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IJMASRI, Vol. 2, issue 1, pp. 32-37, Apr. -2025

<https://doi.org/10.53633/ijmasri>

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY
ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
(IJMASRI)**

ISSN: 2582-9130

IBI IMPACTFACTOR 1.5

DOI: 10.53633/IJMASRI

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NEW APPROCHES IN GENDER STUDIES ON PANOMANIV VIEW

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Abstract

Gender studies, on the other hand, are a separate discipline that has brought half of the population into the spotlight of historical studies, which were previously gender blind or just male. Women are now widely acknowledged to receive little or no attention in mainstream historical literature. One argument is that traditional history has tended to focus on male-dominated domains of human activity such as politics, military, and diplomacy, in which women played little or no involvement. The presence and absence of women from sources must be noted, examined, and fought over before theorizing. Certain artifacts that are closely tied to women's life or express thoughts about the female principle are extremely important. Women had equal status and held an honorable place in society during India's prehistoric or earliest known civilization, the Indus Valley civilization. According to various archeological or historical sources, the deities of the Indus Valley people were largely "mother goddesses" with a matrilineal structure. It demonstrates the strong and highly respected standing of women in the Indus Valley. The society is governed by a patrilineal system in which descent and inheritance are tracked down to the male line and men generally control the distribution of family resources. These Indian traditions and lifestyles have been in place for so long that women have grown accustomed to and expect them.

Keywords: Gender Historiography, Early India, Ancient India, Archaeological perspective

Introduction

Historiography saw tremendous transformations in the twentieth century, particularly following World War II, and the importance of women's history is now recognized to some degree.

Political history was supplanted and challenged by socio-cultural history, which broadened perspectives on theoretical breakthroughs and introduced new fields into historiography, most notably gender history, which resulted in women's history. Gender studies, on the other hand, are a separate discipline

that has brought half of the population into the spotlight of historical studies, which were previously gender blind or just male. Women are now widely acknowledged to receive little or no attention in mainstream historical literature. One argument is that traditional history has tended to focus on male-dominated domains of human activity such as politics, military, and diplomacy, in which women played little or no involvement. Conventional history textbooks only included women who successfully performed male roles or who were adored by famous men. Women's history emerged as an independent discipline in the 1960s and 1970s because traditional historical writing has minimized and ignored the contributions of women, as well as the effects of historical events on women as a whole. In this regard, women's history is frequently aimed at historical revisionism, seeking to challenge the traditional historical consensus.

Because men made up the bulk of early scientists, scholars, and historians, history books ignored many facets of society. Childbirth, menstruation, women's work, transgenders, housing, and other issues were not thoroughly covered. Rather than providing a holistic picture of the past, historical writing focused on specialized themes, such as politics and the diverse roles of men. Women were consigned to one corner of the chapter, with only a paragraph or two dedicated to the "status and position of women." Even the details of these paragraphs were remarkably similar. This gave the impression that men owned history (and so society, politics, the economy, and all culture), whereas women were only a little static unit to be acknowledged individually. Of course, there were few outliers, but they were extremely unusual. This practice is being remedied, and women's roles and presence are being incorporated into all aspects of historical inquiry.

SOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING GENDER HISTORY

Sources are the foundation of historical writing. From tiny prehistoric items to complex literature, everything can be used to better comprehend women's lives and responsibilities throughout history. The presence and absence of women from sources must be noted, examined, and fought over before theorizing. Certain artifacts that

are closely tied to women's life or express thoughts about the female principle are extremely important. These include, but are not limited to, female figurines, art pieces, literature attributed to, authored, or collated by women, monuments built by or for women, numerous artifacts related to their lifestyle, objects connected with women because of their cultural roles, and so on.

It is critical to understand the sources in light of political structures, social conditions, economic activities, and other contemporaneous ideas and organizations. Also, one must be alert to the spatial context and semantic changes that a text has undergone throughout time. Textbooks have restrictions. These must be rigorously examined in order to comprehend gender history. Uma Chakravarti correctly pointed out that most of the early gender history was a 'partial vision from above'. This referred to the use of selective textual sources that focused solely on women's relational identities. There were a few outliers. Inter-disciplinary studies that draw on sources and methodologies from anthropology, art history, ethnography, literary studies, and other disciplines can reveal broader historical trends and gendered roles.

