
Violation of Human Rights with special reference to Son Preference: A Study at Ramakrishna Nagar Village.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon throughout the ages. It is a serious threat to the life of women irrespective of socio-economic and educational background. Incidences of violence against women take place in every Minuit throughout the world. In the universal declaration of human rights emphasized on human rights in 1948, emphasis was given on protection of women's rights. International year of women was declared in 1975, in the right spirit of protecting against human rights.

Although women's right have been a concern of the United Nations since its inception, yet the alarming global dimension of female-targeted violence was not explicitly acknowledged by the international community until December 1993 till the adoption of the declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women by United Nations General Assembly. Because it is increasingly realized by the development authorities that only economic development does not rectify the malady, equal stress should be given to human development. And protection of human rights is a part of human development.

Violence against women takes a dismaying variety of forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child Marriages and female circumcision. All are violations of the fundamental rights. The importance of the question of violence against women was emphasized over the last decade through the holding of meetings with several experts. In September 1992, the United Nations Commission on the status of women established a special working group and gave it a mandate to draw up a draft declaration on violence against women. The following year, United Nations Commission for Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993\46 of March, condemned all forms of violence and violation of human rights directed specially against women. The world conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna June 1993, laid extensive groundwork for eliminating violence against women. In the Vienna declaration and programmed of action, government declared that the United Nations system and member state should work towards the elimination of violence against women in public and private life; of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and trafficking in women; of gender bias in the administration of justice; and of any conflicts arising between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices ,cultural prejudices and religious extremism.

A preliminary report prepared by Ms Radhika Commaraswamy, has focused on three areas of concern where women are particularly vulnerable: in the family (including domestic violence,

traditional practices, infanticide); in the community (including rape, sexual assault, commercialized violence such as trafficking against women, labour exploitation, female migrant workers etc.); and by the state (including violence against women in detention as well as violence against women in situation of armed conflict and against refugee women).

The issue of violence against women gained momentum again on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. The then general secretary Butros Butros Ghali termed it as a universal problem which has to be condemned. She further highlighted on the increasing trend and magnitude of the problem and said that studies in seven countries reveal that women between 17 percent and 38 percent have suffered physical assault by their partners. In a platform for action, the core document of the Beijing conference, Government declared that “violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace” (Side and Rang Nathan, 2001). The need for protection and right against women is a core issue of government of India since independence. Despite many effort women in India by and large continue to face atrocities in family in community and by the state. So is the case in North- east India. Atrocities against women are a regular phenomenon in this region. Son preference is a traditional practice affects women in South Asian countries including India. As traditionally, the responsibility of bread earning is vested with the male member of the family it leads to neglect of girl child in terms of basic needs as nutrition, basic health care and education and even to fetal or female infanticide. Not only the girl child, but also the women who do not mother a boy baby is to face agony by the family member and may face the end of the life. The traditional attitude of son preference is practiced among the tribes as well as non-tribal population of North-east India. Report available from different organizations who are working against women atrocities reveals the fact that more than 20 percent of the violence against women takes place due to not bearing a boy baby. Ramkrishna Nagar development block is not an exception to it. Thus the present paper aims to focus on son preference a traditional practice in India at Ramakrishna Nagar. Ramakrishna Nagar is a rural area of around twenty five thousand population; situated in Karimganj district of Assam state.

The second section of this paper deals with people’s perception and attitude towards son preference. The third section will discuss different of globalization. And in fourth section conclusion is discussed.

PEOPLES PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SON PREFERENCE.

Men are universally considered superior to women in terms of socio-economic status and physical power. They are considered the bread earners of the family. In a patriarchal society son is considered as successor of the family as well as inheritor of the property. They are assigned to take care of their old parent. Not only adult caring but in Hindu society only sons are inherited to do all the activities from “Mookhagni” to “sraddhashanti”. As sons are assigned to undertake economic activities they are given the first preference cutting across all sections. Among the illiterate and poor people son is preferable because son will be engaged in economic activities e.g. helping in agricultural activities or in business activities. They

