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Women Human Rights In India: Violation And Awareness

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Abstract : All human beings are entitled to attain certain natural rights by birth. Unfortunately, some human beings violated others' rights by subjugating them. This kind of exploitation has been faced by women as well based on the social construction of gender discrimination since ancient times. They felt discriminated against in the private and public spheres. They started raising their voice which ultimately led to mass movements and protests as time passed. During modern times women succeeded in achieving legal, political, civil, social, economic, and cultural rights. The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to all its citizens. All men and women are equal in the eyes of law though women in India very often have to face discrimination, injustice, and dishonor. Education is the instrument to address inequalities by promoting equality, social justice, and respect for individual human beings. These are preconditions for ensuring rights. This research was conducted to investigate the violation of the human rights of women and the awareness of human rights among educated and uneducated women. The research was done in the regions of the Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh.

Keywords: Awareness, Human Rights, Law, Violation, Women Rights

I. Introduction

"Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave." – Lord Henry Peter Brougham, The Present State of Law, 1828.

Human Rights are those minimum rights that are compulsorily obtainable by every individual as he or she is a member of the human family. The constitution of India guarantees the equality of rights of men and women. Though women in India have been given more rights as compared to men, even then in the male-dominated Indian society men are always considered to be superior placing women in a miserable condition (Dhanoa). The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to every citizen on an equal basis. It is mentioned in Article 14 as *"The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India."* (Basu, 2007, p. 87) and Article 15 states that, *"The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them."* (Basu, 2007, p. 92).

Till now, the Government of India has formulated three National Policy of Education (NPE) to promote and regulate the elementary and higher education system. The first NPE was promulgated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, and the third by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020 (Wikipedia). The 1986 NPE brought several changes to the educational system. It introduced various measures to promote gender equality to avail the education opportunity for all to raise the status of women in the country (NPE, 1986).

Women have got all the rights in law but they still face lots of discrimination, violence, and unlawful treatment. The crimes against women are still increasing and a matter of severe concern. The table 1 below represents a list of the top 5 dangerous cities in India.

Table 1

Rank	Name of the city	% of crimes
1	Delhi	16
2	Hyderabad	8.1
3	Bangalore	6.5
4	Ahmedabad	6.4
5	Mumbai	5.8

Source: Crimes in India (NCRB, 2010).

There are most women whose rights are being violated but there are also those empowered women who are self-dependent but their number is negligible. Women need to know about their rights and the laws made for them. Some of the important laws related to women are as follows:

1. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
2. Married Women's Property (Extension) Act, 1959
3. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
4. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) (Amended in 1986)
5. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
6. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
7. National Commission for Women Act, 1990
8. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
9. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013

II. Review of Literature

Martha White argues for the protection of women's human rights while throwing light on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993 (White, 1995).

Satya Prakash Das in his research paper entitled "Human Rights: A Gender Perspective" provides a historical journey of the women's movement for human rights. He argues that every step taken for the empowerment of women has been considered in facts and legal documents but there is still a need to achieve gender equality in the fullest form (Das, 2005).

Aaron Karp, Sonal Marwah, and Rita Manchanda brought new cases of violence against women to the forefront. They have argued that the cases of rape, foeticide, infanticide, domestic violence, dowry-related violence, 'honor' violence and killing, violence against women in public places, sexual assault persist in society and there is no solution to end this with an immediate effect. They further argue that there is a need to challenge patriarchal practices to redefine the notions of masculinity and femininity, to confront misogyny, and to promote gender equality (Karp, Marwah, & Manchanda, 2015).

III. Objectives

1. To study the comparison of the level of human rights awareness among educated and uneducated women.

IV. Hypothesis

1. There is a significant difference between the level of human rights awareness among educated and uneducated women.

V. Limitation

This study was conducted on 10 educated and 10 uneducated women in Gwalior and for data collection self-made questionnaire was used. The advanced research is to be done including women from different parts of the country and different spheres of work.

VI. Methodology

The survey method was adopted for the present applied research. The data was collected from 20 respondents and they were selected through a stratified random sampling method. The area of study was Gwalior. The major tools of research were Questionnaire, Schedule, and Interview.

The details of Instrumentation are as follows:

Questionnaire – with 10 educated women as sample

Scheduling – with 10 uneducated women as a sample

Interview – 1) Saroj Jone, S.I., WPS, Padav, Gwalior;

2) Pushplata Jadon, Senior Counselor, Counseling Centre, WPS, Padav, Gwalior.

Observation – Personal

VII. Data Analysis

The data was collected at Kampoo, Maharaj Bada, Padav, Thatipur, and Morar in Gwalior. The analysis was done based on 40 questions asked from educated and uneducated women through questionnaires and schedules respectively as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Data Analysis Through Field Work					
Human Rights Awareness Among Educated And Uneducated Women In Percentage					
Sr. No.	Rights	Educated Women		Uneducated Women	
		Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Right to equality	60	40	20	80
2	Right to protection against gender discrimination	60	40	30	70
3	Right to education	70	30	10	90
4	Political Right	50	50	100	00
5	Right to property	20	80	00	100
6	Right to protection of health	90	10	20	80
7	Right to free choice	70	30	20	80
8	Right to live with dignity	70	30	30	70
9	Protection from eve teasing and sexual abuse	80	20	20	80
10	Right from society, state family system	80	20	40	60
11	General awareness	60	40	20	80
12	Women in pride	70	30	40	60

Source: Prepared by the Researcher

Although, special rights are being given to women as compared to men, yet they are least beneficial to them. Only women are prey to crimes such as rape, dowry, bride burning, sexual harassment, selling and importation, prostitution, and trafficking, etc. In the study survey no single woman was aware of:

1. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013.
2. The National Commission for Women (NCW)
3. Women's Reservation Bill

Most of the women were unaware of Section 376 of IPC in a real sense.

