

LOOKING AT GENDER THROUGH
VARYING LENSES

Looking at Gender through Varying Lenses

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SILIGURI B.Ed. COLLEGE

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LOOKING AT GENDER THROUGH VARYING LENSES

A collection of essays about gender studies
edited by Dr. Ratna Nandi & Dr. Sourav Das

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MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Siliguri B.Ed. College is going to publish an edited book on the subject “Looking at Gender through Varying Lenses”, which I feel is a very relevant topic in the present scenario.

A gender lense as I understand is not a tangible object; it is a way of looking at things, a means to critically assess a wide range of social and political situations, in order to see how gender-inclusive or gender-sensitive they are. In a world in which most critical decision making powers lie with men, this approach of looking through lenses shift the focus and allows us to identify opportunities for those powers to be distributed more evenly. It highlights the difference between female and male interests at numerous levels— be that within the same household, state or country. Across the globe, women are trivialized, objectified and sexualized. Application of the gender lens provide a viewfinder that filters all of that out and exposes the roots of inequality. It places the spotlight on the realities, needs and perceptions of women. Far from ignoring men, it allows them to consider the world in a more holistic manner and reveals how their own interests intersect with those of women.

The subject of the book addresses various issues related to the above. I therefore, appreciate the initiative taken by Siliguri B.Ed. College to publish the book on such major issues. I am quite sure that the book will be of great help to the readers, students and researchers who are working on Gender Studies.

I extend my best wishes to the Principal, editors, authors and researchers who have contributed to make this book worth reading.

Thanking you



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MESSAGE FROM DR. BHIBUTI BHUSAN SARANGI PRINCIPAL, SILIGURI B.ED. COLLEGE

To
Dr. Ratna Nandi
Librarian, Siliguri B.Ed. College
And
Dr. Sourav Das
Assistant Professor, Siliguri B.Ed. College

I am very happy to know that you are going to publish a book "Looking at Gender through Varying Lenses" with Siliguri B.Ed. College as a publisher.

I convey my best wishes for the publication and will provide all kinds of support needed by you.

With warm wishes,

Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Sarangi
PRINCIPAL
SILIGURI B.Ed. COLLEGE

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



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Looking at Gender through Varying Lenses

It is said that the first evidence of civilization among humans is finding of a fossil of a healed femur that is something I liked very much because of the fact that humans as wild or natural beings are exclusive having the concept of exclusion due to our instincts; the instinct of survival, the instinct of perpetuation; they usually made us believe in the concept of exclusion, but with intellectual development, with spirituality we actually think of inclusiveness in the society from all corners and that is the beauty of this human race what I think. But at the same time the thing is it should be sustainable, so what sir was pointing out it should be sustainable not only that the thing which needs to be changed is not the external environment. The thing which needs to be changed is the internal environment of each and every human being intellectually, spiritually. And that way what I feel is the topic of this webinar i.e., “Looking at Gender through varying lenses” basically talks about our perception of gender, not only male female or the third gender and our inclusive thoughts, these will change the environment both external but it should start with the change, the change first should be internal and sustainable. At the same time what I was thinking yesterday only, that is most of us might not have seen the copy of the Constitution of our country, but we know what the Constitution speaks of, because there are so many models in front of us. Everyday we are seeing how rights are being protected; how the people, their lives; all their issues are being taken care of by the same. So models are very important. Even if we don't know the theory, the models which we see in the society, these are going to enlighten us, these are going to change our perception and that way I would like all of us to think in that line and as most

of us here are Bengalis, what I was thinking that it is a challenge for all of us- the society, the nation as a whole and internationally also, it is a challenge. But in Bengali while trying to find out an appropriate word for challenge I didn't find out. Usually what we use the word in Bengali writing is 'challenge'. In Hindi we have 'chunauti', but what I felt was Bengalis are always foremost while accepting challenges. So this webinar is going to go a long way. Again at the same time what I feel is we are going through a time when everything is uncertain. The most certain thing is uncertainty. That is why this webinar which was planned at the end of March of this year in a face to face mode, this we had to replan, reschedule on online platform. And this is a time when we are thinking of vaccine for Covid19 just like a dream of gender equal society. But I would like to stress upon just the deserve of vaccine won't make any difference in this scenario; the thing which is going to make a difference is vaccination. Similarly, I would like to stress that we should try through this webinar to find out avenues, to find out instruments how to actually look at Gender through a lens which gives a equality among genders in the society both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Kalyan Khan

President of the Governing Body, Siliguri B.Ed. College
Associate Professor, West Bengal Medical Education Service

Transcribed by : Arunima Chakraborty, B.Ed. Trainee, Siliguri B.Ed. College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gender-one simple term, but heterogeneous concepts are there scattered around the term. The society was not concerned at all till a few years ago with other categories of people except cisgender people whose gender identity and expression matches the biological sex they were assigned when they were born. Today the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' are commonly used to refer respectively to the biological and the social aspects of being a man or a woman or other. Till date, discrimination and violence against women can be found in every sector, in home, workplaces or even before the birth. The victim women often are not aware of their legal rights and existing laws in support of them. In literatures also, the discrimination can be found. Men also face several times various problems because of their gender identity. With this background, last year the "Gender sensitization committee" of Siliguri B.Ed. College in collaboration with IQAC organized an international webinar on gender and its various aspects. About 800 participants registered for the webinar and more than 100 abstracts of their papers were received. 60 papers were presented in the webinar besides the 4 invited papers by eminent speakers. We decided to compile the selected papers into a book with the aim of preserving the varied innovative ideas and theories of the contributors for future reference. The present book "Looking at the Gender through Varying Lenses" is the result of that decision.

We are honoured that honourable Vice-Chancellor of Raiganj University, Professor Anil Bhuimali has written the foreword of the book. We express our gratitude to him.

We are obliged to get the heartfelt wishes from honourable Vice-Chancellor of WBUTTEPA Prof. Soma Bandyopadhyay .

We are fortunate enough to include in the book the transcripts of the lectures of

Prof. Sugata Marjit, distinguished Professor Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India), Former Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University and Former Chairman, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education;

Foyzoon Nahar, Director, Human Resource Development and Training, TMSS, Bangladesh;

Prof. (Dr.) Sumana Das, Head of the Department (Bengali), Rabindra Bharati University; and

Dr. Sujit Kumar Biswas, Director, Centre for Cyber Law & Cyber Security, Joint Director, Centre for Child Rights, NBU and Associate Professor, Dept. of Law, NBU.

We take this opportunity to convey our sincere thanks to the eminent speakers.

We are Greatful to Dr. Pranab Krishna Chanda, Former Registrar, WBUTTEPA and ex-Principal of Siliguri B.Ed. College for wishing us through his writing.

We express our thanks to Dr. Kalyan Khan, President of the Governing Body of Siliguri B. Ed. College for providing support to us and also for his lecture.

We like to say thanks to all of the contributors of the book for their innovative ideas.

We are grateful to the Governing Body of Siliguri B.Ed. College for their support.

We convey our sincere thanks to Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Sarangi, Principal of Siliguri B. Ed. College for getting his support and best wishes.

We are thankful to all faculty members and staff of the college for their active participation and cooperation.

We are very much grateful to all the reviewers for cutting their valuable time and doing the work sincerely.

And last but not the least, a big thanks to Karulipi, the printers for so neat printing, beautiful cover design and presentation of the book.

Dr. Ratna Nandi Dr. Sourav Das

Editor

FOREWORD



FOREWORD

“Looking at gender through varying lenses” is undoubtedly a good book on various aspects of gender as sharply attempted by a good number of reputed authors under unstinted endeavour of Siliguri B.Ed. College. The concept of gender, in the modern sense, is a recent invention in human history. In the last two decades of the 20th century, the use of gender in academia has increased greatly, outnumbering uses of sex in the social sciences. This discipline examines the ways in which historical, cultural, and social events shape the role of gender in different societies. The history of gender studies looks at the different perspectives of gender. The field of gender studies, while focusing on the differences between men and women, also looks at sexual differences and less binary definitions of gender categorization.

In this book, the writers have fantastically done in-depth study on several topics on gender such as ‘Prosperity and Women’s Work Participation’, ‘Sex vs Gender & Historical Evaluation of Gender through Position of Women in Modern Society’, ‘Crime against Women’ and other themes such as Sex versus Gender Historical Evolution of Gender Thought, Legal Intervention in Conjugal Life, Impact of Gender in Work Place, Gender Issues in Literature and Empowering Third Gender. All these important factors as the writers have chosen for their study bring a good reflection on different issues of gender studies which is basically an interdisciplinary academic field devoted to analysing gender identity and gendered representation. I hope this book has covered most important chapters as related to gender studies from different angles. I highly appreciate the efforts the Siliguri B.Ed. College has taken for its publication and feel happy to mention here that this book will remain a part of good assets on gender studies in future. My best wishes to all those who are closely associated with this book!

Anil Bhuiamali
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INVITED LECTURES

Some Stray Comments from a Layperson

Prof. (Dr.) Pranab Krishna Chanda

Former Registrar, WBUTTEPA

The question is a celebrated one: Who am I?

Most of the persons seek the answer in the context of self-identity.

Very few may seek the answer in the form as stated below:

—Am I a ‘He’?

Or,

—Am I a ‘She’?

Laypersons like me understand in the following way.

—A ‘He’ is a ‘He’. And a ‘She’ is a ‘She’. Those two entities are diametrically opposite.

I wanted to be precise. With my poor knowledge, I went to mathematics for a rational review. Unfortunately, I was still more confused.

—5 is diametrically opposite to +5.

Here, we get a common part, namely ‘5’. Then we use ‘—’ for sending the meaning of ‘5’ in one direction and ‘+’ for sending the same to the opposite.

But, what is the common between ‘He’ and ‘She’. The portion which comes to be common here, namely, ‘he’, cannot be common!

Will the future generations like to improve upon this inadequacy of the vocabulary? Some may comment that we have already done that with the use of the word, ‘person’. For me, this saves us at the cost of the diversity of nature!

If we could see ‘He’ and ‘She’ in the format of a number line, then there would have been several other options for incorporating other diversities.

Is anyone fully 'He' or fully 'She'? Or, is everybody placed at a particular point on the continuum of the number line? Can we then call it a 'gender line' instead of a 'number line'?

Or even, during the whole day, is a person fully 'He' or fully 'She' at the same level?

Not only that!

There would have been the scope of representing some state in between 'He' and 'She' that might be represented by 'zero' (origin!). Does it indicate the 'common' of 'He' and 'She'?

Many philosophers, especially from the soil of the Indian sub-continent, view the issue in that way.

Yes, the view is a bit crazy. I beg your pardon for that.

With regards to the eminent speakers, participants and organizers and best of wishes for the seminar I finish it here.

Economic Prosperity and Gender Equality

Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Marjit

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Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta

Economic Prosperity and Gender Equality are the pillars of that ideal nation for which societies have been crying for ever. There is a perception that gender equality boosts up real economic outcomes. But we need to prove it empirically by using adequate data, to show that the relation between economic prosperity and gender equality is actually reciprocal. In order to make my point more comprehensive, I would summarize the gist of the available empirical regularities as they follow from the work of noted scholars working in this area of research.

Any organization, which not only believes but actively pursues the idea of gender equality and does not discriminate someone just because she is a woman, is likely to prosper. Development can play a major role in reducing gender inequality, but gender equality may also support the process of development.

Now the question is how to think about economic prosperity and gender inequality from a straight forward economic angle? A more intensive analysis would suggest that higher equality may support higher economic growth. This idea somehow brings forward the scope for parallel and similar discussion on racial discrimination. While discussing the topic of discrimination, the three eminent personalities whose concepts and theories in the domain of Economics come to mind are – Amartya Sen (Indian Economist), Kenneth J Arrow and Gary Becker (Both American Economists) all Nobel laureates. Amartya Sen's concept on 'Missing women' made a huge impact on

reigning thoughts about development and gender inequality. He demonstrates that economic prosperity does not guarantee elimination of gender inequality. The two American economists Kenneth Arrow and Gary Becker argued about why companies would or would not engage in racial discrimination while hiring employees. To maximize profits for their organization they should employ the best candidates, male or female. If the employers get carried away by racial instincts and gender biased attitudes then that could lead to a negative impact on profits, efficiency and economic growth of the firm.

But this ideal argument loses its ground and becomes untenable due to the existence of other social factors, as the decision making units are humans. Although their announced objective is to go for higher economic profit for the organization and employment on the basis of 'ability' without being biased, they belong to a heterogeneous group. Hence, some of them are affected by pre-conceived perceptions and core beliefs shaped by their social, cultural, historical and religious background. Rationality, therefore, could easily take a backseat. In spite of all the positive attitude we try to incorporate, there will always be a room for reluctance to reach out towards gender equality and hence higher economic growth would falter.

Therefore, our concern should be practising the idea ourselves and inculcating that idea within our children, making them more gender sensitive because internal environment (Household) always has to encounter adverse influences of external environment (Society). The best example of the society we can portray is ourselves within the household and a crucial medium of this portrayal is education. We need to educate our children to be sensitive towards other genders, including the third gender. The example must be set up at our home, if the world has to be more civilized and humanitarian place to leave.

Sex vs Gender & Historical Evolution of Gender

Prof. (Dr.) Foyzoon Nahar

Director, Human Resource Development and Training, TMSS, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

I would like to remember two verses from a poem of our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam:

‘বিশ্বে যা কিছু মহান সৃষ্টি চির কল্যাণকর,
অর্ধেক তার করিয়াছে নারী অর্ধেক তার নর।’

“Everything created in the world is Ever benevolent, Half of it is done by Women, Half by Men.”

At the beginning of my speech, I would like to share the overview of Women Empowerment in the context of Bangladesh and the world as well as some experiences and practices of TMSS concerning Women Empowerment.

TMSS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

TMSS is the largest woman based Non-Government Organization-NGO in Bangladesh which has been working for the alleviation of poverty in Bangladesh with a vision:

‘Smiling face of women folk’

In 1980 in northern Bangladesh, with the leadership of Prof. Dr. Hosne-Ara Begum, TMSS was formed with a small group of beggar women and began a savings program. The women would bring a handful of rice to each meeting. Once enough rice was collected and

sold to form a small loan fund. From the savings, small loans were made to the women. From these humble beginnings TMSS has now built a huge membership organization with a staff of over 31000 and 1600 branch Offices.

TMSS believes women's empowerment comes only when women are directly involved in economic activities and have control over what they produce and earn and Family should be the focal point for women development.

TMSS organizes grassroots women and forming 40000 groups, it is making them self- reliant and self sufficient in the livelihood sector through micro and SME loans of around Tk 1500 crore every year.

TMSS promotes education for women by providing subsidies in its 35 educational institutes including 13 Technical and Vocational Education and Training: TVET Institutions. Every year thousands of women are provided with decent employment through the TVET programme of TMSS.

TMSS also established many business enterprises with decent environment for women employee. By name TMSS Foods Production Limited, TMSS Handicrafts, TMSS Paper Mill, Eco Park and 5 star Momo Inn Hotel etc.

Now I can share about Women Empowerment in Bangladesh:

Women Empowerment is being established through the adoption and implementation of various programs. In this way, Bangladesh is not backward. Non-governmental development organizations are working on women's awareness and economic development. It is involving them in economics transactions. According to the Bureau of Statistics, in Bangladesh, about 62% women are involved in income generating work, the highest in South Asia. Also women have been able to realize its position on decision making, marriage, reproduction and birth control.

In Bangladesh, we have so many challenges in Women Empowerment.

Challenges to Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

Some points we are discussing in this forum :

1. There is inequality between men and women in education, skills, quality of livelihood, income resources and political power

2. Misinterpretation of existing family law and Muslim inheritance law due to religious narrowness.
3. Women are being posted a government offices, courts but not being empowered. There is more symbolic empowerment than actual empowerment.
4. Women entrepreneurship is hampered and fear works among them due to unfair environment, lack of good governance and the impact of muscle power.
5. Wage inequality exists between men and women.
6. The right to inherit wealth is another major obstacle to Women Empowerment.

This is some challenges in our country aspect. I think some of these are similar in your country also.

Now I can share about global status of Women Empowerment.

Despite different adversities and obstacles, the hope is that all these problems are changing rapidly. Women Empowerment is gradually increasing in the family, society and the state. The issue of Women Empowerment aroused first in the countries of Western World. International Women Year (IWY) was the name given to 1975 by the United Nations. Since that year March 8 has been celebrated as International Women's Day, and the United Nations Decade for Women, from 1976 to 1985.

Women are moving forward in law making and governance. There are 15 women all over the world are acting as the head of state. According to the latest survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of the 45000 members in 190 countries, 10000 are Women. So the empowerment of women worldwide is accelerating.

It is not that women want to rule over men. In fact, women want to be partners, partners in the wheel of development and progress. Women want to be identified not only as women, but also as human being, as independent entities and to contribute at the family, society and as well as state.

It is noted that Six countries (Germany, New Zealand, Singapore, Finland, Bangladesh and Taiwan) have shown the best success in preventing the ongoing Global epidemic Corona and the heads of state or government of these six countries are all women. Women can do any job quite efficiently when given the responsibility.

Now I can share my main topic. Coming to the main topic of my speech, let me discuss on the

- Concept of Sex and Gender
- Difference between Sex and Gender
- Historical Evolution of Social and Economic status of Men and Women

Sex

Sex refers to biological differences, chromosomes, hormonal profiles, Internal and External sex organs.

It classify people as Male and Female.

Gender

Gender refers the attitudes, behaviors, norms and roles that a society or culture associated with an individual's sex, thus the social influence makes differences between female and male.

Gender describes the characteristics that a society and culture mark people as masculine and feminine.

In the general sense, gender is the characteristics of Man and Woman which is recognized by our society and it can be changed.

Let's have a look on the difference between Sex and Gender

SEX	GENDER
1. Sex is natural. It is determined at birth	Gender is social or cultural
2. Sex is immutable. Wherever you go in the world, there will be girls and boys.	Gender is variable. Depending on a family, society, state or individual , or culture.
3. Sex indicates physical differences between women and men.	Whereas Gender indicates the differences between men and women created by the society
4. Sex do not decide the classifications of jobs	But the gender based practices created traditional male and female classifications for jobs.

Then my second topic is :

Historical Evolution of Social and Economic Status of Men and Women

Regarding this status/condition and position of women, many anthropologists said that there is no such difference between men and women, while many others said that there is a huge difference between them.

At different stages of historical evolution, society is divided into four parts by considering about the social and economic status of men and women.

- Primitive communist society
- Slave society
- Feudal society
- Capitalist and Modern society

Now I can share these every society to my slide. First of all...

Primitive communist society

- In Primitive communist society, the status/condition and position of men and women are equal.
- People lived as group in tribes
- There was no difference between men and women except natural differences.
- The boys of one tribe associated with the girls of another tribe.
- Collective marriage was practiced; so it was not possible to determine the father of the child
- The children would grow up in identity of the mother, thus the maternal family system was introduced in the tribe.
- 80% of the food was provided by women and the remaining 20% was provided by men
- Men hunted animals and collected meat as food which was very difficult job.
- There was no social labor division between men and women
- Ownership of wealth was in the hand of both men and women
- In decision making, men and women played an equal role
- The emergence and development of agriculture work was mostly practiced by women

- Women played an important role in the economy
- In primitive times Society was maternal, not matriarchal.
- This time there was a proverb,

‘সকলের তরে সকলে আমরা, প্রত্যেকে আমরা পরের তরে’
That is they were strongly believed in ‘unity is power’.

Now, second society is:

Slave Society

Slave society started after primitive society. In this society agricultural work goes under men. Women lose control in the production process. They become subordinates and pets of men. This is where the slave system begins

- The plow was discovered in the society. It takes animals to plow, in primitive society animals have been teamed by men, so the control of agriculture has totally shifted from women to men.
- Women lose control of agriculture
- Women go under the control of a man
- In a slave society men and women are enslaved
- Twin marriages tradition was established.
- Individual ownership was established by breaking the norms of tribal organization equality.
- Landlords use the advantages of new marriage system only to strengthen their heritability.
- The level of exploitation and oppression of women started from The Slave society
- Women lose their financial and social status.
- The war of occupation of agricultural land and plunder of resources began.
- In place of Matriarchal family the patriarchal family emerged.
- The households enjoyed the female slaves and sold their children.
- Men have not on the ownership on animals property and land but also on women.
- The proverb of this time is, ‘জোর যার, মুলুক তার’ that is “Might is right”

Feudal Society

Feudal society started after Slave society and lasting around the 5th century to the 15th century. In this society women were fall under male control regardless of class. The status of women in feudal society is more disrespectful than in slave society.

- The King/landlord ruled the tenant
- Blue and zoom cultivation was more prevalent as a crop in that society.
- The landlords used to torture the tenant extensively.
- If the taxes could not be collected, the wife and daughter would be taken as tas along with the jug, bowl, cow and goat.
- The wife was raped in front of the husband and the daughter in front of the father.
- Women are more dependent on men.

In proverb means, Alas! Woman, you were born under your father, marriage is under your husband and in old age, you are also under your son, tour subordination never end.

- The violence of the fundamentalists increased.
- Women were the product of enjoyment
- Women were dependent on men from birth to death.
- Women were deprived of their right to education.
- Social and religious prejudices are raised. Such as- child marriage, Satidaha and Porda Protha.

Capitalist and Modern Society

Capitalist society started after Feudal society. At this society, The Industrial Revolution take place in England in the eighteenth century. At the beginning of Capitalist society the status of women remains the same except changing the form of torture and deprivation. In the modern society lives of women are improving by increasing women's access to capital, promoting workplace equity, and creating products and services.

- On this occasion the workers, free from torture of the Landlords, joined the factories.

- The status of women remains the same. Only the section, sub-section and level of torture changes a bit at this level.
- In slave society, women were slaves in feudal society housewives, in capitalist society women were low paying labor. That means they are not free from discrimination.
- In capitalist society, women's labor is twice as much as men's. In this society, women were tortured to more psychological abuse.
- Women were deprived of wages, promotions, opportunities, etc. in the workplace even if they were engaged in some productive activities besides giving birth of children.
- Owners build mountains of wealth by paying workers less than wages.
- Physical abuse is not done on the streets and in the field. They were beaten by playing a cassette at home or by taking a shower in the bathroom.
- The level of brutality and feudalism of the Feudal and Slave System was less than in this society.
- The position and scope of work of women was determined on the basis of the structure of production.
- The slavery of women has not been reduced even in capitalistic society.
- Women have been given the right to work to a limited extent, but the pre-existing trend of exploitation was same.

CONCLUSION

Through the evolution of human society; slave society was established instead of primitive communist society. Slave society was broken and feudal society was established. Due to the inevitable history the capitalist social system was established in place of feudal society. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. Socialist societies are still in place in many parts of the world today. So it can be said that the history of the human race is the history of the evolution of civilization.

Choice of 'Gender' in Chitrangada : Tagore and Rituparno

Prof. (Dr.) Sumana Das

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প্রথমেই আমি দু'-একটি বিষয়কে স্পষ্ট করে নিতে চাই, যা হয়তো আপনাদের সকলেরই জানা, কিন্তু আমার গন্তব্যে পৌঁছানোর পথটিকে মসৃণ করে নিতে এই আলোচনার সূত্রপাত। মানবসমাজকে লিঙ্গগত ভাবে বিভাজন করতে যে দু'টি শব্দ প্রধানত ব্যবহৃত হয়, তার প্রথমটি সেক্স এবং দ্বিতীয়টি জেন্ডার। সেক্স কি? জন্মসূত্রে প্রাপ্ত একটি শারীরিক পরিচয়, যা নিয়ে একজন মানুষ জন্মায়, যা থেকে নির্ধারিত হয় তার যৌন পরিচয়। আরেকটি হচ্ছে জেন্ডার, যাকে আমরা বলতে পারি সামাজিকভাবে নির্মিত লিঙ্গ পরিচয়। এই লিঙ্গ পরিচয়টি জন্মসূত্রে নির্ধারিত হয় না, বরং এটি সামাজিকভাবে, পরিবেশগতভাবে তৈরি হয়। এবং সেইসঙ্গে একজন ব্যক্তি যখন আত্মপরিচয় নির্মাণের মধ্য দিয়ে যায়, তখন তার লিঙ্গ পরিচয় ক্রমশ নির্মিত হতে থাকে। এই যে লিঙ্গ পরিচয় নির্মিত হয়, তাতে সমাজের এবং পরিবেশের একটি নিয়ন্ত্রক ভূমিকা থাকে, যা সবসময় সদর্থক নাও হতে পারে। আমি বলতে চাইছি যে একটি সমাজ এবং পরিবেশ ঠিক করে দেয়, ছেলেরা কেমন আচরণ করবে, তারা কী কী কাজ করবে, তাদের শখ কীরকম হবে, তারা কীভাবে অবসর যাপন করবে, আবার অন্যদিকে একটি মেয়ে যখন বড় হয়ে উঠছে সে কী কী কাজ করবে। যেমন ধরা যাক, একটি মেয়ে যদি পুতুল খেলে তাহলে ছেলে ফুটবল খেলবে, বা যদি একটি মেয়ে দক্ষতা অর্জন করে আলপনা আঁকায়, তাহলে ছেলেটি কীভাবে ঘুড়িতে মাঞ্জা দিতে হয়, সেটা শিখবে। আজকাল যদিও অনেক পরিবর্তন হয়েছে, তবে আমি একটি সাধারণ ধারণার কথাই বলতে চাইছি।

অতএব সামাজিক দৃষ্টি থেকে একজনের লিঙ্গ পরিচয় নির্দিষ্ট হয়, যার ভিত্তিতে ঠিক হয় তার আচরণ পুরুষসুলভ হবে, নাকি নারীসুলভ। এখন মানুষ যখন এই

সামাজিক লিঙ্গ নির্মাণের মধ্য দিয়ে যায়, তখন অনেকের ক্ষেত্রেই যেমন কোনো বিরোধ উপস্থিত হয় না, আবার এমনও বহু মানুষ আছেন, যাদের আত্মপরিচয়কে ব্যক্ত করার সুতীর্থ আকৃতি তাদের সামাজিক ভাবে লিঙ্গ নির্মাণের ক্ষেত্রে একটা সংকটের সম্মুখীন করে তোলে। তাঁরা জন্মসূত্রে পাওয়া যৌন পরিচয়টির বদলে লিঙ্গ ভিত্তিক অন্য একটি পরিচয় নিয়ে বাঁচতে চান। অর্থাৎ শারীরিকভাবে পুরুষ হলেও মানসিকভাবে নারী হয়ে উঠতে চান। তখন লিঙ্গ নির্মাণের এই যে সামাজিক পরিসর, তার সঙ্গে তাঁর একটা দ্বন্দ্ব বা লড়াই বাধে। এখন কথাটা হচ্ছে এই যে লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের ক্ষেত্রে, কতকগুলো সামাজিক নির্মাণের বা পূর্বনির্ধারিত কিছু শর্তের মধ্যে তাঁরা আবদ্ধ থাকতে চান না। অনেকক্ষেত্রেই দেখা যায় যে তারা হয়ত অত্যন্ত সৃষ্টিশীল ও সংবেদনশীল। এখন সংবেদনশীল কথাটার উপর আমি আলাদা করে গুরুত্ব দেব, কারণ সাধারণভাবে আমাদের সমাজে যে পৌরুষের নির্মাণ হয়, তার মধ্যে সংবেদনহীনতা কিছুটা হলেও থাকে। যেমন বলা হয় ছেলেরা কাঁদে না, কান্নার মুহূর্ত এলেও, খুব দুঃখ হলেও, নরম মনের পরিচয় ধরা পড়ে, এমন কিছুতে সে সাড়া দেবে না। এইভাবে যে পৌরুষের নির্মাণ বা ম্যাসকুলিনিটি গঠিত হয়, সেটা হয়ত অনেক সংবেদনশীল মানুষের আত্মপরিচয় নির্মাণের ক্ষেত্রে একটা চাপিয়ে দেওয়া শর্ত, যা তাঁকে তাঁর সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠার ক্ষেত্রেও সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করে। যা হয়েছিল স্বয়ং রবীন্দ্রনাথের ক্ষেত্রেও।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ হয়ে ওঠেননি, অর্থাৎ তখনও তিনি বিখ্যাত লেখক হননি, তাঁর জীবনেও এমন বহুবিধ দ্বন্দ্ব ও সংকট উপস্থিত হয়েছিল, যেসবের কথা পরবর্তীকালে তিনি নিজ মুখেই বলে গেছেন। আমরা সকলেই জানি রবীন্দ্রনাথ কোনদিনই দশটা-পাঁচটার স্কুলে নিজেকে মানিয়ে নিতে পারেনি এবং প্রচলিত শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা তাঁর কাছে আপত্তিকরই লেগেছে। সেইজন্য তিনি তাঁর ধারণা অনুযায়ী পরবর্তীকালে একটি আশ্রম বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন, এবং আরোও পরে একটি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করেছেন। প্রচলিত শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থার প্রতি তাঁর এই বিরূপতা সম্পূর্ণ ব্যবস্থাটাকে কেন্দ্র করেই, যার মধ্যে রয়েছে শিক্ষক ছাত্র সম্পর্কও। পুরো ব্যাপারটির মধ্যে কোথাও যেন একটা কদর্যতা, তাঁকে পীড়িত করেছে। আপনারা যদি রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবনস্মৃতি পড়েন সেখানে তিনি একেবারে স্পষ্ট ভাষায় বলছেন যে, তাঁকে যখন স্কুলে পাঠানো হত, তখন তিনি এক কোণে চুপচাপ জানলার দিকে মুখ করে বসে থাকতেন। আর যখন বিরতি হত তখন সব ছেলেরা খেলাধুলা করত, অথচ তিনি কারও সঙ্গে মিশতেন না, কোনো খেলায় অংশ নিতেন না। কারণ এই ছেলেদের আচরণ এবং কথাবার্তা কোথাও একটা তাঁর রুচিতে বাধতো, তাঁর

শালীনতাবোধের সঙ্গে মিলত না, কুরুচিকর মনে হত। শুধু ছেলেদের নয় স্কুলের পণ্ডিতদের কথাও তিনি বলেছেন যে, তাঁরা ছাত্রদের নানাভাবে কটুক্তি করতেন, ছাত্রদের কোন একটা চেহারাগত বৈশিষ্ট্য নিয়ে মজা করতেন। এর উপর ভিত্তি করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ একটি গল্প লেখেন, ‘গিন্নি’। তাঁর স্কুলের হরনাথ পণ্ডিত, এই গল্পে শিবনাথ পণ্ডিত হয়েছেন। গল্পটি এরকম যে, আশু বলে একটি ছেলে, যে পড়াশোনায় ভালো, কিন্তু সে ভীষণ চুপচাপ থাকে। একটু দেরি করে স্কুলে আসে এবং যেহেতু সে ভীষণ চুপচাপ, সেইজন্য প্রতিদিনই মাস্টারমশাইদের কাছে বকা খায় ও শাস্তি পায়। এক ছুটির দিনে সে তার বাড়ির গাড়ি বারান্দায়, তার ছোট বোনের সঙ্গে পুতুল খেলছিল, এমন সময়ে পথচলতি ওই মাস্টারমশায় ঘটনাটি পুরো দেখেন এবং পরের দিন ক্লাসে, তিনি খুব রসিয়ে রসিয়ে বাকি ছেলেদের সামনে সেই ঘটনার উল্লেখ করেন। আশুর একটি নতুন নামকরণও করেন তিনি “গিন্নি”। ক্লাসের সকলের সামনে তিনি এই নামকরণ করেন, যার ফলে আশু লজ্জায় অধোবদন হয়ে থাক। ক্লাস শেষ হয়ে যাওয়ার পর সমস্ত ছেলেরা আশুকে ঘিরে ধরে ‘গিন্নি গিন্নি’ বলে ক্ষাপাতে থাকে এবং আশুর দুটোখ দিয়ে জল পড়তে থাকে, সে বুঝতে পারে না যে, সে কি দোষ করেছে, কি অন্যায় করেছে।

পণ্ডিত মশাইয়ের আশুকে “গিন্নি” বলা যেন বর্তমানে মেয়েলি ছেলেদের “লেডিস” বলারই একটা ওল্ডার ভার্সন। অর্থাৎ একটা ছেলেকে মেয়েলি বললে তাকে সবচাইতে বেশি অপমান করা যায়। কিন্তু যে বা যারা সেটা করছে, তাতে তাদের নিষ্ঠুরতা, তাদের অসংবেদনশীলতারও যে প্রকাশ ঘটছে, এটিই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর ‘গিন্নি’ গল্পের মধ্যে দেখাচ্ছেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেও ছেলেবেলায় এসবের মধ্য দিয়ে গিয়েছেন, প্রমাণ স্বরূপ তাঁর নিজের একটি স্বীকারোক্তির কথা আমি উল্লেখ করব। তিনি একেবারে পরিণত বয়সে পৌঁছে, মৃত্যুর মাত্র এক বছর আগে বেশ কিছুদিন মংপুতে মৈত্রেয়ী দেবীর কাছে কাটান এবং আমরা জানি সেই সময়েরই দিনিলিপি মৈত্রেয়ী দেবীর ‘মংপুতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ’ গ্রন্থটি। সেখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ একটা জায়গায় বলছেন, সেই প্রত্যেকদিন ধরাবাঁধা নিয়মে স্কুলে যাওয়া, এবং অত্যন্ত নিরসভাবে পাঠ্যবই পড়বার কঠিন চেষ্টা কবির ভাবুক শিশু মনের উপর বোঝার মত চেপেছিল এবং তারপরে তিনি বলছেন যে, সহপাঠীদের বিভিন্ন আলোচনা তার মার্জিত মনের সঙ্গে মিলত না, অধিকাংশ ছেলেদের গল্প আলোচনায় এমন অশুচি এবং একটা কুৎসিত ভাব ছিল যা তিনি কিছুতেই সহ্য করতে পারতেন না। তাঁর যেন গা কেমন করত। বড় হয়ে একবার মাত্র কলেজে গিয়েছিলেন লেকচার শুনতে। আগে বন্দোবস্ত করা হয়েছিল। গেলেন তো উৎসাহ নিয়ে, তখন তাঁর

চুল বড় বড় ছিল। গলার স্বরও মোলায়েম ছিল। ঘরে ঢোকা মাত্র ছেলেরা বললে, ‘এই যে বাইজি যো। তক্ষুনি আমি বুঝলুম এ চলবে না, এ সঙ্গ আমার সহ্য হবে না’ রবীন্দ্রনাথের সেই বিখ্যাত ফটোগ্রাফ আপনাদের সবারই হয়তো মনে আছে। তরুণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের মাথায় পাগড়ি পরা রয়েছে দু’পাশ দিয়ে কাঁধ পর্যন্ত নেমে এসেছে থোকা থোকা চুলের গুচ্ছ। সেই অসামান্য ছবিটা ভেবে দেখুন, সেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রেসিডেন্সিতে যাচ্ছেন, আর ছেলেরা বলছে বাইজি। এইভাবে অপমানিত হতে হয়েছে তাঁকে, নানাভাবে কটুক্তি করা হয়েছে, যা তাঁকে সহ্যও করতে হয়েছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রবল সংবেদনশীলতার জায়গা থেকেই আমরা দেখি, তিনি তাঁর সৃষ্ট চরিত্রদের তাঁর নাটকে, উপন্যাসে, কাব্যনাট্যে এমনভাবে নির্মাণ করেছেন, যে, সেখানে এই নারী-পুরুষের যে বিভেদ তা অনেক সময়তেই অস্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছেন। কোনো একটি এক্সপ্রেশন, যা প্রচলিত ধারণা অনুযায়ী মনে হতে পারে একজন নারীর কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখায় দেখা যাচ্ছে সেটা একজন পুরুষের অনুভব, পুরুষের উক্তি, পুরুষের চিন্তা। যেমন আমরা যদি ‘ঘরে বাইরে’ উপন্যাসটি পড়ি সেখানে বিমলা যখন নিখিলেশের কাছ থেকে সরে যাচ্ছে, তখন নিখিলেশের মনে যে দুঃখ-বেদনা, যে বিরহবোধকে তিনি ব্যক্ত করছেন ‘এ ভরা বাদর মাহ ভাদর/শূন্য মন্দির মোর’, গানের মধ্যে দিয়ে সেটা কিন্তু বিদ্যাপতির রাধার বিরহের পদ। অর্থাৎ রাধার বিরহ আর নিখিলেশের বিরহকে তিনি সমান্তরলতা দিচ্ছেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবলীলায় তাঁর নায়কের মধ্যে এক নারীর বিরহকে সঞ্চার করে দিচ্ছেন। এমনটা তিনি হামেশাই করে থাকেন। এবার আমি যে টেক্সটটির উপর আলোকপাত করতে চাইব, সেটি পরবর্তীকালে আরেকজন সমকামী শিল্পীর আত্মপ্রকাশের আশ্রয় হয়ে ওঠে, ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’। রবীন্দ্রনাথ কাব্যনাট্য হিসেবে যে ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’কে বাংলা সাহিত্যে আনছেন, তাকে তিনি পেলেন কোথায়? এককথায় উত্তর মহাভারত থেকে। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাতে সেই মহাভারতের চিত্রাঙ্গদা সম্পূর্ণরূপে পুনর্নির্মিত হয়েছে।

আমি মূলত রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ নিয়েই কথা বলব। কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ এবং নৃত্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’র মধ্যে কিন্তু বিয়াল্লিশ বছরের ব্যবধান রয়েছে। কাব্যনাট্য লেখা হচ্ছে ১৮৯২ খ্রিস্টাব্দে, আর নৃত্যনাট্য লেখা হচ্ছে ১৯৩৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে। এবং তার মধ্যে তিনি খুব একটা পরিবর্তন করেননি। এ থেকে একটা বিষয় বোঝা যায় যে, তিনি তাঁর অল্প বয়সে লেখা কাব্যনাট্যটিকে পরিণত বয়সেও যথেষ্ট মূল্য দিচ্ছেন। যে কাব্যনাট্যটি প্রকাশের পর তাঁকে অশ্লীলতার

দায়ে প্রবলভাবে অভিযুক্ত হতে হয়েছে। দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায় প্রমুখ তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে অনেক কথা বলেছিলেন। যাই হোক সেই প্রসঙ্গে যাচ্ছি না, আমি যে বিষয়টাতে যাব সেটা হচ্ছে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে পেলেন মহাভারত থেকে। অথচ আমরা যখন মহাভারতের মধ্যে প্রবেশ করি, তখন আমাদের একটা ধন্দ লাগে, এই জন্য ধন্দ লাগে যে মহাভারতের চিত্রাঙ্গদা ও রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদার মধ্যে প্রায় কোন মিলই নেই। মহাভারতের চিত্রাঙ্গদা অত্যন্ত ক্ষুদ্র একটি চরিত্র। সেখানে চিত্রাঙ্গদার গুরুত্ব প্রধানত বঙ্গবাহনের মাতা হিসেবে।

চিত্রাঙ্গদা হলেন মণিপুরের রাজকন্যা। এই মণিপুর অবশ্য আজকের মণিপুর রাজ্য নয়। বরং মহাভারতে যে মণিপুর আমরা পাই, সেটি হচ্ছে উড়িষ্যার কাছাকাছি কোনো একটি স্থান। মহাভারতের আদি পর্ব ২১৫ অধ্যায়ে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে পাওয়া যায়। অর্জুন যখন তাঁর বনবাস পর্বে বারো বছরের ব্রহ্মচর্য পালন করতে বের হন, সেইসময় তিনি মণিপুর রাজ্যে এসে উপস্থিত হন। সেখানে রাজকুমারী চিত্রাঙ্গদার অপরূপ লাভ্য দেখে অর্জুন মুগ্ধ হন এবং সরাসরি তাঁর পিতার কাছে গিয়ে বিবাহের প্রস্তাব দেন। তখন চিত্রাঙ্গদার পিতা জানান তাঁদের কোন এক পূর্বপুরুষ শিবের তপস্যা করায়, শিব বর দেন, সেই বংশে প্রত্যেক রাজা একটি করে পুত্র সন্তান জন্ম দেবে, কখনো কোনো রাজা অপুত্রক থাকবে না। পুত্র সন্তান জন্মাবে এবং একটি মাত্র সন্তান জন্মবে। সেইমতো তাঁদের বংশে প্রত্যেকেরই একটি করে সন্তান জন্মায়। কিন্তু তাঁর জন্মায় কন্যা। এবার একটু লক্ষ করুন, এটা খুবই ইন্টারেস্টিং, কারণ এখান থেকেই আলাদা হয়ে যাচ্ছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদা। মণিপুররাজ বলছেন তাঁর যখন কন্যা জন্মায়, তিনি তাঁকে ‘পুত্রিকা’ রূপে গ্রহণ করেন অর্থাৎ কিনা সেই কন্যার যে পুত্র হবে, সেই হবে তাঁর পরবর্তী বংশধর। ফলত সেই কন্যার যাঁর সঙ্গে বিবাহ হবে, সেই স্বামীর বা তাঁর শ্বশুরবংশের সেই সন্তানের উপর কোন অধিকার থাকবে না। সে হবে মণিপুরের পরবর্তী মহারাজ। অর্জুনে তরফে কোনো আপত্তি থাকে না, কারণ অর্জুনের এমন কোন পরিকল্পনাও ছিল না যে, চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে বিয়ে করে হস্তিনাপুরে নিয়ে যাবেন। ফলত অর্জুন সেই প্রস্তাবে রাজি হয়ে যান। অর্জুন ও চিত্রাঙ্গদার বিবাহ হয়। বিবাহের পর অর্জুন তিন বছর সেই মণিপুর রাজ্যে কাটান। এরপর চিত্রাঙ্গদা গর্ভবতী হন ও তাঁর একটি পুত্রসন্তান জন্মায়। পুত্রসন্তান জন্মানোর পর অর্জুন চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে আলিঙ্গন করে বিদায় নেন।

এবার এই চিত্রাঙ্গদা কীভাবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদা হয়ে উঠলেন? কারণ মহাভারতে যে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে পেলাম তিনি তো পিতৃতত্ত্বের হাতের পুতুল ছাড়া

আর কিছুই নন। এখানে অর্জুন তাঁকে পছন্দ করছেন, তাঁর বাবা বিবাহ ঠিক করেছেন। ভেবেছেন অর্জুনতো বীর। তাঁর ঔরসে যদি পুত্র জন্মায়, তাহলে বংশধরও পরাক্রমী হবে। আবার অর্জুনেরও কোনো আপত্তি নেই, তাঁর স্ত্রী-পুত্রকে ফেলে চলে যেতে। সেখানে সকলেই নিজের ইচ্ছে বা স্বার্থ অনুযায়ী কাজগুলি করলেন, মাঝখান থেকে যাঁর ইচ্ছার কোন মূল্যই সেখানে রইল না, তিনি হলেন চিত্রাঙ্গদা। অথচ এই চিত্রাঙ্গদা যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথের জাদুকাঠিরস্পর্শ পেলে, তিনিই হয়ে উঠলেন এক নব ইচ্ছার রূপকার। এমন এক চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পেলেন কোথায়? তিনি কি পুরোটা নিজেই নির্মাণ করলেন? মনে হয় মহাভারতের অন্য কোন উৎস রয়েছে, যা তাঁর চিত্রাঙ্গদা চরিত্র সৃষ্টির পেছনে হয়ত প্রেরণার কাজ করে থাকতে পারে। তাঁর একটি হচ্ছে উলূপী চরিত্রটি। ২১৪ নং অধ্যায়ে আমরা নাগরাজকন্যা উলূপীর দেখা পাই, যাঁর সঙ্গে অর্জুনের দেখা হয়, চিত্রাঙ্গদার সঙ্গে দেখা হওয়ার ঠিক আগে। তখনও পর্যন্ত অর্জুন ব্রহ্মচর্য ব্রত অনুসরণ করে চলেছেন। একদিন সন্ধ্যাবেলায় পরিব্রাজক অর্জুন যখন নদীতে তর্পণ করতে নেমেছেন, তখন নাগরাজকন্যা উলূপী তাঁকে দেখতে পান এবং তাঁকে টেনে নিয়ে পাতালে চলে যান। এরপর তাঁর সামনে নিজের পরিচয় দিয়ে বলেন যে অর্জুনকে দেখে তিনি কন্দর্প স্বরে জর্জরিত হয়েছেন অর্থাৎ তিনি অর্জুনের প্রতি কামনা বোধ করছেন। মহাভারতের নারীরা কিন্তু এভাবেই নিজের যৌন ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করতেন। তখন অর্জুন ব্রহ্মচর্য ব্রতের কথা বললে, উলূপী বললেন, এই ব্রহ্মচর্য তো দ্রৌপদীর জন্য, অন্য নারীর ক্ষেত্রে সেটাতো কার্যকরী নয়। তাই তাঁকে গ্রহণ করলে অর্জুনের ব্রতভঙ্গ হবে না। অর্জুন রাজি হয়ে গেলেন এবং একটি রাত্রি তিনি উলূপীর সঙ্গে কাটালেন। তারপর তিনি বিদায় নিলেন। এরপর এলেন চিত্রাঙ্গদা। আগেই উলূপী হয়ত অর্জুনের ব্রহ্মচর্যের ভাবটিকে ভেঙে দিয়েছিলেন, সেজন্য চিত্রাঙ্গদার প্রতি সহজেই অর্জুন তাঁর আকর্ষণ ব্যক্ত করতে পারলেন।

তাহলে উলূপীকে পাচ্ছি, এক নারী হিসেবে যিনি তাঁর কাঙ্ক্ষিত পুরুষকে নিজের কামনা জানাতে এতটুকুও দ্বিধাবিত হচ্চেন না। মহাভারতে আরেকটি চরিত্র যিনি উলূপী কিংবা চিত্রাঙ্গদার থেকে অধিক গুরুত্ব নিয়ে আসছেন, সেটি হচ্ছে শিখন্ডী চরিত্র। কুরুক্ষেত্রের যুদ্ধের সময় যে শিখন্ডীকে আমরা দেখি ভীষ্মের হস্তারক রূপে। শিখন্ডী হয়ত ভীষ্মকে মারেননি, কিন্তু তাঁকে সামনে রেখেই অর্জুন পিছন থেকে ভীষ্মকে বধ করেছিলেন। কেন বা কি কারণে শিখন্ডীর উপরে ভীষ্ম অস্ত্র প্রয়োগ করবেন না, শিখন্ডী বাইরে পুরুষ হলেও, আসলে তিনি নারী। এখানে আরো একটা অন্য গল্প প্রসঙ্গ আসে, এক সময়ে ভীষ্ম তার বৈমাত্রেয়

ভাই বিচিত্রবীর্যের বিবাহের জন্য কাশীরাজের তিন কন্যাকে (অম্বা, অম্বিকা ও অম্বালিকা) হরণ করে নিয়ে আসেন। অম্বা প্রথমেই জানান যে তিনি শাল্বরাজের প্রতি অনুরক্ত। ভীষ্ম তাঁকে মুক্তি দেন, কিন্তু শাল্বরাজ তাঁকে ফিরিয়ে দেন। ভীষ্মও তাঁকে স্ত্রী হিসেবে গ্রহণ করতে রাজি না হওয়ায়, অত্যন্ত ক্ষুব্ধ হয়ে অম্বা তপস্যা করেন ও মহাদেবের বরলাভ করেন পরজন্মে তিনি পুরুষ হয়ে জন্মাবেন এবং তিনি ভীষ্মের মৃত্যুর কারণ হবেন। অম্বা পরজন্মে দ্রুপদের ঘরে শিখন্ডী নামে জন্মান। কিন্তু সেখানেও তিনি পুরুষ হয়ে জন্মাননি, নারী হয়ে জন্মেছিলেন। তারপর নানা ঘটনার মধ্য দিয়ে সেই নারী, পুরুষ হয়ে ওঠেন। কিন্তু কথাটা হচ্ছে মহাভারতে যে প্রতিশোধ নিচ্ছেন শিখন্ডী, সেটা কিন্তু শিখন্ডীর প্রতিশোধ নয়, অম্বার প্রতিশোধ। অর্থাৎ শিখন্ডী, অম্বা একইসঙ্গে একটি পুরুষ এবং নারী উভয়ের মন এবং সত্তা নিয়ে বেঁচে আছে। সেই বেঁচে থাকাটা কেমন সেটারও একটা সম্ভাবনা এই মহাভারতে পাচ্ছি। ভীষ্মের সঙ্গে কিন্তু শিখন্ডীর কোনো দ্বন্দ্ব নেই। শিখন্ডী যে ভীষ্মের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিশোধ নিচ্ছেন সেটা অম্বার প্রতিশোধ। এখানে একটি সত্তার মধ্যে উভয়সত্তার বাস। বাহ্যিকভাবে একটি পুরুষের মধ্যে নারীরসত্তা বাস করছে, তার দৃষ্টান্ত শিখন্ডী চরিত্রের মধ্যে পাচ্ছি।

এই সম্ভাবনাগুলি মহাভারতকারই নানা জায়গায় ছেড়ে ছেড়ে গেছেন। যেগুলি আধুনিক ঐশ্বর্য তাঁর নিজের মতো করে নিজের সৃষ্টি দিয়ে নতুন রূপ দিলেন। এখানে একটা বিষয় বলার রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাব্যনাট্য ও পরে নৃত্যনাট্য লিখেছেন, সেখানে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে তাঁর পিতৃ বংশের দাবি মেটাতে পুরুষের মতো করে গড়ে তোলা হয়েছে, এটাই তিনি বলছেন এবং তিনি কতগুলো অস্পষ্টতা রেখে যান, যে চিত্রাঙ্গদা কি আসলেই মেয়ে হয়ে জন্মেছিলেন? তারপরে তাঁকে পুরুষ হিসেবে বড় করে তোলা হয়? একটা সময় পর্যন্ত কি আত্মপরিচয় বিস্মৃত হয়েছিলেন? পরে যখন অর্জুনকে দেখে তখন তাঁর মধ্যে নারীত্ব জেগে ওঠে? এইগুলিই সাধারণভাবে আমরা পাই। কিন্তু তাঁর মধ্যে কিছু কিছু সূত্র ছেড়ে গেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, কিছু সম্ভাবনা সূত্র। দু'রকম সম্ভাবনার অভিমুখ যেখানে খোলা থাকে। যেগুলো থেকে আমাদের মনে হয় চিত্রাঙ্গদা কি আসলেই নারী? নাকি শরীরে পুরুষ ও অন্তরে নারী? যে সম্ভাবনাটাকে নতুনভাবে উদ্ভাবন করলেন ঋতুপর্ণ ঘোষ তাঁর সিনেমাতে। কেমনভাবে সেই চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে নির্মাণ করেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ? চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাব্যনাট্যের মধ্যে তিনি পুরো নির্মিতির নিয়ন্ত্রণ যার হাতে তুলে দিলেন, তিনি হলেন মদন।

এখন এই মদন চরিত্রটিকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কোথায় পেলেন? মহাভারতের কোথাও মদন নেই। মদনভণ্ডের কাহিনি খুব ছোট করে রামায়ণে রয়েছে। আর

মদনভঙ্গ নিয়ে তাঁর ঐশ্বর্যময়রূপ এঁকেছেন কালিদাস তাঁর কুমারসম্ভব-এ। যে মদনভঙ্গ থিমটা রবীন্দ্রনাথ নানা জায়গায় নানাভাবে ব্যবহার করেছেন, “পঞ্চশরে দক্ষ করে, করেছ একি সন্ধ্যাসী।/ বিশ্বময় দিয়েছে তারে ছড়িয়ে”। দক্ষ করলেও তো বিশ্বময় ছড়িয়ে যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের এরকম অজস্র কবিতা রয়েছে যেমন, ‘মদনভঙ্গের আগে’, ‘মদনভঙ্গের পরে’। অর্থাৎ মদন রবীন্দ্রনাথের একটা প্রিয় বিষয়। এইখানে মদনকে তিনি কেন্দ্রীয় চরিত্র হিসেবে ব্যবহার করেছেন। ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ পুরো কাব্যনাটক যদি আপনারা পড়েন, তা প্রথমে শুরুই হচ্ছে ‘অনঙ্গআশ্রম’ নামে একটি অংশ দিয়ে। যেখানে চিত্রাঙ্গদা মদনের আশ্রমে আসছেন এবং তিনি পুরোটা ব্যক্ত করেছেন যে তাঁর পিতা শিবের আশীর্বাদ লাভ করেছিলেন, যে পুত্র হবে। কিন্তু তিনি কন্যা হিসেবে জন্মেছিলেন। সেজন্য তাঁকে তাঁর পিতা পুত্রের মত করে পালন করেছেন। তিনি পুরুষের সঙ্গেই বড় হয়েছেন, পুরুষের মধ্যে, পুরুষের বিদ্যা শিখে পুরুষের সাহচর্য্যে বড় হয়েছেন। কিন্তু হঠাৎই মৃগয়ায় গিয়ে সন্ধ্যাসীবেশে অর্জুনকে দেখে তিনি হতচকিত, আবিষ্কার করলেন যে তাঁর মধ্যে এক নারীর আকাঙ্ক্ষা রয়েছে। তারপরে কি হচ্ছে, অর্জুন প্রথমে খুব ভ্রূদ্ধ হচ্ছেন, তাঁর বিশ্রামভঙ্গ করার জন্য। কিন্তু চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে দেখে তাঁর বালক বলে মনে হয় এবং তিনি তাঁকে ক্ষমাও করে দেন। চিত্রাঙ্গদার কাছে এটাও যেন অপমান। এবারে চিত্রাঙ্গদা অপটু হাতে নারী বেশ ধারণ করে, সাজসজ্জা করে অর্জুনের কাছে এলেন। অর্জুন তাঁকে ভদ্রভাবে বললেন, তিনি তাঁকে গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন না। কারণ তিনি ব্রহ্মচর্যব্রতধারী। চিত্রাঙ্গদা বুঝলেন ব্রহ্মচর্যব্রত পুরোটাই আসলে ছিল, আসলে চিত্রাঙ্গদার এই চেহারা দেখে, অর্জুনের পছন্দ হয়নি। তাই তিনি প্রত্যাখ্যানটা ভদ্র ভাষায় করেছিলেন। সেই কারণে চিত্রাঙ্গদা এসেছেন মদনের কাছে,—যে আমাকে সেই রূপ দাও যাতে আমি আমার কাঙ্ক্ষিত পুরুষের মন জয় করে নিতে পারি। মদন একদিনের বদলে এক বছর দিলেন। এই একবছর তিনি হবেন এক রূপান্তরিত নারী, অপরূপ রূপলাবণ্যবতী এবং তিনি তাঁর কাঙ্ক্ষিত পুরুষকে লাভ করবেন।

সেইমতো চিত্রাঙ্গদা অপরূপ সুন্দরী এক রূপবতী নারীতে বদলে যান। এখানে তরুণ রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর কলমে যতটা সৌন্দর্য সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতা ছিল ততটা দিয়েই বোধহয় রূপান্তরিত চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে নির্মাণ করেছেন। শেষে অপরূপ সুন্দরী চিত্রাঙ্গদায় অর্জুন আকৃষ্ট হলেন। কিন্তু বেশ কিছুদিন কাটার পর দু’জনের মনেই একটা পরিবর্তন আসছে। চিত্রাঙ্গদা বারবার মদনের কাছে ছুটে যাচ্ছেন। চিত্রাঙ্গদার মনে হচ্ছে তাঁর রূপ যেন তাঁর সহায় হয়নি, এ যেন তাঁর প্রকৃত ভালবাসাকে অপমান

করছে। অন্যদিকে অর্জুনের মনেও প্রশ্ন জাগছে, এই অপরূপ নারী কে? ইতিমধ্যে মণিপুর রাজকন্যা চিত্রাঙ্গদার বীরত্বের কথা শুনে তাঁর প্রতি অর্জুনের একটা মুগ্ধতা তৈরি হচ্ছে। শেষ পর্যন্ত চিত্রাঙ্গদা মদনের কাছে ফিরে এসে বলছেন, এই রূপ তিনি যেন ফিরিয়ে নেন। কারণ তিনি তাঁর কাঙ্ক্ষিত পুরুষের কাছে প্রকৃত পরিচয়ে যেতে চান। এই মিথ্যে পরিচয়ের বোঝা তিনি আর বহন করে চলতে পারছেন না এবং শেষপর্যন্ত চিত্রাঙ্গদা প্রকৃতরূপে অর্জুনের সামনে দেখা দিলেন। চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাব্যনাট্য একেবারে শেষে তিনি বলছেন ‘আমি চিত্রাঙ্গদা, দেবী নহি, নহি আমি সামান্য রমণী’। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে তাঁর কাব্যনাট্য শেষ করে দিচ্ছেন। কিন্তু অর্জুনতো চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে সুখে-দুঃখে তার সঙ্গী করেননি। চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে পিছনে ফেলে অর্জুন তাঁর নিজের জীবনে ফিরে গিয়েছিলেন। তাহলে চিত্রাঙ্গদা কীভাবে অর্জুনকে তাঁর প্রকৃত পরিচয় জানাবেন, নাকি তিনি নিজের মধ্যেই তাঁর প্রকৃত পরিচয়ের চরিতার্থতা খুঁজে নেবে। যেমনভাবে উত্তর প্রজন্মের আর এক শিল্পী রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৃষ্টির মধ্যে খুঁজে নিলেন। তিনি হচ্ছেন, ঋতুপর্ণ ঘোষ।

