

LAAVANYA

Let Your Daughter Grow



Laavanya : Let Your Daughter Grow

National Girl Child Day

on

24th January, 2017

Organized by
Deep Welfair



हरियाणा राजभवन,
चण्डीगढ़।

**HARYANA RAJ BHAVAN,
CHANDIGARH.**

Message

I am pleased to know that Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi is organizing a seminar on 'Girl Child: Survival and Growth' on National Girl Child Day on 24th January, 2017. It is equally gratifying that a souvenir titled 'Laavanya: Let Your Daughter Grow' is being brought out to mark the occasion.

National girl child day has been started as a national girl's development mission by the Government of India. It is celebrated to promote the girls position in the society to make their living better among society people. It raises the awareness among people all over the country about the importance of girl's promotion. It enhances the meaningful contribution of the girls in decision making processes through the active support of the parents and other community members. In this direction Prime Minister of India, Sh. Narendra Modi has launched twin programmes of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" and "Sukanya Samriddhi Account" in a bid to encourage birth and education of girls and to tackle the low child sex ratio. Similarly state governments and a number of social organization like Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi are working together to protect girl child.

I appreciate the initiative of Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi to hold a seminar on a very pertinent issue of 'Girl Child: Survival and Growth'. I congratulate Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi for raising voice for girl child and wish all success in its endeavor.

(Prof. Kaptan Singh Solanki)



Devendra Fadnavis

Chief Minister
Maharashtra



Mantralaya
Mumbai-400 032

18th January 2017

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that the Deep Welfare Foundation is organizing a seminar on Girl Child: Survival & Growth to commemorate National Girl Child Day.

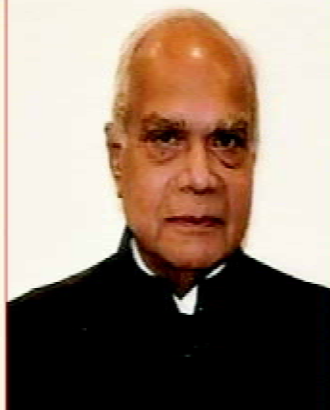
In Sanskrit 'Duhita' is one of the synonyms for daughter which means she is who takes care of the well-being of her parental as well as in-laws house. But, we forget the meaning and for years now a girl child has been treated as a curse for the family. Even in these modern days, the literacy rate is much lower among women compared to men. When India is on the threshold of being a super power, I feel that women must equally participate in this venture. In recent years, many schemes and programs have been introduced by the Government for women empowerment.

I congratulate the members of Deep organization for their initiatives to bring awareness in the society for the child rights and protection of girl child. I extend my best wishes to the souvenir 'Laavanya: Let Your Daughter Grow' being brought out on this occasion

(Devendra Fadnavis)

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RAJ BHAVAN
GUWAHATI

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Deep Welfare Organisation is observing National Girl Child Day on 24 January 2017 and on this occasion a souvenir christened Laavanya: Let your Daughter Grow is being published.

I hope the seminar being held on the occasion dwell on issues concerning gender equalities and set an agenda against inequalities, discrimination and women specific violence.

I convey my best wishes to the organiser and the editorial team a success for their endeavours.

Dated: December 08, 2016


(Banwarilal Purohit)
Governor of Assam



एम. वेंकैया नायडु
M. VENKAIAH NAIDU



शहरी विकास,
आवास और शहरी गरीबी उपशमन एवं
सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्री
भारत सरकार
MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
HOUSING & URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION
AND INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

28 DEC 2016

Message

I am glad to know that Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi is organizing a seminar titled *Girl Child: Survival and Growth* on January 24, 2017 on the occasion of the *National Girl Child Day*. A bi-lingual souvenir titled *Laavanya: Let your Daughter Grow* will be released during the event.

The Census 2011 threw up disturbing finds that sex ratio in India had worsened since 2001. This is not to detriment of womankind only but the whole nation as well. Thanks to the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*, flagship campaign inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in January, 2015, the early leads to change in mindset for better are visible. The government, citizens and non-government organizations must work in tandem, to obliterate the curse of female feticide from India and secure right to life and right to education for the girl child.

I convey my best wishes for the seminar.


(M. Venkaiah Naidu)



धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान
धर्मेश्वर प्रधान
Dharmendra Pradhan



राज्यमंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110 001
MINISTER OF STATE (I/C)
PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI - 110 001

MESSAGE

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to know that Deep Welfare Organisation is organizing a seminar on "Girl Child: Survival and Growth" on 24th January, 2017 014 and a souvenir titled "Laavanya: Let your daughter grow" is also going to be brought out on this occasion.

I am also pleased to hear that Deep Welfare Organisation is actively involved in the field of women empowerment and child development and to commemorate National Girl Child Day the Deep Welfare Organisation is organizing the seminar. It is very necessary to remove different types of social discrimination and exploitation that girls generally face in their life.

National girl child day has been started as a national girls development mission by the Government of India. This mission raises the awareness among people all over the country about the importance of girl's promotion. It enhances the meaningful contribution of the girls in decision making processes through the active support of the parents and other community members. Inequality about girl child is a vast problem which includes many areas like inequality in education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, protection, honour, child marriage and so many.

I extend my greetings and good wishes to the organizers and participants, and wish the programme all success.

I wish the seminar and publication a grand success.



(Dharmendra Pradhan)





राजीव प्रताप रुडी
RAJIV PRATAP RUDY



D.O. No. 4478 / 2016/MOS(IC)SD&E

कौशल विकास और उद्यमशीलता
राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
भारत सरकार

Minister of State (Independent Charge)
Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
Government of India

21st December, 2016

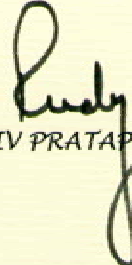
MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Deep Welfare Organisation is organizing a seminar on Girl Child : Survival and Growth on 24th January, 2017 and also publishing a souvenir titled - Laavanya.

Girls form a great potential for development of a large country like India. Yet they are treated with discrimination everywhere on a daily basis. The need of the hour is to bring about a change in the mindset of the people so as to eradicate gender based inequalities, discrimination and violence.

I hope the seminar and the souvenir would help the people to recognize how girls' progress is good not only for them, but also for families, communities and the society at large.

I send my good wishes to the organisers and all those who are associated with the event for the successful conclusion of the seminar.


(RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)



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मंत्री
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भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली

Minister
Statistics & Programme Implementation
Government of India, New Delhi

MESSAGE

डी वी सदानंद गौड़ा
D.V. Sadananda Gowda

It gives me great pleasure that Deep Welfare Organization is organizing a seminar on 'Girl Child : Survival and Growth' on 24th January, 2017 and also publishing a souvenir titled "Laavanya : Let your daughter grow", a bilingual souvenir.

It is pertinent to mention here that the organization is continuously raising its voice for the child rights and protection of girl child in its national campaign and also working in the field of women empowerment and child development.

On this special occasion, I wish all success for the event and convey my best regards for the future assignments of the Organization and to play an important role to eradicate gender based inequalities, discrimination and violence faced by girls.

With regards,

Yours sincerely


(D.V. Sadananda Gowda)

Shri Ajay Prakash,
Secretary,
Deep Welfare Organization,
B-2, 3-4-5, Ansal Building,
Commercial Complex,
Behind UCO Bank,
Dr. Mukherjee Nagar,
Delhi – 9.



कलराज मिश्र
KALRAJ MISHRA



सत्यमेव जयते



सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यम मंत्री
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110011

Minister
of
Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
Government of India
New Delhi-110011

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that **Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi** is bringing out a Souvenir titled "**Laavanya: Let your Daughter Grow**" to commemorate the celebration of **National Girl Child Day** on 24th January, 2017.

National Girl Child Day is celebrated to increase the awareness among people about all the inequalities faced by the girl child in the society. It is very necessary to remove different types of social discrimination and exploitation that girls generally face in their life. It is also essential that the girls to get full potential, safe and enabling environment.

I wish Deep Welfare Organization, Delhi all success in organizing the Seminar and commend their efforts for this initiative.

Kalraj Mishra

(KALRAJ MISHRA)



Vijay Rupani

Chief Minister, Gujarat State



Apro/kp/2016/12/09/ps

DL 09-12-2016

MESSAGE

Although our sanskruti has been professing Woman as Devi Shakti, it is a bolt on our modern day society that we have to carryout the campaign for protection of girl child. The cases of female foeticide have been increasing at alarming rate, and unless & untill we, as civilized society, do not make unified efforts, the ratio of male female child birth will adversely affect our cultural, Social, economical aspects in near future.

Everyone should contribute with might to fight out this evil practice, survival and growth Girl child.

I am glad to know that the **Deep welfare organisation** are organizing a seminar on **girl child survival and Growth** on **24th January 2017** and publish a souvenir titled **Lavanya: Let Your Duaghter Grow.**

My best wishes to the organizers.

(Vijay Rupani)

To,
Shree Ajay Prakash, Secretary,
DEEP WELFARE ORGANISATION,
B - 2, 3 - 4 - 5, Ansal Building,
Commercial Complex, B/h UCO Bank,
Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi - 110009
Email: deepwelfare@gmail.com

थावरचन्द गेहलोत
THAAWARCHAND GEHLOT
सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्री
भारत सरकार
MINISTER OF
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MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Deep Welfare Organisation is organizing a seminar on Girl Child : Survival and Growth on 24th January, 2017.

To commemorate the National Girl Child Day on 24th January, 2017, Deep Welfare Organisation is going to publish a souvenir titled "Laavanya : Let your Daughter Grow.

I send my good wishes to Deep Welfare Organization for all success of the event.

(Thaawarchand Gehlot)

ओम प्रकाश यादव

संसद सदस्य
(लोक सभा)

सदस्य

स्थायी समिति, पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस
परामर्श दायी समिति, विद्युत मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार



सत्यमेव जयते

OM PRAKASH YADAV

Member of Parliament
(Lok Sabha)

Member

Standing Committee, Petroleum and Natural Gas
Consultative, Committee, Ministry of Power
Government of India

पत्रांक सं:.....

दिनांक:.....



MESSAGE

I am glad to know that Deep Welfare Organization is working for Girl Child Education & Protection and in this direction they organize seminar and workshop time to time to promote girl child. I am pleased to know that they are organizing a seminar on "Girl Child: Survival and Growth" on 24 January, 2017 and on this occasion a souvenir title: "Laavanya: Let your daughter grow" is also going to be brought for promotion of Girl Child Protection & Education.

Today there is no difference between girl and boy and both must be equally treated and should get facilities to grow and develop. Girls do have equal right to get opportunities to join hand in national development.

I wish this seminar and souvenir would help to promote girl child in our society and people will change their mind set towards girl child. They will recognize the potential and importance of their contribution in overall development of society.

I send my best wishes to the organizers and all associates for the success of this seminar.

OM PRAKASH YADAV

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Siwan Ph.: 06154-242292, 09431218292

RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
(LOK SABHA)

- Member: Parliamentary Committee on Estimates
- Member: Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Coal
- Member: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy
- Member: State Level, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee on Jharkhand
- Member: State Development Council on Jharkhand
- Chairman: District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committee on Bokaro & Giridih
- Vice-Chairman: District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committee on Dhanbad



MESSAGE

I am glad to know that Deep Welfare Organization- a non-government and non-profit making organization is organizing a seminar title: "GIRL CHILD: SURVIVAL AND GROWTH" on 24th January 18, 2017 on this occasion also releasing a souvenir titled "LAAVANYA: Let your daughter grow" towards their aim to promote protection and education of girl child.

I believe in equal opportunity to all so that every one should get chance to explore their potential and make contribution towards national development. We must promote girl child to empower them and bring more talent to main stream of our society.

I convey my best wishes for the success of this seminar and hope their initiative towards girl child protection and education would make positive change in the mind set of our society.

RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY



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18/01/2017

From the Desk of Secretary

Ajay Prakash

I am very much pleased to dedicate this Souvenir to each and every person who are doing their bit to promote gender equality and are working in the field of women empowerment to bring the much needed change. Empowering the women in any corner of the world is a very noble effort done by any individual or an organization.

A woman is being denied their very rights in our society, where she lacks even her basic rights of development. Our society is full of challenges towards realising this goal, there are several challenges faced by her in every possible way from birth to death. They are being denied life on her birth, if born they are denied their rights to education, if educated till secondary levels they are denied higher education, if got educated to higher education she is being denied to work on the grounds of her household duties which is thought as a compulsory duty of women. She is being denied her educational and financial independence which is the major hindrance towards her development. Our country is in the grips of severe orthodox beliefs and practices which are blocking the path to their development, female feticides, child marriage, and practice of dowry are some of them. Our country was founded on the principles of equality and equal opportunity to all without any discrimination on the basis of caste, race, religion and gender and we have been able to achieve on some of the fronts but gender inequality is still severely prevalent in our society.

I personally believe we will overcome these issues in the near future with the help of our fellow citizens who feels and thinks alike. Deep Welfare Organisation is working towards this since 2005. We have accomplished several milestones in these past years, we have trained several women from under-privileged communities by our skill development programs to bring financial stability in their lives and take several economical activities as entrepreneurs. We are doing our bit to promote gender equality by the means of our programs, seminars, road shows and by other means of community awareness and door to door mobilization and sensitization programs. Deep is imparting a sense of self confidence among young and dynamic female students and household women.

This souvenir is being dedicated to all to women of our country who have excelled in their respective fields and marked their foot print which will be followed by several others. They have shown their strength in several odds and made their way to the top. I would like to thank each and everybody associated with this endeavor in and out of our organization.

With my Deepest Regards,

Ajay Prakash

Secretary, Deep Welfare Organisation

विषय सूची:

GIRL CHILD: EDUCATION AND HEALTHY GROWTH

- DR. BIRESH PACHISIA

When girls gain access to education they acquire important knowledge that gives them greater potential to get a job and an income when they are adults. Even with limited schooling the impact of education can be observed. As a result girls can also play a more active role in the political and social debate and in the development of their own society. Women who have attended school themselves make greater efforts to ensure that their own children attend school. Education for girls can be the start of an upward shift in their life which will lead them and their families out of poverty.

Education also greatly benefits personal health. It profoundly affects reproductive health, and also improves child mortality and welfare through better nutrition and higher immunization rates. Education may be the single most effective preventive weapon against HIV/AIDS. Educated women enjoy greater democracy. Democratic political institutions such as power-sharing and clean elections are more likely to exist only with higher literacy rates and education levels. Women with formal education are much more likely to use reliable family planning methods, delay marriage and childbearing, and have fewer and healthier babies than women with no formal education.

There is a clear association between education and improved health. Girls' education has a positive effect on the level of health in society. Being able to read and acquire knowledge will enable mothers to better look after their own and their children's health.

This has a positive impact on maternal and child health. Knowledge influences women's choices when it comes to pregnancy check-ups, childbirth and nutrition. Educated girls and women turn to the health services to a greater degree.

Education is also effective when it comes to combating child marriage, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. The writer Dr. Biresh Pachisia is also empanelled external evaluator with National Aids Control Organization, Government of India. He has practically seen during field visits to NGOs and community that education has a vital role in the awareness and implementation of various health factors in general and HIV/AIDS in particular.

GENDER EQUALITY: Female Literacy is Family Literacy

The Saakshar Bharat 2012 program of Government of India focused on literacy of women and girls. It highlighted the concept that if female would be literate then the whole family will become literate.

Equal educational opportunities for girls and boys are a fundamental human right and the basis of equal opportunities later in life.

Equality in education is about more than equal access for girls and boys. It also includes aspects linked to teaching practice, curriculum, textbooks and teachers. A lack of equality in education often reflects the prevailing gender norms and discrimination in society.

The school and the learning it provides can play an important role in changing gender stereotypes and attitudes and in promoting gender equality. It is then vital to include knowledge and understanding of gender equality and gender sensitivity in the development of the curriculum and to include knowledge of human rights and sexual reproductive health rights.

CHALLENGES IN FRONT OF US:

Here are some of the reasons why some girls do not start school at all while yet others do not complete their schooling and drop-out in between.

- Poverty: Poor families often decide to complete their other priorities compared to girls schooling.
- Child marriage: Child marriage prevents girls to go to school.
- Early pregnancy: Girls who become pregnant and have children often do not return to school.
- Gender-based violence: Girls are exposed to sexual harassment and violence on the way to school or at the school. Teachers and other school staff are not gender sensitive. The school management has some control on harassment inside school but there is no control for the way to school especially in rural areas.
- Gender stereotypes and gendered attitudes: Traditional perceptions of gender roles that characterize society often mean that educating girls is not regarded as being equally relevant and valuable as educating boys.
- Lack of female teachers. Some parents do not want to send their daughters to school, or remove them from school, unless the school has sufficient number of female teachers and staff.

- Sanitary facilities: Many girls who begin at school leave due to a lack of sanitary facilities. But things are improving in this sphere.

The benefits of female education for women's empowerment and gender equality are broadly recognized:

- As female education rises, fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality fall and family health improves.
- Increases in girls' secondary school enrolment are associated with increases in women's participation in the labour force and their contributions to household and national income.
- Women's increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition.
- Daughters of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and to have higher levels of educational attainment.
- Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them.

Education is central to development and improvement of the nation's welfare. It empowers people and strengthens nations. It is a powerful "equalizer", opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty. Moreover, education especially girls' education has a direct and proven impact on the goals related to child and reproductive health and environmental sustainability. Education also promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, and values of democracy and social cohesion.

The importance of girl child education in a nation's welfare are:

- Reduces inequality: Education is a great "leveler", illiteracy being one of the strongest predictors of poverty. Primary education plays a catalytic role for those most likely to be poor, including girls, ethnic minorities, orphans, disabled people, and rural families. By enabling large numbers to share in the

growth process, education can be the powerful tide that lifts all boats.

- Increases productivity and earnings: Research has established that every year of schooling increases individual wages for both men and women by a worldwide average of about 10 percent. In poor countries, the gains are even greater.

WAY FORWARD:

Investment in girl education benefits the individual, society, and the world as a whole. Broad-based education of good quality is among the most powerful instruments known to reduce poverty and inequality. With proven benefits for personal health, it also strengthens nations' economic health by laying the foundation for sustained economic growth.

For individuals and nations, it is key to creating, applying, and spreading knowledge and thus to the development of dynamic, globally competitive economies.

And it is fundamental for the construction of democratic societies.



Reasons of Child Girls drop out from schools

- *Dr.Zaki Akhtar*

Assistant Professor Department of Psychology
Karim City College, Jamshedpur Abstract

There was a time when people thought that it was not necessary to educate girls. Now we have begun to realize that girls' education is essential. The modern age is the age of awakening of girls. They are trying to compete with men in all spheres of life. There are many people who oppose girls' education. They say that the proper sphere of girls is the home. So, they argue that the money spent on girl's education is wasted. This view is wrong, because girl's education can bring about a silent resolution in the society. The aim of this research article is to identify the factors those are contributing positively the girl child drop out from schools. So that proper and possible solutions can be sketched and implemented to reduce girls child drop out from schools.