VIII. Interview in Women Police Station (WPS), Gwalior

During my research, I had a wonderful conversation with Anita Mishra, Station Incharge (Town Inspector), Mrs. Saroj Jone (Sub Inspector), and Pushplata Jadon (Senior Counselor) on 11 March 2015 at Women Police Station, Padav, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. During the conversation, I got to know that the number of cases filed against Sections 498 (Dowry), 376 (Rape), 354 (Sexual Assault) of the Indian Penal Code were increasing due to the awareness among women. The 'Helpline Service' and 'We Care For You' helped a lot in the safety of women in Madhya Pradesh. Pushplata Jadon, Senior Counselor was serving at the Women Police Station, Gwalior since 1999. Her experience says that somewhere there is the weakness of women in family-related matters. She first listens to every matter from both parties and then only gives solutions to problems. In her message to women, she says that women should develop their understanding and should live in harmony with other family members. She suggested that women must be aware and live in the family premises accordingly. Women must be aware of laws which meant for their safety and security.

IX. Violation of Human Rights of Women in India

1. Violation of 'Right to Equality and 'Right to Protection against Gender Discrimination: We all human beings take pride as we have made technological advancements but it has adversely affected girl children since when sex determination tests are being done in increasing numbers. It leads to female foeticide and female infanticide.
2. Violation of 'Right to Education': In India, people think that educating girl children is a wastage of time and money as they have to go to another family after being married. People spend a lot of money on marriages as dowry is considered more important than educating women.
3. Violation of 'Political Right': Women's representation in the political institutions is very low as laymen think that politics is not a cup of tea for women. Uneducated women fail in availing the equal opportunities for political rights. However, women have started taking part in local-level politics.
4. Violation of 'Right of Property': Being a member of the family, there must be a share of women too as men have but they are mostly denied their property rights. It leads to a lack of confidence in women and eventually they have to compromise with the male members of the family in every sphere of life.
5. Violation of 'Right to Protection of Health': In most Indian families, there is discrimination against women when it comes to a balanced diet. Women are provided less food than men. Sometimes women eat the leftover food after the male members finished their meals.
6. Violation of 'Right to equal opportunity for employment and 'Right to get equal wages for equal work': Though there have been legal rights for women to get equal wages as men get for equal work as they do not get the proper education they are being hired on fewer wages.
7. Violation of 'Right to live with dignity: Sexual Harassment is a big issue for every woman in society. It is an attack on her body, her dignity, and her respect. Because of this reason, they are not allowed to go out of the home as outside the home is always considered unsafe for women.
8. Violation of 'Right from Society, State and Family System': Child Marriage, Dowry Harassment, Bride Burning, Rape, and Domestic Violence are very common crimes against women in India.

X. Result

1. The hypothesis was proved to be true. There is a significant difference between the level of human rights awareness among educated and uneducated women. Educated women are more aware than uneducated women of their rights.

XI. Discussion

This study is undertaken mainly to find out what proportion of women possess human rights awareness. Based on the findings it is noticed that only a negligible proportion of a sample exhibited high human rights awareness. What I say is that women are easily prone to crimes as they either go for compromises or lack knowledge of their rights. Although they are getting an education they lack getting the proper education. They just study for the sake of studying as their family members are allowing them.

If women are properly educated then it will simultaneously increase the number of educated people, increase the growth and development of the country. Keeping the findings of the study in view, I recommend some of the following suggestions:

1. Women should take pride in being women.
2. Women should create understanding to distinguish between right and wrong.
3. Women should always keep their family situations in their minds and work accordingly.
4. Women should not melt emotionally after unusually getting appreciation. 'Just do it for you.'
5. Every individual as a member of the human family should possess a positive and developmental approach.
6. There is a need to initiate action and make policies to aware women of human rights.
7. Education is the tool to make people aware of Gender Sensitization.

XII. Conclusion

Every individual as a member of the human family must possess a positive and developmental approach towards other members and humanity. Former Secretary-General Ban-Ki-Moon rightly stated that *"Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and end violence against women and girls, starting by challenging the culture of discrimination that allows it to continue."*

If they are educated in a proper way they can stand anywhere in any field, they can be Politicians like Indira Gandhi, Mayawati, Vrinda Karat; Corporate ladies like Pepsico CEO Indra Nooyi; Ministers like Smriti Irani; Scientists like Kalpana Chawla, Sunita Williams, Tessy Thomas; Sportspeople like Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, Sania Mirza, Professors and Writers like Sudha Pai, Zoya Hasan, Gurpreet Mahajan, Upinder Singh, Romila Thapar, etc.

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