ঋতুপর্ণ বলেছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখার মধ্যে নানাভাবে তিনি আশ্রয় খুঁজে পান। বলছেন, একদিক দিয়ে তিনি পরম ভাগ্যবান, তাঁর একজন চিরপ্রণয়ী তাঁকে কখনো ত্যাগ করে যাননি, তিনি রবীন্দ্রনাথ। নিগূঢ়তম অঙ্ককারে ডুবে যেতে যেতেও বইয়ের কাছে হাত বাড়ালেই বারবার করে পেয়েছেন তাঁর প্রণয়ের উদ্ভাপ। সেই রবীন্দ্রনাথকে তিনি নতুনভাবে আবিষ্কার করলেন তাঁর চিত্রাঙ্গদার মধ্য দিয়ে, চিত্রাঙ্গদা সিনেমায়া। সিনেমার কথায় এবার চলে আসছি। চিত্রাঙ্গদা ছবিটা তিনটি স্তরে এগিয়েছে। তিনটি স্তর কি কি? একটি হচ্ছে চিত্রাঙ্গদা নৃত্যনাট্য, যে নৃত্যনাট্য এখানে অভিনীত হয়, যেখানে বিভিন্ন পাত্র-পাত্রীরা অভিনয় করে এবং চিত্রাঙ্গদার সেখানে একটি নতুন ভাবে প্রোডাকশন হচ্ছে। সেখানে মদনকে একজন কসমেটিক সার্জেন হিসেবে দেখানো হচ্ছে। এই রকম কিছু কিছু নতুন নতুন ইম্প্রোভাইজেশন করা হচ্ছে। দ্বিতীয় স্তর হচ্ছে এই প্রোডাকশন যে করে সে একজন কোরিওগ্রাফার, তার নাম রুদ্র। সে তার বাবা-মায়ের সঙ্গেই থাকে এবং একজন ট্রান্সজেন্ডার মানুষ। রুদ্র বাবা-মায়ের ইচ্ছায় ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং পড়েছে, কিন্তু ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং তার পছন্দ নয়। তাই একটা সময়ে নিজের ইচ্ছায় নৃত্যশিল্পী হয়েছে। তার একটি নিজস্ব দল আছে। সে যথেষ্ট খ্যাতিমান, নামী এবং প্রতিষ্ঠিত। কিন্তু তার জীবনে একটি শূন্যতাবোধ আছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদা প্রোডাকশন করছে রুদ্রের দল, সেটা হচ্ছে একটা স্তর। দ্বিতীয় স্তরে দেখতে পাচ্ছি রুদ্রের জীবনের প্রাপ্তি-অপ্রাপ্তির নানা দিক। আর তৃতীয় স্তরে হচ্ছে সেই রুদ্রের অন্য আরেকটি

রিয়ালাইজেশন যেখানে তার চিন্তায়, তার জীবন ও রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদা একটার সাথে আরেকটা মিলে যাচ্ছে। যেটা শুধুই একটা নাচের দলের প্রোডাকশন ছিল, সেইটা হয়ে উঠছে তার জীবনের একটা ভাষা। এই হল তিনটি স্তর।

সিনেমাটি যদি দেখেন তাহলে দেখবেন সিনেমাটি শুরু হচ্ছে হসপিটালে রুদ্র ভর্তি এবং সে ভাবছে তার জীবনের নানা কথা এবং সেইসঙ্গে চিত্রাঙ্গদার কথা। সে এই কথাগুলো বলছে তার এক কাউন্সিলরকে। তার নাম শুভ। কেন সে হসপিটালে ভর্তি, কারণ তার একটি অপারেশন হচ্ছে, জেডার রি-অ্যাসাইনমেন্ট সার্জারি। সেই অপারেশনের মধ্য দিয়ে সে তার পুরুষের শরীরটাকে নারীর শরীরে রূপান্তরিত করতে চলেছে। সেই জায়গায় দাঁড়িয়ে সে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে নিজের জীবনের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে নতুনভাবে দেখে। তাই দেখা যাচ্ছে রুদ্র যথেষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠিত হলেও, তার জীবনে অনেকগুলি যেমন শূন্যতা রয়েছে, সে বাবা-মায়ের সঙ্গে থাকে। মা তাকে আগলে রাখার চেষ্টা করলেও বাবার সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক তেমন মধুর নয়, একটা ঘৃণা মিশ্রিত ভালোবাসা। কারণ তিনি ছেলের ঘুঙুরপরে নাচা দেখতে পারেন না। এদিকে রুদ্রর জীবনে একটা শূন্যতা রয়েছে, তার সঙ্গী নির্বাচন নিয়ে। তার জীবনে একাধিক সম্পর্ক এলেও তা ভেঙে যায়। এবারে তার দলে পার্থ নামের একটি ছেলে আসে, এই চরিত্রটি মহাভারতের অর্জুনের অনুকরণ হিসেবেই হয়ত আসে। যদিও সে একেবারেই অর্জুন সুলভ নয় বরং তার বিপরীত। সে নেশার, বাউন্ডুলে। কিন্তু সে একজন প্রতিভাবান শিল্পী, একজন ভালো ড্রামার। রুদ্র তার দলেরই একটি মেয়ের কথায় সেই ছেলেটিকে দলে নেয়। নেয় তার কারণ তার মনের মধ্যে কোথাও এই প্রান্তিক মানুষদের প্রতি একটা দুর্বলতা ছিল। কারণ সে নিজে তো ছিলেন একজন প্রান্তিক মানুষ। তার ভাবনা ড্রাগের নেশায় বয়ে যাওয়া একটি ছেলেকে যদি ঘরে ফেরানো যায়। কিন্তু তারপরেই রুদ্র এবং পার্থ একটি সম্পর্কে জড়িয়ে পড়ে।

ঋতুপর্ণ রুদ্রর মধ্যে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে কল্পনা করেছেন, চিত্রাঙ্গদার সঙ্গে অর্জুনের যে সম্পর্ক সিনেমাতে কিন্তু তা একেবারেই তার বিপরীত রূপে আসছে। তারপর একটা সময়ে রুদ্রর মনে হয় যদি এই সম্পর্কটাকে একটা স্থায়িত্ব দিতে হয়, তাহলে একটি পরিবার গড়ে তোলা প্রয়োজন। এবং সেখানে যেটা ভীষণ জরুরি, তা হল একটা সন্তান থাকা। সন্তান গর্ভে ধারণ করতে না পারলেও সে যদি শারীরিক ভাবে মেয়ে হয়ে ওঠে, তবে তারা একটি সন্তানকে অ্যাডপ্ট করতে পারবে। তাই সে অনেকগুলি অপারেশনের মধ্য দিয়ে যাবে বলে সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়। কিন্তু যখন সে এই অপারেশনের মধ্য দিয়ে যায়, তখন পার্থ তাকে ফেলে চলে যায়। কারণ

পার্থর মধ্যে সবসময়ই একটা দোলাচলতা ছিল। সে রুদ্রকে রীতিমত অপমান করে বলে যে, সে যদি কোন নারীর প্রতিই আকৃষ্ট হবে তাহলে এই সিঙ্গেটিক শরীর তার কোনো প্রয়োজন নেই। সত্যিকারের মেয়েকেই সে গ্রহণ করবে। এরপর রুদ্রের দলের কস্তুরী নামের একটি মেয়ের সাথে পার্থের একটা সম্পর্ক তৈরি হয়। রুদ্র কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও এই অপারেশনগুলি করাতে স্থির করে। কারণ সে তার নিজের মনের পরিচয়টাকে তার নিজের শরীরে ধারণ করতে চায়। সেভাবেই সে পৃথিবীর কাছে পরিচিত হতে চায়। যখন তার এই অপারেশন চলছে তখন একজন কাউন্সিলর তার সঙ্গে নিয়মিত দেখা করতে আসে। সেই কাউন্সিলরের সঙ্গে কথা বলতে বলতে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে নিয়ে তার নিজের উপলব্ধিগুলো সে ব্যক্ত করে। চিত্রাঙ্গদা আসলেই কি কোনো কুরূপা নারী, নাকি প্রকৃতপক্ষে সে একজন পুরুষ, যার মধ্যে রয়েছে একটি নারীর মন। যে নারীমণি একটি বিশেষ কাজ্জিকত পুরুষের সংস্পর্শে এসে নিজেকে প্রকাশ করতে চায় এবং এটি আশ্চর্যভাবে রুদ্রর সংলাপের মধ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সেই প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ‘বাইজি নাকি’ কথাগুলি, ঋতুপর্ণ ঢুকিয়ে দিচ্ছেন। তিনি বলছেন যে চিত্রাঙ্গদা যখন নবরূপ ধারণ করে রাজসভায় গিয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে ছিল, তখন রাজসভাসদরা কি বলেছিল তার সম্পর্কে, একি বাইজি এসেছে? এই যে একটা লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য, সেই ধারণাকে আঘাত করা হচ্ছে নানাভাবে। এখানে রুদ্র চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে নিজের জীবনের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে নিচ্ছে এবং সিনেমার শেষে গিয়ে দেখা যায় এই শুভ চরিত্রটি যে কিনা রুদ্রর কাউন্সিলর, আসলে তার কোনো অস্তিত্বই নেই। আসলে সে রুদ্রর নিজের মনের মধ্য থেকেই তৈরি হয়েছে। যে শুভ তাকে বলে রুদ্র তুমি কি চাও? পৃথিবী তোমাকে কীভাবে মনে রাখবে? শুধুমাত্র তোমার এই রূপান্তরিত নারী রূপে, যেভাবে তোমার শরীরটাকে বদলাতে চাইছো? তোমার আত্মপরিচয়টাকে বদলাতে চাইছো? তোমার আত্মপরিচয় কি শুধুই একজন নারী হয়ে ওঠা? আবার তার কতকগুলো প্র্যাকটিক্যাল অসুবিধা দেখা যাচ্ছে—তার বাবা বলছেন আমার উইল বদলাতে হবে, কারণ উইল অনুসারে সম্পত্তি তাঁর পুত্রের পাবার কথা, সেই যদি বদলে যায় তাহলে তো উইল বদলানো ছাড়া উপায় নেই। এইভাবে নানা জটিলতা আসছে। শুভ একটা জায়গায় বলছে তুমি আসলে কি চাও? তোমার জীবনের লক্ষ্য কি তোমার এই পুরুষের শরীরের খোলস ছেড়ে নারী হয়ে ওঠা? নাকি তুমি চাও পৃথিবী তোমাকে মনে রাখবে এক প্রতিভাশালী নৃত্যশিল্পী হিসেবে। এই প্রশ্নটাই যখন শুভ তাকে করে এবং যখন তার ফাইনাল অপারেশনের যাওয়ার আগের দিন সে তার সার্জেনকে বলে, তাকে তার পুরনো

শরীরে ফিরিয়ে দেওয়ার জন্য, কারণ তখন তার আর মেয়ে হয়ে ওঠার দরকার নেই।

যেটা বলেছিলাম রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্গদায় অর্জুন যেমন চিত্রাঙ্গদার সহায় হতে আসেন নি। রুদ্রর সহায় হতেও কেউ আসে না, কিন্তু রুদ্র নিজের মধ্য থেকেই সৃষ্টি করে শুভকে। সেই শুভ ও রুদ্র দু'য়ে মিলে আমাদের অর্ধনারীশ্বরের ধারণায় পৌঁছে দেয়। যাকে আমরা বৃহদারণ্যক উপনিষদে পাই, যাকে আমরা লিঙ্গ পুরাণে পাই। যেখানে বলা হয় রুদ্র শিব নিজের মধ্য থেকেই জন্ম দিয়েছিলেন উমা মহেশ্বরীকে। এই শিল্পীর মধ্যেই যে অর্ধনারীশ্বর, যার ভাবনা রবীন্দ্রনাথের মধ্যে ছিল, যা রুদ্রর হয়ে ঋতুপর্ণের মধ্যে ছিল। এবারে শেষ তথা একটি চতুর্থ কথা বলব। সেই চতুর্থ স্তর হচ্ছে যে, এই সিনেমার নির্মিতির মধ্যে কোথাও যেন অর্জুনের উদ্দেশে চিত্রাঙ্গদার একটা যাত্রা পাই।

চিত্র পরিচালক ঋতুপর্ণ ঘোষ তিনি যেন একভাবে এই সিনেমার মধ্য দিয়ে এক আত্মপরিচয়ের সন্ধান করছেন। যেভাবে চিত্রাঙ্গদা অর্জুনের কাছে নিজেকে প্রকাশ করতে চায়, কখনো নারীরূপে আবার কখনো বা তাঁর স্বরূপে। সেই যে অর্জুনের কাছে চিত্রাঙ্গদার আত্মপরিচয় প্রকাশ, ঋতুপর্ণ ঘোষও যেন চিত্র পরিচালক হিসেবে তাঁর দর্শকের কাছে তাঁর নিজের আত্মপরিচয়ের প্রকাশ করেছেন সমস্ত সিনেমা জুড়ে। তিনি একাধিক জায়গায় বলেছে—‘যখন আমি রবীন্দ্রনাথের চোখের বালি পড়লাম তখন বিনোদিনীর সঙ্গে নিজেকে আইডেন্টিফাই করলাম।’ তিনি আরেক জায়গায় বলছেন, ‘আমি যখন যখন ঘরে বাইরে পড়ি তখন আমার মনে হয় নিখিলেশ হচ্ছে সবচেয়ে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ট্রাজিক নায়িকা।’ খেয়াল করবেন তিনি নিখিলেশের মধ্যে আইডেন্টিফাই করছেন নিজেকে। অর্থাৎ নারী এবং পুরুষ উভয় চরিত্রের মধ্যেই খুঁজে পাচ্ছেন নিজেকে। ঋতুপর্ণর সিনেমার আসল জোরের জায়গা হচ্ছে একজন পুরুষ পরিচালক কী অসামান্যভাবে নারীর অন্তর্গত সত্তার যে অভিব্যক্তি, তাঁর যে পরিচয়, তাঁর যে যন্ত্রণা সেটাকে প্রকাশ করেন। এই জায়গাটা আমরা বুঝতে পারি যখন তিনি বলেন, ‘অনেকেই তো প্রশ্ন করেন ঋতুপর্ণর কি হল? হঠাৎ করে কেন সে সিনেমা করতে গেল; সিনেমা পরিচালনা করত বেশ ছিল। হঠাৎ করে অভিনয় করতে গেল কেন?’ আসলে তিনটি অভিনয় যে তিনি করেছেন ‘আরেকটি প্রেমের গল্প’, ‘মেমোরিজ ইন মার্চ’ এবং ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ এই প্রত্যেকটাতেই তিনি একজন ট্রান্সজেন্ডার মানুষ। এই ট্রান্সজেন্ডার মানুষ হিসেবে অভিনয় করাটা আসলে সেই ছদ্মবেশ খুলে চিত্রাঙ্গদার বেরিয়ে আসার মত। যে আমাকে তোমরা চিনে নাও। এতদিন নারী চরিত্রের আড়ালে যে

আমি নিজেকেই প্রকাশ করেছি, আমি যে বিনোদিনী হয়ে মহেন্দ্রের কাছে গেছি সে আমিই। সেই আমিই নিজেকে প্রকাশ করতে চাই আমার প্রকৃত পরিচয়ে। পরপর তিনটি ছবিতে পৃথিবীর মূল ধারার অন্যতম গোপন বিষয়কে ফুটিয়ে তোলেন যার নাম সমকাম। তাঁর দর্শকেরা কিছুটা হতচকিত হলেন, বুঝলেন বিকল্প যৌনতার সামনে এসে, তাঁরা আসলে কি করণভাবে রক্ষণশীল। চিত্রাঙ্গদা মুক্তি পেল এবং এরপর তিনি চিত্রাঙ্গদার মুক্তির প্রসঙ্গে বলেছেন—“সমাজের একটা বিরাট অংশ, এই মূলধারার যৌনতার বাইরে যাঁদের বাস এবং অধিকাংশ সময়ই যাঁরা নিজেদের স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত কামনা-বাসনার কথা মুখ ফুটে জানান দিতে ভয় পান। সাফল্যের একটা বর্ম না থাকলে হতেই পারত আমিও গুঁদেরই মতো সংশয়াকুল নির্বাক হয়েই থাকতাম। চিত্রাঙ্গদা আমাদের এই প্রান্তিক মানুষদের অনেক বলতে না পারা কথার উচ্চারণ।” খুব অল্প বয়সে তিনি চলে গেছেন। তবু তিনি তাঁর বহু না বলা কথা, তাঁর যাত্রাকে সম্পূর্ণ করতে পেরেছেন, এই চিত্রাঙ্গদার মধ্য দিয়ে।

অনুলিখন: সুজিত বাল্লা, বি.এড. প্রশিক্ষার্থী, শিলিগুড়ি শিক্ষক-শিক্ষণ মহাবিদ্যালয়

Crime against Women in India

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When we go for hindu Culture In Indian Society Woman occupies a vital position and venerable place; The Vedas glorified women as the mother, the creator, one who gives life and worshipped her as a Devi or Goddess. But their glorification was rather mythical and fake at the same time in India women found herself totally suppressed and subjugated in a patriarchal society.

Now question arises, what the women are facing? In the society they are being oppressed not all but majority in there, tortured domestically, physically mentally emotionally it is worldwide phenomenon, not only in India, but we can observe this universally: whether the country is developed or under developed or is progressive or progressing and fear of violence in a factor, which has causes women to take less participation in every sphere of life.

Now, lets come to the various forms of crime against women, there are various forms of crime against women, Sometimes it is even before birth. Some times in the adulthood and other phrase of life. In the Indian society, position of women is always perceived in relation to the man. This perception has given birth to various customs and practices.

Crime against women both inside and outside of their home has been a crucial issue in the Contemporary Indian Society. Women in India Constitute near about half of its population and most of them are grinding under the socio-cultural and religious structures. One gender has been controlling the space of the India's social economic, political and religious fabric since time immemorial.

Half of the society in India is constituted by women there are socio-cultural and religious structures. And where one gender feels that another gender is trying to create the barrier the rich aviation has started.

1. **Rape:** Rape is a very serious crime against women and this crime is increasing day by day like anything. Reporting of rape and abduction, cases has become very common in print and electronic media which is indeed a very sad affair for all of us. Increasing rape cases are enough to prove that our moral values are still very low and we are yet to learn how to respect the dignity of women at large.

In simple terms the word 'Rape' means sexual intercourse of sexual penetration, by another person without the consent of the other person or victim provisions related to rape are given in Section 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. Section 375 explains the pre-condition which are necessary to prove the offence of rape whereas section 376 provides to punishment for the offence of rape.

'Consent' has played a very dicey role in our society because this is the place where the advocates argue on behalf of the accused or victim girl (the girl who has been raped) has to prove that there was no 'consent' and we all know that the rape doesn't occur in the public it occurs one to one or there may be two to three accused and it is very difficult to prove on behalf of the victim girl that there was no consent and there was no sensual sexual intercourse because of this many accused get acquitted (free) by the courts and the courts are duty bound to release the accused because there is no evidence. Although, the Supreme Court has sent time and again that the sole testimony of the rape victim is enough to convict the accused but again the problem came up was their have been false cases also not all because Indian Society. The girls are very reluctant to come out after rape has happened and even if they come out and if they are criticized by the society that it's a false case they are falsely alleging something against the accused that we understand what can happen.

After the 2013, Amendments Sections has seen a drastic change.

In Section 375, we can see in the above lines, there is a 'Pre-Condition' and whoever it commits the minimum can start from a 7 years which may extend to 10 years.

The Indian law prior to the Nirbhaya incident took into account only acts of penile-Vaginal intercourse within the definition of rape and forcible acts of penetration of vagina, mouth, Urethra or anus through pen or an inanimate object did not fall within the definition of rape. Many rapists were not prosecuted because there was no law to punish such acts. The definition was expanded in 2013 to consider rape as any act like penetration by penis or any object or any part of body to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, Urethra or anus of a woman or making her to do so with another person a applying of mouth to sexual organs without the consent or will of the woman constitutes the offence of rape.

After the Nirbhaya Case, as we all know that what was inserted into the vagina of the Victim Girl, was beyond the imagination of a human being so this definition of rape has been changed drastically and now any object can be a part which can kill the accused to parts of a body now are vagina, mouth, Urethra, Anus, all the things have then include which was previously only the Vagina, even without the offence of rape this was needed as mentioned before, it was very difficult on the behalf of the victim girl to prove Consent without the Consent but now that has been down away after the Nirbhaya Incident.

It has also clarified that Penetration, means penetration to any extent and lack of physical resistance is immaterial for constituting an offence. So, have seen, after the Nirbhaya Incidents it's a good thing that the Parliament is they have come up and law needs to be change and thanks to the civil society their revolution, their movements have made the parliament sit up the situation. Except in certain aggravated situation the punishment will be imprisonment not less than seven year, but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine. In aggravated situations punishment will be rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 10 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine. So these are the changes.

2. Marital Rape : Our Indian Society specially the male thought wife is their property and whatever they want they can do, it was not a criminal offence, previously but again after the 2013 Amendment, it was made a Criminal offence only what had happened before was below 18

years if anybody had a sexual intercourse that was the wife could go for offence on Marital Rape, but how this has changed.

3. **Child Marriage :** Which is happened on 15 August our honourable Prime Minister make an announcement regarding this, that the age of marriage should be increase to 21 years. Although at Present the law is on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, whereby fixing the minimum age for marriage which as 18 years for girls and 21 Years for boys. Another major step was mandatory primary education provided by the Govt. of India to them.

4. **Female foeticide:** When we talk about Hindu law, we say, 'Peetra', 'Putra' means a person who will liberate you from 'Peet' that is hell, so if a girl is born i.e., curse you went go to heaven, you will go to hell, its only the Son, i.e., the 'Putra', who will liberate you and in keeping this in view thus female foeticide offence has started come.

Although the govt. has frame the Pre-conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 for the offence of Female Foeticides.

We can see notice which is generally given outside the clinic or Ultrasound Centre, that under the Pre- conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994, 'the Sex Determination is illegal offence.

Another recent example, Siliguri witnesses, few months back. One doctor is being involved in illegal abortion, so these are still in there our society inspite of Acts being there.

5. **Trafficking :** Specially during this Pandemic, we can see, the increasing cases of trafficking. Trafficking means import and export of humans for sex business. In this pandemic lockdown many are enters into vocation, principle of Primary School were selling Dosa and a Girl is selling vegetables in order to maintain their family needs. This Pandemic has shown a increasing trafficking. It is indeed very sad to learn that in India where women are recognised as Devi and prayed by all Indians as 'Devishakti, they are also treated as a source of earning by unethical means, Prostitution is one of the biggest problems in this world which is 'damaging the women in many ways. In general the term prostitution means after of sexual' services for earning money.

Prostitution is a problem which exists across the world . There are quite a few laws in India in order to prevent the crime prostitution like Immoral Amendments in 1986. There are a few commissions made by state Govt. to save women and specially girls to protect them from this practice. But inspite of that sorry to say trafficking has not decreased by many NGO's are going for many programmes, govt. In coming up with many programmes, govt. In coming up with many programmers for reabritation but inspite of that sorry to say it is increasing day-by-day.

6. Domestic Violence: Domestic Violence has become a very serious problem for women specially in this Pandemic. In general the term Domestic violence means mental, physical , emotional and economical harassment of a woman by family members for the purpose of domestic violence family includes spouse, his mother, father, brother, sister, his relatives and sometimes even friends . We call ourselves educated and talk too much about morality , ethics and civilization and expect others to be good to create a dream world but forget that without giving due respect to the women, a nation's growth is impossible.

Now in India, domestic Voilence is recognised as a criminal offence Under Section 498A of Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Domestic Violence Act, 2005 Domestic violence can be done physically mentally economically or emotionally. Inspite of all these acts , we can see not declining cases of domestic violence.

Recently the issue of acid throwing on girls has also become a big issue. One example of Laxmi Agarwal, and film also made on her life story called 'Chhappak'. There are few types of acids and all are very dangerous for human flesh and burn. This acid attack sometimes is so dangerous that even bones and eyes also got dasaged due to acid. Few victions also forced to leave their education or occupation due to the results of acid throwing. Now a days this has become very easy for people to get these acids and the cases of acid throwing has become very regular in daily life.

New Section of Indian Penal Code, 326A, 1860 , lays, down the Punishment for acid attacks. The minimum punishment is 10 years imprisonment. It can extend up to life imprisonment with fine.

Another Section 326B of JPC, 1860, lays down the punishment for attempted acid attacks. The minimum punishment is 5 years imprisonment. It can extend upto 7 years, imprisonment with fine.

This has been partly shown in the Hindi film of Chhappak (2020) starring Mrs. Deepika Padukone who plays the life of Mrs. Laxmi Agarwal an acid survivor.

7. Eve Teasing: It is a general perception that eve teasing is not a big crime like rape or murder and may be because of that we don't take it seriously. But from a woman's point of view eve teasing is also a very big crime as this activity does make her feel uncomfortable most of the times. Eve teasing usually involves teasing women, passing comments on women and making vulgar signs.

Although Indian law doesn't use the term Eve teasing victim earlier usually seek recourse through Section 294 of the IPC, which sentences a man found guilty of making a girl or woman the target of obscene gestures, remarks songs or recitation to a maximum jail sentence of three months. Section 292 of the JPC clearly spells out that showing pornographic or obscene pictures books or papers to a woman or girl results in fine of Rs. 2,000 with two year's imprisonment for first offenders. In the case of a repeated offense. The offender may have a fine of Rs. 5,000 with five years imprisonment imposed.

A woman has to face this kind of irritating behavior and with this on daily basis. She can't even fight back due to fear of disrespect by others as everyone will blame her and say that you must have done something to invite them. In case of eve teasing girl should not remain silent and raise her voice. She should inform her family members and simultaneously file a complaint in the nearest police Station.

Although under section 292 and 294 of IPC punished a man found guilty with fines and imprisonment as mentioned above.

In this context Justice of American Supreme Court Justice Honer, he gave a theory of 'Bad man', he says the Bad man is not concerned about the law, if you ask him he is saying forget the law, tell me that he find guilty what is the punishment, so people are more fearing the punishment rather than the law, if that would have happened IPC was enforced from 1860 the Section of rape was there from 1860 in spite of that these offences have not decreased on the other hand it increased.

8. **Dowry:** If we look back to the vedic times, hindus scriptures where there is 'Dakshina' prescribed therefore essential parts of Hindu Marriage Law and act of the 'Sagtapadi', most important Vivahahoma, 'Pani-graha' when a girl is handed over to a boy, according to the hindu law 'Dakshina' is important. And this system of 'Dakshina' is taken as misconceived as a Dowry was a Dakshina, Father of a girl has to give a boy. So, this was in such a way people started asking for Dowry as a Ritual of Birth Right. Because of this Dowry cases started increasing Civil law of India has prohibited the payment of dowry in the year 1961. Further, IPC, 1860 has introduced section 304B and 498A, which allows women to file complaint and seek restriction of her rights from serious harassment by the husband's family.

The advancement of Science, education, arts etc. in our country, made people more and more educated and cultured in society, but it further aggravated the miseries of Indian girls, because dowry rate also proportionately increased with the advancement of the country, according to the states, qualification, employment etc. of the bridegroom.

9. **Fraudulent Marriage:** has increased in the recent past as in India parents of a girl are very fond of NRI (Non Resident Indian) Son-in-law. Parents want to settle their daughter with any rich NRI. Parents of bride don't inquire too much about the NRI groom as they are happy that their daughter is going to marry a man and she will live a luxurious life abroad. Their blind faith on NRI's may invite problems like false commitments, false details, second marriage and infertility.

The offence of deceit in marriage is defined in Section 493 of the IPC. If a man deceits a woman to believe that she is lawfully married to him and believing that she cohabitates and has sexual intercourse with him then the man is said to have committed the offence according to Section 493 of IPC. Such a man is to be punished under this section?

Section 496 of IPC defines the offence of fraud marriage. A person who with fraud or dishonest intention of knowing to the nature of marriage ceremony as invalid goes through such a ceremony is liable to be convicted under Sec 496.

10. **Adultery:** against women in India and affects married women by and large. In simple words, adultery means having voluntary sexual

relationship with a married person other than the spouse. The offence of adultery is dealt with in Section 497 of the IPC 1860, which says adultery means sexual intercourse of a man with a married woman without the consent of her husband when such sexual intercourse does not amount to rape.

Initially only men were punished under the law of adultery in India but now men and women both are equally responsible for committing the crime of adultery. As per Section 497 the offender shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine or with both.

On 27 Sept, 2018 in *Joseph Shine vs. Union of India* (2018); the Supreme Court has held that 'Adultery cannot and should not be a crime. It can be a ground for a civil offence, a ground for divorce.

Laes POCSO (Protection of Children from sexual Abuses) Section 354 (Outraging the Modesty of a Woman), 375 (Raped) and 377 unnatural offence under the IPC, 1860 clause inadequate to protect the children from sexual abuses.

A new law for prevention of Children from sexual abuses namely, protection of children from sexual offences Act was passed in 2012, also called POCSO.

Two major judgments of 2018 on Adultery. Section 377 is removed.

And also, In the case,

Navtej Singh Johar
Vs.

Union of India (AIR 2018)

the Supreme Court has held that Section 377 of IPC is unconstitutional.

11. **Work place:** Though we all accept the truth that in today's world women have come out of her image of house wife and proved herself as a better administrator than a

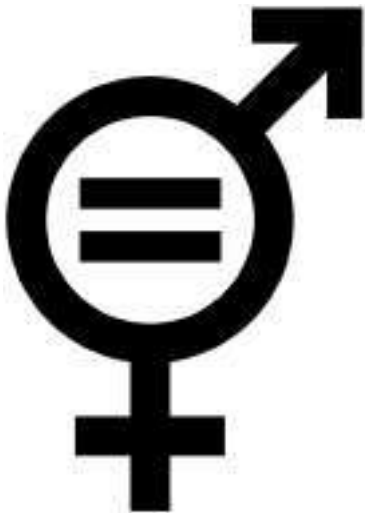
man in all sections women are working hard and getting awards and rewards for that she has crossed all the boundaries and shut the mouth of all those people who have ever questioned her working calibre.

But she has to pay a very heavy price of her success as she has to face exploitation at work place. Do we ever think what boundaries she has

crossed and how? What she had paid to get this position and power? How much pain she has felt to become this persons?

when the woman faces exploitations at work place, their work presentation, performances decreases. Personally, they suffers Depressions, Anxiety, tracemic stress etc.

In the absence of specific legislation and guidelines the judiciary in India specifically depend on two sections of the IPC, namely Section 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and Section 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) in order to protect woman in general from certain categories of sexual misconducts that seen offensive or digestive in nature.



In order ti supplement the absence of specific legislation in this field and to introduce reforms in the society. The Supreme Court laid certain guidelines in vishkd vs State of Rajasthan, (AIR 1997).

Based on the facts of Bhanwari Devi's case a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) was field by Vishakha and other woman groups against the State of Rajasthan and Union of India.

The Supreme Court also made the above guidelines binding and enforceable until suitable

legislation was enacted to occupy the field.

Aftermath 'After 16 years' In pursuance of the judgement of the Supreme Court in 1997, the legislature passed the Sexual Harassment of Women at work place Act on 22nd April 2013.

This Act is effective from December 09, 2013 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development India. The Govt. has also notified rules under the Prevention of Work place Sexual Harassment Act titled, the sexual Harassment of Women at Work place (Prevention Prohibition and Redressal) Rules, 2013.

TIME LINE OF ART

2007 : Drafted

2010 : The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

2012 : The Bill was amended and re-introduced in the Lok Sabha.

3rd Sept 2012: Bill passed by the Lok Sabha.

26th Feb, 2013: Bill passed by the Rajya Sabha.

23 April, 2013 : The prevention of Work place Sexual Harassment Act received the President's assent and was Published in the Gazette of India at Act no. 14 of 2013.

Aggrieved Women gets the benefits of this Act.



Sexual Harassment: Under this Act.

- Making sexually : coloured remarks
- Showing pornography.
- Physical contact and Advances
- A demand for request for
- Unwelcomed and Welcomed remarks made by the Act.

Complaint is received, where,

- Stage One : Receipt of the Complaint
- Stage Two : Planning, Carefully
- Stage Three : Interviews
- Stage four : Reasoning
- Stage Five : Finding & Recommendation
- Stage Six : Report

• Honour killing is not only for female. But males are also facing the problems regarding this. So, we cannot include honour killing in crime against women only.

SAFEGUARDS

There are various legislation which has been incorporated regarding the safeguarding of the women. Various legislation for safeguarding crime against women can be classified under two categories :

i) IPC, 1860;

ii) Crimes under special and local laws

i) IPC 1860 :

- (a) Obscenity (Section 292-294 IPC)
- (b) Eve teasing (Section 294 IPC)
- (c) Homicide for dowry 'Dowry death' or their attempts (Section 302/304B IPC)
- (d) Molestation (Section 354 IPC)
- (e) Sexual Harassment, Assault, Voyeurism and stalking (Section 354A to 354 & IPC)

(ii) Crimes under Special and local laws:

- (a) Immoral traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- (b) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- (c) Incident Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986.
- (d) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987
- (e) The Protection of Women from Domestic violence Act, 2005 etc.

The above list is not conclusive but inclusive . These acts have given ample provisions to ensure the protection of women rights like

minimum wages protection from Domestic violence right of equal remuneration, prevention from immoral trafficking prevention from indecent representation of women etc.

STATISTICS (NCRB-Data)

- ❖ Data more of 2014 and 2017 :
- ▲ How IPC crimes have conducted in 2014.
- ❖ Highest (above 2 lakhs)
- ❖ Lowest (North-East India)

ANOTHER DATA OF 2014 (NCRB Data)

- ▲ Crimes against Women
- ❖ Highest (above 30,000)

In the above Data, every crime is increasing Rape etc with the time.

IPC Crime against Women 2010—9.5%

IPC Crime against Women 2011—9.4%

IPC Crime against Women 2012—10.2%

It's increasing by the time inspite of decreasing.

SUGGESTIONS :

As per Sir Dr. Sujit Kumar Biswas;

1. Establishment of Women Police Stations with Women Desks and Help Desks manned by Women Police Personnel.
2. Special Family counseling Centres.
3. Missing Persons, Websites, providing information on missing persons and recovery there of.

Teach your daughters and sons about fair and respectful treatment of girls and women.

CONCLUSION

Women even in the modern age is tortured in all vistas of society. She is teased and kidnapped as a girl abducted and raped as a young women, beaten and harassed as a house-wife, harassed and humiliated as a working lady, and lastly detested and discarded in her old age as a burden.

Transcribed by : Sudip Chettri, B.Ed. Trainee, Siliguri B.Ed. College

THEME :

SEX VERSUS GENDER

Gender Concerns in Education and Democracy

Dr. Dipty Subba

'Not only must there be no gender discrimination in education but we must pressurise for education systems that foster overall gender equity in broader society.'

—Camilla Croso, GCE President

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender relations vary from society to society. It is a women's and people's issues shaped by power relations in multicultural societies like India. It deals with human concerns encompassing diversities and differences. It has been the most endemic form of discrimination operating across cultures in developed and developing societies. Girls around the world are experiencing gender discrimination from the age of just seven years old, with one in ten primary schoolgirls reported being unhappy being a girl, doubling to one in five by the time they reach secondary school. This contrasts with less than 1% of boys at primary school and less than 3% of boys at secondary school. The figures have been published in an interim report from the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

Sex discrimination occurs when a person is treated unequally due to their sex, the biological factor of being female or male. Gender discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavorably due to social behavior such as the nonconformance of gender roles (which may be related to someone's sexual orientation). The terms are often used interchangeably; and for purposes of anti-discrimination and civil rights law, that use is more likely accurate than not.

Today, girls and women have many more opportunities. Women make up a large percentage (sometimes the majority) of college and university enrollment, and they have access to professions that were traditionally male dominated. Although great strides have been made in the realm of women's equality, there is still a long way to go, hampered by the problem of cultural stereotypes that affect boys and girls from the day they are born. Examples include: pink clothes for girls and blue for boys; dolls for girls and trucks for boys; girls can cry, but boys cannot; and dance class for girls and football for boys. There are so many differences in the way that boys and girls are raised that, by the time they get to school, it can be very difficult for teachers to treat them equally and overcome the gender stereotypes they've already been taught.

Research shows many differences in the way boys and girls are treated in the classroom and shows that differences in treatment by teachers and other school personnel may be both conscious and subconscious. Measures of human development that assess economic and social attainment indicate that women stand well below men. The Gender Development Index (GDI) developed by UNDP shows that in 2005 only 27 countries had a gap of less than 10 percent between men and women. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which assesses the level of political and economic power held by women, indicates that only one country (Norway) had a gap smaller than 10 percent between men and women, and that only 14 countries had a gap of less than 20 percent between them (UNDP, 2005). Furthermore, abundant evidence indicates that class, gender, and ethnicity combine to create substantial conditions of marginality. Women not only face considerable conditions of subordination in society but poor, indigenous, and Afro-descendent women encounter even greater marginalization. Such is indeed the case in Latin America.

Global policies such as EFA and the MDGs promote the equality of women and men in education. Such policies promote access and to some extent permanence and completion—but only in basic education, not at higher levels. Neither of those two policies do not touch issues of content or the socialization experience in schools; in other words, they leave out the explicit and the hidden curriculum and assume schools as neutral institutions. Gender issues do not appear in regional educational

policies in Latin America. Governments endorse EFA objectives and the MDGs in terms of access. But, like most other governments and international development agencies, Latin American governments do not acknowledge the impacts of the content and experience of schooling in shaping notions of femininity and masculinity. Therefore, the current reproductive tendencies of schools as well as the potential of formal education to incorporate changes in the socialization and conception of gender are ignored.

Since governments equate sex (numerical representation of women and men) with gender, most Latin American governments wrongly assume that the region does not face a gender problem. Gender not seen as priority in educational plans other than to improve access in cases where serious disparities exist, as revealed by studies conducted in Costa Rica (Umayá, 2006) and Peru (Muñoz, 2006). Some exceptions exist; a notable example is Brazil's recent efforts to modify the curriculum and improve the design of textbooks, which now contain wording that reflects an accurate and expanded definition of gender in education (Vianna and Unbehaum, 2006). The translation of such principles into daily practices, however, will depend on the training and support that school administrators and teachers receive on gender issues.

2. GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH SCHOOL

Education is a strong mean to bring social change. Educational institutions can play a prominent role in achieving gender equality. Gender can be viewed as a social construct with culturally based expectations of appropriate behavior for girls and boys. Physiological differences in girls and boys also impact their learning and behavior. It's important for teachers to understand both the social construct of gender and the physiological differences, to ensure that the school culture and climate support the development of girls and boys. School culture refers to the values, traditions, and infrastructure in each school. These characteristics govern how the school functions as an entity. School climate is a collective, descriptive label for the social interactions and relationships among students—with each other and with their teachers—and teachers' interactions with their peers and administrators.

Boys and girls must feel welcome in a safe and secure learning environment. Governments, schools, teachers and students all have a part to play in ensuring that schools are free of violence and discrimination and provide a gender-sensitive, good-quality education.

A landmark initiative was undertaken in 1986, with the enactment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) and its revised POA 1992. This philosophy has also been reflected in the National Policy on Empowerment of Women 2001. The policy focuses on promoting gender sensitive curriculum for addressing gender discrimination at all levels of education. The new draft of National Policy lays emphasizes on “Encourage, Educate and Employ”, all irrespective of their socio-economic background

According to official education statistics, female enrollment in Latin America is higher than male enrollment (although typically by a few percentage points) in 11 of 20 countries at the secondary school level, and in 12 of these countries at the tertiary education level (UNESCO, 2004). There continues, however, sizable clustering of men in engineering and technology fields and of women in the social sciences and education (Subirats, 1998), which reflects the different representations of women and men in society and their role in it.

3. MAKING CURRICULA AND TEXTBOOKS GENDER EQUITABLE

Gender equality needs to be a central part of the development of the school curriculum and ways of teaching. Over the years, there has been a great deal of curriculum reform as the country reassesses its national identity or position in the global economy. In Nigeria, the curriculum, a key piece of national legislation, is often amended after changes in government or as a result of the influence of powerful social movements. The National Policy of Education (FGN; 2004) and the national curriculum documents express the commitment in terms of providing education for all children.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a gender-sensitive curriculum promotes equal treatment between men and women and between girls and boys, and it encourages them to achieve their full potential. This includes how they interact with learners in and outside the classroom,

and how boys and girls are depicted in textbooks. Gender-sensitive attitudes and learning materials promote non-stereotyped images of men and women.

Social science forms an integral component of general education up to the secondary stage. It helps adolescent learners to understand contemporary society from the perspective of continuity and change. It enables them to get an in-depth understanding of their immediate environment and the world in which they live. It provides information on diversity, difference, issues that impact the lives of all sections of society that encompass gender, class, caste, religion and location. The subject also includes strategies to address conflicting issues of developing societies of the world including India.

4. EDUCATING THE TEACHER

Despite extensive gender inequalities outside school, teachers can make a difference inside school. If teachers assume that a girl can learn mathematics, it will affect their approach to teaching girls and their expectations of what girls can achieve in their subject. According to Akpakwu (2003), if teachers are seen as facilitators of learning, rather than merely deliverers of knowledge, then they are obliged to ensure that all children learn.

The teaching process is about the relationships between teachers and learners in schools. What is considered to be 'good' teaching and what promotes successful learning will change, according to who is involved and the context in which the learning takes place. as Akpakwu (2005) has observed, men tend to dominate school committees, while women fill the more domestic roles. The school needs to interact with the local community to ensure that significant local issues of gender inequality (for example, abuse of girls by their peers and by teachers) are analyzed and addressed.

Student teachers, and in-service teachers, need opportunities to examine and understand their own gender identities, and to understand how gender discrimination takes place in schools, as well as their role in addressing it.

There is need for teachers, NGOs, and community-based organizations to work alongside parents and communities to think

about the ways in which they can support boys and girls to learn well at school, in order that both can participate in the society. The school, clubs and parents'/students'/teachers' associations can provide venues and forums where strong gender-equality messages can be explored and reinforced. Different types of extra-curricular activities can help children who have been silenced to articulate their needs. Governments have a responsibility to develop gender equality in teaching through the courses and practical materials that they provide. Teacher education needs to equip teachers to promote an understanding of the profound nature of gender inequity and to overcome the resultant bafflers to learning. Ensuring that gender equity is a central theme throughout a programme of teacher education, rather than delivered in one-off sessions, is likely to ingrain understanding more effectively.

5. GENDER AND DEMOCRACY

The quality of democracy influences the quality of gender equality. Gender equality and democracy are linked in an intricate and reinforcing feedback loop. The more democracy, the more chances for gender equality; the more gender equality there is, the more chances for democracy. Because of their interdependence, we need to be as clear and specific as possible about what kind of democratic principles and practices are aimed for and needed to achieve real gender equality. As a set of principles, practices and outcomes guiding, organizing and producing the polity and civil society, deep democracy is utopian but the only hope for achieving real gender equality.

In the field of gender studies, a tension exists between gender as equality and gender as difference, with proponents of the former seeking total equality between women and men, and those of the latter taking into account the special needs of women (Phillips, 1998). Fraser (1998) maintains that the attention to gender requires two aspects: redistribution, or the modification of access to material goods (the economic dimension), and recognition, or the addressing of symbolic and cultural injustices manifested in stereotyped representations of women (the cultural dimension). These dimensions are considered to a minimal degree in public policy in education. Gender appears often cursorily in the context of equality of opportunity, a response

comprised of empty slogans since specific measures do not follow, or responses that seek ways to redefine gender so that it becomes applied only to women in vulnerable groups, such as rural and indigenous girls, rather than seeing gender as a phenomenon of social differentiation and arbitrary hierarchy that permeates society.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Make curricula and teaching more gender equitable The curriculum, and ways of teaching and learning, can reproduce ideas and practices marked by gender inequality. Gender inequalities and wider social, political and economic inequalities, can influence the access that girls and boys have to different parts of the curriculum. Teachers' awareness of, and approaches to gender issues in teaching and learning, are crucial if gender-equitable education is to be achieved. Curriculum content, the relationship between teachers and students, and teacher-education, require special attention and policy development if gender-equitable education is to be achieved.

The success of any educational programme depends to a large extent on its implementation by those concerned especially the head teachers. In order to achieve a gender equitable education in schools, head teachers should therefore inform themselves about existing policy for gender equality. Develop school-level policies for gender-equitable approaches to teaching and learning Move beyond gender stereotypes and investigate the schools and teacher's own values and culture, and aspirations for gender equality, Be trained and empowered to analyze and challenge gender stereotyping and gender bias in curriculum materials, in language use and relations in the school and with the community. Recognize the many pressure on women teachers, and encourage supportive networks and practices.

Parents and Community Members play vey-vital roles towards the achievement of a gender- equitable education in schools. They should therefore: Take an active interest in their children's learning and ensure that the school learning environment is healthy and safe.

Play an active part in the management of the education resources to ensure they are used for the benefit of both girls and boys.

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Role of Education in Gender Equality in the Indian Perspective

Santu Biswas & Parimal Sarkar

INTRODUCTION

Equality and Equity are the strongest framing principles of a post-2015 rights-based agenda, and underlines the need to redress historical and structural inequalities in order to provide access to equal quality education at all levels. This heralds what was effectively one of the strongest themes that emerged in the post-2015 education consultations, i.e., a rights-based approach in which rights are indivisible. This implies that all aspects of education should be considered from a rights perspective, including structural features of education systems, methods of education, as well as the contents of the education curricula. Indeed, overcoming structural barriers to accessing good quality education is vital for realizing education rights for all. Gender inequality in India refers to all kinds of inequalities like health, education, economic, social and political between man and women. There is an unending continuous controversy for measuring the highest position of man and women in every sphere of society. Though in the present era the concept of gender is not confined within the man and women only but extended as different gender identities, including male, female, transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, agender, pangender, genderqueer, two-spirit, third gender etc.

Gender equality is a rights based approach in India. But in reality, scenario is different because there is no single day without gender discrimination in India. Now the question is where the problem is actually lies? Answer may be multiple but attitude is pertinent

one of them. Still we have a negative attitude towards opposite and others gender. Not only is it impossible to achieve gender equality without education, but expanding education opportunities for all can help stimulate productivity and thereby also reduce the economic vulnerability of poor households. In the light of this, Gender inequality, analyses the international conventions and constitutional mandate along with statutory mechanism to tackle the discrimination based on sex in the most significant matter that is education. The education system must play a positive role in the empowerment of people and removal of all kinds of biases which are basically man made.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Gender equality means that males and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development. This equality has been ensured by the Indian Constitution under the Article 15. This article prevents the state from discriminating against any citizen of India or violating their equal rights on the basis of race, caste, religion, class, or sex etc. There should be certain provisions that need to be made by the state authority for the benefit of the women in every field. But in reality gender disparity is seen in everywhere. In most of the cases female is victimized by their male counterparts. Sometimes opposite scenario is also noticed. To be practical, this framework must draw clear distinctions and demonstrate interrelationships among the concepts of gender parity, gender equity, and gender equality.

In addition to drawing out the nuances between equity and equality, the framework also reinforces other key issues in education such as access, quality, continuity, and relevance. Educators should foster in student equality, promote and strengthen the constitutional culture and stability. To promote equality, it will be necessary to provide for equal opportunity to all not only in access to education, but also in the conditions for success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Present Study was undertaken to achieve the following objectives :

- To highlight the vulnerability of gender inequality in India.
- To analyze the role of education for combating the gender disparity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study attempts to describe the function of education in gender equality. Therefore, the researcher considered the title of the problem as : 'role of education in gender equality in the indian perspective'.

METHODOLOGY

It is a Qualitative study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on Secondary sources. The Secondary sources data relating to the journal, article, newspaper etc. Some related information's were extracted from various websites.

DISCUSSION

Objectives 1: to highlight the vulnerability of gender inequality in India.

Gender inequality in India refers to health, education, economic and political inequalities between men and women. Various international gender inequality indices rank India differently on each of these factors, as well as on a composite basis, and these indices are controversial. Gender inequalities, and their social causes, impact India's sex ratio, women's health over their lifetimes, their educational attainment, and economic conditions. Gender inequality in India is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women.

Child marriage

Child marriage is a form of gender-based violence and a result and driver of gender inequality and gender discrimination. Experts predict that the COVID-19 pandemic is set to reverse 25 years of progress, which saw child marriage rates decline. In fact, Save the Children analysis revealed a further 2.5 million girls at risk of marriage by 2025

because of the pandemic—the greatest surge in child marriage rates in nearly three decades.

Poverty

This is the root cause of gender discrimination in the patriarchal Indian society, as the economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity. A total of 30% of people live below the poverty line, and out of this 70% are women.

Illiteracy

Gender discrimination in India had led to educational backwardness for girls. It's a sad reality that despite educational reforms in the country, girls in India are still denied a chance at learning. The mindset needs to be changed, and people need to understand the benefits of educating girls. An educated, well-read woman ensures that other members, especially the children of the house, get a quality education.

Patriarchal setup in our Indian society

Men dominate societal and family life in India. This has been the case in the past ages and continues to be practised in the majority of households. Though this mindset is changing with urbanization and education, there is still a long way to permanently change the scenario.

Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices

To date, a lot of families have a preference for a male child and disfavour towards the daughter. Sons, especially in the business communities, are considered economic, political, and ritual assets where daughters are considered liabilities.

Lack of Awareness Among Women

Most of the women are unaware of their fundamental rights and capabilities. They lack a basic understanding of how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. They accept all discriminatory practices that persist in families from generation in the name of tradition and societal norms primarily due to their ignorance and unawareness.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence occurs everywhere around the world. While

both boys and girls are negatively impacted, girls are particularly at risk. An estimated 1 in 3 women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly at the hands of their partners. There are various types of violence may include: prenatal sex selection, female infanticide, neglect, female genital mutilation, rape, child marriage, forced prostitution, honor killing and dowry killing. Many of these gross violations of human rights have been used as weapons of war around the world. Refugee children are particularly vulnerable.

Child labor

There are currently 152 million children engaged in child labor around the whole world. Child labor makes it difficult for children to attend school or limits their attendance, putting them at risk of falling behind their peers group. Girls are much more likely to shoulder the responsibility for household chores while boys are more likely to engage in harmful work such as construction. Girls are usually pulled out of school earlier than boys and are more likely to face sexual exploitation and slavery.



Source: <https://www.sonata-software.com/sustainability/gender-equality>

OBJECTIVES 2: To analyze the role of education for combating the gender disparity.

Make education gender sensitive

There has been much progress in increasing access to education, but

progress has been slow in improving the gender sensitivity of the education system, including ensuring textbooks promote positive stereotypes. This is critically important for girls to come out of schools as citizens who can shape a more equal society. In some countries, there is a tendency to assume that things are fine as long as there are equal number of girls in schools. Global Partnership for Education, Washington DC, USA

Equal access

In crisis situations, the right to gender-sensitive education is critical and should be fulfilled without discrimination of any kind. National authorities, communities and humanitarian organizations have the responsibility to ensure that all people have access to educational activities. This means assessing and addressing the needs and priorities of excluded groups and those with different learning needs in the specific context. Discriminatory policies and practices that limit access to learning opportunities should be identified and steps taken to address them.

Protection and well-being

Ensuring children and young people have access to supportive educational activities as soon as possible after an emergency provides them with a routine, stable and protective environment. Education can provide physical, cognitive and psychosocial protection for learners. The protection needs of learners are different, and should be carefully analyzed with a view to the different risks faced by women, girls, boys and men.

Gender role stereotyping

Schools should avoid negative gender role stereotyping in any form and should promote both girls and boys for all types of sports, vocational courses and subjects.

Integrating Life Skills and gender equality

Age relevant gender and life skills orientation for both girls and boys, helps in building emotional resilience, emotional intelligence, decision making, mutual respect, assertive skills and leadership skills.

Promoting psychosocial well-being

Education is a key psychosocial intervention providing safe and stable activities for learners, a sense of routine, dignity and hope for the future. For many children, youth and parents, the disruption of education can itself also be a major stressor.

Gender equitable print rich environment in schools

Recognizing, promoting and displaying the contribution of both women and men in nation building, art, culture, science, sports and various fields by means of equal display of pictures and information on both women and men achievers and contributors. This also helps girls in understanding that there are women role models at par in our society and that girls should also dream big and achieve high.

Gender responsive text books and libraries

Parity in the number of books on women and men achievers and on themes around positive gender roles should make up the library. Schools can do a 'Gender Audit' of their libraries to see how they promote gender equality through books. Text books should be reviewed from a gender lens to ensure that they promote positive gender role and messages of equality and mutual respect.

Teachers- the torch bearers of gender equality

Teachers should promote equal participation and motivation of girls and boys in classroom activities, raising personal aspiration for a career among girls and their parents. Developing and nurturing leadership and initiative among children, especially girls so that they can prevent gender based violence and promote gender equity in their own lives.

CONCLUSION

For overall wellbeing and growth of a nation, scoring high on gender equality is the most crucial aspect. Countries with less disparity in gender equality have progressed a lot. The government of India has also started taking steps to ensure gender equality. Several laws and policies are prepared to encourage girls. 'BetiBachao, BetiPadao' (Save girl, and make girls educated) campaign is created to spread awareness of the importance of girl child. Several laws to protect girls are also there.

However, we need more awareness of spreading knowledge of women rights. In addition, the government should take initiatives to check the correct and proper implementation of policies. Education is crucial in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and in promoting women's sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, education is important for women's political and civic participation, and in preventing gender-based violence and insecurity.

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Relation between Vocational Aspiration and Socioeconomic Status of Higher Secondary Students of Darjeeling District— A Gender-wise Analysis

Paramita De Palit & Dr. Pradip Debnath

INTRODUCTION

Appropriate choice of a career is reported to have received greater attention in the world of work (Kulshrestha, 1979). The modern society with its scientific and technological advancement, its division of labour and specialization of functions demand the fullest use of manpower at all levels. Our pressing need today is to harness and broaden the ways and means of proper utilization of manpower resources. Therefore, capacities and strengths require a proper direction. This will culminate into the fresh attempt towards research in career orientation with a view to understand the ways in which our teeming millions may choose their career (Mattoo and Sugra, 2007). This was realised some more than two decades ago when Government of India introduced 10+2+3 pattern of education in 1987. With the implementation of this system the students have to decide the main stream of education which they have to pursue after the completion of secondary education. Even the Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) observed that, “students are admitted to vocational courses unsystematically which results in the wastage of manpower and viz-a-viz. the expenditure earmarked on education. To overcome this malpractice, it is of paramount importance that right type of educational course/s be made available according to their aptitude and interest. It can be made possible if we initiate

vocational guidance at school level which hitherto has been debated much but not implemented in letter and spirit. Considerable amount of research has been carried out in the area of career education in India and abroad. A host of researchers have concentrated on a number of areas falling under cognitive, affective and demographical variables. Attempts have been made to study career choices of students in relation to intelligence, scholastic achievement and creativity (Habibollah, et al., 2010; Heinze, 2009; Ivcevic, 2007; Hamingthanzuala, 2001; Mattoo, 1994; Tulsi, 1985; Randhawa, 1977; Martin, 1975). Age, socio-economic status, type of institution and influence of parental education has also been the focus area (Jansari and Kumar, 1999; Anderson, 1993; Sujata, 1988; Yasmeen, 1985; Kumar, 1984; Mohan and Banth, 1975; Martin, 1975; Adams, 1974; Patel, 1967; Mowsesian, Health and Rothney, 1966; Crites, 1962; Abhilashi, 1956; Bell, 1938). Locale, personality factors, gender has been the interest area of researchers (Jansari and Kumar, 1999; Panday, 1975; Pangotra, 1965). The results of these studies reveal that interests are dependent upon these variables. The gender differences have also been reported to exist. It has also been reported that dichotomies like rural and urban play a significant role in shaping the interest patterns of students. Karimi, (2000) observed that changes in interest patterns occur due to environment, social status and specific abilities.. While scanning the existing findings, it is reported that the results are not in uniform direction. Therefore, further exploration is needed to arrive at definite conclusions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Osa-Edoh (2011) studied parental socio-economic status and its effect on student's educational values and vocational choices. The findings showed that there is significant difference in educational values and career aspirations of students from high and middle socio-economic homes in favor of higher socio-economic students. There is also significant difference in educational and career choices of students from middle and low socio-economic homes in favor of the former. Earlier study by Okhawere (1999) also found similar results. Likewise was the study by Udoh, Nsiong and Kudirat (2012). Such findings were also reported by Okunniyi (2004).

