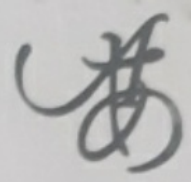




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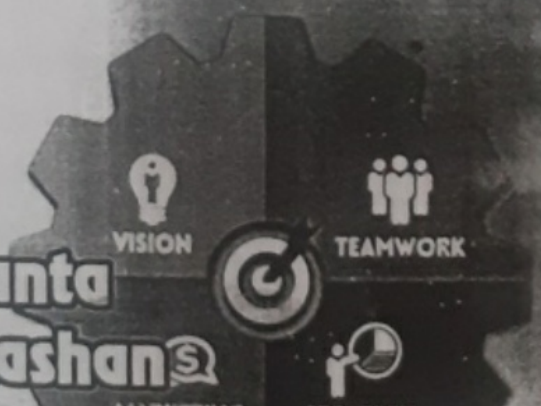


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17. The Great Debate on Widow Remarriage

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Introduction

The last three decades of the 19th century were an age of controversies and conflicts, which were carried out with great fire and fulmination. And Pune was battle-ground of this controversies, because it was both the centre of social reformers and the seat of orthodoxy. In all these controversies Tilak stood in opposition to the reformers such as M.G.Ranade Bhandarkar, Telang, Agarkar and others.

The Great Debate on Widow Remarriage – Vishanushastri Parshuram Pandit (1827-1876), an erudite Sanskrit scholar and staunch reformer was a great champion of widow remarriage. He founded the widow remarriage association with cooperation of Ranade and Lokhitavadi on 14th Dec. 1865. He was called “The vidyasagar of Maharashtra”. But Vishanushastri’s method differed from that of vidyasagar while the Bengali pandit sought government sanction for widow remarriage, Vishanushastri desired that in addition to legal sanction the sanction of the highest authority with jurisdiction in religious matters, the sankracharya of the Karaveer and Sankeshwar Math should be obtained for the reform. The reformists thought that this dual sanction would make social reform acceptable to all.

The founding of the widow remarriage not merely drew together the educated reformers and gave them a common frame-work of activity, it also formalised the division of opinion. In opposition to the association the orthodox section of Pune founded the Dharma Vyavasthapak Manali (society for the Hindu religion) under the leader of Pandurang Shivram Bhawe and Krishnashashtri Sathe. Vithoba Anna Daftardar (1813to 1873). A devotional poet and great debater was the chief spokesman of the mandali . he toured Maharashtra to present the orthodox viewpoint against social reform movement. In 1868 both Vishnushashtri Pandit and Daftardar give a spate of lecture at Pune expounding their opposing viewpoints they challenged each other to a public debate on the issue in the mean time the first remarriage took placed under the auspices of the widow remarriage Association on 15 June 1869 .a great commotion ensued excommunication was pronounced by the Hindu dharma Vyuavasthapak Mandali against the sponsors of the remarriage .eventually , a full scale debate between the two sides was organised

in the presence of the Shankaracharya , who acted as the mediator. Each had five well known shashris as jurors.

The widow remarriage side had 1. Krishnashashri Chiplunkar, 2.Ravjishashri Agashe, 3.Raghunathshashri Shende, 4. Keshavashashri Gadgil, Vyankatshashri Mate. On the orthodox side were 1.Bhikushashri Godbole ,2.Dinkarshashri Khambate ,3.Appashastri Khandilkar 4.Bhikacharya Ainapure

The reformers case was put up by Vishnushashri Pandit aided by Ranade and Bhandarkar and that of the opponents by Narayanacharya Gajendragadkar and Vithoba Anna daftardar .Krishnashashri Chiplunkar had to undergo penance to act as juror because he had taken tea with an English man .Bhandarkar the world renowned Sanskrit scholar, was not allowed sit as a juror as he belonged to the saraswat Brahman caste . but he belonged with Janardan Sakaram Gadgil assisted pandit and Ranade .

