questions are not left unanswered, they are answered but the answer to these questions will be discussed further. Now let us see the answer to all these questions. Let us discuss this topic in detail.

It is very important for us to know the meaning and definition of Women Rights. So let us see the definition at very first.

## 2. WHAT ARE WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

Women's Rights are the rights claimed for women worldwide. It formed the basis for women's rights movement in the 19th century and that for the feminist movement in 20th century. In some countries, these rights are supported by the law and as well as institutionalized but in some countries it is suppressed as well. They differ from broader notions of human rights through claims of an inherent historical and traditional bias against the exercise of rights by women in favor of men. Issues commonly associated with notions of women's rights include the right to bodily integrity, to be free from sexual violence, to vote, to hold public office, to enter into legal contracts, to have equal rights in family law to work, to fair wages or equal pay, to have reproductive rights, to own property and to get education.

The situation of women in the ancient period was pretty good. In the medieval period the condition of women deteriorated and in modern time the condition of women is a mixture of both the ancient and medieval period. The condition is neither too good nor too bad. Now let us see the condition of women in different periods one by one in detail. Firstly, we will discuss the condition in ancient time then in medieval time and finally in the modern time. Let us discuss one by one in detail.

### 3. WOMEN'S CONDITION IN ANCIENT TIME

Women's condition in ancient India was pretty good. Our ancient time was the Vedic period. During the Vedic period women were given equal status to the men. They both were treated equally. No discrimination was done, they were provided an ample amount of education. The famous grammarians PATANJALI AND KATYAYANA have mentioned the fact that women were given an ample amount of education in their famous works. They were also allowed to choose their life partners by themselves, they were very free to choose the husband for themselves and this process was known as 'SWAYAMWAR'. They were allowed for a practice of live in relationship which is known as 'GANDHARVA MARRIAGE'. Earlier women had to undergo an initiation which means getting admitted somewhere at an initial stage. They had to undergo two types of initiations, ie. One was a Vedic initiation and second was marriage. In Vedic initiation they had to kindle the sacred fire, study the Veda and beg food in their own houses and in the marriage initiation they used to marry at a very early age. Here we can take the example of Draupadi. In Mahabharata the marriage of Draupadi to 5 men, ie, with the Pandavas is a case in point. The thing which is pointed here is that earlier at that time polygamy was matched with polyandry. Earlier, during the vedic era women could select their husbands which was known as 'SWAYAMWAR'. As a result the father of the woman used to invite all the men and women could select one of them. Their marriage was also watched by the court.



This clearly showed that how seriously the rights of women were taken during that period. They were given a lot of priority. At that time women were seriously worshipped like a goddess and they were treated equal to men. This practice was prevalent till 10 A.D.

Also in the Puranas every god is shown in the consort of their wives. We can take some examples also such as BRAHMA WITH SARASWATI, VISHNU WITH LAKSHMI AND SHIV WITH PARAVATI. Idols of god and goddess were depicted with equal importance to both genders. Separate temples were created for goddess and they were worshipped with much devotion as god were. There was no inequality at that time.

Even in the practice of Homa, ie, a ritual which involves offerings to the fire, every mantra or shloka is addressed to 'SWAHA'. We use to say swaha while giving offerings to the fire. So it is important to know that WHY DO WE SAY SWAHA WHILE GIVING OFFERINGS TO THE FIRE? Actually the reason behind the fact is that SWAHA was the wife of AGNI. From these facts we can very lucidly observe that how respectful women were for everyone at that time. They had a very top priority and a topmost place in the eyes of the people. They were respected a lot. The condition of women was so good. Everything was like a big big WOW! Even today when the people use to study about the Vedic period and especially about the condition of women during that period the word WOW comes from their mouth. The condition of women was really very amazing that time. Earlier the people very clearly understood the fact "PRO

WOMAN, PRO FAMILY, PRO LIFE”. This is the fact due to which women were respected a lot. They were like a shining moon and the burning sparkling sun in the sky. All in all they were respected so much. But one thing is very important on which we should have a look is that the condition of women during the Buddha period was not so good. Women got education but the important point here is that the woman those who were of very rich families got education. Women those who were of the middle families did not get an ample opportunity of education. So very lucidly from here we can conclude that the condition of women was fluctuating. No doubt their condition during the Vedic age was amazing but their condition during the Buddha age was not that good. So, the condition of women was good in the ancient time but their condition was of a fluctuating type.

In the above mentioned paragraphs we saw the condition of women in the ancient time. Now let us see the condition of women in the medieval time.

#### 4. THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The condition of women in the late medieval period was so so pathetic. Their lives had become so suffocated. They were surrounded by evil practices and the evil people. Being a girl I think that how they survived at that time. They were so bold and strong enough to face all those evil situations. Seriously, a huge HATS OFF to them. HATS

OFF AND A GREAT SALUTE to their boldness. Now let us see their condition in detail.

We can observe the condition of women in the medieval period very clearly by looking at some examples.