Every society emphasizes particular roles that each sex should play, although there is wide latitude in acceptable behaviors for each gender (HesseBiber & Carger, 2010). Gender is the division of people into two categories- men and women based on their biological differences. Through interactions with caretakers, socialization in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, gendered work and family roles, men and women are socially constructed to be different in behaviour, attitude and emotions. The gendered social order is based on and maintains these differences (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2009). A vocation is an individual's occupation; what they do for a living. An aspiration is the desire to do something great, make a mark therefore Janny (2011) asserted that vocational aspiration is the great desire to do something for a living. Role expectations of males and females differ so also their vocational aspirations. Gender inequality has been a long standing issue with which society continues to grapple; as soon as one is born, people start limiting one's possibilities based on that child's gender irrespective of the talents or potentials displayed. Achieving gender equality is an uphill task but a worthwhile one, no one should be underestimated based on their gender or denied opportunities simply because one is not of a particular gender. The challenge is how to identify and change institutional cultures so as to create a level playing ground for equal opportunities for males and females, it is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to investigate gender and socioeconomic status differences in the vocational aspiration of High School students in Darjeeling district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the difference between the male and female students of higher secondary school with respect to their vocational aspiration
2. To study the difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary male students with respect to their vocational aspiration.
3. To study the difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary female students with respect to their vocational aspiration.

4. To study the difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary students with respect to their vocational aspiration

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students of higher secondary school students with respect to their vocational aspiration.
2. There is no significant difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary male students with respect to their vocational aspiration
3. There is no significant difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary female students with respect to their vocational aspiration
4. There is no significant difference between high and low socioeconomic status higher secondary students with respect to their vocational aspiration

DELIMITATION

The study is aimed to relate the vocational aspiration with socioeconomic status of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district in respect to gender. The study is delimited to higher secondary students of Darjeeling district only

METHOD OF STUDY

In the present study the researcher followed the descriptive study method. The present study attempted to compare the relation between vocational aspiration and socioeconomic status in respect to gender of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district.

SAMPLE

The primary data of 100 students of higher secondary students of Darjeeling districts were selected through purposive sampling from St. Alphanso school, Kurseong and G.D Goenka school, Siliguri.

VARIABLE

Variables undertaken in the study were as following

1. Vocational aspiration- independent variable
2. Gender-dependent variable
3. Socioeconomic status-dependent variable

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

In the present study, the researchers used the

1. Occupational aspiration scale by G.S Greweel
2. Socioeconomic status scale (urban & rural) by Dr. Ashok K. Kalia and Dr. Sudhir Sahu

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

To know the vocational aspiration level gender wise and socioeconomic status wise the researcher administered the above-mentioned tool and data were collected from 100 higher secondary students of Darjeeling district. After collection of data the researcher used the statistical techniques, that is mean, standard deviation and t' test to compare the level of vocational aspiration gender wise and socioeconomic status wise.

Fig 1: Gender graph in respect to vocational aspiration.

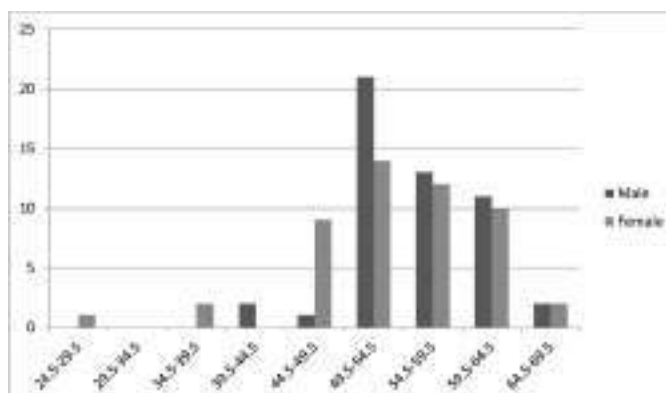


Fig:1 shows the vocational aspiration of male and female higher secondary students of Darjeeling district. It also reveals that male vocational aspiration is higher than the female students.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

In the present study vocational aspiration scores of 100 higher secondary students of Darjeeling districts had been collected.

Table 1: The details of the sample

Darjeeling district			
Siliguri		Kurseong	
Male	Female	Male	Female
25	22	25	28

Table 2: Frequency distribution of total sample and sub sample of gender and socioeconomic status.

Vocational aspiration	Gender		Socioeconomic status			
Class interval	Male	Female	Male		Female	
			High	Low	High	Low
24.5-29.5	00	01				
29.5-34.5	00	00				
34.5-39.5	00	02				
39.5-44.5	02	00				
44.5-49.5	01	09	1	0	1	1
49.5-54.5	21	14	1	1	1	8
54.5-59.5	13	12	6	14	7	6
59.5-64.5	11	10	6	8	4	9
64.5-69.5	02	02	7	6	10	3
Total	50	50	21	29	23	27

Table 3

Mean and S.D. vocational aspiration scores of 7 groups

Sl. no.	Group	Mean	S.D
1	Male vocational aspiration	53.1	5.4
2	Female vocational aspiration	51.3	5.75

3	High socioeconomic status male students V.A	56.05	6
4	Low socioeconomic status male student V.A	54.93	4.2
5	High socioeconomic status female student V.A	56.57	5.5
6	Low socioeconomic status female student V.A	52.93	5.45
7	High socioeconomic student	56.32	5.6
8	Low socioeconomic student	54.14	5

Table 3 shows that the mean score and standard deviation of vocational aspiration of male and female 53.1, 5.4 and 51.3, 5.75 respectively. The difference of mean score of vocational aspiration of male and female shows that their level of vocational aspiration was not same. It reveals that little differences are there which is found in the following figure

Figure 2

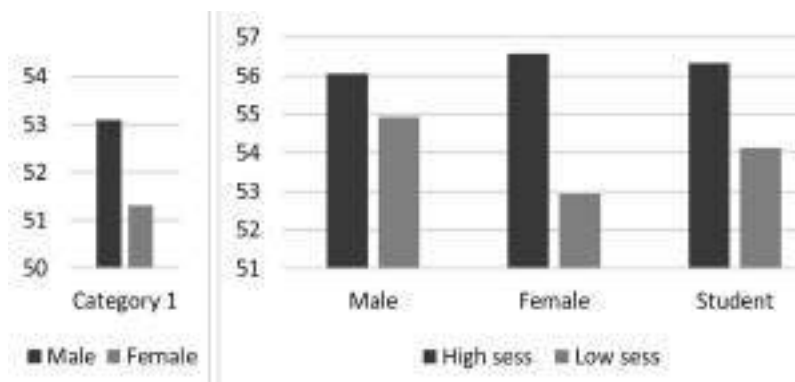


Table 3 also shows that in case of male candidates, under high and low socioeconomic status, mean score of vocational aspiration was 56.05 and 54.93 and S.D 6 and 4.2. the difference is not same which reveals that vocational aspiration level of male with high socioeconomic status is higher than level of vocational aspiration of low socioeconomic status male.

It also reveals that in case of female candidates under high and low socioeconomic status mean score of vocational aspiration was 56.57 and 52.93 and standard deviation 5.5 and 5.45. high socioeconomic status female student's vocational aspiration is higher than the low

socioeconomic status students.

Table 4 also shows that high and low socioeconomic status students vocational aspiration mean score and S.D was 56.32, 54.14 and 5.6, 5 respectively which reveals that vocational aspiration level of high socioeconomic status students is higher than low socioeconomic status students of Darjeeling district.

To know the exact significant effect of gender and socioeconomic status on vocational aspiration researcher had collected the test of significance (t-test)

Gender wise differential analysis on vocational aspiration of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district.

In present study gender was taken as an intra variable and sample was divided into two categories. They were male and female. The test of significance of difference the mean scores of male and female on their vocational aspiration was calculated and presented in table 4

Table 4:

Summary of the test of significance differences between the mean score of male and female on vocational aspiration.

Variation	Sub sample	Number	Mean	S.D	SED	t	Remarks
Gender	Male	50	53.1	5.4	11.15/100	1.65	Significant
	Female	50	51.3	5.75			

From table 4 the calculated 't' value of male vs female vocation aspiration was 1.65

Table 5:

Test of significance (t-test) of male with high and low socioeconomic status.

Groups	t value	significant level
High sess male students		
Vs		significant
Low sess male students	0.86	

The above table clearly indicated that male students of high and low socioeconomic status of Darjeeling districts do not differ significantly

with respect to their vocational aspiration($t=0.86 > 0.05$) at 0.05% level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It can be calculated that higher secondary male students of high and low socioeconomic status have same vocational aspiration

Table 6:

Test of significance(t -test) of female students with high and low socioeconomic status

Group	t-value	significant level
High SESS female students		
Vs	2.52	Not significant
Low SESS female students		

From the table 6 calculated 't' value of female students with high socioeconomic status vs female students with low socioeconomic status was 2.52 which exceeds the critical value of 0.05 levels (2.00). Therefore it can be taken as significant at 0.5% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and we may say that there exists significant difference of female students with high and low socioeconomic status with respect to their vocational aspiration. So it can be easily concluded that socioeconomic status play an important role in case of female students but not in case of male students.

Table 7

Test of significance(t -test) of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district of high and low socioeconomic status.

Group	t-value	Significant level
High SESS students of higher secondary		
Vs	2.39	Not Low
Low SESS students of higher secondary		

From table 7 the calculated 't' value of higher secondary students of high socioeconomic status vs low socioeconomic status was 2.39 which exceeds the critical value of 0.05 level(2.00). Therefore it can be taken

as significant at 0.05% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and we may say that there exists significant difference of the students of high and low socioeconomic status with respect to their vocational aspiration.

So it can be easily concluded that there exists a positive and significant co-relation between vocational aspirations and socioeconomic status of adolescents of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district.

Findings of the study

The following were the findings of the study.

1. In Darjeeling district higher secondary students vocational aspiration is different with respect to gender. Male vocational aspiration is little higher than female.
2. In Darjeeling district higher secondary male students with high and low socioeconomic status was same vocational aspiration .
3. In Darjeeling district higher secondary female students with high and low socioeconomic status differ significantly with respect to their vocational aspiration
4. In Darjeeling district higher secondary students with high and low socioeconomic status differ significantly with respect to their vocational aspiration

Educational Implication

1. In designing and developing students' vocational aspirations, curriculum planners should collaborate with the family to bring out the best in the students.
2. The school should recognize the roles of self-efficacy and learning experience of the students.
3. There should be existence of school wide career programs, which will allow students and those with special needs to interact with professionals in various fields of work.
4. The school should collaborate/ partner with community agencies to identify resources which would help students improve their career self efficacy and vocational related skills.
5. Students in the course of study can be helped, especially those with special needs to know their capabilities and careers they can

fit in to. These implications and subsequent recommendations are in line with the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The Ginzberg theory adopted stated that vocational career choice is a developmental process involving series of decisions that span over many years and occurs in stages. All depend on factors such as parental SES, the school and the community. These are the stages a student must pass through to develop his own career. They must all collaborate with the student's development for him to make a wise choice.

Recommendations

From the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The school curriculum should be shaped in such a way that gender stereotypes in subjects and occupations are discouraged. Career counselling should be an integral part of the school curriculum and students should be taught on gender equality in terms of career prospects. Female students should be encouraged and supported to endeavour into the traditionally male dominated careers.
2. Teachers should be aware of their influential positions in schools and advise students well on career choices. Teachers should explain the global scenario and increasing rate of inflation and encourage the girls to choose the skilled and professional job as their future career choice.
3. There is a need to engage parents and provide them with appropriate advice and information that dispels false myths and assumptions. This could include providing case-study examples of local young people who aspired and achieved their aims, as well as practical information on how to apply for courses or employment, so that parents are well informed and can better support their children. Parents should allow some degree of flexibility in their children's career choices and avoid imposing careers on their children.
4. The school should collaborate with the home to help students develop their vocational aspirations.

5. Literacy and life-long learning campaigns should be intensified by the school to get students enlightened. This will help them in choice of vocations.
6. The government should provide required teaching materials, educational facilities laboratory equipment and books in the library.
7. Students with special needs should be especially guided so as not to make wrong choice of vocations.
8. The curriculum should be student centered.
9. Easy access of news papers and magazines in school. Clearly identify the opportunities, possibilities and salaries available in local and global jobs.
10. The government should also provide awards for students who have qualified for higher learning but lack financial resources in order for the students to pursue their careers of choice.

Suggestion for further research.

The present investigation attempted to compare the relation between vocational aspiration and socioeconomic status in respect to gender of higher secondary students of Darjeeling district. However, in view of inevitable limitations and constraints of this study following directions are suggested for future research.

- Present study had been done on the higher secondary level. The studies can be conducted in college level and university level also.
- It can be conducted on general adult in any sector also.
- The present study has been tried out in limited area and sample . so it is recommended to try out in large sample and in different areas of the state for its validation.

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Sex Versus Gender as a Sociological Study

Adrita Banerjee & Amisha Dey

INTRODUCTION

Sex is defined as the biological differences between men and women whereas gender is the fashion in which society highlights the sexual differences among both species (Siann, 1994). From the moment we are born, our lives are shaped by our biological identity, which in turn, is further influenced by an unlimited number of social, cultural, environmental and psychological forces. Even when we reach adulthood, these social and psychological forces are still prevalent. Determining what it means to be male or female involves more than a strictly biological definition. Often without our awareness; our behavior, attitudes and aspirations have been strongly influenced by the gender role expectations of our particular culture. By the time we reached late childhood and adolescence our concept of gender identity and sexual orientation is firmly entrenched (Wood, 2010). In this article we will clearly show all the readers the relationship between sex and gender

SEX

‘Sex’ refers to physiological differences found among male, female and various intersex bodies. Sex includes both primary sex characteristics (those are directly related to the reproductive system) and secondary sex characteristics (those are not directly related to the reproductive system)

Forms of Sex

Sex Orientation is typically divided into four categories:

- a) Heterosexuality: The attraction to individuals of the opposite sex.

- b) Homosexuality: The attraction to individuals of one's own.
- c) Bisexuality: The attraction to individuals of either sex.
- d) Asexuality: This means no attraction to either sex

Characteristics of sex

- Referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is
- Produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions,
- Generally male or female
- Something that is assigned at birth.

GENDER

'Gender' is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being men, women or transgender.

Types of Gender

Gender is of five types: a) Masculine Gender, b) Feminine Gender, c) Third Gender, d) Gay, e) Lesbian

- a) Masculine Gender: It refers to traits, activities and characteristics, and behaviors of males, boys or men.
- b) Feminine Gender: It refers to traits, characteristics, activities and behaviors of females, girls or women.
- c) Third Gender: It is a category of people who do not identify as male or female, but rather as neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.
- d) Gay: A person, especially a man, who is sexually attracted to the people of same sex are called Gay.
- e) Lesbian: A person, especially a woman, who is sexually attracted to the people of same sex.

Characteristics of gender

- A social construction relating to behaviors and attributes based onto labels of masculinity and femininity
- Gender is also assigned at birth

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

The term “sex” refers to the genetic makeup, internal reproductive organs and the organization of the brain of individuals that distinguish them as male or female. On the contrary, Gender is the social roles and behaviour associated with both males and females are due to their cultural awareness and the way they were brought up (Lippa, 2005). Thus one can claim that the gender of an individual is nurtured by social, environmental and cultural factors whereas sex is a biological trait and, while it can be altered in the course of advanced surgery, it is normally believed to be fixed and determined by natural forces.

Nature has made men and women different from the very outset in their inceptions when they became human beings. Scientists in the medical field have found that the determination of basic sexual behaviours are not conditioned by society and the process of socialisation, but are innate- inherent during the very making of the babies in the mother’s wombs. The way the brain of the girl is wired, and the quantities of male hormones (testosterone) that exist in the babies are responsible for influencing this sexual difference (Williams, 2011). On the other hand gender is an existing sociocultural model that describes social outlooks of masculinity and femininity. The gender theory suggests how society typically expects men or women to do; how they behave and what kinds of personality attributes to associate with each gender (Hutson, Warne & Grover, 2012). Thus one can assert that sex refers to biological variables and that hormones play a chief role in sex differentiation. In contrast gender refers to the cultural, social and psychological orientation of feminine and masculine behaviour.

Playing with what is considered gender appropriate toys is one way children begin to form their gender identities. When a child is between the ages of two and three, they start to acquire gender role stereotypes by the kinds of toys and games they prefer along with similar preferences for clothing, household objects and work (Rathus, 2010). When does the idea of gender begin? There are two major theories: social learning theory and gender schema theory. According to the social learning theory, children learn appropriate behaviours for each gender through concepts such as reinforcement, punishment and modelling to shape their behaviour. The gender schema theory

suggests that from an early age, children develop mental categories for each gender and that underlined awareness influences what they have learned and remembered and how they apply it to themselves and others. Gender identification starts when we are troubled and continues throughout childhood and adulthood (Devor, 1989). Therefore one can claim that the social learning theory lays emphasis on how people learn from behaviours and attitudes of others to model their own. Conversely, gender schema theory explains how an individual regulates his behaviour to society's definition of gender vis-à-vis the internalised beliefs he acquired in childhood.

In order to understand how gender identity and roles develop, cognitive psychologists highlight the significance of critical reflection process. They are keen in how children collect and grasp information about gender and how their perceptive of gender modulates. Cognitive psychologists presume that gender differences in behaviour reveal changes in how children value and reflect about gender. Kohlberg's theory suggests that a child understands gender as he matures with age. The child thinks in distinctive ways about gender at succeeding stages and as he transits from one stage to another; he develops a complex understanding of gender. The first stage is gender identity (at age of two years), where the child is able to properly identify his own sex. The second stage is gender stability (at age of four years) where the child realizes that gender is consistent and stable. However, a boy at this stage might say he would be a girl if he wore a dress. It is only in the third stage (at age of seven years), that the child is aware that gender is independent of external features (Cardwell & Flanagan, 2003).

Men and women are very similar in social, personality and cognitive aspects but still that there are some significant differences between the sexes. In the area of personality, research has proven that women do tend to be more nurtured than men. Nevertheless men tend to be more assertive than women and there are some limited differences in certain cognitive abilities. Men outscore women in some tests involving spatial skills and test slightly better in mathematical ability. In areas of verbal fluency however, women scored much higher than men. These skills include reading comprehension, spelling and basic writing manner. Men are assumed to be more rational and logical and think in a very

linear way. Women are believed to reject logics and rely mostly on their feelings and intuitions. Scientific evidence suggests that there are differences in the way men and women process information but that doesn't automatically mean that a woman is incapable of doing a job that a man might traditionally do or vice versa (Carter & Seifert, 2012). Hence one can affirm that social, personality and cognitive aspects determine the differences between masculine and feminine behavior.

5. CONCLUSION:

To conclude; sex refers to one's physical anatomy and the sexual orientation of a person is determined by a combination of genetic and hormonal influences. In opposition, gender is shaped by culture, social expectations and behaviors assigned to being male or female (Giddens & Griffiths, 2006). Sex is the first organizer of human society. This is filtered culturally through gender. Gender labor and status depends on cultural factors. Explanations for these differences continue to be advanced.

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Sex Versus Gender : A Social Dystopia

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MAIN ARTICLE

Beauvoir 1953 famously declares, “One is not born but becomes a woman”. While this quote implies a break between the biological (“to be born”) and the social (“to become”), Beauvoir 1953 did not yet have the conceptual formulation of sex (the biological) versus gender (the social). Nevertheless, this work deeply influences major feminist thought and gender theory that would follow.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a conceptual distinction between “sex” and “gender” arose in the clinical literature on human psychosexual development. Sex came to signify the biological or bodily component of difference, that is, male and female. Gender, on the other hand, came to signify the social or cultural component of difference, that is masculine and feminine. This sex/gender distinction, as it is often called, was heartily embraced by many feminists of the day who sought to account for differences between the sexes as well as explain and remediate women’s second-class status in society. The establishment of gender as a distinctly “social” concept appealed to feminists because it opened up an intellectual and political space- a space beyond biological determinism- for inquiry into the cases of “male domination” and “female subordination” that were not essential, universal or fixed. In this space, social change was possible; gender relations could be reconfigured. To that end, the sex/gender distinction became, by and large, paradigmatic in feminist thought and social science, and from it grew a burgeoning body of gender theory loosely characterized as the social construction of gender. Intersectional, post-structural,

postmodern, and queer schools of thought produced new insights and advanced theory in ways that posed challenges to the viability and utility of gender as a concept as well as to the sex/gender paradigm. The ensuing debates were highly productive, ushering in a new era of social theory on the body that centered corporeality and embodiment and that sought to deconstruct binary thinking. As thinking on sex/gender evolved, the conceptual split was no longer understood as a simple separation between the biological and the social. Feminist and queer scholars problematized the distinction, reformulating it as an interlocking set of relationships: the sex/gender/sexuality system. Interdisciplinary gender scholars, including prominent feminist scientists, began theorizing the complex interrelationship between sex and gender with gender sophistication in an attempt to more firmly discredit biological determinist approaches to the study of differences based on sex, gender, or sexuality. Advancing theory, research, and praxis has not only deepened understanding about a wider variety of identities, experiences, and practices around sex, gender, and sexuality but has also won greater recognition in the early 21st century for them. This multiplicity of sexes, genders, and sexualities has brought with it unique methodological concerns in the social sciences, which represent a new frontier of research and activism in gender and sexuality studies.

Humans have both a sexual orientation and a gender identity. Sexual orientation refers to a person's "emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender." Heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality are all sexual orientations. The terms lesbian, gay and bisexual also refer to an individual's sexual orientation. Gender identity refers to "each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth." Many individuals identify as male or female. However, some individuals may identify with a non-binary gender or with no gender at all. A person's gender identity may be different than the gender that society might attribute to that person on the basis of external signifiers such as clothing or mannerisms. Transgender individuals identify with a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth. Gender identity isn't black or white, and it isn't just male or female, either. Intersex persons,

like others, have a sexual orientation and gender identity. Collectively, members of sexual minority groups are frequently referred to using the acronym “LGBTI”, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity also affects individuals whom others merely assume or perceive to belong to a sexual minority.

Previously, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code made sexual activities “against the order of nature” illegal but on 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* that Section 377 was unconstitutional “in so far as it criminalises consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex”. Currently, no international human rights treaty specifically protects the rights of LGBTI persons. Nevertheless, the absence of a specialized convention does not mean that sexual minorities’ human rights are not protected under international human rights law. International and regional human rights conventions protect all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays out the key principle of modern human rights, declaring, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Unfortunately, homophobic attitudes, failure to protect or investigate hate crimes and other abuses, and insufficient legal protection at the national level often prevent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons from fully enjoying their human rights. In recent years, international human rights bodies and civil society have taken definitive steps to raise awareness about the problems facing the LGBTI community and advocate for change.

Sociologists and other social scientists generally attribute many of the behavioural differences between genders to socialization. The most intense period of socialization is during childhood, when adults who are members of a particular culture group instruct young children on how to behave in order to comply with social norms. Gender is included in this process; individuals are taught how to socially behave in accordance with their assigned gender, which is assigned at birth based on their biological sex (for instance, male babies are given the gender of “boy”, while female babies are given the gender of “girl”). Preparations for gender socialization begin even before the birth of the

child. One of the first questions people ask of expectant parents is the sex of the child. This is the beginning of a social categorization process that continues throughout life. Today it is largely believed that most gender differences are attributed to differences in socialization, rather than genetic or biological factors. Gender stereotypes can be a result of gender socialization. Girls and boys are expected to act in certain ways, and these ways are socialized from birth by many parents (and society). In other words, individuals are socialized into conceiving of their gender as either masculine (male) or feminine (female). Identities are therefore normatively constructed along this single parameter. Boys and girls who do not conform to gender roles and stereotypes are usually ostracized by same-age peers for being different. This can lead to negative effects, such as lower self-esteem. The LGBTQ community demonstrate the fluidity of gender, which is so frequently thought to be biological and immutable. Gender fluidity also shows how gender norms are learned and either accepted or rejected by the socialized individual.

Regardless of sexual experience, sexual desire and behaviours can change over time, and sexual identities may or may not shift as a result. Gender and sexuality are not just personal identities; they are social identities. They arise from our relationships to other people, and they depend upon social interaction and social recognition. As such, they influence how we understand ourselves in relation to others. Gender, like all social identities, is socially constructed. Social constructionism is a social theory about how meaning is created through social interaction – through the things we do or say with other people. This theory shows that gender it is not a fixed or innate fact, but instead it varies across time and place. When an individual performs their gender to the standards set by societal norms, this bolsters the argument of gender essentialism. Historically, men have assumed a dominant gender role, and women have been prescribed a role submissive to men. In order for subordination to go unquestioned, the structure must not appear as a cultural product – it must seem natural. Social movements can challenge the categories that appear “natural”. Certain legislation can promote equality for men and women, which could call into question whether there needs to be two categories of gender at all (if both are treated

equally). Social change relies on an understanding of how inequality is rooted in gender accomplishment. Most studies that rely on social constructionism explore the ways in which gender is constructed but nevertheless demonstrate how those gender constructions uphold gender as a construct and gender inequality.

However, because gender is “done” or constructed, it can also be “undone” or deconstructed. The study of the interactional level could expand beyond simply documenting the persistence of inequality to examine: (1) when and how social interactions become less gendered, not just differently gendered, (2) the conditions under which gender is irrelevant in social interactions, (3) whether all gendered interactions reinforce inequality, (4) how the structural (institutional) and interactional levels might work together to produce change, and (5) interaction as the site of change.

CONCLUSION

We have to break free from the social construction that is gender. Each and every person on this earth should be able to express themselves without any fear of oppression, violence or gender hegemony. The government should step up and formulate laws that protect the rights of the LGBTQ community specially in a male dominant country like India. Women should receive equal pay and rights which they are deprived of. Gender based violence like sexual violence, physical violence, emotional violence and psychological violence, harmful traditional practices and socio-economic violence which is deeply rooted in discriminatory beliefs is strictly prohibited by the human rights law and violation of this law can result in severe punishments. We all should come together and promote equality so that gender equality and gender or sexual expression can prevail in this society and we can progress towards a brighter future with peace and harmony. As renowned feminist Kamla Bhasin has said, “Men of quality are not afraid of equality”.

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লিঙ্গ : সমাজ-রাজনীতি ও তাত্ত্বিক পরিক্রমা

ড. লিলি সরকার

সামাজিক পরিচয়ে নারী ও পুরুষ লিঙ্গ চিহ্নায়িত হয়। জীববিজ্ঞানগতভাবে এই মেরুকরণ যৌক্তিক হলেও সামাজিক অবস্থানগতভাবে এই মেরুকরণ একান্তই দুর্বল, একপেশে ও অনান্দনিক। এ প্রসঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের একটি মন্তব্য স্মরণযোগ্য... “স্ত্রী পুরুষের পরস্পরের ভেদ সম্বন্ধে বোধটা প্রকৃতি আপন প্রয়োজনের সীমায় পরিমিত করে দিয়েছেন। মানুষ আপন কল্পনা ও সংস্কারের দ্বারা। তাকে অনেক দূর বাড়িয়ে তুলেছে।” নারীর প্রতি সামাজিক বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ সামাজিক মুক্তির পথ অবরুদ্ধ করে রেখেছে। সমাজ নানা দিক থেকে নারীকে শৃঙ্খলিত করে রেখেছে। তথাকথিত অর্থে সভ্যতার সূচনাকাল থেকেই। সমাজের ফলিয়ে তোলা এই নারী পরিচয় প্রকট হয়ে ওঠে কন্যা-বধূ-জায়া-জননী প্রভৃতি সম্বোধনে। এই শব্দ গুলি কঠোরভাবে লিঙ্গ বাচক। নারীর জন্য শৃংখলা বঞ্চনা নিষ্পেষণের প্রতীক স্বরূপ। নরী ও পুরুষ শব্দ দুটিতে নারীকেন্দ্রিকতা ও পুরুষ তাত্ত্বিকতা অস্তিত্ববান। লক্ষণীয় ভূত্ব ও ভার্যা দুটি শব্দেরই ব্যুৎপত্তি এক। ভূ খাতু নিষ্পন্ন। তাই নারীর সঙ্গে ভূত্বের বলা ভালো ভার্যার সঙ্গে ভূত্ব তাই সম মর্যাদা সম্পন্ন। বিবাহ আসলে একটা চুক্তি। যার সুফল ভোগ করে পুরুষ। নারী রূপান্তরিত হয় দাসীতে।

নারীর কর্মজগৎ সীমাবদ্ধ ভাত রাঁধা, কাপড়কাচা, ঘরগোছানো সন্তান পালন প্রভৃতিতে। সমাজ প্রতিনিয়ত প্রান্তিক দৃষ্টি কোণের বেড়াজালে আবদ্ধ করে নারীকে গড়ে তোলে। পুরুষের দৃষ্টিতে নারী অর্ধেক কল্পনা, মানুষ হিসাবে তার পরিচয় আধখানা। সমাজ ও ধর্ম সব ক্ষেত্রেই প্রান্তিক বৈশিষ্ট্য চিহ্নিত হয়ে প্রতীয়মান হয় নারী। পুরুষের বিপরীতে তাদের অবস্থান ফ্যাকাশে, স্তান, নিষ্প্রভ, অর্ধপ্রস্ফুটিত। পুরুষ দায়িত্ব নিয়ে নারীকে করেছে। দ্বিতীয় লিঙ্গ। আসলে নারী নামে কোন জাতি নেই, নারী নামে কোন সত্তা নেই, নারী নামে কোন অবয়ব নেই, নারী নামে

কোন প্রান্তিকতা নেই। সবটাই সমাজ নির্ধারিত, সমাজ চিহ্নিত সামাজিক বিন্যাস প্রতিবিন্যাস মাত্র। ‘পিতৃতান্ত্রিক যুক্তি শৃঙ্খলায় অভ্যস্ত পুরুষ নিজেকে সত্তার অভিধা দিয়েছে আর নারীকে দিয়েছে অপরের পদবী।’ পিতৃতন্ত্রের ক্রমাগত আক্রমণে নবজ হতে হতে মাটির সাথে মিশে যেতে বাধ্য হয় নারী আত্মা। সভ্যতার জন্মের আঁতুর ঘর থেকেই নারীর বন্দি দশার সূচনা। অত্যন্ত দুঃখের হলেও বাস্তব সমাজ নারীকে একটি ভোগ্যপণ্য বলেই মনে করে। হিন্দু শাস্ত্রে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার বিরুদ্ধে কোন বিধান না থাকা সত্ত্বেও অষ্টাদশ শতক ও ঊনবিংশ শতকের প্রথম দিকে স্ত্রী শিক্ষা প্রায় নিষিদ্ধই ছিল। পরবর্তীকালে নারীশিক্ষা কয়েকজন মুষ্টিমেয় প্রগতিশীল মহামানব দ্বারা প্রতিষ্ঠা পেল। তবুও স্ত্রীশিক্ষা তখনও ‘নারীসুলভ’ ছিল। মেয়েদের জ্যামিতি দর্শন প্রভৃতি বিষয় পাঠ করা অনাবশ্যক বলে তারা মনে করতেন। মেয়েদের উচ্চশিক্ষার বিষয় নিয়ে তখনও ভাবনা চিন্তা করা হয় নি। সমাজে প্রচলিত বিশ্বাস ছিল মেয়েরা লেখাপড়া শিখলে বিধবা হয়। মেয়েরা কালির আঁচড় দিলে সংসারে দুর্ভাগ্য নেমে আসে। শিক্ষা পেলে মেয়েরা অসতী হয় ইত্যাদি। নারীর স্বাতন্ত্র্য চেতনা সংবেদনা সব কিছুকে দখল করে আছে পুরুষ তন্ত্র। সর্বত্র পিতৃতন্ত্রের কতৃৎ দৃঢ় প্রতিষ্ঠিত। শিক্ষিত অশিক্ষিত নির্বিশেষে অধিকাংশ মেয়েরা তাই ভাবে তাই চিন্তা করে যা তাদের পুরুষ কেন্দ্রিক সমাজ ভাবতে শেখায়। এমনকি সাম্প্রতিককালে সর্বব্যাপ্ত ভোগবাদ ও পণ্যায়নের যুগেও মেয়েদের সাজসজ্জায় শরীরী আবেদনে মূলত ভোগ সর্বস্ব পিতৃতন্ত্রের মনোন্ধামনা প্রতিফলিত। তাই নারীর নিজস্ব বিশ্ব তৈরী করতে এক দীর্ঘ পরিশ্রম ও প্রতিকূল। পরিবেশ অতিক্রম করতে হয়েছে। নারী সম্পর্কে বহু প্রথিতযশা পুরুষগণও উদারনীতির সমর্থক ছিলেন না। নারীর অভিভাবকের আসনে সবসময়ই পুরুষের অবস্থান। নারীর স্বাধীন সামাজিক অস্তিত্ব, আইনগত স্বীকৃতিও ছিল না।

রাজনৈতিক স্বীকৃতি তো অনেক দূরের কথা। প্লেটো তাঁর রাষ্ট্র সম্পর্কিত চিন্তায় নারীকে দলগত বা গোষ্ঠীগতভাবে স্ত্রী হিসাবে পরিচয় দেওয়ার পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। অ্যারিস্টটল Política গ্রন্থে বললেন—নারীরা স্বাধীন হলেও পুরুষের নীচে, তবে তিনি সং পরামর্শদাত্রী হিসাবে স্ত্রীর অধিকার স্বীকার করে নিলেন। অ্যারিস্টটল পুরুষদের স্বাভাবিক প্রণয় সম্পর্ক থেকে বিরত থেকে সম লিঙ্গে যৌন সংসর্গে লিপ্ত থাকার পরামর্শ দিয়েছিলেন। সেসময় পুরুষ বেশ্যালয়ের সংখ্যা নারী বেশ্যালয়ের সমান ছিল। ফ্যাসিস্ট হিটলার বলেছিলেন নরীদের জন্য তিনটি কাজ আছে সন্তান পালন, রান্না ঘরের কাজ ও চার্চে প্রার্থনা করা। তাই যুদ্ধের

মুখে হিটলার নারীদের জন্য শ্লোগান দিয়েছিলেন—‘রান্না ঘরে ফিরে যাও’ go back to kitchen! আর ঠিক তখনই সারা বিশ্বের কোটি কোটি নারী হিটলারের মুখের উপর জবাব দিয়েছিলেন। প্রবল ফ্যাসি বিরোধী সংগ্রাম আন্দোলনের মধ্য দিয়ে ফ্যাসিস্ট হিটলারের পতন সুনিশ্চিত করেছিল।

এই সময় থেকে প্রগতিশীল আন্তর্জাতিক নারী আন্দোলনেরও নতুন পর্যায় শুরু হয়। নারী তার আত্মপ্রকাশের দুর্জয় বাসনা চরিতার্থ করার জন্য নানা উপায় ও পদ্ধতি বেছে নেয়। শিল্প বিপ্লবের ফলে মেয়েরা রুজিরোজগারের জন্য ঘরের বাইরে বেরিয়ে আসে। শুরু হয় বৈষম্যের আর এক ভিন্ন অভিমুখে যাত্রা। কাজের সময় বেশি পারিশ্রমিক কম। প্রথমে ব্রিটেন ও পরে আমেরিকায় মহিলারা সংগঠিত হতে শুরু করেন। ১৯৬০ এর বছরগুলি থেকে মার্কিন দেশে একধরনের জঙ্গি নারীবাদী আন্দোলনের জন্ম হয়। এইসময় বেশ কয়েকটি গ্রন্থ প্রকাশিত হয়। লেসলি বেনেটস রচিত দ্য ফেমিনিন মিস্টেক (Leslie Bennetts—The Feminine Mistake), বেটি ফ্রিডান রচিত দ্য ফেমিনিন মিস্টিক (Betty Friedan—The Feminine Mystique) মার্গারেট মিড রচিত য়েল এন্ড ফিমেল (Margaret mead—Male and Female) এই গ্রন্থ গুলি প্রকাশিত হতে থাকে। ১৯৭৫ সালকে রাষ্ট্র সংঘ আন্তর্জাতিক নারী বর্ষ হিসাবে ঘোষণা করে পরবর্তীকালে ১৯৭৫ থেকে ৮৫ এই সময়কালকে নারী দশক হিসাবে চিহ্নিত করা হয়। নাইরোবি সম্মেলনের মধ্য দিয়ে নারী দশকের পূর্তি হয়। সরকারিভাবে রাষ্ট্রসংঘ সম্মেলন ও বেসরকারি মহিলা স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংগঠনগুলির উদ্যোগে এই সম্মেলন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। দুটি সম্মেলন থেকেই দাবি সনদ গৃহীত হয়। এই দাবী সনদে রাজনীতি ও প্রশাসনে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ সুনিশ্চিত করার কথা বলা হয়। ঐ দাবী সনদে সমস্ত সদস্য রাষ্ট্র স্বাক্ষর করে। আমাদের দেশ ভারতবর্ষও ঐ সনদে স্বাক্ষরকারী একটি দেশ। আন্তর্জাতিক নারী বর্ষের প্রাক্কালে জাতীয় স্তরে শিক্ষা স্বাস্থ্য আর্থসামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে মেয়েদের অবস্থান নির্ণয় করার জন্য একটি status committee গঠিত হয়। এই স্টেটাস কমিটির রিপোর্টে আমাদের দেশের সংসদ বিধানসভা ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত সংস্থাগুলিতে মেয়েদের অংশগ্রহণ খুবই নগন্য বলে উল্লেখ করা হয়। মেয়েদের জন্য আসন সংরক্ষণের প্রশ্নে স্টেটাস কমিটির সদস্যরা দ্বিধাবিভক্ত ছিলেন। সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ সদস্যরা নির্বাচন ক্ষেত্রে আসন সংরক্ষণের বিরোধীতা করেছিলেন। ৭৩তম সংবিধান সংশোধনের মাধ্যমে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার ১৯৯৩ সালে পঞ্চায়েত ও পৌরসভায় মেয়েদের জন্য এক তৃতীয়াংশ আসন সংরক্ষণ আইন পাশ করে। দেশের বিভিন্ন নারী সংগঠনগুলি দাবী জানায় একই সাথে সংবিধান সংশোধন করে বিধানসভা ও

লোকসভায় মেয়েদের জন্য এক তৃতীয়াংশ আসন সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। বামপন্থীরা ও জাতীয় সংগ্রেস সংরক্ষণের প্রশ্নে সহমত পোষণ করে। কিন্তু অকংগ্রেসী ও অবামপন্থী বিভিন্ন দল সংরক্ষণের প্রশ্নে বিরোধীতা শুরু করে। রাজনীতির আঙ্গিনায় নারীরা নিজেদের সংখ্যালঘু মনে করে। রাজনীতি নারীর সক্ষেত্র নয় সাধারণভাবে একথা মনে করা হয়। ভারতের ইতিহাসে রাজ সিংহাসনে নারীর অধিকার স্বীকৃত হয় নি। ইলতুৎমিসের কন্যা সুলতানা রিজিয়াকে রাজধানীর অমাত্যগণ সেসময় মেনে নেয় নি। স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে মেয়েদের অংশগ্রহণের বৃত্তান্ত ভারতবাসীর অজানা থেকে গিয়েছে। যে সমস্ত নারীগণ দেশের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে সশস্ত্র আন্দোলনে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন তারা হলেন শ্রীমতি। পারুল মুখার্জী প্রীতিলতা ওয়াদেদার, কল্পনা দত্ত, উজ্জ্বলা মজুমদার, সুনীতি চৌধুরী, শান্তি ঘোষ, প্রফুল্ল নলিনী ব্রহ্ম, বীণা দাস ভৌমিক, রানী গুইদালো, লীলা নাগ, লীলা রায়, প্রমীলা। ড. কাদম্বিনী গাঙ্গুলী, সাবিত্রী বালা দেবী প্রমুখ স্বাধীনতা। আন্দোলনে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ ছিল উল্লেখযোগ্য। গান্ধীজী বলেছিলেন নারী কোন অংশেই পুরুষের চেয়ে হীন নয় মানসিক ক্ষমতা ও যোগ্যতায় সে পুরুষের সমকক্ষ। জাতীয় মুক্তি আন্দোলনের উত্তাল সময়ে বৃহৎ নারীসমাজ অন্দরমহলের সুখে আত্ম মগ্ন থাকতে চান নি। ইংরেজ শাসনের প্রথম শতবর্ষে অস্ত্র হাতে ইংরেজদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই করেছিলেন অধুনা কর্ণাটকের ছোট্ট একটি স্থানের মহারানী। ১৮৫৭ এর সিপাহী মহাবিদ্রোহের অন্যতম ঝাঁসির রানী লক্ষ্মীবাই। ঝাঁসি রাজ্য অপুত্রক এই অজুহাতে ইংরেজরা দখল করতে চেয়েছিল একথা আমরা সবাই জানি। ঝাঁসি বাহিনীর এক মহিলা সৈনিক বলেছিলেন, ‘মরার জন্য আমরা সবাই প্রস্তুত। মৃত্যুকে ভয় পায় এমন একজনও মহিলা এই ফৌজে নেই।’ এক গভীর আত্মপ্রত্যয় ও আত্মত্যাগের মধ্য দিয়ে ভারতবর্ষের নারীসমাজ সেদিন এগিয়ে এসেছিল দেশের জন্য প্রাণ বলিদান করতো। শিক্ষা বিস্তার এবং আত্মনির্ভর হবার পাশাপাশি বিদেশী শাসনের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ প্রতিরোধ আন্দোলন গড়ে তুলেছিল। মাদাম কামার ১৯১০ সালে একটি সভায় বক্তৃতা দিতে গিয়ে বলেছিলেন—‘মনে রাখবেন যে হাত শিশুদের দোলায় দোলায়, সেই হাতই চরিত্র গঠন করে। এই কোমল হাতই জাতীয় জীবন গঠনের প্রধান উপাদান। সুতরাং এই শক্তিশালী হাতকে উপেক্ষা করবেন না।’ ১৯৪৭ সালে ভারতের অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকারের মন্ত্রীত্ব লাভ করেছিলেন রাজকুমারী অমৃত কাউর। আধুনিক ভারত রাষ্ট্রের প্রথম মহিলা মন্ত্রী। স্বাধীন ভারতের লোকসভার নারী নেতৃগণ হলেন—আম্মু স্বামীনাথন, রেণু চক্রবর্তী, বিজয় রাজে সিদ্ধিয়া, তারকেশ্বরী সিনহা, সুচেতা কৃপালনী, গায়ত্রী দেবী,

সুশীলা রোহতগী, মৈত্রেয়ী বসু, সুশীলা গোপালন, গীতা মুখার্জী। ভারতের প্রথম রাজ্যপাল ছিলেন সরোজিনী নাইডু।

১৯৫০ সালে ভারতীয় সংবিধানে কয়েকটি ধারা সংযোজিত হয়। এই সংযোজনের উদ্দেশ্য ছিল নারীর অবস্থান পুরুষের পাশাপাশি নিয়ে আসা। সংবিধানের ১৪ নং অনুচ্ছেদে বলা হল আইনের চোখে নারী পুরুষ সমান। ১৫ নং অনুচ্ছেদ নারী পুরুষ প্রভেদে নিষিদ্ধ ১৫(৩) পেশায় নিযুক্তির ক্ষেত্রে স্ত্রী পুরুষ নির্বিশেষে সমান অধিকার পাবে ৩৯(১) স্বাধীন ভাবে জীবিকা অর্জনের অধিকার সকলের সমান ৩৯ (৪) একই কাজের জন্য নারী পুরুষ সমান বেতন পাবে ৩৯ (৫) সার্মথ্য ও বয়স অনুযায়ী কাজের সমান সুযোগ ৪২ যথোপযুক্ত মানবিক পরিবেশ।

ড. ফুলরেণু গুহর নেতৃত্বে গঠিত কমিটি অন দি স্টেটাস অফ উইমেন ইন ইন্ডিয়া। ১৯৭৪ সালে ঐ কমিটি ভারত সরকারের কাছে যে রিপোর্ট দাখিল করে সেখানে বলা হয়েছে নারীর রাজনৈতিক অধিকার লাভের ক্ষেত্রে দুটি উপাদান। সবচেয়ে বেশি প্রভাব ফেলেছে এক, স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রাম দ্বিতীয়ত, গান্ধীজীর নেতৃত্ব। গান্ধীজী বলেছিলেন—‘Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the point does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to effect the political deliberation of the nation.’ ১৯১৭ সালে সরোজিনী নাইডু ব্রিটিশ পার্লামেন্টে ভোটাধিকারের দাবী পেশ করেন। ১৯২১ সালের রিফর্মস অ্যাক্ট ভারতীয়দের এক ক্ষুদ্র অংশকে ভোটাধিকার প্রদান করে। ১৯৩০ সালে করাচী অধিবেশনে নারী পুরুষের সমান অধিকারের এক প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করা হয়। ১৯৩৫ সালে গভর্নমেন্ট অফ ইন্ডিয়া ভোটাধিকারের ক্ষেত্র প্রসারিত করে। ২১ বছর বয়স হলে শর্তসাপেক্ষে ভোটাধিকার প্রদান করা হয়।

১৯৫২ সালে প্রথম সাধারণ নির্বাচন হয়। ৪৯৯টি লোকসভা আসনের মধ্যে মাত্র ২২টিতে নারী প্রতিনিধি ছিলেন। এ পর্যন্ত কোন লোকসভা আসনেই নারী সদস্য সংখ্যা ১০ শতাংশের বেশি বৃদ্ধি পাই নি। রাজীব গান্ধীর আমলে ন্যাশনাল পারস্পেকটিভ প্লানে মেয়েদের জন্য চাকুরী ও রাজনীতিতে ৩৩ শতাংশ আসন সংরক্ষণের কথা বলা হয়। রাষ্ট্রসংঘ আয়োজিত চতুর্থ বিশ্ব নারী সম্মেলন আয়োজিত হয় চীনের বেজিং এ ১৯৯৫ সালের সেপ্টেম্বরে। এই সম্মেলনের প্ল্যান অফ অ্যাকশন অনুযায়ী মূল বিষয় ছিল তিনটি—সমতা, উন্নয়ন ও শান্তি। বেজিং সম্মেলনের প্রস্তাব অনুযায়ী ভারত সরকার লোকসভায় নারীদের জন্য

এক তৃতীয়াংশ আসন সংরক্ষণের প্রস্তাব আনার উদ্যোগ নিলেন। পঞ্চায়েত ও পুরসভাগুলিতে এক-তৃতীয়াংশ আসনে মহিলাদের জন্য সংরক্ষণ চালু হয়েছে। লোকসভা ও বিধানসভায় নানা ভাবে এই বিল পাশ হয়নি। লোকসভায় যদি এক তৃতীয়াংশ আসন মেয়েদের দখলে যায় তাহলে অবস্থাটা দাঁড়াবে প্রায় ১৮১ জন মহিলা সদস্য লোকসভায় উপস্থিত হবেন। মেয়েদের যেকোন ইস্যুতে সংসদে বেশ জোর আওয়াজ তোলা সম্ভব হবে। মহিলা বিল পাশে প্রধান বাধা পুরুষ সাংসদগণ। নারীর রাজনৈতিক ক্ষমতায়নের প্রশ্নটি বাস্তব সাফল্য থেকে তাই অনেক দূরে। ভারতের সংসদে নারী প্রতিনিধির সংখ্যা ৮ শতাংশে সীমাবদ্ধ। নারীবাদী শব্দটি সম্ভবত সর্বপ্রথম ১৮৭১ সালে ফরাসী চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানের গ্রন্থে ব্যবহার করা হয়েছিল। মজার ব্যাপার শব্দটি পুরুষ রোগী যাদের পুরুষ প্রজনন অঙ্গটি সঠিকভাবে গড়ে ওঠে নি তাদের ক্ষেত্রেই প্রথম প্রয়োগ করা হয়। বলা হয় যে তাদের ‘শরীর নারীসুলভ’ হয়ে উঠেছে। আর এই নারীবাদী শব্দটি প্রথম ব্যবহার করেন এক নারী বিদ্যেবী লেখক তাঁর প্রবন্ধে। তাই নারীবাদ শব্দটিতে পুরুষ বিরোধিতার আঁচ যে পাওয়া যায় তাও আসলে একজন পুরুষ প্রদত্ত। চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানে পুরুষের নারীসুলভ বিকৃতিকে বোঝানো হলেও সমাজ বিজ্ঞানের আলোচনায় মহিলাদের পুরুষালি প্রকৃতিকে বোঝানোর জন্য নারীবাদী শব্দটি সর্বপ্রথম ব্যবহৃত হয়। ইউরোপে সপ্তদশ শতকের মধ্যভাগ থেকেই নারীদের সম্পর্কে প্রচলিত ধ্যান ধারণাকে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে আসছিলেন বেশ কিছু মহিলা। নাট্যকার আক্কাবেন (১৬৪০-৮৯) এবং চিন্তাবিদ যেরি। আস্টেল (১৬৬৬-১৭৩১) কে অনেকে আধুনিক নারীবাদের প্রবক্তা তথা পশ্চিমের প্রথম নারীবাদী তাত্ত্বিক হিসাবে দেখেন। প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে মেয়েরা নিজেদের আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য সাধারণ স্বাভাবিক কয়েকটি অধিকার আদায়ের লড়াইয়ের মধ্য দিয়ে স্বতন্ত্র অস্তিত্ব প্রকাশ করতে এগিয়ে আসে। শিক্ষার অধিকার ধর্মীয় কুসংস্কারের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ সামাজিক অবজ্ঞা ও অন্যান্য দমনের বিরুদ্ধে সোচ্চার হয়ে স্বাধিকার রক্ষায় বদ্ধ পরিকর হয়। এই পর্বে বলাবাহুল্য মহাপুরুষগণ তাদের সঙ্গ দিয়েছিলেন। পরবর্তীকালে শিল্প বিপ্লবের সময়ে কর্মের জগতে তাদের অনুপ্রবেশ ঘটে। সেসময় তারা সোচ্চার হন সম মজুরির দাবীতে। এই এক নতুন রূপে দেখা দিল নারীর লড়াই। প্রতিপক্ষে যেমন বুর্জোয়া ব্যবস্থা তেমনই পরোক্ষ রূপে কেবলই পুরুষগণ। লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য আরো প্রকটরূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে শুরু করলো প্রতিষ্ঠিত হল মূল ধারার (mainstream feminism) নারীবাদ। এই সময় রাজনৈতিক ও আইন সংস্কারের দাবী উঠে এলো। তারা পুরুষ তত্ত্বের মধ্যে

থেকেই নিজেদের প্রতিবাদ চালিয়ে যেতে পছন্দ করতেন। মেইনস্ট্রিম ফেমিনিজম আবার হোয়াইট ফেমিনিজম নামে খ্যাত। পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজের মূল ভিত্তি পুরুষ। পুরুষ মানুষেরা অধিক সুযোগ ভোগ করে থাকেন। সমাজের দীর্ঘ পথ পরিক্রমায় পুরুষতন্ত্র কায়েমি স্বার্থান্বেষী গোষ্ঠীর মতোই আচরণ করে এসেছে নারীর প্রতি। তাই পুরুষকে সমাজে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বি বলে মনে করে নারী। এই মতাদর্শের উপর ভিত্তি করে র্যাডিক্যাল ফেমিনিজম নামক নারীবাদী আন্দোলন গড়ে ওঠে। এই শ্রেণীর নারীবাদীগণ সমস্ত সামাজিক ও অর্থনৈতিক দিক থেকে পুরুষ প্রভুত্বকে তারা অস্বীকার করতে চায়।

গড়ে ওঠে Women's Liberation Movement (WLM)। শুরু হয় প্রথম পথ চলা। ১৯৬০ এর দিকে সূচনা হয় দ্বিতীয় ধারার আন্দোলন Civil Rights Movement Struggle against racism. এঁরা বুর্জোয়া ব্যবস্থার বিরোধীতা করে নি। তারা সকলকে সচেতন করার কাজ করতে থাকে 'consciousness raising group' তৈরি করে। এরা র্যাডিক্যাল ফেমিনিস্ট নামে খ্যাত। ব্যক্তিসত্তার স্বাভাবিক স্বীকার করে নিয়ে তারা মনে করে সমানভাবে পুরুষের মতোই তাদের নিজস্ব কাজ ও কর্মের স্বাধীনতা ভোগ করার অধিকারী। ন্যায় নীতির কোন লিঙ্গ পরিচয় হয় না। এরপরের নারীবাদী আন্দোলনের ধারা প্রবাহিত হলো আরও এক নতুন স্রোতে। নারীর শরীর তার নিজের সম্পদ। শরীরের উপর তার নিজস্ব অধিকার আছে। এই ধারনার উপর ভিত্তি করে নারীবাদী আন্দোলন আর এক নতুন অভিমুখে প্রবাহিত হয়। বিভিন্ন ধারার নারী আন্দোলনের মধ্য দিয়ে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যমূলক ব্যবস্থার বিরুদ্ধে মুক্তির লক্ষ্য সমাজে এগিয়ে চলেছে নারীরা। বর্তমানে নারীর যৌন স্বাধীনতা এই ধারার আন্দোলনে গৃহীত। যৌন স্বাধীনতাকে স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছে black feminism ধারার এই নারীবাদ। এই ধারার আন্দোলনের জন্ম হয় ১৯৭৩ সালে। বিভিন্ন জাতি ধর্ম সমাজ রাষ্ট্রব্যবস্থার নিরিখে নরী আন্দোলনের প্রয়োজন ও প্রাসঙ্গিকতা পৃথক। ফলে আন্দোলনের অভিমুখ, দাবী আদায়ের পন্থা পদ্ধতি সবই পৃথক।

তথ্যসূত্র

রবীন্দ্রচন্দ্রাবলী, জন্মশতবার্ষিকী সংস্করণ, প, ব. সরকার, ত্রয়োদশ খন্ড, 'সমাজ, নারীর মনুষ্যত্ব' শিরোনামাঙ্কিত পত্র

তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য, নারীচেতনা : মননে ও সাহিত্যে, পুস্তক বিপণি, কলকাতা, প্রথম প্রকাশ জানুয়ারি ২০০৭

হুমায়ুন আজাদ, নারী, আগামী প্রকাশনী, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ, তৃতীয় সংস্করণ, সপ্তদশ মুদ্রণ
আগস্ট বেবেল, নারী অতীত বর্তমান ভবিষ্যতে, (অনুবাদ) কনক মুখোপাধ্যায়, ন্যাশনাল বুক
এজেন্সি, কলকাতা

সিমোন দ্য বোভোয়ার, ল্য দ্যজিয়েম সেক্স : দি সেকেন্ড সেক্স, দ্বিতীয় লিঙ্গ, বাংলা অনুবাদ হুমায়ুন
আজাদ, আগামী প্রকাশনী, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ

রাজশ্রী বসু বাসবী চক্রবর্তী (সম্পাদনা), প্রসঙ্গ মানবী বিদ্যা, উবী প্রকাশন, কলকাতা।

গোলাম মুরশিদ, নারী প্রগতি, আধুনিকতার অভিঘাতে বঙ্গরমণী, নয়া উদ্যোগ, কলকাতা

তসলিমা নাসরিন, নির্বাচিত কলাম, আনন্দ পাব. কলকাতা

বারিদবরণ ঘোষ (সম্পাদনা) রাসসুন্দরী দাসী, আমার জীবন, ন্যাশনাল বুক ট্রাস্ট, নয়া দিল্লি,

সামাজিক লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক সচেতনতায় বি.এড. পাঠক্রমের ভূমিকা

সদর সেখ

ভূমিকা

শিক্ষা হলো সামাজিক পরিবর্তনের হাতিয়ার। আর শিক্ষার দ্বিতীয় উপাদান হলো শিক্ষক। বর্তমান ভারতবর্ষে শিক্ষকতা পেশায় গ্রহণ করার ক্ষেত্রে প্রশিক্ষণ বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়েছে। যার ফলে হবু শিক্ষকদের প্রধান শর্ত হল প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত। এর মূল উদ্দেশ্য হলো প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে এমন কিছু ক্রিয়া-কলাপ ও কার্যক্রম শেখানো যাতে এই শিক্ষকদের মাধ্যমে ভবিষ্যতে প্রজন্ম তার জীবন গড়ে তুলতে পারে। এর থেকে বোঝা যায় যে শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণের ক্ষেত্রে পাঠক্রমের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা আছে। শিক্ষার তৃতীয় উপাদান অর্থাৎ পাঠক্রম ঠিক করে দেয় শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য। এই গবেষণা প্রবন্ধের উদ্দেশ্য বর্তমান বিএড পাঠক্রমের ছোট্ট একটি জায়গা, যার নাম হল Gender, School and Society। এই বিষয়টি প্রশিক্ষণার্থীদের সামাজিক লিঙ্গ বিষয়ে সচেতন করতে কতটা সক্ষম হয়েছে সে বিষয়ে আলোচনা করা। এখানেই গবেষণা প্রবন্ধটির গুরুত্ব নিহিত আছে।

উদ্দেশ্য

নিচের কয়েকটি উদ্দেশ্য গুলি কে সামনে রেখে গবেষণা প্রবন্ধটি সম্পন্ন করার চেষ্টা করা হবে।

- বর্তমান বি. এড পাঠক্রমের Gender, School and Society কোর্সটির সামাজিক লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক আলোচনা গুরুত্ব গুলি অনুধাবন করা।
- Gender, School and Society পাঠক্রমের বিষয়বস্তু সামাজিক লিঙ্গ সচেতনতায় এর ভূমিকা অনুধাবন করা।
- Gender, School and Society কোর্সটির প্রয়োগের দিক গুলি দেখা।