Introduction

Our Constitution fathers did not intend that we just set up hovels, put students there, give untrained teachers, give them bad textbooks, no playgrounds, and say, we have complied with Article 45 and primary education is expanding...They meant that real education should be given to our children between the ages of 6 and 14."- M. C. Chagla - Education Minister Of India, 1963-66.

India has one of the fastest growing youth populations in the world. Girls below 19 years of age comprise one-quarter of India's rapidly growing population. In spite of India's reputation for respecting women, to an extent to treat her as a goddess, the moment a baby

is born, the first thing comes to mind is "boy or girl?" as the differences are beyond just being biological. This article examines the psychosocial issues and factors that are leading to girl child drop out from school in our country.

Education is a boon to girls in this age of economic crisis. Gone are the days of plenty and prosperity. Now-a-days it is difficult for the people of the middle class to make both ends meet. After marriage, educated girls can add to the income of their husbands. If a woman is educated, she can earn a living after the death of her husband. They can share the burden of men in the different walk of life. They can serve the society as teachers, lawyers, doctors and administrators. They can work at banks, hospitals, government offices and large businesses. They can play an important role during war.

Girls' education is necessary for making our homes happy places. Our home life would be brightened if we had well-educated wives and mother. Educated girls can brighten the future of their country by the good upbringing of their children. Education gives a woman freedom of thought. It broadens her outlook and makes her aware of her duties and responsibilities.

Education empower a grown up girl to become economically independent. They will be able to stand up for their rights. Girls have all the rights to get educated. Empowerment of girls and women is necessary to fight against the problem of gender-inequality.

Education of rural girls is equally important. The rural girls are not getting ample opportunity for education. Education of these girls would have positive impact on both economy and society.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had opined that "Women empowered means mother India empowered" and to have empowered women in future we need to empower our girl child of today. In ancient Indian societies, women enjoyed ample freedom and respect. Present day champions of women excellence in India are numerous - from a woman Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to the heroic deeds of Kiran Bedi, the first woman IPS officer of India, there should be no doubt that our women. Girls are proficient in balancing multiple roles and they are naturally made for multitasking. Today, girls are applying for jobs that were once considered solely for men and tackling them with élan. Not just in their traditional roles of wife, daughter and mothers, girls are even the sole bread-winner of the family.

Big reasons for girls drop out from schools

There is not obviously no single good answer, nor is there conclusive data to show us which factors relatively impact girls education and drop out of school the most. However we can identify a range of possibilities that could suggest specific reasons for the drop out marginalization of girls from the schooling system.

1. Expectations of Domesticity

To start with, girls are expected to contribute to the household far younger than boys are - the implicit understanding being that a girl is being trained for a role as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law, whereas boys are being trained for an occupation. Girls get married younger than boys do - a Harvard School of Public Health survey (2013) conducted studies in Gujarat looking into rates of child marriage, and found that of girls aged 14-17, 37% were engaged and 12% married. On the other hand, for boys in the same age range, only 27% were engaged and 3% married. The same study found strong correlation between marital status and school attendance rates (in which married children were over twice as likely to not attend school than single children), but also marriage proved to be worse for the educational prospects of girls than boys.

Besides, families often think that the cost of education, both monetary and psychological is wasted on a girl because of her decreased earning potential and this selfsame expectation of domesticity. The economic ben-

efit thereof is not immediately apparent to most families. Overall, the expectation of the girl child's participation in family life seems to be a hindrance in her participation in schooling.

2. Negative Mind set / Safety

Safety of girls travelling alone is a major concern for Indians - the prevalent discourse surrounding recent events has brought to the forefront a longstanding problem. It has also seen a fear that educating girls causes excessive independence, and this is seemingly manifested in the attitude that parents take to a girl's education. In an interview a guardian told the story of a girl in Patamda who was being taunted by boys on the way to school. She was afraid to tell her parents, for she thought that they would prevent her from attending school if she did. She was right - her family was, in the words of the author, 'worried about the effect on their "honor" if she was sexually assaulted.' These stories are not isolated; rather, this is an endemic and very gendered problem in economically disadvantaged India, be it rural or urban.

3. Infrastructure Barriers

The Right to Education bill has set forth some norms and standards in this regard - it codifies expectations and requirements of norms and standards relating inter alia to pupil-teacher ratios buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours. Therefore we do see legislators are at the very least, considering this area of concern further. It is also one of the easier aspects to tackle, as it falls within the purview of Education Departments in the Centre and in States. However, it is commonly perceived that girls suffer for various reasons from the lack of infrastructure much worse than boys do - for instance, as of 2012 40% of all government schools lacked a functioning common toilet, and another 40% lacked a separate toilet for girls. This in fact creates even more reluctance to allow for girls to be educated.

Although including girls in the scheme of Indian universalized education, these causes seem to make one thing clear - the causes are ingrained in systems that are larger than education. This can be accepted as one of the important factors which leads to girls dropping out of schools.

4. Physiological changes.

Physiological changes are also important factors which play roles in drop out of girl child. Accord-

ing to THE CITIZEN BUREAU , May 31, 2016 (2016) Menstruation Keeps Girls from School: In India 20% Drop Out Reaching Puberty. And others changes like growth of breast, pimples and pubic hair make the girl child anxious and leads to shyness, lack of confidence, and identity crisis. Finally leads to girls child drop out.

5. Parents chronic illness

It has been noticed by many social scientists that there is a positive correlation between drop out and parents chronic illness.

6. The importance of a girl's education is still not understood

Indian society girls are subjected to consider as "Paraya dhan" and it is a very common belief that she has to go to other family after marriage, such stereotype belief still prevailing in India even in this era of globalization.

7. A death of earning member in family

Sudden death of earning member of a family may cause a major cause of dropout of girl child. Since they are unable to afford further education. Such people cannot get support from any sources government must plan and implement for situational victims.

8. The family is in never-ending debt

Low income is the major cause of illiteracy. As we all know that in India majority of people are below poverty line, for their livelihood they take loans in high interests many times.

9. Troubles at home

It has been observed by the researchers that most of the families are disorganized and having problems of interpersonal relationship. Such hindrance leads to ill treatment of girl education.

10. Faulty evaluation system of schools

The schooling system in Indian has some faulty evaluation techniques which is still prevailing in most of the educational institutions. They have not been updated and adopted new technologies for evaluation of learning disabilities. Studies revealed that out of every hundred ten to fifteen students are learning disable which is not been noticeable by the school management.

11. Lack of counselors and educational psychologists in Indian schools

since most of the cities and villages lacking of

counseling and guidance about well being of women education and empowerment. It is time to introspect our self for giving insight into the issue and fresh look for the welfare society in particular and in country in general.

12. Faulty educational philosophy

Educational philosophy has to redefine and should be implemented according to the aptitude, interest and need of the students. Although, some initiatives have been taken but that are not enough and up to the mark.

13. Participation in other economic activities

A girl child in village often participate in the activities of economic importance wherever required. They earn money for household along with their mother in remote villages and left their studies in between.

14. Attend to domestic duties

Most of the household of work are done by a girl child in a family. She has been given a great responsibility of their younger brother and sister. She used to cook food and take care of her parents.

15. Facility for study doesn't exist in the nearby town

Most of the villages are lacking good schools and colleges. They cannot afford to go to town because nearby there is no such institution which impart education.

Conclusion

The question remains of changing our perception about girls being fragile, weak and dependent. In today's India, they are capable of anything. With projects like the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya aimed at providing young girls an increased chance at education, an educated daughter is surely to make their family proud. Investing in the education of a young girl will contribute significantly towards eradication evil practices like child marriage, premature pregnancy, child abuse etc. which, in turn, creates the vision of a healthier nation. It is rightly said that "When you educate a man, you educate an individual and when you educate a woman, you educate an entire family." That is why education of a girl child is so important that psychological wellbeing of a whole family depends on her.

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Protecting the girl child

- Vikaram Dutt

An ultra sound clinic in Haryana had a tag line:

“Spend 600 now and save the 2 lakhs you will spend...”

Horrible, but real. Various legislations have been enacted to ban ultra sound for sex determination, but law cannot change human and societal behaviour. What does change it is constant and continuous advocacy of the sort that Deep Welfare and Ajay ji do that can change the understanding and mindset of the people.

It is important to realize, that unlike what the public perception is, the richest pockets of where people live often has the highest number of illegal abortions. Colonies like Greater Kailash and Punjabi Bagh, both extremely upscale, have terrible records of the girl child not being allowed to be born.

Violence is widespread. Violence is not only physical violence but includes sexual violence, marital violence, psychological brutality, and nutritional deprivation. The Indian woman's private space is abused on a daily basis. Poor diet and reduced nutrition leads

to problems during pregnancy and very often to low weight babies – another violence and oppression of the girl child. Low weight babies usually suffer from health problems throughout their lives.

Statistics reveal that in the ten years between 1981 and 1991, as many as 11 million girls went missing. At school, studies showed that more girls – 60% - than boys were out of school. Often the elder sibling acts as a nursemaid to the younger girl. Girls as young as five years of age are forced into menial labour including work as unskilled labour around the home. They have no access to education and thus are deprived of a childhood; forget a happy one.

What is the solution? Public participation in according the girl child and the mother their rightful place in society. Easier said than done. Publicity Division of the I & B Ministry, the field publicity units, television channels; all need to join the campaign to highlight the Ma Durga and Kali Ma in our ethos. One of the ironic tragedies of

India is that the birth of a boy is celebrated by paying obeisance to Ma Durga; yet the girl baby is hardly allowed to see the day, often being smothered at birth.

Radio is a powerful medium which is not used as much as it should be. There are over 1000 FM channels today – both AIR and private. It should be mandated that they should carry a minimum of five hours of programmes that could motivate better appreciation of the role of the mother and the daughter. In the eighties, I had the privilege of heading the government of India effort for inclusion of people with disability in mainstream society. My colleagues, both in the government and in the private sector used to ridicule me, “We don’t have job opportunities for able bodied and you want equality for people with disability!”

We were able to voluntarily get the Vice Chancellors of at least ten universities to agree to run lectures on the subject in journalism classes. The spin off effect is that in twenty years, we have come a long way. It was the realization that the media plays a critical role in spreading awareness.

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Street childrens in India

- Prof. Rajesh

Women in General-

The status of women in India has been subject to many change over the several millennium , the changes in the state of women can be noticed in ancient ,medieval and modern India as it have held higher designation of administration of the nation. The constitution of India guarantee the equal right to women, dignity and freedom from discrimination, in spite of it, women in India faces several act of discrimination such as rape, dowry killings, faced prostitution and universal assessment of Education to the young girls. Gender based discrimination against female children is pervasive across the nation; it is one of the big cause of declining the sex ratio

Street children-

Though a well-structured data and number is not available but it is estimated that India has more than 4, 00,000 street children. Also India has the largest population of street children in the world. UNICEF (2006). Street children are a term for children experiencing homelessness who live on the streets of a city, town or village. Homeless youth are often called street kids and street youth. India has an estimated one million or more street children in each of the following

cities: New Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

Definition of a Street Child by UNICEF, "...any girl or boy... for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults". Female street children are sometimes called gamines, a term that is also used for Colombian street children of either gender.

Factors -

The causes of this phenomenon are varied, but are often related to domestic, economic, or social disruption including, but not limited to, poverty; breakdown of homes and/or families; political unrest; acculturation; sexual, physical or emotional abuse; domestic violence; lured away by pimps, Internet predators, or begging syndicates; mental health problems; substance abuse; and sexual orientation or gender identity issues.

Problems-

Lack of Adequate Nutrition: street children can usually get some amount of food to eat; they do not have nutritious or balanced diets.

Homelessness:

The children who choose the streets as their home face the most acute problems related to shelter. They are vulnerable; these children do not suffer merely from physical homelessness, but also from a psychological homelessness since they have nowhere to belong.

Health Problems: Street children live in an atmosphere of continued physical and mental strain. Many of them rummage through the garbage to find food; others go hungry for day's drinking water or taking to drugs to diminish their pangs of hunger.

Substance Abuse: Many street children resort to using psychoactive substances (such as alcohol and drugs) in an attempt to escape from the overwhelming pressure of their traumatic past and their daily problems.

Deprivation of Needs and Lack of Resources and Opportunities: The varied needs of street children are rarely met. They frequently go hungry; wear torn, tattered and dirty clothes or sometimes, no clothes at all. They have no permanent place to stay, no educational facilities, no facilities for hygiene and in brief, no facilities at all.

Exploitation:

Children on the street have to work to survive. Since they have no skills with which to bargain for fair pay or to fight for their rights, they are very vulnerable to employers who look to make a profit on them. So child Labour has posed the serious threat to the street children.

Street children- NGO intervention-

In India, many interventions have been made by individual NGOs and NGO forums, which have been working for provision of services to street children, and fighting for their rights. These interventions can be classified into three levels: (i) primary prevention, (ii) secondary prevention, and (iii) tertiary interventions. NGO also advocates for the rights of street children and demands policy changes. It involves in empowerment,

social justice and rehabilitation of the individual' and fight to 'the rights of street children' and various other demand from the government. It works as advocacy-based, critiquing the development paradigm and fighting for the rights of street children is carried out as a collaborative activity through NGO forums. Community-based Contact Programmes. These are 'outreach programmers' to contact the street children to take notice of its problems,

Street Children- Higher Education -

The core sense behind the Higher Education system is to better service for the welfare of society, where the University can engage their resource to study the deep root of the problems and provide some solution by serving for the welfare of Street children. Where the sum of departments and cell of University system, like Adult Education Departments and social work departments are working for street children in which the help of NGOs and the support of CSR for the rehabilitation and providing the basic education to these children's, but need of greater engagement of University education system for this there is need of engagement of various departments other than few departments to resolve the human right issue of street children with NGO and Government. so meaningful engagement of Higher education system under extension Programme is need of hour. Where Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi has started its outreach activity for Street Children under its Programme "VISTAAR" is model of intervention.

"Best wishes too Deep Welfare Society for pioneering role in India for the welfare of the Street Children's"

Former Head of DACEE

Chairman SSN College, University of Delhi

Member University community cell.

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Contribution of social science concept for the study of inequality in health status and access to health services in India

*- Amitabh Sarkar, JNU Scholar
Debjani Khan, Development Professional*

Only 5 Jhat families are holding around 95% of farm land compare to 350 lower castes (Khatik, Balmiki, Chamar) families which hold 5% of farm land in Moujpur village.⁽¹³⁾ Inequality, the shout of the unheard, is not uncommon in India but to understand the fundamental problem of this shout is not at all common. Inequality is the origin which perpetuates from top to bottom of the society and form many unheard shouts.

Health is a state of being and free from any illness or injury for any individual. Health of the population is the responsibility of the state as it leads to the overall wellbeing of the society. India is a country where people are depriving of food, water and even shelter. Health is not a rights but an opportunity to get luxury for many people. Health or the health status of the population is considered as the one of the key indicators of improvement for society and as well as nation. Health status implies life expectancy, infant mortality, maternal mortality and many other measureable indicators. Health status is depending on the existence of health infrastructure and the availability of health services (preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative), where the later is based on the former. Health service can only be available if there is an existence of health infrastructure (hospitals, dispensaries, manpower) thus health infrastructure is the representative of health service from the state to its people. The availability of health status is depending on the larger environment because health service refers to the availability of

resource, political commitment, administrative priority and so on. Hence, this health service is the social determinant of the health (or health status of the population) where human beings live and grow and get influenced by the many factors.

Inequality is the opposite of equality and equality refers to the equal distribution of any goods. Inequality in health means unequal or ill distribution of health. Hence, injustice in society ascribes to inequality. The ill distribution may be through political ploy, social discrimination, cultural gap or economic scarcity. These politics, social, economic and culture are the structure of the society. The inequality could be the structural determinants of health or good health as it is representing (or ill product) the basic pillars on which the system works. There are also scientific evidences which adduces that population with lower class, race, gender inequalities in standard of living have good level of health status too.⁽¹⁾

The study of Inequality in health status and access to health service is the relation between structural determinants and social determinants of health. Structural determinants are where the cause mainly forms and the social determinants are where the cause starts affecting, which ultimately impacts the health status of the population. The cause of inequality may be visible at PHC level where a Dalit patient is ignored by the Brahmin doctor, but the problem is not with the health service in general because the social system itself

harbors the hierarchy based caste concept of Brahmin and Dalit. In Indian social system sequence, the caste, class and gender are the major social concepts where the problem of inequality gets formed. Inequality in health status and access to health service must be considered from the view of basic societal structure and how the structure gets influenced by the factors.

To define the inequality of health status, the inequality has to be understood from health service system aspect, like resource distribution, access and participation etc.. These factors collectively impact on inequality in health status of any population or individual. ⁽²⁾ The social concepts of class, caste and gender have continuous interactions with these factors and manipulate the system which ultimately creates inequality.

It is always the class which has pivotal role in spreading inequality. In Indian context the class may not be visible so much because the traditional stratification system is caste, but still the role of class is becoming important in this era of globalisation. Class is defined by the power and the economic position in the society, the ruling class and the deprived/working class. The ruling class is exploiting the working class traditionally. India's health service system is exploited by both the insider and outsider ruling classes. Sheila Zurbrigg has pointed out in her writing- 'Re-Thinking Public Health: Food, Hunger and Mortality Decline in South Asian History' ⁽³⁾ that the land less and poor peasants were mostly died during malaria mortality between 1864 and 1908. It was the British regime which exploited that poor people by imposing ban on Indian cotton industries to sell their own cotton products made in England, shifting farming from staple crop to cash crop and food export. These changes had larger effect in food production and food availability, and during famine or flood the food price was soaring which made poor people the victim of hunger. In the monsoon because of malaria epidemics those unfed people were the easy victim of malaria infection and finally got died. There was no protection available which could provide either food support or the available treatment. It was the British regime which utilised the poor for their own resource generation purpose with help of Indian upper class, but left the poor unattended while they were in grave need.

