

Impact Of Urbanization & Rural Development Programmes On The Status Of Rural Women : A Sociological Study Of A Mathura District

15

*Dr. Satyveer Singh**

*Vivek Sukrishan***

Introduction

Indian women have equal status and rights with men. Women constitute about 48.3 percent of the India's population and play an important role both as housewives & also in the development of the country. In this connection, the constitution of India and the laws enacted from time to time grant equal rights in all the spheres to the women & laws guaranteeing for their equal status of participation in the political process and as well as in the employment. But they constitute to suffer from disabilities & social prejudices due to so many factors hidden in the absolute social, cultural & religious traditions. After independence many organizations & institutions, both government & voluntary organizations have been active in improving the socio-economic conditions of rural women.

There were distinct stages of rise and fall in the status of women in Indian context. In the Vedic era women participated in all the fields like men & took active part in every walk of human life. Women of Vedic India were educated. During this period women occupied a high position in society. There was no seclusion of women and then used to move freely in society. Purdah was not in practice in Vedic period. In social and religious functions they occupied a prominent position in society. She had equal rights with men. After the Vedic period the status of women deteriorated considerably. This position of women continued throughout the Hindu times & was reinforced by the complete subordination of women by men and which considered women as inferior to men. During this period women completely dependent on man and subjected her to

**Lect. & Active Principal in Ch. G.S. Girls Degree College, Bandukheri, Shaharanpur (U.P.)*

the authority of a father, wife & mother. The outstanding change has been the change from freedom to bondage & from honour to disgrace. Customs of Sati, Child marriages & prohibition of widow remarriage were widely prevalent. All these led to degradation in the status of women. During the medieval period, the position of Hindu women deteriorated day by day. In this period Purdah system came in to existence. In early 19th century with the help of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. During this period attempts were made to eradicate the social customs like State, to allow widow re-marriage, abolish child marriage, etc. The second phase began from mid-19th century. The third phase was characterised by the struggle for political rights & it began at the beginning of the 20th century. The status of women in Independent India occupies an important role and all efforts are being made to establish the significant place that woman can play in the upliftment of her own self and society at large. The preamble to the constitution of India resolved to secure to all its citizens "Social, economic & political justice, liberty of thought expression, belief, faith & worship, equality of status & 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 to the age of 14, right to an adequate means of livelihood, equal for equal work, maternity relief etc.

To evaluate the social status and position of Indian rural women, the researcher has chosen the topic entitled "Impact of urbanization and rural development programmes on the status of rural women : A sociological study of Mathura Block in Mathura District" for this micro empirical study, Mathura block of Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh is selected as an universe of this Sociological inquiry, in which 89 villages are situated in all. According to the block records & district directory, the total population of this block is 190899 i.e. 100024 males & 90874 females. The investigator has selected ten villages from Mathura block of Mathura district by Lottery method of Random sampling & 30 women have selected from each village by purposive and irregular marking method from the voter list of concerning village panchayats. Hence the researcher has selected total 300 rural women respondents from different caste

categories, family composition, are groups, income groups, marital status, educational level and participation in rural power structure.

Every investigator has to formulate the objectives and related hypotheses to achieve the goals. The researcher has also formulated the following objectives for the present micro empirical study :

- (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 changing life style and other new emerging patterns among rural women.
- (5) To study the impact of urbanization, rural development programmes and social legislations on the women respondents.
- (6) To study the political awareness and political participation among the respondents regarding the rural power structure.

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 becoming in the social and family status of rural women due to the impact of urbanization, rural development programmes 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 rural women are found desirous and aware to get employment.
- (4) The awareness regarding to get education, is found among the rural women.
- (5) The attitudes of the rural women are changing regarding the utility of education.
- (6) Now-a-days; the rural women are aware towards their rights.

- (7) The joint families are disorganizing due to the impact of urbanization and social legislations, in rural society.
- (8) The behaviour patterns, life style, capacity to take decision and the feelings of family adjustment have changed among the rural women.
- (9) The feelings to become economic-independent have developed in rural women.
- (10) Rural women want equal co-operation from their husbands in domestic works.
- (11) Now-these-days; love, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are in practice in rural society.
- (12) The positive impact of rural development programmes is seen on rural women.
- (13) Now-a-day, tradition and modernity are in transition in rural society.
- (14) Due to the impact of urbanization and untouchability act: 1956, the feelings of untouchability are abolishing among the ruralists.
- (15) The rate of physical assaults and mental exploitation have decreased on the rural women due to the effectiveness of 'The domestic violence act- 2006.'
- (16) The cases of atrocities (abusing, assaults, rape, murder), divorce and dowry-exploitation have increased in the rural communities due to the process of urbanization.
- (17) Law is a tool for Social change.