আলোচনা

Gender, School and Society এই কোর্সটি পাঠক্রমের বিভিন্ন দিকগুলো যদি আমরা আলোচনা করি তাহলে আমরা বুঝতে পারবো যে এর প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য গুলি কি কি। আমাদের সমাজে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক প্রচলিত ধারণা কোন অভাব নেই কিন্তু এ বিষয়ে আমাদের সমাজে প্রচলিত অনেক ধারণা সঠিক আবার অনেক আছে ভ্রান্ত ধারণা। বর্তমান বি. এড. পাঠক্রমের Gender, School and Society কোর্সটির প্রথম একক এ লিঙ্গ বিষয়ের ভিত্তি মূলক তথ্যের খুব সুন্দর অবতারণা করা হয়েছে। যার প্রধান বিষয় গুলির মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হলো লিঙ্গের ধারণা, সেক্সের ও লিঙ্গ এর মধ্যে পার্থক্য, লিঙ্গের সামাজিক নির্মিতিবাদ, বর্তমান লিঙ্গের শ্রেণীবিভাগ, লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক পক্ষপাতিত্বের বিভিন্ন দিক, লিঙ্গ ও ক্ষমতায়ন। এছাড়াও এখানে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গগত বৈষম্যের কারণ এবং লিঙ্গ এর সাথে আরো সামাজিক বিষয় গুলির সম্পর্ক যেমন—জাতিভেদ প্রথা, শ্রেণী বৈষম্য।

দ্বিতীয় এককের মূল বিষয়বস্তু হল লিঙ্গ সচেতন ঐতিহাসিক প্রেক্ষাপট। সমগ্র অংশ জুড়ে আছে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক সচেতনতা বিভিন্ন ঐতিহাসিক প্রেক্ষাপট। এই প্রথম অংশে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে ঊনবিংশ শতকের থেকে বিংশ সময়ে নারী আন্দোলন ও সমাজ সংস্কার আন্দোলন। এবং এই আন্দোলন এর সাথে যুক্ত বিভিন্ন মনীষী যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, রাজা রামমোহন রায়, বিদ্যাসাগর প্রমুখের কথা উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে এবং এদের বিভিন্ন অবদান নিয়ে বিশেষ আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এরপর বিভিন্ন শিক্ষা বিষয়ক কমিটি কমিশনে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ে বিভিন্ন আলোচনা করা হয়েছে এবং সেইসঙ্গে শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে কিভাবে নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন হবে সে সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। পরবর্তী অংশে ট্রান্সজেন্ডার এবং থার্ড জেন্ডার সম্পর্কে বিভিন্ন আইন বিষয়ে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে।

তৃতীয় একক এ Gender Identity এবং Socialization practices বিভিন্ন দিকগুলি আলোচনা করা হয়েছে, যেমন সামাজিক লিঙ্গ নির্ধারণের পরিবারের ভূমিকা এছাড়া বিদ্যালয় কিভাবে সামাজিক লিঙ্গ নির্ধারণ এবং সামাজিকীকরণের ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে এখানে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। আমাদের সমাজে প্রথাগত ও অপ্রথাগত সংস্থাগুলি কি ভাবে লিঙ্গ নির্ধারণ কাজ করে তা আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। শিক্ষা হলো ক্ষমতায়নের মূল হাতিয়ার তাই নারী ক্ষমতায়ন তার ব্যতিক্রম নয়। শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে কিভাবে নারীদের ক্ষমতায়ন করা যাবে তা

আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। তাই এখানে স্কুল শিক্ষা কে বিশেষ গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা হয়েছে।

লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক আলোচনায় বি.এড পাঠক্রমের মধ্যে সর্বাপেক্ষা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অংশ হলো Gender Issues in Curriculum, যেখানে পাঠক্রমের বিভিন্ন দিক গুলি লিঙ্গের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। নিচে খুব সংক্ষেপে এগুলি আলোচনা করা হল।

প্রথমত, বর্তমান পাঠক্রম লিঙ্গ সম্পর্কে আলোচনা স্থান কতটা এ সম্পর্কে বহু মতামত আছে। তবে বর্তমানে পাঠক্রমের লিঙ্গবৈষম্য তো অনেক ক্ষেত্রে আমরা দেখতে পাই তবে এ সম্পর্কে আমাদের অবস্থান কি হওয়া উচিত যা জানতে হলে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ে স্বচ্ছ ধারণা থাকা দরকার। তাই বর্তমান বি. এড.পাঠক্রমের লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক আলোচনা একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থান অধিকার করে আছে।

দ্বিতীয়ত, জাতীয় পাঠক্রম গঠনের ক্ষেত্রে পরবর্তীকালে লিঙ্গ বিষয়কে গুরুত্ব প্রদান করা এটি একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পদক্ষেপ। এক্ষেত্রে আমরা এন.সি.এফ. ২০০৫-এর কথা বলতে পারি। এনসিএফ ২০০৫ যদি আমরা বিশ্লেষণ করি তাহলে আমরা দেখতে পাবো যে শিক্ষার বিভিন্ন দিকে মাধ্যমে যাতে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি পায় এবং সামাজিক কুসংস্কার গুলি লোপ পায় তার ওপর দৃষ্টিপাত করা হয়েছে।

তৃতীয়ত, কেবলমাত্র নিয়ম ভিত্তিক পাঠক্রমই নয়, লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক সচেতনতার আলোচনা শ্রেণীকক্ষের বাইরে বা যেগুলি পাঠ্যক্রমের অন্তর্ভুক্ত নয় তার দ্বারাও যাতে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক চর্চা হয় সে বিষয়গুলো গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে। এবং শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে বিভিন্ন অনুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে এই চর্চা হয় সে বিষয়টি গুরুত্ব দেবে। যা আমরা সাধারণভাবে লুকায়িত পাঠক্রম বলে থাকি।

চতুর্থত, আমাদের বর্তমানে যে পাঠপুস্তক ও বিষয়বস্তু আছে তার মাধ্যমে যাতে শিক্ষার্থীরা লিঙ্গ বিষয়ে সচেতন হতে পারে সে বিষয়ের ওপর বিশেষ গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা হয়েছে। এক্ষেত্রে যাতে বিষয়বস্তু মধ্যে এমন কিছু বিষয় না থাকে যারা সমাজে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য দেখা যায় সেটি ও খেয়াল রাখতে হবে।

পঞ্চমত, একজন শিক্ষকই পারে শিক্ষার্থী তথা সমাজকে পরিবর্তন করতে। গতানুগতিক লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক ধারণার উদ্ভে ওঠার জন্য শিক্ষকের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা আছে। তাই শিক্ষক এ ব্যাপারে কি করতে হবে তার একটি সম্পূর্ণ রূপরেখা আমরা বর্তমান কোর্সটির মধ্যমে জানতে পারি।

পাঠক্রমের শেষ এককটি বিভিন্ন বিষয়ের দিক থেকে বিচার করলে খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কারণ এখানে লিঙ্গ বিষয়ক কিছু বাস্তব সমস্যার সমাধান সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে, যেমন Sexuality, Sexual Harassment, Abuse। এই সমস্ত পরিভাষা গুলি কি এবং এর প্রয়োগ গুলি কোন ক্ষেত্রে কেমন তা সুন্দরভাবে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। যা বর্তমান পরিস্থিতির পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে খুবই কার্যকরী।

উপসংহার

উপরিউক্ত আলোচনা থেকে আমরা বুঝতে পারি যে বর্তমান বি.এড. পাঠক্রমের লিঙ্গবিষয়ক কোর্সটি খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এখানে যে বিষয়গুলো আলোচনা করা হয়েছে তা বর্তমান এর পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে যথোপযুক্ত। কিন্তু এগুলি কেবল এই বিষয়ের তাত্ত্বিক দিক। তাত্ত্বিক দিকের আসল সাফল্য হলো তার প্রয়োগে। আমরা যদি একজন শিক্ষক হিসেবে ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কাছে এই বিষয়ে সঠিক জ্ঞান পৌঁছে দিতে পারি তাহলে হয়তো ভবিষ্যতে সমাজে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য থাকবে না। তাই শিক্ষক-ছাত্রদের থেকে শুরু করে লিঙ্গ সচেতনতা এমন ভাবে ছড়িয়ে দিতে হবে যাতে খুব তাড়াতাড়ি লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য সমাজ থেকে দূর হয়। সেই সঙ্গে শিক্ষার আঙিনায় শিক্ষকদের বদ্ধ পরিকর হতে হবে। সামাজিক লিঙ্গ সচেতনতা সঠিকভাবে সমাজে দেখা যাবে যখন তা সঠিকভাবে সমাজে প্রয়োগ হবে।

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THEME :
HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF GENDER THOUGHT

Historical Evolution of Gender Thought

Dr. P. S. Shanmugaboopathi

INTRODUCTION

The Meadow Movement, which began in the United States last year and has spread to Tamil Nadu today, is a reminder of the importance of gender education in schools and colleges. European countries have created a situation where a sense of gender equality and the introduction of education for gender recognition in schools can lead to a respectful relationship between men and women. The problem is growing in society as a hereditary disease that continues from the literary period to the present day. The reason for this persistence is that from that time to this, gender has been seen as a problematic issue in this society.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION FROM THE LITERARY PERIOD TO THE PRESENT

Gender problem and inequality has been a thorn in the side of society since the dawn of human civilization. The status of women as slaves in the development of human civilization has been the same. In the early days women were restricted to the definition of housekeeping and child protection. Are they educated by this condition? Social contribution? Their status was degraded in terms of giving during the Sangam period. But even in today's corporate work environment, there is a general understanding that women are equal; They say they are not in the mood to accept it in practice Behavioral psychologists. They are deliberately indifferent because of gender. In this situation it is an unwritten rule in modern society that a woman has to become a man in order to gain her recognition and focus on her skills and ideas in her

work environment. Have to raise your voice as loud as men. Men are considered to be an important factor in the acceptance of a woman's idea or ability. This memory is the reason for gender discrimination.

To get rid of these conditions a man must first reach the maturity of seeing her from the position of a woman. He should know that the way of thinking of a man and the way of thinking of a woman are different. Male has one linear thinking after another. Women have Lateral Thinking that combines different possibilities. To understand all this, education must begin at home and at school.

BISEXUAL SCHOOL IS THE SOLUTION TO GENDER DISCRIMINATION

A recent UNESCO guideline on gender education explains the impact of education on sexual behavior. The report states that this education enhances the understanding of the feelings, the practicality of expressing it, the credible places, and the ability to identify individuals, beginning with the need to keep body parts intimate in any given situation. According to the IIT, violence is more likely to occur in an environment where men and women do not have the opportunity to interact together from an early age. Professor Kalpana said in a statement.

Bisexual students should be encouraged to play together in sports classes. Conduct workshops for them to ask and share questions, fears, and doubts that may arise about the other person regarding another gender.

Most private colleges in Tamil Nadu do not even allow students to speak. This will create an unhealthy social status. "Schools are the best place to talk and practice gender equality. Bisexual schools are great for knowing that the two are equal in skills, qualifications, and standards. When students of both sexes are separated, the environment for women to be like themselves is lost."

EQUALITY THINKING MUST BE IMPROVED

Professor of Gynecology N. Manimegala says that gender equality education can be successful only by cultivating a sense of equality in all spheres, be it caste, religion or class. Beyond male and female relationships, sexual minorities share the power and oppression of

each other's sexuality. In addition, the solution is to have a Foundation Course on Gender Studies for undergraduate students in colleges under the administration of Bharathidasan University. Lessons like this are not just for reading and passing exams. This gender education system is based not only on the sense of gender equality but also on the idea that these subjects should be taught by teachers who have a sense of equality at all levels such as caste, religion and class.

But, in practice the situation is not so good. Even the perception of women's clothing has not changed in the college and university environment. The prevailing view is that women's clothing is the cause of all problems. The fact that there is a lack of gender equality thinking even among male and female volunteers participating in 'gender champion clubs' set up in colleges under the guidance of the Central University Grants Commission is saddening that the level of gender discrimination remains unchanged even among educated people. In a society where a woman is accepted to leave home for education and work, she has not yet come to accept that she is equal and has all the rights.

The Royal Commission of Australia says sexual violence and domestic violence can be avoided through mutual understanding and respect for men, women and sexual minorities in relationships such as friendship, work and love. Attempting to pursue education about sex, understanding of sex, and relationships with the opposite sex based on mutual respect, not just starting at home, school, or college, can lead to a complete reduction of gender discrimination.

SOLUTIONS OF PIONEERING COUNTRIES IN GENDER DISCRIMINATION EDUCATION

Dutch : Sex education is part of the government-subsidized school curriculum for children between the ages of four and 12. They are taught about relationships, sexual attraction, warmth, friendship, childbirth and so on. Lessons are taught on reproductive, sexual and sexually transmitted diseases over the age of 14.

Denmark : In Denmark, sex is taught very simply and accurately from an early age. They are taught through illustrated books about safe relationships. It is accepted there that children know their sexual

suspensions from adults, including parents.

Germany : It is common practice in schools and communities to clarify children's sex education and suspensions. In 1974, the book 'Psych Mall', which teaches sex education with pornographic photographs, was published for pre-teen children and became very popular with them.

CONCLUSION

Gender is the length of the genres that depend on masculinity and femininity and distinguish them. Depending on the context, it may be based on the gender or gender differences of the living male or female, as well as on gender characteristics and sexual social structures such as gender identity. The notion that this distinction is formed by society is embodied in many philosophical and sociological theories about gender. According to this ideology, society, culture, and literature form gender; Society, culture, and literature do not depend on whether they define activities that are appropriate or ideal for a particular child.

The real claim is that this status equates to equal rights for both men and women. Others say that society constructs activities other than certain behaviors that define biological components. Others argue that the solution to the problem of gender discrimination is based on gender equality, regardless of gender in general. These changes will be the platform for a permanent solution to gender discrimination and problems then, today and in the future. If the social structure, the family structure and the educational structure are equally aligned with it, the weeds of gender discrimination will be completely eradicated.

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Praxis of Gender Equity in Curriculum Transaction : A Transformative Pedagogy

Anirban Ghosh & Chandan Adhikary

The term 'Gender' symbolizes a social construct that is an internal sense of self, behavior, ability, roles, status, expectations, earning capability and activities within society that human has evolved. The term 'gender' is used in place of 'sex' because, while 'sex' refers to the binary division between males and females in terms of biological discrimination based on their chromosomes, hormones and secondary sexual characteristics etc. Inequality of gender is evidenced in the curriculum of primary, secondary and higher secondary institutions. Mainly there are two types of curriculum i.e. formal and informal. Formal curriculum introduced by Govt. or institutions. They are defined as sets of objectives, context, resources and assessment. Informal curriculum, also defined as hidden or unofficial, refer to attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, behaviors and undeclared agendas underlying the learning process. These are formulated by individuals, families, societies, religions, cultures and traditions. When our society was established, some high profile as well as high ranked people set some rules regarding gender division and lifestyle of male and female. These conventional rules have been repeated generation to generation. Consequently, the female has been oppressed, humiliated and brutalized era after era. Various social activists and reformers have come forward to remove the stereotype system of gender inequality as well as discrimination of works which are varied between male and female. Active feminists are giving their best effort to promote the concept of gender inequality and division

of work. Their tireless effort has proved to be a great impact in school curriculum and textbooks. Many inspiring life stories of heroic bodies have been made as contexts in school syllabus as well as curriculum. In this socio cultural platform the teachers or educators has a great role to clarify all these gender issues and make a way to their learning outcomes. Praxis of gender equity is to be exercised judiciously and strategically through reflective practice on the part of the teachers so that the question of gender equity may be justified. This paper aims at sensitizing the teachers about the need and importance of a gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction in both scholastic and co-scholastic areas of academic pursuits.

INTRODUCTION

Masculine and feminine collaboration has made this beautiful planet. To the necessity of creation and reproduction, men and women have same role, share as well as importance. Human life is sustaining and nurtured by the contributory roles of both men and women. It enhances their individual capabilities to the development of a child. But it is a matter of great awe that a society like ours treat a girl as less capable than a boy. Hence discrimination between a boy-student and girl-student is considered everywhere. In the family, in the community and in the school this gender based discrimination has been established and promoted in our country generation after generation so far. The situation of gender imbalance is very sharp in our country. This stereotype practice of gender based discrimination is depriving the girls from every fields of our society. Now this is the high time to discontinue the vulgar game of discrimination and separation to the girls in the male dominant society. Education can change and remold into a new shape and framework of our narrow- minded society where both boys and girls would enjoy and perform in a friendly atmosphere. Therefore, upgraded and updated educational interventions are strongly required to eliminate and eradicate the root of gender biased and stereotyped thoughts of differentiating the girls from the male dominant society. This conventional practice should be shattered from the primary level

by providing a school where there will not be any kind of gender inequality and partiality. A gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction must be implemented from the very beginning. In terms of offering equal chances and choices to the implementation of gender friendly atmosphere is sharply required to fulfill our approach in curriculum transaction in both scholastic and co-scholastic atmospheres to attain school education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To explore the needs and importance of a gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction.
2. To find out innovative strategies for studying praxis of gender equity in classroom transaction.
3. To investigate the role of teachers as reflective practitioner in implementing gender friendly approach in classroom context.

TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY

Transformative pedagogy is defined as an active pedagogical ideology which offers some combining elements to construct a critical pedagogy that empowers students to examine their values, knowledge and beliefs thoroughly and critically. It develops and reflects the goal of practicing multiple perspectives based on a critical consciousness. In this aspect it evolves a sense of an advocacy and social responsibility. Based on the webinar series, IICBA (International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa) is preparing a module of 'Transformative pedagogy'. In this module, there are six key elements are referred as well. They are—(i) Safe-learning environment (Safe and inclusive spaces for children to learn). (ii) Whole School approach (Inclusive of all subjects, staff and school life). (iii) Role modeling (The influence and role of adults in children's learning). (iv) Context sensitivity (The understanding and integration of the learners' contexts and social reality into the content). (v) Participatory and collaborative learning (Use a learning process based on participatory, collaborative and self-driven learning approaches) (vi) Supporting learner-led action (Connecting learning to

action to empower learners to become agents of change). The six key elements of transformative pedagogy are depicted in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. The key elements of Transformative Pedagogy.

In this field everyone associated to the life of a student must treat to sow the seed of gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction and the sense gender discrimination must be eradicated from the primary level of a student.

Need and Importance of gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction

First of all, we must understand the meaning of gender and difference between 'sex' and 'gender'. Gender is a term which refers as well as differentiates male and female. Now-a-days this term is applied to mean the socio-culture differences between man and woman. On the other hand, 'sex' refers to the binary division between males and females in different fields such as hormones, chromosomes, sexual organs etc. If we do the further study then we find the term 'gender' which means the socio – cultural differences between the males and females in various areas such as their strength, ability, performance, wage earning capacity and social acceptability as well as responsibility. In Fig. 2 indicates the clear concept of 'Sex' and 'Gender'.

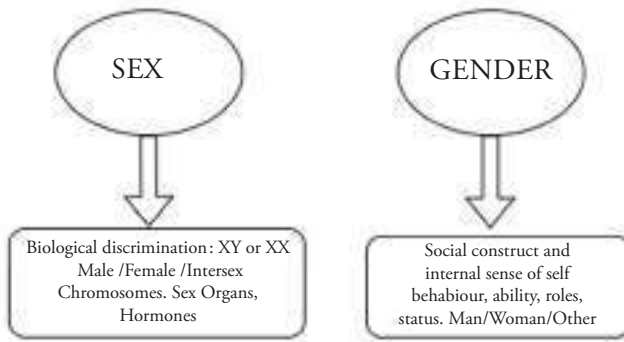


Fig.- 2 Concept of 'Sex' and 'Gender'

In fact, the biological process does not discriminate and differentiate man and woman but our stereotyped male dominant society considers the woman as weak, helpless etc. Hence, they have become conservative and subordinate to man.

In a cross cultural comparative study of Australian and Samish textbooks, Hellsten highlighted that in both cultures boys receive more attention in textual content. Gender bias is transmitted through the use of gender specific verbal phrases and portrayal of gender specific adult activities, where men are the initiators and women are relatively passive. In an analysis, Chung observed that comparative invisibility and unimportance of women characters in Korean and Mexican primary level textbooks. Women are depicted as passive, dependent, emotionally sensible, mostly at home as homemaker and mother. However, women are sometime visible in traditional feminine jobs outside home. Men are always portrayed as intellectually inclined, adventurous, forward looking and active. Gender stereotyping is noticeable in the behavioural traits of protagonists in textbooks. Walker and Foote notice most children's story books contain boys as Hero while girls play stereotypical role. So gender friendly approach essentials to be a central part of the development of the school curriculum and strategies of teaching. Children will want to come to school and will enjoy the experience of learning if schools implement good-quality, gender-friendly approach in curriculum, and strategies of teaching. Therefore, the high time has come to realize the need and importance of gender friendly approach

in curriculum transaction as well as scholastic and co-scholastic areas in society. Otherwise in this conventional society most of the girls who enter into the portals of primary education have a low self-esteem and negative self-image. If the socio cultural gender friendly approach is not offered, then large scale of dropouts of girls must be happened before completing their elementary education. State Governments as well as Central Governments have a responsibility to develop gender friendly education policies for children's learning, as well as for their long-term wellbeing.

Some innovative strategies for studying praxis of gender equity

Some new ideas have been already launched by both of the state and central government to motivate the girl-students in their study, empowerment and self- existence. Their initiatives and enterprises are quite praise worthy. Some more innovative initiatives should be added to their scheme. Some innovative strategies like as:

- Lady teachers should be appointed, scholarships to the meritorious and eligible tribal and needy girls.
- They should be awarded few attractive incentives in different fields such as for any brave deed, humble behavior to the poor, social activities etc.
- Women and men are equally involved in all levels of decision making.
- Women's as well as men's concerns, perspectives and experiences are integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all education legislation, policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally.
- Training teachers in the skills for making teaching and learning processes responsive to the specific needs of girls and boys.

Gender issue is not only an educational issue but also a social issue. Therefore, it is a great need and responsibility of the teachers, educators, parents and community to sensitize the gender issue. Gifts, awards and attractive incentives should be offered to the good doers considering the achievement level of both the boy-students and girl- students.

Role of Teachers as reflective practioner

A teacher moulds and shapes the society. A teacher must be

sensitive and he needs follow some guidelines in practicing a gender friendly approach in curriculum transaction. Their interpretation of the curriculum, interaction with learners, and way they assign duties and homework, are important factors in a child's education. A teacher must follow some dos and don'ts in this process of class management.

WHAT TO DO:

- First of all, the teacher needs to be gender sensitized and promote appropriate and effective skills to break the gender stereotypes in the teaching- learning process. Before doing this the teacher must attend specific training programmes.
- He/She has to understand the social context and create fruitful atmosphere free from any kind of gender inequality thoughts through special programmes and regular PTA meetings.
- He/ She has to create motivating classroom environment by exemplifying both brave men and women as well as social workers. He/She has to decorate the walls of the classrooms with the photographs of local women and meritorious ex-students of the school.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Do not speak on gender issues based on stereotyped gender discrimination.
- Do not give any task which may arise gender issues.
- Do not use remarks that are detrimental to girls and boys.
- Do not show any favour or partiality to the girls or boys.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, a teacher has a potential role to guide every situation so that any type of gender issues may not appear in the mindset of both boys and girls. In every activity such as sweeping, cleaning, decorating as well as maintaining the congenial atmosphere of the classroom, both boys and girls should be assigned. Finally, in teaching learning process conscious efforts of the teachers needs to be addressed by giving equal opportunities to both the boys and girls. Every classroom, curriculum and instructional system should be transformed into an inclusive set up

with respect to gender equity. Innovative pedagogical strategies should be designed through judicious and strategic approaches. Worldwide researcher involved in pedagogical research should be encouraged to conduct research on gender equity and curriculum transaction in order to eradicate gender biases reflected in our education setting.

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In Search of a Gender Inclusive Curriculum : A Journey

Dr. Rituparna Basak (DasGupta)

‘Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we *have*, but something we *do* (West and Zimmerman 1987)— something we *perform* (Butler 1990).’

Traditionally and historically, Indian society has always been a patriarchal one where women are dominated and controlled by male members of the society. After the publication of the report “Towards Equality” in 1974 by the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Social Welfare (NCERT Report, 2013-2014), the issues related to gender in India had gained importance since the 70’s. In the arena of education, the need to make the curriculum a gender inclusive one also ran parallel.

In a country struggling towards attaining the gender equality like India, one way of doing so is to educate the young learners through a gender bias free curriculum in the schools. If both men and women are presented equally without any gender bias and stereotypes, chance is optimum that children grow up without any pre-destined and imposed notion of gender roles on their young minds. Gender perceptions can be made positive through education. Thus, tracking the changes which have been taken place in the Post-independence Indian Curriculum is the focal point of this study, and also to find out how a gender inclusive curriculum can successfully be practiced in Indian schools.

The Modern English word ‘gender’ comes from Middle English ‘gender’ (also *gendere*, *gndir*, *gendyr*, *gendre*), a loanword from Anglo-Norman and Middle French ‘*gendre*’. The modern use of the term

'gender' referring to masculinity and femininity are found throughout the history of Modern English (from about the 14th century). The modern academic use of the word, in the context of socially assigned roles of men and women, dates at least back to 1945, and was popularized and developed by the feminist movement from the 1970s onwards. The World Health Organization states, "[s]ex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women," and "'gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." Thus, sex is regarded as a category studied in biology (natural sciences), while gender is studied in humanities and social sciences. Therefore, it is stated that sex is something that does not change, while the concept of gender varies as per the social structure.

Most of the studies indicate that "Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different education" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994) and that these experiences have a negative impact on girls' educational attainment (Younger & Warrington, 1996; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Several studies have shown that textbooks reinforce traditional and stereotypical views of masculinity and femininity, and also encourage children to accept a traditional gender order. Teachers often use materials, including texts, images or examples that reinforce stereotyped roles. Typical examples given are roles of the father (reading the newspaper) and the mother (serving dinner); the doctor (male) and the nurse (female); playing ball (boy) and combing doll's hair (girl). Thus curriculum plays a vital role in shaping the concept of gender and gender bias, for example, bullying and noise-making are considered natural for boys, and politeness and gentleness for girls.

In general, teachers interact with boys more often than with girls by a margin of 10 to 30 percent, depending on the grade level of the students and the personality of the teacher (Measor & Sykes, 1992). One possible reason for the difference is related to the greater assertiveness of boys that makes a teacher "forced" to pay more attention to them. Another possibility is that some teachers may feel that boys are especially prone to getting into mischief, so they may interact with them more frequently to keep them focused on the task at hand (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004). The differences are summarized in Table 1. The result (probably unintended) is a tendency to make boys' knowledge

seem more important and boys themselves more competent than girls. Another result is the tendency to make girls' knowledge less visible and girls themselves less competent than boys.

Type of response from teachers	Boys	Girls
Praises	Correct knowledge	"Good" or compliant behaviour
Overlooks or ignores	"Good" or compliant behaviour; incorrect knowledge	Misbehaviour; correct knowledge
Criticizes	Misbehaviour	Incorrect knowledge

Table 1: Gender differences in how teachers praise and criticize students

In sociological terms 'gender role' refers to the characteristics and behaviours that different cultures attribute to the sexes. Therefore, a 'real man' in any culture requires male sex plus what various cultures define as masculine characteristics and behaviours, similarly a 'real woman' is defined by female sex and feminine characteristics. Thus gender is a social construct that determines attitudes, roles, responsibilities and behaviour patterns of boys and girls, men and women in all societies. Gender relations, though vary from society to society, are mostly shaped by power relations, especially in the context of multicultural societies like India. Therefore, positive interventions have been initiated by the Government of India to ensure gender equality in education at the Centre and state level. A landmark initiative was undertaken in 1986, with the enactment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) and its revised POA (1992). The same concern has also been reflected in curriculum frameworks developed by apex national organization like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). In this regard NCFs of 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 have made specific efforts to reduce and eradicate gender disparities from the arena of education.

The following section throws light on the journey undertaken by the Indian education system to create a gender inclusive curriculum from time to time. In doing so, the biggest challenge for the Post-

Independent India was to make maximum provisions to uplift the deplorable condition of women and girls' education so that first the gender equity in education may be achieved.

The first educational commission in the Post-Independent India was Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) which placed the following recommendations to promote girls' and women education :

- More facilities in co-ed institutions for girls,
- Equality in curriculum,
- Special subjects for girls,
- Equal salary for male and female teachers,
- Proper value education

Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) also made some important recommendations to promote the same:

- Provision for home science as a subject in girls' school and co-ed schools,
- Separate girls' schools,
- To establish government schools for girls at places where there is none,
- To minimize inconveniences faced by girls and lady teachers,
- Inclusion of music, arts etc. in the curriculum to encourage more participation of girls in education.

Though number of schools was increased following these recommendations, the number of girl students did not increase satisfactorily. Considering the gravity of the problem the National Committee for Women's Education was set up in 1958 under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. After studying and analyzing the history of women's education and its problems the committee submitted its report in 1959 with some very significant recommendations such as:

- To form National Council for the education of Girls and Women along with state councils to monitor the progress of girls' education state wise,
- To appoint State wise one Joint Director(woman) to supervise and conduct the women's education,

- Proper funding to be done to promote such education,
- To appoint 'school mother' in absence of lady teacher in primary schools,
- To increase number of schools for girls,
- Provision for better salary and triple benefit scheme for lady teachers to encourage the teaching profession for women,
- To provide vocational training for girls,
- To establish separate hostel and residential schools for girls,
- To provide better transport facility and free tiffin.

Following the first recommendation of the said committee, National Council for women education and National Institute for Women Education were formed. The latter appointed a committee in 1961 under the chairmanship of **Srimati Hansa Mehta** which made the following recommendations:

- To balance the uneven ratio of boys and girls at schools by increasing the number of girls,
- To follow same curriculum for boys and girls,
- To appoint both male and female teachers, especially female teachers,
- Not to make cooking or home science compulsory for girls,
- To introduce sex education at secondary level,
- Provision of vocational and technical education for girls at the secondary level,
- To encourage girls in studying mathematics and science, and to appoint ample number of lady teachers.

Even after repeated recommendations and positive initiatives situation did not improve much. Sri Bhaktabatsalam Committee (1963) made the following recommendations:

- To establish Private Girls' School to promote girls' education,
- To provide hostels for girl students and lady teachers at villages and remote places,
- To inspire girls to become teachers in future,
- Provision of promotion for lady teachers and enrichment of their social status,

- To provide meal for students,
- To supply books and uniforms free of cost to poor girl students,
- State governments have to construct one primary school within 1 km radius in case of villages having 300 population and one secondary school within 5 km radius in case of villages having 1500 population,
- To reduce wastage and stagnation by appointing school inspectors,
- To appoint educated women of the villages as teachers on part time basis.

Keeping in view the earlier recommendations **Kothari Commission** (1964-66) recommended the following steps:

- To implement recommendations made by previous committees,
- To increase the existing ratio of woman and man in higher education from 1:4 to 1:3,
- To establish separate schools and colleges for women,
- To set up ladies' hostel,
- No separate curriculum for girls/ women,
- To admit more no. of girl students in science, technical subjects, medical science streams etc.

From the above mentioned recommendations it is quite clear that the problem of women education ranges from infrastructure to the closed mind set of the society. Government Of India took some significant steps like:

- The National Policy of Education(1968, 1972, 1986, 2020)
- Five years plans
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (mid-day meal, separate toilet, free books and uniform, remedial coaching, observation of women related days, fairs etc.)
- National programme for Education of girls at Elementary Level
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)
- Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS)
- National Women Commission (1992) etc.

Both NPE, 1968 and NPE, 1986 considered Education as a tool or an agent of basic change for:

- Upgrading the social status and respect of women in society,
- Eradicating the gender discrimination.
- Fostering the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development.
- Laying emphasis on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels to eliminate sex stereo-typing in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations.

Among several remarkable curricular modifications NCF 2005 emphasized on the following:

- Modification in traditional stereotypes
- Gender bias-free classroom interaction
- Textbook: an important tool
- Objective learning experiences
- Significant role of teachers

Some of the remarkable initiatives as designed in the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 are:

- To introduce "Gender Inclusion Fund" to provide quality and equitable education for all girls. The fund will focus on ensuring 100% enrollment of girls in schooling and a record participation rate in higher education, decrease gender gaps at all levels, practice gender equity and inclusion in society, and improve the leadership capacity of girls through positive civil dialogues. It will also address local context-specific barriers to girls and transgender students.
- Safety and security of school-going girls both inside and outside the school are to be ensured to increase the attendance number of girl children and prevent dropouts.

- Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (MoE) is implementing Samagra Shiksha - an Integrated Scheme for School Education (ISSE) under which various interventions have been targeted for Girls' Education. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has launched 'Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)' Scheme to provide various career opportunities to women scientists and technologists.

From the foregoing discussion it is now well understood that our education system, with the aim to ensure gender equality, has walked a long way. It started with the focus on establishing more girls' schools, including subjects like home science and music to enroll more girl students. But the system has been through revolutionary changes over the years. At present we can say that a lot has been achieved, a lot to be achieved yet to reach to a gender inclusive curriculum.

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Position of Women in Modern Society

Shabaree Nath

‘There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect law maker’

—Susan B. Anthony

INTRODUCTION

In most civilization and Society in history women did not have the same rights as men but were barred from Public sphere of politics and economy to very large extent. Their place at home and task was to raise children and attend their husband their master. Attempts were made during British period for bringing improvement in the condition of Indian woman. The attempts succeeded as well to certain extent and therefore we find marked differences in the condition of woman during modern times. Of course it has not been possible to remove all social evils concerning woman and to assign them an equal status with men.

POSITION OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT

In ancient time Indian women enjoy a respectable position in the society. They could participate in religious rights attend festivals and take part in political and social activities. The Indian women in ancient period take part in public activities indicate the nature of the status enjoyed by women. Daughters were never treated although male children preferred to female children. They also received education like boys and went Brahmachari. Womens given complete freedom in family matters and were treated as an Ardhanginis. In many aspects the present day Indian women had to wait a long time to regain some of the rights the Vedic women enjoyed. They enjoyed a kind of liberty in

selecting their male partner. They could educate themselves, Widows were permitted to remarry. Even in ancient time men did not have the rights to divorce their wives. Marriage was not forcibly imposed on them. Child marriage were unknown. Girls were given in marriage only after puberty and after completing their education women were enjoyed full rights to select their life partners. In the religious, field women were enjoyed full rights and regularly participated in the religious ceremonies and sacrifices were performed jointly by men and women. Women could shine as debaters in public assemblies. Women participation in public meetings and debates became less and less common in later Vedic. The worship of mother goddess is also symbolizing the position of women during that period. So it may be said that in ancient India or Vedic India women enjoy a superior status and they occupied an honorable position.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN POST VEDIC PERIOD

In the post Vedic period the status of women in the society began to decline on account of Supremacy of the priestly class. Women were recognized only as wives and mother. Their position sub-ordinate to men. This period can be marked for significant changes in the social and political system of India... Gradually birth based caste system came into existence and got firmly established. Indian women are relatively disempowered and they enjoy lower status than that of men from times in memorial. Status of wife much below than that of her husband. Even the privilege of participation in Vedic rites with husband was snatched away from her. Women sole duty was to obey their master and serve their husband. The husband was allowed to beat his wife with first or rod if she refused his sexual advances. Wives became silent partners of religious ceremonies. Sita in the Ramayana and Draupadi in the Mahabharata are the burning examples of Indian women. In the name of religion and ritual women have been exploited by the male chauvinists in the form of child marriage, polygamy, sati, girl infanticide etc. deprived the women from their least freedom of lives.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

In mediaeval Indian society women held in the complete subjugation to men and their status to deteriorate. This is a period that witnesses

the spread of Hinduism and the caste system; we also find a gradual lawyering of women position in society. Sons are given more preference than to daughter. MP Srivastava opines in early mediaeval period and Sultan period ***'No Woman had an independent status. As daughter, women lived under the worship of her father, as a wife under the take care of her husband, and as a widow under the care of her eldest son'***. Two system child marriage and Purdha brought about segregation of girls and degradation in the condition of Hindu women during the mediaeval period. Another social evil that is devdasi system also common during that period. Every important temple had a number of unmarried girls dedicated to the service of the deity. (The system of polygamy was common in both the Hindu and Muslim Society which did more harm to them. It is true that throughout the long period of Indian history we get instances of some outstanding woman like Gargi, Noor Jahan, Razia Begam, Laxmibai etc. who accomplished great merit in different sphere of activities. But these women sprang from the ruling privileged strata of the Society who were free from social subjugation and lived freely. But mass of the Indian woman had neither freedom nor opportunity for the development of self-expression.

EMANCIPATION OF INDIAN WOMEN

The British rule had brought a revolution in social status of Indian women. A new social based of Liberty equality and individual rights begin emergency in Indian society. Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar strongly raised voice against injustice women. The practice of Sati, Polygamy, Child marriage, Widow remarriage, abolition of discrimination between men and women and strongly advocated education for women. A Christian missionary pioneers in this field. Bethune the president of council of Education founded girl's schools in Calcutta in 1819. Pt. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar also did a lot in popular popularizing the cause of female education and associated with no less than 35 girl's schools in Bengal. In 1916 Prof. DK Karve set-up and Indian women's University in Bombay. The social and religious reforms of the 19th Century were pioneers in this field. They gave equal emphasizes to social reforms primarily concerning women. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan attempted modern education for Muslim girls. Thus, the religious reformers of the 19th

century gave equal emphasis to social reforms primarily concerning women.

When India came in contact with foreign countries in modern times. The women's liberation movements in other countries, their claim of equality with men, their dress, thoughts, etc. also helped in the emancipation of Indian women because they inspired them to struggle for their betterment. The doctrines of socialism and communism also emphasized the equality of women with men. Western education and ideas have also taken a large part in the emancipation of Indian women. The Indian women are now aiming at education as well as gainful employment which may make them self-reliant economically. This is a well-directed course for the emancipation of Indian women. Indian women are doctors, engineers, teachers, political leader, etc. several women organization and NGO are also working for the upliftment and protection of the rights of women. All this is a sign of improvement in the condition of Indian women will be able to command an honorable place in the society, yet the condition of Indian women cannot be regarded satisfactory. So women are the backbone of the society to bring strength, harmony, cooperation, humanity and eventually transforming the society into a compassionate and peaceful place to live in.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN

Efforts have been made for bringing about improvement in the conditions of women by framing laws as well. Such attempts began during the period of the British rule. In 1829, when William Bentinck was the governor-general of the East India Company, the practice of Sati was declared illegal, in 1856, Widow Remarriage Act provided the right to Hindu widows to remarry, and in 1872, Native Marriage Act was passed primarily because of the efforts of Keshav Chandra Sen. This Act decided that for all those who accept this law voluntarily, child-marriages and polygamy would be illegal, while widow-marriages and inter-cast marriages would be legal. In 1937, a law was framed which provided that Hindu women had the right to own property and in 1943 working women were given the right to take leave during the period of child-birth.

Indian women have been protected by laws after Indian independence as well, The Indian Constitution has declared that the state would not discriminate between male and female. Several laws have also been framed for bringing about improvement in the status of women. Various labour Acts and various insurance schemes have been framed for protecting working women. Marriage Act in 1958, marriageable age for a boy and a girl belonging to different religions was fixed at 21 and 18 years respectively. Another Act in 1961, declared the taking and giving of dowry illegal. Certainly, all these laws have helped in bringing about improvement in the status of Indian Women.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE STATUS OF WOMEN

Yet, the condition of Indian women cannot be regarded satisfactory. The Indian society still suffers from the evil practices or Devadasi, prostitution, child-marriages, dowry-system, Purdah, reluctance in marrying widows, rape cases, etc. Besides, female education is not widespread. However, the worst feature is that the Indian society is still suffering from Ignorance and blind traditions and no law of the government is attempting for their removal.

There is yet another serious problem concerning Indian woman. Whatever been provided by state and the Society to woman have been unevenly distributed. Woman among the common people of India are not able to share this facilities provided by the state and Society. Mostly, they are uneducated ignorant and unconscious of their rights. Education is regarded as an instrument that is of utmost significant in bringing about improvement in the status of woman. The women belonging to backgrounds section are needed more and more employment opportunities where they are able to acquire opportunities to enhance their living conditions. In rural and urban areas woman and girls are not given equal rights and opportunities as men or male members of the family and a prohibited from certain aspects like education, employment opportunities, decision-making, eating etc. The government launched Mahila Shakti Kendra in 2017, to improve the condition of the rural woman with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition. Betty Bacha Beti Padhao yojna in 2015 ,aims to generate awareness and

also improve the efficiency of welfare services for the girl child. All these are measure improvement in the condition of Indian woman and it is expected that Indian women will be able to command an honorable place in the Society.

CONCLUSION:

The reality is that, in India, whatever efforts have been made for the betterment of women have been done not with a view to providing them equal status with men but simply to remove certain gross injustices done to them by the society. Therefore, it is not possible that women may get equal status with men in the society. Exploitation of women can be checked only when the society accepts that men and women are two species of human beings and, for that, it will be necessary to bring about changes in many social traditions and values of life. In that state of affairs, there will be same code of morality, social behaviour, duties, rights and protection by law both to men and women. The alone men and women will enjoy equal status in society and a balanced Indian society will be formed. So far, we are far away that goal.

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Role of Human Rights Education in Creating Awareness among Women in North-East Region

Rupamay Sarma & Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Sarangi

INTRODUCTION

Education is a liberating force. It is always a democratizing force, cutting the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances to the development of human society. It is the beginning not only of individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also a holistic strategy for development and change. The issue of class, race, ethnicity and caste have been central to the educational discourse. And major emphasis has been laid on promoting equality through educating different classes, race, ethnic groups and castes. Gradually gender added a new dimension to this education equality paradigm. Feminists vehemently criticize the differential attitude towards women because of which women have lagged behind in the field of education.

It is being argued that equality among human beings across and within society can be attained by providing sufficient opportunities for better health and education to the girl and women. Primary education is important for enabling women to breakthrough many traditional and social barriers, thus, promoting social development, while higher education plays a significant role in the promotion of upward/vertical social and occupational mobility, personality development, intellectual development as well as economical development.

The modern economy of 21st century, certainly the knowledge economy, requires highly educated people for accelerating the process of economic development. Both the primary and higher education of a country plays a significant role in reducing gender disparity in the fastest developing countries like India. Today it appears to be one of the five most developed countries of the world by the year 2020 (Kalam 2020) with the strength of its core competencies.

Women's access to education has not been an easy one. Negative values that have posed several challenges on women's development have been operating in our society far too long. In fact, our society has a history of denying opportunities for women to seek knowledge. This systematic denial of women's access to education kept women in a state of perpetual ignorance and prevented them from seeking or utilizing opportunities for education and empowerment. For women the past has been dark, gloomy period of ignorance and illiteracy, the present is an era of meeting challenges and seeking equal opportunities, the future will be the women's own rendering of writing her history.

With the launch of the NPE 1986, a large number of initiatives have been undertaken to achieve the goals of "Education for All". This goal of universalization of education has been pursued by successive developmental policies and plans for the last six decades. Nevertheless with a large and growing population of more than 121 crores today, it has been an uphill task to keep pace with the expanding demands for basic education. This challenges has been further compounded by the diverse socio-cultural and geographical conditions across the nation and rapidly changing scenario at global level in the name of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The efforts of government, NGOs and society have borne fruits as far as level of literacy in post independent India has risen from mere 18.33% to 74.04% in 2011 but all areas of the country have not been benefited equally.

The issue of women, their rights and awareness has been an ongoing topic of discussion since the dawn of 21st century and 2001 was considered as the year of women empowerment. Many conferences and seminars have been held in the country to make women aware about their role in the society. Many strategies, ways and means has been adopted to enhance the status of women world-wide and to

make them aware of their rights and powers. In this regard an humble attempt has been made on the part paper presenter to study and find out the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To study about the present scenario of women education in N.E India.
- ii) To study about the crucial problems of women awareness in North-East India.
- iii) To find out the ways and means to develop women awareness through human right education.

METHODOLOGY

For this study only secondary data are used. Data are collected from various government departments, various studies on women, books, journals, Statistical hand book of Assam, Economic survey of Assam and other available documents. Analysis and interpretation of the study were done on the basis of the data collected from the various sources. Statistical technique of percentage is applied in interpretation of the result.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN N.E INDIA

Female literacy is considered to be a more sensitive index of social development compared to overall literacy rate. Female literacy is negatively related with fertility rate, population growth rates, infant and child mortality rates and shows a positive association with females age at marriage, life expectancy, participation in modern sectors of economy and above all, female enrolment. The male- female literacy gap has narrowed from 21.59% in 2001 census to 16.68% in 2011 census. The rate is also narrowed in the North-East region remarkably.

Women constitute about 48.46% of population of India as per census of 2011, but they are not well represented in social, political, economic and religious life as per their numerical strength. There is gender gap in education where women are lagging behind men. The literacy rate of women is lower than that of men. The real picture of this gender gap can be realized by having look on the Table 1.

Table: 1 Literacy Rate: 1951--2011

Census year	Persons	Males	Female's	Gender gap
1951	18.33%	27.16%	8.86%	18.30%
1961	28.30%	40.40%	15.35%	25.05%
1971	34.45%	45.96%	21.97%	23.09%
1981	43.57%	56.38%	29.76%	26.62%
1991	52.21%	64.13%	39.29%	24.62%
2001	64.84%	75.26%	53.76%	21.59%
2011	74.04%	82.14%	65.46%	16.68%

(Source : Census report 2011)

Table 1 reveals that there is a wide gap in literacy level of males and females. Though the literacy level of women has risen from a low level of 8.86% to 65.46%. But the gap in male literacy with female is not decreased remarkably. India's effective literacy rate has recorded a 9.2% rise to reach 74.04% in 2011 from 64.84% in 2001. Interestingly, literacy rate improved ply among females as compared to males. While the effective literacy rate for males rose from 75.26% to 82.14% marking a rise of 6.9%, it increased by 11.8% for females to go from 53.67% to 65.46%

Table: 2 Literacy Rate in North-Eastern State: (Census report 2011)

Rank State	Persons	Males	Female's	Gender gap
Mizoram	91.60%	93.70%	89.40%	4.30%
Tipura	87.80%	92.20%	83.10%	9.10%
Sikkim	82.70%	87.30%	76.40%	10.90%
Nagaland	80.10%	83.30%	76.70%	6.60%
Manipur	79.80%	86.50%	73.20%	13.30%
Maghalaya	75.50%	77.20%	73.80%	3.40%
Assam	73.20%	78.80%	67.30%	11.50%
Arunachal Pradesh	67%	73.70%	59.60%	14.10%

Source:<http://cyberjournalist.org.in/census/cenlito.html>

Among the ten states and union territories, two North-Eastern state namely Tripura and Mizoram have attained the literacy rate of above 85%, the target set by the Planning Commission to be achieved by

2011-2012. The other N.E. states like Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur have achieved almost 80% or above literacy rate. The states like Assam and Meghalaya have almost 70% or above literacy rate. In case of Arunachal Pradesh both the literacy rate is lowest and the gender gap is the highest among the N.E. States. The table also reveals that the very narrow in case of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. Though Tripura is the second in literacy rate in the table but the gender gap is 9.1% which indicates that the provision of female education is still below at per with other states. The gender gap is remarkably seen in the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Sikkim.

Table 3 Status of Gender Gap during the last decade (2001-2011)

States	Year	Persons	Males	Females	Gender gap
Mizoram	2001	88.49%	90.69%	86.13%	4.56%
	2011	91.60%	93.70%	89.40%	4.30%
Tripura	2001	73.66%	81.47%	65.41%	16.06%
	2011	87.80%	92.20%	83.10%	9.10%
Sikkim	2001	69.68%	76.73%	61.46%	15.27%
	2011	82.20%	87.30%	76.40%	10.90%
Nagaland	2001	67.11%	71.77%	61.92%	9.85%
	2011	80.10%	83.30%	76.70%	6.60%
Manipur	2001	68.87%	77.87%	59.70%	18.17%
	2011	79.80%	86.50%	73.20%	9.30%
Meghalaya	2001	63.31%	66.14%	60.41%	5.73%
	2011	75.50%	77.20%	73.80%	3.4%
Assam	2001	64.28%	71.93%	56.03%	15.90%
	2011	73.20%	78.80%	67.30%	11.50%
Arunachal Pradesh	2001	54.74%	64.02%	44.24%	19.78%
	2011	67%	73.70%	59.60%	14.10%

Source: <http://cyberjournalist.org.in/census/cenlito.html>

Table 3 indicates that gender disparity has reduced remarkably in the state of Tripura by 6.96% during the decade, from 16.06% to 9.10% and literacy rate has been increased by 14.14%. The gender gap is reduced by 5.68% though the sex ratio in Arunachal Pradesh has

improved to 920 females per 1000 males, up from 893 a decade ago, as per the provisional Census report of 2011, stated by the Assam Tribune, dated 6th April 2011. In Manipur the gap is 4.87% and in Assam it is 4.40% during the decade. In the state of Sikkim, Nagaland and Meghalaya the percentage is 4.37, 3.25 and 2.33 respectively. Mizoram shows only a decimal decrease of 0.26% during the decade.

The latest census report also reveals that the gender disparity is lower in the N.E region of India with regards to other comparatively developed states in India, even in the highest literate state of Kerala the rate of disparity is almost 4% in the last decade.

Ways and means to develop women awareness

The disparity between male and female in the area of education can be narrowed down and awareness among the women about their role in the society can be improved in phased manner by adopting ways and means and target group oriented strategies. Some of these are enumerated below:

- (a) **Provision of Schools:** School should be provided within the reach of people, so that girls and boys should not cover long distances to attend school. More schools should be inhibited by socially and educationally marginalized sections of the society.
- (b) **Gender Sensitized School Environment:** School is the place where attitude ideology and values are formed in tender minds of girls and boys. School should not promote gender biased ideology. Physical amenities should care the needs of girls and boys. So it is the prime responsibility of school to develop gender neutral attitude in their students from very beginning. Schools should be in a democratic setting respecting the religious and cultural diversity and stressing the fundamental principle of equality between girls and boys, women and men, whatever differences there may be between them, their viewpoints and expressions. Girls students may be accommodated in morning shifts Safe transportation to and from school, free uniforms, workbooks, mid day meals, flexible time tables and proper toilet facilities should be provided to girls.
- (c) **Gender Sensitized Curriculum:** Curriculum should be framed in such a way that it can promote social awareness to gender issues

and women's human rights. There should be review of curriculum at regular time period to check that it includes gender education and human right issues. Not only this all references derogatory to the dignity of women, must be removed from the entire curriculum. The learning materials and methods need to be revised or developed with a view to reinforce non-discriminatory language and non-sexist teaching and to placing greater emphasis on equality and non-violence. Girls in developing countries often come up against teaching practices, textbooks and other learning materials in schools that promote gender stereotypes that are detrimental to their academic achievement.

- (d) **Gender Sensitive Teachers:** The need of the hour are of gender sensitive teachers. The teacher training programme should cater to sensitize teachers to specific needs of girls students. Teacher should respect the personality of every girl and boy student. Teacher should encourage the active participation of girl students in teaching-learning process. Teacher should avoid in prescribing stereotype gender roles to girls.
- (e) Socio-political and economic equality and development are the greatest needs of women in this juncture. It is not just for political equality but economic, socio and educational equality as well are to be emphasized. To prohibit discrimination in their jobs and their ability to obtain credit and benefits, women must be in the economic position to make decision. To achieve economic position it is the educational qualification which further boost women in the higher hierarchy in socio-political affairs.
- (f) Though significant progress has been made in the provision of education for all girls, the task is not yet complete. There are several issues that need to be seriously addressed by educational planners and policy makers in the years to come. Provision of post-primary education to girls in remote areas and adequate funding to be allocated for providing and expanding hostel facilities for girls students, especially in rural and backward areas.
- (g) 'Girls do not cross village boundaries ordinarily so it is essential to upgrade all primary schools to middle schools and middle schools to high schools in a phased manner. To gear the entire educational

system to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. The educational institute should adopt action programmes to enhance women's status and further development in all sectors including education. To widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels breaking gender stereotype.

The recommendations by the National Commissions and Committees have focused on a multidimensional approach to bring positive directional changes in the status of women in our society, equality in opportunities, removal of all kinds of disparities and expansion of facilities for women education providing incentives like scholarships, free studentships, hostel accommodation, developing positive attitudes towards women through curricular reforms, textbook reforms, encouraging participation in vocational technical and professional areas.

Women Literacy: Literacy changed the life of women. As observed by the evaluators of all these programmes, the literacy programme not only provided skills but also gave space to women to conduct dialogue among themselves and with the teachers. New feminist groups also encouraged women to speak out and share their concerns.

- (j) **Role of NGOs:** The involvement of NGOs with education is not recent. In fact, for many NGOs education was their entry point for development work in the community. Malvika
- (k) Karlekar has tried to categorise NGOs into pedagogic innovators, institutional innovators and familial innovators. Various NGOs realized that to persuade girls to come to the organization, their mothers' support is necessary, and mothers' support is available when they are aware of female education. The process of transforming knowledge has to be innovative and relating to the problems of girls. Thus, with their other programmes, the creation of awareness, resistance to violence, the building up of confidence among women education becomes an act of awaring women.

CONCLUSION

The National Policy on Education 1986 states that education will be used as a driving force of basic change in the status of women in society.

Access and equity are the two most important components to aware women to facilitate the delivery of social justice to them. Human Right Education should be viewed as an investment in social transformation, human resources development and technology for the betterment of the quality of life of mankind as a whole. Women access to education is of great importance in order to aware dern outlook, who are willing to change and to put in their best in all their endeavour with a sense of responsibility and with confidence. Participation of women in social responsibility becomes more important when it concerns some special target groups, such as indigenous people cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups or people living under occupation. Believing their education, experience, talent and active participation in social responsibilities, it can be of great value for the development of the society and the nation. Girls and women are not only housewives and mothers but they are also workers in the economic sense. They should be educated to perform an indispensable role in the home and in the household economy as well as for bringing enlightenment and emancipation.

The efforts of governments, NGOs and public participation has resulted in rise in level of literacy among males and females both but gender disparity still persists. Though during the last decade the gender disparity at various levels of education in India has declined at 4.91% but it still needs to be further reduced. India being a dominant country of the knowledge era, can brighten its fortunes by increasing access of women at different levels of education. Though there are several obstacles associated with women. Education in the country in general and in the N.E. region in particular, female literacy rate has improved by 11.79% compared to 6.88% in case of males during the last decade. Some areas and some sections of society are more lagging behind in literacy campaign. So area specific approach and strategies can serve the purpose.

The need of the hour is to ensure better lives for the coming generations by creating an equitable social order. Education of girls is increasingly being seen as basic human right and a crucial input of national development. Yet gender disparities within the education sectors are far from having been overcome. It is believed that gender

equality may be attained by guaranteed access to quality education for all.

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Contribution of Indian Women Scientists in Biological Sciences

Sharmistha Pramanik

INTRODUCTION

Women in modern society have determination, confidence, immense self respect, progressive mentality, honesty in their endeavors, creative outlook and they have a wish to build a niche for themselves. Women prove themselves in each and every field by shouldering more familial responsibilities than men from Agriculture to Space Science, culture to politics, medical field to engineering, rural to urban areas. There are numerous examples who achieved their excellence to equally lead the male dominated society. The theme for International Women's Day, 2020 commemorates the global day celebrating social, economical, cultural excellence of women making a call to action for overcoming the persistent barrier against gender equality. To glorify their achievements, the theme of National Science Day, 2020 had been selected as "Women in Science". This present paper focuses to highlight the achievements made by Indian recognized and non-recognised aspirants of the Bioscience field.

Edavaleth Kakkat Janaki Ammal (1897–1984), D.Sc. (1931, Michigan)

Janaki Ammal was born in the year 1897, in Tellicherry, Kerala, in a cultured middle class family. She was a Founder Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences. The University of Michigan conferred an honorary LL.D. on her in 1956. The Government of India conferred the Padma Shri on her in 1957. In 2000, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Government of India instituted the National Award

of Taxonomy in her name in 2000. She was a renowned botanist and plant cytologist who made significant contributions to genetics, evolution, phytogeography and ethnobotany. (E K Janaki Ammal by C V Subramanian).

Kamal Ranadive (1917-2001), Ph.D. (1949, Bombay), FNA

Kamal Samarth was born in Pune in 1917. In 1949, she obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Bombay. She was the recipient of many awards including Padma Vibhushan and the Watumull Foundation award for her work in the field of leprosy. This recipient of the Padmabhushan established the first tissue culture laboratory in India at the Indian Cancer Research Centre (presently Cancer Research Institute). A strict disciplinarian, she instilled the spirit of hard work in her students; her lab was busy till late in the night. She founded the Indian Women Scientist Association (IWSA) with the goal of spreading science to masses particularly women and children. She worked on the nutrition and health of tribal women and children in Rajur in Maharashtra. IWSA runs a project providing awareness about nutrition and medical care to tribals and training women health workers as primary health care givers. She strongly believed that scientists who went abroad for postdoctoral work should return to India and develop new areas of research in their prospective laboratories. She would be definitely remembered for her generosity, integrity and obsession with advancement of excellence in science. (Obsessed with excellence : Kamal Ranadive by R Bhisey).

