

THE GLOBAL NATURE OF SLAVERY AND WOMEN: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

Mr. Mansing Vitthal Thombare

Abstract: The present research paper deals with the status of slavery and women in the new age, where we are living (living or ruling?). Slavery which was existed in world in ancient-medieval-modern time is abolished by law (only), but it is still remained in the mind of human being and every corner of society. The researcher intends to open the eye of so called human beings on SLAVERY by exploring that slavery is not demolished or eradicated, but it is rooted in the society and replaced by different names, labels and concepts.

Keywords: Slavery, SHE, Historiography, women and transgender

Introduction: Can we say that the whole world is free from slavery today? Everyone may have different opinions and those opinions will revolve around the answer to the question 'What is slavery?' What is slavery? Absolute lack of freedom means slavery! The one who is completely paralyzed is a slave! A slave who has no right to his own body! We call a slave a person who cannot speak, walk, or behave as ss/he pleases.

Slavery is an ancient institution. Its nature is eternal. However, this pattern is changing in different ways. Slavery is not completely abolished. So its nature has been changed. Slavery has existed since ancient times, even in today's age of technology and science and robots. Its existence is being felt at all levels of society. Human beings belonging to the class of Shudras and Atishudras in the society have to suffer the most from slavery. In a country like India, Dalits and in a country like Africa, Negroes were enslaved as much as possible. Whoever is a slave is persecuted immensely but the most mental and physical persecution is faced by women and transgender.

A Slave is any human being who is under the absolute control of a master and is considered by the latter as his property.¹

In every human society, the rule is '*Jisaki lathi, usaki bhains*'. We have to accept that slavery is an integral part of the ancient-medieval-modern world. Greece, Rome, Babylon, Egypt, Japan, China, India, Southeast Asian countries all had slavery in their ancient cultures. In these countries, slavery was recognized by law and society.

Ancient Greece was a democracy. In Greece, Athens, Sparta, and Thebes were municipal states that were governed by democratic principles. Greek society was completely

¹ Dev Raj Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, P.1

dependent on slavery. There was a society in Greece where the institution of slavery was necessary for the progress of understanding at a certain stage of social development. And even today the institution of slavery appears in this society under a hidden agenda and the chief slave is naturally made a woman. However, it has been labeled with different names.

The saga of the glory of Roman culture is well known. All roads go to Rome - it was proudly said. But this society also stands on the labor of slaves. Roman slavery was more brutal than Greek slavery. The Roman Empire is said to have enslaved fifteen million prisoners of war. Young girls were valued for their age, shape, color, and beauty, and women were sold as prostitutes. Children born to slave women were slaves. Female slaves were used for housework. Female slaves were also sexually assaulted. What makes the situation different today? Not only does the word 'slave' appear but it exists.

In fact, slavery is found in all religions and cultures. Its emergence in Hinduism dates back to Vedic times. The Rig Veda mentions slavery. The Bible and the Koran also mention slavery. Slavery also appears to exist in ancient cultures such as the Egypt.

In India, the Abolition of Slavery Act was passed in 1843, and similar laws came into existence in other countries, and it is true that slavery ended, but there was religious and social slavery in India and other countries too. Shudras are the victims of that slavery. Even more important is the fact that women are still victims of slavery. Just as the Shudras were denied their rights, so were the rights of women. They were denied the rights to education, property, and remarriage. Even though different laws have been passed today, these bad tendencies are still entrenched in this society. The trend of unwritten rules of 'what will society say?' has taken the form of slavery.

For some unfortunate women, marriage is a prison! SHE is a family worker. The whole family owns SHE. The husband has absolute power over her. Slaves should not be treated as unjustly as they (women) are today. Women are not independent in any stage of their lives. When SHE is a virgin SHE is subject to her father, when SHE is young SHE is subject to her husband, and when SHE is old SHE is subject to her son. In the name of culture and on the basis of unwritten social norms, a web of many bonds has been woven around women. Women are also held responsible for infertility and widowhood. A childless woman is widely condemned in society. They have to endure death. They are brutally denied 'femininity'. This is the kind of slavery.

In 1975, the United Nations declared the decade as "International Women's Decade". World conferences were held to discuss women's issues. Women's study centers were set up in universities. Seminars on women's issues were held around the world. The media gave it a

lot of publicity. Out of it revealed a terrible truth – ‘woman-slavery’. In all countries, in all religions and in all cultures, women have a secondary place. Not only that, they have been heavily exploited. They are slaves and prostitutes for Men. Prostitutes and prostitution have been around in every country since ancient times. This is a terrible form of slavery. It is a pity that the same questions remain today, and are being deliberately ignored.

John Stuart Mill uses the word 'subject' to describe this state of woman. The word 'subjection' means dependency, subordination, subjugation of another. The meaning of slavery is the same.²

Christianity is a liberal mind. There are many people in the world who believe in this religion. In this religion too, woman has been given a secondary place. The story of Adam and Eve is enough for us to understand this. Even in Jainism and Buddhism, women have not been treated equally. The Digambar sect of Jains denies woman the right to salvation. Gautama Buddha was not firstly to admit women into the Bhikkhusangha. At the urging of his favorite disciple (Anand), he admitted women into the Bhikkhusangha. Slavery is also mentioned in Buddhist literature.

Indian society was based on four *Varnas*. In this, the process of thinking independently was stopped for centuries due to the ban on education for Shudras and women. This is the special feature of Indian slavery. Slavery continues to this day. The action exists and the name is silent.

In Islam, female slaves were used only for sex as a sex doll. Muslim sultans, nobles, Nawabs, and landlords kept many slave women in their brothels. They enjoy it. Not only that, but the castrated slaves had to protect them so that they would not have intercourse with other men. This is an abominable aspect of Islamic slavery. And that is the essence of Islamic slavery.

Today's jihadist terrorism is rooted in the supremacy of Islam. Boko Haram, a religious terrorist group in Nigeria, has tortured 200 women in an unknown location, a recent incident. What if this is not slavery?

In 2014, Nadia Murad, a Jewish girl, was abducted by ISIS terrorists. They kidnapped five thousand women with her. All these women were physically and mentally abused. What to call it?

Conclusions: There are countless examples like these all over the world. Yet no one dares to call it slavery. The concept of democracy has evolved on a large scale today. Democracy is

² John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, 1869

based on the values of justice, equality, freedom and fraternity. In a democracy, slavery has no legal basis today, but what about society? the question remains.

Reference:

Chattopadhyay, Amal Kumar. *Slavery in India*. Calcutta: Nagarjun Press, 1959.

Dange, S. A. *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*. People's Publishing House, Delhi.

Macmunn, Sir George. *Slavery Through the Ages*. P. 230

Waghmare, Dr. Janardhan. *Gulami: Ek Drushtikshep*. Sugava Prakashan, Pune.

Waghmare, Dr. Janardhan. *American Nigro: Sahitya ani Sanskruti*. Padmagandha Prakashan, Pune.