WOMEN'S HISTORY IN INDIA

In India, women's history began as a form of reclamation. It has moved in the direction suggested by the titles of key works produced in English during the 1970s. Because women were 'hidden from history,' the purpose was to 'raise Clio's consciousness' by 'liberating women's history' from ignorance and neglect, and as a result, women in history were 'becoming visible' in the resulting work. In recent years, our view on the past has expanded dramatically. History is no longer just about monarchs and rulers exercising power; it also includes regular women and men working in a range of jobs. Women's history contends that women have a history, albeit one that has been distorted, if not entirely erased, by the biases that pervade our culture and scholarship. We must view women as political actors, reformers and revolutionaries seeking identity in their country, class, and themselves. Women must be visible as producers, peasants, laborers, craftsmen, domestic servants, and in their family roles as wives, daughters, and mothers.

Women historians are interested in the whole of women's lives.

GENDER HISTORIOGRAPHY

Among the many tales constructed by British colonial authorities to disparage Indian civilization and culture, the situation of Indian women became a primary focus. Various societal problems that made the lives of women unpleasant were highlighted, and efforts were made to implement 'reforms.' Sati, child marriages, imposed widowhood, polygamy, dowry, educational and economic inequalities, purdah (ghoonghat), and many other customs dominated during the colonial period, making women's lives arduous and pitiable. Some practices harmed women from better social and economic homes, while others caused unhappiness for poorer women. Many social reform groups were formed in the nineteenth century to address these challenges, with input from Indian reformers, British officials, and other Europeans. These efforts to improve the position of women constituted a significant and welcome improvement. Women's standing became essential to discussions about country building and national character. The contentious subject of women's status became a symbolic battleground for various historians. They might either be guarded by nationalists or saved by British or Indian reformers.

WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIAN LITERATURE

The sacred literature of Hinduism encourages for women to be honored and cherished. Many Hindu scriptures depict the honour and respect paid upon women. It is said that a woman should be loved, fed, and cared for. These viewpoints are common in ancient Indian religious and semi-religious writings. We have numerous stories of loyal, dedicated, and faithful wives. For example, Sita is regarded as a wonderful model of Indian womanhood, having followed Rama into exile and endured numerous difficulties. Similarly, Savitri accompanied her husband Satyavan when he was dragged away by the god of death, 'Yama', and the deity had to release her husband since he was impressed with his wife 'Savitri's loyalty'.

PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

Women had equal status and held an honorable place in society during India's prehistoric or earliest known civilization, the Indus Valley civilization. According to various archeological or historical sources, the deities of the Indus Valley people were largely "mother goddesses" with a matrilineal structure. It demonstrates the strong and highly respected standing of women in the Indus Valley.

EARLY VEDIC OR RIG VEDIC AGE

The Vedic civilization can be divided into two periods: early Vedic or Rig Vedic (1500BC to 1000BC) and later Vedic (1000BC to 600BC). Even though Indian civilization transitioned from a matriarchal to a patriarchal system during the Vedic age, women were treated properly in the early Rig Vedic period. Though the birth of males was preferred and welcomed, the birth of daughters was neither condemned nor looked upon. The delivery of a girl child was not viewed as a liability. There were no incidences of infanticide reported. The Vedas gave women dignified status since they were allowed to gain religious instruction and perform rites and sacrifices.

They were allowed to practice religion, but not to become priests. Women were often discouraged from pursuing religious or ascetical practices. Women were free to choose their spouses, and marriage was not mandatory for them. A Gurukul performed the 'Upanayana' ceremony to teach students the Vedas. Some women are also believed to have written Rig Vedic hymns. Avviyar, an early poetess from the Tamil area of South India, left a significant body of literary work. During this time, numerous learned women, like Gosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Indrani, Maitreyi, and Gargi, participated in political, intellectual, and philosophical discussions and debates.

WOMEN'S HISTORIOGRAPHY IN ANCIENT INDIA

We may find allusions to the role of women in Indian history dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished in the northwestern region of India between 3000 BC and 1500 BC.

According to historical evidence, ties with humans were governed by the social nature of production and consumption. Men and women had equal status in food production and family relationships. Women worked and contributed to their families in the same way that men did. Nature was commonly referred to as 'mother'. The matrilineal system persisted for a long time, and women appear to have achieved a higher rank than men.

Women had an extremely important status in ancient India, vastly superior to men at the time. "Shakti" is a feminine noun that means "power" and "strong." According to literary texts, monarchs and towns were destroyed because the rulers were preoccupied with a single woman. According to the Valmiki Ramayana, Ravana and his entire kingdom were destroyed because he took Sita. According to Veda Vyasa's Mahabharata, all of the Kauravas were killed because they publicly mocked Draupadi. Elango Adigal's Sillapathigaram teaches us that Madurai, the Pandya capital, was burned because Pandyan Nedunchezhiyan accidentally injured Kannagi.

