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Nari Shakti Vandan Act: A meaningful effort towards the social and economic upliftment of women

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Abstract

Indian civilization and culture is about 5000 years old. Women have always been revered in Indian culture. A saying has been prevalent in our culture since the beginning, 'Yatra Naryestu Pujyante, Ramante Tatra Devata', that is, where women are honored and respected, there reside the gods. Women have played an important role in the economic and political field and functioning of the family, society and nation since the beginning. Women have played a remarkable role in the empowerment of society and re-building of the nation. Women in India have made invaluable contributions from time to time in the social and political fields. History is witness to the fact that women have played an important role in the reconstruction of society and nation. Many economic, social, political and constitutional reforms have taken place in India after independence. The result of this is that from the Panchayat level to the Parliament, the representation of women is increasing every day and women have also become quite aware in the social and political fields, but the level at which women should have a role at the social and political level is not there yet. It has been possible. This Act will prove helpful in strengthening the political and economic sphere of women.

Keywords: *Upliftment, Women Empowerment, Strengthening Democracy and Implementation*

Introduction

Indian civilization and culture is about 5000 years old. Women have always been revered in Indian culture. A saying has been prevalent in our culture since the beginning, 'Yatra Naryestu Pujyante, Ramante Tatra Devata', that is, where women are honored and respected, there reside the gods. Women have played an important role in the economic and political field and functioning of the family, society and nation since the beginning. Women have played a remarkable role in the empowerment of society and re-building of the nation. Women in India have made invaluable contributions from time to time in the social and political fields. History is witness to the fact that women have played an important role in the reconstruction of society and nation. Many economic, social, political and constitutional reforms have taken place in India after independence. The result of this is that from the Panchayat level to the Parliament, the representation of women is increasing every day and women have also become quite aware in the social and political fields, but the level at which women should have a role at the social and political level is not there yet. It has been possible. This Act will prove helpful in strengthening the political and economic sphere of women[1]. Through this, women will be able to register their influential role at the social and political level.

The Nari Shakti Vandan Act-2023, which has been passed by the Central Government, will

have visible positive effects on the political and social level of women and women will be successful in establishing an influential role in their field of politics. Women play an important role in the new construction of any country and society. Women play an important role in making the family and society cultured and civilized. It is not possible to make any work successful without the role of women. In this context, some scholars say that this Act will prove important in providing a new direction to the society. Positive results will be visible to the society in terms of political and economic upliftment of women. Women play a remarkable role in the upliftment of any civilized society and nation. If women progress in social, political and economic fields, then definitely our political and social system will become much stronger[2]. Only when women become empowered, our society and country will become strong. In this context, the need to create political awareness on a large scale is also being felt. A strong and successful nation cannot be imagined without the awareness of the society.

The Nari Shakti Vandan Act was presented in the Lok Sabha on 19th September 2023 in the new Parliament House. After being passed in the Lok Sabha on 20th September, it was passed in the Rajya Sabha on 21st September. After this, this bill was approved by President Draupati Murmu. 21st September has become an important historical day in the context of Nari Shakti Vandan Act. This Act was passed unanimously by both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The 128th Constitutional Amendment Bill for women's reservation was passed first in the Lok Sabha and then in the Rajya Sabha, but it will take some time for it to become law. It was supported by all the members and all the parties in the Rajya Sabha. But some Political parties have demanded that OBC quota should also be included in it. It has also been said by some members that the government is taking time to make this Act a law, whereas this government is known to work at a fast pace. Just as decisions were taken quickly by the government regarding demonetization and Article 370, similarly why was there no haste in making the Nari Shakti Vandan Act a law. Why is it taking time? This Act is related to the sentiments of all the people and is related to women empowerment. Laws should be made rising above Political matters and no politics should be done over the Act, because women play an incomparable role in the political, social and economic structure. Women should move forward strongly in the social, Political and economic fields through this Act, such action plans should be set by the government.

Some challenges before Nari Shakti Vandan Act

Nari Shakti Vandan Act will definitely prove to be a milestone in the direction of women empowerment[3]. Questions are also arising in the minds of some intellectuals whether mere provision of reservation will bring visible changes in the status of women. It is necessary to identify the diverse and similar forms of women's reservation which are patriarchal and exclude women from public life[4]. The need for such a law was being felt from the very beginning to advance women power in the country's democracy. Even after seven decades of independence, the expected results are not visible in the social, political and economic status of women. In this context, it has also been said by some scholars that when the new Parliament was being inaugurated, Singol, a symbol of good governance, was established at the time of inauguration. Even at the time of its establishment, the woman President of India was not invited. The woman President and women from both the opposition and the govt. side should have been invited without any discrimination, which would have been a good measure from the point of view of women's respect.

