



IMPACT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ON THE STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN

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Abstract

Mother is a radiant nurse, an angel of mercy, a patient teacher, a watchful guardian and compassionate attorney and a fountainhead of courage. Post independence sociologists paid attention towards the women who are traditionally backward, exploited and taken as second-rate citizens. This is obstruction and hindrance in the progress and prosperity of family, community and country. The complete social structure is affected. For the rural development and reconstruction, it is necessary to understand the changing social status and role of rural women who are 48.3% of the Total population of the country. For the study of past enables us to grasp the fundamental psychology behind the present problems and attitudes that uphold or reject them due to which it has come to be what it is. We may thus be enabling to make out the cause and circumstances embedded in the past, which led to the existence and conditions and causes are sure to prove themselves of great help to us in the making up and planning of a figure. Women constitute about fifty per cent of the world population. It is estimated that by A.D. 2000, the total number of women in the world will be more than 3 billion and they will outnumber men by nearly 175 million. At the United Nations Conference in Nairobi in 1985, it was noted that they comprise 35 per cent of the world's labor force in the sphere of employment and occupied lower positions. Further it is observed that over 60 per cent of world's illiterates are women, mostly in the developing countries. More than 60% respondents have accepted all the factors mentioned as variables are responsible for the uplift of the status of rural women. But; it is noteworthy that more than three-fourth of the respondents have emphasized especially on urbanization, women welfare organizations and rural development programs; as the tools of uplift for the status of rural women.

Keywords: *Mitaksharaa, urbanization, women welfare, RDP, Social Status.*



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Introduction and Review of Literature:

God made men and women almost equal in number. A woman is considered as 'Ardhangini' and 'Grah Laxmi'. The house is like a forest without women. The status, role, and position of Indian women is changing very fast with the time and change in social, political and legislation. The reformist and religious preachers are attracted towards the pitiable conditions of women.

The social changes have not left the woman untouched. The traditional position, the enjoyed in society, the roles she was expected to perform and the status she carried in her family and the society have all been affected by these factors influencing social change. A study of changing status of women in India is thus sociologically necessary and meaningful, on the one hand to understand the broad pattern and process of social change in India and on the other, to understand the emerging status and role of woman as a person, as a family member and as a member of society. Such a study will also reveal the structural changes occurring in Indian society. While it is certainly true to say that present functions cannot always be explained in terms of historical origins, yet it remains equally true that our society is almost impossible to study, in however, a limited form, without reference to the past. It is true in the case of the studying the changes in women's roles too.^[1]

In India, specific activities to enhance the status of women were initiated in the 19th century under the 'reform movement'. It demanded more human treatment for women. Liberal male crusaders, their wives and some British administrators worked for abolition of Sati, Purdah, Child marriage and other oppressive and cruel customs affecting women's lives. They actively advocated women's education, widow-remarriage and social reforms. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Mahatma Phule, Ranade, Karsandus Mulji and Maharshi Karve were some of the leading personalities of the reform movement. The contemporary, Pandit Ramabai, was even more radical reformer of her times and as such faced plenty of hardships. For the first time, thousands of India women actively participated in the Nationalist Movement which occurred during 1940's under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In the movement, women were mere vehicles who helped to achieve National Independence.^[2] There was no specific attention given to change the status of women. Once national independence was achieved, women stopped taking interest in the larger social issues. But with the blossoming autonomous women's groups, things started changing. It also forced the established women's organizations hitherto preoccupied with their 'welfare activities' or women's front of political parties busy with election propaganda at the time of election, to review their past and revitalise themselves.^[3]

Appreciation of this complexity led the Committee on the Status of Women in India to admit that "the status of women in the Indian context cannot be defined simply. General concepts like equality, role differentiation, legal, social and political rights, dependency or independence, are not applicable to all sections of our population. Mahatma Gandhi who

believed that the freedom movement to be successful had to be a movement of the masses felt that “**Swaraj**” would be meaningless without reform of the social structure and upliftment of the weaker section, namely, the women and the lower social strata to a position of equality with others. While lending his support to the cause of improving women’s conditions through education and reform of marriage laws, he declared himself to be “uncompromising in the matter of women’s rights.”^[4]