Sipra Guha-Mukherjee, Ph.D. (1963, Delhi), FASc, FNASc

A recipient of the Senior National Bio-scientist Award, the Om Prakash Bhasin Foundation Award in Biotechnology and the Kanishka Award. She was Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Her field of specialization was Plant tissue culture, Plant Molecular Biology, Biotechnology and Cell Biology. She passed away in September 2007 after writing this piece for Lilavati's Daughters. She decided to study botany because it was her favorite subject in school. As a school student she was awed by the contribution of Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose, and fascinated by his work that showed that plants were living organisms and had a metabolism similar to that of animals. Earlier she used to

think that plants were inert objects which could never respond to any external stimuli. As a student in classes five and six, she developed a strong determination to find the locations of the “heart” and “brain” of plants and to understand the way they functioned. In classes nine to eleven when she studied botany more seriously, she was taught several phenomena regarding plants but nothing about how plants respond to external stimuli. After finishing school, she joined the B.Sc. (Botany) Honors course at Delhi University. Her doctoral research dealt with the tissue culture of flowers of *Allium cepa*. For postdoctoral research she joined S. C. Maheshwari in the same department. This was a very rewarding period. She worked on various aspects of biochemistry of differentiation in plants, effects of plant hormones on transcription, and stumbled upon production of haploids through Anther cultures of *Datura innoxia*. She felt very privileged as she was at the right place at the right time. Their culturing anthers of *Datura* was an extension of several projects in her scientific career. She had written a detailed account of the discovery of anther culture in a turning point article published by the journal *In Vitro Plant*, Volume 35, 1999. She continued her post-doctoral studies at Michigan State University with Robert S. Bandurski and later with J. E. Varner at the AEC Plant Research Laboratory where, she mainly worked on subunit structures of Aspartate transcarbamylase and isozymes of peroxidases. Although her work on haploid production was published in *Nature*. Unfortunately she did not find any enthusiasm or even appreciation of this work amongst fellow scientists there. This was primarily due to the excitement of new discoveries in molecular biology that overshadowed all other good research, a trend that still continues. In Europe the situation was different. She was invited to present her work at the EMBO symposium on Haploids in Italy in 1971. The next symposium on Haploids was held in Guelph, Canada, where again she was invited to present a paper. At the XV International Congress of Genetics held in New Delhi in 1983, she met Professor Hu Han, Director of the Institute of Genetics of Academia Sinica, China, who appreciated their work on anther culture and remarked that our work was responsible for a substantial change in the agricultural economy in China. This was one of the greatest moments in her life. He invited her to Beijing, China, to attend an International Symposium of Genetic Manipulation

in Crops in 1984 which was the third international symposium on Haploids. While she was teaching at West Virginia University in the U.S. in 1972, she was invited to take up a faculty position at the newly established School of Life Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was very happy to get this opportunity. At JNU, no one interfered with her work, they also had the freedom to frame their own syllabi, she got adequate grants from U.G.C. C.S.I.R., DST and DBT to support research. Her decision to continue postdoctoral work both at Delhi University as well as in the U.S despite the negative pressures was most crucial in shaping her scientific career. Her decision to opt for higher studies was frowned upon by her relatives and friends, and she received no encouragement or appreciation from them. Even some notable scientists thought it improper to appoint a woman scientist as a faculty member in the department. With this bias in the workplace, no woman scientist could rise above a certain level and thus women scientists felt mentally inferior to male scientists. She felt that she was swimming against the tide. Despite the negative attitude of society and of most male scientists towards women's role as research scientists, she did get inspiration and encouragement from some senior scientists who helped her sustain interest in research. Without the support of such people there would be a scarcity of women scientists today. In later years, whenever she discussed this aspect with other teachers she heard that although women were as intelligent as men they could not achieve the same level of success because of their different social commitments. This was also a matter of understanding the psyche of many contemporary scientists and administrators and their attitude towards women. She felt a lot of precious time was wasted, smoothing ruffled feathers and pacifying many important fellow scientists, administrators and vice chancellors. It is important to eliminate the damage caused by such attitudes so that coming generations of women scientists will not have to waste time combating them. (Successfully combating Prejudice: Sipra Guha-Mukherjee).

Kusum Marathe, M.Sc. (1948), Ph.D. (1968, Bombay)

She was Retired Professor of Botany and officiating Director of Institute of Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India. Her areas of interest are metabolic products of algae, drainage water algae, nitrogen-

fixing algae, etc. She was born in 1924 in Mumbai and joined school when she was seven years old. In those days very few girls went to school and they used to get married early. After completing school education she admitted BSc with Botany and stood first and was awarded a Fellowship. When project work of her Master's was nearing completion, her Guide was transferred to Karnataka College, Dharwar. She moved there to complete the thesis and got a demonstrator's job in the same college, starting her teaching career. She submitted her thesis to Bombay University and received the M.Sc. degree in 1948. She was later appointed as Assistant Lecturer in Botany and in 1950, she married Dr. V. B. Marathe, Lecturer in Zoology in the same college. She wanted to start research but she had two sons. Their second child was prematurely born. Besides, there was no recognized Ph.D. guide for algae. However, she collected soil samples, made cultures and continued research in the spare time she got between her lectures and practicals. Meanwhile, Dr V. R. Dnyansagar, who had moved to RIS as Professor and Head of the Botany department, agreed to register her as his Ph.D. student. She continued the same project that had been undertaken in M.Sc. and submitted her Ph. D. thesis in 1968, twenty years after the M. Sc. In 1970, She was selected by MPSC as Associate Professor of Botany and transferred to the Institute of Science, Nagpur. After joining the Institute, she started a special subject 'Algae' for MSc at Nagpur University. A few years later, she was promoted as Professor, and in 1980, she became Acting Director of the Institute of Science, Nagpur till 1981. She retired in 1982.

Although she could guide research only at a late stage, she had seven Ph. D. students who worked on various research project work such as metabolic products of algae, drainage water algae, nitrogen-fixing algae in paddy fields, effects of algal extracts on the germination of seeds and seedling growth. She has published over forty research papers. She did not get much time for research due to her teaching and administrative responsibilities. She sincerely felt that more research on algae will reveal many more algal species which can be used as food, manure, and as a source of oil, as they had found considerable oil in a new *Zygnema* species. (Hard work and perseverance lead to success: Kusum Marathe).

P Mohanty Hejmadi, Ph.D. (1970, Ann Arbor), FASc

She received the Pitamber Pant National Environment Fellowship and the Justice Raj Kishore Das Memorial Award, in addition to the Pranakrushna Parija Award. She has also received awards such as Central Sangeet Natak Academy award, Sarangdev fellowship etc. for contributions to Odissi dance. Her area of specialization is developmental biology and conservation in the field of herpetology. She was born during the pre-independence era in a freedom fighters' family. After B.Sc. in Zoology, she went to Lucknow University for masters. Then she took up a teaching position in the newly opened M.Sc. classes in Utkal University, Orissa. While pursuing various avenues, she was offered the Barbour Fellowship of University of Michigan, along with a Fulbright travel grant. She joined the University of Michigan, Zoology department in the beautiful city of Ann Arbor. After theoretical education, she got the chance to learn by realistic experience in Michigan – fertilizing frog eggs, grafting live tissues to chicken eggs or crossing different strains of *Drosophila* to study genetics. The experiments in physiology, cell biology and genetics charged with the euphoria of cracking the post-genetic code era; life science was gaining momentum. The miracle of fertilization, the unraveling of genetic programming in the nascent amphibians eggs starting with the lines of tension in cleavage, the complete division of egg and rearrangement of cells and appearance of different organs to make a tadpole and then the metamorphosis drew her to Developmental Biology. She completed her Ph.D. on the “Transfer of Maternal Serum Proteins and their Role in Development in the American Leopard Frog “*Rana pipiens*”. While pursuing super regeneration in tadpoles under the influence of vitamin A (initially discovered by I.A. Niazi of Jaipur University,) her team published their “Breakthrough” of transforming the tail to legs in amphibians known as homeotic transformation in *Nature* in January 1992. This drew international attention both to the phenomenon as well as to their laboratory. Recognition has come in many forms, including the Padmashri in 1998: she was the first woman to be elected President of Indian Developmental Biologists, and was the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Orissa-Sambalpur University (1995-98). After retirement, she continued her study of science through memberships

in various agencies and by writing on science. Although she could have opted for a more glamorous career in pursuing dance (the art critic Charles Fabri wrote that she could have “name, fame and fortune”), she opted for science as it provided an opportunity where one can mould and nurture a career with a very private space. To her, science opened up a window of unknown opportunities, seeing the world, interacting with many eminent scientists, artists and policy makers– a charmed life which she will never regret. (The amazing world of life science: P Mohanty Hejmadi)

Aditi Pant, Ph.D. (1973, London) FMASc.

She was given the Antarctic Award of the Government of India. She is an oceanographer with interests in plankton physiology and biochemistry. In her childhood days, she was influenced by her father. He had a keen interest in how things worked and why, and dinner table conversations varied from steam engines to stars. She wanted a career which allowed her freedom of movement, not only of thought. At about this time she was completing BSc at the University of Pune, and a friend of her father's gave her a book by Sir Alistair Hardy called “The Open Sea”. The book described the life of plankton as observed by this Cambridge biologist. Her joys knew no bounds when she got the opportunity to do MS in the subject of her professional interest and got a US Government scholarship to the University of Hawaii. At that time, oceanography was not so popular in India. There was more opportunities in abroad, but she had to drop all her dreams and plans for tenure and post docs and everything else and applied for a Pool Officership in 1973 and returned to India. Though she had never regretted it. In 1973-76 her team explored coastal studies and covered the whole of the West coast of India from Veeraval to Kanyakumari and the Gulf of Mannar by vehicle and country fishing craft at the National Institute of Oceanography. They spent nights sleeping on the beaches because accommodation was not available and the team, whether scientist, driver or student, worked together to complete the planned objectives. They didn't worry about food or water or privacy, they ate whatever the local tea shop supplied. Very often she was the only woman on the team. She had another experience of every

oceanographer's dream to visit the Antarctic and when the chance came she grabbed it with both hands. The NIO had a 10-year programme in the Antarctic Ocean for studies on food chain physics, chemistry and biology. By 1990 she had moved out of NIO, after 17 years there, to the National Chemical Laboratory in Pune and spent the next 15 years studying enzymology of salt-tolerant and salt-loving microbes involved in the food chain. Although the work she did at NCL was completely different in its nature to what she did at NIO she learnt almost as much in Pune as she did while still at University, and during her early years in Goa. (An oceanographer's life: Aditi Pant)

Rajani A. Bhisey, Ph.D. (1974, Bombay), FASc, FNA.

She belonged to the family of a freedom fighter and was also academically oriented. Reading 'Microbe Hunters' a book from her father's collection, led her to opt for Microbiology for B.Sc. degree. In 1960, when she passed B.Sc. examination, the university of Bombay did not offer M.Sc. courses in microbiology, therefore she had to think of obtaining an M.Sc. degree by research. . After obtaining an M.Sc. degree in 1965, she was recruited as a Scientific Assistant at the Cancer Research Institute. Around that time, her husband obtained the position of a postdoctoral associate at the Institute for Cancer Research at Fox Chase Philadelphia, USA. Naturally, their son and she accompanied him to the USA. This resulted in a break in pursuing her doctoral work. But she used the opportunity to gain expertise in different aspects of electron microscopy. In the laboratory of the late Dr. Jerome J. Freed at Fox Chase Cancer Center, she looked at the cell surface of cultured cells by doing histochemistry at an ultrastructural level. Regrettably, nearly 2 years of hard work failed to produce any significant results. After returning to India, she worked hard and obtained a Ph.D. degree. Her research focussed on the mechanisms involved in skin tumor promotion, and environmental carcinogenesis. She concentrated on the development and characterization of a mouse model that would be sensitive to skin carcinogenesis. Several years later with the help of colleagues they could use these mouse strains to demonstrate carcinogenic potential of chewing products such as paan masala, gutkha and bidi. (The enthusiasm of a novice: Rajani A Bhisey)

Renu Khanna-Chopra, Ph.D. (1974, IARI), FNA, FNASc.

She is largely known for her research work in the area of Photosynthesis, crop physiology and abiotic stress physiology, especially drought and high temperature tolerance. As a child she always felt excited about going to school and learning new things. Being a daughter of an engineer with a government department she went to school across several states as her father was transferred frequently. From her school days, she was very eager to learn about the basis of life, that is, the cell. In class eleven, she competed for the N.C.E.R.T. National Talent Search scholarship. She was selected for a scholarship which was up to Ph.D. level for pursuing studies in basic sciences. She participated in many summer schools organized by N.C.E.R.T. at Madras University and Delhi University which oriented her towards a research career. She did her post graduation in plant physiology at Indian Agricultural Research Institute. Her Ph.D. research work was on Physiological and genetic basis of heterosis which laid the foundation of photosynthesis research in relation to agricultural crops in India. This was published as a review in *Advances in Agronomy* and subsequently became part of the text book on genetics. Finally she joined I.C.A.R. Agricultural Research Service as a scientist in 1978. In that same year she also received the Young Scientist award of I.N.S.A. from the prime minister of India, Mr. Morarji Desai. Over the years she won several awards and honors, including the first I.C.A.R. Best Woman Scientist Award (1995), R.S. Asana Endowment award (1983) and Platinum Jubilee Lecture award of Indian Science Congress Association (1998). She was elected Fellow of Prestigious National Academies, including the Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences, India. She also received several fellowships including the Homi Bhabha Fellowship (1980), INSA-Royal Society Exchange Fellowship (1982) and the Biotechnology Overseas Fellowship (1989). (From basic science to agricultural scientists : Renu Khanna Chopra)

Manju Bansal, Ph.D. (1977), IISC, FASc, FNASc

She was a von Humboldt Fellow at EMBI, Heidelberg, and joined the Faculty of IISc in 1981. She was the founder-Director of the Institute

of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, Bangalore. In Spite of lifelong passion for literature, she decided to opt for specialization in biophysics during her master's course, instead of the more popular solid state physics or even more glamorous nuclear physics. Biophysics was introduced that very year and, by the inspiration from a couple of enthusiastic teachers and access to some good books, she found herself thoroughly enjoying this new found subject, although still uncomfortable with dissecting frogs to study their muscle contraction. What appealed most to her was the strange but happy marriage of biology with physical science. She researched the idea that a DNA structure other than the celebrated Watson-Crick double helix actually exists and plays an important role in the biological function of DNA. Their work has made some important contributions towards a better understanding of this basic building block of nature. (How I became a biophysicist: Manju Bansal)

Sudha Bhattacharya, Ph.D. in 1977 (New Delhi)

Migrating from a small town of Punjab, after India's partition in 1947, She came to New Delhi with her mom. Not so ambitious but a very dreamy girl was scoring well in her school days. During National Science Talent summer school she came to know about thrilling discoveries in molecular biology. A new ambition to do research in molecular biology was taking root. Despite being from a conservative and middle class family, she decided to prepare really hard for the I.A.R.I in 1971 and got admission into the M. Sc. biochemistry course at I.A.R.I and obtained her Ph.D. in 1977 (New Delhi). In spite of family pressure for marriage, she tried to convince her mother that a woman's place in the world was not the same as before, and that marriage was not the ultimate goal of life, with the result that when she, still unmarried, set sail for the U.S with a postdoctoral fellowship she, her mother was no longer worried about her future. In fact, two years later her mother stepped out of the house to work for a voluntary organization that had set up schools for slum children. In retrospect, the resistance and orthodox mentality of family toughened her and prepared her for further challenges. The most difficult challenge was when she herself became a mother. Though it was she and her husband

who managed their laboratory works collaboratively and research had become an integral part of their lives. She is a recipient of the Rockefeller Biotechnology Career Development Award. She is Associate Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her areas of interest are molecular biology, molecular parasitology and genomics. (Science is fun every single day: Sudha Bhattacharya)

Chandrima Shaha, Ph.D. (1980, Calcutta), FASc, FNASc, FNA

She is recipient of S. Amirchand Award, DBT Award, J.C. Bose Fellowship. She is at the National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi. Her interest is cell death. Her interest in science was kindled by her father, a remarkable teacher. Although by profession he was not a scientist, he built her a small laboratory complete with a light microscope, Bunsen burner, test tubes and some chemicals. Her father believed in holistic education and taught her carpentry, photography, gardening and the reading of classic literature. She spent much enjoyable time with him doing various projects like looking at pond-water droplets under the microscope or putting together a circuit for a small radio. As a result, her interest in scientific enquiry got deeply rooted while she was very young. As she grew older, her interests expanded to field studies and she spent considerable amounts of time running after insects and collecting small animals. She spent her holidays in school collecting caterpillars to watch them metamorphose into butterflies and she kept detailed photographic records of the events, using a Leica camera fitted with a bellows for close-ups. Childhood events being most essential for scientific and philosophical development, she felt that the early influences that shaped her future interests were her family and committed school teachers. After finishing school, she continued to be obsessed with nature and thought that being an entomologist would be most wonderful, as she could be in the field as well as in the laboratory. While in college, she developed other interests. She became vice-captain of the Bengal women's cricket team at a time when women's cricket was at a nascent stage and women were just storming this male bastion. Cricket brought a completely different flavour into her life because team activity was very enjoyable. Their success in winning the National Championship for three consecutive years was certainly

delectable. Her parents were supportive of her interest in sports and gave her the free choice to do whatever she most preferred. The interest in science instilled in her during childhood propelled her more towards academics than sports. Nevertheless, she maintained her interest in sports by doing commentaries on men's cricket during the winter on All India Radio, although she could not participate in zonal tournaments due to academic commitments. At this time, she was introduced to first experiences in a real laboratory set-up and during post-graduation she chose endocrinology as a subject for specialization because the course interested her. She completed university sojourn, looking forward to getting involved in full-time research, and thus her formal involvement in a life in science was initiated. In retrospect, she felt that the constant support her parents gave and the atmosphere of creativity at home influenced her to choose a career that ensured intellectual pleasure. In later years, whenever her work has received national recognition, she regretted that her parents were not there to share the events. After formal training in endocrinology, she was particularly interested in the events of reproduction because that provided an opportunity to understand the fascinating phenomenon of how life begins. The major obstacle at this period was to find a suitable laboratory to pursue her interests. Fortunately, she got a placement at a reputed research institute now named the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB), in a laboratory that offered the possibility of doing reproductive biology research. After completion doctoral studies, her interests took her to Kansas University Medical Center in the United States with a Ford Foundation Fellowship, where she was able to pursue her interests in female reproductive physiology. Even though the empty streets of a midwest American town were disconcerting after the vibrant city of Kolkata, the very active laboratory soon made her feel comfortable. She worked on the mechanisms related to ovarian steroidogenesis in the years she spent in this laboratory, towards the end of which she was interested in studying similar phenomena in the counterpart of the ovary in males, the testis. Exploring the research interests of various laboratories, she decided to join The Population Council at New York City which was located on the campus of the Rockefeller University that in turn was surrounded by two great institutions, the

Sloan Kettering Memorial Hospital and the Cornell Medical College. She spent two very productive years of her life at this laboratory, working on the involvement of opiates in testicular steroidogenesis and functioning, following which she joined the National Institute of Immunology in New Delhi. Here she started a laboratory with a group of people interested in exploring the possibilities of developing a vaccine against male fertility. And after a decade or so, they extended their interests into probing the modalities of male gamete survival, information on which had the possibilities to contribute to the success of a possible vaccine. She believed that her ability to carry out research on problems that are related in essence but different in their identities, had contributed greatly to her evolution as a scientist, kept her interests alive and created a lot of excitement in laboratory life. (Looking for the unknown in the known: Chandrima Shaha)

Priya Davidar, Ph.D. (1980, Bombay)

She was a Senior Fellow of the Smithsonian Institution and was elected President of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation in 2009. She is the Dean of the School of Life Sciences, Pondicherry University, Puducherry. Her area of specialization is tropical ecology and conservation biology. She was one of the first women to become a professor of ecology in India who witnessed the changes in the status of women ecologists in the developing world. Being a daughter of an amateur naturalist and wildlife photographer, she had a spirit of adventure and curiosity about life and the environment. She completed her doctoral research under the guidance of Dr. Salim Ali, who was an eminent ornithologist. She was a young woman in her early twenties launched into a male dominated field, where women were conspicuous by their absence. Her interest in ecological research was not taken too seriously by many of her colleagues. However, Dr. Salim Ali gave her unstinting support, completely disregarding gender as being of any significance to research involving fieldwork. This gave her the courage to carry on regardless of opposition or indifference and lack of peer support. She believed Ecologists can improve the quality of life in India, where environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity is pervasive. Young ecologists are now taking the lead and with their

vision and intelligence, are making changes both small and large across the landscape in India. (A woman ecologist in India: Priya Davidar).

Gaiti Hasan, Ph.D. (1983, Cambridge), FASc, FNA

She is associated with the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore. Her areas of specialization are molecular biology, genetics and cell signaling. Earlier, she joined a zoology honours course at Miranda House, Delhi University. After that she decided to move for Master's degree to the newly founded School of Life Sciences (SLS) at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi where she found molecular genetics was the field she wanted to work in. While making applications to U.K. universities for research purposes she realized for the first time that belonging to a minority could lead to discrimination. What came as a bigger shock was that the discrimination came from a woman teacher. Finally she went to a lab at Cambridge for a Ph.D., where she studied gene organisation. After completing Ph.D. she came back to T.I.F.R., Mumbai for a post-doctoral position. She and her team could do genetics to make mutants, and molecular biology with the mutants and finally they could use the mutants to look at cellular function, development and physiology. They are now busy trying to relate InsP3 receptor function in *Drosophila* with human diseases like diabetes and neuro-degeneration. She felt the best part of working in science is the freedom to take on a problem that interests intellectually. The tough part is balancing the long hours of work with raising a family. A supportive family is a must. And just when one thinks she has done both then she realizes there is another part to science i.e. the networking required to stay visible nationally and internationally. Most existing networks are male dominated and women need to work harder and more systematically at entering these. Or no one will ever know about the wonderful scientific breakthroughs someone may have achieved quietly in her lab. (Science and the art of detection: Gaiti Hasan).

Shubhada Chiplunkar, Ph.D. (1983, Bombay)

She was awarded the Senior Scientist Oration Award by Indian Immunology Society and also a recipient of Max Planck Institute fellowship. She works at the Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research

and Education in Cancer (ACTREC) in the area of immunology of tumor, hepatitis, hepatocellular carcinoma, and leprosy. She was born in a joint Marathi family. Her parents, both teachers at that time, inculcated in her the love for science and literature. She enjoyed studying English literature, history and science with the same passion. The non-fiction book popular among students in those days was 'Microbe Hunters' in which stories of important events in history of microbiology and contributions made her to do graduate in Microbiology. She applied for the postgraduate program at the Cancer Research Institute (CRI) in Mumbai and continued for a Ph.D. degree at that Institute. In 1984, she resigned from the job of 'Scientific Officer' at CRI and joined the lab of Prof. Stefan Kaufmann at the Max Planck Institute for Immunobiology in Freiburg, Germany for postdoctoral offer. In 1984, T cell cloning was a hot field. With all zeal and determination she stepped into this field not realizing the frustration and disappointments she would be facing! Making T cell clone was not an easy task for a postdoc working within a limited time frame. After a year of hard work they finally got interesting results. Staying away from family for all those years was not easy, and in 1986, she returned home with a firm decision to work in immunology. At that time CRI was engaged in anti-leprosy vaccine trials and were looking for immunologists with experience in the field. Her training in mycobacterial immunology turned out to be an asset and she joined the institute as Scientific Officer in the Immunology department. Working on the leprosy vaccine project proved to be a multifaceted experience. In addition to doing basic research, this involved visits to leprosy hospitals, vaccine trial areas and helping in project administration. It was a challenge to handle projects on leprosy and cancer. She and her team were keen to discuss good science outside the 'traditional disciplines'. In due course, they expanded their research interests to other areas of innate immunity, understanding reasons for immune dysfunction in patients with cancer and development of immunotherapeutics (monoclonal antibodies). Looking back upon the 25 years she spent in research as a woman scientist, although she did not face major road blocks that could steer her away from the path, she did encounter obstacles which have made her emerge as a stronger person. Gender bias did not become a hindrance, although she feels it remains

a major issue which women scientists face even today. It is the inner believe in one's ability and capacity to undertake challenging projects and to move ahead. (Believing in Myself : Shubhada Chiplunkar)

Deepti Deobagkar, Ph.D. (1984, IISc)

She has received the DAAD Fellowship, Inlaks Fellowship, UNESCO TWAS Fellowship and the INSA Medal for Young Scientist. She works on molecular genetics, epigenetics, biosensors and bionanotechnology. She is with the Molecular Biology Research Laboratory and Center for Advanced Studies, Department of Zoology, University of Pune, India. Being a very quiet and shy only child of her family, she spent hours on own, daydreaming and imagining things. Initially, because of her liking for reading, she even toyed with the idea of taking up arts and psychology. The living world and the amazing capabilities of microbes were her early interests. The development of a single cell into an embryo and then into an organism which has the potential to create artifacts was an interesting subject. Although it is the genome which seems to have the blueprint, the ability of the environment to influence through epigenetics, the phenotype, behaviour, physiology and even intelligence of an individual held great promise in her imagination. Support from her husband in every possible aspect and his trust and confidence in her ability to multitask had been the main factors that enabled her to continue research while making a home and looking after her daughters. (The pursuit of Science: my hobby and profession).

Anuradha Lohia, Ph.D. (1986, Calcutta), FASc.

She is a recipient of National Women Bioscientist Award 2001, the Stree Shakti Science Sanmaan, Zee Astitva Award and the Rockefeller Foundation Biotechnology career fellowship. She is a Senior Professor at the Bose Institute, Kolkata and currently the CEO of the Wellcome Trust DBT India Alliance. Her areas of interest are molecular and cellular biology. She was born into a business family of the Marwari community, where a career path for women was unheard of when she was young. Her mother, herself a pathbreaker, decided to study applied psychology and follow a career in educating special children with mental retardation. She was encouraged to pursue studies and fine arts with equal vigour. As a result, of her own interest and will, she

was equally engaged in studying human physiology and performing classical dance. When she stepped into a Ph.D. programme to study the biochemistry of the *Vibrio cholerae* cell surface, it began to dawn on me that it would not be easy to carry on both professions in tandem. However, she was unwilling to let go of either profession even after the birth of her daughter in 1981. Family and friends suggested that her success in classical dance should, for obvious reasons, result in her choosing it as a career. She was indecisive, because even though she was good at Kuchipudi and enjoyed performing, she felt she was not given the creative freedom to bring her own personality to dance. To add to this confusion, she was failing miserably in her research at (IICB) Kolkata. Experimental results were open-ended, funding was limited and more importantly, her ideas were very hazy. She thought she understood less than her colleagues and was constantly plagued by doubts of her own scientific ability. The less she understood, the greater the challenge and, consequently, the greater her desire to excel in research. Unable to give up either profession, she continued to dance and carry on her research (along with bringing up a little daughter) until she published two papers in international journals and finished her Ph.D. In the meantime she got an opportunity for postdoctoral research, and then she faced the most difficult time with her family. Additionally, she was torn between her daughter's welfare and her desire to continue research. It was all finally resolved but her troubles did not end. Two years at New York University, spent almost entirely in the lab, just blew away when another group published her results before she could complete her paper. She had to return; she could not stay away from her daughter any longer, knowing that she faced failure as a scientist. However, she got a second chance with Prof. B.B. Biswas at Bose Institute to set up a lab studying the biology of *Entamoeba histolytica*. She started with isolating DNA replication origins from *E. histolytica* and published her first paper in record time and had never looked back. (No choice but to learn: Anuradha Lohia)

Meenakshi Banerjee, Ph.D., 1988 (Banaras)

A very determined child with a deep appreciation of and inquisitiveness regarding nature Dr. Meenakshi Banerjee was born in Asansol, West

Bengal. She specializes in cyano-bacteriology and obtained her Ph.D. in 1988 (Banaras). She is a Fellow of the Academy of Environmental Biology and the National Environmental Science Academy also a Life member of NASI. Her numerous awards include Albert Schweitzer International Gold Medal for Science, as well as UGC career award. She currently teaches at Barkatullah University, Bhopal. She believes that nothing in life is to be feared. If someone recognizes her potential, she must try to fly to understand the heights she can reach as the sky's the limit. (Full faith in myself, Meenakshi Banerjee).

Qudsia Tahseen, Ph.D. (1989, Aligarh), FASc

She is a recipient of the INSA Young Scientist Medal. She is Reader, Department of Zoology, Aligarh Muslim University. Her areas of interest are nematode taxonomy, developmental biology and ecology. She was born In Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh where girls were not expected to have careers. At most they were supposed to be educated up to BA, to be capable housewives. Fortunately she has enlightened parents who considered education of prime importance. Being the eldest child in the family, she enjoyed more attention from parents than two younger brothers. Her father treated her more like a son and many times she heard him arguing with her mother to let her study and not to pressurise to do household work. She was always among the top students in school. Science was her first love and she was fascinated by the working of the human body. In view of her calibre and interest in science her father sent her to the Government Girls' College. She got a merit scholarship after passing high school: this was her first auspicious step towards a scientific career. In view of her enthusiasm and good performance and the limited opportunities at Azamgarh, parents decided to send her to Aligarh Muslim University where she could easily get admission on the basis of merit. She learnt a lot while in hostel and the experience gave her a lot of confidence and the ability to live harmoniously with others. Since she was away from her parents she tried to focus on her work and not get distracted. She chose zoology as a specialization because of her immense interest in it. The scholarships she got in BSc and MSc were of relief as she was conscious of spending her father's hard-earned money. She decided to go for

research and opted Nematology as a specialization at the Master's level. The NET examination was introduced that year and she qualified for a Junior Research Fellowship. She owe a great deal to her guide, Prof. M. Shamim Jairajpuri, who was an ideal teacher, very encouraging and supportive to her research endeavours. He prompted her to strive for excellence and advised her to start work on the developmental biology of nematodes and she did her doctoral thesis with dedication, finishing it in only three years. By this time she was married, and staying in a joint family. Her first appointment as a faculty was in 1989 in Women's College, AMU even before she received the PhD degree. The appointment came as a reward in recognition to her academic skills but at the same time posed great challenges. Women's College did not have any infrastructure for research and it was a difficult job to teach at college and then to carry out research work in the Department. However, it was during this period she bagged four young scientist awards including those of Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) and Indian National Science Academy (INSA), besides publishing a score of papers in journals of international repute. Her efforts paid off and she was transferred to the Department of Zoology, AMU, in 1997. Thereafter, She could devote more time to research and (in this regard) visited Rothamsted, CABI, University of Reading, British National History Museum (England), Scottish Crop Research Institute (Scotland), University of Ghent, Belgium and University of California, Riverside for collaborative research by availing Royal Society-INSA Bilateral Exchange Programme, Rothamsted International Fellowship and DBT Overseas Associateship. Encouraged by these collaborations, she submitted proposals for funding which then enabled her to procure some important equipment for research. For a long time after my appointment, she had to decline guiding many students since she did not have a laboratory to provide them work space. She got an independent laboratory only in 2003, about fourteen years after joining service. The new lab proved lucky for her. She published extensively and her work on nematode taxonomy got national and international recognition as she remain the first Asian to receive ONTA special award 2005 for sustained excellence in Nematology. (Journey to success: Qudsia Tahseen).

Renee M Borges, Ph.D. (1989, Miami)

She received the Sunderlal Baghai Gold Medal for Science. She works in the areas of chemical ecology, plant-animal interactions, behavioural ecology, and evolutionary biology. She was a strong believer in instinct. She realised that the only subject that could hold her attention was the natural world. Having been born into a family where medicine was an important vocation, this fascination with the natural world translated into an early desire to become a veterinarian (around the age of seven). Animal behaviour, plants, her surroundings, everything made her choose the profession of an ecologist. During her graduation, she spent evenings working with Humayun Abdulali at the Bombay National History Society, on the bird collections of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. She wrote a series of popular articles on ecology and evolution while pursuing an MSc in Animal Physiology at the Institute of Science in Mumbai under the supervision of the great Bird Man Dr. Salim Ali. During her PhD days in University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, where she received a Maytag PhD Fellowship and got the opportunity to work in their extremely successful Tropical Biology Programme. The Miami experience taught her scientific independence because graduate students had to write their own grant proposals and obtain their own research funds. She developed a proposal to study the relationship between phytochemistry and food choices in the herbivorous Indian giant squirrel *Ratufa indica*. In that time, she spent two years in India, a year each in Magod, North Kanara, Karnataka and in Bhimashankar, Maharashtra, collecting data for the degree. In those years she lived alone in the forests, drove her own jeep through the forests, hired local field assistants, and made enduring friendships, both personal and scientific. Since giant squirrels are found only in dense forests, in remote areas, those two years also gave her first contact with true rural India. After Ph.D., She continued a five-year post-doctoral programme supported by grant through the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in Dehradun. During this same period she joined the Bombay Natural History Society as Deputy Director (Research). Later, she accepted the faculty position in the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), where, she found the right scientific atmosphere, and most importantly, academic freedom that brings new excitement,

scientific friendships and collaborations. Together she discovered the world's first truly nocturnal bee that can pollinate plants, arboreal earthworms that live within ant-plants, ant's survival strategies, how male ant-mimicking spiders can find out whether a silken nest belongs to a virgin female just by chemical cues of the silk; her research team discovered how crab spiders can be successful at mimicking flowers; how plants produce scents to attract appropriate visitors and also scents to repel inappropriate ones. (The excitement of colours and scents : Renee Borges).

Usha Vijayraghavan, Ph.D. (1989, Caltech), FASc, FNA

She is the faculty of the Department of Microbiology and Cell Biology, IISc, Bangalore. She has won the DBT-Bioscience award and International Senior Research Fellowship of The Wellcome Trust, UK and J.C. Bose Fellowship. Her research group uses genetics and functional genomics to decipher how gene expression is controlled using plants and yeasts as experimental models. She was born into a family with a surfeit of engineers and grew up in an environment that greatly valued education. She had excellent teachers who recognized her eagerness to go beyond the curriculum and above what mattered for excellent board results. She obtained a Bachelors degree from Delhi University where the faculty of Sri Venkateshwara College recognized from very early on her aptitude and commitment. She sat her first year University exams while suffering chicken pox in an "isolation room" created in the college. Such was their confidence in her potential. She went on to top the University bringing to her college one of its many "Firsts" in its early years as a South Campus college of Delhi University. Subsequently, she did a master's degree in "interdisciplinary subject": Biochemistry, which was not offered at Delhi University or Jawaharlal Nehru University. At Post Graduate Institute for Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh her interest in research was reaffirmed. In the meantime she got married, and they decided to go to Caltech for her husband's post-doctoral work. She too work hard and with rigorous preparation and perseverance she was admitted to Caltech for her graduate research with Prof. John Ableson. He was among the few leading labs working intensively on the mechanism of mRNA splicing.

This is a process that contributes greatly to how eukaryotic cells generate a large repertoire of functional molecules from defined inherited genetic material. Towards the end of her graduate work came decision making time as her husband was returning to TIFR, Bombay. She had to identify her long-term objectives and decided on plant biology as an area for her post-doctoral research and began her tryst with plants in the laboratory of Prof. Elliot Meyerowitz at Caltech. After her post doc she returned to India as a Lecturer at the Indian Institute of Science. In general, Institutional support for women with families leaves much to be desired in most Indian establishments. But this is not an issue limited to career scientists. These issues plague most Indian establishments and require a combination of Institutional commitment to women's issues and a changed perception in society that values women at the work place. On the balance, the inner drive to excel in ones chosen profession counters any of the downsides of being a career scientist. She believed that there are great opportunities, many professional and personal gratifying moments waiting to be discovered by a woman who takes to science as a career. (My journey into understanding how cells and organisms are made : Usha Vijayraghavan).

Sulabha Pathak, Ph.D. (1995, Rotterdam)

She was a recipient of Homi Bhabha Fellowship. In childhood she was aware of only two burning passions i.e. to teach and to see the world. She was pragmatic enough to know that while her first goal was achievable for a girl from a middle-class family in recently independent India, the second seemed destined to remain a dream. She enjoyed all the subjects, be they languages (she often fancied herself an author) mathematics or sciences. Microbiology, at that time a relatively new field, offered the chance of a college teaching position directly after a master's. At the age of twenty-three, she was supposed to get married according to her mother's and grandmother's way of thinking. Though her father, on the other hand, thought it would be a mistake for her to marry before getting a Ph.D. She was ambivalent; marriage was not an option unless it was to the right guy. As fate would have it, after completion of Masters, she got the job of lecturing but she needed another challenge. Then she wrote her first book "Notes in Microbiology". It kept her

occupied for a while, and then she started dabbling in research projects. In this meantime her husband was transferred to the Netherlands. However, for the gypsy in her, it was a chance to see the world. Giving up her dream job was an easy decision because she knew her potential well enough to realize that she would always find something to do. Within a week of their arrival, with three-year old daughter in tow, she approached Prof. Rob Benner at the Erasmus University's immunology department for a voluntary job. She explained that she would work only the hours when her daughter was at school. Luckily, Rob appreciated her forthrightness and passion for research. Within a month, what had started as a voluntary job was converted to a salaried position. Strikingly her long march to a Ph.D. had begun. A couple of years after joining Erasmus, she started on a Ph.D. track. In the meantime her husband was transferred back to Mumbai. Also her supervisor accepted a two-year position at Stanford. She toyed with the idea of letting her husband return alone, but the emotional and economic toll was unacceptable. Her Guide was very supportive and understood her compulsions and suggested that to write a paper on her data while in India and then restart her research once her Co-Guide finished his stint at Stanford. While she waited to recommence doctoral work, she began to work as an industrial research consultant and dealt with a gamut of disparate projects from acne to herbal medicines to washing powders. When she revisited her doctoral track, she battled frustration as she worked in stretches of a few months at a time at Erasmus before returning home to analyze the data and think up new experiments. Her Ph.D. had morphed into a long-distance, part-time venture. She finally stood before thesis committee defending doctorate almost a decade. By this time, her daughter was soon to enter class ten, and she did not want any upheavals in her life. To use the time fruitfully, she teamed up with a friend and turned to a long-cherished dream of writing an immunology textbook priced for the Indian market. This was before the easy availability of information of the internet era. By the time she finished the book and her daughter passed class ten, fate intervened, once again in the person of her husband. He was offered a position in the U.S.. She jumped at the opportunities this presented for both travel and research. After years of self-imposed discipline, returning to

regular working hours as a post-doctoral fellow in immunology was a sheer joy. After the appointed three years, he was ready to return to India; but she was not. Her stint had been very fruitful and opened up the possibility of pursuing research at some of the most prestigious institutes in the U.S.. Her family knew that their lives had always taken precedence over her career; they told her now her dreams should come first. From a long-distance career to a long-distance marriage—for a year and a half, she lived the single life in Boston, indulging her passion for research at M.I.T. and Harvard. The year spent alone provided ample time for introspection. After the book, research projects, Ph.D., and postdoctoral stints, it was now time to do other things with her life. She was never been ambitious about her career, only about her work. When she returned to India, she worked on the second edition of the immunology book while searching for a position that would allow room for other pursuits. She is now a post-doctoral fellow at T.I.F.R., lucky to be with a boss who understands her perspective. She also teach underprivileged children, participate actively in causes she believe in, and travel extensively. The gypsy in her is now at peace it was a long, unconventional journey, but she would not change a thing. (The long way home...: Sulabha Pathak)

Chanda Nimbkar, Ph.D. (2006, Armidale)

She received the John Allwright Fellowship of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. She works on farm animal genetics and breeding, at the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute at Phaltan, which is a recipient of the CSIR Award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development, Maharashtra. In Spite of getting a high score (third highest in Maharashtra) in the SSC exam in 1976 she opted for B.Com., Yet she is now immersed in the science and practice of Animal Breeding. She can live on her farm near a village, a comparatively pollution free and more or less peaceful life, have a career in a challenging and exciting field and help to improve productivity of local sheep and goats and incomes of the people who rear them. She had the courage to give up the prospect of a career as a chartered accountant, and embarked on a new path in farming although she did not know where the path would lead. Her field of Animal Breeding was based on

statistics, and that early background helped her a lot. Her knowledge of accountancy is also very useful for administrative duties which she had to carry out as the head of a division of their Institute. The one year Master's degree in Animal Breeding at Edinburgh University, six years after her Bachelor's degree in Commerce was really tough but she enjoyed the rigour and discipline of 'quantitative' or 'statistical' genetics. After the MSc, there was an offer of a PhD scholarship at Edinburgh University. Others might have found this tempting, but she refused it because she wanted to come back and work on farm animal breeding for a few years, and then select a relevant topic for her PhD. She wanted her PhD thesis to be practically useful; not just academically interesting. Therefore she came back in 1990 and worked in the Animal Husbandry Division (established that year) of their Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute. Her father had established NARI in 1968 for research on improving the yield of irrigated crops such as sunflower, safflower and sweet sorghum. The work was novel and interesting; they were able to get some funding and worked with enthusiasm. The opportunity for another PhD scholarship did not come along until 2002. She got the John Allwright Fellowship offered by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research which was funding their project on developing 'Prolific worm-resistant meat sheep for Maharashtra'. She did PhD at the University of New England in Armidale, Australia, which is one of the top universities in the world in the field of animal breeding. She became a scientist cum entrepreneur and works for rural development. (Off the beaten track: Chanda Nimbkar)

Conclusion

This article herein has discussed the achievements, struggles and challenges of life of quite a few Indian women scientists. Still there remains scope for recapitulation of other researchers, whose innovations have not got due prominence for several factors which can be a topic of further studies. There are much more fields where more inspirational lives can be explored. In this short span of words and space, all the stories can not be explained. This article tries to depict the lives of some of the jewels of our country who have certainly achieved their

goals and also inspired a lot of other people. Still it is obviously depicted that women researchers need to be more encouraged for which opportunities to them should be made through proper mentoring or encouraging collaboration. Less likely to have full time contracts and fewer opportunities to gain influential position than male colleagues, sexual harassment, gender biased attitude- all these anomalies need to be redressed so as to inspire the women potential. However, it is surprising to know that the infrastructure and research facilities are not up to the mark in India. Strong family support and positive attitude towards women in workplace is much required aspects so that more girls who aspire to mark in the field of science can be more motivated.

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Contribution of Women Scientists in Biological Sciences in Global Perspective

Anisha Satpati, Sharmistha Pramanik & Poulami Ghosh

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid progress of human civilization, head of the family started considering the potential of the women folk outside the home as well. We have numerous examples who proved their excellence equally lead the male dominated science fraction. The theme for International Women's Day, 2020 commemorate the global day celebrating social, economical, cultural excellence of women making a call to action for tackling the persistent barrier against gender equality. To glorify their achievements, the theme of National Science Day has been selected as "Women in Science". This article tries to highlight the achievements made by recognized and non-recognised aspirants of Bioscience field.

WOMEN SCIENTISTS IN 19TH CENTURY

- Nettie Maria' Stevens (1861–1912):

She was one of the early American geneticists and was among the first researchers who described the chromosomal basis of sex first in insects and then in humans. Her early discoveries laid the basis for the Morgan's mapping the first gene locations onto chromosomes of fruit flies. She passed away just prior to accepting a faculty position.

- Beatrix Potter (1866-1943):

She is best known for her Peter Rabbit series of children's books. She was interested in nature, but was rejected as a student at the Royal Botanical Garden, only for her gender. In spite of being

discriminated she could not stop her innovative research work. She was the first person to hypothesize that lichens were actually a symbiotic relationship between fungi and algae. She recorded her observations in exquisite painting and become respectfully reputed as mycologist. Her work on germination of spores was rejected due to her gender.

- Florence Sabin (1871–1953):
She has been called as the first lady of American Science who studied the lymphatic and immune system. She was the first female full Professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She was an advocate for women's rights and higher education. In 1951 she achieved the Albert Lasker Public Service Award for her work.
- Margaret Sanger (1879–1966):
She was a nurse who promoted birth control as a means by which a woman could control her reproductive destiny. She opened the first birth control clinic in the United States. In 1929, she formed the National Committee on Fiederal Legislation for birth control. She is widely regarded as a founder of the modern birth control movement.
- Charlotte Auerbach (1899–1994):
Charlotte Auerbach, a German zoologist and geneticist discovered the mutations that mustard gas could cause in fruit flies. Her approach was biological rather than chemical in that, while she acknowledged that mutation took place in the chemistry of the gene, she adhered to the idea that it was the biological interaction that gave the process its complexity. Her work formed the basis for the science of mutagenesis. She was awarded the Royal Society Darwin Medal in 1977.

WOMEN SCIENTISTS IN 20TH CENTURY

- Margaret Mead (1901–1978):
She was a curator of ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History from 1928 to her retirement in 1959. She is an influ-

ential anthropologist who published her famous 'Coming of Age' in 1928. By this book the boys and girl in the Samon culture were taught to and allowed to value their sexuality. She died in 1978 and was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Union States' highest civilization honour.

- Barbara McClintock (1902–1992):

She is considered as the one of the greatest biologists of the twentieth century. Her research focused on colour mosaicism in maize during the 1940s. She is responsible for producing the first genetic map for maize. She also discovered the transposons, mobile genetic elements that tend to move between locations in the genome. For her remarkable work she was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983.

- Rachel Carson (1907–1964):

She was an American marine biologist and a science writer, is best known for her book 'Silent Spring' where she explored the long term effects of synthetic pesticides. Carson initially started working as a biologist with the U.S Bureau of Fisheries and later she became a known figure and researcher in that field. She won several awards for 'The sea around us including the National Book Award and the John Burroughs Medal. Rachel received many honorary degrees from universities. She was the second woman to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

- Virginia Apgar (1909–1974):

She was pioneer in anaesthesiology who developed the Apgar Newborn Scoring System, increasing infant survival rates. She warned that use of some anaesthetics during childbirth has negative effect. She was a leader in the field of anaesthesiology and teratology and introduced obstetrical considerations to the established field of neonatology.

- Ruth Dixon Turner (1914–2000):

Ruth Turner was a marine biologist, a curator of malacology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology and also a world-renowned expert on teredos, sharp-shelled mollusks that bore through wood.

For this reason she was called 'Lady Wormwood.' She was also the first woman scientist to use the deep ocean research submarine Alvin. Much of her work was done in co-operation with William J. Clench. They jointly described about 70 new mollusk species. She had published more than 200 scientific articles and had a successful career as a marine researcher.

- Gertrude Bell Elion (1918–1999):

Gertrude Belle Elion was an American biochemist and also a pharmacologist. She could not find a research job after graduating because she was female; then she worked as a secretary and high school teacher. After saving enough money to attend New York University she obtained her M.Sc. in 1941. Her fifteen financial aid applications for graduate school were not accepted due to gender bias. She had never obtained a formal Ph.D., but was later awarded an honorary Ph.D. from New York University Tandon School of Engineering in 1989 and an honorary S.D. degree from Harvard University in 1998. She had worked for the National Cancer Institute, American Association for Cancer Research and World Health Organization. She played an important role in the development of AZT, one of the first drugs used to treat HIV and AIDS. For discoveries of "important new principles of drug treatment" Elion had received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, together with Hitchings and Sir James Black in 1988.

- Rosalind Franklin (1920–1958):

She is called as 'The Dark Lady of DNA' as she was the pioneer of DNA double helix discovery but she was not in focus. Beside this she was an English chemist and X-ray crystallographer. There is very much controversy surrounding her life and work. Franklin is best known for her work on the X-ray diffraction images of DNA, particularly Photo 51, which led to the discovery of the DNA double helix for which James Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1962. Watson suggested that Franklin would have ideally been awarded a Nobel Prize in Chemistry, along with Wilkins. But she

had died in 1958 although there was not yet a rule against posthumous awards, the Nobel Committee generally does not make posthumous nominations. After finishing her work on DNA, Franklin led pioneering work at Birkbeck on the molecular structures of viruses. Her team member Aaron Klug continued her research, winning the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1982. This work was exactly what Franklin had started and which she introduced to Klug, and it is highly possible that, if she alive, she would have shared the Nobel Prize.

- Rosalyn Yalow (1921–2011):

She was an American medical physicist who had overcome many hurdles as a woman in her field as the powerful male figures controlled opportunities for training, promotion, and many aspects of development in the science field. When Yalow entered the University of Illinois in September 1941, she was the only woman among 400 professors and teaching assistants. At 1950, she had equipped a radioisotope laboratory at the Bronx VA Hospital. There she joined with Berson to develop radioimmunoassay (RIA), a radioisotope tracing technique. In 1977, Yalow was the sixth individual woman and the first American-born woman, to win the Nobel Prize in a scientific field for her role in devising the radioimmunoassay (RIA) technique. In 1988, she received the National Medal of Science, the highest honour for American individuals in science and technology.

- Martha Cowles Chase (1927–2003):

She was an American geneticist. In 1952, she and Hershey (a bacteriologist & geneticist) performed the Hershey–Chase experiment, which helped to confirm that genetic information is transmitted by DNA, but not by the protein. That experiment helped to resolve the controversy over the composition of hereditary information. For that discovery Hershey won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1969, but Chase was not included. A series of personal setbacks through the 1960s ended her career in science.

- Anne McLaren (1927–2007):

She was a famous scientist in developmental biology. She was a member of the committee established to inquire into the technologies of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and embryology, which later produced the Warnock Report. From the year 1991–2000, she was a member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. She had many contributions towards the development of new contraceptive methods for women. For her contribution in science she was made an officer of the Royal Society, the first female officer in the society's 330-years history. For her pioneering work on fertility she was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1986.

- Dian Fossey (1932–1985):

She was an American primatologist, conservationist who was known for undertaking an extensive study of mountain gorilla groups. Fossey made discoveries about gorillas including gorilla vocalization, hierarchies and social relationships among groups, rare infanticide, gorilla diet, and how gorillas recycle nutrients. She had supported the active conservation through anti-poaching patrols and preservation of natural habitat. She was recognized as the world's leading authority on the physiology and behaviour of mountain gorillas, defining gorillas as being 'dignified, highly social, gentle giants, with individual personalities, and strong family relationships.' After her death, Fossey's Digit Fund in the US was renamed the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International. The Kari-soke Research Centre is operated by this fund and it continues the daily gorilla monitoring and protection that she started.

- Jane Goodall (1934–Continued):

She is an English primatologist, who is considered to be the world's famous expert on chimpanzees. She became the eighth person to be allowed to study for a PhD in the University of Cambridge without having a BA or BSc degree. Jane Goodall is well known for her studies of the chimpanzees at the Gombe Stream Game Reserve on Lake Tanzania. She discovered that they are omnivores. She also found that, 'it isn't only human beings who have personality,

who are capable of rational thought and emotions like joy and sorrow.’ She became the global leader of efforts to protect wild apes and their habitats. But her unconventional practices, such as giving names to the chimpanzees she studied, have brought criticism from some scientists. In April 2002, Secretary-General Kofi Annan named Goodall a United Nations Messenger of Peace. Her other honours include, the French Legion of Honor, Medal of Tanzania, the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science, the Spanish Prince of Asturias Awards. In 2019 she had received Gold Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

- Lynn Margulis(1938–2011):
Lynn Margulis, an American evolutionary theorist & biologist was the primary modern proponent for the significance of symbiosis in evolution. Her first publication was on the genetics of *Euglena* which published in 1958 in the *Journal of Protozoology*. In 1966, as a young faculty member at Boston University, Margulis wrote a theoretical paper titled ‘On the Origin of Mitosing Cells’. This is considered today as a landmark in modern endosymbiotic theory. For the Advancement of Science she was elected as Fellow of the American Association in 1975.
- WangariMaathai (1940–2011):
WangariMaathai, an environmentalist was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She had worked in veterinary medicine research at the University of Nairobi. Despite the opposition of the male students and faculty, she was able to earn a Ph.D. there. She was the first woman who became the head of the veterinary medicine faculty at that university. In 1977 she founded the Green Belt movement in Kenya, which has planted more than 10 million trees to prevent soil erosion. She had also served as national chairperson for the National Council of Women of Kenya. Her efforts in environmental act led to a Nobel Peace Prize.
- Lydia Villa-Komaroff (1947-continued):
Lydia Villa-Komaroff, a molecular & cellular biologist is known as a pioneer in the field of molecular cloning and DNA manipulation. She was part of a team that discovered how bacterial cells

could be used to generate insulin. Villa-Komaroff's laboratory made several important contributions following the insulin research. Villa-Komaroff contributed to the discovery that a molecule known to be associated with Alzheimer's disease (amyloid beta) causes degeneration of brain cells (neurons). This had provided the first direct evidence that a fragment of the amyloid precursor protein could kill neurons. At 1992 she had received Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Award. Now she is a Fellow of the Association for Women in Science.

Recent achievements of women scientists:

- Francoise BarreSinoussi :
The French virologist shared Nobel Prize in 2008 in physiology/medicine with Luc Montagnier for discovery of HIV virus.
- Elizabeth Blackburn and Carol Greider :
Both of them shared Nobel Prize in 2009 for discovery of Telomere and Telomerase which has wild application in research in health sector.
- Ada E. Youath :
She shared Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2009 with Venkatraman-Ramakrishnan for demonstrating the structure and function of ribosomes at the atomic level. X-ray crystallography was used to map the position of each and every atom making the ribosome.
- TuYouyou :
She won Nobel Prize for physiology/ medicine in 2015 shared with William C. Campbell and Santosh Omura. A new drug, Avernecetin, discovered by Campbell and Omura lower the incidence of River Blindness, Lymphatic Filariasis as well as other parasitic diseases. Another drug discovered by Youyou was Artemisinin found to have a significant reduction in mortality rates of malaria patient.
- May Britt Moser :
A Nobel laureate in physiology/medicine in 2014- the awareness of one's location and how to find the way to other places is crucial for both human and animals. She with her husband discovered

that nerve cells of a rat fire in the entorhinal cortex, a region near the hippocampus when the animal scuttled past particular location arranged in a hexagonal grid. These grid cells associated with other cells to form the brains positioning system. Similar grid arrangements were found in human brain. Their work paved the way for other neuroscientists working on diseases like Alzheimer's.

- Barbara Rosemary Grant :

An evolutionary biologist shared Kyoto prize in 2009 with her husband Raymond Grant for demonstration of rapid evolution caused by natural selection in response to environmental changes. This award is for significant contribution to cultural and spiritual betterment of mankind.

- Francis Arnold :

She was a Nobel laureate in chemistry in 2008 for her evolution of enzyme. She shared the prize with George P. Smith and Gregory P. Winter who discovered the technique called Phage- Display to isolate genes for targeted proteins.

- Linda J. Saif :

She was a American microbiologist at Ohio state university. She was the first women scientists to win wolf prize agriculture awarded in 2015 for her contribution in the field of virology and immunology.

- Xiaowei Zhuang :

She was a multitalented women scientist recipient of one of the most prestigious awards, Heineken prize (2018) in biochemistry. She was a Chinese -American biophysicist, professor of chemical biology as well as an investigator at the Howard Hughes medical institute. She is best known for her work in developing stochastic optical Reconstruction microscopy (STORM), a super resolution fluorescence microscopy method and discovery of novel cellular structure using STORM.

CONCLUSION

This article herein has discussed proficiency of quiet a few scientists. Still there remains scope for recapitulation of other researchers, whose innovations have not got due prominence for several factors which can be a topic of further studies. As of 1901-2019, it is noted that Nobel prizes had been awarded to 866 male scientists whereas 53 female scientists had been honoured. This figure evaluates that ratio of women scientists is not appreciable in global context. Still the representation to this discipline on the part of women researchers needs to be encouraged for which opportunities to them should be made through proper mentoring or encouraging collaboration. Less likely to have full time contracts and fewer opportunities to gain influential position than male colleagues, sexual harassment, gender biased attitude- all these anomalies needs to be redressed so as to inspire the women potential. However, it is surprising to know that till enthusiasm and inspiration among women researchers is not up to the mark in developed nations.

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Nature of Women-Centric Bengali Television Serials and Its Negative Impact

Jhuma Hari

In modern era, television has played multiple roles in society. It plays the role of a teacher who gives an education, a parent who will be with us every moment to guide us and a special guru to its viewers. Indeed, television acts as an agent that transforms culture and tradition from one generation to another. It builds bonds in our relationship, with it and acts as a friend in loneliness, a device of empowerment, and a tool of learning. Amongst all the mass media today, Bengali Television serials attract the largest number of viewers. Its audience is greater in size than any of the other media audiences. This is because of the Bengali Television serials have capacity to attract the audiences of all age groups, literate and illiterate and of all the strata of the society.

Television serials, mainly Bengali Television serials, have become a major source of enlightenment, leisure and entertainment for women. The media planners at present scenario are particularly focusing on the requirements and needs of their women viewers, who are very large in number. It is very much prominently observed that the programs shown on television these days are largely women-centric. Serials can impart both positive and negative values on its viewers. Hence, the objectives of the present exercise are to highlight the nature of women-centric Bengali Television Serials and to examine the negative impact of women-centric Bengali Television Serials. Content Analysis, Comparative Analysis, and Internet Research have been employed to develop this paper.