The above mentioned hypotheses have been tested by various statistical tests i.e. tests of significance chi-square (X^2), coefficient of variance (Q) and coefficient of co-relation (r) by Speerman's rank difference method, so that scientific results may be established. In this research study, the researcher keeping in mind; the problems of status of rural women preferred to collect primary data to make the study more scientific. For that the field observations were made to encounter the study. Apart from primary informations, documentary sources related books, life sketch, panchayat records, news paper-contents as evidence

are also used because there is lack of secondary (statistical) data; and if available, they are not adequate & reliable. Therefore the researcher has used 'Interview-Schedule method & non-participant observation technique to collect field data. The researcher has conducted personal interviews with 300 women respondents by face to face situation, so that original & reliable and arranging the primary & secondary data, the researcher has made the statistical analysis through simple & complex frequency tables so that the scientific results may be drawn; because research becomes the creative aspect of Scientific analysis. In this study the researcher has constructed & demonstrated diagrams at proper places and where it were needed, because diagrams are merely an aid to eyes and means of saving time for a scientific study.

To draw logical conclusions regarding the study problem, the researcher has studied the socio-economic & demographic profile of the respondents such as : age, sex, caste, religion, educational status, marital status, occupation, income, family size, etc.; the findings of the field survey are as follows :

- (1) **Sex** : In the selection of 300 respondents cent-percent female respondents have selected for investigation.
- (2) **Religion**: In samples of respondents, 282(94%) were Hindu and rest 18(6%) respondents were Muslim & others.
- (3) **Caste**: So far as caste distribution of respondents was concerned; majority of 162(54%) were from General categories, 39(13%) OBC and rest 99(33%) belonged to Dalits (S/C).
- (4) **Type of Family** : Majority of 153 respondents (51%) belonged Nuclear family system, 138 respondents (46%) joint families & 9 respondents (3%) belonged to extended family system.
- (5) **Family Size** : Majority of 129(43%) respondents had 5 to 7 members in their families and upto 4 members followed by 27% in their families; while 8 & more than 8 members in 30% families. An average 5.82 i.e. 6 members were in surveyed family.
- (6) **Housing Conditions** : Majority of 146 respondents (48.67%) had Semi Pakke houses, 94 respondents (31.33%) followed

Pakke houses and 60 respondents (20%) used to live in Kachche houses.

- (7) **Educational Status** : Majority of 210 respondents (70%) were of school level, 30(10%) respondents were literate, 27 respondents (9%) were illiterate and only 33(11%) respondents were educate upto college level.
- (8) **Monthly Income** : Majority of 129(43%) respondent's family income was Rs. 6000-9000/- per month; followed by 81(27%) respondents Rs. 3000-6000/-, 30(10%) respondent's family income was Rs. 9000 & above per moth while 60(20%) respondent's monthly earning was > Rs. 3000/-.
- (9) **Occupation** : Amongst 300 women respondents 48(16%) were domestic, 72(24%) labourers, 54(18%) service holders and 126(42%) respondents (students & others) were doing no work.
- (10) **Marital Status** : Majority of 192(64%) respondents were married, 90(30%) respondents un-married and 18(6%) respondents were selected widows & divorced.

· Amongst 300 women respondents 183(61%) have stated that the process of change in the status and role of rural women in their families is the result of awareness created by urbanization & modernization among them. So that they are intend to break the traditional barriers of Indian rural society.

· Amongst 300 women respondents 206(68.67%) have accepted that rural women have achieved their status and prestige by family adjustments due to the educational ability and hidden individual qualities that is the result of the accomplishment of their familiar and social duties by them. 201(67%) respondents have stated that being educated & self depend, the Indian rural women are raising up the socio-economic positions of their families now a days; but 159(53%) respondents opined that the feelings of educational equality, the changing attitudes & ambitions have motivated them to do services. The element of socio-economic freedom of Indian women is also responsible for the various changes in their life.

Amongst 300 respondents; (75%) i.e. 3/4 respondents have accepted that with the process of modernization, urbanization & industrialization; the attitudes and parameters of Indian rural women have changed. This had led to breakup the joint family system in rural communities. Amongst 300 respondents 75(25%) respondents have accepted that the increase in education, the Indian rural women are performing their family duties properly.

Amongst 300 respondents 139(46.33%) have told that the feeling of self pride & the capacity to decision-making have developed in them. They believe in small families. They are contributing & performing active part in the development & progress of their families.