Ram Mohan Roy was also in favour of granting the right to property to women, as it had been advocated in ‘**the rules of Dayabhaag**’. Consequently Roy and his Brahm Samaj strongly advocated widow remarriage. However, it was the repeated and untiring efforts of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar that led to the promulgation of the Widow- Remarriage Act of 1856. This was the result of the long sought after effort of the young reformers of Bengal as well.^[5]

The status of women in Independent India occupies an important role and all efforts are being made to establish the significant place that she can play in the upliftment of her own self and the society at large. **The preamble to the Constitution of India resolved to secure to all its citizens- “Social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunities, dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.”** Indian women are entitled to these rights just as men are. Some of the specific directive principles are free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen, right to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work, maternity relief etc.

The Women’s movement in India grew out of male reformist efforts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.^[6] It was a bourgeoisie feminist movement involving middle class women who campaigned for extension of educational opportunities and acting rights and later property rights. The reformists of the last century infused in their women relatives their favourite ideologies and encouraged them to participate in public life through forming associations and holding conferences. The idea was to project a progressive image to impress Britain in order to win more political power.^[7]

The present study is based on the impact of rural development programs on the status of rural women of Mathura District of U.P. In fact enough and appropriate subject matter is not available on the present problem. Exploratory research design is necessary to obtain the experience which will be helpful in formulating relevant hypothesis for more definite

investigation”, to study the “Impact of rural development programs on the Status of Rural Women”.

Objectives of the Study :

The objectives of the present study are as under :

- (1) To study the socio-economic conditions and background of the respondents.
- (2) To study the status and role of women as daughter, wife and mother for shaping and development of society.
- (3) To study the changing attitudes of the respondents towards family and marriage institutions.
- (4) To study the Impact of Rural Development Programs on the Status of Rural Women.

To justify and for the fulfillment of the above objectives of the study problem, the following ‘**hypotheses**’ have been formulated regarding the study:

- (1) The positive changes are being practiced in social and family status of rural women due to the impact of rural development programs and social legislations.
- (2) The social and family position of un-employed rural women is found low in comparison to employed rural women.
- (3) The attitudes of rural women are changing regarding the utility of education.
- (4) Rural women are aware towards their rights.
- (5) The joint families are disorganizing due to the impact of urbanization and social legislations, in rural society.
- (6) The behavior patterns, life style, capacity to take decision and the feelings of family adjustment have changed among the rural women.
- (7) The feelings to become economic-independent have developed in rural women.
- (8) Rural women want equal co-operation from their husbands in domestic works.
- (9) The positive impact of rural development programmes is seen on rural women.
- (10) modernity are in transition in rural society.
- (11) Due to the impact of urbanization and untouchability act: 1956, the feelings of untouchability are abolishing among the ruralists.
- (12) The rate of physical assaults and mental exploitation have decreased on rural women due to the effectiveness of ‘The domestic violence act- 2006’.
- (13) The cases of atrocities (abusing, assaults, rape, murder), divorce and dowry-exploitation have increased in rural communities due to urbanization.

(14) Social Laws are tool for Social change.

Data Analysis , Interpretation and Results:

Table No. 1 : Distribution of respondents according to variables

1	Age-Group	<u>Upto 25 yrs.</u> 108(36.00)	<u>26-44 yrs.</u> 138(46.00)	<u>45 yrs. & above</u> 54(18.00)	--	Total 300(100.00)
2	Education	<u>Illiterate</u> 27(09.00)	<u>Literate</u> 30(10.00)	<u>School Level</u> 210(70.00)	<u>College Level</u> (33(11.00)	Total 300(100.00)
3	Caste category	<u>General</u> 162(54.00)	<u>Backward</u> 39(13.00)	<u>Scheduled</u> 99(33.00)	--	Total 300(100.00)
4	Occupation	<u>Domestic</u> 48(16.00)	<u>Labour</u> 72(24.00)	<u>Service</u> 54(18.00)	<u>Others</u> 126(42.00)	Total 300(100.00)