Post independence India has been seeing many from of ruling class assertion where again the western countries' upper class is exploiting Indian poor with the help of their Indian counterparts. The great neo-Malthusian idea had alone wasted so many resources at the cost of ignored, ill structured general health service. The population control agenda is not for the wellbeing of women's health or overall development of the nation, but it might be with that assumption that increasing population in third world may take position of existing resources which has only meant for the rich of the first world country. Similarly, the World Bank model of SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) and the World Development Report- 1993 which encouraged reduce investment in social sector and privatisation of health care had made enormous impact on India's health status. The cost to medical expenses has increased heavily, during the period of 1986-87 to 1995-96, only because of financial reasons the proportion of people not accessing any type of medical care has been increased from 10 to 21 per cent (in urban areas) and from 15 to 24 per cent (in rural areas). ⁽⁴⁾ It is the same ploy of upper class of the western world to continue the resource drainage (like, because of SAP, the policy legitimised on researching a controversial hormonal contraceptive- Norplant) ⁽⁵⁾ from third world to first world and exploits the deprived section in India and increase the inequality in terms of accessing health because of ever escalating health expenditure. The Indian upper class has also taken advantage to this situation by forming up many private ill equipped hospitals, laboratories which finally implies to the overutilisation of health and resulting increased health expenditure. For example, Rama Baru has shown in her study that in two *talukas* in rural Maharashtra that all the surveyed 49 private hospitals has no registration with any authority. The hospitals ran by the allopathic doctor but manned by the doctor qualified in other system (29%). In another study in Madhya Pradesh she has shown majority of the qualified practitioners, rural private practitioners and owners of nursing homes are from forward caste and trading community. Backward classes, schedule tribe and schedule caste collectively have only 5 to 20% of the total number of practitioners. Further she takes an interesting indicator which looks the class and caste system from empowerment aspect. She notes that majority of middle class people having fixed income usually register complain at consumer

court and she concludes that implicates the rural and urban poor, schedule castes/tribes and women have negligible presence.⁽⁶⁾

Caste is another important social concept which predominantly holds the central position in India's social, political, cultural and economical settings. The caste is a stratification of hierarchy within the society. It is based on 'purity of blood' and 'marriage', and ranks the society in four categories, orderly, *Brahmin*, *Khatriya*, *Baishya* and *Sudra*. Traditionally *Sudras* are poor, marginalised and the easy choice of exploitation. Interestingly, the hierarchy of class and caste are usually same in any community set up in India. It implies that the higher caste is holding the majority of economic power whereas the *Sudras* are at the verge of the economic crisis. On a critique to Indian health service system, Imranan Quadir has analysed that the economical hierarchy in society also represents the health service system. She furthered that mostly upper middle class is representing the doctor cadre, nurses are from middle class and the grass root level health workers belongs to lower middle class. This hierarchy of economic positions certainly gets matched with the caste hierarchy while she has noted that SCs and STs (traditionally lower caste) are representing a quantum of overall manpower in health service system in spite of the reservation norm.⁽²⁾ Now, if the lower caste is outnumbered by the higher caste employee then how can be an equitable distribution of health expected where the traditional Indian caste system follows the superior and inferior (elderly untouchable) relationship among the followed hierarchy. Another issue is the distribution of resources in tribal belt, the health infrastructure is not adequate and in tribal areas it is unacceptable. Jhabua district is a place of 85% tribal. 120 out of 222 ANM positions are vacant, at least 50 posts for the doctor are vacant with recording zero doctors in two PHCs, if this is the situation of manpower then how can be the tribal gets served. According to District Additional Collector, the doctors are trained in cities and also lived there which are the obstacles for them to work in tribal area.⁽⁷⁾ Again the class and caste come hand in hand which denotes the inequality in terms of resource distribution and also on the point of service access. The life of a Dalit (a lower caste) is a struggle in India. The inequality starts from the birth for a Dalit. The narrative of Mukta Sarvagod in 'Closed Doors' is learning for the larger society about a Dalit life. Mukta

was a Dalit (belong to *Mahars* community) women and active at community work. She narrated her life which was full of ignorance, discrimination, humiliation and series of social injustice. Being a Dalit women she had to sit in the floor (not in bench) in school and the discrimination continued and converted into injustice in her marriage life when she and her husband had faced difficulty in finding any domestic help because no helper wanted to work in a Dalit home as that would eventually close the door for them in upper caste household.⁽⁸⁾ The Dalit's life is full of injustice and most sadly these ignored people tend to believe that they are made for it which penetrates to the deep into the society. The same mindset has been observed by Imrana Quadir when a *Harijan* replies that 'how can she (the nurse) visit us? We are poor. We can not pay her fees. She visits rich people and spend considerable time in their houses.'⁽²⁾ This mindset is not the cultivated product of the lower caste but the society is constituted in such manner which produces this type of assumption. Inequality in access to health may not be always visible but it is the very nature of the social construction which assiduously proliferates among the lower and upper caste and ultimately manifest in different attitude.

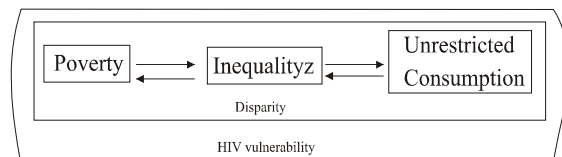
Inequality in health is intermittently related with gender. Gender is often mistaken with sex, whereas sex is a biologically determined and gender is socially determined. Gender has a multiple impact on health. This is the social mindset which first imposes and then builds the conception of gender thus society defines it according to its structure. Like, traditionally male are rational and female are emotional or male are always active and female are passive. This typecasting has a deep root and probably the cause of inequality.⁽⁹⁾ Two important incidences related to family planning history in India can be discussed to narrate how gender, certainly female, is used as an object thus becoming the victim of inequality. The Fifth five Year Plan had realised the problem of vertical programme and integrated the family planning, MCH (Maternal & Child Health), nutrition with general health service, but during the emergency period (political turmoil) in 1975, the family planning agenda was back to square one and male sterilisation drive had been reinforced which also reflected in the National Population Policy of April, 1976. It brought unrest to the community and led to the political change in the country in 1977.

Thereafter the family planning programme had been discarded but included under MCH which further the family planning motivation of govt.⁽¹⁰⁾ The interesting change was the shift in focus from male to female in family planning. It can be concluded that as male are the dominant power of the society and because of 'nasbandi' (vasectomy, male sterilisation) the great political defeat had to come for the then ruling govt., and thus prompted to change the main focus on female as they are the submissive gender and traditionally less empowered. So, the experiment of population control could be done to a female body whatever the bad consequences it has but not to a male because of the patriarchal structure of the society. Hence, it can be contemplated that there is no equal rights for the women to protect their body from any 'experiment'.

Another example can be taken from the MTP act, 1975.⁽¹⁰⁾ MTP- Medical Termination of Pregnancy act has been established to save the women from any severe pregnancy related complication issue and allow them to terminate the pregnancy. However, the social diversity of India sometime uses this act as a weapon for sex selective abortion, and no guess that the fetus is always a female. The mushrooming of private nursing homes are spreading this practice where the son centric family members perform this unholy ritual. Lack of vigilance from state and social menace collectively help this practice to grow in general. This may be considered as the case of gender violence where women are denied to give birth but is it not ignorance to her reproductive and sexual health. This unhealthy practice often leads women into a complicated health situation and even to death. The role of female gender is always suppressed and unheard thus consider also a less productive and less useful. Female as a gender is fundamentally unequal compare to man in Indian society thus the access to health sometime be restricted even before a women gives birth. There are many other issues within the health service that brings the inequality question. RCH (Reproductive and Child Health) programme is the mandate of ICPD (International Conference on population and Development), 1994⁽⁵⁾ which govt. of India has started in 1997 as a signatory member of the conference. The RCH programme only caters the need of reproductive health of the women, then what about the general health of the women. Is reproduction the only health requirement of a woman? What about the

anemia, malnutrition issues and the women who does not fall under the reproductive age group? The planning of the programme should give a revise and then decide where from the inequality starts.

Inequality is caused often because of unrestricted consumption and result increasing disparity and breeds poverty. Disease can occur also because of ever expanding inequality among two groups in the society. In 'Revisiting the epidemiology of HIV infection', Ritu Priya has shown how the inequality creates disparity and that disparity decides the vulnerability to HIV.



The schematic format is diagramed based on the 'Matrix of Economic Determinants of a Society's Vulnerability to HIV' (Revisiting the Epidemiology, page no. 51)⁽¹¹⁾

Inequality builds the many conditions for poverty and on the other hand inequality occurs because of unrestricted consumption. Hence, inequality mediates between unrestricted consumption and poverty. The social factors (like, lifestyle, commercialisation etc.) are responsible for unrestricted consumption and which leads to inequality. Increasing inequality means closer to the disparity line and increasing disparity refers to more vulnerability to HIV. Ritu Priya has proved through the matrix (which is computed based on the selective indicators of selective countries) that high disparity (because of high inequality) causes the population more vulnerable to HIV. Like, according to the matrix Zimbabwe has the highest vulnerability to HIV because the country has the highest consumption disparity and also the lowest consumption/income level. Hence, inequality in health status happens because there is an inequality in consumption and in income, so, the society has the structure which formulates the inequality and in turn effect to the health status of the population.

The life of a human being is not about a complex matrix of inequality but the milieu of his/her social condition. Rakku's story is an illustration of that social condition.⁽¹²⁾ Rakku is the representative of lower caste, landless labour class village women who takes most of the responsibility (including earning for family) but

have limited decision making choices. Rakku is a malnourished, anemic and an example of many who spends their whole life in the vicious cycle of 'struggle to be alive'. These women have the courage to fight against all odds but often get suppressed under the limitation of 'social norms (or rules)'. Rakku has gone to an extreme point to save her child in spite of social obligation (night stay in a hospital without her husband), family obligation and crumbling govt. infrastructure. The story entails the poor state of health infrastructure which is full of urban centric, upper class mentality, corrupt leaving the poor and the village people almost unattended. Rakku is the example of how inequality forms and affects the society. Rakku is a landless labourer which bars her to visit the city to treat her child because it would lead her to get deprived from her wages and also bound her to take additional loan to avail the transport for city. Rakku is a lower caste uneducated village woman, so her voice is negligible to the medical staff even though the child's condition gets serious in hospital. Rakku is a female so she has to take every responsibility of the family (from earning to child feeding) and also need to think how to go to the urban health facility, how to approach to the doctor and how can she spend a night without her husband in hospital though her child is at the verge of the death. The socialisation of inequality and the availability of health services have made the Rakkus to be more vulnerable.

Rakku's child has finally got died but raised the many questions silently. Rakku thought to question the system which only favours the ruling class but like many other working class people she has also restrained herself.

Further, the situation seems to be normal till the next death comes!!

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LET YOUR GIRLS GROW

- SHAHNAZ RAFIQUE
Social Enterprenuer/Activist
Former Juvenile Member, Jharkhand

Girls !! The corporatized world makes them an object, a commodity and makes them feel insecure. Often read and witnessed, since childhood, in most places girls are advised to eat after their brothers or father and keep quiet in front of them!! Female foeticide, malnutrition, child marriage, trafficking, dowry, exploitation, harassment etc .. are the well known traumas girls go through. But there's one thing which gets undermined which is about dealing with body image.

Our idea of feminism is encouraging girls to become astronauts. How is 14-year old going to have big dreams if she isn't taught to be comfortable with her own body and appearance? When young girls start getting breasts, there are mothers that tape/make their daughters wear loose clothes so her breasts don't show, to protect her. We are at constant watch of what we wear, how we sit, the tone of our voice, the bra strap that mustn't show, the neckline that shouldn't drop when you're set-

ting food on the dinner table- while on the other hand our sons are probably just outside discussing about bikes with their friends in an alley, or spreading legs, wearing half pants or showing hair- when a man's body reacts the same way as girls, we name it strength. In the midst of all of this, you tell them about educating girls to have a career goals- but tell me something, how can you go inspire the young teenage girls to have big dreams, when 80% of her worries are body related?

I would rather teach my girls to love and accept their bodies as they are, understand their sexuality and gender before I talk about her career. Women's breast are not the problem, sexual objectification is the problem. Breasts don't hurt children, breasts feed children and it's the sexualisation of women's bodies that's actually hurting the children the most.

Yet we realise that education is one of the tools which can tackle all challenges. Education along

with sustainable development will improve the present scenario. Government and the civil societies have started working in this area and we are seeing the difference too, 2016 has witnessed female growth ! Yet we have miles to go....

Besides education and sustainable economic development, girls should be educated to assess and stand against unacceptable behaviour, they should be taught to say No, and develop strategies to help themselves and others as per the situation. Parents usually teach their girls, since childhood, not to get involved when it doesn't concern them. This brings a negative impact in their personality. We should in fact raise our daughters to be confident, determined and strong to fight back all kinds of violence and harassments and say -No . They need to realise that their dreams also have value!! Education can do wonders and bring an impressive upliftment in their character, career and life. It teaches them to recognize good from better, learn to say NO, stand up against wrong, become visionary and turn their lives into an institution so as they get empowered not only socially but also politically and economically. This dream will turn true only through accessibility to quality education and support of parents, family and society , So let us all contribute to their growth and development !!

I recollect a wonderful quote of Roman Payne- "As for you girls, you must risk everything for Freedom, and give everything for Passion, loving everything that your hearts and your bodies love. The only thing higher for a girl and more sacred for a young woman than her freedom and her passion

should be her desire to make her life into poetry, surrendering everything she has to create a life as beautiful as the dreams that dance in her imagination."

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'STOP FOETICIDE, NURTURE THEM'

- Ritu Mehra

“Women are as unique as salt, their presence is never felt... but absence makes all the things dull and uninteresting!!”

We can never imagine a society without the women. They are the creators who nurture life. Women are the pillars of any civilization and society. As per mythology in India women were worshiped for their dedication, loyalty, sacrifice for family and society. Ironically with passage of time it has changed to totally opposite. These days women have to face many atrocities like dowry system, female foeticide, exploitation etc. The all India ratio of women is only 943 against 1000 men while in the States like Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab the situation is grimmer.

Having a girl child in many societies is still considered to be a social stigma. Many a times family either opts for foeticide or after the birth the child is abandoned; and if none of these is achievable then the mother has to face discrimination in the society. Though the literacy rate has gone multi-fold higher as compared to ancient India but the few of the communities still consider girl child as a burden for the family and the boys are given more preference as well as importance in anticipation that he will take care of age-

ing parents while the girls would have to be married and sent off with dowry. Although the government has taken all conscious steps by formulating required strict laws to stop female foeticide but the implementation still remains very weak. There exists few medical practitioners who would not mind detecting the sex of the child in the womb and fearlessly carry female foeticide.

It is high time for the society to realize the gravity of the situation as well as for the government to enforce the laws more rigorously against the law breakers. Further awareness programmes have to be conducted to educate people importance of having an equal ratio of girls in the society as without them there would be no life .

“Every man needs a mother a sister, a wife, then why not a Daughter!!”

“Girls makes the world bright, even when she herself struggles to see the light!!”

“Don’t kill girl in womb, when she might bring country to gloom!!”

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PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION

Independent Thought vs. Union of India (W.P. Civil 382 of 2013) (Honorable Supreme Court Issued notices to Centre on 10 July 2013)

Independent Thought (www.ithought.in) has approached the Hon'ble Court Supreme Court of India by way of Writ Petition under Article 32 of the Constitution seeking a declaration that Exception 2 to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, [as amended by Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013] is violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution to the extent that it permits intrusive sexual intercourse with a girl child aged between 15 to 18 years only on the ground that she has been married.

Background

As per the Section 375 IPC, as amended by Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 which defines

"Rape"; a man is said to commit "rape" if he with or without the consent a girl under eighteen years of age, does any of the following;

- a) Penetrates his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or
- b) inserts, to any extent, any object or a part of the body, nor being the penis, into the vagina, the urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or
- c) manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra, anus or any part of body of such woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or
- d) applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person,

The are few exceptions to the above age of Consent of 18 years, one being Exception 2 which mentions that Sexual intercourse



or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.". Whereby making it conducive for child Marriages and allowing husbands of illegal child marriages to force themselves on their wife if she is 15 years and above.

The PIL challenges the above situation in light of the larger State Policy, Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 demanding to declare the exception under Section 375 as unconstitutional and uniformity as to the Minimum age of consent for Sexual Intercourse.

Historically the minimum age of consent and minimum age prescribed for marriage has consistently increased;

Minimum Age of Consent		Minimum Age for Marriage (Girls)	
Section 375, Indian Penal Code		Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929	
1860	10 years	1891	12 years
1925	14 years	1929	14 Years
1940	16 years	1940	15 Years
2013	18 years	1978	18 Years

The Larger State Policy, since 2000 has recognized any person below the age of 18 years as children.

" Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, defines a child anyone less than 18 years

" Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which repeals the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, also provides the minimum age of 18 years for marriage for a girl.

" Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 defines child as any person below age of 18

years.

" The 84th Law Commission report in 1980 had suggested increase in the threshold age to 18 years irrespective of the fact whether the girl is married or not.

" The Law Commission in its 172nd report had suggested parity in so far as age of consent is concerned and had suggested increase of the minimum age requirement to 16 years, even if the girl was married.

" National Policy for Children mentions defines child as any person below age of 18 years.

Grounds

Some of the important grounds on which the PIL has been framed :

1. For that Exception 2 to Section 375 of IPC, as amended by Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, is violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

2. For that the said provision discriminates between a girl child aged between 15 to 18 years and those above 18 years on the ground of marriage which has no rationale nexus to the purpose sought to be achieved.

3. For that the age for grant of consent for sexual relationship has increased over a period of time from 10 years in 1860 to 16 years in 1940 and now the same has been increased to 18 years by way of Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013. There is no justification whatsoever to maintain the age at 15 years only because the girl child is married. Thus, the provision is arbitrary and violates Article 14 of the Constitution.

4. For that by virtue of provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and provisions of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, Parliament has recognized that a girl less than 18 years is a child and therefore, not in a physical and mental condition to take an informed decision

as to sexual relationship. In such circumstances, there is no reason for Parliament to retain the age of 15 years in Exception 2 of Section 375 of IPC. Hence, the said provision is arbitrary and violates Article 14 of the Constitution liable to be struck down.

5. For that Parliament has failed to take notice the recommendation of the Law Commission made in 84th Report and 172nd Report; mentioned above.

6. While POCSO, 2012 protects and secured girls between ages of 15-18, the Exception Clause of Section 375 of Criminal Law (Amendment) legalizes penetrative sexual assault; a clear contradiction in law.

7. Parliament has failed to note that various medical studies and data show that pregnancy in a girl, less than 18 years, is detrimental not only to the health of the girl, but also to the child in the womb, Parliament by permitting lawful sexual intercourse with a girl aged 16 to 18 years who is, in a matrimonial relation, has put the lives of lacs of such girls at risk [and also the lives of children in their womb at considerable risk.

8. For that Parliament could not have upheld the right of the parents to violate the rights of their daughters who are less than 18 years, who have the right, like any other citizen, to grow in the best way possible manner, without being forced into sexual intercourse only on the ground that they have been married off by their parents.

Prayers

The Petitioner has prayed for following in Hon'ble Court:

a) issue an appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature of certiorari or such other similar writ, in the nature of declaration, declaring that the provisions of Exception 2 to Section 375 of IPC, as amended by Crimi-

nal law (Amendment) Act, 2013 is unconstitutional and liable to be struck down;

b) issue an appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature of certiorari or a writ of declaration that the age of consent for sexual relationship should be treated as 18 years, irrespective of the marital status of the girl child;

c) Pass such other order or orders and directions as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case as also in the interest of justice

¹ Independent Thought is a National Human Rights organization working towards equity, justice and mutual respect. Based in Delhi NCR, iThought provides technical and handholding support to non government, government and multilateral Funding, Policy, Research and Grassroots organizations in several states of India.