NATURE OF WOMEN-CENTRIC BENGALI TV SERIALS

Kolkata based television serial production houses highly try to grab attention, particularly at the evening time, from a massive number of people belonging to Bengali society by producing women-centered television serials. Several overwhelming evidences can be produce in support of people's Bengali TV serials Addiction. But it is very difficult to measure whether this people's interest is inherent or it is newly developed attraction.

It is perceived that, the people from various economic backgrounds are taking interest in Bengali Television Serials and spending a considerable amount of time experiencing multidimensional role of the women as projected through television channels like Zee Bangla and Star Jalsha especially. Widely projected themes are: a woman is a good daughter, a good wife, a good mother, a good life companion etc.

Current Bengali Television Serials mostly highlight love and affection, marriage, divorce, remarriage, conspiracy, vengeance, extra-marital affairs, deprivation, success and failure etc. centering round the life of women. People are watching these issues in dramatic forms and hence people are becoming more aware about the problems and challenges of contemporary society.

Now-a-days, Bengali Television serials are significant sources of income for the women. It can easily be understood that the percentage of women artists is comparatively high than that of the men artists. Bengali Television serials are the platforms to project vibrant capabilities and fabulous performances by the women artists. Mimi Chakraborty, Manali Dey, Ritabhari Chakraborty are few popular personalities who came from the small screen.

Wardrobes in contemporary Bengali TV serials are also very impressive. Make-up of the actresses are outstanding than that of the actors. The viewers express their desires to copy the actresses to whom people think popular identity and unique character. The serials addicted women viewers often insist to make their dresses with the help of the tailors in accordance with the wardrobes that their favorite characters wear in the Bengali Television serials.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF BENGALI TELEVISION SERIALS

TV serials play very momentous role in society as well as in our day to day daily life. But, in recent days the TV serials have produced bad examples in many cases. Now-a-days Bengali TV Serials producers propagate maximum number of controversial issues in their serials which mostly influence their largest audience that is women. Good Bengali TV Serials is very scarce. TV Serials have immense negative influence on the mind and thought of the people.

Negative impact of Bengali TV Serials can be seen in the role of Bengali women in their domestic life. Women members are deeply interested in experiencing evening time Bengali TV Serials than that of rearing and caring their children.

Cultures like divorce, remarriage, extra-marital affairs etc. were strictly blameful in Bengali society, particularly in rural areas. But due to the broadcast of Bengali TV serials highlighting on these Post-Modernist issues, we witness, the people are getting opportunities to reconstruct their mind set-up. Ultimately, people are welcoming these cultures with serious troubles. Is this the erosion of traditional Bengali culture or modernization?

Few important Issues of Post-Modern Feminism such as abortion, prostitution, pre-marriage motherhood etc. all these are either silent in Bengali TV Serials or lightly projected.

Everyone would justify that evening time news is better than evening time TV serials. A considerable figure of Indian population is ignorant about the problems and emerging challenges of the country because of their eager interest in Television Serials.

The language used in Bengali TV serials is usually potent enough to deteriorate the generally excepted social culture and norms. They talk like the Bengali TV Serials actress.

TV serials addiction is a hindrance to practice good habits such as Library visit, social works, and constructive human action like writing poems, music practice, dancing and so on.

TRP of serials is increasing day by day with the voting of public only, if everyone understands that these Bengali TV Serials are only for entertainment not a part of our life and sometimes spoils the environment of the family as few people also applied the conspiracies

in their personal life also. We should be conscious on what we are watching that might impact the next generation and this can only bring revolution in the serial industry which will help the industry to bring forth new and innovative things which will not only help the adult but the children to develop the mind.

Bengali Television serials are an integral part of our everyday life and have become a kind of necessity. The picture of women portrayed in the Bengali Television serials is a blend of both reality and illusion. The daily serials are infact mirroring the India Society. All most all the aspects of Indian society and its culture are portrayed in the serials, so it's very essential to properly understand what is reality and illusion in these serials. Some of the good informative Bengali Television serials also started new point of view serials like Prothoma Kadambini is based on Kadambini Ganguly who becomes one of the first female doctors in British India. However, besides being a woman, she has to battle superstition and the ignorance of the Bengal society from 16 March 2020 at Star Jalsha same way one of very papoular Bengali Television serials is Karunamoyee Rani Rashmoni at Zee Bangla which started from 24 July 2017 today also very popular because of its historical importance.

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Position of Women in Modern Society

Pramanna Gurung

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where goddesses are worshiped and women get tamed, harassed, abused, raped, and kidnapped every single day. So the question is how terrible is it to be born a girl in the world today? The almost daily headlines about cruel act of violence, exploitation and discrimination against women from the kidnapping of nearly 276 school girls in Nigeria in April 2014 to the latest gang rape and murder of a 26 year old veterinary doctor in Shamshabad, near Hyderabad, India provide plenty of reasons to be pessimistic about women's equality in today's world. Religion and law tell us that we are all alike and equal, but society tends to prove us the contrary. Woman have found themselves interpreting many parts on the stage of life, from key characters to ones of very little importance, but always present in the spotlight. From Goddesses to slaves, from the symbol of sin to the image of holiness, women have had a difficult path in understanding their purpose, their limits, and most importantly, their freedom. Today's society reveals a modern perspective of this issue, one that in earlier times would have been strongly disapproved. Today, the modern woman is totally different from what she used to be. She tries to constantly improve her position in society, she is preoccupied with her looks, and what is very important, she is trying to have a normal life without being constrained by anyone or anything. The modern women wants good education and a blooming professional life, a way of life that allows her to have a baby and she can do it alone if she does not find the right man to support her. Women are no longer the better half

of someone or something, they are their own shelves, they represent their own idea and beliefs, they can be leaders, mother, wives, and also the heads of companies, and in one word they are free. There was a time when only one woman succeeded in being a queen. Now, there is nothing holding us back from becoming queen in our own lives.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A WOMAN?

First of all women is mother, a wife, a daughter, a friend. The woman is sensitive but also strong. She is independent but knows her responsibility very well. The woman exudes beauty, sensuality, love. Women are true heroes who fight for their purposes, who go through life with their heads up and who love to be respected and appreciated. Women are the smile, the finesse and the love in this world. They have enormous soul power.

FACTORS LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITION OF WOMEN IN MODERN SOCIETY:

The enhancement of position of women in the society can be analysed in the light of the major changes that have taken place in areas such as legislation, education, economic and employment sector, political participation and awareness of right on the part of women etc. Following are some changes that have been taken place in modern society

WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

“If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered”.—Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The education of women is critical component in a country's goal to close the gender gap and advance economic and social growth and development. Studies show that the investment in the education of women is effective in addressing poverty and extremism. Women's education increases the income of women and leads to growth in GDP. Educated women can help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. They can guide their children in all fields of life. In last few years there has been considerable improvement in women education. Education for disabled women has also improved – In 2011; Giusi

Spagnolo became the first woman with Down syndrome to graduate college in Europe. More and more women are coming out of house and opt for education. That is the reason why we are seeing lot of women on top position in world. They have done considerable improvement in all areas. Some women who have done remarkable work in the field of education in the world are Savitribai Phule, Maria Montessori, Mary McLeod Bethune, Helen Keller, Clara Barton, Mary Ward etc.

WOMEN IN ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT FIELDS:

Unlike in the earlier days women in the modern society and in the age of technology are not constrained in four walls of house they are going out of their boundaries and becoming self dependent. In the employment market they are giving tough competition to men folk. In some fields number of women workers is steadily increasing. For example women working as doctors, researchers, teachers, advocates, nurses, bank employ clerks, typist, receptionist, personal assistants, telephone operators and so on. Today some of them are the CEOs of top companies and they are running successful business. Since 1991, though in a smaller number, women are getting recruited into armed force, naval force and air force also. In order to give protection to the economic interests and rights of the womenfolk the government has undertaken various socio-economic legislation, which cover areas such as right to property or inheritance, equal wages, working conditions, maternity benefits and job security. Some countries like India, France, Germany Italy, The Netherland, and Norway have quotas for women on boards of public companies. But it is seen that women earnings still lags behind the man. Around the world, women perform two-thirds of the world's work, especially in agriculture, for 10 percent of the income (Inter Action, 2009); own only 1 percent of the assets (www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org); and constitute 70% of the world's poor (International Labour Organisation). "Whatever women are working in industrialized nations or developing countries, in rural or urban settings, most women still carry the triple burden of raising children, performing household chores and earning an income for their family," was the finding of the 2010 Soroptimist International white paper "Women at Work."

WOMEN IN POLITICAL FIELD

It is believed that equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to build and sustain responsive and transparent democracy. The meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus on global development policy. Women's participation in mainstream political activity has important implication for the broader arena of governance in any country. There is growing recognition of the untapped capacity and talents of women and women's leadership. Over the last two decades, the rate of women's representation in national parliaments globally has increased from 11.8% in 1998 to 17.8% in 2008 to 23.5% in 2018, as of April 1, 2019, the global average of women in national assemblies is 24.3%. A number of countries are exploring measures that may increase women's participation in government at all levels, from the local to the national. However more and more women are pursuing leadership position in the present day. The number of women leaders around the world has grown, but they still represent a small group .At the executive levels of government, women become prime ministers more often than they become presidents. But no doubt today there is exception increase of women participation in politics than earlier.

WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF SPORTS

Women participation in sports rose dramatically in the twentieth century, especially in the last quarter, reflecting changes in modern societies that emphasized gender parity. Although the level of participation and performance still varies greatly by country and by sport, women's sports have broad acceptance throughout the world, and in a few instance, such as figure skating, rival or exceed their male counterparts in popularity. Today there is more female participating in athletics than ever before. In October 2018, the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018 was the first fully gender balance Olympic event ever. Most recently, changes to the event programme for Tokyo 2020 will see female participation rise to a projected 48.4%, with double the number of mixed events compared to Rio 2016, while Beijing 2022 will also see an increase number in women's and mixed events to reach record 45.44% female representation at a Winter Games. "This is an excellent step forward. We have made history-to have equal numbers

of women and men competing for the first time at the Olympic games of Youth Olympic Games. As well as being another step in the implementation of Olympic agenda 2020, this is a great milestone for Women's sport and for Olympic movement as a whole." This statement was made by President Bach at the IOC (International Olympic Committee) Executive meeting 21 August 2015. In the present day the some name of the women who are pioneering in the field of sports are P V Sindhu (Badminton), Mary Kom (Boxing), Serena William (Tennis), Katinka Hosszu (Swimming) and so on.

WOMEN GIVEN EQUAL RIGHT

Women's rights are the rights and entitlements claimed for women worldwide, and which formed the basis for women's right movement in the 19th century and feminist movement during 20th century. In some countries, these rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local custom and behaviour, whereas in others they are ignored and suppressed. Issues commonly associated with notions of women's right include the right to bodily integrity and autonomy; to be free from sexual violence; to vote; to hold public office; to enter into legal contracts; to have equal right in family law; to work; to fair wages or equal pay; to have reproductive rights; to own property; to education. The Universal Declaration of Human Right, adopted in 1948, enshrines "the equal right of men and women.", and addressed both the equality and equity issues. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for legal imprecation of the Declaration of elimination of discrimination against sex, described as an International bill of rights for women. It came into force on 5 September 1981. In 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act was passed in India which provides protection to women from sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector. All these rights are passed for the benefits o of women.

CONCLUSION

Gandhi ji once said, "Women is the noblest of God's creation, supreme in her own sphere of activity." These words are blossoming now. The

woman of modern society has started caring for her social, emotional, cultural, religious and economic needs. She has now become tool for social change. She has fought a great deal so that the present times would treat the new female generation differently. It can be said that women have more freedom than earlier however not true in many respects because prejudice still remains in the society. Though the position of today's modern women is high, the overall picture of women's position in world is not satisfactory. Discrimination against women is still a pervasive phenomenon. Despite major initiative by the Government, to end discrimination through legal and policy instruments, to improve access of women to education, nutrition and health care services, the ground level situation still shows that much remains to be done, The greater empowerment of women and enhanced political participation at all levels of such activity can help to change the scene. Last but not the least, we should not forget that progress of a nation cannot be achieved until and unless there is active participation of its mother, wives, sister and daughter. So each and every man should thoughtfully decide to bring a revolutionary transformation in his attitude towards women and accept the women to be the equal participants in the country's progress.

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Position of Women in Modern Society

Reeta Das

INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare said about women: "The world would be imperfect without the presence of the woman. The woman came out of man's rib, not from the feet to be trampled on, not from his head to be superior but from the side to be equal, under the arm to be protected, next to the heart to be loved." Status of Indian Women began to change radically during the modern period. Historically the period after 1750 A.D is known as the modern period. Though the quality of life of women during the British Rule remained more or less the same, some substantial progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women in education, employment, social right and so on. Some social evils such as child marriage, sati system, devadasi system, purdah system, prohibition of widow remarriage etc., which were a great hurdle in the path of women's progress were either controlled or removed by suitable legislations. Social reformers with patriotic spirit on the one hand and the British Government on the other together took several measures to improve the status of women and to The status of Indian women has radically changed since independence. Both the structural and cultural changes provided equality of opportunities to women in education, employment and political participation. With the help of these changes, exploitation of women, to a great extent was reduced. More freedom and better orientation were provided to the women's organisation to pursue their interest.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article is descriptive. An attempt has been made to analyse the conditions of position of women in modern India. Here I have

concentrated in the sphere of Science and Technology. From the 18th century onwards, Indian women contributed their works to the society. According to the need of the article the data utilised are secondary in nature, which are collected from books, journals, magazines, research articles.

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS OF INDIA

In India the situation of women in science is similar to other Asian countries, with some notable differences. India is a land of contradictions: it has had a powerful woman prime minister, a woman president, it has a large number of very highly accomplished women and at the same time it rates extremely low in the treatment of the average woman. As an example, the percentage of women Nobel laureates (2.94%) in the fields of Science and Technology along with the Field's medal (1.66%) in mathematics gives us a brief idea. Such glaring inequity can be explained by many social prejudices and stereotypes towards women counterpart, questioning their intellectual and leadership ability. Such as :

- A stereotype of men being better at math and science is inculcated from childhood itself 1, 2. These preconceived notions might discourage female students to pursue their career in science or technology.
- There is also the longstanding belief that science and technology are masculine subjects, since they deal with the technical aspects of nature 3, 4. A recent study tried to explain the role of society and psychological impression over the masculinity of "physics" and thus highlighted the role of symbolic hegemony which perpetuated this idea 5.
- Another stereotype that plagues female worker in every sphere of life is the expectation to be the primary caregiver of the family.

During Vedic age, the highlight was that women enjoyed equal rights in education, politics and property. For example, Gargi Vachaknavi, 6, 7 Lilavati 8, Maitreyi 9 were mentioned as the experts of their respective fields.

The status of women in Indian society underwent many changes as a result of the social changes in the country. Among the various sub disciplines of science, medicine was the first to attract Indian women. Indian women have had a presence in the sciences for well over a century.

The first Indian woman to receive her degree as a medical doctor did so in 1885. Kadambini Ganguly, the extraordinary woman who broke the glass ceiling on women's freedom. She was one of the first women graduates of India and to get admission to Calcutta Medical College in 1884. Incredibly confident, determined and multi-faceted, Kadambini Ganguly was the voice of women's education and rights.

An early Indian woman doctorate in basic sciences was Janaki Ammal (in 1931) and the first woman to get her doctorate from an Indian university was Ashima Chatterjee, (in 1944). However, prior to Indian independence in 1947, the numbers had been very low, even as a fraction of those who studied science. Since then however, Indian women have come a long way in terms of science education. They are entering into all kinds of professions like engineering, medicine, research in different sphere of science.

In 1950, university enrolment in the sciences accounted for about 20% of the total irrespective of gender. By 2000, women's share in university enrolment increased to about 40% and appears to have plateaued at this level, as has the share within the sciences.

A comparative analysis of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the most prominent engineering colleges in the country depicts the immense gap in gender equality with an average female faculty of 11.24%. The first group of IITs established between 1951-2001 (7 IITs) shows an average of 10.74% women faculty in science and technology streams, followed by 11.6% in second set (2008-2009) (8 IITs) and 11.33% in third set (2012-2016) (8 IITs)¹⁰.

Among the Universities, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (IISc) came out as the mostly male dominated (with 8.6% female faculty), while Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham (45.8%) and Savitribai Phule Pune University (40.53%) stands out with most balanced distribution of gender within India¹⁰.

The National Institutes of Technologies (NITs) exhibit an average of 17.75% of women faculty with NIT Uttarakhand having the lowest

(6.67%) and NIT Manipur having the highest percentage (29.41%) of female faculty 10 .

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) is one of the largest research organization, with 38 national laboratories and approximately 4600 active scientists, distributed throughout India of which only 18.48% are women¹⁰ .

The distribution of gender in Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISERs) throughout the India is 15.47% (female) and 84.52% (male) 10.

Different research institutes (mainly focused on biological sciences) such as The National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (IICB) etc, exhibit the same profile of having 23.12% female scientists compared to 77.49% of male scientists¹⁰.

The All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has had only one woman director in its 60-year history given the large number of women in medicine, and this is also true for the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR). The prestigious Indian Statistical Institute, founded in the year 1931, now has its first woman director only now. The first woman director of the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism was appointed in 2005, after its establishment as an autonomous institute in 1971.

Other institutions that have been headed by women at some time include the National Institute of Immunology, the National Brain Research Centre, and the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology.

The data shows that women directors of science institutes, whether in areas of Biological/Medical Sciences or in Physical Sciences are rare, and as heads of departments in universities and research institutes, they are not uncommon, but the fraction rarely exceeds 15% overall. In all, therefore, women's participation in governance structures is fairly limited. With such low numbers, changes are difficult to bring about.

Interestingly enough, the Indian Academy of Science (IASc) and National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) 11 undertook a survey which included women who could not continue in Science after a Ph.D., along with scientists of both genders who had continued in

science or related professions. In the survey all but the women who had had to leave, said that in their perception those who left had left due to family reasons whereas those who had actually left answered that it was because they did not find appropriate job or support.

The large drop in the number of women between the doctoral and professional stages appears to be, in part due to social pressure on women to have a family which is seen as incompatible with a professional career. There are patriarchal attitudes in hiring practices, so many women are discriminated against at this stage as well, with administrators deciding that women “should” be opting for family over a career .

For women holding positions in governmental institutions, there is presently a policy that entitles them to two years of support for “child-care leave”, which they can take at any point until their children are 18 years of age. This is intended to help balance the pressures of maintaining a family and a career.

Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Bio Technology (DBT) Schemes for women to come back to science after a break. DBT, Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI) special awards for women. Establishment of the Task Force for Women in Science by the DST. Support of women entrepreneurs by DST, DBT and other organizations. The DST has also brought out a book containing detailed life and career stories of a few Indian women scientists 12; these also serve as inspirational material designed to attract young women to a career in science.

The IASc Council formed a committee in 2001 to discuss issues of women in the sciences, and their deliberations led to the formation of the Women in Science (WiS) Panel in 2003. The webpage <http://www.ias.ac.in/womeninscience> summarizes information of interest to women scientists and acts as a source for related material and research.

A large fraction of women scientists work in Institutes that come under Department of Space (DOS), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) or the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) where they do not need to make grant applications. The fraction of women as division and

project heads in the above (DRDO, ISRO and DOS) is substantial, about 30%, and in fact the current head of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (Agni-IV) is a woman. Muthayya Vanitha & Ritu Karidhal Senior Scientists at ISRO. Vanitha was project director, & Karidhal was mission director of Chandrayaan-2. These organizations follow the rule of transferring spouses together when both are employed in the same service. This certainly has helped women working in organizations.

CONCLUSION

Women in India slowly started recognising her true potential. She has started questioning the rules laid down for her by the society. As a result, she has started breaking barriers and earned a respectable position in the world. Today Indian women have excelled in each and every field from social work to visiting space station. The Indian woman has to make her way through all the socialised prejudices against her, and the men yet have to allow and accept the women to be equal participants in the country's way forward.

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Emergency of Open Educational Resources for Rural Women Empowerment in India: The Possible Roles of Public Libraries for Disseminating Knowledge

Tumpa Saha

INTRODUCTION

In today's environment women empowerment is a pre requisite for a good nation. Women empowerment means the ability for women to enjoy their right to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and well being. But rural women are less literate than rural men because there was a negative attitude of the family towards education for girl child. And the dropout rate is high of girls from schools. Including above reasons some others factors inhibiting women's growth in India. These areas are :

- Lack of digital literacy.
- Lack of access to necessary and sufficient information.
- Being economically poor.
- Mistreatment / violence.
- Overwork.
- Linguistic diversity.

In this paper I have tried to describe how rural women's can be empowered through open educational resources with the help of public libraries in India.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women's empowerment is, basically, giving power to women in space of society where they didn't have it. It is a process of making them part of the decision process in a certain area where they didn't have it.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To give a brief description of open educational resources which are useful for rural women empowerment in India.
- To explore the necessities for open educational resources for rural women empowerment in India.
- To assess the possible roles of public libraries for disseminating knowledge.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER)

According to UNESCO, Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

ADVANTAGES OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- **Expanded access to learning:** Students anywhere in the world can access OERs at any time, and they can access the material repeatedly and easy to distribute widely with little or no cost.
- **Augmentation of class materials:** OERs can supplement textbooks and lectures where deficiencies in information are evident.
- **Quick circulation:** Quick availability of material may increase the timeliness and/or relevance of the material being presented.
- **Less expense for students:** The use of OERs instead of traditional textbooks or course packs, etc. can substantially reduce the cost of course materials for students.
- **Showcasing of innovation and talent:** A wide audience may learn of faculty research interests and expertise. Potential students and donors may be impressed, and student and faculty recruitment efforts may be enhanced.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN INDIA:

Here open educational resources can be divided into two parts:

- I. Audio visual open educational resources
- II. Textual open educational resources

A list of some open educational resources is given below which are mostly useful for rural women empowerment in India. These are:

AUDIO VISUAL OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Open Educational Resources	URL
SWAYAM PRAVA	https://swayamprabha.gov.in/
Sugamya pustakalaya	https://library.daisyindia.org/
NPTEL	https://nptel.ac.in/
CLABIL	https://clabil.org/
DIKSHA	https://diksha.gov.in/

TEXTUAL OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Open Educational Resources	URL
SWAY AM PORTAL	https://swayam.gov.in/
epg pathshala	http://epgp.inflibnet.sc.in/
OERu	https://oeru.org
Khan Academy	https://khanacademy.org
Freotech e book	https://freotechbooks.com/
Book Boon	https://bookboon.com

POSSIBLE ROLES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES FOR DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE

Public libraries play an important role in women empowerment process. It attempts to meet various needs of readers, provide various information sources and services. Hence it has been established as a crucial place in the life of women, as it provides information that is essential for the women empowerment. According to UNESCO public library manifesto defines

public library as “the local gateway of knowledge” so; public library can be act as an intermediary centre for women’s to providing Teleworking facility, CAS service, Extension service, Awareness programme etc. And also aware rural women about their:

- **Human rights** : Public library has to offer materials and services to the people to understand social phenomenon, human rights and thus live successful social life and social evils.
 - **Gender equality** : Women’s empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country.
 - **Increase awareness regarding health** : Public libraries can help to increase the awareness of women about their problems and solutions about the major issues in women’s health through open educational resources.
 - **Education, economic and Occupational empowerment** : public libraries can empower rural women’s through education, economically and occupationally through disseminate information which can use for the employment, skill development or in generating self employment activity.
 - **Legal and Political information** : the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women empowerment. Public library through information sources can address the gaps between what the law prescribes and what actually occurs.
-
- Public library is very important in the life of any nation. It attempts to meet various
 - needs of readers, provide various information sources and services. Public library play
 - important role in women empowerment process. Hence it has been established as a crucial
 - place in the life of women, as it provides information that is essential for the women
 - empowerment. It will help for their own development, family and community development.
 - From the analysis, it stated that library has to play a vital role for the improvement of women.

- Various information sources of the library are not sufficient to meet the needs of women users
- and the infrastructure and facilities of the library has to be improved. Majority of the women
- under study are not aware of the information technology applications. Hence there is an
- urgent need for effective orientation programmes, workshops, seminars etc among women
- that only they can exploit the maximum benefit from application of information technology.

CONCLUSION

Information is a basic need of life, which is helps in the proper Role of Public Libraries on Women Empowerment. Public libraries are the local gateway to knowledge and should provide basic information for lifelong learning, decision making etc which overcome the poverty of information of rural women therefore they can use for skill development or in generating self employment activity. So, the conclusion of this study is that it is the high time for emergency of open educational resources for empowering rural women and it is the hour that public library should act as a facilitator to empower the women.

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Position of Women in Modern Society

Dr. Arpana Dhar Das

To speak about women in modern society it is imperative to refer to the statement of the great Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda who stated, “The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women’s is improved.” This precious statement of the great Indian saint expresses the actual value of women in society.

Both men and women make up the societal matrix and unlike men, women contribute equally to the welfare and progress of the nation. The status of women in society has been subjected to several changes in the history of mankind. The status of a woman refers to her position in society with respect to her privileges, rights, and duties. Here status is measured in the comparative amount of respect and prestige conferred to her with that of her male counterpart.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN VEDIC AND POST-VEDIC PERIOD

Women of ancient India, especially during the Vedic period, some 3000 years ago, enjoyed equal or even high intellectual and spiritual states as their male counterparts. The Rig-Vedic society was indeed liberal in nature. Both boys and girls had equal access to education. Women never stayed behind the *pardah* and were free to choose their mates. Wives were treated as ‘*Ardhanginis*’ who advised their husbands in all family and even financial matters. Unmarried women inherited their father’s property like men. Women took part in all religious ceremonies with their husbands. Lopamudra, Gargi, Maitreyee Khana were women of high intellect who composed hymns of Rig Veda. Such was the status of women in the Vedic period.

From the post-Vedic period onwards the position of women started declining and they were considered to be mere homemakers making happy and strong families for their men. In fact, patriarchy started creeping in since the post-Vedic period where men started holding primary power, predominating in the roles of political leadership, moral authority, economic power, and control of the property. The organization of the family or the household was fully under the control of man. The superior position of men in society resulted in dominance, subjugation, and exploitation of women in most cases. Women, therefore, become a victim of humiliation, torture, and immense exploitation. Patriarchy, or domination of men on women, is an unjust social system that is, in fact, harmful for the society at large.

The traditional Indian society witnessed several social events which were clear reflections of patriarchy. The Muslim women, since time immemorial, were compelled to keep themselves within the four walls of their houses with a long veil or pardah on their faces. They were allowed to step out of their houses robed in long 'Burkas'. They were, in fact, treated as saleable communities who tolerated their husband's whims of marrying scores of women. The husband was allowed to discard a woman by uttering the simple word 'talaq'.

The Hindu women were equally oppressed in the name of child marriage, 'satidaha', polygamy, dowry, and even pardah. Women were deprived of their right to education and to property. The rigidity of the caste system, the austerity of Hindu religion, the discrimination of men and women in all respects were the major causes behind the deterioration of women in society.

ROLE OF SOCIAL REFORMERS AND LEGISLATIONS

The realization about the importance of women in Indian society by some social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Dayananda Saraswati, B. R. Ambedkar, and many others, the strong legislations in favour of women and the consciousness of women about themselves brought about drastic changes in the status of modern women.

The social reformers believed in the principle of individual liberty, freedom, and equality of all humans irrespective of caste, creed, sex,

colour, and religion. The aforesaid reformers stood against authoritarian, social, and religious strictures and dogmas to liberate women from the shackles of exploitation, torture, and humiliation.

Raja Rammohan Roy, one of the greatest social reformers in India stood against the societal evils like 'sati' female infanticide, polygamy, infant marriages, pardah, absence of education among women, and the Devdasi system which degraded the status of women to its maximum. It was through his endeavour that the inhuman practice of 'satidaha' where the widow was forced to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband was halted. Rammohan Ray's antisati activities prompted Lord William Bentinck to pass the 'Prohibition of Sati Act' in 1829.

The contribution of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar for the upliftment of women in India is no less. He fought for the education of women and the legalization of widow remarriage. He realized that education was the most powerful instrument of social change and could bring back the lost prestige and respect of women in society. Other social reformers like Maharishi Karve also worked for the spread of education among women and widow remarriage. The contribution of Arya Samaj towards the spread of women's education is worth mentioning. The chief architect of Arya Samaj was Swami Dayanand Saraswati, an eminent philosopher who contributed immensely in promoting equal rights for women, such as, the right to education and the reading of Indian scriptures.

Swami Vivekananda, the Nobel saint and the pride of India strived ceaselessly to reform the distressed Indian society during the 19th century. He raised his voice against women's subjugation and exploitation and declared boldly that the weakness of the Indian society was chiefly rooted in the negligence, deprivation, subjugation, exploitation, and torture of women. He strongly supported Manus's statement. In this regard, Vivekananda remarks, "Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all works and efforts come to naught." He declared that it is women who occupy a central place in society. He believed and realized, "That there is no hope for the rise of that family or nation where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness." He worked relentlessly for the

emancipation of women without which the progress of the nation and society would come to a halt. He wanted the revival of Vedic women in modern society and stated that the women of India must grow and develop following the footprints of Sita.

Vivekananda opined that changes in the position of women in the society can be brought about by themselves – the way they took upon themselves and the self-image they carry with them which, in fact, forms the basis of their existence in the society. Womenfolk must change the self-image and discard the belief that they are subordinate to men and have to depend on them. They have to start rethinking that they are not mere items of pleasure for men. They need to come out from such weakening deep-rooted beliefs to liberate themselves from the bondage of men. Only then can women exist in society as independent, pure, strong, holy, and heroic human beings. The modernization of women is not rooted in the scientific and technological advancement of the society but in the way men and women look upon and treat each other. Education can only make women acquire the power to liberate themselves from the shackles of their bondage and build a new and strong self-image. Vivekananda could foresee that such educated women could change the matrix of the society where men and women would hold equal status, i.e., true liberation of the society from patriarchy. Vivekananda boldly stated, “ We should not think that we are men and women, but only that we are human beings, born to cherish and to help one another.” Vivekananda believed that lack of education was the fundamental cause of the negligence and subordination of women in society. Education that would give strength and power and would also build their character is a must for the womenfolk of the country, as opined by Swami Vivekananda and this would eventually lead to women’s emancipation and empowerment.

Rabindranath Tagore, one of the greatest exponents of women’s emancipation and empowerment, placed women at the forefront of his creations to convey the message of feminism and women empowerment. He used his pen as a weapon to fight against patriarchy and women’s exploitation. He boldly campaigned for women’s liberation, their rights, education, justice, and their true power and dignity through his short stories, novels, and poems. It is said that “Tagore through

his numerous novels and short stories emphasized women's education which has paved the way for women's emancipation'. His concept of New Women claimed the right to education, right to property, social position, political position, choice of marriage, participation in rituals, and decision making at least in family matters. Tagore strongly believed that education was the only path towards the liberation of women from the shackles of patriarchy and domination.

He highlighted that education is a must for women to empower their status and realize their own self, their power, and their dignity. True education can make a woman realize the potentials and help her acquire a dignified position in the family as well as in society.

FEMINISM AND MODERN WOMEN

The feminist movement, which is a totalitarian mass movement undertaken by women of all sects to bring an end to all forms of feminist oppression is a strong factor that has led to women empowerment and upliftment of women at large. Feminism, in fact, first understands gender inequality and then focuses on gender politics, social relations, power relations, economic relations, and sexuality. Feminist writings and their activities encourage oppressed women to be aware of their rights in the world which guides them towards liberation within the patriarchal setup. Feminism provides a platform to address social and cultural factors and traditional issues that subjugate women. Political participation and more involvement of women in political decision making of the society and country is encouraged by feminists which equalize women with men. Women's emancipation is closely connected to the assurance of women's rights through law. Rights for women encompassing the right to bodily integrity and autonomy, right against sexual violence, right to vote, right to hold public office, property right, right to fair wages and equal pay, reproductive rights, right to education has been institutionalized or backed by law during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to put women on a strong foothold in society. Law, in fact, ensures the equal existence of men and women in society.

The progress of any civilization can be judged by the status of women in society. The activities of the social reformers, the prominent role of education, and the legalization of women's rights are the crucial

factors that have emancipated the status of women in society. Modern women have established themselves in all spheres of life and are working successfully as politicians, lawyers, teachers, doctors, administrators, and diplomats. They are known to work with the utmost sense of responsibility, honesty, and sincerity. It is women who efficiently handle the dual responsibility of maintaining their family and office.

Women are intelligent enough to handle all types of work including administration. Many of the administrators at all levels by dint of their power, fall prey to bribery and dishonesty. But women administrators in most cases are honest and at the same time equally or sometimes more efficient than their male counterparts.

Teaching is a noble profession and women have proved themselves as very good teachers. The supreme qualities of sincerity, dedication, love, and affection present in most women make them responsible and efficient teachers. The attitude of love and affection towards students makes women understand child psychology much better than the males which are very essential in teaching.

Women enjoy a monopoly in nursing due to their soft and tender nature. Their tenacity helps them to handle patients with great care. The service of Florence Nightingale during the crucial period of suffering is worth mentionable in this context. Women have excelled as good doctors too.

A democracy can run steadily only with the equitable participation of men and women. Active participation of women in the political arena, parliament, and other areas of governance is a clear indication of women's empowerment. The role of Indira Gandhi as a politician and Prime Minister of free India and her dedicated service to the nation for more than a decade is noteworthy.

In the field of social service too, women are serving for the cause of humanity at large. The selfless service of Mother Teresa for the poor, needy, and downtrodden made her win the Noble Prize for India. She was indeed a noble lady who dedicated her life to the service of mankind.

Female participation in sports rose dramatically since the twentieth century reflecting changes due to modernization bringing down gender disparity. Participation of more women in sports has

worldwide acceptance especially in certain events like figure skating and gymnastics.

A phenomenal increase in the number of working women in the present century has added to the economic growth of the country. Today women are at par with men in all spheres. A high level of education has led to a high level of employment which means a strong economic foothold of womenfolk. The financial independence of women has decreased their dependence on their male counterparts and empowered them to acquire a respectable position in society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the basis of the above observation, I would like to conclude by saying that although women have marched forward in all spheres, yet patriarchy in some form or the other exists in society. A lot of crime against women like molestation, rape, trafficking continues till date. Constitutional provisions and legislation alone cannot solve this issue. Change in the mindset of both men and women at large can only bring about true equality of men and women at large can only bring about true equality of men and women in society. It has to be realized that all women are parts of the same Infinite Divine Power as men and therefore have to be treated equally. True empowerment or amelioration in the status of women can be established in the society with the complete eradication of illiteracy, ignorance, and economic slavery.

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Education and Gender Gaps among All Communities in North-East India

Indira Sarma

INTRODUCTION

Education is a liberating force. It is always a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances to the development of human society. It is the beginning not only the individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also a holistic strategy for development and change. The issue of class, race, ethnicity and caste have been the central to the educational discourse. And major emphasis has been laid on promoting equality through educating different classes, race, ethnic groups and castes. Gradually gender added a new dimension to this education equality paradigm. Feminists vehemently criticize the differential attitude towards women because of which women have lagged behind in the field of education. The scenario is equally the same in case of NE India, as the latest Sensus Report 2011 indicated that women are far more lagging behind in education with respect to their counterparts. The paper presenter has emphasise some of the reasons and to find out the reasonable solution to reduce the gender gap in education with respect to men and women in NE India.

It is being argued that equality among human beings across and within society can be attained by providing sufficient opportunities for better health and education to the girl and women. Primary education is important for enabling women to breakthrough many traditional and social barriers, thus, promoting social development, while higher

education plays a significant role in the promotion of upward/vertical social and occupational mobility, personality development, intellectual development as well as economical development.

The modern economy of 21st century, certainly the knowledge economy, requires highly educated people for accelerating the process of economic development. Both the primary and higher education of a country plays a significant role in reducing gender disparity in the fastest developing countries like India. Today it appears to be one of the five most developed countries of the world by the year 2020 (Kalam 2020) with the strength of its core competencies.

Women's access to education has not been an easy one. Negative values that have posed several challenges on women's development have been operating in our society far too long. In fact, our society has a history of denying opportunities for women to seek knowledge. This systematic denial of women's access to education kept women in a state of perpetual ignorance and prevented them from seeking or utilizing opportunities for education and empowerment. For women the past has been dark, gloomy period of ignorance and illiteracy, the present is an era of meeting challenges and seeking equal opportunities, the future will be the women's own rendering of writing her history.

With the launch of the NPE 1986, a large number of initiatives have been undertaken to achieve the goals of "Education for All". This goal of universalization of education has been pursued by successive developmental policies and plans for the last six decades. Nevertheless with a large and growing population of more than 121 crores today, it has been an uphill task to keep pace with the expanding demands for basic education. This challenges has been further compounded by the diverse socio-cultural and geographical conditions across the nation and rapidly changing scenario at global level in the name of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The efforts of government, NGOs and society have borne fruits as far as level of literacy in post independent India has risen from mere 18.33% to 74.04% in 2011 but all areas of the country have not been benefited equally.

The issue of women, their rights and awareness has been an ongoing topic of discussion since the dawn of 21st century and 2001 was considered as the year of women empowerment. Many conferences

and seminars have been held in the country to make women aware about their role in the society. Many strategies, ways and means has been adopted to enhance the status of women world-wide and to make them aware of their rights and powers. In this regard an humble attempt has been made on the part paper presenter to study and find out the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To study about the present scenario of women education in N.E India.
- ii) To study about the crucial problems of women awareness in North-East India
- iii) To find out the ways and means to develop women awareness through human right education.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on primary data as well as secondary data. Primary data are collected from individual belonged to minority community(Muslim population). The Secondary data are collected from various government departments, various studies on women, books, journals, Statistical hand book of Assam, Economic survey of Assam and other available documents. Analysis and interpretation of the study were done on the basis of the data collected from the various sources. Statistical technique of percentage is applied in interpretation of the result.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN N.E INDIA

Female literacy is considered to be a more sensitive index of social development compared to overall literacy rate. Female literacy is negatively related with fertility rate, population growth rates, infant and child mortality rates and shows a positive association with females age at marriage, life expectancy, participation in modern sectors of economy and above all, female enrolment. The male- female literacy gap has narrowed from 21.59% in 2001 census to 16.68% in 2011 census. The rate is also narrowed in the NorthEast region remarkably.

Women constitute about 48.46% of population of India as per

census of 2011, but they are not well represented in social, political, economic and religious life as per their numerical strength. There is gender gap in education where women are lagging behind men. The literacy rate of women is lower than that of men. The real picture of this gender gap can be realized by having look on the Table 1.

Table: 1
Literacy Rate: 1951—2011

Census year	Persons	Males	Female's	Gender gap
1951	18.33%	27.16%	18.86%	18.30%
1961	28.30%	40.40%	15.35%	25.05%
1971	34.45%	45.96%	21.97%	23.09%
1981	43.57%	56.38%	29.76%	26.62%
1991	52.21%	64.13%	39.29%	24.62%
2001	64.84%	75.26%	53.76%	21.59%
2011	74.04%	82.14%	65.46%	16.68%

(Source : Census report 2011)

Table 1 that reveals that there is a wide gap in literacy level of males and females. Though the literacy level of women has risen from a low level of 8.86% to 65.46%. But the gap in male literacy with female is not decreased remarkably. India's effective literacy rate has recorded a 9.2% rise to reach 74.04% in 2011 from 64.84% in 2001. Interestingly, literacy rate improved sharply among females as compared to males. While the effective literacy rate for males rose from 75.26% to 82.14% marking a rise of 6.9%, it increased by 11.8% for females to go from 53.67% to 65.46%

Table: 2
Literacy Rate in North-Eastern State: (Census report 2011)

Rank State	Persons	Males	Female's	Gender gap
Mizoram	91.60%	93.70%	89.40%	4.30%
Tripura	87.80%	92.20%	83.10%	9.10%
Sikkim	82.70%	87.30%	76.40%	10.90%
Nagaland	80.10%	83.30%	76.70%	6.60%
Manipur	79.80%	86.50%	73.20%	13.30%
Maghalaya	75.50%	77.20%	73.80%	3.40%
Assam	73.20%	78.80%	67.30%	11.50%
Arunachal Pradesh	67%	73.70%	59.60%	14.10%

Source:<http://cyberjournalist.org.in/census/cenlito.html>

Among the ten states and union territories, two North-Eastern state namely Tripura and Mizoram have attained the literacy rate of above 85% , the target set by the Planning Commission to be achieved by 2011-2012. The other N.E. states like Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur have achieved almost 80% or above literacy rate. The states like Assam and Meghalaya have almost 70% or above literacy rate. In case of Arunachal Pradesh both the literacy rate is lowest and the gender gap is the highest among the N.E. States. The table also reveals that the gender gap is very narrow in case of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, Though Tripura is the second in literacy rate in the table but the gender gap is 9.1% which indicates that the provision of female education is still below at per with other states. The gender gap is remarkably seen in the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Sikkim.

Table 3
Status of Gender Gap during the last decade (2001-2011)

States	Year	Persons	Males	Females	Gender gap
Mizoram	2001	88.49%	90.69%	86.13%	4.56%
	2011	91.60%	93.70%	89.40%	4.30%
Tripura	2001	73.66%	81.47%	65.41%	16.06%
	2011	87.80%	92.20%	83.10%	9.10%
Sikkim	2001	69.68%	76.73%	61.46%	15.27%
	2011	82.20%	87.30%	76.40%	10.90%
Nagaland	2001	67.11%	71.77%	61.92%	9.85%
	2011	80.10%	83.30%	76.70%	6.60%
Manipur	2001	68.87%	77.87%	59.70%	18.17%
	2011	79.80%	86.50%	73.20%	9.30%
Meghalaya	2001	63.31%	66.14%	60.41%	5.73%
	2011	75.50%	77.20%	73.80%	3.4%
Assam	2001	64.28%	71.93%	56.03%	15.90%
	2011	73.20%	78.80%	67.30%	11.50%
Arunachal Pradesh	2001	54.74%	64.02%	44.24%	19.78%
	2011	67%	73.70%	59.60%	14.10%

Source: <http://cyberjournalist.org.in/census/cenlito.html>

Table 3 indicates that gender disparity has reduced remarkably in the state of Tripura by 6.96% during the decade, from 16.06% to 9.10% and literacy rate has been increased by 14.14%. The gender gap is reduced by 5.68% though the sex ratio in Arunachal Pradesh has improved to 920 females per 1000 males, up from 893 a decade ago, as per the provisional Census report of 2011, stated by the Assam Tribune, dated 6th April 2011. In Manipur the gap is 4.87% and in

Assam it is 4.40% during the decade. In the state of Sikkim, Nagaland and Meghalaya the percentage is 4.37, 3.25 and 2.33 respectively. Mizoram shows only a decimal decrease of 0.26% during the decade.

The latest census report also reveals that the gender disparity is lowers in the N.E region of India with regards to other comparatively developed states in India, even in the highest literate state of Kerala the rate of disparity is almost 4% ion the last decade.

CRUCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN AWARENESS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

- a) **Socio-political factors:** Our society does not accord equal status to women. Though we are living in the age of 21st century with tremendous scientifically developed society and consuming all fruits but we are backward in our thinking and attitude. Society turns a blue eye towards the capabilities of women. It is a custom to marry girl at an early age so that guardian can get rid of their responsibility of protecting their girl child from unsoial elements. The dowry system is also responsible for deplorable condition of women.
- b) **Religious factors:** Religion plays a very determinative role in life of every person in India .Some religions do not treat women equal to men. She is always dependent on men either on father, husband or son. So, very little importance has always been given to education to women.
- c) **Geographical factors:** In the North-Eastern part of the country, some localities are very inaccessible and schools are very far away from the residence of people. Women being a weaker sex, girls are not being sent to attend schools stationed at a long distance.
- d) **Deliberate Gender Discrimination:** There is serious and deliberate discrimination against the girl child due to age old deeply embedded cultural resistance and attitude of parents that girls should learn household skills.
- e) **Biological Factors:** Girls are not physically strong by nature in comparison to boys. This distinction is biological .The school in India are not girl-friendly, so parents prefer to withdraw their daughter from school at adolescent age. Complaints of sexual ha-

rassment are not properly addressed

- f) **Declining Sex Ratio:** Gender inequality being before birth and the way right for the girl child to take birth, as preference for son is a mania for majority of the Indian population. Women are denied the right to be born, thanks to the pre-natal medical tests. The result: men have outnumbered women in every census of the last century, which is indicative of continuing female foeticide. The sex ratio has declined from 972 in 1901 to 914 in 2011.
- g) **Discrimination in Health Care and Nutrition:** It further cuts short the lives of unwanted girl children. Eighteen per cent more girls die before their fifth birthday according to a MHRD report (2002-03). So, there are higher mortality rates for girls compared to the boys.
- h) **Gender Gap in Literacy rate:** Almost every third women in India continues to be illiterate (According to Census report 2011). Girls are the first to be pulled out of school when needed in the family to supplement the family income or to help care for the siblings. Without access to education, girls are denied to knowledge and skills needed to advance their status.
- i) **Priority to Boy's Education:** A boy's education is viewed as a possibility of increasing the earning and status of the family. The value of a daughter's education is gauged in terms of her marriage prospects and the benefits of her education in any case are seen as going to her husband's family. Motivation or desire to send girls to school and ensure its completion is circumscribed by high economic costs, unfriendly school environments and social sanctions.

Table: 4
Sex Ratio in India 1901-2011

Census Year	Sex Ratio (Females per 1000 Males)
1901	964
1911	972
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933
2011	914

Source: Census of India 2011

- j) **Violence against Girls and Women:** Girls and women are subjected to crudest forms of violence, rape, assault and sexual slavery both inside outside the house.
- k) **Poverty:** India is a poor country and 40% of people live below the poverty line. The condition of N. E. Region is also severe in this regard. To earn enough money for bread and butter, the first priority of two third of the women population work on the fields to earn money. In the tribal areas specially in the states of Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and tribal areas of Assam and Tripura, majority of the women are engaged in economic activities to support their family. They bear dual duties of household activities as well as earning of money. The same

is the case of Tea tribe of Assam where majority of the women population are engaged in economic activities.

- 1) **Lack of opportunities:** The Human Development Report 1997 observes that even income-poor-societies, women may enjoy opportunities to participate in economic and political activities. The low value of Gender Empowerment Measure make it clear that many countries like India have much further to travel in extending broad economic and political opportunities to women and higher level of female education can make appreciable contribution towards it.
- m) **Lack of Social Awareness:** It has been observed over the years that the share of women in terms of enrolment in education is not increasing. Women continue to opt for the more traditional, less challenging and less rewarding areas. Domestic responsibilities that continue to be seen as an exclusive female pressure, compel many women to break their career graph, thus diluting even further, the abysmally low presence of women in these areas. The fact the matter is that women who are qualified and capable of contributing the national development as a valuable asset are ending up becoming a liability under social compulsions and family responsibilities. Lack of social consciousness and moribund social compulsions and one sided family responsibilities have become a hurdle in the path of professional and career advancement for women.

CONCLUSION

The National Policy on Education 1986 states that education will be used as a driving force of basic change in the status of women in society. Access and equity are the two most important components to aware women to facilitate the delivery of social justice to them. Human Right Education should be viewed as an investment in social transformation, human resources development and technology for the betterment of the quality of life of mankind as a whole. Women access to education is of great importance in order to aware them with a modern outlook, who are willing to change and to put in their best in all their endeavour with a sense of responsibility and with confidence. Participation of women

in social responsibility becomes more important when it concerns some special target groups, such as indigenous people cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups or people living under occupation. Believing their education, experience, talent and active participation in social responsibilities, it can be of great value for the development of the society and the nation. Girls and women are not only housewives and mothers but they are also workers in the economic sense. They should be educated to perform an indispensable role in the home and in the household economy as well as for bringing enlightenment and emancipation.

The efforts of governments, NGOs and public participation has resulted in rise in level of literacy among males and females both but gender disparity still persists. Though during the last decade the gender disparity at various levels of education in India has declined at 4.91% but it still needs to be further reduced. India being a dominant country of the knowledge era, can brighten its fortunes by increasing access of women at different levels of education. Though there are several obstacles associated with women. Education in the country in general and in the N.E. region in particular, female literacy rate has improved by 11.79% compared to 6.88% in case of males during the last decade. Some areas and some sections of society are more lagging behind in literacy campaign. So area specific approach and strategies can serve the purpose.

The need of the hour is to ensure better lives for the coming generations by creating an equitable social order. Education of girls is increasingly being seen as basic human right and a crucial input of national development. Yet gender disparities within the education sectors are far from having been overcome. It is believed that gender equality may be attained by guaranteed access to quality education for all.

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Education and the Changing Status of Women in North Bengal

Ankita Banik

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
—Nelson Mandela

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most powerful instruments of social change and social development. Education liberates the mind; it helps to break down all religious, cultural, political and gender barriers. Education helps to mobilize people and their status. Women are the most important part of our society and their education is very crucial to enhance their status and standard of living. Education brings empowerment in their life; women are capable to break the social barriers, traditional orthodox rules. It helps women to face the challenges, to change their lives and help them to think positively. It is very powerful tool for women to change her position in our society.

Women constitute almost 50 percent of the world's population but in Indian scenario female's population has been lower than males. They are not treated as equal to men in our patriarchal society. Even gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India. The status women in India have undergone many changes over the past centuries. Women in ancient India, particularly during the Vedic period, enjoyed a position which was on the whole much more satisfactory than in the later periods. Women underwent almost a kind of servitude during the medieval period their position went on improving during the British

period and after independence. Women under Indian society treated as subordinated and inferior than men. Women had low status in the beginning of the British period. But during British Raj many great social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, M.G. Ranade, D.K.Karve and Mahatma Gandhi were in the forefront, fighting against social atrocities toward women (Jha and Pujari, 1998). After independence government introduces many programmes, policies, democratic policies, development policies etc for their betterment. In 1951, India's literacy rate was 27.16 percent where female literacy rate was just 8.86percent (Maitr and Sinha, 1993). But gradually it's increasing and according to 2011 census literacy rate of India is 82.14 percent and female literacy rate 65.46 percent. The literacy rate of female in west Bengal gradually increased since independence. According to 2011 census total literacy rate in west Bengal is 76.26percent and women literacy rate is 71.16 percent. The present study based on village of Phansidewa CD Block, where literacy rate is 64.46 percent and female literacy is 56.06 percent (2011 census).

Today, Indian women are almost assigned an equal status with men. All their political, economic and educational and other disabilities have been removed legally. But study of the history of human society reveals that in no society of the world women enjoyed absolute equality on par with men. Everywhere they were subject to inequality, discrimination and exploitation. In some societies, their position has been comparatively better than their counterpart in some other societies. Even in the same society the status of women has never been the same all through. It has been changing in keeping with the changes in the general conditions of society. Earlier in rural India women did not get much respect which they deserved. They had to work hard inside their home and also suffer a lot. They completely depend on men. In such case education plays an important role. Education not only educates a woman but also enable her to take decisions and accept responsibilities at home and outer world for their empowerment. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women in the society. It involves the building up of a society where women can breathe without the fear of oppression,

exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure.

Education is the key to gender equality. Education and employment are two basic tools that can change the economic and social status of women. The study area is kalujote village in Phansidewa. Heterogeneous population found in this village. Majority of the population are Rajbangsi and Namasudra. Muslim and tribal also found in sound number. Educational background of this village is now quite impressive. Women are now becoming independent, self reliant and take their own decision. Education brings to their life a new dimension. So, the present study is based on how education brings changes in the life of women. What are the role of education and empowerment to enhance their status in family and society?

Objectives

1. To find out the educational status of women in this village.
2. To know about women work participation.
3. To know about their socio-economic position in society.
4. To know details about their participation in family decision making process.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on primary data. Data collected through the method of household survey, open ended questionnaire, interview schedule, observation and case studies. . Personal interviews were conducted to find out the importance of education in their life. I had personally visited 200 women from this village. The findings of the study are constituted from personal interviews with respondents, using a prepared questionnaire and case studies. Raw data pertaining to the 200 women have been analysed and grouped. The respondents were chosen randomly from the entire village.

EARLIER STATUS OF WOMEN

During the study in Kalujote village I found certain extent of changes in the status of women in this village. Earlier most of them bounded

by their family's traditional mentality; the status of women was not effectively recognized. They always experienced discriminatory treatment as compared to their male counterparts. They are deprived in certain rights and opportunities. Their main concentration was household responsibilities, child rearing and bearing, taking care of needs and requirements of elderly family members and so on. Most of the people thought that girls are liabilities to family. Their birth is not appreciated and more preference was given to male children. They thought girls should be trained in terms of implementation of household responsibilities and education is not meant for them. So we found certain number of women those are illiterate. Illiteracy mainly found in aged women.

EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. In this study I have chosen 200 sample or women (age under 18 -50) in this village, Rajbangsi 60, Namasudra 86, General caste 14, Muslim 25 and tribal 15. In this village all castes and community people are aware about the importance of education. Women education plays a very significant role in the overall development of the society. It improves the quality of life of women at home and outside. Education empowers women and give them equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop their own selves. Education makes them self sufficient in every aspects of life.

In this village literacy rate of women are increasing day by day. In this study I have found 20 percent women studied only upper primary level, 30 percent studied secondary level, 20 percent are higher secondary qualified, and 7 percent are graduated and only 3 percent are post graduated. Now women are aware about importance of education in developing their lives. 80 percent of women in Kalujote village are literate. Beside that I have found 20 percent women, those are illiterate. Illiteracy mainly found in aged women. They are illiterate but conscious about next generation's education. They support, appreciate and encourage girl's education in respect to enhance women's life.

Earlier the village was backward and most of the people involved in agricultural work. But due to modernisation and spread of education, people are aware about the advantages of education which leads to empowerment. Especially in rural areas two types of basic needs strategy found for women. One is to enable them to contribute more effectively to the satisfaction of their family's basic needs along with traditional responsibilities and the other hand outside work. Under the study most of the women are wives and faithful companions to their husbands, mothers and educators of their children, managers of the household and supports family income. Along with performing all household duties now women are participating in economic activities. In this village women are engage in different types of job and work according to their skill, aptitude and qualification, which make them self reliant. This is mainly agriculture based village and sound numbers of women are engaged in agricultural production. Apart from agricultural production they are also involve in political work, doing job in both private and public sectors. Some of them are engage in small scale business, handicraft etc. In this study I have found 93 percent women involve in income generated work and only 7 percent women are fully housewife. 27 percent women involve in agricultural production (as land owner, agricultural labour), 20 percent women engage in government sponsor various group works or self help group work, 10 percent women involve in political work, 13 percent perform small scale business (grocery shop, handicraft work) from their home, 6 percent doing job in public sector and 8 percent in private sector. 6 percent works in school in mead day meal section and 3 percent are teachers in ICDS, primary and high schools. Now women contribute to their family income, which enhance their status within family. Women empowerment gives new dimension in their life. Women education leads to women empowerment, which brings equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop her. Now they are more independent and self reliant.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN FAMILY

Education used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there is

well conceived edge in favour of women. Education and empowerment enhance the status of women in their family. Now women are not only home makers but also earn money. In this study 93 percent women engage in different types of job and works. Women are contributor in family economy. This role has given a new status and position in their family. In family decision making process now they are participating, even 15 percent of them are taking their own decisions and families also. But 60 percent women said that, in family decision making process men and women are equal and together they take all the decisions. So women are now getting preferences from their male partners and share equal status within family. But I found also 25 percent women those are neglected. They are totally controlled by patriarchal family structure. Sometimes they also faced physical assault and their husbands taken away their income. But I found in most of the families, due to education and employment now women enjoyed a greater position and status than earlier.

Now women are conscious about in particular areas:

- 65 percent women are aware about families' health and hygiene. Education increases a woman's and her partner and the family's level of health and hygiene.
- 71 percent women are conscious about their children education. 40percent of them give private tuitions to their children better learning from their income.
- Empowerment extent to which a woman decides where the income she earns will be spent. Women are also participating in family savings and expanses. 39 percent of them are involving in various savings scheme. 20 percent involve in loan repayment for different purposes.
- 61 percent women aware about family planning and they support the use of contraception. Now woman takes control of her reproductive functions and decides about family size.
- They have ability to prevent violence. They have strong sense of self worth, pride, satisfaction and control over life.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the study show that education enhances the status of women in Phansidewa CD Block. Education and employment change the economic and social status of women. In this village women literacy rate is increasing day by day which brings new dimension in their life. The main findings is that women enjoying better quality life in family as well as in society. Education is to impart knowledge to people become responsible citizens and lead a better life. Education is important for each and every individual in a society. Women are the most important part of our society and their education is of utmost importance. Educated women will lead her entire family to better life and pass on her knowledge. Study shows that earlier women were only just part of the families. But now, at present, they are not only part of the family and neighbourhood but they are also becoming the bread earners of their family. In this village women perform both household work and outside work. They have proved themselves that they can also get independent and work their way out in this male dominated society. Women under this village continued their education and completed it satisfactorily. 40 percent women said that they always get support from their families. 32 percent women achieved to fulfil their dreams. 7 percent women cited that they got help from their parents in law. The present study shows that parents and husbands have been the constant source of support for many women in completing their education, which is very positive sign in women development. Moreover, women position in this village is very much satisfactory.