(The figures shown in brackets are percentage)

Table No. 2: The opinion of respondents regarding the position of rural women in of social life

S. No	Various fields of life	Respondents (Frequencies & %)				
		The opinion regarding the position of women				
		Low	Medium	High	Un-decided	Total
1	Family	30 (10.00)	177 (59.00)	93 (31.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
2	Social	27 (09.00)	186 (62.00)	81 (27.00)	06 (02.00)	300 (100.00)
3	Economic	120 (40.00)	132 (44.00)	-- (00.00)	48 (16.00)	300 (100.00)
4	Educational	75 (25.00)	186 (62.00)	39 (13.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
5	Religious	-- (00.00)	105 (35.00)	183 (61.00)	12 (04.00)	300 (100.00)
6	Political	108 (36.00)	165 (55.00)	-- (00.00)	27 (09.00)	300 (100.00)
7	Legal	180 (60.00)	120 (40.00)	-- (00.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
8	Trade & Commerce	140 (46.67)	150 (50.00)	-- (00.00)	10 (03.33)	300 (100.00)

(Note : The figures given in brackets are percentage of frequencies)

The data of above table reveal the opinion of the respondents regarding rural women in the position of various fields of life .**In the family** amongst 300 respondents; 30(10%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low, while 177(59%) opined medium and remaining 93(31%) high. Amongst 300 respondents; 27(9%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low, while 186(62%) respondents opined medium, 81(27%) high and remaining 6(2%) respondents un-decided. 120(40%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low in the family while 132(44%) medium and remaining 48(16%) respondents said un-decided. 75(25%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low, while 186(62%) medium and only 39(13%) said high. 105(35%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is medium, while 183(61%) high and remaining 12(4%) respondents said un-decided. **In Political field** amongst 300 respondents; 108(36%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low, while 165(55%) medium and remaining 27(9%) respondents said un-decided. 80(60%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low and 120(40%) said medium. At the time of survey some the respondents said the court cases of dowry exploitation show their legal consciousness. About **the field of trade & commerce** amongst 300 respondents; 140(46.67%) respondents have opined that the position of rural women is low, 150(50%) medium; while 10(3.33%) respondents said un-decided.

Table No. 3: The position of 90 un-married respondents in their family

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Un-married respondents</i>	<i>Frequencies</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	<u>Your role in family :</u>		
	(a) Eldest daughter	30	33.33
	(b) Middle daughter	35	38.88
	(c) Youngest daughter	25	27.79
	Total	90	100.00
2	<u>Is there any importance of your views in family affairs? :</u>	45	50.00
	(a) Yes	30	33.33
	(b) No	05	05.56
	(c) No response	10	11.11
	(d) Now is given		
	Total	90	100.00
3	<u>Is any concern given to your liking at the time of marriage in family :</u>		
	(a) Yes	55	61.11
	(b) No	20	22.22
	(c) No response	15	16.67
	Total	90	100.00
4	<u>Is there any importance given to your choices in the family? :</u>	75	83.33

	(a) Yes	10	11.11
	(b) No	05	05.56
	(c) No response		
	Total	90	100.00
5	<u>Is which affairs of the family your views/ consents are taken? :</u>		
	(a) In purchasing the cloths	55	61.11
	(b) at the time of marriage	35	38.89
	Total	90	100.00
6	<u>Is there any system of division of labour in your family? :</u>		
	(a) Yes	25	27.78
	(b) No	54	60.00
	(c) No response	11	12.22
	Total	90	100.00
7	<u>How are you behaved in the condition (situation) of not doing work? :</u>		
	(a) Appreciable	60	66.67
	(b) Non-appreciable	20	22.22
	(c) No response/Neutral	10	11.11
	Total	90	100.00

The respondents, who gave your answer in negative/neutral or no response said that our family become annoyed because :

- (1) We do not give so much time to family or for family affairs due to service, as we should give.
- (2) The domestic works are done late by us due to service.
- (3) The proper take-care of children and the proper time & services for elders are not given by us.
- (4) We are intended to go for service.
- (5) The widows & divorced said that no body ask to us in family affairs.