In another PIL, Independent Thought has approached the Hon'ble Delhi High Court seeking a writ of declaration that exclusion of schools established, owned or controlled by the appropriate Government or the local authority under Section 18(1) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) to obtain a certificate of recognition as required under the RTE Act is violative of Articles 14 and 21A of the Constitution, so should be declared as Unconstitutional, as it defeats the aims and objectives of the RTE Act of providing quality education to all children.

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NEGLECTED EQUAL HALF

*- Ranvijay Kumar
Editor*

There is no denying the fact that women in India have made a considerable progress in almost seven decades of Independence, but they still have to struggle against many cultural and social orthodox in the male-dominated society. Many evils and male dominance still prevail in the modern Indian society that resists the welfare of its other half. It is ironical that a country, which has recently acclaimed the status of the first Asian country to accomplish its Mars mission in the maiden attempt, is positioned at the 127th rank among 146 countries across the globe on the basis of Gender Inequality Index. There has been amelioration in the position of women, but their true empowerment is still awaited.

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest sons of India, quoted that, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved, It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." Therefore, the inclusion of "Women Empowerment" as one of the prime goals in the eight Millennium Development Goals underscores the relevance of this fact. Thus, in order to achieve the status of a developed country, India needs to transform its colossal women force into an effective human resource and this is possible only through the empowerment of women.

Women empowerment doesn't mean dominance of women in the society but it's about getting a fair share in the opportunity to develop herself like others from the vicious grips of social, economical, political, caste and gender-based discrimination. It means granting women the freedom to make life choices. Women empowerment does not mean 'deifying women' rather it means replacing patriarchy with parity.

Development is a multidimensional goal where each and every aspect should be functioning closely to get the desired results. As a matter of fact what seems free to our naked eyes on monitoring closely we can clearly find the strings, from which they are bound by, in our country the same thing is with our other half. The founding fathers of our nation has given us a comprehensive texts which carters all the minutes and details for the well being and development of a human being residing in our country, in the form of The Constitution of India. If we only go by the constitution of India then we will find everyone living in this country is equal and have equal opportunity in each and every aspects. But the ground reality is entirely different due to the social dogma, cultural barriers, economical front and mainly

on the front of making her own choices. Women in our country and in more than approx half of the world are not getting fair and equal share in development and they cannot make her own choice of what she wants to do. As women she is denied many basic rights directly or indirectly in our society, here we cannot say in our country because our country with the several provisions mentioned in it not only provides those rights but also tries to protect those rights by the means of law.

Provisions made under the Constitution of India such as: Right to equality under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees to all Indian women equality before law; Equal pay for equal work under Article 39(d), guards the economic rights of women by guaranteeing equal pay for equal work; and Maternity Relief under Article 42, allows provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane condition of work and maternity relief for women.

Acts like the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of a dowry. Asking or giving dowry can be punished by imprisonment as well as fine; Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, provides for a more effective protection of the rights of women who are victims of domestic violence. A breach of this Act is punishable with both fine and imprisonment; Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, helps to create a conducive environment at the workplace for women where they are not subjected to any sort of sexual harassment. As per the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, all the local elected bodies reserve one-third of their seats for women. Such a provision was made to increase the effective participation of women in politics.

A woman is a being with senses, imagination and thoughts; she should be able to express them freely. Individual empowerment means to have the self-confidence to articulate and assert the power to negotiate and decide. A critical aspect of social empowerment of women is the promotion of gender equality. Gender

equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. It means making women aware of their rights and developing a sense confidence to claim them. A better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods should be promoted amongst the women. It will reduce their financial dependence on their male counterparts by making them a significant part of the human resource of our country.

The position enjoyed by women in the Rig-Vedic period deteriorated in the later Vedic civilization. Women were denied the right to education and widow remarriage. They were denied the right to inheritance and ownership of property. Many social evils like child marriage and dowry system surfaced and started to engulf women. During Gupta period, the status of women immensely deteriorated. Dowry became an institution and Sati Pratha became prominent. During the British Raj, many social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule and others have started agitations for the empowerment of women and bringing them in the mainstream society. Their efforts led to the abolition of Sati Pratha and formulation of the Widow Remarriage Act. Later, stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Nehru advocated women rights. As a result of their concentrated efforts, the status of women in social, economic and political life began to elevate in the Indian society and we can clearly see many shining names in the movement of independence.

The most widespread and dehumanizing discriminations against women are on the basis of the biased perspective. The discrimination against the girl child begins from the birth itself. Boys are preferred over girls; hence, female infanticide is a common practice in India. The ordeal that an Indian girl faces at birth is only the beginning of a lifelong struggle to be seen and heard. The traditional Indian society is a patriarchal society

ruled by the diktats of self-proclaimed caste lords who are the guardians of archaic and unjust traditions. They put the burden of traditions, culture, and honor on the shoulders of women and hinder their growth. The incidences of "honor killing" reveal the distorted social fiber in the male-dominated society. Women constitute only 29% of the workforce but forms majority of the destitute in the country. There has been a failure in transforming the available women base into human resource. This, in turn, has hampered not only the economic development of women but also of the country' as a whole.

Through all these years, the attention is only on developing and devising new schemes, policies and programs and have paid less attention to the proper monitoring system and implementation short-sightedness, for e.g. despite the presence of The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technologies Act and various health programs like Janani Suraksha Yojana and National Rural Health Mission (NHRM), our country has a skewed sex ratio and a high maternal mortality rate (MMR).

Although there are a number of laws to protect women against all sorts of violence yet there has been the significant increase in the episodes of rapes, extortions, acid, attacks etc. This is due to delay in legal procedures and the presence of several loopholes in the functioning of a judicial system.

The male dominance prevails in the politics of India and women are forced to remain mute spectators. The deep-rooted biases through sustained social barriers, it is only possible way to bring parity is to by promoting the idea of gender equality and uprooting social ideology of male child preferability. This concept of equality should be first developed in each and every household and from there; it should be taken to the society. This can be achieved by running sustained awareness programs with the help of Nukkad Natak or dramas, radio, television, Internet, etc. across the country and globe.

Education is the most important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. It makes women aware

of their rights and responsibilities. Educational achievements of a woman can have ripple effects for the family and across generations. Most of the girls drop out of schools due to the unavailability of separate toilets for them. The recently launched 'Swachh Bharat Mission' focusing on improving sanitation facilities in schools and every rural household by 2019, can prove to be very significant in bringing down the rate of girls dropping out of school. Government or community-based bodies must be set up to monitor the programs devised for the welfare of the society. Due importance should be given for their proper implementation and their monitoring and evaluation through social audits.

Justice delayed is justice denied. Efforts should be made to restructure the legal process to deliver fair and in-time justice to the victims of heinous crimes like rapes, acid attacks, sexual harassment, trafficking and domestic violence. The idea of fast-track courts, devised to impart speedy justice to the victims of rapes and other crimes against women, is a good initiative taken by the judiciary and the Government of India.

Empowering women socially, economically, educationally politically and legally is going to be a tough task and each and every individual's participation is sought. It is not going to be easy to change the culture of disregard for women which are so deep-rooted in Indian society. But it does not mean that it is implausible. Only revolutions bring changes in a day, and reforms take their time. This one, in particular, will take its time as well. All we need is a concentrated effort focused in the right direction that would rest only with the liberation of women from all forms of evil.

I henceforth would like to express my deepest regards to the people either individual or organization for their works done and also for the continuous efforts which will surely bring about a change in our society and ultimately in our country.

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बेटी-अस्तित्व और विकास

सामाजिक सन्तुलन को बनाये रखने के लिये, समाज में लड़कियाँ भी लड़कों की तरह महत्वपूर्ण हैं। कुछ वर्ष पहले, पुरुषों के मुकाबले में महिलाओं की संख्या में भारी गिरावट थी। ये महिलाओं के खिलाफ अपराधों को बढ़ने के कारण था जैसेरु कन्या भ्रूण हत्या, दहेज के लिये हत्या, बलात्कार, गरीबी, अशिक्षा, लिंग भेदभाव आदि। समाज में महिलाओं की संख्या को बराबर करने के लिये, लोगों को बड़े स्तर पर कन्या बचाने के बारे में जागरूक करने की आवश्यकता है। भारत की सरकार ने कन्याओं को बचाने के सन्दर्भ में कुछ सकारात्मक कदम उठाये हैं जैसेरु महिलाओं की घरेलू हिंसा से सुरक्षा अधिनियम द्रढ़, कन्या भ्रूण हत्या पर प्रतिबंध, अनैतिक तस्करी (रोकथाम) अधिनियम, उचित शिक्षा, लिंग समानता आदि।

महिलाओं के सम्पूर्ण सामाजिक और आर्थिक स्तर को सुधारने के लिये बेटी बचाओ विषय पर पूरे भारत में सभी के ध्यान को केन्द्रित करना है। केन्द्रीय या राज्य सरकार ने बेटी बचाओ के सन्दर्भ में निम्नलिखित कुछ पहलों को शुरू किया हैरु

कन्या (बालिका) बचाने के लिये, दिल्ली और हरियाणा सरकार ने द्रढ़ में लाड़ली योजना को शुरू करके लागू किया था। इस योजना का उद्देश्य कन्या भ्रूण हत्या को रोकने के साथ ही साथ शिक्षा और समान लिंग

अधिकार के माध्यम से बालिकाओं की स्थिति में सुधार था।

शिक्षा के माध्यम से लड़कियों को सशक्त करने के उद्देश्य से महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय ने द्रढ़ में सबला योजना को शुरू किया था।

जन्म, पंजीकरण, और टीकाकरण के बाद बालिका के परिवार को नकद हस्तांतरण प्रदान करने के उद्देश्य से महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय के द्वारा द्रढ़ में ६ जनलक्ष्मी योजना को शुरू किया गया था।

किशोरियों के पोषण और स्वास्थ्य की स्थिति में सुधार करने के उद्देश्य से महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय के द्वारा किशोरी शक्ति योजना को शुरू किया गया था।

परिवार में एक लड़की की समान हिस्सेदारी को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सुकन्या समृद्धि योजना शुरू की गयी।

बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ (अर्थात् लड़कियों को बचाना और लड़कियों को पढ़ाना) योजना को द्रढ़ में महिलाओं के कल्याण के लिये शुरू किया गया था।

आजकल पूरे देश में लड़कियों को बचाने के सन्दर्भ में बेटी बचाओ विषय बहुत महत्वपूर्ण सामाजिक जागरूकता का विषय है। लड़कियों को बचाने के लिये

बहुत से प्रभावशाली उपायों को अपनाया गया है जिससे इन्हें बहुत हद तक बचाया जा सकता है। समाज में बड़े स्तर पर गरीबी का प्रसार है जो भारतीय समाज में अशिक्षा और लिंग असमानता का बहुत बड़ा कारण है। तो शिक्षा, गरीबी और लिंग भेदभाव को कम करने के साथ ही भारतीय समाज में बालिकाओं और औरत की स्थिति में सुधार के लिए महत्वपूर्ण तत्व है। आकड़ों के अनुसार, ये पाया गया है कि उड़ीसा में महिला साक्षरता लगातार गिर रही है जहाँ लड़कियाँ शिक्षा और अन्य गतिविधियों में समान पहुँच नहीं रखती है।

शिक्षा गहराई के साथ रोजगार से जुड़ी हुई है। कम शिक्षा का अर्थ है कम रोजगार जो समाज में गरीबी और लिंग असमानता का नेतृत्व करता है। महिलाओं की स्थिति में सुधार करने के लिये शिक्षा बहुत प्रभावी कदम है क्योंकि ये इन्हें वित्तीय रूप से आत्मनिर्भर बनाता है। समाज में महिलाओं के समान अधिकार और अवसरों को सुनिश्चित करने के लिये सरकार ने कन्या बचाओं कदम उठाया है। ब लीवुड अभिनेत्री (परिणीति चौपड़ा) को प्रधानमंत्री की हाल की योजना बेटा बचाओ (बेटा बचाओ, बेटा पढ़ाओ) की एक आधिकारिक तौर पर ब्रांड एंबेसडर बनाया गया है।

लड़कियाँ वर्षों से भारत में कई तरह के अपराधों से पीड़ित हैं। सबसे भयानक अपराध कन्या भ्रूण हत्या है जिसमें अल्ट्रासाउंड के माध्यम से लिंग परीक्षण के बाद लड़कियों को माँ के गर्भ में ही मार दिया जाता है। बेटा बचाओ अभियान सरकार द्वारा स्त्री भ्रूण के लिंग-चयनात्मक गर्भपात के साथ ही बालिकाओं के खिलाफ अन्य अपराधों को समाप्त करने के लिए शुरू किया गया है।

कन्या भ्रूण हत्या का कन्या शिशु अनुपात-कमी पर प्रभाव

कन्या भ्रूण हत्या अस्पतालों (ह स्पिटल्स) में चयनात्मक लिंग परीक्षण के बाद गर्भपात के माध्यम से किया जाना वाला बहुत भयानक कार्य है। ये भारत में लोगों की लड़कों में लड़कियों से अधिक चाह होने के कारण विकसित हुआ है। इसने काफी हद तक भारत में कन्या शिशु लिंग अनुपात में कमी की है। ये देश में अल्ट्रासाउंड तकनीकी के कारण ही सम्भव हो पाया है।

इसने समाज में लिंग भेदभाव और लड़कियों के लिये असमानता के कारण बड़े दानव (राक्षस) का रूप ले लिया है। महिला लिंग अनुपात में भारी कमी की राष्ट्रीय जनगणना के बाद देखी गयी थी। इसके बाद ये द्रढ़ की राष्ट्रीय जनगणना के बाद समाज की एक बिगड़ती समस्या के रूप में घोषित की गयी थी। हालांकि, महिला आबादी में कमी द्रढ़ तक भी जारी रही। बाद में, कन्या शिशु के अनुपात को नियंत्रित करने के लिए सरकार द्वारा इस प्रथा पर सख्ती से प्रतिबंध लगाया गया था। द्रढ़ में मध्य प्रदेश में ये अनुपात लड़कियाँ द्रढ़ लड़कें था हालांकि द्रढ़ में द्रढ़ तक कम हो गया। इसका मतलब है, ये अभी भी जारी है और द्रढ़ तक इसे द्रढ़ द्रढ़ कम किया जा सकता है।

बेटा बचाओ बेटा पढ़ाओ जागरुकता अभियान की भूमिका

बेटा बचाओ, बेटा पढ़ाओ एक योजना है जिसका अर्थ है कन्या शिशु को बचाओं और इन्हें शिक्षित करें। ये योजना भारतीय सरकार द्वारा जनवरी द्रढ़ को कन्या शिशु के लिये जागरुकता का निर्माण करने के साथ साथ महिला कल्याण में सुधार करने के लिये शुरू की गयी थी। ये अभियान कुछ गतिविधियों जैसे बड़ी रैलियों, दीवार लेखन, टीवी विज्ञापनों, होर्डिंग, लघु एनिमेशन, वीडियो फिल्मों, निबंध लेखन, वाद-विवाद, आदि, को आयोजित करने के द्वारा समाज के अधिक लोगों को जागरुक करने के लिये शुरू किया गया था। ये अभियान भारत में बहुत से सरकारी और गैर सरकारी संगठनों के द्वारा समर्थित है। ये योजना पूरे देश में कन्या शिशु बचाओ के सन्दर्भ में जागरुकता फैलाने में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका को निभाने के साथ ही भारतीय समाज में लड़कियों के स्तर में सुधार करेगी।

भारतीय समाज में लड़कियों की स्थिति बहुत समय से विवाद का विषय है। आमतौर पर प्राचीन समय से ही, लड़कियाँ की खाना बनाने और गुड़ियों के साथ खेलने में शामिल होने की मान्यता है जबकि लड़कें शिक्षा और अन्य शारीरिक गतिविधियों में शामिल होते हैं। लोगों की ऐसी पुरानी मान्यताएँ उन्हें नकली बनाकर महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा करने को प्रेरित करती हैं जिसका परिणाम समाज में बालिकाओं की संख्या में

निरंतर कमी है। इसलिये, दोनों (महिला और पुरुषों) के लिंग-अनुपात को समान करने के साथ ही देश का विकास सुनिश्चित करने के लिये कन्याओं को बचाने की बहुत आवश्यकता है।

कन्या या बालिका बचाओ के सन्दर्भ में लिये गये प्रभावशाली कदम

बेटी बचाओ के सन्दर्भ में लिये गये बहुत से प्रभावी कदम निम्नलिखित हैरू

वर्षों से, भारतीय समाज में माता-पिता के द्वारा लड़के के जन्म की चाह के कारण महिलाओं की स्थिति पिछड़ी हुई है। इसने समाज में लिंग असमानता का निर्माण किया और लिंग समानता को लाकर इसे हटाना बहुत आवश्यक है।

समाज में व्याप्त अत्यधिक गरीबी ने महिलाओं के खिलाफ सामाजिक बुराई जैसे दहेज प्रथा जन्म दिया है जिसने महिलाओं की स्थिति को बद से बदतर (बहुत बुरा) बना दिया है। आमतौर पर माता-पिता सोचते हैं कि लड़कियाँ केवल रुपये खर्च कराती हैं जिसके कारण वो लड़कियों को बहुत से तरीकों (कन्या भ्रूण हत्या, दहेज के लिये हत्या) जन्म से पहले या बाद में मार देते हैं, कन्याओं या महिलाओं को बचाने के लिये ये मुद्दे समाज से बहुत शीघ्र खत्म करने की आवश्यकता है।

अशिक्षा एक दूसरा मुद्दा है जो दोनों लिंगों (लड़कों और लड़कियों) को उचित शिक्षा देने के माध्यम से खत्म किया जा सकता है।

बालिकाओं के जीवन को बचाने के लिये महिलाओं का सशक्तिकरण बहुत प्रभावशाली यंत्र है।

बेटी बचाओ के सन्दर्भ में कुछ प्रभावशाली अभियानों के माध्यम से लोगों को जागरूक किया जाना चाहिये।

एक लड़की माँ के गर्भ में साथ ही साथ बाहर भी असुरक्षित है। वो जीवन भर उन पुरुषों के माध्यम से कई मायनों में भयभीत रहती है जिसने उन्हें जन्म दिया है। जिस पुरुष को उसने जन्म दिया है वो उससे शासित होती है और जो हमारे लिये बहुत हास्यपद और शर्मनाक है। कन्याओं को बचाने और उनके सम्मान को बनाने के लिये, शिक्षा सबसे बड़ी क्रान्ति है।

एक लड़की को प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में समान पहुँच और

अवसर देने चाहिये।

सभी सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर लड़कियों के लिये रक्षा और सुरक्षा के प्रबंध करने चाहिये।

एक लड़की के परिवार के सदस्य बालिका बचाओ अभियान को सफल बनाने के लिए बेहतर लक्ष्य हो सकते हैं।

पृथ्वी पर मानव जाति का अस्तित्व, आदमी और औरत दोनों की समान भागीदारी के बिना असंभव है। दोनों ही पृथ्वी पर मानव जाति के अस्तित्व के साथ ही साथ किसी भी देश के विकास के लिये समान रूप से जिम्मेदार हैं। हालांकि, इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है कि महिलाएं पुरुषों से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हैं क्योंकि इनके बिना हम मानव जाति की निरंतरता के बारे में नहीं सोच सकते क्योंकि वो मानव को जन्म देती हैं। तो कन्या शिशु को नहीं मारा जाना चाहिये, उन्हें आगे बढ़ाने के लिये सुरक्षा, सम्मान और समान अवसर प्रदान किये जाने चाहिये। वो सभ्यता के भाग्य निर्माण में मददगार और सजन के स्त्रोत की जड़े हैं। हालांकि, महिलाएं कन्या भ्रूण हत्या, बलात्कार, यौन शोषण, दहेज के लिये हत्या आदि से अपनी ही बनायी गयी सभ्यता में पीड़ित हैं। ये कितना शर्मनाक है!

