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REVIEW ARTICLE

CONDITION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA

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Condition of Women and Children in India

Dr. Shiraz Khan

Assistant Professor, Govt. Girls Degree College, Jhansi

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All over the world woman has to play multifaceted roles of a wife, daughter, sister, mother, administrator, a statesperson and many more. Since the advent of civilization in India woman has been revered as a goddess 'srajini' given an equal platform "यत्र नार्मस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता" Biological a weaker sex her status in India has been subject to many great changes. Through given equal platform with her, she was subjected to discrimination and oppression based on class, caste and gender. From the beginning she has proved her position in every field and fulfilled the officers with great efficiency Rani Laxmi Bai, Razia Sultan who ruled India and glorified womanhood. After Independence women also participated in active politics became president of India Prime Minister and chief minister of states.

The cycle of the world is based on new lives. Children are the future of a nation. After nearly 60 years of Independence and over a decade after India became a signatory to the United Nation convention of child rights our children continue to be the most neglected segment. Lack of awareness about the basic rights of the child has led to easy violations of laws meant to protect and support children are being exploited by the thousands.

Social Condition of Women : The concept of "Arhangni" (equal half) in the society could not followed. She was never treated equal to men. Her inferior position snatched away her fundamental rights. Motherhood is compared in almost every religion with the bliss of heaven. Yet Apstmbh Sutra states the position of women clearly....."the primary duty of woman is enjoined to be the services to one's husband". Looking back at the historical facts scholars believed that women in ancient India enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. The Indian woman's position in the society further deteriorated during the medieval period when **Sati Pratha , Child Marriage, Jauhar, Purdah System, Deva dasi and ban on widow remarriage** became part of social life in India. In spite of these conditions some women excelled in the field of politics, literature, education and religion. The Bhakti movement tried to restore women's status and questioned some of the forms of oppression. Guru Nanak the first guru of Sikhs also preached the message of equality between men and women. During

the British period many reforms took place with the help of reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhya Sagar, Jyotorao Phule. Major reforms like abolition of Sati Pratha in 1829, Widow re-marriage act in 1856, Child marriage Restraint Act 1929, establishment school and colleges for girls.

Women of Independent India participated in education, politics media, art, culture, services sector. She excellent in every field and once again started uplifting her social position.

The principal of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in the preamble, Fundamental rights, Fundamental duties and Directive Principals. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empower the state to adopt measure of positive discrimination in favour of women. The Feminist activism in India picked up momentum during later 1970's. Female activists united over issues such as a **female infanticide, gender bias, women health and female literacy.**

Crime Against Women : The records shows a dramatic increase in Number of reported crime against women. The National Crime Records Bureau reported 1998 the growth rate of crime against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. No other country than in India the entire world has **Dowry System.** 1997 report claimed that at least 5000 women die each year because of dowry deaths and at least a dozen die each day in Kitchen fire thought to be intentional. It is the evil dowry system and thirst for male heir in the family that has given birth to **female feticide and infanticide.** Every sixth girl child's death is due to gender discrimination. It has also given way to **domestic Violence,** the protection of which Domestic Violence Act 2005 came into force on 26 Oct. 2006.

If we look at the **health condition of Indian women** we find that average female life expectancy is low as compared to many countries. The material morality in India is the second highest in the world nearly 88% pregnant women age 15-49 suffers from anemia every year.

Talking of the education of a girl child which says **Education a girl is educating a family** the statistics show that not even 45% of India women get education. It is the women who are the primary source of education. She can inculcate **value Based Education** right from the beginning in a child. To make the child grow into a better human being with all the moral and ethical values contributing in the integrity of a country. There are so many government schemes and scholarship policies for girls yet the girls are not sent to school for education. They are one of the most marginalized sections of the society.

Comparing the condition of rural and urban women we find the living standards, working condition and health condition several women rural women are extremely pathetic. They have to work for 14 to 16 hours in unhygienic and exploitative conditions. They are paid less than men in factories and fields. The do not have representation and no one stands for their rights in villages. They do not get even two times of proper meal. Women are a victim of triple oppression in terms of gender, class and race. Every day in cases of domestic violence are registered in India.