In this way we can say that the achieved status and role of women in society is changing day by day; for that the modern education, occupational mobility & change in economic interest are especially responsible factors. Now-these-days; (a) there is no difference between male & female in the family affairs (b) Economics & Social positions of the families of service holder women are high in comparison to others (c) The educated working women & female students spend their holidays freely and they do their pending works in the holidays (d) Rural women are doing jobs due to their individual desires, personal attitudes, the curiosity for getting higher position in society; for utilizing the time, do to the economic help of their families and to take the benefit of their education etc.

The un-married women respondents are desirous for getting jobs due to; to get better life partner, for economic help of the family, for better life & better livelihood, desires of the parents & self-desires & to get benefit of her education. It is noteworthy that the women become highly curious to get much more money because they want to stand on their feet. Amongst 300 respondents; 273(91%) respondents are found to be self depend because :

- (1) The family members do not support financially at the time of needs.
- (2) For the smooth & proper running of their families.
- (3) To take benefit of her education & self motivation.

- (4) Not to be financially supported by husband, parents, guardians & family members.
- (5) The guardians do not give financial support at the time of necessity & for the better career of the children.

Before, and after Independence several acts & constitutional provisions have been passed to improve the socio-economic and political conditions of women. Some important acts are described as follows :

Social legislation can be affective means of social change, if there is awareness and knowledge of social legislation among public. But in this investigation the lack of awareness is found in women especially in illiterates regarding social legislations. Therefore, the need of awareness is essential in women of rural communities because they are of traditionally & conservative thinking. From the field survey & study of 300 rural women respondents the researcher has observed :

- (1) The lack of knowledge towards the social legislations is found among illiterate & uneducated women in comparison to the educated women.
- (2) The consciousness is found among the rural women to get their legal rights.
- (3) The consciousness is increasing with education among the rural women regarding the social legislations.
- (4) The rural women have become aware & conscious towards their rights through social legislations.
- (5) The status of rural women, have become better due to the impact of social legislations.
- (6) The social legislations are helpful to check the social disorganization.
- (7) To improve the status of rural women; the knowledge of social legislations; is essential.
- (8) The lack of knowledge about the specific social legislations especially made for women, is the result of various disabilities spread among them.

- (9) The level of awareness regarding the social legislations is increasing with the level of education in the rural women.
- (10) The level of consciousness towards social legislations is found more in scheduled castes & among the women of general categories in comparison to the women of the backward castes.
- (11) The women of all the caste categories, marital status, income and age groups are found in the favour of the implementation of the social legislations made for the uplift of the women.
- (12) The social legislations are helpful to check the social disorganization.
- (13) Due to the awareness & consciousness; the tendency to move the courts for justice is increasing among 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

- Increase in Social Participation
- Increase in Women Entrepreneurship
- Increase in religious participation
- Increase in awareness in Political participation
- Involvement in health sector 'ASHA' workers
- Involvement in village health sanitation committee
- Mahila Mandal
- SAKSHAR Mahila Samooh etc.

Change in Institutional Behaviour (with respect to the marriage & family institutions)

- Change in the marital & family status
- Increase in love, inter-caste & inter-religious marriages
- Change in Property rights
- Change in Beliefs & rituals
- Change in Social Values
- Changes in Normative Patterns etc.

Other Changes

- Increase in Education
- Increase in awareness
- Increase in individual recognition etc.

As stated earlier, illiteracy is the villain of piece. There is no denying of the fact better education and vocational training will improve their potential. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) has come out with a major programme of socio-economic advancement for women; which will help them in setting up training-cum-production Centres. Many other Voluntary Social Organization (VSOs) have also come in the field. Tirade against the social evils like dowry, brid-burning, child-marriage & prostitution have been started. As the rule; the exploitation of women in any form is punishable under the law.

Today it is seen that the law grants immense power to the women. She has the right of equal status in social, cultural, economic and political fields. What was lacking; was the will at her own part of claim equality with them. It was the world of her own disbelief and ignorance which always kept her as the shadow of her man. As such the first step towards up-gradation is to educate her & Mack her conscious to her position and status. Though education in India is free and compulsory; yet she is not able to permit her children, especially the girls; to attend the school in rural areas. The irony of the situation is that inspite of the protection provided by the law; she remains unprotected.

Before and after independence, the various efforts were made to encourage the position & social status of Indian women. But not achieving the positive consequences the special efforts & provisions were also made under certain strategies through 'The Five Year' plans. In each five year plan various development schemes were launched & implemented for the development & progress of the rural women; so that their socio-economic, educational and political status may be improved; and they may give their contribution in the main stream of nation-building. To encourage and enhancement of their socio-economic status and position; the various **Women Welfare Organizations*** and **Rural Development Programmes**** were also launched time to time, even then desired success in desired directions could not be achieved till today.