बेटी बचाओ अभियान क्यों

समाज में लोगों द्वारा एक शिशु कन्या को विभिन्न कारणों के कारण बचाया जाना चाहिये

वो किसी भी क्षेत्र में लड़कों की तुलना में कम सक्षम नहीं है और अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ देती है।

से कन्या भ्रूण हत्या एक गैर कानूनी अपराध है और लिंग परीक्षण चुनाव के बाद गर्भपात को रोकने के लिये प्रतिबंधित कर दिया गया है। लोगों को सभी नियमों को लड़कियों को बचाने के लिये सख्ती से पालन करना चाहिये।

लड़कियाँ लड़कों की तुलना में अधिक आज्ञाकारी, कम हिंसक और अभिमानी साबित हो चुकी हैं।

वो अपने परिवार, नौकरी, समाज या देश के लिए ज्यादा जिम्मेदार साबित हो चुकी हैं।

वो अपने माता-पिता की और उनके कार्यों की अधिक परवाह करने वाली होती हैं।

एक महिला माता, पत्नी, बेटी, बहन आदि होती है। प्रत्येक को ये सोचना चाहिये कि उसकी पत्नी किसी अन्य आदमी का बेटी है और भविष्य में उसकी बेटी किसी और की पत्नी होगी। इसलिये प्रत्येक को औरतों के हर एक रूप का सम्मान करना चाहिये।

एक लड़की अपनी जिम्मेदारियों के साथ-साथ अपनी पेशेवर जिम्मेदारियों को बहुत वफादारी से निभाती है जो इन्हें लड़को से अधिक विशेष बनाती है।

लड़कियाँ मानव जाति के अस्तित्व का परम कारण है।

लड़कियों को बचाने के लिये सरकार द्वारा उठाये गये कदम

सरकार द्वारा लड़कियों को बचाने और शिक्षित करने के लिये बहुत से कदम उठाये गये हैं। इस बारे में सबसे हाल की पहल बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ है जो बहुत सक्रिय रूप से सरकार, एनजीओ, क रपोरेट समूहों, और मानव अधिकार कार्यकर्ताओं और गैर सरकारी संगठनों द्वारा समर्थित है। विभिन्न सामाजिक संगठनों ने महिला स्कूलों में शौचालय के निर्माण से अभियान में मदद की है। बालिकाओं और महिलाओं के खिलाफ अपराध भारत में वृद्धि और विकास के रास्ते में बड़ी बाधा है। कन्या भ्रूण हत्या बड़े मुद्दों में से एक था हालांकि अस्पतालों में लिंग निर्धारण, स्कैन परीक्षण, उत्सववेधन, के लिए अल्ट्रासाउंड पर रोक लगा कर आदि के द्वारा सरकार ने प्रतिबंधित किया गया है। सरकार ने ये कदम लोगों को ये बताने के लिये लिया है कि लड़कियाँ समाज में अपराध नहीं हालांकि भगवान का दिया हुआ एक खूबसूरत तोहफा है।



जेण्डर आधारित भेदभाव तथा आगे का रास्ता

- अर्पणा द्विवेदी

दांस्तां कहां से शुरू करूं
जिधर देखती हूं घाव ही घाव नजर
आते हैं

लड़कियों व महिलाओं के साथ होने वाली जेण्डर आधारित भेदभाव तथा हिंसा के बारे में लिखना कहां से शुरू करें यह एक चुनौती नहीं तकलीफ देह लगता है, क्योंकि लड़कियों के अस्तित्व की लड़ाई मां के कोख लेकर शमशान तक चलती है। हमारे पितसत्तामक समाज में कदम कदम पर भेदभाव और असुरक्षा से भरी लड़कियों की जिन्दगी सभी समुदायों में लगभग एक जैसी ही है, बतौर महिला और महिला अधिकार कार्यकर्ता हजारों जगह पर इस भेदभाव को झेला भी है।

मां के कोख में पलने वाला भ्रूण जन्म लेगा की नहीं वह इस बात पर निर्भर करता है कि उसका लिंग क्या है। भला हो सोनोग्राफी मशीन का, पैदा होने के बाद मार दी जाने वाली लड़कियां मां के कोख में ही खत्म कर दी जाती हैं और वो मां जो नौ महीने तक आशाओं और उम्मीदों से कोख में पलने वाले बच्चे से जन्म होने के बाद मायूस नहीं होना पड़ता। यह इतना सरल नहीं है कि, क्या फर्क पड़ता है कि बच्चा मां के कोख में खत्म हुआ या जन्म लेने के बाद? इस पूरी प्रक्रिया में मां या वो

औरत जिन शारीरिक, मानसिक व सामाजिक तनाव तथा परिवर्तन से गुजरती है वह कभी असहनीय और अमानवीय हो जाता है।

यह तकलीफ मुझे भी तब अन्दर तक झकझोर गयी जब एक महिला ने मेरे साथ बात-चीत में बताया कि उसे नहीं पता कि उसकी तीसरी बेटी का क्या हुआ? वो पैदा तो जिंदा हुयी थी, दूध के लिए बहुत रोयी भी थी लेकिन तीसरी बेटी की खबर सुनते ही उसके कान बंद हो गये, हिलने दुलने की शक्ति खत्म हो गयी और उसके बाद का उसे कुछ याद नहीं की वह तीसरी बेटी कैसे मरी, कारण सास के ताने। बीस साल बाद भी उसे मलाल है, दुख है लेकिन उसे उस समय कुछ समझ में नहीं आया और पैदा होने के बाद दूध के लिए तपड़ती मासूम को ये नहीं पता था कि उसका लड़की होना इतना बड़ा कसूर है कि उसे दूध तक नसीब नहीं होगा।

भेदभाव से लेकर हिंसा तक का सफर यहां से शुरू होता है कदम कदम पर सीमाएं तय की जाती हैं और उन सीमाओं में रहना सिखाया जाता है यह पहनो यह मत पहनो, गुड़डे गुड़िया से घर घर खेलो, बाहर नहीं खेलना है, इससे बात कर सकते हो इससे बात नहीं करनी है, कहीं थोड़ी बहुत पढ़ाई करनी है कहीं नहीं करनी है, १० वीं से आगे पढ़ना है तो ससुराल वालों

से पूछना पड़ेगा और ससुराल जाने के बाद और पांबदियां।

भेदभाव का सिलसिला यहीं तक खत्म हो जाता तो शायद इतनी तकलीफ नहीं होती, ये भेदभाव तो सबसे नीचली सीढ़ी है और यह जाती है लड़कियों व औरतों के साथ क्रूरतम हत्याओं तक, सामूहिक बलात्कार तक, ऐसे अमानवीय फैसले जिन सुनकर दिल दहल उठे, उनपर तेजाब फेंका जाना इत्यादि इत्यादि।

लड़की पढ़ेगी की नहीं पढ़ेगी यह उसकी काबिलियत नहीं परिवार तय करता है। रास्ते में अगर लड़के लड़कियों को छेड़ते हैं तो लड़कों को नहीं रोका जाता लड़कियों की पढ़ाई छुड़वा दी जाती है। खुदा न खास्ता किसी लड़की ने किसी लड़के को पंसद कर लिया तो समाज व परिवार को हक मिल जाता है कि उसे जान से खत्म कर दे, लड़कियां इतनी सस्ती हैं कि राह चलता १५ साल से लेकर ७५ साल तक आदमी उसके साथ किसी भी तरह की बदतमीजी कर शान से निकल जाता है, गाड़ी वाला हो तो उठा कर ही ले जाये और उसे अपने तरीके से इस्तेमाल कर कहीं भी फेंक दे या बेच दे, इज्जत के नाम १०-१२ साल की लड़की होने पर मां बाप भी चिंता ग्रस्त हो जाते की जल्दी से जल्दी उसकी शादी कर दे, और शादी के बाद तानो का, हिंसा का अलग दौर जो फिर उनको मौत की तरफ ले जाता है। मनमुताबिक शादी नहीं हुयी तो जिंदा जलाया जा सकता है लड़का पैदा नहीं किया तो उम्र की किसी भी दहलीज पर डिफाल्ट मशीन की तरह घर से निकाल कर बाहर फेंका जा सकता है।

एक और जरूरी मुद्दा कि ऐसा नहीं है कि पढ़ी लिखी महिलाएं या लड़कियां हिंसा का शिकार नहीं हो रही हैं या पढ़े लिखे परिवार और लोग ऐसा नहीं कर रहे हैं। मुझे लगता है कि यह सबसे दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि शिक्षा हमारे सामाज में प्रगतिशील सोच नहीं ला पायी।

हमारा पढ़ा लिखा समाज इन सवालों के जबाब में "औरत ही औरत की दुश्मन है" मुहावरे के साथ बड़ी शान से सारी जिम्मेदारी औरतों पर डालते हैं लेकिन पितसत्तात्मक समाज में हम यह भूल जाते हैं कि हर औरत इस सामाजिक ढांचे का हिस्सा है और उस पर

एक आदर्श महिला होने की जिम्मेदारी है, आदर्श महिला जो अपनी बेटी को सारे तौर तरीके सीखाए वर्ना बेटी के साथ वो भी चरित्रहीन कहलाएगी, ससुराल में ताना मिलेगा 'तेरी मां यही सीखाया', जो अपनी बहु को नियंत्रण में रखे, परिवार की सम्पत्ति के वारिस यानी लड़का सुनिश्चित करे और उम्र भर अपने पिता, भाई, पति तथा बेटे को खुश रखे।

ये मुआवरे, लोक कथाएं और उस पर मोहर लगाती धार्मिक मान्यताएं सभी लड़कियों तथा औरतों की स्थिति समाज में कमजोर करते हैं और उसे पुरुष द्वारा नियंत्रित करने की आवश्यकता साबित करते हैं।

यह जेण्डर भेदभाव हमें सामाजिक स्तर पर ही नहीं सरकारी ढांचों, नीतियों तथा कानूनों तथा उनके क्रियान्वयन में उतनी ही गहराई से दिखायी देता है जितना यह हमारे समाज के अंदर है। कार्यस्थल पर यौन हिंसा विरोधी कानून लागू करना इसका एक उदाहरण मात्र है।

एक बदलाव की लहर हम महसूस कर सकते हैं अपनी युवा पीढ़ी के साथ जो कुछ हद तक इन भेदभाव आधारित मान्यताओं को चुनौती ही नहीं दे रही उन्हें उखाड़ कर फेंक रही है। जेण्डर भेदभाव की जड़ें जितनी गहरी हैं उतना ही व्यापक इसका विरोध भी जरूरी है। जैसे आजादी की लौ जब हर घर से जलने लगी तो बाहरी ताकतों को यह ठिकना मुश्किल हो गया ऐसे ही जब हर घर से कोई न कोई एक व्यक्ति जेण्डर भेदभाव का, हिंसा का विरोध करना शुरू कर देगा तब बदलाव जरूर आयेगा।

साथ ही साथ जरूरी है कि लड़कियों और महिलाओं के विकास के मौके बढ़ें और जो मौके उपलब्ध हैं उन तक पहुंच बने। देश में सिर्फ एक इंदिरा गांधी, या पी टी उषा या गीता फोगट न बने जिन लड़की में भी काबिलियत है या वो जो बनना चाहती हैं वो बन सके, अपना भविष्य खुद लिख सकें।

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इंद्रधनुष की तलाश में भारतीय स्त्री

- डा मेधा

जनम लिया तो जले पिता—माँ, यौवन खिला
ननद—भाभी

ब्याह रचा तो जला मोहल्ला, पुत्र हुआ तो
बंध्या भी

जले हृदय के अन्दर नारी

उस पर बाहर दुनिया सारी

मर जाने पर भी मरघट में, जल—जल
उठी लकड़ियाँ रे।

कविवर गोपाल सिंह नेपाली की कविताएँ
' बाबुल तुम बगिया के तरुवर' की ये पंक्तियाँ
आज भी कितनी प्रासंगिक हैं। पिछले कुछ दशकों
में भारतीय समाज में बहुत सारी तब्दिलियाँ आई
हैं, जिसने समाज के ताने—बाने को बहुत हद तक
बदलने का काम किया है। लेकिन जब हम स्त्री
के जीवन को इन परिवर्तनों के बीच रख कर
देखते हैं, तो तस्वीर कुछ इतर ही नजर आती है।
वहाँ बदलाव का कोई बड़ा दावा करता, हमारा
समाज नजर नहीं आता।

आज भी हमारे देश में कन्या भ्रूण हत्या
एक क्रूर सच्चाई बनी हुई है। यदि माँ की कोख
से किसी मानिंद कन्या शिशु बाहर आ भी जाती
है, तो उनके पांच साल की उम्र पार करने की
उम्मीद बालक शिशु की तुलना में बहुत क्षीण

होती है। आज भी आंकड़े विकास के हमारे
तमामतर दावों को मुंह चिढ़ाते नजर आते हैं।

लेकिन जब हम वैश्विक परिदृश्य में भारतीय
स्त्री के जीवन की सच्चाइयों की तस्वीर देखने
का प्रयास करते हैं, तो वहाँ कुछ चमकदार हिस्से
भी दिखाई देते हैं तो अधिकांश तस्वीर बदरंग
नजर आती है। पहले तस्वीर के उन अंधेरे हिस्सों
को देखने का प्रयास करेंगे, जिनमें आज भी
भारतीय स्त्री का जीवन जन्म पूर्व से लेकर अंतिम
सांसों तक दारुणता की कथा—व्यथा है।

वैश्विक जेंडर गैप के पैमाने पर स्वास्थ्य
और उत्तरजीविता(सरवाइवल) के मानकों के लिहाज
से भारत का स्थान सबसे आखिर(वां) में है।
भारत में महिलाएं(साल) पुरुषों (साल) से मात्र
एक साल ज्यादा जीवित रहती हैं। जरा इसकी
तुलना यूएन द्वारा अमल में लाये जा रहे जेंडर
संबंधी वैकासिक सूचकांक से करें जो स्त्री और
पुरुष के बीच आयुसंभावित के बीच पांच साल
का अंतर मानता है। यूएन के पैमाने पर भारत
का स्थान कुल देशों के बीच (स्त्री और पुरुष के
आयु में अंतर के मामले में) वां है।

द इंडिया जेंडर गैप रिव्यू के विशेष
संस्करण में भारत को कुल देशों के बीच वां

स्थान दिया गया है जबकि स्वास्थ्य के पैमाने पर जेंडर गैप के मानकों के लिहाज से भारत में स्त्री पुरुष के बीच अंतर फीसदी का, शिक्षा के मामले में फीसदी का, आर्थिक प्रतिभागिता के मामले में फीसदी का और राजनीतिक सशक्तीकरण के मामले में ८ फीसदी का है।

भारत में मात्र ८ फीसद प्रसव स्वास्थ्य कर्मियों की देखरेख में होते हैं। भारत में तकरीबन द्वादश महिलाएँ प्रतिदिन प्रसव के दौरान या गर्भावस्था की अन्य जटिलताओं के कारण काल कवलित होती हैं। जन्मकालिक लिंग-अनुपात के लिहाज से भी भारत का स्थान दुनिया में बहुत नीचे (१०० वां) है। जन्मकालिक सामान्य लिंग अनुपात प्रति मादा शिशु -द्व नर शिशु का माना जाता है लेकिन भारत में यह ९४ लड़कों का है। भारत में प्रति हजार जावित शिशुओं प्रसव पर १०० नर शिशुओं की मृत्यु होती है तो मादा शिशुओं की।

बालिका शिक्षा के मामले में भी भारत की स्थिति बहुत अच्छी नहीं कही जा सकती। शैक्षिक परिलब्धि (ग्लोबल जेंडर गैप रिव्यूज में) के पैमाने पर भारत का स्थान १०० वां है। भारत में स्त्री (१०० फीसदी) पुरुषों (१०० फीसदी) के बीच साक्षरता दर में लगभग एक तिहाई का अन्तर है। तकरीबन ८ करोड़ द्वादश लाख महिलाएं पढ़ने-लिखने की बुनियादी क्षमता से भी समपन्न नहीं हैं। प्राथमिक माध्यमिक और तृतीयक स्तर की शिक्षा में भारत का जेंडर गैप के मामले में स्थान क्रमशः १०० वां, ८० वां और ६० वां है। भारत में अगर दो लड़के स्कूल जाती हैं तो एक लड़की स्कूल स्कूल जा पाती है। ठीक यही स्थिति स्कूली पढ़ाई छूटने के मामले में भी है।

जेंडर गैप के पैमाने पर आर्थिक प्रतिभागिता के लिहाज से भारत का स्थान १०० वां है और इन्तर तकरीबन १०० फीसद का है। महिला कार्यशक्ति की प्रतिभागिता (१०० फीसदी) पुरुष कार्यशक्ति की प्रतिभागिता (१०० फीसदी) से लगभग आधा है। यही स्थिति आमदनी के मामले में भी है। भारत में

महिला की औसत सालाना आमदनी (अमेरिकी ड लर) पुरुष की आमदनी (अमेरिकी ड लर) की तुलना में दो तिहाई कम है।

भारत की लैंगिक समानता की तस्वीर का चमकदार हिस्सा महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी से जुड़ा है। साल १९५० में संविधान का वां(पंचायत) संशोधन पारित हुआ और इस संविधान संशोधन से तणमूल स्तर की दस लाख महिलाएं आनन फानन में राजनीतिक मशीनरी का हिस्सा बन गईं। कहानी का एक चमकदार पहलू जुड़ता है नेतत्व के शीर्ष पदों पर बैठी महिलाओं के रूप में। आजादी के बाद के कुल पचास वर्षों में १९५० साल देश के राजनीतिक शीर्ष पर एक महिला विद्यमान रही और राजनीतिक नेतत्व के इस संदर्भ में भारत का स्थान विश्व में १०० है (ध्यान रहे यहां हम कुछेक कदावर महिला नेतवर्ग मसलन सोनिया गांधी, मायावती और जयललिता की गणना नहीं कर रहे)।

महिलाओं के राजनीतिक सशक्तीकरण के पैमाने पर भारत की वैश्विक स्थिति (१०० वां स्थान) दुनिया के दूसरों देशों की अपेक्षा तनिक मजबूत है और इस मामले में जेंडर गैप की स्थिति ८० फीसद है। भारत में महिलाएँ संसद की कुल और मंत्रिस्तरीय के कुल द्वादश फीसदी पदों पर काबिज हैं और इस मामले में ग्लोबल जेंडर गैप के लिहाज से भारत का स्थान क्रमशः द्वादशवां और १०० वां है।

राजनैतिक नेतत्व और आर्थिक प्रतिभागिता में बेहतर होने के बाद भी घर के भीतर और बाहर, अपनों या परायों द्वारा बालिकाओं या वयस्क महिलाओं से की जा रही यौन और अन्य तरह की हिंसा के आंकड़े दिल दहलाने वाले हैं। बहुत कुछ बदल रहा है, लेकिन इन बदलावों की लहरों के भीतर कहीं गहरा कुछ अब भी ठहरा हुआ है। वह है, भारतीय पुरुष का मन। और मन बदलना दुरुह प्रक्रिया है। अपने को पूरी तरह से अस्वीकार्य कर, पुनः स्वयं को रचना। स्वयं से स्वयं को जन्मना— बारंबार जन्मना, यह तो स्त्रियों की शक्ति

है। इसके लिए पुरुषों को गहरी साधना करनी पड़ती है, तब जाकर कहीं अपने को नया रच पाता है पुरुष – जैसे कि गांधी, जैसे कि ज्योतिबा फुले...। यह मन जब तक नहीं बदलेगा तब तक भारतीय स्त्री के संघर्ष की यह कहानी अकथ चलती रहेगी और इंद्रधनुष बनाने के लिए वह आसमान से बादल बटोरती रहेगी।

संपर्क—

ए ६ विजय नगर,
सिंगल स्टोरी, दिल्ली— ११००६

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SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW ON THE ISSUES FACED BY GIRL CHILD

- Sapna Grover

Introduction

The culture and tradition of India is considered as old and great all over the world where people used to worship various female goddesses, saints and poets. India is also a powerful nation and famous worldwide for being the largest democracy in the world however, women backwardness is also very clear in the Indian society because of the social issues, problems and lots of restrictions against women.