The most important thing is that the Muslim conquest brought in a lot of changes in the Indian society. The condition of women became so pathetic. Their condition was deteriorated that time. There were a lot of systems such as the Purdah System in which the women were bounded. They were into the clutches of many evil practices. The Purdah System was started by Firoz Tughlaq and it was made compulsory for everyone. This practice was made a strict compulsion on everyone by Akbar. He said that the woman who will be found without the veil or the purdah will be made a prostitute. He also told them that they should either be at their homes or come out under a supervision of a male. Muslim women thus suffered greatly and denied education also. The Purdah System did not affect the upper class women because they were a bit educated but the women those who were of lower class were not educated and as a result they suffered a lot. But the Purdah System became weaker as the Mughal Empire declined. The system of Jauhar was an evil system which was started by Rani Padmavati of Chittor. She did jauhar when his husband Raja Ratanasinha was killed in a battle in 1303. Earlier every woman used to do jauhar when became widow. But there are some traces of the medieval history which show that the condition of women was fine at some extent. There are the various examples of the

rulers those who were women. The examples are as follows. A very famous example is of Rani Lakshmi Bai who was the queen of Jhansi and fought against the britishers for the Independence of our country. We can take another example of Raziya Sultan who became the only queen to rule over Delhi. Tarabai was the queen of Marathas. As such there are many more. But if we look at the ratio of the side that is the side of the women which was so pathetic is heavier. So all in all this period was the darkest period for women.

There were many evil practices which had taken women into its clutches. The practices like SATI PRATHA, DOWRY, PURDAH, DEVADASI had made the life of women totally suffocated. They were like the puppets of someone. They were dealt like someone had the rope of their fate in their hands instead of god. The soul shivers whenever these pictures come to our mind. First of all let us discuss these practices in a bit detail.

#### 4.1. SATI PRATHA

This practice is named after a goddess Sati who sacrificed herself rather than endures insults about her husband Shiva. It started becoming regular after 500 A.D. The women who lost their husbands had to sit on the funeral of their husbands forcefully. They used to sit on the funeral alive. However this practice was abolished in the British period in 1829 but it was so prevalent in the medieval India. This shivers the soul. This shows how courageous the women were and how courageous there was. They were so devoted to their

husbands but this practice was forced on some women. All in all this practice was so evil that it shivers our soul even the soul of each and every person who studies this practice. It is very important to think about the fact if our finger get burnt anyhow we feel pain a lot in the very same way if the body of a person is burnt alive how painful it will be. The same was felt by the women of the medieval period. It shivers the whole body, the whole mind even the whole soul.

#### 4.2. PURDAH SYSTEM

Purdah is the practice prevalent in Muslim community in which they have to cover their faces in order to protect their modesty.

#### 4.3. DOWRY SYSTEM

In this system the father of the bride had to give some amount to the father of the groom to satisfy their demands. We know that KANYADAAN IS THE MAHADAAN but the fact is that the people do not get satisfied with it. They do not understand that if a father is donating his daughter then it is the most important and the biggest donation of the world. The fact is that the people despite of seeing the fact predict as they do not understand the fact because they are greedy and as a result they follow this evil practice.

As such there were many more evil practices those were taken women in its clutches. But many social activists such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar etc. helped in curbing these social practices.

Now, coming to the condition of women in the modern time.

## 5. THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN THE MODERN TIME

The condition of women in the modern time has become good in various aspects. As they are educated a lot. They are given an ample amount of education opportunity. They have all the rights such as right to education, right to vote etc. Their condition is very nice in the modern time. But there are various crimes that are committed against women. There are various examples of those crimes such as SEXUAL HARRASMENT, RAPE, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, ACID ATTACKS etc. Often we read these news in the newspapers, see the news channels and we hear about these crimes from other sources. Women are sexually assaulted. Female infanticide is present. Modern medical technologies have provided the sex to be determined which a crime is now. The daughters are considered to be an economic and social burden. And if we talk about rape, India has become the most dangerous country for women regarding this topic. The crime rates in our country are increasing day by day. Human Trafficking and forced Prostitution are also the crimes that are committed against women. Even today also in some parts of our country such as the small villages of Rajasthan child marriage is still prevalent. They let their daughters get married at a very young age. Child brides do not understand the meaning and responsibilities of marriage. They then have to bear two things that is of being a girl child and a female. Acid attacks are very common. Acid is thrown on the faces of women which led them to be blind and destroy their faces. But the thing is

that women are now given all kinds of rights. They are given the right to education. They are treated equal. They are educated enough so that they can complain against the violence happening to them. They are powerful and these lines show their power. We are educated and we have all those rights which a man possess. We are independent. We are on our own feet. So, the condition of woman in our country in the present time is nice.

## 6. CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

The Constitution of India not only allows equality to women but also empowers the state to use measures of positive discrimination in the favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio-economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any resident on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens in concerns relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of special importance in this regard.

Though the position of women has developed in the last four decades however still they are struggling to maintain their freedom and dignity. Presently Indian women are suffering from the toughest time physically and mentally, mainly due to unawareness and lack of information on legal and constitutional woman rights in India. The Constitution provides many protection women rights such as

Protective discrimination for women, right of women against exploitation, rights of women under directives, Right to freedom of women and political representations of women.





## CONCLUSION

So finally after a long journey of this research work we have come to an end, i.e., we have come to a conclusion. Here we will get the answers to all those questions that are been asked at the very beginning of this research work. Now if we talk about the modern time, our condition has become far better in comparison to the earlier time. We are getting an ample opportunity of education. We are developing more and more. We are getting a great social standing. It is often said that when you educate a woman, you educate a family. It is very truly said that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. The people are more and more awarded. That's why women are developing more and more. We cannot say that women are treated like a goddess because several crimes such as rape, murder, sexual harassment etc. are happening but we can say that women are treated nicely. They have freedom. They have all the rights. So all in all the condition of women is good in the modern time. The only birth giver is the woman. The world is only because of women. A woman is the basic unit of the family. A woman is always needed to be respected. She should always be treated like a goddess. Here are few lines.

This poem is for all those who think that women cannot fly or they are not independent. A beautiful message is through this beautiful poem for them. We are rising and we will keep rising. Definitely no one can stop us from flying ahead. The same is happening with them.

They are flying ahead and spreading the beautiful colors of success in the world.



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