The practice of female feticide in India, causing the death of fetus in the womb because of the gender, has resulted in all time low birth rate ratio in India according to the Ministry of Health and family Welfare. The pre- conception and Pre- Natal Diagnostic Technique Act (PCPNDT) of 1994 criminalized prenatal sex determination and female feticide, making it illegal in India to determine or disclose the sex of the fetus to anyone but this act has been poorly enforced by the authorities.

The decline in child rate ratio in India is evident by comparing the census figure. In 1991 the figure was 947 girls to 1000 boys. Ten years later it had fallen to 927 girls for 1000 boys. Since 1991, 80% of districts of India have recorded a declining sex ratio with the state of Punjab being the worst. States like Maharashtra, Gujrat, Punjab, Himanchal Pradesh and Haryana have recorded a more than 50 point decline in the child sex ratio in this period. Fetal sex determination and abortion by medical professionals have grown today. Technology developments have spurred sex determination in villages of neighborhood through mobile sex determination clinics. In this context and present economic and social scenario of the country, all these appear in be impractical remedies for this growing malice.

The cycle of the world is based on the new lives; children are the future of a nation. As per the child rights charter a universal definition of child includes all persons under the age of 18. Forty percent of India's population is below the age of 18 years which at 400 million is the world's largest child population.

At present it is difficult to answer that after 60 years of Independence half of Indian children are illiterate less

than the half of Indian children between the ages 6 to 14 go to school 53% of girls in the age group 5 to 9 years are illiterates. One out of four Primary school in India is educated in open spaces or tents, 50% of Indian Children aged 6-18 do not go to school.

Health & Nutrition: More than 50% of Indian children are malnourished. Which one in every five adolescent boys in malnourished, one in every two girl in India is undernourished 58% of India's children below the age of 2 years are not fully vaccinated and 24% of these children do not receive vaccination. Every 1000 children born in India do not see their 5th birthday child mortality is very high compared to the other nations of the world. Active respiratory infections are leading cause of child mortality, 30% followed by diarrhea. 20% in India only 38 % of Indian children below the age of 2 years are immunized.

Special Statics on Girl child: Regarding girl child one- third of this death take place every week. Every sixth girl child's death is due to gender discrimination. Females are victimized more than males during childhood. Of the 12 million girls born in India, 1 million do not see their first birthday. Female mortality exceeds male mortality in 224 one of 402 districts in India. Death rate among girls below the age of 4 years is higher than that of boys. Even if she escape infanticide or feticide, a girl child is less likely to receive immunization nutrition & medical treatment compared to a male child.

After nearly 59 years of Independence and over a decade after India became a signatory to the United Nation convention of child Rights, our children continue to be the most neglected segment. Lack of awareness about the basic rights of the child has led to easy violations of laws meant to protect and empower children. Children on the streets and in shops are being exploited by the thousands.

Child Labour: Child labour in India is a grave and extensive problems statistic level that India has 17 million child labours. The highest in the world Children under the age of 14 are forced to work in glass blowing, fireworks and most commonly carpet making factories. Of 90% working sectors 80% of child labour is engaged in agriculture work. Millions of children work to help their families because the adults do not have appropriate employment thus leaving schooling and opportunity to play and rest. Poor and bounded there are approximately 2 million child commercial sex workers between the age of 5 to 15 years and about 3.3 million between 15 and 18 years. They form 40% of the total population of commercial sex workers in India. 80% these are found in the 5 metros.

There are several problems and issues of social distance- arising out of caste, class and gender difference in children and equal opportunities. According to the UN convention on child Rights, all children are equal and have equal rights yet they are

neglected and exploited. The convention also states that children have the rights to participated in decision.

There are various schemes and plans by the Govt. to ensure safe and better life for children. Strict enforcement of child labour Act, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rehabilitation scheme, UNICEF and many are needed to save our future our children. A complete re-examination of legal frame work for women and children with removal of anomalies within the law and implementation of programme and policies are required. There is a need for a check at every step of such policies and programmes for the desired results.

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