While children around the world continue to face various forms of adversity in the 21st century, girl children in particular are subjected to multiple forms of oppression, exploitation, and discrimination due to their gender. Taking birth as a girl in the Indian society can be said as curse for the women. Women in India face lots of social issues and problems all through the life which are big struggle for them right from their beginning of life. Female infanticide is the most common practice of killing girl child in mother's womb in the Indian society. Women in India are considered as burden for their parents and husbands as they think that women are here only to consume money whole life without earning a little bit.

Another common problem for women is sex discrimination which they face from their birth and continues till their death. Illiteracy, lack of proper edu-

cation, responsible for household works, rape, sexual harassment at workplace, etc. are some big issues for the women in India. However, a lot of positive changes has occurred in the women status as the number of educated people is increasing in the country.

General Issues:

Female Infanticide

Female infanticide and feticide are predominantly practiced in regions of significant poverty and overpopulation. One reason boys are more valued than girls is preserving lineage, as family lineage and family name are carried only by males in most societies. Also, children are expected to care for parents in their old age in many countries, so raising a son becomes a better investment because once a girl marries, she becomes the property of her husband and of virtually no value to her parents. Some women resort to female infanticide and feticide in order to protect their daughters from a life of objectification and subjugation in a society dominated by men, where there is a prevalent anti-girl attitude.

Sex-Selective Abortion

Selective abortion - also called gender-selective abortion, sex-selective abortion, or female feticide - is the abortion of a fetus because it is female. Medical technology has made it possible for parents to discover

the sex of a fetus at earlier and earlier stages of pregnancy, so many women from communities with a preference for boys practice selective abortion.

Honor Killing

Honor killing is the practice of killing girls and women who are perceived to have defiled a family's honor by allegedly engaging in sexual activity or other improprieties before marriage or outside of marriage. "Improper" behavior justifies grounds for killing, however, has expanded to include transgressions that are not initiated by the girl, including rape, incest, sexual abuse, or sexual rumor. A girl is killed most often by male kin - father, husband, brother, uncle, or cousin - to restore honor to her family. Criminal penalties for honor killing are lenient in countries where this practice is most prevalent.

Because many cases go unreported, it is difficult to determine the number of women who are the victims of honor killing. Violations of honor include engaging in an illicit sexual relationship, eloping, being raped, being sexually abused by a family member and then running away, seeking divorce, and being seen alone with a man or boy even if the interaction is innocent. Some children are killed for being born to a mother who is accused of violating a family's honor. Allegations of these activities or other improprieties are enough to instigate honor killings, often little or no proof is necessary.

Dowry and Bride burning

It is another problem generally faced by women of low or middle class family during or after the marriage. Parents of boys demands a lot of money from the bride's family to be rich in one time. Groom's family perform bride burning in case of lack of fulfilled dowry demand. In 2005, around 6787 dowry death cases was registered in India.

Girl and Women Trafficking in India

According to a recent survey women are bought and sold with impunity and trafficked at will to other countries from different parts of India. These girls and women are sourced from Dindigal, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, and Chengalpattu in TamilNadu, Gaya,

Kishanganj, Patna, Katihar, Purnea, Araria and Madhubani from Bihar, Murshidabad and 24 Parganas in West Bengal, Maharajgunj from UP, Dholpur, Alwar, Tonk from Rajasthan, Mangalore, and Gulbarga and Raichur from Karnataka. These women and girls are supplied to Thailand, Kenya, South Africa and Middle East countries like Bahrain, Dubai, Oman, Britain, South Korea and Philippines. They are forced to work as sex workers undergoing severe exploitation and abuse. These women are the most vulnerable group in contracting HIV infection. Due to unrelenting poverty and lack of unemployment opportunities there is an increase in the voluntary entry of women into sex work.

Conclusion

Even after so many years of independence, women in India continue to suffer socially as well as economically at different levels and in different forms. One of the most horrific violence against women is branding them as witch. Scores of women are regularly killed on charges of witchcraft across the country. For time immemorial women in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in relation to men. This has resulted in women being unable to take a place of human dignity as free and independent entities associated with men on an intellectual and professional equal wavelength. The men were to write the codes of the society and governance where women were given subordinate role. Unless women throw off the shackles that ignore their talent, skill and spirit women through education and economic self-reliance, cannot be empowered. Unless they are empowered to take a decisive part in the social, political and economic life of the country the very development of the country will be lop-sided.

The need of the hour is to implement the laws more strictly with heavy punishments as deterrents. Another measure could be to introduce fast track courts to look at the cases that involve the rights of minors. They need speedy justice to move on and leave the past behind.

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ONE STEP TOWARDS GIRL EDUCATION

- ShivaniGrover(MCA, M.Tech)

Abstract

Education is a human right that should be given to all human beings. India is home to the largest number of children in the world. However, inadequate impact of programming investment and achievement in overall development of the child, and the adverse influence of negative social attitudes towards women and girls have left girl children in India underprivileged. Forms of discrimination against girl children are numerous and vary depending on the traditions, history, and culture of a particular society.

Women are at the heart of most societies. Regardless of whether they are working or not, mothers are very influential people in children's lives. Educating girls is one of the most important investments that any country can make in its own future. Education has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. Having an education can make an enormous difference to a woman's chances of finding well-paid work, raising a healthy family and preventing the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

"Education is a right - but it is still beyond the reach of many"

Introduction

"When you educate a man, you educate an individual and when you educate a woman, you educate an entire family."

Educating a girl is one of the best investments her family, community, and country can make. We know that a good quality education can be life-changing for girls, boys, young women, and men, helping them develop to their full potential and putting them on a path for success in their life. We also know that educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of

development. More educated girls, for example, marry later, have healthier children, earn more money that they invest back into their families and communities, and play more active roles in leading their communities and countries.

Over the last 25 years, there have been large gains in girls' education, and we as a global community can congratulate ourselves for the real progress that has been made. This demonstrates that with shared goals and collective action-among

governments, international

organizations, civil society, media, and the private sector-we can change the educational prospects for girls around the world. Despite this progress, girls are not getting a quality education.

In many countries and communities in both the developed and the developing world, parents can

take it for granted that their daughters receive a quality education. Yet in many other places around the world, providing every child with an education appears to be beyond reach.

There are five main challenges we identify that make it difficult for girls to access education.

These include:

- o the cost of education - ensuring that communities, parents and children can afford schooling;

- o poor school environments - ensuring that girls have access to a safe school environment;

- o the weak position of women in society - ensuring that society and parents value the education of girls;

- o conflict - ensuring that children who are excluded due to conflict have access to schooling; and

- o social exclusion - ensuring girls are not disadvantaged on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion or disability.

What prevents girl?.....

Conflict hurts girls most

Girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse and unequal access to schooling in fragile states. States can be fragile for a range of reasons, including conflict, lack of resources and people, high levels of corruption, and political instability. What sets these countries apart is their failure to deliver on the core functions of government, including keeping people safe, managing the economy, and delivering basic services. Violence and disease, as well as illiteracy

and economic weakness, are most intensively concentrated in these areas.

Tackling social exclusion

Social exclusion is an additional barrier to girls going to school. Certain groups of girls are more

likely to be excluded from school on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion or disability.

Prejudices

The biggest hurdle is the prejudices that families have about girls-like girls are slow learners, they are not rational; they are to be confined inside the domestic household, and why bother about educating them. Only a handful of people have actually realized the importance of educating a girl.

Early marriage and pregnancy

When girls are forced to marry young, they are often pulled out of school at a very critical age in their development. The transition from primary to secondary education is key for girls to gain the life skills they need to escape the cycle of poverty. Yet, this is often the same time that many girls leave school due to early marriages or pregnancy. Girls who become pregnant are often discouraged from attending school because of the stigma surrounding them.

Basic Hindrances

Domestic Duty

Many societies and a vast population in India still believes that proper place for women is to remain at home, serve the husband and his family and give birth to the children. This function can be performed irrespective of the fact whether the girl is educated or not. In fact, they feel that educated women begin to get some enlightens and start demanding. Especially in a poor section of the society they are required in bring potable water, take food to fields for parents engaged in work and look after their young siblings, besides some are required to work as paid and unpaid workers.

Safety

Safety of girls travelling alone is a major concern for Indians - the prevalent discourse surrounding recent events has brought to the forefront a longstanding problem. We also see a fear that educating girls causes excessive independence, and this is seemingly manifested in the attitude that parents take to a girl's education.

Conservation Mentality

In India, women education has been linked with employment. In other words, the children are educated simply because they are to get some employment. Those people who are not in favor of sending their daughter for employment do not feel the necessity of educating them.

Lack of Adequate Education Facilities

Non-availability of a school within walking distance of the girls, particularly in backward areas and the unwillingness of many parents to send their daughter to mixed schools beyond the age of 9 plus. Lack of separate sanitary facilities for girls in the mixed schools and lack of suitable school buildings and equipment which tend to create a poor school environment and the crisis of no of girls' hostel in near the schools.

Lack of Women Teachers for Women Education

The lack of women teachers in primary and middle schools has been very largely responsible for the low enrolment of girls, especially in the nine backward states. It is an accepted fact that the primary schools should be staffed by women teachers. At present the proportion of women teachers to men teachers is very low.

Conclusion

The girl child is also discriminated against extensively in the right to education, even basic at times. Lack of education denies the girl child, the knowledge and skills needed to advance their status. Education enables the child to realize her full

potential, to think, question and judge independently; to be a wise decision-maker, develop civic sense and learn to respect, love his fellow human beings and to be a good citizen.

Even after so many programs and policies of the government, we are still lagging behind in providing education to the girl child. The problem here is not in implementation but in the level of commitment of people in general. Until we create awareness amongst people about the benefits of women education, all these programs would not bring about the desired result. We fail to understand that men and women are two sides of the same coin-a girl is as much a part of the society as is a boy. They are both the futures of tomorrow. They both need to be given equal opportunities for the wholesome growth of the nation. Let us give the girl child a chance to show her capabilities.

Education is one composite single variable, which has the capacity to transform many odds turning in favor of girls more specially so in the rural India. Therefore, an exclusive emphasis on girls' education is necessary.

Now it's time to break the myth that "Ladki apni kismat upar se likhwa kar aati hai."

"When it comes to luck, you make your own."

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Status of Women: Quest for Equality

- Dr. D.K. Gour

Women have been treated as 'objects' by the male-dominated society in India and elsewhere. However, there is no uniform pattern of social, cultural and economic distinctions between men and women. In contemporary India, gender-based consciousness has its origin in emergence of the middle classes and their problems. Patriarchy is very strong in India despite several movements for the upliftment of women launched by women's organizations during the pre- and the post-independence periods. Sex morals have a direct bearing on hierarchy of caste and class groups.

Four aspects have been studied in detail in the context of the gender-related problems: (1) production, (2). reproduction, (3) sexuality, and (4) socialization of children. However, in general, the Marxists and the socialists have over-emphasized the first aspect. In India's context, men generally dominate in all the four aspects, though women shoulder major responsibilities in these spheres. Male supremacy emanates from caste, class, patriarchy, and sexuality of the male.

Women are treated as inferior in their own families by parents-in-law and even by their husbands. They are stationed at the receiving end.

This is generally true of families belonging to all castes and classes, but it is more often found among those groups who are still under the influence of feudalism or have feudalistic lifestyles and values. Even, the neo-rich in the countryside have put restrictions on women's higher education, migration and jobs. The fact is that women have been made dependent by men and by the social milieu they have created for them. In this chapter we have discussed status of women in ancient, medieval, British and post-independence India, and the role of women's organizations, legislations, social movements and man-woman relations.

Women in History

In the Rig-Vedic civilization, women enjoyed equal status with men. Women, like men, received education and observed brahmacharya, and upanayana was also performed for them. Women studied the Vedas, and composed Vedic hymns. Women had access to all branches of knowledge. Women like Ghosha, Apala and Vishvara were composers of outstanding Vedic hymns. In the age of the Upanishads, there were women rishis like Gargi and Maitreyi. Women could own property and widows could remarry.

They also became teachers. Women were not secluded from men, and they freely participated in public life. Marriage was sacred and indivisible and was not a secular contract. It was a religious bond. Child marriage was unknown. Girls enjoyed great freedom and settled their own marriages.

The position enjoyed by women in the Rig-Vedic period deteriorated in the later-Vedic period. A daughter began to be regarded as a curse. However, women were granted freedom to participate in public life. They were denied the right of inheritance and ownership of property (like the Shudras).

During the Buddhist period women were not denied learning. They took active part in public life, but did not enjoy the right of Vedic studies. The position of women really deteriorated in the Gupta Age. Dowry and Sati emerged as an institution in this period. Widows could not marry again.

However, the purdah system did not exist. Sari had become popular by the seventh century A.D. Some women did receive higher education even in this period. Livavati and Khana were experts in arithmetic and astronomy.

The period between A.D. 1206 and A.D. 1761 witnessed further deterioration in the position of women. In this period, female infanticide, child marriage, purdah, jauhar, sati and slavery were the main social evils affecting the position of women. The birth of a daughter was considered a bad omen.

The reform movements and the national movement created social consciousness among women. The All India Women's Conference, established in January 1927.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed several reforms regarding the position of women in Indian society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started agitation for widow remarriage, and they were successful

in getting the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act passed in 1856.

The most important legislations of the post-Independence periods are: the Special Marriage Act of 1954, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, and the Hindu Succession Act of 1956.

The Government of India has taken up the problems of divorce, dowry, rape, etc., with a view to find solutions, which will ensure equality of women with men. The latest legislations and actions are not only stringent and effective, but court decisions and police actions are also in favour of the women victims.

Status of Women in the British Period

The British had shown interest in the abolition of sati in 1813. In Jhunjhunu town of Rajasthan, a huge temple of sati — known as Rani Sati Mandir — is a place of worship by all castes and communities.

Female infanticide was found mainly among the Rajputs of Benaras, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and in parts of Punjab and Sind and among some Sikhs.

The institution of female infanticide arose due to (1) the deplorable position of women in Hindu society, (2) the dowry system, (3) hypergamy, and (4) the sense of honour and pride. Marriage of a female is considered compulsory.

Child marriage is prevalent even today among the rural people, and among the urban illiterate and poor. In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act (Sharda Bill) was passed. Under this Act, which came into being in 1930, the minimum age of marriage for a girl was fixed at fourteen and for a boy at eighteen. According to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, the minimum age for a bride is fifteen, and for a bridegroom it is eighteen. The legislations have not proved effective in this case. Education, economic pressures, and migration to towns and cities from rural areas have certainly

contributed to the raising of the age at marriage of both the sexes. However, child marriage persists unchecked. Many a time, even political leaders of repute have enacted child marriages of their wards. No stringent actions are taken for violation of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.

Slavery was of two types: (1) domestic, and (2) predial (agricultural). There were also institutions of the nautch (dance) girls and prostitutes. The latter was found particularly in the princely states. Predial slavery was found in Bengal, Madras, Assam, Coorg and southern Bombay Presidency (presently in Karnataka and Maharashtra, respectively). The slaves of this category were insolvent debtors. Some of them were migrants from Rajputana. Even slaves were sold out. There was also the practice of entering a contract by a person to work for a specific period of time either to pay the debt or to “have a fresh one”. Domestic slavery was confined to females. The foreigners also indulged in the purchase of children in a clandestine manner and exported them overseas. Proclamations were made in Bengal, Madras, Bombay, etc., to prevent the institution of slavery. Today, the institution exists in the form of bonded labour. It is known by different names in different states. The British policy of apparent and selective non-interference in social matters encouraged the institution of slavery and other institutions which supported this evil.

With the efforts of Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. In 1861, a Widow Marriage Association was formed. The Arya Samaj gave top priority to this programme. The following legislations have enhanced the status of Hindu women in matters of marriage, adoption and inheritance: (1) the Hindu Law of Inheritance (Amendment Act) of 1929, (2) the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937, (3) the Hindu Marriage Disability Removal Act of 1946, (4) the Special Marriage Act of 1954, (5)

the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, (6) the Hindu Succession Act and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, (7) the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, (8) the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, (9) the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, and (10) the Criminal Law Amendment, 1983.

Quest for Equality

Woman's quest for equality with man has become universal. It has given birth to women's movements and activities and associations. All over the world, feminism has its origin in society and unequal man-woman relations. Several constraints, such as inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women, are age-old issues. For a long time women remained within the four walls of their households. Their dependence on menfolk was total. Educated women in particular and the poor ones in general realized the need for taking up employment outside the household. In recent years, the middle class women have taken up the issue of price rise and have launched anti-price rise movements in various cities of India. Within the household, women have demanded equality with men. What exists for men is demanded for women. The demand for equality with men speaks of a notion of man's tyrannical hegemony over woman.