The social status of women should be strengthened and women should be empowered in such a way that they can live in the society with respect and maintain their existence. It is the constitutional right of women to move forward with a respectful thinking. This participation in our MPs and Assemblies has never been more than 15%. The policy makers of our country should focus on ensuring that half of the country's popula-

tion gets respect and women move ahead with strength. Women's participation in politics is 20% in Pakistan, 30% in Nepal, 30% in Bangladesh, which is more than us. The world average in this case is 26%. Thus it can be said that India is ranked 144th in the world in this respect. The highest number of women members in the seventeenth Lok Sabha is 82. Many political thinkers say in this context that all the political parties have welcomed the bill, but they themselves are never able to provide 33% tickets to women in their parties, so it is also a question to be considered that all political parties why don't provide at least 33% reservation to women in Lok Sabha, Assembly and local elections.

Many positive steps have been taken by previous governments

The total number of members till the 17th Lok Sabha is fixed at 543 and the number of elected women MPs is 82. After the implementation of this law, the number of women members will increase to 181. Along with this, the provision of 33% reservation for women will also be implemented in the state assemblies[5]. It will definitely increase after delimitation. Then women will be able to get more representation in the House. Elected women MPs will also be able to raise demands in the interest of women from time to time. Many positive steps have been taken by previous governments also in the context of women empowerment. Many steps were also taken by the Rajiv Gandhi government to give representation to women in the Panchayati Raj system. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave the historic call for complete Swaraj on the banks of river Ravi in 1929, he would never have imagined that after 60 years, Rajiv Gandhi would present Complete Swaraj at the doorstep of every village. In the year 1989, the birth centenary of Pandit Nehru, the Panchayati Raj and Municipalities Bill was introduced by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to strengthen and secure the foundation of parliamentary democracy gifted to the people of India by the Founders of India, who there has been a radical change in the social, economic and political system of the country.

In December 1985, Rajiv Gandhi, while delivering a speech on the centenary of Congress in Mumbai, presented his perspective of the Bharat Nirman Movement. He made it clear that the country needs politics of service to the poor. The country needs politics based on ideology and programs. To make this a reality, we will have to break the nexus between political parties and vested interests. The power to shape their lives should rest with the people, not bureaucrats and experts. A vibrant Gram Panchayat should discuss, deliberate and decide on the options to be chosen. Rajiv Gandhi realized that no program of rural development could be truly implemented without the active participation of the local people. He did an excellent job of strengthening democracy at the grassroots level by introducing the Panchayat Raj Bill and the Municipality Bill. These laws envisage a direct transfer of power to the people along with resources and rights in the manner they deem best. This revolutionary effort was blocked by members of the joint opposition in the Rajya Sabha after it was passed in the Lok Sabha.

After Congress returned to power in 1991, these provisions were passed. It would be appropriate to remember here that Pandit Nehru had to face strong opposition even before passing the Hindu Code Bill. The Hindu Code Bills were a series of laws passed in India in the 1950s, intended to reform and modernize Hindu personal law. This bill was introduced in the Indian Parliament by the then Law Minister Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. The Hindu Code Bill sought to reform various aspects of Hindu personal law, including marriage, divorce, inheritance and property rights. Before the passage of the Hindu Code Bill, Hindus were governed by a complex system of personal laws, customs and traditions, which often discriminated against women. Women had limited property rights and were subject to male control in matters of marriage and divorce. The bill sought to eliminate this discriminatory effect and provide greater legal protection to women. The most important aspect of the Hindu Code Bill was the insertion of the Hindu Marriage Act, which provided for monogamous marriage. Permitted

divorce on specified grounds and established legal rights of married women. Through the Act women gained the right to own property, inherit property from their parents and demand alimony in case of divorce.

Child marriage and dowry system were also banned through the Hindu Marriage Act. It required registration of marriages and made key provision for the appointment of marriage officers to oversee the registration process. The Act also established minimum age requirements for women, setting the legal age of marriage at 18 for girls and 21 for boys. The Hindu Succession Act which was also included in the Hindu Code Bill provided equal inheritance rights for daughters. Before this law was passed, daughters had limited inheritance rights and were often excluded from family property. This discrimination was abolished through the Act and the right to inherit goods was provided for sons as well as daughters. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act which was a part of the Hindu Code Bill. By this the age of adulthood was established for Hindus and the mother was given the right to act as the natural guardian of her children. The Act also recognized the important role that mothers play in the upbringing of their children and gave them the legal right to make decisions on behalf of their children.