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Status of Rajbanshi Women in Modern Society : A Contemporary Historical Study

Sanchita Roy

“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” —Swami Vivekananda

The status of women in a society is measured in terms of education, employment, health , income , decision making right as well as the active participation in family, society and community. As per the Census report of India 2011, the literacy rate of women is 65.46 percent to that of men is 82.14 percent. Literacy rate represents a measure of educational status of any community.

Rajbanshis, an indigenous community of northern part of West Bengal, in the past they were the majority people of North Bengal, particularly in the district of Coochbehar, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, and the plain areas of Darjeeling district. Rajbanshis had been living in the other parts of Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Bangladesh and south east Nepal.

They generally belong to the Scheduled Castes. They usually depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Though participation of Rajbanshi women in formal or traditional education is less, but they are skilled in agriculture, animal husbandry for their livelihood.

Literacy Rate of the Rajbanshis of West Bengal(sc)

Total population	Male	Female
60.1	72.3	47.3

Source: Cultural Research Institute : Short Notes on the Scheduled Castes of West Bengal(Kolkata 2005).

According to the census report India 2001 literacy rate of Rajbanshi woman is percent to that of 72.3 percent literacy rate of her male counterpart.

According to 1911 census report of India only 51 out of 1000 Rajbanshis were literate, where the male and female ratio was 97:2. Based on educational status of Rajbanshi women in various census reports, it can be stated that the Rajbanshi society of Northern part of West Bengal is lagging in terms of educational progress.

LITERACY RATE OF THE RAJBANSHI MEN AND WOMEN:**District Literacy Rate in Percentage**

	1961		1971		1981	
District	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Coochbehar	28.71	5.23	24.7	9.28	37.50	13.57
Jalpaiguri	14.67	3.00	23.81	7.71	33.55	11.97
Dinajpur	22.44	2.21	19.44	3.20	32.14	8.03
Malda	20.06	2.10	21.23	4.49	30.98	7.31
Darjeeling	40.05	5.59	37.48	6.06	40.39	12.60

Source: Census report of India(West Bengal)

According to 1981 census report majority of Rajbanshi women were educated up to primary and middle level of school education. The participation of Rajbanshi women in technical and professional education streams was quite poor.

The literacy rate in India 2011 census report, 82.1 percent men and 65.5 percent are women.

REASONS FOR BACKWARDNESS OF RAJBANSHI WOMEN IN EDUCATION

1. The Rajbanshi people generally live in rural areas and their main occupation is based on agriculture. More initiatives are being taken to expand modern education in urban areas but very little has been done to spread education in rural areas. Therefore women always have been alienated from exposure to modern educational benefits.
2. Economic problem was one of the most vital issues of the Rajbanshi women for backwardness in educational field. Majority of them were financially not able to send their girl children to school, after certain age often the young ones had to provide helping hands to the family.
3. Early marriage or Child marriage is one of the main barriers of women education.
4. Lack of motivation and interest towards education was another reason of educational backwardness.
5. Among them many are first generation learners and they hardly get any guidance from their parents.
6. Being mainly from rural areas commutation has been always a major issue for the Rajbanshi girls.

The present scenario of twenty first century is hopeful and promising. The status of women has undergone lots of changes. And the Rajbanshi women's participation in education is increasing day by day. It is also seen in many families that the boys of the house go to work outside so that their sisters can study which resulted into a large number of women graduates in Rajbanshi community. They are making themselves self dependent by taking different types of vocational training and by completing various professional courses.

The neo-literate women of this community are providing the much needed education which has been the main factor of backwardness of this indigenous community.

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Position of Women from Ancient to Modern Period

Ankita Sen

Women is a very wonderful creation of God. In Hindu ideology the women represented duality form, some time she is fertile, benevolent just like mother goddess Laxmi and other time she is aggressive, malevolent the destroyer just like mother goddess Durga, and Kali. Situation wise women always changes their position. From ancient to modern period men are standing in the same position in the society but the women were unable to continuing their position in the same manner. If we go back to the ancient period, we can see the women occupied the highly position beside man in the society but in the medieval Period their position were deteriorated.

During Vedic period women enjoyed their freedoms in the society. Along with the man they also had the opportunity to take proper education. Education mostly centered in the family where brothers, sisters probably studies together under the family elders. In the morning and evening they were also offered to take part in Vedic prayers and they also received Upanayana Samskara. Women Students were divided into two classes such as Brahnavadinis and Sayodvahas. A woman who cultured the Vedas throughout their lives and never married are called Brahnavadinis and the women who studies Vedas till they married called Sayodvahas. Many educated women who choose the teaching profession were called Upadhyayas and they liked to use Sanskrit language for teaching.

Many women in Vedic period were considered to be highly advanced intellectuality. At that time Women like Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Visvavara, Ghosa, Lopamudra hold very important position

in the society. Educated women Gargi summoned by king Janaka to attained the conference convened by him, there she launched her attack on Yajnavalkya with an admirable coolness and confident. Women also revealed the Vedic Knowledge to others. The 126 hymn of the Rig veda was revealed by a Hindu women Romasha and 179 hymn were revealed by Lopamudra. Women not only had the knowledge in education but they also had the knowledge in music and dancing.

In the marriage system of Vedic period women had the chance to select their husband in an assembly called Svayamvara. Manusmiti and Arthasastra mention eight kind of marriage system such as—Brahma, prajapatya, Arsa Daiva, Gandharva, Asura, Raksasa, Paisaca.

Brahma, prajapatya, Arsa, Daiva marriage form depended upon the girl's father but other four forms are considered as unapproved form of marriage. In the caste based society marriage is a very sensitive matter. According to Manu if the husband belongs to the higher caste this kind of marriage known as Anulom Marriage and if women belongs to the higher caste is known as Pratilom Marriage. There were also few instances of widow remarriage. In Rig Veda some references to polygyny and polyandry are also found but there was no example found of child marriage and at that time age 16 to age 17 had been considered as the marriageable age for girls.

The Vedic family was not a matriarchate type, patriarchal being known to Vedic society. Girl child did not receive as welcome as the boy child received at that time. In sacrifices husband and wife participated jointly. Women were also participated in Sabha and Samati and all family ceremony. Women were engaged in many professions like embroiders, and basket makers. They also help her husband in agriculture field.

In the question of women property women had some personal property like jewellery and clothes. Women's property rights were limited in inheritary property. The brotherless daughter were also succeeded in establishing her right of inheritance. The history of streedhana was undoubtedly a proud and glorious chapter in the ancient period. This connection tells us that at that time period women could get property in their marriage ceremony as gifts. In Arthasastra Chanakya mention the concept of streedhana and he mention six varieties of streedhana such

as- gifts given by father, mother, brother, gifts given by her husband in subsequent to marriage and gifts given by anybody in her marriage ceremony. Three more category were added by Vishnu purana.

In post Vedic age , the position of women had started degenerating due to several reason. In this period womens were not able to gain high status, Upanayana ceremony was prohibited. The birth of the daughter was considered inauspicious. It was actually a shift from a matriarchal society to patriarchal society.

In the medieval period the position and the status of womens was not quite high because their position gradually deteriorated. Many foreign invaders entered into india and as the spoil of the war womens were taken like a prize and they looked at their as an object of sexual enjoyment and exploitation .The Devadasi System was originated and developed during the early medieval period. Devadasi means a women who performed the service for deities , and they spend their all the time in worship of god and by singing and dancing for God. The first known mention of Devadasi is to a girl named Amrapali .Womens life was restricted in the medieval society. After birth, a women lived under the worship of her father as a daughter , under the tutelage of her husband as a wife and as a widow under her son. In this time Purdah, Jauhar, sati, child marriage , Polygamy were introduced.

In Purdah system a muslim women is fully covered her body with cloths, as to cover their body from male and to avoid capture and consequent molestation by the enemies. And their face would not be seen by anyone except their husband. In the society it had acquired an almost rigid symbol of a womens subordinate and totally dependent place in her husband.

In Jauhar system the wives and the daughter of defeated warriors immolate themselves, women would fling themselves into a huge fire in order to preserve their honour. It was performed in the home of the fort. In this system women embraced death before their husband. This practice mainly followed by the wives of Rajput rulers. Many Queen of famous ruler immolate themselves like Padmavati , Rani Karnavati etc.

At that time Polygamy , Child marriage, sati pratha became a part of society. Polygamy was practiced for some political reasons. In this system husband having more than one wives. And another system

is Sathidaho pratha in which hindu women throwing herself on her husband funeral pyre in the belief that the dead man would need the company of his wife in the nether world. Many famous queen burnt themselves on the funeral pyre of their husband. When Raja Chatrasal died, his 64 queen embraced the sacred fire and 8 queen of Raja karan Singh also burnt themselves after the death of Raja karan Singh.

In the medieval period few women succeeded in education, politics, literature and religion. Razia Sultana daughter of Iltutmish was the first woman ruler who has ever ruled Delhi. Mughal made arrangements for education of harem women. Rajaram wife Tarabai, carried out the administration of the Maratha Kingdom in the name of her minor son. Moreover Women played an important role in maintaining the economic status of the family.

In the 19th century For the better future of women in the society some reformers fight like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, Jyotirao Phule, M.G. Ranade, Dayananda Swaraswati, Sister Nivedita etc fought against the stereotype rules. Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of the Indian Renaissance was a determined crusader against the practice of Sati. In 1818 he started his anti Sati struggle and he got his success in 1829 when the government declared the practice of Sati is a crime. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar another Social reformer tried to sanction the widow remarriage act. He sent a 987 persons signed petition to the government of India for urging for legislative action and In 1856 he got Success to pass the widow Remarriage act. Besides widow Remarriage Ishwarchandra also fight for the education of girls. He established 35 girls school in Bengal. A Significant change came in the society when women came out of their house to take part in the struggle for the freedom. Many women like Latika Ghosh, Sarojini Naidu, Pravabati Debi, Kasturba Gandhi, Ashalata Devi, Aruna Asaf Ali etc played a remarkable role in the Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement. Few women also served as a Soldier of Jhansi Rani regiment in the Indian National Army which was created by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in 1943.

When nature has given her equal number on earth, women in India still placed at second rates citizen. The main cause of her second

position in society is because of her dependency on man and because of this dependency, she has become a weaker section of society and because of this weakness she is the victim of all evils. The position of women were coming strong from the Independence of India with the help of few human rights and women empowerment policies of Indian Government. Article 14 and 15 of Indian Constitution guaranteed a complete equality of man and women. In 1988, National perspective plan for women was introduced which detailed plans for women health, Education and political participation. Panchayati Raj Bill was also introduced in which one third of the seats in the Panchayats to be reserved for women. Women have achieved high fame in the areas of Game, Education, Service, Music, Dance, Literature, Arts etc. Some Indian women like P.T. Usha, Sania Mirza, Mary Kom made a notable achievement in the field of game. In the 21st century we are all introduced with a new word "Feminism". It is a struggle for equality of women and struggle against all forms of Patriarchal and sexist aggression. In this time she has come to know about her right and had vast knowledge in every field.

As compared with past, Women in modern times have become powerful in various field and have achieved a lot but in reality the overall picture of women position in India is not satisfactory, they have to still travel a long way.

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আধুনিক সমাজে নারীদের অবস্থান

রত্না বিশ্বাস

ভূমিকা

‘এ বিশ্বে যা কিছু মহান, চিরকল্যানকর অর্ধেক তার করিয়াছে নারী, অর্ধেক তার নর’, নারী ও পুরুষ হল সমাজ নামক গাড়ীর দুটি চাকা। একে অপরের ওপর সমান ভাবে নির্ভরশীল। একটিকে ছাড়া অপরটিকে নিয়ে সমাজের সার্বিক উন্নয়ন কখনোই সম্ভব নয়। কিন্তু আমাদের সমাজে নারীরা দীর্ঘকাল ধরেই বঞ্চিত, অবহেলিত, শোষিত, নিম্নোষিত। অনেকক্ষেত্রে নারীরা হয় ভোগবাদী সমাজের শিকার। আবার অনেক সময় হতে হয় পণপ্রথার বলী। আবার বা অনেকাংশে পেতে হয় অ্যাসিডের ছপক। আজ আমাদের সমাজের কন্যার পিতারা দায়গ্রস্থ হয়েই থাকেন। কখনো কখনো কন্যা সন্তান জন্ম দেওয়ার অপরাধে সদ্যোজাত কন্যাসন্তানটিকে মেরে ফেলা বা জন্মদাত্রী মাকে মেরে ফেলার জ্বলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত দেখা যায় আমাদের সমাজে। বহু ক্ষেত্রে নারীদের ডাইনি অপবাদ দিয়ে ও অত্যাচার করা হয়। গ্রামে গঞ্জে মেয়েরা আজও বিদ্যালয়মুখী হতে পারে না। আর এক্ষেত্রে পুরুষশাসিত সমাজ বহুলাংশে দায়ী। সত্যি কথা বলতে কী, মেয়েকে মেয়ে করে দেওয়াটা শুরু হয় পরিবার থেকেই। একটি পরিবারের যখন দুটি শিশু, একটি ছেলে সন্তান এবং অপরটি মেয়ে সন্তান থাকে, তখন যেখানে ছেলে সন্তানটিকে দেওয়া হয় খেলনা হিসেবে গাড়ি, বন্দুক ও প্লেন ইত্যাদি, বিপরীত দিকে কন্যা সন্তানটির হাতে তুলে দেওয়া হয় রান্নাবাটি, পুতুল ইত্যাদি, উদ্দেশ্য একটাই মেয়েকে আরো মেয়ে করে তোলা। যাতে ভবিষ্যতে সেই শিশু কন্যাটি সুনিপুণ ও সুদক্ষ গৃহিণীও মা হয়ে উঠতে পারে। অর্থাৎ ঘরকন্না, স্বামী, সন্তান ও সংসার ইত্যাদিতেই যেন নারীর অস্তিত্ব, এর বাইরে নারীর অবস্থান অকল্পনীয়। কিন্তু এর

বাইরেও নারীর একটা নিজস্ব সত্ত্বা রয়েছে। আধুনিক যুগ হল মহিলা ক্ষমতায়নের যুগ পরিবর্তনের যুগ। এখন নারীকে আর আগের মত বদ্ধ ঘরে পর্দার আড়ালে বন্দি করে রাখার কথা ভাবাই যায় না। নারী এখন সব ক্ষেত্রেই পুরুষের সমকক্ষ। বিদ্যাক্ষন, চিকিৎসাক্ষেত্রে, পার্লামেন্ট, ক্রীড়াক্ষেত্রে, সেনাবাহিনী সব ক্ষেত্রেই আজ কম বেশি নারীদের অবস্থান লক্ষ্য করা যায়। নারী আজ উড়োজাহাজ চালায়, মহাকাশে পাড়ী দেয়, পাহাড় চূড়ায় আরোহন করে। বর্তমান আধুনিক যুগে এসব ক্ষেত্রে নারীর আজ আর অস্তিত্ব দেখায় না। এখন নারীদের বিভিন্ন সুযোগ সুবিধা সম্পর্কে সচেতন নাগরিক সমাজ দারুণ ভাবে সচেতন। বিভিন্ন সরকারী পদক্ষেপ গুলো সত্যিই নারীকে তার আপন ভাগ্য জয় করবার দূয়ার খুলে দিয়েছে। এখন নারী আর বোঝা নয়, বরং নারী হল বোঝা তোলার হাতিয়ার।

বিভিন্নযুগে নারীর অবস্থান

আমরা যদি ঋক বৈদিক যুগে নারীর অবস্থানের দিকে তাকাই বা দৃষ্টিপাত করি, তাহলে দেখবো যে সেখানে নারীর অবস্থান ছিল খুবই সম্মানজনক। সমাজে নারী মর্যাদার আসনে অধিষ্ঠিতা ছিলেন। কন্যা সন্তানকে কখনোই আবহেলা করা হতো না। তাদের উপযুক্ত শিক্ষা দেওয়া হত। তারা বেদ পাঠ ও উপকরণের অধিকারীনি ছিলেন। পর্দা প্রথা সেযুগে প্রচলিত হয়নি। নারীরা বৌদিক মন্ত্র রচনা করতেন, অধ্যাপনা করতেন, প্রকাশ্য সভায় তর্কযুদ্ধে অবতীর্ণ হতেন, সভাসমিতির অনুষ্ঠানে অংশ নিতেন ও নৃত্য-গীতে পারদর্শিনী ছিলেন। যুদ্ধ বিদ্যাতে ও অনেকে দক্ষ ছিলেন। ঋগ্বেদে একাধিক যোদ্ধা নারীর উল্লেখ আছে। স্বামীর যথার্থ সহধর্মিনী রূপে বিবাহিতা নারীরা যাগযজ্ঞে অংশ নিতেন। ঘোষা, অপালা, বিশ্ববারা, মমতা, লোপামুদ্রা পোমুখ নারী শিক্ষার উচ্চতর স্থানে পৌঁছেছিলেন। অনেক নারী আবার অবিবাহিত থেকে বিদ্যাচর্চা ও শাস্ত্রলোচনায় জীবন অতিবাহিত করেন। সতীদাহ বা বাল্যবিবাহ সে যুগে প্রচলিত ছিল না। পতি নির্বাচনে মেয়েদের স্বাধীনতা ছিল। নারীদের নৈতিকতার মান ছিল খুবই উঁচু।

পরবর্তীতে পাল ও সেনযুগে নারীর মর্যাদা অনেকাংশে ক্ষুণ্ণ ছিল। একটি পতি সেযুগের নিয়ম হলেও রাজপরিবার অভিজাত সম্প্রদায় ও ব্রাহ্মণদের মধ্যে বহুবিবাহ প্রচলিত ছিল। বাল্যবিবাহের ফলে নারীরা উচ্চশিক্ষার অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত হত। উচ্চ বংশের নারীরা লেখাপড়া শিখতেন এবং সংগীত, চিত্রাঙ্কন, ললিতকলা ও নৃত্যগীতে নিপুণতা অর্জন করতেন! গৃহের অভ্যন্তরে নারী সর্বেসর্বা ছিলেন। জীকে পরিত্যাগ করলে জীর ভরণ পোষণের দায়িত্ব নিতে হত স্বামীকে। এযুগে

সম্পত্তির ওপর নারীর অধিকার স্বীকৃত হয়। বিধবা নারী অপুত্রক স্বামীর সম্পত্তির অধিকারিনী হতেন। সতিদাহ প্রথা প্রচলিত ছিল। মধ্যযুগে নারীর সামাজিক মর্যাদা দারুণ ভাবে লুপ্তিত হয়েছিল। এসময় নারীর জন্য পর্দাপ্রথা চালু হল। নারী শিক্ষার ক্রমশ অবনতি ঘটল মায়েদের স্কুলে যেতে দেওয়া হত না। ক্রমশ এই নিয়ম আরও কঠিন ভাবে বলবৎ করা হয়। এরপর ভারতে প্রবেশ ঘটল প্রবল প্রতাপশালী ব্রিটিশদের। ভারতবর্ষ পরিণিত হল ব্রিটিশদের উপনিবেশ। মিশনারীগন এদেশে আসার পর নারীশিক্ষার অগ্রগতির সুযোগ ঘটল। এসময় থেকে শুরু হল নারীর সামাজিক অবস্থানেরও পরিবর্তন। মিশনারীগন নারীদের আত্মমর্যাদা ও স্বনির্ভরতা রক্ষার্থে কাজ শুরু করতে থাকলেন। শিক্ষা, অর্থনৈতিক স্বনির্ভরতা ও আত্মমর্যাদা পরস্পর যুক্ত বিষয়। এসময় ব্রিটিশদের উদ্যোগে গঠিত হয়েছিল অনেক মিশনারী বিদ্যালয় যেখানে সমাজের নীচু তলার মেয়েরাই পড়তে আসতো কারন উচ্চবংশীয় রক্ষণশীল পরিবারের অভিভাবকেরা তাদের মেয়েদের খ্রিস্টান স্কুলে পাঠাতেন না, তাদের ধারণা ছিল যে মেয়েরা পরাশুনা করলে বিধবা হবে।

নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন

আধুনিক যুগে নারীর অবস্থান যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে উন্নত হয়েছে। আধুনিক যুগ হল নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের যুগ। নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন একবিংশ শতাব্দীতে সবচেয়ে আলোচিত একটি বিষয়। বর্তমানে নারীর যে মানবত্বের অবস্থান তা থেকে কেবল মুক্তিই নয়, বিভিন্ন সামাজিক ও রাষ্ট্রীয় কাজে যে কোনো সমস্যা সমাধানের ক্ষেত্রে ও নীতি নির্ধারণে নারীর অংশগ্রহণ কে অপরিহার্য বলে বিবেচনা করা হচ্ছে।

‘ক্ষমতায়ন’ শব্দটি তুলনামূলক ভাবে নতুন। এই ক্ষমতায়নের মূল উদ্দেশ্য হল নারীর স্বাধীনতা ও সমাজের সকল ক্ষেত্রে অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা বিশেষ করে ক্ষমতা প্রতিষ্ঠা কে বোঝায়। নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের অন্য আরও উদ্দেশ্য হল নারীকে স্বাধীন ও মর্যাদার অধিকারিনী করে তোলা। বলা বাহুল্য নারীর এই ক্ষমতায়ন একদিনে তৈরি হয়নি। সরকার ও সচেতন নাগরিকদের দীর্ঘ প্রচেষ্টার ফলশ্রুতিরই অপর নাম হল নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন বা Women Empowerment.

অনেকে নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন বলতে বোঝে পুরুষের বিরুদ্ধে নারীর ক্ষমতা প্রতিষ্ঠাকে, কিন্তু এটি একটি ভুল ধারণা। নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন হল বিদ্যমান সমাজে পুরুষের পাশাপাশি নারীর দায়িত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠা; পুরুষের অধিকারের পাশাপাশি নারীর অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা করা। ১৯৯৪ সালে মিশরের কায়রোতে যে সম্মেলন হয়েছিল, যেখানে নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের বিষয়টিকেই প্রাধান্য দেওয়া হয়েছিল, সেখানে

১৮৯টি পৃষ্ঠার একটি প্রস্তাবনায় সাম্য, ন্যায়বিচার, সন্তানধারণের প্রশ্নে নারীর ইচ্ছার প্রাধান্য, নারীর সামাজিক রাজনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক অধিকার প্রভৃতির ওপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা হয়েছিল।

১৯৭৫ সালকে রাষ্ট্রসংঘ আন্তর্জাতিক নারীবর্ষ হিসেবে ঘোষণা করেছিল। পরবর্তীতে নারী দশকের পূর্তি হয়েছিল নাইরোবি সম্মেলনের মধ্য দিয়ে। এই সম্মেলনে বিভিন্ন ধরনের দাবি ছিল এবং এখানে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণের কথা ও বলা হয়েছিল। ওই সনদে অন্যান্য দলের ন্যায় ভারতবর্ষ ও স্বাক্ষর বর্তমান আধুনিক সমাজে রাজনীতিতে ও নারীরা সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারে, এক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই উল্লেখযোগ্য যে, ১৯৯৩ সালে ৭৩তম সংবিধান সংশোধনের মধ্য দিয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার পঞ্চায়েত ও পৌরসভায় মেয়েদের জন্য এক-তৃতীয়াংশ আসন সংরক্ষণ আইন পাশ করান। এক্ষেত্রে আরও একটি বড়ো পদক্ষেপ হল মহিলা সংরক্ষণ বিল, ২০১০। এটি সংসদের উচ্চকক্ষে অনুমোদিত হয়েছে। এই বিলের উদ্দেশ্য হল মহিলাদের আরও বেশি ক্ষমতা দেওয়া ও উন্নয়নমূলক প্রক্রিয়ায় তাদের সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ নিশ্চিত করা।

নারীর উন্নতিকল্পে ভারত সরকার কতক গৃহীত পদক্ষেপ

‘নারীকে আপন ভাগ্য জয় করিবারে

কেন নাহি দিবে অধিকার?

হে বিধাতা।

নারীকে তার আপন ভাগ্য জয় করবার সুযোগ করে দেওয়ার জন্য ভারত সরকার নারীদের কল্যানার্থে কতগুলি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছেন। নীচে খুব সংক্ষেপে সেগুলির বিবরণ দেওয়া হল—

(ক) স্বাস্থ্য : মহিলাদের স্বাস্থ্যের সার্বিক উন্নতিকল্পে ভারত সরকার নিম্নলিখিত পদক্ষেপসমূহ গ্রহণ করেছেন।

(ক) ইন্দিরা গান্ধি মাতৃ সহযোগ যোজনা। এখানে প্রসূতি মহিলাদের প্রসবকালীন অবস্থা থেকে সন্তান প্রসবের পরবর্তী স্তর পর্যন্ত তিনটি কিস্তিতে ৪০০০ টাকা দেওয়ার কথা ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে।

(১) সুসংহত শিশু বিকাশ প্রকল্প,

(২) জননী সুরক্ষা যোজনা,

(৩) জননী ও শিশুর ট্রান কার্ড ব্যবস্থা,

- (৪) প্রসূতি মৃত্যু পর্যালোচনা,
(৫) ২৬ সপ্তাহ মাতৃকালীন ছুটি।

(খ) শিক্ষা: শিক্ষা হল জাতীর মূল মেরুদণ্ড। মানব সম্পদের সার্বিক উন্নয়ন সাধিত হয় শিক্ষার দ্বারা। এই দেশের অর্থেক জনসম্পদ হল নারী, স্বাধীনতার পর থেকেই নারী শিক্ষার বিষয় নিয়েই সরকার সচেতন। নারী শিক্ষাকে সুদৃঢ় ভিত্তির ওপর প্রতিষ্ঠা করার জন্য বিভিন্ন কমিটি ও কমিশন নারী শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠার ওপর বিশেষ জোর দিয়েছেন এইসব কমিটির মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল—দেশমুখ কমিটি, ভক্তবৎসল কমিটি, হংসমেহতা কমিটি ইত্যাদি আর কমিশন গুলোর মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল রাধাকৃষ্ণন কমিশন, জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতি। এছাড়াও ছিল জাতীয় নারী শিক্ষার কমিশন, জাতীয় নারী পর্যদ ইত্যাদি।

এইসব কমিটি কমিশন ছাড়াও ভারত সরকার নারীদের শিক্ষাসংক্রান্ত ব্যাপারে কতকগুলি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছেন। এগুলি হল—

- (১) প্রধানমন্ত্রী বিদ্যালক্ষী কার্যক্রম,
- (২) বোটি বাঁচাও, বোটি পড়াও,
- (৩) কন্যাশ্রী প্রকল্প (পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার),
- (৪) কস্তুরবা বালিকা বিদ্যালয় নির্মাণ

(গ) অর্থনৈতিক নিরাপত্তা : লক্ষ লক্ষ নারী যাতে অর্থনৈতিকভাবে স্বনির্ভর হতে পারে সে ব্যাপারেও ভারত সরকার একগুচ্ছ প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করেছেন। এগুলি হল—

- (১) রাষ্ট্রীয় মহিলা কোশ স্থাপন,
- (২) সুকন্যা সমৃদ্ধি যোজনা,
- (৩) ইন্দিরা আবাস যোজনা,
- (৪) নারী সমৃদ্ধি যোজনা,
- (৫) ১০০দিনের কাজ,
- (৬) বিধবা ভাতা ইত্যাদি

(ঘ) নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত প্রকল্প : ভারত সরকার ইন্ডিয়ান পেনাল কোড এ কতকগুলি দণ্ডবিধির ধারা রেখেছেন। যেমন—

- (১) রেপ বা ধর্ষণ (IPC-376) নং ধারা
- (২) মানসিক ও দৈহিক নিষ্ঠুরতা ও নির্যাতন (IPC-498 নং ধারা)

(৩) বলাৎকার বা যৌন নির্যাতন (IPC-354 নং ধারা)

(৪) ইভটিজিং (IPC-509 নং ধারা)

এছাড়াও কর্মক্ষেত্রে যদি কোনো নারীকে যৌন হেনস্তা করা হয়, তার জন্য সরকার কঠিন পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছেন। এগুলি বাদে ভারত সরকার ২০০৬ সালে বাল্য বিবাহ নিষিদ্ধ আইন প্রণয়ন করেছেন নারীর সুরক্ষার্থে। তাছাড়া চালু হয়েছে নির্ভয়া তহবিলের অধীন (one stop centre, women helpline ইত্যাদি)। এখানে একটি টোল ফ্রি নম্বর ১৮১ যা সবসময় মহিলাদের সুরক্ষা প্রদানে অগ্রণী ভূমিকা পালন করে চলেছে।

(ঙ) অন্যান্য প্রকল্প : অন্যান্য প্রকল্পের মধ্যে রয়েছে

(১) মহিলা-ই-হাত

(২) কর্মরত মহিলাদের থাকার জন্য আবাসন

(৩) নারী শক্তি পুরস্কার ইত্যাদি।

উপসংহার

আধুনিক সমাজে নারীরা হল পুরুষের সমকক্ষ। এখন আর নারীকে শুধু রান্নাঘর ও সংসারের চার দেওয়ালে বন্দী থাকতে হয়না। নারী এখন সর্বত্রই নিজেকে প্রকাশ করতে পারে। সমাজ নামক আকাশে নারীরা এখন উড়তে পারে স্বাধীন ভাবে। তাইতো আমরা এখন খেলার মাঠে যেমন নারীকে অংশগ্রহণ করতে দেখি আকাশে উড়োজাহাজ চালাতে দেখি। তেমনি সৈনিকের পোশাকে সীমান্তে প্রহরীর ভূমিকাতে নারী আজ সপ্রতিভ আবার রাজনীতির অঙ্গনেও নারীর পদধ্বনি শুনতে পাওয়া যায়। ভারতে মহিলাদের সংখ্যা অনেক দেশের মোট জনসংখ্যাকে ছাড়িয়ে যায়। ২০১১ সালের আদমশুমারীতে নারী ও পুরুষের অনুপাত হল ৯৩০ : ১০০০ জন। তাইতো কবির ভাষায় যদি বলি বলতে হবে ‘মেয়েদের জন্য অর্ধেক আকাশ’। কিন্তু প্রশ্ন জাগে অর্ধেক আকাশের অধিকার সত্যিই কি নারীরা পেয়েছে? জন্ম থেকেই তারা বৈষম্যের শিকার। এদেশে অবাধে চলে কন্যাশ্রম হত্যা, শিশুকন্যা হত্যা। এখনো অনেক মেয়েকে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিরুপমার মত পণের বলী হতে হয়। অনেক শহরে প্রায় প্রত্যহই ঘটে নির্ভয়া কাণ্ডের পুনরাবৃত্তি যা বিভিন্ন সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার মাধ্যমে আমাদের নজরে ধরা পড়ে।

তবে যাইহোক নারীর সুরক্ষার্থে ভারতবর্ষের সরকার যে প্রকল্পগুলি গ্রহণ করেছেন, তা যথার্থভাবেই নারীর সুরক্ষার রক্ষাকবচসম। এবং এই প্রকল্পগুলি

খুবই প্রশংসনীয় আর এগুলির মধ্য দিয়ে নারী পেয়েছে অর্ধেক আকাশের অধিকার এবং একের পর এক জয় করে চলেছে আপন ভাগ্যকে।

সহায়ক গ্রন্থপঞ্জি

- (ক) শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গ বিদ্যালয় ও সমাজ—ড. প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়
- (খ) স্বদেশ পরিচয়— জীবন মুখোপাধ্যায়
- (গ) স্বাস্থ্য ও শারীরশিক্ষা (শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য অষ্টম শ্রেণি) প: ব: মধ্যশিক্ষা পর্ষদ
- (ঘ) Gender school and Society— Dr. Piku Chowdhury

লিঙ্গ সংক্রান্ত ভাবনার ঐতিহাসিক ক্রমবিকাশ এবং আধুনিক সমাজে এর প্রভাব

সমাপ্তি হালদার ও শ্রাবস্তী হালদার

ভূমিকা

বর্তমান সময়কালের ক্রমবর্ধমান লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক অপরাধপ্রবণতার উৎস সন্ধান করতে গিয়ে আজকের সমাজের নারীপুরুষের মনের গভীর অন্তঃস্থলের কিছু বদ্ধমূল ধারণা ও দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির উপর আলোকপাত করা হয়েছে। যুগান্তরের ধারায় প্রবাহিত হয়ে বিভিন্ন কালে লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের বিষয়টি বহুরূপে ভাবিত ও প্রকাশিত হয়ে কিভাবে বর্তমানের পথ অতিক্রম করতে করতে পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের ধারক ও বাহক হিসাবে ভবিষ্যতের দিকে ধাবিত হচ্ছে—সে কথাই এখানে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে দেখা গিয়েছে যে আজকের সমাজে শৈশব-কৈশোর এবং শিক্ষাজীবনের ব্যবহারিক ক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক ভাবনা কিভাবে পূর্ববর্তী থেকে পরবর্তী প্রজন্মে প্রবাহিত হচ্ছে। খাদ্যাভ্যাস চালচলন পেশানির্বাচন, বিবাহ এবং বিবাহোত্তর জীবন সকল ক্ষেত্রেই বহু শতাব্দী প্রাচীন লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক ভাবনা রূপবদল করে বর্তমান ও ভবিষ্যতের মানবজীবন অধিকার করে নিচ্ছে। আধুনিক যুক্তিবাদী শিক্ষাসংস্কৃতির কালে ও নারীস্বাধীনতার জয়গান গাওয়ার যুগেও ফল্গুধারার মতো প্রবহমান লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক প্রাচীন ভাবনা বিভিন্ন পরিস্থিতিতে প্রায়শই প্রকাশিত হয়ে পড়ছে। তাই মানব সমাজের কল্যানার্থে বর্তমান সময়ের যুক্তিবাদী ও মানবতাবাদী শিক্ষার আলোকে সমাজ সংস্কার ও নবজাগরণ (রেনেসাঁ) ঘটানোর আহ্বান জানিয়ে এই নিবন্ধটি রচিত হয়েছে।

লিঙ্গসংক্রান্ত ভাবনার ঐতিহাসিক ক্রমবিকাশ

প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগে সভ্যতার সূচনালগ্ন থেকে পর্যালোচনা করলে স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে যে জীবজগতের অন্যান্য জীবকূলের মতই মানব প্রজাতি ক্রমবিবর্তনের ধারায়

বাহিত হয়ে এপ থেকে বর্তমান সময়ে এগিয়ে এসেছে (হোমোস্যাপিয়েন্স)। মানসিক ও শারীরবৃত্তীয় ক্রিয়াকলাপের নিরিখে প্রধান দ্বিলিঙ্গভিত্তিক বিভাজনে (স্ট্রীলিঙ্গ ও পুংলিঙ্গ) বিপুল পার্থক্যের বৈশিষ্ট্য নিয়ে তারা স্বমহিমায় বিরাজ করেছে। দুই বিপরীত লিঙ্গের মানব মানবীর ভবিষ্যত প্রজন্মের সৃষ্টির প্রক্রিয়া ও প্রতিপালন সংক্রান্ত প্রাকৃতিক ক্রিয়াকলাপের মধ্যে যে সকল পার্থক্য প্রকট হয়ে উঠেছে তা তাদের আদিম সমাজে স্ত্রী ও পুরুষ বোধে বিভাজিত করেছে।

আদিম পৃথিবীতে আদিম মানবের খাদ্যসংগ্রাহক থেকে খাদ্য উৎপাদকে পরিণত হওয়ার ধারাবাহিক প্রক্রিয়াতে। মানবসমাজের বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠীর নারী পুরুষ অনুযায়ী শ্রম বিভাজন ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠায় প্রকট হয়ে উঠেছে। পরবর্তীকালে সভ্যতার অগ্রগতি ঘটতে থাকলে মানবসমাজের এই শ্রমবিভাজন অব্যাহত থাকতে দেখা গিয়েছে এবং কাঁধে কাঁধ মিলিয়ে নারীপুরুষকে অস্তিত্বের সংগ্রামে টিকে থেকে পরস্পর সহাবস্থান করতে দেখা গিয়েছে।

অতঃপর সভ্যতার ক্রম অগ্রগতির দিকে লক্ষ্য করলে দৃশ্যমান হয় যে সভ্যতার সূচনালব্ধের দুই বিপরীত লিঙ্গের বৈশিষ্ট্যের পার্থক্যগুলিকে বেশ কিছু ক্ষমতা ও সুবিধালোভী প্রবৃত্তিভিত্তিত মানুষ নিজেদের স্বার্থে ব্যবহার করতে শুরু করে। বিশেষ লিঙ্গের অধিকারী (পুংলিঙ্গ) হওয়ার ফলে বিশেষ কিছু সুবিধা ভোগ করবার প্রতি তারা আসক্ত হয়ে অপর বিপরীত লিঙ্গের (স্ট্রীলিঙ্গ) প্রতি তাদের আচরণ প্রায় অত্যাচারের পর্যায়ে নিয়ে যায়। (আদিম সমাজে পুরুষ কর্তৃক বলপূর্বক বহনকারী সঙ্গ করা নারীদের একচেটিয়াভাবে সন্তানপ্রতিপালনে ব্যস্ত রাখা ইত্যাদি)। এ প্রসঙ্গে মহর্ষি উদ্দালকপুত্র শ্বেতকেতুর অভিজ্ঞতার কথা উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে।

শ্বেতকেতু যখন তাঁর পিতামাতার সঙ্গে সময় কাটাচ্ছিলেন তখন এক ব্রাহ্মণ শ্বেতকেতুর মাতাকে তাঁর পিতার (মহর্ষি উদ্দালক) সামনেই বলপূর্বক (‘বলং ইব’) নিয়ে যায়। এই ঘটনা পর্যবেক্ষণ করে শ্বেতকেতু অত্যন্ত ক্রুদ্ধ হন ও তাঁর মনে গভীর প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি হয়। পুত্রের অবস্থা লক্ষ্য করে মহর্ষি উদ্দালক বলেন—‘বৎস ক্রোধ করিওনা, ইহা নিত্য ধর্ম। এ ভূমন্ডল মধ্যে সমস্ত রমনীরাই অব্যবহিত। গোগণ যে রকম ব্যবহার করে, প্রজাগণ ও স্ব স্ব বর্ণে সে রকম আচরণ করিয়া থাকে।’—পিতার বাক্য শ্রবণ করে ঋষিপুত্র পূর্বাপেক্ষা আরো রুষ্ট হয়ে ওঠেন ও পরবর্তী সময়ে এই নিয়ম স্থাপন করেন—‘যে স্ত্রী পতিভিন্ন পুরুষান্তর সংসর্গ করিবে এবং যে পুরুষ পতিব্রতা স্ত্রীকে পরিত্যাগ করিয়া অন্য স্ত্রীতে আসক্ত হইবে, ইহাদের উভয়কেই ঋণহত্যাসদৃশ ঘোরতর পাপপঙ্কে লিপ্ত হইতে হইবে।’

উপরোক্ত মনোভাব থেকেই তৎকালীন সময়ে বিবাহ প্রথার উদ্ভব হয়েছিল বলে অনেক পণ্ডিত ব্যক্তি মনে করে থাকেন। সেই পৌরানিক যুগ থেকে বেশকিছু চিন্তাশীল মানুষ বিবাহ বন্ধনে আবদ্ধ জীবনের অপেক্ষাকৃত সুরক্ষিত বলে মনে করেছিলেন কারণ তারা ভেবেছিলেন যে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ না হলে প্রবৃত্তি তাড়িত পুরুষদের কাছে নারীরা সহজলভ্য হয়ে উঠবে এবং পুরুষরা অবাধে ‘বীরভোগ্যা বসুন্ধরা’ নীতি প্রয়োগ করার সুযোগ পাবে। আপাতদৃষ্টিতে বিবাহপ্রথার মাধ্যমে সমাজে নারীদের মর্যাদাসূচক অবস্থান সূচিত হয়েছে বলে মনে হলেও পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থায় সর্বযুগেই নারীদের মর্যাদা ভুলুণ্ঠিত হতে দেখা গেছে।

ঋগ্বেদিক যুগের নারীরা অধ্যাপিকা, আচার্যা বা লেখিকা হিসাবে আজীবন জ্ঞানচর্চা করার সুযোগ (‘ব্রহ্মবাদিনী’) পেয়ে সৃজনশীলতা ও কৃতিত্বের অধিকারিনী হলেও বা গার্হস্থ্য জীবন বেছে নেওয়ার স্বাধীনতা ভোগ করলেও সর্বোপরি পুরুষদের দ্বারা নির্ধারিত অনুশাসন মেনেই তাদের চলতে হতো। সামাজিক অনুশাসন তৈরীতে নারীদের ভূমিকা ছিল আনুবীক্ষনিক। পরবর্তী বৈদিক যুগে পুরুষদের তুলনায় নারীদের শিক্ষাগ্রহণ ও জ্ঞানচর্চার পরিধি এবং স্বাধীনতা সঙ্কুচিত হয়ে আসে। পুরুষদের দ্বারা নির্ধারিত গার্হস্থ্য জীবনের কঠোর অনুশাসন ও কর্তব্যকর্মে বেশীরভাগ। ক্ষেত্রেই তাদের অন্তপুরচারিনী করে তোলা হয়।

মনু সংহিতায় বলা হয়েছে—‘স্মৃতিশাস্ত্র ও বেদ প্রভৃতি ধর্মশাস্ত্রের উপর স্ত্রীজাতির কোন অধিকার নেই’ (১/১৮) আরো বলা হয়েছে যে ‘স্ত্রীলোকের স্বামী ভিন্ন পৃথক যজ্ঞ নেই। স্বামীর অনুমতি ছাড়া কোন ব্রত এবং উপবাস নেই। কেবলমাত্র স্বামীর সেবা করলেই স্ত্রীলোক স্বর্গে যেতে পারেনা’ (৫/১৫৫) ভগবান মনুর মতে—পুরুষ দর্শন মাত্রেই স্ত্রীজাতির মনে তার সঙ্গে মিলনেচ্ছা জাগে, তাই নারীদের শৈশবে পিতার অধীন, যৌবনে স্বামীর অধীন এবং বার্ধক্যে পুত্রের অধীন থাকা বাধ্যতামূলক বলে তিনি মনে করেছেন। নারীদের বশে রাখার জন্য অবশ্য পালনীয় কর্তব্য হিসেবে তিনি লেখেন যে পত্নীর সঙ্গে স্নাতক ব্রাহ্মণ একপাতে ভোজন করবেন না। স্ত্রী, পুত্র, দাস, শিষ্য এবং সহোদর কনিষ্ঠ ভাই অপরাধ করলে সূক্ষ্ম রঞ্জু দিয়ে অথবা বেনুদল বা বাঁশের বাখারি দিয়ে শাসনের জন্য আঘাত করবে। এ প্রসঙ্গে উল্লেখ করার মত বিষয় যে স্বামীর অপরাধের ক্ষেত্রে স্ত্রীর কর্তব্য বিষয়ে কিছু উল্লেখ নেই। এইভাবে নারীরা সমাজে দীর্ঘকাল মহত্বের আবরণে একপ্রকার পরাধীনতা লালন করতে শুরু করে।

মহাকাব্যের যুগে এই অভ্যস্ত পরাধীনতার শিকার নারীদের ইচ্ছার বিরুদ্ধে অপচ্ছন্দের মানুষের ঔরসে একপ্রকার বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্ষনের শিকার হয়ে

ক্ষেত্রজ সন্তানের জন্ম দিতে হয়। (মহাভারতে ব্যাসদেবের ঔরসজাত অশ্বিকা ও অশ্বালিকার গর্ভজাত ক্ষেত্রজ সন্তান ধৃতরাষ্ট্র এবং পাণ্ডু) এখানে উল্লেখ করার মত বিষয় যে মধ্যযুগ ও বর্তমান আধুনিক যুগেও কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে সন্তান উৎপাদনে অক্ষম স্বামীর ক্ষেত্রে বৈজ্ঞানিক পদক্ষেপ নেওয়ার পরিবর্তে বিবাহিতা স্ত্রীদের গুণিনদের তুকতাক ও ব্যাভিচারের সংস্পর্শে এনে একপ্রকার বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্ষণের মাধ্যমেই সন্তান উৎপাদনে বাধ্য করা হয়। অন্য দিকে পারিবারিক পশ্চন্দের বাইরে ভিন্ন জাতি বা ধর্মের বাইরে বিবাহ করলে বা সম্পর্ক তৈরী করলে কন্যা বা স্ত্রীদের বিভৎস শাস্তি (পুড়িয়ে মারা, বিভৎসভাবে হত্যা করা, চরিত্রহীনা অপবাদ দেওয়া)ধার্য করা হয়।

গার্হস্থ্য বা পারিবারিক অপরাধ (domestic violence) বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্ষণ, খুন (marital rape, murder)

পরবর্তী বৈদিক যুগের নারী স্বাধীনতা নিয়ন্ত্রণ' প্রবাহিত হয়ে মধ্যযুগের ভারতবর্ষে ভয়ঙ্কর রূপ ধারণ করে এবং পরবর্তীকালে তা আধুনিক যুগেও সংক্রামিত হয়। মধ্যযুগের ভারতবর্ষে নারীদের (ব্যতিক্রম-ধনীপরিবারের বা রাজপরিবারের কন্যা) শিক্ষাগ্রহণের অধিকার কেড়ে নেওয়া হয় এবং শিক্ষাগ্রহণ করলে নারীরা বিধবা হয় ইত্যাদি নানাপ্রকার ভীতি প্রদর্শন করে তাদের কঠোর অনুশাসনে পর্দানসীন ও গৃহবন্দী করে ফেলা হয়। অতঃপর শিক্ষার আলোক বঞ্চিতা নারীদের খুব সহজেই ধর্মের দোহাই দিয়ে সমাজে পুরুষ স্বার্থ সংরক্ষণকারী কিছু চরম লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক অমানবিক প্রথা মানতে বাধ্য করা হয়। নারীদের শিক্ষার অধিকার হরণ থেকে শুরু করে কন্যা সন্তানের জন্মদান, বিবাহ ও গার্হস্থ্য জীবন পালন, সন্তানদের প্রতিপালন, নারীদের পারিবারিক ও সামাজিক নিরাপত্তাহীনতা ও সর্বোপরি নারীদের মর্যাদার অবমূল্যায়ন শতাব্দীর পর শতাব্দী সমাজের একাংশকে অজ্ঞানতার। অন্ধকারে নিমজ্জিত করতে থাকে।

ধর্মীয় অনুশাসনের আবরণে কন্যাদের অসম বিবাহে বা বাল্যবিবাহে বাধ্য করার মধ্যযুগীয় ধারা বর্তমান সময়েও প্রবাহিত হতে দেখা যায়। বৈদিক মন্ত্র উচ্চারণ করে বিবাহের মধ্য দিয়ে বা যে কোন প্রকার বিবাহের মধ্য দিয়ে স্ত্রীর ওপর স্বামীর নিরঙ্কুশ অধিকার প্রাপ্তির বহুরূপী বহিঃপ্রকাশের শিকার অসহায় নারীরা বর্তমান সচেতনতার যুগেও একপ্রকার অভ্যস্ত পরাধীনতায় বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্ষণ এর শিকার হয়। সামাজিক লজ্জা বা অর্থনৈতিক পরাধীনতার কারণে এই বিষয়টির বিরুদ্ধে অভিযোগ আজকের দিনেও (বিশেষ করে ভারতে) যথেষ্ট

সংখ্যায় নথিভুক্ত হয় না কিন্তু এ বিষয়ে অন্যান্য দেশের পরিসংখ্যান উপেক্ষা করার মত নয় ইউনাইটেড স্টেটস্ এ প্রতি সাত বা আটজন স্ত্রীর মধ্যে একজন স্ত্রী স্বামীর দ্বারা ধর্ষিতা হন (S Box. S. Power, Crime and My stification, London Tavistok Publication, 1983, p.122)। আরেকটি পরিসংখ্যানে দেখা যায় যে ১০%-১৪% বিবাহিতা নারী স্বামী কর্তৃক ধর্ষণের সম্মুখীন হন যা একজন স্ত্রীর স্বামীর প্রতি বিশ্বাস এবং ভালোবাসাকে ফসিলে পরিণত করে। যাইহোক প্রবৃত্তিভিত্তি স্বামীরা বিবাহকে স্ত্রীকে অবাধে ধর্ষণ করার ছাড়পত্র (লাইসেন্স) মনে না করলে এবং স্ত্রীরা ভালবাসার আবরণে অভ্যস্ত পরাধীনতার শিকার না হয়ে বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্ষণের বিরুদ্ধে। সচেতন হয়ে উঠলে মানবতা, বিজ্ঞান ও যুক্তির আলোকে বহু শতাব্দীর এই নিপীড়ন বন্ধ করা সম্ভব হবে। শুভ বুদ্ধিসম্পন্ন সমাজের প্রকৃত কল্যাণকামী নরনারীর জাগরণের ফলেই শারিরীক নিগ্রহ ও খুনের মতই উপরোক্ত মনুষ্যসৃষ্ট পাশবিকতার বিরুদ্ধেও কঠোর আইন প্রণয়ন করা সম্ভব হবে।

ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষে ও তার পরবর্তী সময়ে নারীদের মর্যাদাসূচক অবস্থান
(Status and Position of women in colonial India)

ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর ভারতবর্ষে পাশ্চাত্য জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞান চর্চার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নারীশিক্ষার প্রসার সমাজে আলোড়ন সৃষ্টি করে। এই নব পরিবর্তিত পরিবেশে প্রথমে জ্ঞানী ও মহৎ হৃদয় পুরুষদের (মনীষি—ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, রামমোহন রায় প্রমুখ) সহায়তায় পরিবার ও সমাজের ভয়ঙ্কর প্রতিকূলতার মধ্যে স্ত্রী ও কন্যারা শিক্ষিত হয়ে উঠতে থাকে। বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই বিবাহের পর স্বশুর গৃহের শ্রমসাধ্য গৃহকর্ম সম্পন্ন করে, পরিবারে নারীশিক্ষা গ্রহণের প্রতি বিরূপ মনোভাবাসম্পন্ন মানুষদের চক্ষের আড়ালে গিয়ে শুধু স্বামীর পৃষ্ঠপোষকতা সম্বল করে স্ত্রীদের বিদ্যাচর্চা সে যুগে অব্যাহত থাকে।

সাহিত্যে প্রতিফলন (Gender issue in literature)

বৈদিক সাহিত্য থেকে যেমন প্রাচীন ভারতে নারীদের স্থান সম্পর্কে সম্যক ধারণা করা যায় তেমনই চরম প্রতিকূলতার সঙ্গে সংগ্রাম করে শিক্ষিত হয়ে ওঠা নারীদের জলন্ত লেখনি দ্বারা সৃষ্ট আত্মজীবনী ও সাহিত্য কর্মগুলি বর্তমান সময়ে তদানীন্তন কালের প্রতিকূল লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক সমাজের প্রতিফলন ঘটায় (সরসীবালা বসু, বেগম রোকেয়া, আশাপূর্ণা দেবী প্রমুখ)। ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষের

বামাবোধিনী পত্রিকায় গার্হস্থ্যের প্রয়োজনে নারীশিক্ষার কথা বলা হলেও নারীদের কর্মের ক্ষেত্র বর্ধিতকালের পরিবর্তে গৃহে সীমাবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে। ঐ সময়ে সমাজে মাতৃদেবীর আরাধনার অন্তরালে নারীদের নানাপ্রকার ব্যাভিচারে বাধ্য করা হয় (শরদিন্দু বন্দোপাধ্যায়—‘চুয়াচন্দন’)

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতবর্ষে বিবাহোত্তর স্বীকৃত ধর্মণের শিকার হয়ে অনিয়ন্ত্রিত গর্ভধারণের কারনে নারীদের করুণ ও দুর্বিসহ জীবনযাপন করে চলতে হত। জনৈক লেখিকার বর্ণনা অনুযায়ী উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে যে কোন একটি গৃহস্থ পরিবারে স্ত্রী তার স্বামীকে পঞ্জিকা হাতে বসতে দেখলেই কোন শুভক্ষণে পুনর্বীর গর্ভধারণ করার আশঙ্কায় তার (স্ত্রীর) ঠকঠকি লেগে যেত। উপরোক্ত সামাজিক চিত্রের প্রতিফলন আমরা আশাপূর্ণা দেবী রচিত সুবর্ণলতা-তেও দেখি। বর্তমান সময়ে বিবাহোত্তর শারীরিক সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে বেশীর ভাগ সময়েই অসুস্থতা সত্ত্বেও স্ত্রীদেরই গর্ভনিরোধক সেবন বা ব্যবহার করতে সচেতন থাকতে হয় নাহলে গর্ভপাতের যন্ত্রনা ও শারীরিক ক্ষতি স্বীকার করে নিতে হয়।

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর সমাজ সংস্কারের স্রোতধারায় প্রবাহিত হয়ে সামাজিক কুসংস্কারগুলির অবলুপ্তি ঘটানোর জন্য কুসংস্কারগুলির বিপক্ষের যুক্তি হিসাবে শাস্ত্রীয় বচন ও অনুশাসনের সাহায্য নেওয়া হয়েছিল। এক্ষেত্রে মহাপ্রাণ মনীষিগণ যদি কুসংস্কারগুলির অবলুপ্তির বিপক্ষে কোন যুক্তি শাস্ত্রে খুঁজে না পেতেন তাহলে কি বর্তমান সময়েও সতীদাহ প্রথা বলবৎ থাকত? শুধুমাত্র যুক্তি মানবতা ও সাম্যের মাপকাঠিতে কি মনীষীদের পক্ষে তদানীন্তন সময়ের ওই প্রথা বন্ধ করা সম্ভব হতো? বৃহত্তর সমাজ বিপ্লবের ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত করতে সাহিত্যের ভূমিকা অনস্বীকার্য। তাই সাহিত্যে ও বাস্তবে নারীরা উচ্চপদাধিকারী ডিগ্রীধারী পুরুষদের প্রেরণাদাত্রী, সহকারিনী বা আহাৰ্য্য প্রস্তুতকারিনী না হয়ে সমান অংশীদারিনী হিসাবে প্রতিভাত হলে নরনারীর সামাজিক চেতনা বৃদ্ধি পাবে।

শৈশব ও কৈশোরের অপরাধ ও পিতামাতার ভূমিকা

(Juvenile Crime and role of parents)

অপরাধ প্রবণতার উৎস সন্ধান করতে গেলে পরিবারে ও সমাজের পরিণত বয়সের অপরাধীদের অতীতের দিকে দৃষ্টি নিক্ষেপ করা প্রয়োজন। ব্যক্তির শৈশব ও কৈশোরের বেড়ে ওঠার পরিবেশ, অর্জিত অভিজ্ঞতা ও পিতামাতার ভূমিকা পর্যালোচনা করলে দেখা যায় যে সমাজে যে সকল পরিবারগুলি লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের

এক একটি কেন্দ্রস্থল সেই সকল পরিবারের পুত্র ও কন্যা-সন্তানরা বিভিন্ন প্রকার তিন্ত অভিজ্ঞতার সম্মুখীন হয় যা তাদের পরবর্তী পারিবারিক জীবনে ও সমাজের বৃহত্তর ক্ষেত্রে ভয়ঙ্কর প্রভাব বিস্তার করতে পারে। মাতার ওপর পিতার শারীরিক নিগ্রহ পর্যবেক্ষণ করে কন্যা সন্তানরা আজীবন পুরুষ জাতির প্রতি বিদ্বেষমূলক মনোভাব পোষণ করে নিরাপত্তাহীনতায় ভুগতে পারে। তারা কখনো আত্মসীও হয়ে উঠতে পারে। অন্যদিকে পুত্র সন্তানরা পিতার অত্যাচারের অনুকরণে স্ত্রী বা সমাজের অন্যান্য নারীদের উপর অত্যাচারীর ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করতে পারে।

শৈশবে ও কৈশোরে পুত্র ও কন্যাদের মধ্যে দৈনন্দিন জীবনের খাদ্য,বস্ত্র ,শিক্ষা,বাসস্থান(ঠাঠেঠাঠে বুনিয়ে দেওয়া যে পুত্র ও কন্যার মধ্যে সম্পত্তির সমানাধিকারের বিষয়টি আইনসঙ্গত হলেও কার্যক্ষেত্রে পুত্রদেরই পিতার সম্পত্তির উত্তরাধিকারী করা হয় ও কন্যাদের স্বশুরগৃহে চলে যেতেই হয়।) ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলিতে বৈষম্য প্রকট হয়ে উঠলে কন্যারা আজীবন পরাধীনতায় অভ্যস্ত হয়ে উঠতে পারে ও পুত্ররা একপ্রকার বিপজ্জনক স্বাধীনতা ভোগে অভ্যস্ত হয়ে যেতে পারে। পুরুষের বিপজ্জনক স্বাধীনতা (পরিবারে পুরুষদের সর্বাত্মক আহরণগ্রহণ, পারিবারিক দায়িত্বহীনতা ও বধূনির্যাতন, মাদক সেবন, পতিতালয়ে গমন) বিগতদিনের মতো বর্তমানের সমাজকেও নানা ভাবে কলুষিত করতে পারে। বিপজ্জনক স্বাধীনতার ফল হিসাবে বিবাহের সময় সৌহার্দ্যমূলক সম্পর্ক নষ্ট হয়ে যাওয়ার আশঙ্কায় রক্ত ও স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষা না করে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ নববধূ তার নববিবাহিত উৎশৃঙ্খল স্বামীর কাছ থেকে ফুলশয্যার রাতে সিমিলিস এইডস ইত্যাদি অসুখের জীবাণু উপহার হিসাবে লাভ করে । এক্ষেত্রে অবশ্য পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের। শোষণের শিকার দেওয়ালে পিঠ ঠেকে যাওয়া কোন নারী ও পুরুষজাতিকে কর্মফল হিসাবে এই ধরনের উপহার (গণোরিয়া বা এইডস এর জীবাণু) দিতে পারে।

আধুনিক গবেষণায় দেখা গেছে যে পারিবারিক হিংসা, অরাজকতা, পরকীয়ার কারণে সন্তানরা অধিকমাত্রায় অবহেলিত হয় ও যৌন হয়রানির শিকার হয় যা শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবারে দেখা যায় না (CNSPCC, UK, 2011)। দেখা গেছে যে বেশীরভাগ ক্ষেত্রে জন্মদাতা পিতার চেয়ে সৎ পিতারা সৎ সন্তানদের নিরাপত্তার (বিশেষ করে যৌন নিরাপত্তার) ক্ষেত্রে উদাসীন থাকে। (Rothman et.al. 2007) শৈশবে নানা প্রকার বৈষম্যমূলক অত্যাচার প্রত্যক্ষণ (লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক), পারিবারিক অরাজকতা,বঞ্চনা ও অতিমাত্রায় পারিবারিক দমননীতি সন্তানদের মধ্যে Emotional Block বা ট্রমা সৃষ্টি করতে পারে,তাদের জ্ঞানমূলক বিকাশেও (cogni-

tive development) বাধা হয়ে দাড়াতে পারে। পাঠগ্রহণ অমনোযোগীতা, অযথা নিজের প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করার চেষ্টা করা, সমাজের নিষিদ্ধ কাজকর্মে (নেশা করা, একই সঙ্গে বহু নারী সঙ্গ করা, হিংসাত্মক খুন) লিপ্ত হওয়া, সর্বোপরি আত্মহননের মতো পথও তারা বেছে নিতে পারে। শৈশব ও কৈশোরে লালিত এই সকল অপরাধপ্রবণতা তাদের পরিণত বয়সে সমাজের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্নভাবে প্রতিফলিত হতে পারে।

জীবনের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গগত অবস্থানের ভূমিকা

(Role of Gender in different sphere of life)

পারিবারিক অরাজকতা, অবহেলা বা চরমদমননীতি, সন্তানদের এক কাল্পনিক সুখের জগতে আবদ্ধ করে যেখানে তাদের বাস্তব জীবনে ঘটা সকল অমীমাংসিত অবিচারের সুবিচার করেন কোন এক অদৃশ্য বিচারক। তাদের শৈশব ও কৈশোরের মনোজগতের অদৃশ্য বিচারক প্রচলিত আইন ব্যবস্থার উপর আস্থা হারিয়ে ব্যক্তির পরিণত বয়সেও তাদের বিগত জীবনের অভিজ্ঞতার নিরিখে তাদের ব্যতিক্রমী পথে পরিচালিত করে। শৈশবে ও কৈশোরে পারিবারিক হিংসাত্মক কার্যকলাপ (লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক অত্যাচার, খুন, ধর্ষণ, পতিতালয় গমন, বিপজ্জনক নেশায় আসক্তি) পরিণত বয়সে তাদের একই ঘটনা ঘটাতে প্ররোচিত করতে পারে। অতীতের অমীমাংসিত বৈষম্যমূলক হিংসার প্রত্যুত্তর হিসাবে কোন ব্যক্তি সিরিয়াল কিলার বা ধর্ষকের ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করতে পারে। বিপজ্জনক স্বাধীনতার প্রয়োগ স্বরূপ দুঃসাহসী প্রেমে প্রত্যাখ্যাত যুবক অ্যাসিড অ্যাটাকের মত ঘটনাও ঘটাতে পারে। এছাড়া বর্তমান প্রতিযোগিতামূলক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা ও পারিবারিক চাপের মুখে পড়ে জীবনের নানা প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হতে বিভিন্ন বয়সের শিক্ষার্থীরা অপর শ্রেষ্ঠতর প্রতিযোগীদের অপহরণ, হুমকি এমনকি খুনের মত অপরাধের শিকার হতে বাধ্য করে। এ সকল ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিযোগিতার পরিবর্তে মানুষের মঙ্গলসাধনকারী মানবতাবাদী কর্মের বহিঃপ্রকাশ ও মানব কল্যাণার্থে জ্ঞানার্জনই যদি পৃথিবীর সকল মানুষের যোগ্যতার মাপকাঠি হয়ে ওঠে তাহলেই হয়ত মানব প্রজাতি নিজেদের পৃথিবী থেকে নিশ্চিহ্ন হয়ে যাওয়া থেকে বাঁচতে পারবে। পৃথিবীর সকল পিতামাতারা তাদের সন্তানদের এক একজন প্রতিযোগী নয়, যদি জ্ঞানযোগী ও কর্মযোগী হিসাবে তৈরি করতে সক্ষম হন তাহলে সমাজ সংসার অচিরেই অপরাধ ও অপরাধীশূন্য হয়ে উঠবে।

উপসংহার

উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে আমরা স্পষ্ট ধারণা করতে পারি যে সভ্যতার সূচনাকাল থেকে মানবজাতির মনোজগতে লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক অনুভূতির এক ধারাবাহিক পরিবর্তন বিভিন্ন সময়কালে মানবসমাজে প্রতিফলিত হয়েছে। সমাজের পুরুষদের লিঙ্গবৈষম্যমূলক অনুভূতির ধারাবাহিক পরিবর্তনের ধারা বিভিন্ন সময়কালে রূপ বদল করে নারীদের ভাবনার জগৎ, তাদের আর্থসামাজিক অবস্থান ও স্বাধীনতাকে ধর্মীয় মহত্বের আবরণে সূচিত করে কঠোর অনুশাসনে বেঁধে দিয়েছে। বহু শতাব্দীর অভ্যন্তরীণ পরাধীনতায় আবদ্ধ নারী সমাজের ব্যতিক্রমী অগ্নিকন্যাদের জীবন সংগ্রাম সমাজ সংসারে দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপন করলেও নারীদের চেতনা জাগ্রত করতে, অনালোকিত অর্ধাকাশকে আলোকিত করতে এক বৃহত্তর সমাজ বিপ্লবের প্রয়োজনে এই নিবন্ধটি এক ক্ষুদ্র প্রচেষ্টা।

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THEME :
LEGAL INTERVENTION IN CONJUGAL LIFE

Pumping and Leaks in the Pink Balloon: Issues of Feminist Development in India

Dr. Avijit Sutradhar

Feminist movements emerged, throughout the world, as a response to the male domination in society and age-old injustice done to the women. Feminism is considered as new social movement in which political values such as liberty, equality, justice and democratization are closely engaged. In the age of globalization and ideological plurality, feminist movements mostly arrange radicalism particularly in matters of anti-rape movement, movement for sexual rights, movement for political equality etc. as we have observed in most popular movements on feminist issues. The paper is a modest attempt to highlight some successes of Indian feminist movements, simultaneously, we can also explore that the consequences of these movements were not always in favour of the women of contemporary India. Highlighting different backgrounds, the Paper has been developed with the methodology of social movement research such as online journalism, historical analysis, and comparative analysis.