even do not hesitate to father any number of children to have at least one son. As the duties of a son include to caring and performance of funeral rights an intensive study was carried out. It is observed from the narratives of three old women of more than eighty years who have been in primary schools that son is more preferable because sons are considered as successor of the family i. e “Bangser bati”. Trauma of social insecurity of girl in their adolescent stage goes with the less preference of girl child even among the highly educated sections. Two college teachers are of the opinion that they prefer son than girls because of the traumatized teen age problem of the girls. Family is the first agency of socialization. Norms and values of society are internalized during the process of socialization. Son and daughter are socialized according to their roles in the society. Girls are encouraged to learn all domestic activities, they are to make to be accommodating, home sickle, soft spoken and obedient, having tolerance for injustice, as they would have to go to “parer Ghar”. Hierarchical difference is reflected in terms of giving food, imparting education and to build up a carrier. In a family more care is given to sons in food giving and in health care. Share of nutritious food goes more to the son than to the daughter. In education also priority and high investment is made to son’s education. They are encouraged to do excel result and to be the great representative of the society. Contrary to it, girl’s education is not perceived as important as their male counterpart. It is considered as secondary objectives in life. Even in many cases women’s education is a qualification for the marriage. Hardly a few families found who gives any importance to women’s education for capacity building of women.

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION.

Globalization is multidimensional. Along with economic arena it covers socio-political and cultural arena also. A revolutionary change has been brought in the field of communication and information technology. It is very amazing to think that people of this particular backward locality who are not even properly connected with surface communication are well equipped with electronic communication. The people of this locality are using mobile phones, they have internet access, and fax, they are watching star T.V, Tan sports etc .Although majority of the inhabitant of this locality have not heard about the name of Mcdonald or do not know the concept of multiplex but those who are in service or doing any petty business they consume product of amway and avon, pepsi and coke and other exogenous consumer goods. Although a little shadow of globalization has spread in this locality but it is limited in the sphere of entertainment culture or consumer culture only. Traditional attitude of the people remain intact as of today. Information collected from the Ramakrishna Nagar unit of district women cell (an wing of administration constituted to combat violence against women) 25-30 cases of atrocities against women take place per month at Ramakrishna Nagar village and its surrounding areas of which minimum 10 percent cases are due to the inability to bear a boy baby (Member, women cell).Neither the victim nor those who do the offences against victim are not aware about the fact sex of a foetus is determined through father. Even they do not know any violence against women is violation of human rights .As article 7 of human rights commission declares that All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.”(Side and Rang Nathan, 2001). A dichotomy

of values is seen even among the high educated section also. It is observed that the women using mobile phone consuming amway product or coke -pepsi is preferring a boy baby. Even the youth the mostly effected group of globalization prefer to have at least one son, but they are not in favour of fathering a no of child for the sake of a boy baby. The etymology responsible for predominance of traditional attitude is poverty and illiteracy. Besides, lack of intervention programme for enhancement of knowledge by government and non government sector is also responsible. Even the member of women cell is not aware about the rights and laws properly. Thus intervention programme to enhance the knowledge is of utmost necessary.

CONCLUSION

The discussion in the preceeding sections reveals the fact that this rural society is heading towards a process of cultural lag i.e a gap between material and non-material culture. Because, as of today, it has affected consumer culture only there is hardly any effect on the traditional values and attitude of the people. it The process of homogenisation the core concept of globalization is yet to culminate. And in north-eastern region the process of modernization has started of late. It will not be wrong to assume that in some of the places attributes of modernization like industrialization, transport and communication, individualism, bureaucratisation and rationalization are yet to reach. And hence structural impediment hinders on the way of globalization in the north-east. Structuralist like Futardo, Pinto and Sunkel assume structural condition is one of the impediments of development of underdeveloped economies. Owing to free trade policy and acceleration of market economy an individual sitting there in the rural society is able to consume the same product, which is using by his friend of USA. Because of structural impediment of the society an women of the same place are not able to enjoy the same rights, which a women of USA is enjoying.

Thus, structural condition like poverty and illiteracy are impediments to development. As it is already mentioned that economy is a factor closely associated with preference of son, the fact implicates that economic empowerment of women will lead to change the social attitude. Moreover education and intervention programmers like awareness campaign, observation of human rights day etc by government and non govern sector are also the major keys to change the social attitude of the people. Until and unless structural condition will be improved new thoughts and ideas will have no effect. The dream of borderless nation state will remain as a dream only for north-east, and instead of equality; disparity between people will be increased.

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