Table 4: The factors; responsible to uplift the status of rural women : according to the opinion of the respondents

S. No.	The Factors, responsible for the uplift the status of the rural women	The opinions of the respondents (Frequencies and %)				Total (%)
		Yes	No	Neutral	No response	
1	Social reform movements	180 (60.00)	-- (00.00)	99 (33.00)	21 (07.00)	300 (100.00)
2	Constitutional rights & provisions	213 (71.00)	-- (00.00)	87 (29.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
3	Extension of women education	246 (82.00)	-- (00.00)	48 (16.00)	06 (02.00)	300 (100.00)

4	Political participation of women	189 (63.00)	15 (05.00)	96 (32.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
5	Women's economic participation	177 (59.00)	57 (19.00)	66 (22.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
6	Impact of Western Values	198 (66.00)	-- (00.00)	102 (34.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
7	Impact of Urbanization	237 (79.00)	-- (00.00)	54 (18.00)	09 (03.00)	300 (100.00)
8	Women Welfare Organisations*	273 (91.00)	-- (00.00)	27 (09.00)	-- (00.00)	300 (100.00)
9	Rural Development Programmes**	267 (89.00)	-- (00.00)	27 (09.00)	06 (02.00)	300 (100.00)

(Note : The percentage of frequencies are shown in the parenthesis)

The above table reveals the opinions of the respondents regarding the factors which are responsible for the uplift of the status of rural women. It is clear that amongst the 300 women-respondents; more than 60% respondents have accepted all the factors mentioned in the above table. But; it is note-worthy that more than three-fourth of the respondents have emphasized especially on urbanization, women welfare organizations and rural development programs; as the tools of uplift for the status of rural women.

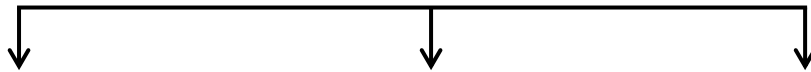
Table 5: Major factors responsible for upliftment the status of rural women

S. No	Major factors which are especially responsible for increasing the status of rural women	Frequencies	%
1	Urbanization	96	32.00
2	Rural development programmes	95	31.67
3	Acts & constitutional provisions	109	36.33
4	(Urbanization + Rural development programmes)	191	63.67
5	(Rural Development Programmes + Acts & Const. provisions)	204	68.00
6	(Acts & const. provisions + Urbanization)	205	68.33
7	(Urbanization + Rural development programmes + Acts & Constitutional Provisions)	300	100.0

(* The multiple responses permitted)

It is clear from the above table no. 7(2) that cent-percent women respondents have opined & accepted that urbanization, the various rural development programmes and the acts & constitutional provisions are three major factors especially responsible for increasing the status of the rural women.

In the light of above facts it may be concluded that the positive impact of social legislations is falling on the status & role of the rural women. The various changes & responsible factors for changing the position of the rural women may be observed; as given in the following chart:



Change in Community Participation	Change in Institutional Behaviour (with respect to the marriage & family institutions)	Other Changes
- Increase in Social Participation	- Change in the marital & family status	- Increase in Education
- Increase in women Entrepreneurship	- Increase in love, inter-caste & inter-religious marriages	- Increase in awareness
- Increase in religious participation	- Change in Property rights	- Increase in individual recognition etc.
- Increase in awareness in Political participation	- Change in Beliefs & rituals	
- Involvement in health sector 'ASHA' workers	- Change in Social Values	
- Involvement in Village health sanitation committee	- Change in Normative Patterns etc.	
- Mahila Mandal		
- SAKSHAR Mahila group etc.		

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