Women have hardly any choice to adopt an independent path for their upliftment. The question is how women can have equality within the framework of the existing highly rigid patriarchal society. Further, why women want to have for themselves the same strategies of change which menfolk have had over the centuries. Women want to follow in the footsteps of men. Our experience shows that even earning women give their earnings to their mothers-in-law and husbands rather than spending independently. This again speaks of the deep-rooted patriarchal normative orientation among women. However, this does not mean that women have always followed men in all respects in their households. Women participated in India's national

movement for freedom. Many of them worked with Gandhi in the pre-independence period. Today, women's organizations, women social workers and politicians have taken up the issues of price rise, dowry, rape, exploitation, etc., to seek equal status with men to lead a dignified life. Women have demanded their share of jobs in the police and other such services. Women's organizations have created consciousness for gender equality, particularly in the urban areas. Reservation for women in the PRIs has been made after the recent 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, which provide statutory status to the local bodies like the state legislatures and parliament.

Consequent upon these urgent social problems connected with women, International Women's Day, International Women's Year, conferences and seminars on women, and women's studies have been instituted in a big way since the late 1960s and 1970s. The provisions made in the Constitution of India regarding equality of women with men have also been widely popularized by these organizations and associations. A notable development was the appointment of the Committee on the Status of Women in 1971 by the Government of India. The committee submitted its report in 1974, which was very widely welcomed. There is also an All-India Association of Women's Studies. Demonstrations, processions and strikes against rape, dowry deaths and murder of women have become a regular feature in Delhi, Mumbai and other cities. Rape is generally committed by upper caste/class landowners, moneylenders, police officials and government functionaries, besides anti-social elements. Dowry has become a sort of market mechanism among the urban middle class, the lower middle class and the upper castes and among the economically well-off rural people. In case of dowry deaths, suicides and extortion, parents of the victims as well as the girls themselves suffer indignities and inhuman treatment.

Andre Beteille (1974) makes some valuable observations about the position of women in peasant families. He asks: "How are we to view families in which men work in the fields but women are by custom debarred from such work?" This is found among the families of the upper castes. Even some families of the intermediate and of the lower castes, who have become economically well-off, have adopted this norm with a view to elevate their social status in the village community. This does not mean that these women, who do not work or have been stopped from working on farms, are given treatment equal to the men in their families. The status of the family within the community is one thing and the status of the individual members within the family is quite another. There is an elaborate sex-based division of labour in rural families. However, this too varies from caste to caste, and also depends upon the economic and social standing of particular families.

Beteille comments upon the process of change in the status of women in the context of manual labour. He very rightly states:

"Women are first withdrawn from wage employment on the farms of others. They are then withdrawn from the family farm. Finally, the men either withdraw from work, or change their role from cultivator to supervisor." Thus, withdrawing womenfolk from manual work on farms is a symbol of high status in the countryside.

But this is not true of working women belonging to upper and upper-middle or even to the lower-middle classes in towns and cities. Working unmarried women are considered an asset as they can be married without much difficulty and with less dowry.

Man-Woman Relationship

Can there be an expression of woman's identity independent of man? The answer is: Ideologically yes, and practically no. Meenakshi Mukherjee (1984) rightly observes that social conformity has always been more obligatory for

a woman than for a man. Generally, a woman's identity tends to be defined by herself as well as by others in terms of her relationship with men as a daughter, a wife, a mother. This was also true of women in Europe in the nineteenth century. Today, women in China enjoy status almost equal to men. Chairman Mao said: "The day all women in China stand on their feet is the time for victory for the Chinese revolution. Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too." Feudal ways of thinking and acting were strongly attacked to elevate women's position in Chinese society. Old beliefs about women's inferiority were discarded. Equal pay for equal work is the practice today in China.

Women's bondage to men and to the social structure is a characteristic feature of capitalism, and emancipation of women from such ties is referred to as a feature of socialism. Employment for women is not a panacea for solving their problems. Women among the lower sections of society are found engaged in several economic activities, and yet they are more enslaved to their menfolk. Similarly, to look at women in terms of literate versus illiterate, rich versus poor and rural versus urban would not give a proper understanding of women's plight in today's India. Women, in fact, cannot be understood independent of men. The family alone has not been enslaving women. The ethos of society is such that women have been treated rather shabbily. Leon Trotsky once remarked: "There are no limits to masculine egotism. In order to understand the world, we must look at it through the eyes of women."

Today, the emphasis in women's studies is not on the status of women, their degradation and social customs, the role of women in the family, community and tradition, but it has shifted to education, economic and legal status of women, political participation, etc. Nowadays, instead of

studying their attitudes, roles and status, the causes of women's subordination, work participation, women in movements, patriarchal structure, and women in relation to socio-economic and political structure are being taken up as crucial issues concerning women. Age and sex are not simply biological phenomena, they are social and cultural variables too, and in some societies these are considered as the basis for distribution of rewards and privileges.

It is necessary to have 'empathy' for studying the position of women. For a scientific understanding of their problems, the device of 'role-taking' needs to be adopted. This means placing oneself in the position of women rather than simply expressing sympathy with them.

Women working within their own households as dependent members, children and old men by and large constitute a common category against the active and earning male members.

Such a situation is found in India where a great deal of concern has been expressed for familial bonds, collective responsibilities and emotional ties for kinship relations.

Women's Struggle against Exploitation and Oppression

In recent years, a number of women's movements have emerged, characterized by theorizing, mobilizing and acting against suppression and subjugation of women.

The women's movement has been organized by white-collar middle class women and women social workers from amongst upper and upper-middle classes. Feminist publications such as *Manushi*, *Bayja*, *Mahila Andolan Patrika*.

Some women protagonists have mentioned four major forms of the struggle of women for greater control over their lives. These are: (1) Women have organized (through mass movements) consciousness raising groups, women's centres, etc. These are meant for greater control over their bodies (for example, against

rape, for free and safe contraceptives and abortions), for political rights like suffrage, against oppression in the family, against pornography, etc. (2) Women have fought through unions for improvement in their standards of living and in conditions of work. (3) Women have organized themselves for social recognition and remuneration for their work as housewives. (4) Women have also worked for housing, and against political repression, price rise, etc. But all these issues mainly concern the urban women.

Exploitation of women in the countryside has not received proper attention. Women are protesting against forcible sexual contact with men. A woman's willingness is her prerogative. Men do not see these as women's issues of dignity and honour.

Woman's Identity as a Person

Identity of woman is generally defined by her role within the family. She is identified as a daughter, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, wife, etc., and not as a person.

Is a woman a person? A woman bows down to her husband's desires even if she is unwilling to do so.

Crime against women has gone up in the recent years. Rape, kidnapping and abduction, homicide for dowry and dowry deaths, torture, molestation, sexual harassment, importation of girls (eve-teasing), etc., legal provisions such as Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1979; Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; and Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987. At times even the upper sections of society, including political personalities, are found violating these legal enactments. According to the National Crime Research Bureau (NCR), in 2005, there were 1,55,553 incidents of crime against women.

Maximum cases of rape in 2005 were reported from Madhya Pradesh. The highest cases of

dowry deaths were reported from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Several legislations have been passed by the Government of India since independence relating to marriage, inheritance of property, divorce, dowry, rape, etc., in addition to what was incorporated in the Constitution regarding equality and against discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, etc. Social legislations have not been very effective in India.

Women are in no way inferior to men. They have contributed a lot to India's development. They participated in the freedom struggle against the British. They did a lot of social work in those very difficult days of Indian history. But, they are exploited despite their immense contribution to the national cause. They are generally found in the unorganized sector, hence their oppression and exploitation. Technological advancement has affected women adversely as they have now less control over resources within the family and other sectors of their employment. Advancement in the fields of agriculture, dairy development, fisheries and domestic technology has reduced the economic authority and the general status of women. Men have become less dependent upon women even in domestic affairs. The gap between men and women has further widened. The major areas of hiatus between men and women are, for example, literacy, education and training, women's employment, female mortality, health care and medical services. Female mortality is higher than male mortality. Women are lagging behind men in these areas because of India's social and cultural heritage and strong tradition of patriarchy and male domination.

Conclusion

The problems of women are due to unequal access of men and women to society's resources and their distributive processes. Technological devices, which could have helped women in many ways, have also been adopted by men to their advantage. Can men alone be blamed for

these gender-based inequalities? It has been observed that it is women also who obstruct the path of other women even more than men do. For example, mothers-in-law and colleagues at work suppress more the daughters-in-law and junior women workers, respectively. However, all women are not equally exploited or oppressed. Therefore, there is a need to study women as unmarried girls, young wives, mothers, old women, and working and non-working women. Such a scheme of study will provide a comparative picture of the dimensions of women's problems as it covers ramifications and variations in the status of women. Interaction between women in different settings may also provide useful clues for a better understanding of the problem.

Women's struggle for emancipation from social and cultural bondage has been a historical fact in the Indian context. Women have also fought for their right to vote and also against their oppression and exploitation. Women's struggles have challenged the existing system which has made them socially, culturally, economically, and even politically, crippled. To seek 'gender justice' for them (and also for men), it would be proper to understand India's social formation, its layers and levels (including caste and class), male-female images and reality, various views on a woman's place in the family and at the place of work, and the congruence between technological advancement and patriarchy. Scientific and technological devices have not challenged the traditional mechanisms of women's oppression and exploitation. The man-woman relationship continues to be the dominating-dominated relationship. One finds even today a close tie-up between caste, class and man-woman relationship. However, the quest for equality with men has been strongly expressed in recent years. It has made some tangible impact in metropolitan cities and big towns. There is a need for a lot more to be done in this field.



ऐसी होती है एक सशक्त महिला

पिछले साल यानी २०१६ में रिलीज हुई फिल्म ज़ीरजा ने व्यावसायिक तौर पर तो सफलता हासिल की ही, उसे आलोचकों की भी जम कर प्रशंसा मिली। दरअसल नीरजा की कहानी हजारों आम लड़कियों जैसी एक साधारण लड़की की कहानी है। संकट के बीच भी वह सही और गलत में फर्क करना नहीं छोड़ती। वह अपनी जान को जोखिम में डाल कर सही का चुनाव करती है। नीरजा अपनी निजी जीवन में घरेलू हिंसा का सामना कर चुकी होती है, पर आतंकवादियों से नजरें मिला कर बात करने और बच्चों की जान बचाने के लिए उसे अपनी जान देने में भी कोई संकोच नहीं हुआ। नीरजा सही मायने में सशक्त थी, ताकतवर थी। अगर देखा जाए तो नीरजा जैसी ताकत हर महिला में है। बस, उसे पहचानने और बढ़ावा देने की जरूरत है।

स्त्री सशक्तीकरण शब्द का इस्तेमाल इन दिनों बहुत ज्यादा होता है। यह अलग बात है कि अधिकांश लोग इसका असली मतलब नहीं जानते, बस कहने के लिए कह देते हैं। दरअसल एक सशक्त महिला वह होती है, जिसकी जिंदगी पूरी तरह उसके नियंत्रण में होती है। हर महिला में यह क्षमता, हिम्मत और आत्मविश्वास होता है कि वह अपनी जिंदगी को अपनी इच्छा के अनुसार संचालित कर सके। यह क्षमता सबमें है, बस, आपको खुद को ताकतवर बनाने के लिए इस दिशा में लगातार सकारात्मक कोशिश

करनी होगी। लोग क्या सोचेंगे, क्या कहेंगे, इसको नजरअंदाज करना होगा। हो सकता है, इस राह में कुछ कठिनाइयां आएँ, मगर उसका सामना करना होगा। वैसे भी जीवन में व्यक्ति को कई बार कई कारणों से मुसीबतों का सामना करना पड़ता है, तो क्यों न कुछ कठिनाइयां अपनी बेहतरी के लिए भी मोल ले लें।

सशक्त बनने के लिए सबसे पहले खुद को जानना होगा। एक सशक्त महिला जानती है कि वह कौन है। अधिकांश महिलाएं कभी-न-कभी यह महसूस करती हैं कि वे अपनी असली पहचान खो चुकी हैं। उन्होंने ऐसे रिश्ते में अपना बहुत ज्यादा वक्त लगा दिया है, जिसमें सिर्फ वही सकारात्मक कोशिश कर रही थीं। या फिर बच्चे के जन्म के बाद उनकी अपनी जिंदगी कुछ बची ही नहीं है। इस स्थिति को बदला जा सकता है। एक महिला के तौर पर आप चाहे जैसा भी महसूस कर रही हों, लेकिन खुद को जानने के लिए अपने साथ थोड़ा वक्त बिताना जरूरी है। खुद को जानने का मतलब यह नहीं है कि आप कहां काम कर रही हैं या आपके शौक क्या-क्या हैं? खुद को जानने का मतलब है, अपनी ताकत और कमजोरियों को पहचानना। क्या आप अपनी बात सामने वाले तक सही तरीके से पहुंचा पाती हैं? क्या आप एक अच्छी लीडर हैं? ये ऐसे सवाल हैं, जिनके जवाब एक सशक्त महिला को मालूम होते हैं। एक व्यक्ति के रूप में वह खुद को अच्छी तरह से पहचानती है।

दूसरी अहम बात है, सीखने की लालसा कभी खत्म नहीं हो। कुछ भी नया सीखने की कोई उम्र नहीं होती। सीखने की इस प्रक्रिया पर अंकुश लगाना जिंदगी का सबसे खराब निर्णय हो सकता है। हमेशा कुछ नया सीखना खुद को सशक्त बनाने की दिशा में सबसे अच्छा और मजबूत कदम साबित होता है। जिस रूप में भी चाहें, नई चीजें सीखते रहें। नई चीज सीखने के लिए जरूरी नहीं है कि कोई क्लास ज्वॉइन किया जाए। क्लास रूम में गए बिना भी कुछ नया सीखा जा सकता है। किताबें पढ़ें, लाइब्रेरी जाएं, बुक क्लब की सदस्य बन जाएं या फिर इंटरनेट पर कुछ नया पढ़ें। वैसे कोई क्लास भी ज्वॉइन किया जा सकता है, इसमें कोई हर्ज नहीं है। यह कोई भी क्लास यानी बुनाई और कुकरी से लेकर कोई गंभीर विषय जैसे फिजिक्स की क्लास भी हो सकती है। खुद को कोई ऐसा काम करने का मौका दें, जो आप आज तक नहीं कर पाई हैं। पूरे सप्ताह समय नहीं है तो कोई वीकएंड क्लास ज्वॉइन कर लें। अगर वक्त कम है तो अपनी पसंद के विषय की किताब पढ़ें।

जिंदगी में यह जानना जरूरी है कि क्या करना है। एक सशक्त महिला जानती है कि वह जिंदगी से क्या चाहती है। इसका मतलब है कि वह अपने लक्ष्य और सपनों से पूरी तरह वाकिफ होती है। इन लक्ष्यों में शादी, परिवार, बच्चे या फिर करियर में आगे बढ़ना कुछ भी शामिल हो सकता है। एक सशक्त महिला अपने लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए अपनी ओर से भरपूर कोशिश करती है। अगर वो करियर में अपने साथ काम करने वालों से आगे निकलना चाहती है, तो उस दिशा में आगे बढ़ती है। अगर वह अपनी किसी शौक को प्रोफेशन में तब्दील करना चाहती है, तो अपने इस लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए जी-जान लगा देती है। उसके लक्ष्य जो भी हों, ऐसी महिला के पास इतनी मानसिक ताकत होती है कि वह जो चाहती है, उसे हासिल कर सके।

आत्मनिर्भर बनने की कोशिश कीजिए। कब आखिरी बार आप अपना सेलफोन घर पर छोड़ कर बाहर गई थीं? क्या आपने कभी रेस्टोरेंट में अकेले जाकर लंच या डिनर किया है? कोई भी काम अकेले करना चुनौतीपूर्ण होता है। आप जैसी हैं, खुद को उस रूप में स्वीकारना और किसी भी कठिनाई का सामना करने के लिए तैयार रहने का

साहस सबसे अनूठा होता है। यह अनुभूति ही आपको सशक्त बना देगी। इससे फर्क नहीं पड़ता है कि आपका कोई साथी है या नहीं। अपने साथ कुछ वक्त बिताकर और अकेले कुछ काम करके आप फिर से ऊर्जावान बन जाएंगी। अकेले कोई काम करने का लक्ष्य तय कीजिए और फिर उसे पूरा करने की कोशिश कीजिए। अंत में सबसे मजा आपको ही आएगा। इस पूरी प्रक्रिया से न सिर्फ आपका आत्मविश्वास बढ़ेगा, बल्कि आप खुद को बेहतर तरीके से जान भी पाएंगी।

अपने रिश्तों को भी स्थायित्व दीजिए। एक सशक्त महिला जरूरत पड़ने पर ही किसी से दोस्ती नहीं करती है, बल्कि उसकी दोस्ती जिंदगी भर के लिए होती है। फिर चाहे यह दोस्ती प्रोफेशनल हो या फिर निजी। एक सशक्त महिला के पास जान-पहचान के लोगों का एक ऐसा नेटवर्क होता है, जिन पर वो कभी भी भरोसा कर सकती है। अपने इस नेटवर्क के भरोसे वह अपना एक सपोर्ट सिस्टम विकसित करती है, जो समय-समय पर उसके काम आते हैं। सपोर्ट सिस्टम में शामिल ये लोग न सिर्फ उसकी मदद करते हैं, बल्कि वह भी इन लोगों की मदद करती है। यह सपोर्ट सिस्टम उसे एक बेहतर इंसान बनने में भी मदद करता है।

शारीरिक रूप से सशक्त बनिए। इस सोच से बाहर निकलिए कि महिलाएं शारीरिक रूप से कमजोर होती हैं। आपकी बॉडी टाइप चाहे जैसी भी हो, उसी के अनुरूप फिजिकल ट्रेनिंग लें। आप चाहे पतली हों या फिर मोटी.. आपका लक्ष्य खुद को फिट और मजबूत बनाना होना चाहिए। अपने खानपान का ध्यान रखें। नियमित व्यायाम करें। कोई मार्शल आर्ट या योग सीखें। खुद को शारीरिक रूप से मजबूत बनाने का इससे बेहतर तरीका कुछ और नहीं है।

भावनाओं पर काबू रखें। महिलाओं के सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में भावनात्मक सशक्तीकरण की अहम भूमिका है। आमतौर पर माना जाता है कि महिलाएं भावनात्मक रूप से कमजोर होती हैं और पुरुष मजबूत। हालांकि यह सच नहीं है। लेकिन आप अपने आसानी से निकलने वाले आंसू को अपनी कमजोरी की निशानी न बनने दें। आप अगर भावनात्मक रूप से मजबूत रहेंगी तो चुनौतियों और तनाव

का सामना बेहतर तरीके से कर पाएंगी। विभिन्न शोधों के अनुसार भावनात्मक रूप से मजबूत महिलाएं जिंदगी की चुनौतियों के सामने आसानी से हार नहीं मानतीं। उनमें जीतने की जिद होती है।