The Grand Council commenced in Pune on 20 March 1870 and continued for full nine days ' in the midst of steadily mounting excitement ' .a large audience including about 200 learned man from distant places such as Nagpur, Varanasi, Indore , and Gwalior attended the debate . finally the jurors cast their votes , six against and four in favour of widow remarriage , The Shankaracharya then pronounced his decision that widow remarriage , not being sanctioned by the scriptures ,was invalid and that among the three varnas viz. Brahman, kshtriya, and Vaishya, it was prohibited . the shankarachrya also confirmed the Ex communication of those who had taken part in the widow remarriage of 15 June 1869. It was later found that jurors Vyankatshashri Mate of the reformers side wad influenced by the Shankarachrya and under the threat of excommunication ,was forced to vote against the reformers side . the reformers , therefore maintained that the Shankaracharya had taken sides . Bitters recrimination followed culminating in a defamation suit filed by a reformer against an orthodox libeller resulting in 31 days imprisonment for the latter.

The widow remarriage association declared it had won a moral victory and Ranade in a paper , 'Vedic Authority for widow remarriage' , argued that the religious texts , in fact, did sanction window remarriage . Vishnushashri Pandit and Ranade did not yield and withstood excommunication. Yet, after the tempest over the debate was over , the cause of widow remarriage languished, giving a set back to the social reforms movement in general. But the movement launched in pune spread to other provinces. In Ahmedabad, the gujrathi reformers formed a widow Remarriage Association in 1872. In madras Presidency, Vireshingam

Pantulu(1848-1919) Founded the Rajamehendri social reform movement Association.in 1878and began his crushed against enforced widowhood .

Pandita Ramabai's Contribution for Widows-In Bombay she founded the sarda sadan, a home for widows ,on 11march 1889,but owing to high cost of running the sadan in Bombay, it was moved to Pune at the end of 1890. The home aimed at providing educational facilities for widows and destitute women of upper castes, On the opening day the sadan had two Imation of them Guddubai,a child widow, who later married D.K. Karve. The constitution of the Ramabai Sadan wold be completely secular.

Ramabai's sharda sadan had a mixed reception. While reformers like Ranade, Bhadarkar,Telang and Agarkar welcome her efforts and agreed to work on the advisory board of the sadan , the orthodox section were suspicious of her intentions .the missionaries also did not like her stand, as she herself expressed, "Missionaries as a rule do not like the idea of my school being wholly secular and the orthodox Hindu finds its repulsive to have me, a Christian outcast. for his daughters teacher."

Work of Dhondo Keshav karve-Indian social reformer and educator, noted for supportigthe education of women and for organising associations for the remarriageof hindu widows

While an instructor in mathematics (1891-1914) at Fergusson college Poona, Karve become concerned with broadened with breaking down orthodox Hindu opposition to widow remarriage and he established the widow remarriage. Association in 1893 In the same year he shocked public opinion by himself married a widow his first wife had died in 1891 karve also founded 1896 an education institution Hindu widow home, in Poona to help widow support themselves if they could not remarry Karave become increasingly concerned with illiteracy among women and on his retirement from fergusson college he started Shreemati Nathibai Domodar Thackersey women university in 1916. He later widened his Social reform effort to include the establishment of societies for village primary education and the abolition of caste Karave autobiography was entitled on his 100 birthday he was awarded India's highest honour the Bharat Ratna.

Objective

The aim of the study is to analyse the specific issues related to the problem of widow, to study the impact of widow remarriage and its consequence in the society and to find out the change it broughams a new dimension of social change in India

- 1) To use a tool for the measurement of social Economic and personal problem of widows

- 2) To construct a standardized scale for the measurement of socio economic status of widow
- 3) To compare the socio economic and personal problem of educated and uneducated widows
- 4) To compare the socio Economic status of educated and uneducated widows
- 5) To identify the problem in widow remarriage
- 6) To suggest measures within the present socio cultural framework in order to improve the condition of the widow

Conclusion

this research study reveals that it is possible to save and rehabilitate the life of more number of widows through sensitizing the young men to come forward to get married to widows. The sustainable means for widows to overcome their grief is remarriage through which and adjustment process of improvement takes place and allowing them to full fill their basic human development needs. In this circumstances ,empowerment would enable woman to increase their human and economic developmental goals as defined by their families and communities. It is advisable to reorganized communities through sensitization and awareness programs on widows remarriage. The educated and the politicians at the higher levels should find out the way to bring a major breakthrough of widow remarriage. Mass widows remarriage may be organised by the political and religious leader to mark the occasion like woman' s day.

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