The passage of the Hindu Code Bill is seen as a landmark event in Indian history, as it was an important step in the struggle for gender equality and women's rights. The bill helped establish legal rights for women in a society that had traditionally discriminated against them and set the stage for further reforms in the decades to come. The Hindu Code Bill also faced opposition from conservative elements within the Hindu community. Who argued that it was a violation of their religious and cultural traditions. Opposition to the bill was led by the Hindu Mahasabha, a right-wing Hindu nationalist organization. It was also opposed by many members of the ruling party Indian National Congress at that time. Despite this opposition, the Hindu Code Bill was eventually passed in Parliament in various forms. The passage of the bill represents a significant victory for women's rights activists, who have campaigned for decades to reform Hindu personal law.

The most important part of the bills in favor of women's rights is also the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments enacted on 24 April 1993[6], which was the clause related to reservation of 33% seats for women. At present, after 7 decades, there are many bodies in which there are lakhs of elected women representatives. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have proved to be a milestone in the direction of women empowerment. In this, women from rural areas have started coming into the political field and have started working actively at the local level. Many women are working on the basis of their ability and talent by becoming Panch, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti member and Pradhan. This has been a very positive effort towards women empowerment. Many women representatives are successfully discharging all the household work as well as social and political responsibilities.

Women are Playing a Decisive Role in the Democratic Systems

If we talk about women power, it is clear that the first woman Prime Minister of India was Indira Gandhi, who has increased the respect of India not only at the national but also at the international level. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil was the first woman President of India. This is also seen as a bold and meaningful step at the national and international level. It can definitely be said that this Act will prove to be helpful in bringing many positive results in the political, social and economic status of women. Women have had a special role in Indian culture since the beginning. Along with family, social and political work is also being done by women with great strength. Women are playing a very important and decisive role in the democratic systems in all the present countries. Smt. Indira Gandhi also known as Iron Lady. She has been a strong woman Prime Minister of India, who has hoisted the flag of Indian democracy not only in India but at the global level.

From local to National level, women are working with great strength. These days, even in local

elections, women are being elected and they have influence in the social and political systems. This is a good sign for the future of Indian democracy. It is a great pleasure to know and see that even today in many homes, daughters are managing the economy of the house. Nowadays, in many homes, the keys to the cupboard are with the daughters and the entire economic system is managed by the daughters. Women are moving forward in political and economic fields. Women are being given equal status in the society, but till now the awareness has not reached the level at which it should come. There is a widespread lack of awareness at the social and political level, especially in rural areas. It will take time to close the current gap between men and women, but it is certain that if we work with strong political will, every goal can be easily achieved.

Regarding the place of MPs, it has been described in the Indian Constitution, in which it is clear that on the basis of increasing population, the boundaries of the constituencies will be determined from time to time to make the electoral process completely democratic. It will be very important to delimit the places, which can be done on the basis of actual census. There is a clear mention in the Constitution that the electoral process can be made democratic on the basis of increasing population. For this it is necessary to delimit the boundaries of the constituency. This delimitation can be based on population. According to Article 82, a Delimitation Act can be made by the Parliament after every census[7]. According to Article 170, the states are divided into constituencies according to the Delimitation Act after every census[8].

In the context of the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, some thinkers are expressing concern that the future will determine how positive results will be visible in the political, economic and social status of women after reservation is finalized. They clearly believes that capable women should be fielded in elections even on general seats. Capable women cannot be kept within the ambit of certain seats. If women have talent and ability, they can contest elections even on general seats and win. Even before this, many women have been winning elections from general seats and are showing their talent in the Houses . From time to time, issues are raised by them in the interest of women and they are also resolved. It is being seen in rural areas that women do become Panch, Sarpanch, Pradhan or Panchayat Samiti members, but in their place the work is done by their husbands, brothers and relatives. Some apprehension is also being expressed that women will be elected from certain seats, so it should not happen that instead of them, their representative should conduct their work and influence the policies.

Conclusion

It can be said that it is necessary to strengthen women politically and socially at the ground level and this is also the need of the hour. At a time women confined including sexual satisfaction, reproduction, care of children and the elderly and to the kitchen, Now women have made strides in all areas[10]. Social, economic and political upliftment of women will be possible only when women are provided a free environment to work fully. At present, women are participating in all the tasks ranging from small household tasks to big tasks, from policy making to governance[10]. If women work independently and impartially with their full potential and talent, then definitely the results will be good. Women have proved this from time to time. Women have done very good work on the basis of their talent and ability. History is witness to the fact that women have changed the history of democracy on their own. The political and geographical form of Pakistan was changed by Indira Gandhi in 1971. When appropriate number of women will sit in the Houses, our democratic system will definitely be strengthened and our culture which has been going on since ancient times, which has given a lot of priority and respect to women, will be strengthened to a greater extent.

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