खुद तो मजबूत बनें ही, दूसरों को भी सशक्त बनाएं। एक सशक्त महिला अपनी साथी महिलाओं को भी सशक्त बनाने में मदद करती है। यह काम थोड़ा मुश्किल भरा हो सकता है, पर इससे बहुत ज्यादा संतुष्टि मिलेगी। एक सशक्त महिला पीठ पीछे किसी महिला पर वार नहीं करती, बल्कि वह उसे आगे बढ़ने में मदद करती है। इन तरीकों से आप भी अपनी साथी महिलाओं की मदद कर सकती हैं—

— अपनी साथी महिलाओं के लिए रोल मॉडल बनें। आत्मविश्वास से भरपूर रहें और दूसरी महिलाओं को यह बताएं कि एक मजबूत और सशक्त महिला बनना इतना भी मुश्किल काम नहीं है।

— अपनी भाषा का ध्यान रखें। दूसरी महिलाओं के लिए गलत शब्दों का प्रयोग न करें। अबर आप ऐसा करेंगी तो आप समाज को यह संदेश देंगी कि समाज भी महिलाओं के लिए गलत शब्द बोल सकता है। जब हम अपने बारे में सोच-समझकर बोलना शुरू करते हैं, तो समाज भी यह शुरुआत करता है।

— अपने आसपास की महिलाओं की तारीफ करें। तारीफ के दो शब्द उनके आत्मविश्वास को कई गुना बढ़ा देंगे।

— अपनी साथी महिलाओं के अधिकार के लिए आवाज उठाएं। अगर आपके सामने कोई किसी महिला के साथ गलत व्यवहार कर रहा है तो अपनी आवाज बुलंद करें। ऐसा करके आप पूरे समाज को संदेश देंगी कि महिलाएं अब सशक्त हो रही हैं।

— इन सब बातों के अलावा अपनी बेटी को बचपन से ही सशक्त बनाइए। उसे सिखाइए कि कोई भी लक्ष्य हासिल करना उसके लिए मुश्किल नहीं है। उसे खुले आसमान में उड़ना और अपने हर लक्ष्य को पाना सिखाएं।



बेटी है तो कल है, बालिका राष्ट्र का आधार है।

वर्तमान में भारत की आबादी लगभग १२५ करोड़ है। जिसमें अनुमानतः ६४ करोड़ पुरुष व ६१ करोड़ महिलायें हैं। नारी के बिना संसार की कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती। भारत प्राचीन काल से लेकर वर्तमान तक स्त्री सम्मान के लिए के लिए जाना जाता रहा है। माँ का स्थान पिता से ऊपर माना था लेकिन आज स्त्रियों के सम्मान व अधिकार सुरक्षित नहीं है। लड़कियों के आधुनिक समय में हर क्षेत्र में यह सिद्ध कर दिया है कि वह बेटों से किसी भी रूप में कम नहीं है।

समाज में निहित कुप्रथाओं, विसंगतियों एवं अवरोद्धों के पश्चात बालिकाएं निरंतर आगे बढ़ रही हैं, लेकिन समाज में बेटियों के प्रति भेदभाव की जड़ें बहुत गहरी हैं। बच्चों देश का भविष्य होते हैं लेकिन यह बड़ी दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण बात है कि हमारे देश में बच्चों मुख्यतः बालिकाओं की दशा बहुत ही सोचनीय हैं, उनके साथ भेदभाव किया जाता है। बालिका होने से स्त्री होने तक यौन उत्पीड़न व दुष्कर्म की घटनाएँ प्रतिदिन अखबारों में पढ़ने को मिलती है। आज लड़कियां

न घर में और न बाहर सुरक्षित हैं। बेटी को जन्म देने वाली माता को परिवार और समाज में बड़ी हेय दृष्टि से देखा जाता है। तथा परिवार के लोग माता को प्रसव पश्चात् आवश्यक देखभाल व सुविधाएं प्रदान नहीं करते जिससे माँ बेटी दोनों ही कुपोषित, बीमार तथा तिरस्कृत हो जाते हैं।

भारत के अनेक क्षेत्रों व कुछ जातियों में कन्या का जन्म अपराध के बराबर माना जाता है। यह भी देखने में आता है कि यदि परिवार में दो से तीन बेटियाँ जन्म ले लेती हैं तो जन्म देने वाले माता को प्रताड़ित किया जाता है तथा तलाक तक कि नौबत आ जाती है। बेटी की चाह बेटियों के जन्म के पश्चात् भी पुत्र प्राप्ति होने की संभावना रखते हुए गर्भ धारण व जन्म देने का सिलसिला चलता रहता है। बालिकाओं को माँ के कोख में ही मार दिया जाता है, कम आयु में शादी करके उनसे उनका बचपन छिन लिया जाता है, अल्पआयु (कच्ची उम्र) में उनपर गर्भ धारण का दबाव डालकर उनकी जान जोखिम में डाल दी जाती है। आज के आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक युग में देश में बाल विवाह

का चलन जारी है। जिसके कारण छोटी आयु में ही माता गंभीर बिमारियों से ग्रसित होकर (मृत्यु तक का शिकार बन जाती हैं)

स्वामी विवेकानंद ने कहा था जबतक महिलाओं के स्थिति में सुधार नहीं होगा तबतक राष्ट्र के कल्याण की कोई संभावना नहीं है। एक पक्षी के लिए एक पंख हो उड़ना संभव नहीं है। यही उक्ति किसी भी राष्ट्र के लिए सही है। कि आधी आबादी को नकर कर कोई भी राष्ट्र विकसित व संपन्न नहीं हो सकता।

हमारे देश में बालिकाओं और महिलाओं के विरुद्ध हिंसा, बालात्कार व अत्याचार दिन प्रतिदिन बढ़ते जा रहे हैं, जो ग्रामीण, शहरी, शिक्षित, अशिक्षित, व्यवसायिक, नौकरी पेशा एवं गृहणी तथा बच्ची से लेकर बुजुर्ग महिला तक हर स्तर पर हो रहे हैं। बेटियों का शोषण हो रहा है उनको देह व्यापार जैसे घणित धंधे में ढकेला जा रहा है। घरेलू हिंसा लड़कियों व महिलाओं के प्रति मारपीट समाज की एक बहुत बड़ी समस्या है, हर स्तर पर लड़कियों के साथ भेदभाव हो रहा है। बीमार होने पर लड़कियों को डॉक्टर के पास या स्पताल में जब ले जया जाता है। जब बीमारी भयंकर रूप धारण कर लेती है। उपर्युक्त सभी कारणों से लड़कों के तुलना में लड़कियां घटती जा रहीं हैं।

भारत में स्त्री पुरुष अनुपात:- हमार देश में महिला एवं पुरुष अनुपात में लगातार गिरावट हो रही है जो किसी भी समाज के लिए बड़ी चिंता की विषय है। सन् १९०१ में १००० पुरुषों के अनुपात में ६७२ महिलाएं थी जो सन् २०११ की जनगणना के अनुसार घट कर ६४० प्रति हजार रह गई। केवल केरल राज्य को छोड़कर सभी राज्यों में अनुपात बड़ा असंतुलित है। यदि

भारत की जनांकिकीय स्थिति में ०-६ वर्ष के बच्चों में लड़के, लड़कियों के अनुपात का अवलोकर करे तो स्थिति और भी चौका देने वाली है। सन् २००१ में लड़कियों की संख्या प्रति हजार लड़कों पर ६२७ थी जो घटकर १० साल बाद सन् २०११ में ६१४ रह गई। राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर यदि राज्य स्तर की बात करें तो इन दस वर्षों में, ६०६ से घटकर ८८३, बिहार में ६४४ से ६३३, उत्तर प्रदेश में ६१६ से ८६६, उड़ीसा में ६५३ से ६३४, जम्मू कश्मीर के आंकड़े तो और भी आश्चर्यजनक हैं। जो ६४१ से घटकर ८५६ अर्थात् केवल दस वर्षों में ८२ प्रति हजार की कमी आई है। केवल केरल राज्य ही ऐसा है जहाँ पर स्तर ६६० पर ही बना रहा जिसका मुख्य कारण जनसंख्या का शिक्षित होना, बेटा-बेटी में भेदभाव न करना तथा अच्छा जीवन स्तर स्थापित किया जाना है। देश के कुछ राज्यों व भागों में लड़कियों की संख्या ८०० प्रति हजार से भी कम है। इससे समाज में अनेक प्रकार की समस्याएं उत्पन्न होती हैं।

बालिका

भ्रूण हत्या रोकने के लिए सरकार के लिए सरीकारी नीति अनुपात:

सह

WOMEN IN INDIA

- Dr. Kanchan Gaur

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From a largely unknown status in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of

Women in India have been eventful.

Education and economic development

According to 1992-93 figures, only 9.2% of the households in India were female-headed. However, approximately 35% of the households below the poverty line were found to be female-headed.

Education

Though it is gradually rising, the female literacy rate in India is lower than the male literacy rate. Compared to boys, far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. According to the National Sample Survey Data of 1997, only the states of Kerala and Mizoram have approached universal female literacy rates. According to majority of the scholars, the major factor behind the improved social and economic status of women in Kerala is literacy. Under Non-Formal Education programme, about 40% of the centers in states and 10% of the centers in UTs are exclusively reserved for females. As of 2000,

about 0.3 million NFE centers were catering to about 7.42 million children, out of which about 0.12 million were exclusively for girls. In urban India, girls are nearly at par with the boys in terms of education. However, in rural India girls continue to be less educated than the boys.

According to a 1998 report by U.S. Department of Commerce, the chief barrier to female education in India are inadequate school facilities (such as sanitary facilities), shortage of female teachers and gender bias in curriculum (majority of the female characters being depicted as weak and helpless).

Workforce participation

Contrary to the common perception, a large percent of women in India work. The National data collection agencies accept the fact that there is a serious under-estimation of women's contribution as workers. However, there are far fewer women in the paid workforce than there are men. In urban India Women have impressive number in the workforce. As an example at software industry 30% of the workforce is female. They are at par with their male counter parts in terms of wages, position at the work place. In rural India, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total female labour. In overall farm

production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55% to 66% of the total labour. According to a 1991 World Bank report women accounted for 93% of total employment in dairy production in India. Women constitute 51% of the total employed in forest-based small-scale enterprises. One of the most famous female business success stories is the Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad. In 2006, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, who started Biocon - one of India's first biotech companies, was rated India's richest woman. Lalita Gupte and Kalpana Morparia (both were the only businesswomen in India who made the list of the Forbes World's Most Powerful Women), run India's second-largest bank, ICICI Bank.

Land and property rights

In most Indian families, women do not own any property in their own names, and do not get a share of parental property. Due to weak enforcement of laws protecting them, women continue to have little access to land and property. In fact, some of the laws discriminate against women, when it comes to land and property rights.

The Hindu personal laws of mid-1950s (applied to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains) gave women rights to inheritance. However, the sons had an independent share in the ancestral property, while the daughters' shares were based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father could effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in his own right. Additionally, married daughters, even those facing marital harassment, had no residential rights in the ancestral home. After amendment of Hindu laws in 2005, now women have been provided the same status as that of men.

In 1986, the Supreme Court of India ruled that Shah Bano, an old divorced Muslim woman was eligible for maintenance money. However, the decision was vociferously opposed by fundamentalist Muslim leaders, who alleged that the court was interfering in their personal law. The Union Government subsequently passed the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights Upon Divorce) Act. Similarly, the Christian women have struggled over years for equal rights of divorce and

succession. In 1994, all the churches, jointly with women's organisations, drew up a draft law called the Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill. However, the government has still not amended the relevant laws.

Crimes against women

women in India. The National Crime Records Bureau reported in 1998 that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. Earlier, many cases were not registered with the police due to the social stigma attached to rape and molestation cases. Official statistics show that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of reported crimes against women.

Sexual harassment

Half of the total number of crimes against women reported in 1990 related to molestation and harassment at the workplace. Eve teasing is a euphemism used for sexual harassment or molestation of women by men. Many activists blame the rising incidents of sexual harassment against women on the influence of "Western culture". In 1987, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act was passed to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.

In 1997, in a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court of India took a strong stand against sexual harassment of women in the workplace. The Court also laid down detailed guidelines for prevention and redressal of grievances. The National Commission for Women subsequently elaborated these guidelines into a Code of Conduct for employers.

Dowry

In 1961, the Government of India passed the Dowry Prohibition Act, making the dowry demands in wedding arrangements illegal. However, many cases of dowry-related domestic violence, suicides and murders have been reported. In the 1980s, numerous such cases were reported.

In 1985, the Dowry Prohibition (maintenance of lists of presents to the bride and bridegroom) rules were

framed. According to these rules, a signed list of presents given at the time of the marriage to the bride and the bridegroom should be maintained. The list should contain a brief description of each present, its approximate value, the name of whoever has given the present and his/her relationship to the person. However, such rules are hardly enforced.

A 1997 report claimed that at least 5,000 women die each year because of dowry deaths, and at least a dozen die each day in 'kitchen fires' thought to be intentional. The term for this is "bride burning" and is criticized within India itself. Amongst the urban educated, such dowry abuse has reduced considerably.

Child marriage

Child marriage has been traditionally prevalent in India and continues to this day. Historically, young girls would live with their parents till they reached puberty. In the past, the child widows were condemned to a life of great agony, shaving heads, living in isolation, and shunned by the society. Although child marriage was outlawed in 1860, it is still a common practice.

According to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children-2009" report, 47% of India's women aged 20-24 were married before the legal age of 18, with 56% in rural areas. The report also showed that 40% of the world's child marriages occur in India.

Female infanticides and sex selective abortions

India has a highly masculine sex ratio, the chief reason being that many women die before reaching adulthood. Tribal societies in India have a less masculine sex ratio than all other caste groups. This, in spite of the fact that tribal communities have far lower levels of income, literacy and health facilities. It is therefore suggested by many experts, that the highly masculine sex ratio in India can be attributed to female infanticides and sex-selective abortions.

All medical tests that can be used to determine the sex of the child have been banned in India, due to incidents of these tests being used to get rid of unwanted female children before birth. Female infanticide (killing of girl infants) is still prevalent in some rural areas.

The abuse of the dowry tradition has been one of the main reasons for sex-selective abortions and female infanticides in India.

Domestic violence

The incidents of domestic violence are higher among the lower Socio-Economic Classes (SECs). The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 came into force on October 26, 2006.

Trafficking

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act was passed in 1956. However many cases of trafficking of young girls and women have been reported. These women are either forced into prostitution, domestic work or child labor.

Other concerns

Health

The average female life expectancy today in India is low compared to many countries, but it has shown gradual improvement over the years. In many families, especially rural ones, the girls and women face nutritional discrimination within the family, and are anaemic and malnourished. The maternal mortality in India is the second highest in the world. Only 42% of births in the country are supervised by health professionals. Most women deliver with help from women in the family who often lack the skills and resources to save the mother's life if it is in danger. According to UNDP Human Development Report (1997), 88% of pregnant women (age 15-49) were found to be suffering from anemia.

Family planning

The average Indian woman has little control over her own fertility and reproductive health. Women, particularly women in rural areas, do not have access to safe and self-controlled methods of contraception. The public health system emphasises permanent methods like sterilisation, or long-term methods like IUDs that do not need follow-up. Sterilization accounts for more

than 75% of total contraception, with female sterilisation accounting for almost 95% of all sterilizations.

Scenario in Independent India

From time immemorial, the women in this land of ours were treated as a sort of thing. Her placing in the society was not at par with other human being. She has no rights. She cannot move nor do anything at her will. Women in India now participate in all activities such as education, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc. The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. (Article 42). The feminist activism in India picked up momentum during later 1970s.

One of the first national level issues that brought the women's groups together was the Mathura rape case. The acquittal of policemen accused of raping a young girl Mathura in a police station, led to a wide-scale protests in 1979-1980. The protests were widely covered in the national media, and forced the Government to amend the Evidence Act, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Penal Code and introduce the category of custodial rape. Female activists united over issues such as female infanticide, gender bias, women health, and female literacy. Since alcoholism is often associated with violence against women in India, many women groups launched anti-liquor campaigns in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and other states. Many Indian Muslim women have questioned the fundamental leaders' interpretation of women's rights under the Shariat law and have criticized the triple talaq system. In 1990s, grants from foreign donor agencies enabled the formation of new women-oriented NGOs.

Self-help groups and NGOs such as Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) have played a major role in women's rights in India. Many women have emerged as leaders of local movements. For example, Medha Patkar of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. The Government of India declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti). The National Policy For The Empowerment Of Women came was passed in 2001. In 2006, the case of a Muslim rape victim called Imrana was highlighted in the media. Imrana was raped by her father-in-law. The pronouncement of some Muslim clerics that Imrana should marry her father-in-law led to widespread protests and finally Imrana's father-in-law was given a prison term of 10 years. The verdict was welcomed by many women's groups and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

Women's rights and issues have always been a subject of serious concern of academicians, intelligentsia and policy makers. From pastoral society to contemporary information and global society, the role of women has changed drastically. The role of a typical "Grihani" (house wife) who catered to all the requirements of the house holds including the rearing and upbringing of children in various sub roles of daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, mother, aunt etc. has been played quite efficiently. The continuity of changes in socio-economic and psycho-cultural aspects of human living has influenced the role of women. With the process of Industrialization, Modernization and Globalization showing its deep impact on the human society all over the world, the role and responsibilities of women has attained new definition and perspective. Further this has also led to addition of responsibilities and widened the role of women who also shares the financial responsibilities. The extent of empowerment of women in a nation is largely determined by three factors viz., economic, social and political identity.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) called for a three pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive, economic and social

policies for women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and thus advance gender equality goals. The Government of India has initiated various schemes spread across a broader spectrum such as women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health, food, nutrition etc. as well as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education, and access to credit and marketing. In order to address the phenomenon of domestic violence, which is widely prevalent but remains largely invisible in the public domain, the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, 2006 was enacted by the Parliament. The Act envisages that the Protection Officer would assist the victim of domestic violence to be secure from violence and help her to access shelter homes, health care and legal advice. For a holistic empowerment of women to happen, social, economic and political aspects impacting on women must converge effectively. The multiple roles of women and the meager ability to access resource and available assets are areas of concern. It is important to emphasize that women require adequate security and protection to be self-reliant.

NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (2001)

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments

(1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21st century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

The Policy also takes note of the commitments of the Ninth Five Year Plan and the other Sectoral Policies relating to empowerment of Women.

The women's movement and a wide-spread network of non-Government Organisations which have strong grass-roots presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analyzed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, "Towards Equality", 1974 and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000, the Shramshakti Report, 1988 and the Platform for Action, Five Years After- An assessment"

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations.

Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in parts of the country.

The underlying causes of gender inequality are related to social and economic structure, which is based on informal and formal norms, and practices.

Consequently, the access of women particularly those belonging to weaker sections including Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/ Other backward Classes and minorities, majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganized sector - to education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The Policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving its goals. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include

(i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential

(ii) The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres - political, economic, social, cultural and civil

(iii) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation

(iv) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.

(v) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

(vi) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.

(vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.

(viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and

(ix) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

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