If the present government is really serious to improve the status of rural women; it has to take up radical steps to implement the national

perspective plan for rural women which will ultimately help to achieve the goal of the rural development programmes. The past experience shows that women are protected by law only on paper, while in practice discrimination on the basis of sex is the rule. The economic & social status of women could only be improved & raised; if they come forward and fight against discrimination every where; and put pressure on the concerned authorities to tackle the issue in the right perspective.

All the hypotheses formulated regarding the study problem; are found empirically and statistically true and significant; therefore in the light of the facts and findings it may be concluded that :

- (1) The positive changes are becoming in social and family status of rural women due to the impact of urbanization, rural development programmes and social legislations.

*CARE⁵ = Co-operative for American Relief Every where

NCWI = National Council of Women in India

AMSHI = Association for Moral and Social Hygiene in India

YWCAI = Young Women’s Christians Association of India

KGNMT = Kastoorba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

AIWEFA = All Indian Women’s Education Fund Association

FUW = Federation of University Women

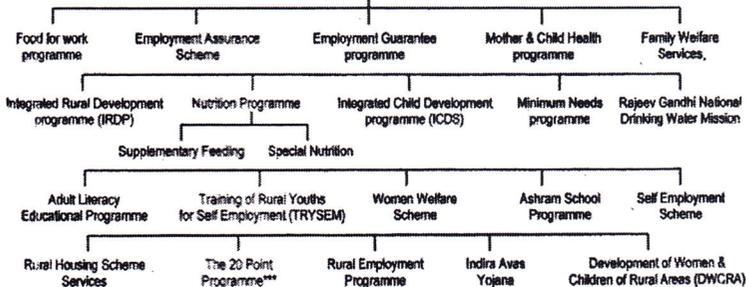
TNAI = Trained Nurses Association of India

NPAW = National Plan of Action for Women

NIPCCD = National Institute of Public Co-operation & Child

Development

****‘Rural Development Programme’⁶ which are enhancing the status of rural women :**



*****The 20 Point Programme⁷ envisaged by the (Late) Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi, lays specific stress, besides other points, on the equality of women. With a view to achieve the desired goal, the scheme has been described as the road to the destination. Some of the important targets which have received attention at all levels are :**

- (1) Raising the status and position of rural women.**
 - (2) Highlighting the specific problems.**
 - (3) Creation of mass consciousness about the status of women.**
 - (4) Provision of training and facilities of employment.**
 - (5) Participation of women in the nation building activities.**
 - (6) Creation of mass hysteria against dowry and social exploitation of women.**
- (2) The social and family position of un-employed rural women is found low in comparison to employed rural women.**
 - (3) The rural women are found desirous and aware to get employment.**
 - (4) The awareness regarding to get education, is found among the rural women.**
 - (5) The attitudes of rural women are changing regarding the utility of education.**
 - (6) Now-a-days; the rural women are aware towards their rights.**
 - (7) The joint families are disorganizing due to the impact of urbanization and social legislations in rural society.**
 - (8) The behaviour patterns, life style, capacity to take decision and the feelings of family adjustment have changed among the rural women.**
 - (9) The feelings to become economic-independent have developed in rural women.**
 - (10) Rural women want equal co-operation from their husbands in domestic works.**
 - (11) Now-these-days; love, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are in practice in rural society.**

- (12) The positive impact of rural development programmes is seen on rural women.
- (13) Now-a-days, tradition and modernity are in transition in rural society.
- (14) Due to the impact of urbanization and un-touchability act: 1956, the feelings of un-touchability are abolishing among the ruralists.
- (15) The rate of physical assaults and mental exploitation have decreased on rural women due to the effectiveness of 'The domestic violence act- 2006'.
- (16) The cases of atrocities (abusing, assaults, rape, murder), divorce and dowry-exploitation have increased in rural communities due to urbanization.
- (17) Law is a tool for social change.

References

- Agrawal, Manju, "A Silent Revolution : Women in Grassroots Democracy", Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2004.*
- Baviskar, B.S., "Impact of Women's Participation in Local Governance in Rural India", Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, 2003.*
- Datta, Prabhat, "Major Issues in the Development Debate : Lessons in Empowerment from India", Kanishka Publications, New Delhi, 1998.*
- Mathur, P.K. and Fasahat Shamoan, "Quest for Women Empowerment : 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and Its Implementation", Mohammed Shabbir (ed.), Human Rights in the 21st Century, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2008, pp. 353-369.*
- Ravi, R. Venkata and P. Shiva Ram, "Empowering Rural in India", Kanishka Publications, New Delhi, 2006.*
- Singh, Anupama, "Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development", Kanishka Publications, New Delhi, 2008.*
- Singh, D.P., Manjit Singh (eds.), "Women and Empowerment", Unistar Publishers, Chandigarh, 2005.*