POSITION OF WOMEN IN EARLY INDIA

The Vedic corpus is the oldest literary tradition on the Indian subcontinent (and the world). There are numerous fascinating references to women in diverse roles throughout the four Samhitas and the Upanishads. Some of these women have left an indelible mark on the cultural legacy and are commemorated in many ceremonial and social situations. The Vedic corpus mentions their names, stories, some of the most revered songs, and other intriguing details. Women are mentioned to not only in terms of societal roles, but also as the authors of many significant hymns. In addition to feminine and masculine characters, the Vedic corpus has a number of neuter characters and categories. The Vedic literature has been divided into two categories: early Vedic and later Vedic. The Rigvedic society and polity appear to be thriving, and the agro-pastoral economy is intertwined with strong kinship bonds. Women and men participated in society, the economy, and politics. Some of the most revered hymns, such as the Gayatri mantra, are attributed to women. Various

natural occurrences are portrayed as Goddesses, to whom prayers are made.

While quantitative research reveals the dominance of Indra, Agni, Varuna, and other male gods, the goddesses' strength and stature are also firmly established. Women make their own life choices and participate in decision-making bodies in both the divine and temporal worlds. Women participated in all three Vedic sociopolitical assemblies: Sabha, Samiti, and Vidhata. They had access to education and were even actively involved in knowledge development. They could choose to be Brahmavadins with or without marriage. As a result, there is no reason to suppose they were limited to their home and hearth.

ANCIENT WOMEN IN POLITICS

In ancient India, royal ladies had an important part in politics. For example, Megasthenes noted the Pandya women who govern the Tamil region's administration. In the Satavahana kingdom of today's Andhra region, a queen named Nayanika governed on behalf of her small son. Similarly, Pravabati, Chandragupta II's daughter, reigned on behalf of her minor Vakataka prince. During the post-Gupta period, queens governed in numerous regions, including Kashmir, Odisha, and Andhra. In ancient India, royal ladies played a significant role in politics. Megasthenes, for example, noted the Pandya women in charge of the Tamil region's governance. In the Satavahana kingdom of today's Andhra region, a queen named Nayanika ruled on behalf of her young son. Similarly, Chandragupta II's daughter, Pravabati, ruled on behalf of her minor Vakataka prince. During the post-Gupta period, queens ruled in a variety of states, including Kashmir, Odisha, and Andhra.

WOMEN'S HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

During the medieval period, women's history appears to have been liberated from ignorance and neglect, and they have grown more 'visible'; nonetheless, this time has been the topic of considerable controversy among researchers. The early medieval period is seen as a gloomy period in Indian history, marked by a collapse in trade, the

metal economy, and urban centers. However, subsequent study has revealed that this time was characterized by a resurgence of trade and urbanization. Changes in society have a considerably different impact on women's positions than they do on men's lives in the same class or social group. A variety of inscriptional and literary sources provide information about women's roles throughout this time period. In addition, there are literary and epigraphic sources for studying women's status during the medieval period. The utilization of both literary and epigraphical sources aids in the reconstruction of women's history since they provide integrated information on a wide range of concerns and themes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER STUDIES

Broad claims or generalizations concerning the status of women in early India have proven controversial. It is critical to study texts in a nuanced approach in order to comprehend the position of women. There are many different voices, and one single paradigm of interpretation cannot fit them. Furthermore, it is critical to be aware of the Western attitude toward women as subservient and voiceless. The ideal technique is to conduct piece-by-piece analysis. We should recognize that metacategories such as Hinduism, Tantra, and Women were not homogenous.

CONCLUSION

It is commonly known that women receive little to no attention in conventional historical writing. One explanation for this is that traditional history has tended to focus on male-dominated sectors of human activity, such as politics, warfare, and diplomacy, where women played little or no involvement. The only women who had a place in traditional history were those who effectively played male roles or those whom great men adored. Furthermore, India is a patriarchal society, which refers to societies in which males are regarded to be in charge and the formal heads of houses. The society is governed by a patrilineal system in which descent and inheritance

13. Women Empowerment in Indian Literature. SLBSRS Vidyapeetha, 21-30. ISBN 81-87987-78-2.

are traced down to the male line and men generally control the distribution of family resources. These Indian traditions and lifestyles have been in place for so long that women have grown accustomed to and expect them. Indian women do not fully use their constitutional rights since they are not aware or informed about them. Women are rarely encouraged to become aware about issues.

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