SEX CRIMES AND 'INDIA'S DAUGHTER'

'India's Daughter', a documentary short film directed by Leslee Widwin, faced serious controversy projecting flagrant misogyny raised by an interviewee who was convicted for committing sex crime on December 16, 2012. We all know that the film was based on Nirbhaya Gang Rape incident in India's Capital. Many famous personalities of Bollywood have argued for broadcasting the movie from the viewpoint that the movie would make people aware about the threats that the Indian women are facing today. But the Government of India was

in favour of censorship and banned the movie in 2015 arguing that Government of India will not tolerate commercial benefit and India's insult centring round this movie in international context. On the Contrary, 'Daughters of Mother India' which was released in 2014, directed by Vibha Bakshi, has received National Film Award for best film on social issues revealing aftermath of Nirbhaya Gang Rape.

After a long court proceeding, on 20th March, 2020, death sentence was executed against Nirbhaya's rapists to deliver justice to 'India's Daughter'. Movement against Nirbhaya's gang rape took the shape of popular movement throughout the country and got the name of "Nirbhaya Movement" in media politics. Anti-rape movements under different socio-political structure, after Nirbhaya's gang rape pose a serious challenge to law enforcement agencies. Many self-appointed leaders have shouted the slogans and tried to convince people about the demand of the movement and started several smaller sub-movements under the umbrella of bigger movement. But we find a lack of solidarity in the feminist movements to resolve protracted court proceedings on rape cases or sex crimes. Still the reports on gang rape are coming and the rate of such crime against women is increasing day-by-day even after death sentence of Nirbhaya's rapists. According to National Crime Records Bureau report on 'Crime in India', 2019, out of many crimes against women, a total of 7.9% is of 'rape'. In this report, 32,260 rape cases have been reported till 2018. Hathras Gang Rape case of 14th September, 2020 was a most reactionary incident in Uttar Pradesh where the role of police administration was controversial since the police persons took the steps of cremation of the dead body of rape victim 19 years old Dalit girl without the consent of her family members. The reports on socio-political protests have been broadcasted nationwide with 24 hours media coverage. This Dalit girl was another 'India's Daughter' as we find no revolutionary impact of anti-rape laws on society to control the human behaviour so as to save the 'Daughters of Mother India'.

GENDER DISPARITY IN LEGISLATURE

A total of 78 women have got their seats in Lok Sabha by 17th parliamentary election. It is 14% of the total seat and this is the highest

since independence. By this, we cannot assume that what would be the time limit in future to be equal to men members in the Parliament. Surprisingly, Women's Reservation Bill (108th Amendment Bill), which proposes 33% reservation for women in the Parliament and State Legislative Bodies to strengthen better representation, is still pending in Lok Sabha since many years, but notably, Rajya Sabha has passed the bill on 9th March 2010. The following data highlights the rate of huge difference in terms of gender representation in the legislature in SAARC countries.

**Proportion of Seats held by Women in National Parliaments
(in percentage) in SAARC Countries**

Sl. No.	Name of the Country	Most Recent Year	Most Recent Value
1.	Afghanistan	2020	27%
2.	Bangladesh	2020	21%
3.	Bhutan	2020	15%
4.	India	2020	14%
5.	Maldives	2020	05%
6.	Nepal	2020	33%
7.	Pakistan	2020	20%
8.	Sri Lanka	2020	05%

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>, Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) Data (worldbank.org), accessed on 30th November, 2020 at 15:56 pm

Opposition to the Women's Reservation Bill was characterized by anti-woman and patriarchal. Arguments against the bill came from two different sides—one is from opposition to reservation in general and another from a belief the reservation for women should be extended to other disempowered groups, in other words, the quotas within the quotas position. The Bill was vehemently opposed by OBC faction of the parliament with a claim that only the creamy layer of upper caste women will benefit from reservation for women. In 2014, during winter session of the parliament, actress Jayaprada raised the issue of

women's reservation and she was supported by members of Left parties, BJD, Trinamool Congress and even from Congress.

WOMEN AS ARMY COMMANDER

According to a Supreme Court's verdict came on February, 2020, the women are now allowed to serve Indian Army as Commander. Women will have permanent commission and command roles in Indian Military Units excluding few combat units like infantry or artillery corps. Legal battle for permanent commission was started with a Public Interest Litigation (PIL). A PIL was filed in 2003 before the Delhi High Court for grant of permanent commission (PC) to women Short-Service Commission (SSC) officers in the Army. Another writ petition was filed by Major Leena Gurav on October 16, 2006 to challenge the terms and conditions of service imposed by circulars earlier and to seek PC for women officers. The Defence Ministry of Defence passed an order in September 2008 saying PC would be granted prospectively to SSC women officers in the Judge Advocate General (JAG) department and the Army Education Corps (AEC). But this circular was challenged before the Delhi High Court by Major Sandhya Yadav and others on the ground that it granted PC only prospectively, and only in certain specified streams. The High Court heard the 2003, 2006, and 2008 challenges together, and passed its judgment in 2010. It was ruled that, women officers of the Air Force and Army on SSC who had sought permanent commission but were not granted that status, would be entitled to PC at par with male SSC officers. But this benefit was only available to women officers in service who had instituted proceedings before the High Court, and had retired during the pendency of the writ petitions. Consequently, it was observed that the government challenged the High Court's order in the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Defence did not implement those directions. While the proceedings were on, the government passed an order in February 2019 for the grant of PC to SSC women officers in eight streams of the Army, in addition to the JAG and AEC which had been opened up in 2008. But they would not be offered any command appointments and would serve only in staff posts. During the hearing, the government came up with a proposal whereby women officers of up to 14 years

of service would be granted permanent commission in line with the letter of February 2019 and, on the contrary, women officers with more than 14 years of service would be permitted to serve for up to 20 years without being considered for PC, but would retire with pension, and those with more than 20 years of service would be released with pensionary benefits immediately.

It is important to note that, Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh is going to be the first Indian woman fighter pilot to fly Rafale Combat Aircraft. She is undergoing training to fly the aircraft. Dr. Madhuri Kanitkar has been promoted to Lieutenant General rank, which is the second highest rank in Indian army and this is another remarkable incident in this context. These are the evidences that India is going to witness the equal opportunities for women in most important segments like Indian military.

LESBIANISM UNRESOLVED!

On September, 2018, Indian Supreme Court decriminalized homosexuality and also considered Section 377 of Indian Penal Code as unconstitutional. This section is considered as a weapon to harass the LGBT people. Supreme Court said that the consensual gay sex is not a crime and sexual orientation is natural in which people have no control. Section 377 of IPC of 1861 was first challenged by NGO Naz Foundation and Bedhhab Birodh Andolan in Delhi High Court in 2001. In July 2009, Delhi High Court decriminalized sex between consenting same sex adult persons upholding constitutional rights to equality and freedom. High Court's judgement was overturned by Supreme Court in 2013 and considered 'legally unsustainable'. In 2014, the Supreme Court has directed the Government to declare transgender people as 'third gender' and include them in OBC category. In 2015, several petitions have been filed by the LGBTQ activists in support of 'right to sexuality', 'sexual autonomy', 'choice of sexual partner' etc. In August, 2017 Supreme Court considered right to privacy as fundamental rights. After all these court proceedings, Supreme Court decriminalized gay sex but lesbianism didn't receive prime focus. Therefore, it is observed that the political lesbianism has failed to convince the state institution to legalize the same-sex marriage among the women.

WOMEN FOR TRP?

Through TV serials and Indian Cinemas, many of the Indian Actresses have gained popularity and public support astonishingly. To uphold the Indian culture and tradition, outstanding performances of the Indian Actresses have been projected. But, in the age of globalization, from Marxist point of view, it can be said that women are also the commodity as the body of a woman is now a medium to increase Television Rating Point (TRP) with erotic gesture. Scenes concerning full frontal nudity, particularly in magazines based on Bollywood gossips, length of kissing scenes and all other intimate scenes in the Indian cinema are increasing with a disclaimer like 'few events have been fictionalized only for cinematic reasons and entertainment'. UN sponsored global study report reveals that 35% of female characters in Indian movies shown with nudity. However, Indian Television Serials and Cinemas also projected several positive roles of women in life of men. Sex-positive feminism is most popular in Indian Bollywood, for instance, *Lust Stories* (2018), *Veere Di Wedding* (2018), *Lipstick Under my Burkha* (2016) etc. have portrayed sexually empowered women.

A total of Five sceneries have been highlighted in this paper. Now just assume that, Feminism is a balloon which is pink in colour and some people are supplying air by sufficient pumping for its sustenance but in reality, air leaks are also appearing that would make a balloon empty. Similarly, in present day society, we can measure some developments in social and political structures that indicate the success of feminist movements and, at the opposite, inability of the socio-political machineries was also overwhelming that exhibit the limitations of Indian Feminist Movements.

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Domestic Violence and its Connotations: with Reference to India

Barnali Chakraborty

INTRODUCTION

The foundations of domestic violence are imbedded deep in evolutionary history of mankind in India. The history of mankind is history of repeated injuries and usurpations towards women, with an objective to establish tyranny over her. Women were always considered vulnerable and in a position to be exploited. Violence has long been accepted as something that happened to women. Family which was perceived as an arena of love, affection, gentleness and center of solidarity and warmth has now become a center of exploitation, and violence ranging from slapping, hitting, homicidal assault by one member of the family on the other, the husband and in-laws harassment for dowry or for another reason, dowry deaths, wife bettering, female child abuse and abuse of elderly female in a family are also included in domestic violence. Domestic Violence is not person specific; its victim can be children, woman, aged, disabled or any other vulnerable group. However, due to the traditional patriarchal system, emotional and economic dependence and inherent biological weakness turn out to be the most potent and it is one of the most vicious circles. It takes place behind the closed doors, the very door which are meant to protect women from the hazards of the outside world. It is nothing short of a form of custodial violence and must be so recognized. Domestic violence must come out of the closet and be addressed.

Domestic violence is an extremely complex and vicious form of abuse, committed most often within the four walls of the family house and/or within a particular deep-rooted power dynamic and socio-

economic structure, which do not allow even the acknowledgement or recognition of this abuse. Meaning and detection of domestic violence itself is the most demanding task. Violence against women in any form is a violation of the right of equality. State inaction in the field of preventing violence would itself be a violation of fundamental right to equality.

Domestic violence is a social problem that, although well recognized, is still associated with uncertainty and taboos. Many women, in their intimate relationships or immediate social environment, experience psychological and/or physical violence, which becomes a serious health problem for them.

DEFINITION

There is no universally accepted definition of violence against women. Some human rights activists prefer a broad-based definition that includes “structural violence” such as poverty, and unequal access to health and education. Others have argued for a more limited definition in order not to lose the actual descriptive power of the term. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Domestic violence is defined as the threat or exercise of physical, psychological, and/or motional violence; i.e., any type of force against another person with the intent of inflicting harm or exercising power and control over them. The perpetrator belongs to the victim’s “domestic environment”: an intimate partner, husband, former intimate partner, family member, friend or acquaintance. Included among friends or acquaintances of the family, are those who maintain a friendly relationship to the victim and encounter her in a domestic setting. Whether or not the victim actually lives in the same household as the perpetrator is not crucial for the definition of domestic violence; the term is defined by the closeness of the relationship between perpetrator and abused victim.

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional/psychological abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence varies dramatically.

Domestic violence is not physical violence alone. Domestic violence is any behavior the purpose of which is to gain power and control over a spouse, partner, girl/boyfriend or intimate family member. Abuse is a learned behavior; it is not caused by anger, mental problems, drugs or alcohol, or other common excuses.

The term “domestic violence” includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.[United Nations, Department of justice]

Domestic violence can be defined to include any threatening, abusive, or violent behavior in the home, including between adult children and other adult family members. However, most people use the term to mean that this behavior is used by one intimate partner to establish power and control over the other partner through fear and intimidation. Dating or relationship violence means that this behavior is directed by one person towards another in a dating relationship.

The U.S. Department of Justice defines domestic violence as “A pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

According to Black's Law Dictionary, "domestic violence means violence between members of a household, usually spouses, an assault or other violent act committed by one member of a household against another"

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners.

The current definition of domestic violence is: "Any incident of threatening behavior, violence or abuse [psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional] between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality".

TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse & Intimidation, Isolation, Verbal Abuse, Reproductive Coercion, Threats, & Blame, Using Male Privilege, Economic Abuse/Financial Abuse, Psychological Abuse, Social Abuse, Stalking, Spiritual Abuse, Elderly Abuse, Dowry Abuse, Intellectual abuse, Cyber stalking refers to online action or repeated emailing that inflicts substantial emotional distress in the recipient.

a) Physical Abuse

While defining Domestic Violence under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, in section 3 of the act Physical Abuse is explained as any act or conduct which is of such nature as to cause bodily pain, harm or danger to life, limb, or health or impair the health or development of the aggrieved person and include assault criminal intimidation and criminal force. Physical abuse is the most pervasive and ancient method of subordinating of women in a family, it is the most common control mechanism applied against a woman within the domestic sphere.

Physical abuse is abuse involving contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. It includes hitting, slapping, punching, choking, pushing, burning and other types of contact that result in physical injury to

the victim. Physical abuse can also include behaviors such as denying the victim of medical care when needed, depriving the victim of sleep or other functions necessary to live, or forcing the victim to engage in drug/alcohol use against his/her will. If a person is suffering from any physical harm then they are experiencing physical abuse. This pain can be experienced on any level. It can also include inflicting physical injury onto other targets, such as children or pets, in order to cause psychological harm to the victim.

The most common and frequently used forms of physical violence used against women are: (i) Slaps (ii) beating (iii) pulsing (iv) Kicking (v) throwing objects (vi) beating with cane (vii) Burning with rod (viii) holding with rope (ix) Sexual coercion or assault.

b) Psychological Abuse

Causing of abuse to a woman in the domestic sphere is multidimensional. Under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 emotional or psychological abuse which has been categorized as verbal, is explained as to include—insults, ridicule, humiliation, name calling and insults especially with regard to not having a child or a male child and repeated there as to cause physical pain to any person in whom the aggrieved person is interested. Psychological abuses are one of the major forms of abuses faced by women. The report by the United Nations World Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Washington-based International Center for Research on Women—polled 9,205 men, aged 18 to 49, across the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra found that men who had experienced discrimination as children were four times more likely to be violent towards their partners. The highest reports of violence came from Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, with more than 70 percent of men in these regions admitting to being abusive towards their wives and partners.

c) Sexual Abuse

International law in the context of violence against women has recognized sexual abuse against women as one of the forms of violence inflicted by both public and private sector. The Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 explains sexual abuse includes any

conduct of a sexual nature that abuses humiliates degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of women. This form of abuse is specific to the interpersonal relation between a man and a woman most often in a marital relationship. Of the many duties that a wife has towards her husband, performance of sexual duties is one of them. In present times men use sexual violence to assert and maintain their superior masculinity. This form of abuse is more common in households where men are literate and affluent. In a survey it was found that 79% of men used sexual violence to control their wives' fidelity and 57% of them had more than 6 years of formal education.

Sexual abuse is any situation in which force or threat is used to obtain participation in unwanted sexual activity. Coercing a person to engage in sexual activity against their will, even if that person is a spouse or intimate partner with whom consensual sex has occurred, is an act of aggression and violence.

d) Economic Abuse

Economic abuse is a deprivation of the basic need of a person to sustain him in a social set up. It is a form of abuse when one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources. Economic abuse may involve preventing a spouse from resource acquisition, limiting the amount of resources to use by the victim, or by exploiting economic resources of the victim. The motive behind preventing a spouse from acquiring resources is to diminish victim's capacity to support him/her, thus forcing him/her to depend on the perpetrator financially, which includes preventing the victim from obtaining education, finding employment maintaining or advancing their careers, and acquiring assets.

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obtaining education, finding employment, maintaining or advancing their careers, and acquiring assets.

Following are the most frequently used forms of economic abuse against women: (i) Preventing her from taking a job (ii) Forcing her to leave present job (iii) Not allowing her to purchase things of her liking and choice (iv) Stopping her from access to resources or money (v) Pressurizing her to bring money from her parents and so on.

e) Intellectual Abuse

Of all the abuses in Domestic Violence previously discussed, intellectual abuse has been missing from all the definitions of Domestic Violence. This is perhaps because in India a marital relationship or any other man-woman relationship is about the acceptance of inequality, where men dominate and injure and women get dominated and endure. The entire socialization process has an inherent isolation for both men and women, which inhibits effective communication between the two. Even where domestic harmony exists, there is a sense of isolation in thought whereby both men and women experience alienation from each other and at a certain level they come out to be strangers. Different educational levels add to the isolation as the mental levels are different and both find difficulties in relating to each other at the intellect level. In most of instances it is seen that Indian marriages are clouded with words such as adjustments and compromises. There is no mention of companionship or friendship as John Stuart Mill would describe it. In this scenario women come to be perceived as intellectually inferior, hysterical and

predominantly by patriarchal authorities at home and outside. The Domestic Violence Act, 2005 has failed to address this form of abuse as it has been clubbed with other abuses such as psychological emotional and economic there by missing its import.

f) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse (also called psychological abuse or mental abuse) can include humiliating the victim privately or publicly, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information from the victim, deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed, isolating the victim from friends and family, implicitly blackmailing the victim by harming others when the victim expresses

independence or happiness, or denying the victim access to money or other basic resources and necessities. Degradation in any form can be considered psychological abuse.

Emotional abuse includes conflicting actions or statements which are designed to confuse and create insecurity in the victim. These behaviors also lead the victims to question themselves, causing them to believe that they are making up the abuse or that the abuse is their fault. Women or men undergoing emotional abuse often suffer from depression, which puts them at increased risk for suicide, eating disorders, and drug and alcohol abuse. The mental or emotional abuse of a woman may take the following forms:

(i) Using abusive language (ii) Insulting her in the presence of children, other member of the family and relatives (iii) Blaming her for everything that goes wrong in the family (iv) Charging her frequently on small and negligible issues (v) Making her feel guilty for no fault of her (vi) Calling her names (vii) Giving her threat of divorce (viii) Treating her like a servant (ix) Keeping a strict watch on her movements (x) Prohibiting her from meeting her friends and relatives (xi) Prohibiting her from expression of her view on family matters (xii) Suspecting her for extramarital relations (xiv) Using ugly and insulting language for her parents (xv) Insulting her for house-keeping (xvi) Demeaning her family background (xvii) Criticizing her for lacking intelligence (xviii) Threatening her to commit suicide (xiv) Giving her verbal threats to use physical force (xv) Threats to kill or burn.

g) Social Abuse

Social abuse is used to isolate the victim from others in the community. The fewer people the victim is connected with, the more control the abuser has over the victim. Examples of social abuse include:

- Insisting that the couple spend all time together
- Discouraging the victim from seeing friends or family
- Forbidding the victim to see friends or family
- Monitoring the victim's mail or phone calls
- Checking the odometer
- Restricting access to the car or car keys
- Telling others the victim is crazy or abusive

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are a number of causes of domestic violence against women. These causes range from the trivial to bizarre and include mainly the following:

- Not doing house-work properly
- Dressing fashionably
- Jealousy of husband
- Husband's alcoholism
- Dowry Demands
- Husband's mistress
- Laughing without reason
- Combing hairs a number of times during day
- High tone during dialogue
- Free and Social nature
- Close relations with friends
- Boy friends
- Disrespectful behavior with elders in the family
- Refusal to bring money from parent's house
- Partial fulfillment or non-fulfillment of promises made at the time of marriage.
- Doubt of love affairs before marriage.
- Doubt of extra-marital relations
- Resistance for abnormal sexual behavior of the husband
- No child bearing capability
- Birth of girl child repeatedly
- Husband economically dependent on parents
- Husband has problems at work place.
- Sexual difficulties
- Low job satisfaction
- Single personality factor
- Antisocial personality disorders

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

The most common type of violence against women worldwide is domestic violence. So, this problem is not specific to India. It is a

universal scourge that tears at the fabric of communities and threatens the life, health, and happiness of the affected women. As the domestic violence is a pervasive problem in India, it cuts across age, education, social class and religion. From the richest classes and highest castes to the poorest slum dwellers, domestic violence is a problem.

Although women today have proven themselves in almost every field of life, affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against women are much higher in number than those against men. Reasons for it being so prevalent are the mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males and the economical dependence of the females. Women suffering from violence have more chances of suffering from physical, emotional, and mental problems such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.

Domestic violence in India includes any form of violence suffered by a person from a biological relative, but typically is the violence suffered by a woman by male members of her family or relatives.

A 2015 journal article on domestic violence in India, by Claire Snell-Rood, a medical anthropologist at the Department of Behavioral Science with the University of Kentucky, notes that 75-86 percent of women do not disclose that they are victims of abuse by their families. In 2015 an article by IPS reports that, according to "the most recent government household survey," 40 percent of women have been abused in their homes; while, according to an independent survey supported by the Planning Commission of India, the number is closer to 84 percent. The Hindu reports that, according to household surveys conducted in India by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 10 percent of women in India reported that they have experienced sexual violence by their husbands in their lifetime (The Hindu 19 Dec. 2014). Reuters reported in June 2012 that, according to the Health and Program Development Adviser at Save the Children UK, an international NGO that works in 120 countries to "save children's lives" (Save the Children), despite India's domestic violence Act, "women and girls continue to be sold as chattels, married off as young as 10, burned alive as a result of dowry-related disputes and young girls [are] exploited and abused as domestic slave labor." (Reuters 13 June 2012).

STRATEGIES:

Strategies to prevent domestic violence has two challenges:

- Finding ways to stop the violence that is occurring
- Preventing violence from happening

Prevention strategies must first protect the safety, security and well-being of victims and those at risk. Prevention strategies need to operate at various levels addressing the many layers of the problem. Any serious prevention strategy requires a long-term commitment to individual and social change. In short-term victim needs immediate effective services and assistances. A comprehensive domestic violence strategy requires both reactive measures including protection, treatment, and law enforcement measures and proactive measures, education and public information program. Intervention strategies that can be used when violence has been occurred and includes specific measures, but preventive strategies can also include more general measures intended to improve the position of women in the society. These measures might include :

- Reforming the law to foster equality
- Promoting equal opportunities and human rights
- Offering economic opportunities to ensure economic independence
- Providing affordable child supporting
- Providing affordable housing
- Improving social policies
- To raise public awareness
- Changing Public attitudes
- Public education campaigns

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is a complex problem requiring the combined and coordinated efforts of people from different professional backgrounds and the community. In all countries domestic violence is deeply woven into the social fabric. Although resources are important, they are not the entire solution. In the developed world, the existence of large social

services and law enforcement systems does not guarantee an adequate response to domestic violence. In the developing world, the scarcity of resources further underscores the need to work together.

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Domestic Sufferings and Harassment in Passive Mode

Dr. Ratna Nandi

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a serious and most highlighted crisis in our country. Patriarchy exists in India since the middle age. Women are being dominated and ill-treated by men since then. In many cases women were considered as a property or slave of men. After independence, though the situation slightly improved but till now, the mindset of both men and women have been programmed with various wrong concepts that leads to the misbehaviour and violence against women by men or women as a representative of the men. Women has to face violence from the early age even they can understand the meaning of it or even before their birth irrespective of caste, status, religion, age, conduct, look-up, or else. The violence against women may be in different forms also. A girl does not assume when she will be attacked and by whom. They may be attacked in any place- school, college, universities, workplaces, road, bus, train or even at their home. Domestic violence refers to those cases mainly women face at their home more specifically after their marriage. That does not mean that before marriage domestic violence does not occur. Nowadays 'domestic violence' includes all types of violence in a family irrespective of gender. But in this study the violence against women will be discussed and focused. There are several laws to protect women from the violence against them those are identified in terms of physical or mental. But there are also some hidden types of harassment that women have to suffer in a family. These stories are either unnoticed or ignored consciously. This study aims to focus on these sufferings of women that faced by them.

The data have been collected from social media with the help of survey method for the study. Several social groups of women where they talk to each other frankly, discuss their problems, seek & provide suggestions have been followed during few months. Information is collected from their posts and comments and analyzed then. The personal experience and observation of the author also have been used to analyze the cases and come to the conclusion.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

According to the 'United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women', the definition of domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner. Many types of abuse are included in the definition of domestic violence:

- **Physical abuse** means any type of physical torture upon the victim including denying someone medical treatment and forcing drug/alcohol use on someone.
- **Sexual abuse** occurs when the abuser forces the victim into having sexual contact or sexual behaviour without the victim's consent.
- **Emotional abuse** involves degrading the victim's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. Emotional abuse often takes the form of constant criticism, name-calling, injuring the victim's relationship with his/her children, or interfering with the victim's abilities.
- **Economic abuse** takes place when the abuser tries to maintain total control over financial resources, or prohibit the victim from going to school or work.
- **Psychological abuse** involves the abuser to make afraid the victim by threatening to physically hurt himself/herself, the victim, children, the victim's family or friends, or the pets; destruction of property; injuring the pets; isolating the victim from loved ones; and prohibiting the victim from going to school or work.

Definitions of domestic violence recognize that victims can include anyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, education level, race,

age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. Domestic violence was formerly referred to as wife abuse. However, this term was abandoned when the definition of domestic violence was changed to reflect that wives are not the only ones who can fall victim to domestic violence. The definition of domestic violence now recognizes that victims can be:

- Spouses
- Sexual/Dating/Intimate partners
- Family members
- Children
- Cohabitants

Thus the definition of violence not only includes physical forms of violence but also emotional, mental, financial, and other forms of cruelty. The term domestic violence refers to the acts which harm or endangers the health, safety, life, limb, or wellbeing (mental or physical) of the victim, or tends to do so, done by any person who is or was in a domestic relationship with the victim.

LAWS

Before the enactment of the 'Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005', the victim could approach the court under Section 498-A of the Penal Code, 1860 which considers only for 'husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty' excludes many instances of domestic violence within the household.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (DV ACT) : Meaning, Intent, and Objective:

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was enacted to protect the women from acts of domestic violence. The legislative intent was further emphasized by the Supreme Court of India in the case of **Indra Sarma v. V.K.V Sarma**, (2013) 15 SCC 755 wherein it was stated that the DV Act is enacted to provide a remedy in civil law for the protection of women, from being victims of such relationship, and to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society. Other legislations like CrPC, IPC, etc., where reliefs have been provided to women who are placed in vulnerable situations were also discussed.

The objective of the Act lays down “An Act to provide for more **effective protection of the rights of women** guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.” The Act provides for security and protection of a wife irrespective of her proprietary rights in her residence. It aims at protecting the wife against violence and at the prevention of recurrence of acts of violence.

The introduction of special police cells to facilitate women reporting violence has been an important response to violence by the Indian government.

OBSERVATION

In a recent survey of “The Hindu” the following facts has been highlighted:

About 86% women who experienced violence never sought help, and 77% of the victims did not even mention the incident(s) to anyone.

During the first four phases of the COVID-19-related lockdown, Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in a similar period in the last 10 years. But even this unusual spurt is only the tip of the iceberg as 86% women who experience domestic violence do not seek help in India.

In 2020, between March 25 and May 31, 1,477 complaints of domestic violence were made by women. This 68-day period recorded more complaints than those received between March and May in the previous 10 years. The cause may be that as in this period men spent maximum time at home and spouses were in close contact so the instances of violence increased.

It is mentioned earlier that 86% of victim women do not complain in India that is also in clear identified cases, It is the fact that most of the women cannot even understand that they are victim of domestic violence. The societal norms maintained for so many days make both the men and women to consider these cases as normal. When even understood by women, they don't have courage to move against system and break family peace or simply don't want to disturb their child's life. So, they make compromises those are often termed as adjustment. These

compromises change a lovely girl to a rude or depressed dull woman. The other members of the family do not notice at all about this change.

Now a few examples of many forms of this kind of underlying violence or harassment will be focused and discussed. Before that I like to confess that the examples are not applicable to all families. Of course, exceptions are there.

i) Physical abuse: It is very common scene in Indian families that women are responsible for all household activities at home. We find that when both husband and wife go out for their job or any other work then also the wife does all the household activities –cooking, arranging lunch boxes of everyone, serving, washing clothes, cleaning homes, rearing children, guiding children in study, caring every family member while sick and so on. To manage these loads of work day by day the women go beyond her capacity and soon grow deteriorated physical condition. The women don't take rest until they become unable to get up from bed. They continue their responsibilities in their minor or sometimes major illness also. Sometimes, the cause may be their own negligence rooted again in societal norm and often it is the negligence of husband and other family members. They are not willing at all to think about the capacity of the woman or look after them in their illness or give them proper treatment in time. All in the family are ignorant that these treatment to the women falls under the definition of physical abuse of domestic violence.

ii) Sexual abuse: In many cases, husband and wife have no mental bond as the husband doesn't have the intention to satisfy his wife's mental want. He does not give attention or know the likes and dislikes of the wife, if he knows then also he ignores them. Many times, the wife is forced to leave her habit or likings for the sake of family tradition, conservative attitude or simply to carry on her duties properly. This happens both in case of arranged or love marriage, as the tradition is thinking that the adjustment part is the duty of the wife. That leads to unwillingness in bed. Again, after managing so many duties inside and outside home, the wife gets tired. Till she is bound to satisfy her husband's sexual need to retain her position often. So, there remains force intentionally or unintentionally that is ignored.

iii) Emotional Abuse: The maximum case of unnoticed abuse in Indian family is 'emotional abuse'. This is often done comparing the

women with the Goddess or treating them as good for nothing, or considering the women have no intelligence, no right to take decisions in family or no need to go and work outside or even stopping them to study after marriage. In most times, they have to leave their passion, their food habit, dress habit, likes, dislikes, rituals, hobbies, childhood friends, house, families, surname, looks, etc. They have to adjust with their husband and his family and their likes, dislikes, rituals, food habits, and so on. In this process, often the girl loses herself, her identity and changes herself to a play item or robot. If failed to satisfy the husband and his family's expectation anytime, the wife has to be humiliated directly or indirectly that can't be proved always as in these cases we found overall the husband and his family claim and think also to love and take care of the girl. Actually the family also can't understand that the woman needs something else and she should not be suppressed to resist her mental craving. It is not rare to find that an economically independent woman or woman of high society also has to sacrifice many of the above to get only the happiness of married life. And at the end of the life she found that she achieved a big zero. In economically backward families, emotional abuses are very common and they (both husband and wife) are not bothered at all with the emotional needs of wife.

iv) Economic abuse: When the husband is the only earning member, then the wife has to be dependent on his husband and after doing all household activities, she has to remember her dependency on her husband as household activities have no acknowledgement or wages. So the husband remains always the decision-maker and reminds his wife this fact of dependency in a minor issue too.

We found that in so-called educated and high-status family also, the women are restricted to go outside for any purpose. In many cases, the wife is forced to leave her job or study after marriage by emotionally blackmailing them saying that there is no need of their earned money in the family. In cases where husband and wife are working in two different locations the wife has to sacrifice their jobs always.

CONCLUSION

This is found that even in a highly educated family there exist different kinds of restrictions and mental suppression on women members.

Somewhere openly they are stopped to continue their study or passion or even any other hobby. Many women are not allowed to read story books even in their leisure time. Where the family allows women to continue their study after marriage with proud and announcement but not as a right of them, there also in maximum cases women have to carry on their study or passion after managing all household activities, child rearing, etc. They are not supported by other members by sharing their loads of work. In many families, women take very little food or the rest amount of food after satisfying the other members willingly or by force. But the other members do not notice at all what are they taking as their food. There is always some kind of mental pressure on women in passive mode if not directly to suppress them.

There are no such law also to support the women in this matter as these incidents are not identified in maximum cases.

To overcome the situation, it is most important to change the mental status of men and women first. We have to remove the old mental stigma about the status, role and right of women in the society. Above all, the women have to come forward with courage to break the pattern of the family life and fight for their right without any guilt feeling.

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What is the Definition of Domestic Violence?

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Stridharma: A Contemporary Perspective

Pratap Kumar Ghorai & Shreya Dutta

INTRODUCTION

With the changing phases of the Indian Society, from Ancient to Modern times, Status of Women had witnessed a steady shift. Newspapers have always written about the poor helpless women and the wicked things they do. But it's hard to imagine the bitter despair how all these hundreds and thousands of women suffer and many disasters come out of it because Stridharma hasn't ever been saved just by making people sit at home and control their thoughts. There is a wide gap between the legislative provisions of H.M.A. and societal value system and attitudes towards marriage in Indian society. Societal norms are powerful and often override the legal provisions. This is a reflection of social stigma for patriarchal attitude towards women.

CONCEPT OF FEMINISM IN EAST AND WEST

Geraldine Forbes in her article Caged Tigers 'First Wave Feminism in India', stated the statement expressed by Miriam Schneir from her book entitled Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings that 'No feminists works emerge from behind the Hindu Purdah or out of the Moslem Harems; centuries of Slavery do not provide a fertile soil for the intellectual development or expression'. Where Schneir has justified the publication of a collection of articles solely by Western women and denied (other Asian and Middle Eastern) women their Feminist Heritage. According to Forbes, Schneir was wrong on a number of counts if we agree on a definition of Feminism as a set of doctrine 'on the place of women on society and ... on the extent to which women should have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities of

those of men then Feminism existed in India. Indian Women wrote and spoke about women; condition, formed organizations to secure desired change and eventually had an impact on the institution of their society but they were not carbon copies of the Western Feminists in either ideology or goals. Under the colonial rule Indian Economy was subordinated to British needs, and its social system hardly resembled to that of Western Nations. Apart from these differences, Feminism did emerge from behind the *Purdah*.

THE ERA OF WOMEN ASSOCIATION AND DEMAND FOR WOMEN RIGHT

The earliest association of women were 'ladies' gatherings', attached to larger social reform organizations. An early example of this type of association was the Bharata Mohila Parishad (Indian Women Conference) inaugurated in 1904 as a part of National Social Conference (NSC) began in 1887. Speakers focused on the need for education being the foremost followed by child marriage, and the problems of widows and dowry. the most important Women Organization formed in this period was All India Women's Conference (AWIC) which first meet in January of 1927. These Women rejected the English label "feminists" because it implied that they put Women's Right before those of the Nation and viewed Men as the Enemy. They defined their enemy as "custom" which they saw as the result of wars, invention, imperialism.

EARLY TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF 'STRIDHARMA'

Now the question is from what kind of tradition and customary laws did these women wanted freedom from? The answer to this is that of "Stridharma" that they were expected to follow which was nothing but an illusionary form of blind devotion and love for the marriage which resulted in nothing but pain and suffering. In fact, what does Stridharma really mean? Best example can be cited out from the works of Tarabai Shinde's article on "Stripurush Tulna"* where she raises question on what does Stridharma really mean, does it always mean, always obeying orders from your husband and doing everything he wants? He can kick you and swear at you, keep his whores, get drunk, gamble with dice and bawl, he's lost all his money,

steal, compete murder, be treachous and slander people, rob people's money or squeeze them for bribe. He can do all this but when he comes home, Stridharma means women are meant to think—Oh! Who is this coming now but our little lord Krishna, who's just stolen the milk maids curd and milk and tried to blame Chandravali for it?" And then smile at him and offer their devotion, stand ready at his service as if he was Paramatma himself, but how can people go on believing this idea of Stridharma once they began to think about what's good and bad? They had changed their ideas straight, away wouldn't they? A man can run off with someone else's wife, but that's not against the rule of Pativrata. In fact, there are thousands of reasons for breaking the rule. You are supposed to worship your husband as if he were a god. Who on earth really follows the Shastras to the letter or expects anyone else to? If the Husband is really to be like a god to the wife then shouldn't he behave like one? And wives are to worship them like true devotees, shouldn't husbands, have a tender love for them in return and care about their joys and pains like a real God would?

DAWN OF NEW ERA: LEGALIZATION OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN PRE AND POST-COLONIAL ERA

A historic landmark in the social legislation of the 19th century British India was the Age of Consent Act (1891), the culmination of long-drawn debates on restitution of congeal rights, Divorce and Child Marriage of the 1880s. Prior of the Judicature Act of 1873 there were 4 separate systems of Courts. Each applying its own form of law, made English judges in India agree with India Legal and Nationalist opinion that customs usage and precedence were far more valid sources of law then legislation. They were 2 equally strong compulsions and possibilities in the construction of Hindu Womanhood-love and pain – which produced deep anxieties within early Nationalism. Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramani, argued that a highest form of love distinguished Western form of Hindu Marriages. While the former seeks the social stability and order through control over sexual morality the latter apparently aspires only towards the "the unification of two souls."

Rukhmabai Case

Rukhmabai Episode of 1887 made it imperative at last to rewrite this narrative of love and pleasure in the language of force. Rukhmabai's action violently foregrounded the sexual double standards and make a mockery of the notion of the loving heart of the Hindu Conjugal. Interestingly, the episode had shown up another fault in the image of the Hindu Community. Rukhmabai belonged to a carpenter caste where Divorce had been customary. Now the question was whose custom must the colonial law recognize now? Was Hinduism a heterogenous, indeed, self-divided, self-contradictory or was it a unified monolithic one? The debate prised open the imagined community along lines of caste and gender and delineated the specific contours of the revivalist nationalist agenda. Its rationality was based on forced absolute domination of upper caste male standards, not universal reason leading towards freedom and self-determination for the dispossessed. The controversy over the right age of consent continued to hinge on eugenics, morality, child-rearing and family interest.

Phulmoneecase

In 1890, Phulmonee a girl of 10 or 11 was raped to death by husband Hari Maithi, a man of 35, under existing penal code provision, however he was not guilty of rape since Phulmonee had been well within the statutory age limit of 10, the event however, added enormous weight and urgency to Malabari's Campaign for raising the age of consent from 10 to 12. 44 women doctors brought out long list of cases where child wives had been maimed or killed because of rape. From the possible effects of child marriage on the health of future generations, the debate shifted to life and safety of Hindu Wives.

REVIVIFYING NATIONALISM

The New Legislation was conceived after the reformist agitation had conceived the authority that the "Great Majority" was ready for change. By 1934, the AIWC had passed a resolution demanding a Hindu Code that would modify the laws. In Jan 1944, the AIWC supported the reconstitution of the Rau Committee, to prepare a Hindu Code. In the final analysis, the Hindu Code did not become law until after Indian Independence after 1947. Between 1955 and 1956 the Code passed

piecemeal through Parliament, owing as much to the preservice of PM Nehru as to the lobbying efforts of the Women's Organisations. The decision of women's rights advocates to support the committee's effort in 1944 had not caused Congress to abandon social reform.

The Indian Constitution promised women complete equality. The new legal codes abolished social restrictions and the new bureaucratic structure included institution designed to improve women's status. Many have credited these gains to women's participation in the nationalist movement, arguing these were their "rewards" for marching demonstrating, and picketing on behalf of nationalist objectives. A more careful reading of documents makes it clear that made leaders were not united in support of women's right. Some of the most important leaders, were committed to improving women's position. Other disagreed that social legislation and civil right were that social legislation and civil right were the appropriate means for attaining this aim. However, they understood that women wanted rights and would organise to obtain them. Women's willingness to fight for political and legal rights, often in defiance of make authority, is one of the significant accomplishments of First-wave Feminism.

CONCLUSION

Forbes in her words, further stated that—Indian women were unlike Western Feminist is true. They shield away from the very term "Feminist" and from discussion of sexual issues. Indian men were not to be blame, they re-instated, "custom" was the enemy and custom were the result of wars and imperialism. During the "Golden- Age". Indian women had been accorded equality, the aims were to recreate the past rather than develop and totally new relationship between the sexes. The Indian social system was bases in sex-segregation but this did not have to result in inequality. Men and Women, they believed, had different natures and different talents. this did not justify excluding women from certain profession or occupation, instead society should appreciate the special talents women had because they were nurturers and housekeepers.

Now, did these women succeed in improving conditions for Indian women generally? This question must be answered in the negative.

Laws were made but they were rarely enforced, rights were granted but woman had neither the education nor the necessary access to the legal system to take advantage of them. That child marriage still exists, only a few women fight Legal battles to secure their inheritance, dowry prevails and widows are stigmatized is not the fault of these early feminists who work to change the system. It simply indicates that legal changes do not result in a changed social system. Forbes, further pointed out that—"If Schneir and other Western writers should have looked more closely, they would have seen that behind the curtain there were "caged tigers" not slaves, and they became feminists." Concerted efforts are needed to bridge the gap between the legislative provisions of H.M.A. and societal value systems and attitudes towards marriage. Improvement in moral and religious values will overcome to the extent the negative attitude and patriarchal mindset towards married women.

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Domestic Violence in Tea Garden Areas and its Adverse Impact

Sujata Pradhan

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Domestic violence, “social and legal concept that, in the broadest sense, refers to any abuse-including physical, emotional, sexual or financial-between intimate partners, often living in the same household. The term is often used specifically to designate physical assaults upon women by their male partners, but though rarer, the victim may be a male abused by his female partners, and the term may also be used regarding abuse of both women and men by same-sex partners”. “Domestic violence also named domestic abuse or family violence is violence or other abuse in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. In the broadest sense, domestic violence can also involve violence against children, parents, or the elderly.” (Wikipedia). Gordon described domestic violence as “generally understood to apply to any assault committed by a person who either shares a living arrangement with or is involved in an intimate relation with the victim of the assault”.

It is therefore clear that domestic violence results in dire consequences which not only affects the victim but the whole family especially the children. It takes place when the abuser believes that it is an entitlement, acceptable, justified or unlikely to be reported. According to National Family Health Survey (NHFS-4) released by Union Health Ministry every third woman, since the age of 15, has faced domestic violence of various forms in the country. Most of the times the perpetrators of the violence have been the husbands.

Tea plantaion workers are mostly Adivasi and Tribal communities who have been recruited by the colonial planters 150 years ago. The

women folk make up about 70% of the work force but they are mostly employed as casual labourers and are not given any clerical post or their views are not taken into account while making major changes in the company.

The women folk of the tea garden areas in north Bengal are prone to violence of different kinds and the dominant one being domestic violence. Though it is still a matter of shame to talk about it in public, the effect of such violence is evident on their scared faces. As in most of the work areas, the tea garden women are paid low wages even though their presence is more than the men folk. This is basically to maximise the profit of the stakeholders of the tea estates. The women are mostly engaged as casual labour and are hardly given permanent jobs. In order to safeguard their rights the Companies Act came into force but there still exist disparity in their income. The working conditions of the tea workers deteriorated from the British times to the present day. During interactions with the elderly women workers, it was found that “life in the tea gardens and the working conditions during the time of gora sahibs were much better than the kala sahibs. They had job guarantee, their working hours were less and their burden of work was minimal. They even got spare time to work in their own paddy fields. Even with fewer wage, they could manage their house-hold due to the good quality ration and other amenities provided by the colonial management. However in the post-colonial times, even when the wage structure improved, the ration and other amenities provided to them are not sufficient enough to run a household. One of the main reasons for this is that the present day tea companies have indulged in cost cutting and maximizing profit with the available resources.”

In such a scenario, the women who has to work at home and in the tea garden in order to earn their living has to succumb to domestic violence as well. This not only has an adverse impact on their physical, mental and social health of the women but also on their children who quietly witness everything before their innocent eyes. Undoubtedly it has long term effect on the children and their future.

REASONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN TEA GARDEN AREAS

The condition of the poverty stricken lives of the tea garden workers have not changed much even after the end of the colonial rule. It appears as though the lives of the people living in the tea garden are far from the development and change that most of the country men experience. Poverty could be a significant reason of domestic violence in this region. Poor living conditions causes stress and pressure in the family. Illiteracy is prevalent for many generations. Though Anganwadis, primary schools and high schools have been established near the tea estates the attendance is poor. This area too is male dominated even though women form a large part of the workforce. Drug abuse and alcoholism is rampant here. Drunkard parents create poor relationship with their children which in turn results in domestic violence in the long run. Due to financial crisis, the children of the tea garden areas become bread earners at an early age. Financial independence at an early age lead to development of independence from the parents. Hence the children misbehave with their parents as they no longer need financial support of their parent. Misbehaviour of children is another reason for domestic violence. People in these region are also believers of superstitions. Though they are simple minded people, some evil minded people are all around to pollute the environment with gossips which in turn leads to misunderstanding, jealousy and finally end up in violence at home. The power play at home between the parents and the children is also another cause. Children suffer because they are children and have no say in the family in most of the cases.

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor health condition of the malnourished women in the tea garden area is further worsened due to domestic violence. Women are mostly anaemic and due to addiction of tobacco and alcohol they suffer from various diseases like tuberculosis, gastro-diseases, arthritis, lung diseases are some of them. Unable to go for proper treatment apart from the local health services, they succumb to pain and ultimately death at an early age. Violence at home also takes a toll on their mental and psychological health.

At no age are the children unaffected by what is happening even when they are unborn, that is in the mother's womb. The effect of domestic violence on children can effect their whole life. It can leave them with a sense of vulnerability and hopelessness. It often results in psychological disorders and emotional instability. Children could be either silent watchers of the violence at home or they themselves could be victims of it. Young children are often unaware of it and could think it to be a norm in the family. Boys and girls have different repercussion of the violence in their daily and future life depending on their age and gender. Most of the times, boys could exhibit aggressive behaviour and in future adopt similar behaviour. While girls could act more vulnerable and introvert. In future the girls would think that it is normal to have an abusive husband and learn to live a submissive life. Many a times children end up choosing abusive partner for themselves. However, children could deal with it positively in later life. They could realise that such violence should not be a part of life and move towards leading a healthier and productive life.

Young girls and boys in the tea garden areas have a tendency to marry at an early age, perhaps to escape from such violence and poverty at home. They might be doing so in search of happiness. There are many cases of drop outs in the school for this reason. However, things do not always meet their expectations, the girls become mothers very early which is dangerous for their health as well as the new born. When the young couple are unable to bear the financial pressure of family they are left with no other option but to get involved in domestic violence themselves. The victim, that is, mothers of the children also migrate to other states mostly Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kerala and Sikkim to work as domestic help or cheap labour either to earn better or to escape from violence at home. There have been many cases of missing women but no one reports such cases. Many are either sold as sex workers, forced to marry or their organs are sold. While in some cases, the man or the woman as the case may be get remarried and the child is left to stay either with their grand parents or cousin uncle or aunty. These guardian are but little aware of the child needs and expectations. What is evident is that the child with or without his abusive parent is left to suffer in this world. There a few children who are able to complete their schooling and lead a normal life.

The effect of domestic violence on children could be broadly divided into three types that is , behavioural or emotional, cognitive and long term. Behavioural or emotional section is the one wherein lies the most problem. At which ever age the child is subjected to domestic violence, it is seen in his changed or unnatural behaviour when compared to children who have not experienced such violence at home. Aggressive or submissive behaviour of the child is not only seen at home but outside as well especially in school. Jaffe, Wilson and Wolf suggest that “children’s exposure to adult violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence”. Carlson found that “boys who witnessed domestic abuse were significantly more likely to approve to violence than were girls who witnessed it.” There are long term effects of domestic violence on children as well. Silveren’s et al study of 550 undergraduate students found that witnessing violence result in “depression, trauma related symptoms and low self esteem among men and women”.

The learning process of the child is greatly hampered due to the rough relation between parents at home. It is a fact that emotional security is the foundation of healthy relationships in life but it is damaged by domestic violence. Children perform poorly, they lack concentration, they remain absent from school or become cases of drop outs. They have low self esteem and think negatively about themselves and people around them. Such children grow up to become a menace to the society in later life. Hence it calls for an urgent solution in order to form a harmonious society in the future.

Children hardly talk about violence at home with others. Due to lack of awareness of their rights and the law or are too scared to share about such shameful deeds of their parents with others. Even if they do share their problems they get little or no help from the elders around them. Injuries and broken homes have a deep impact on their future.

Cases of women and children trafficking have been on a rise in the tea garden area. The so-called agents who lure the innocent people of a better life either sell them as domestic help or as sex worker. The tea garden women are susceptible to such agents who are trying to get away from pressure of domestic violence at home. For few months they are

in touch with their family and also send money but soon lose contact with their homes. No one knows what happens to them. However there are cases in which they return home and are able to provide a better life for their family.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Though at the surface level it may seem that domestic violence is of single nature if we delve deep inside we can analyse its different types. According to Phillip G. Kanchiputu and M.Marisen Mawale there are various types of domestic violence. First is the emotional violence which can be in the form of verbal abuses and 'insults, shouts, repeated criticism, frequent blames, threatening, denying of love and affection, and ignoring.' It reflects that the children in such homes are habituated to hear such abusive words which make them feel 'useless or worthless'. When adults use abusive language in order to make children obey their commands it harms children's feelings and thinking. Second, is physical violence not only on the victim but also the children who are mere silent audience to all that is happening before them. The examples given are: beating (slapping or kicking), pushing and assault with an object or weapon. Violence leads loss of mental balance and children become the victim of the anger and wrath of the parents. Parents during domestic violence express their rage by burning the books of their children or at times it could be used as a form of punishment. They are also denied food. Third is financial or economical violence. Abusive parent often threaten their children of not paying their school fee. They are also made to work as child labours in the tea factory. At the tea factory young children sometimes work for the whole night during the flush time and are also giving double wages for it. This has an adverse effect on their health. Young girls and boys become prey to a host of life threatening diseases. Intake of drugs, chewing tobacco and alcoholism is rampant in these areas. Even though many awareness programmes are organised in schools and public places, it has been of little help to eradicate this problem, since there is no control over the sale of these items in the local market

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS OF TEA GARDEN AREAS

Pratima Oraon of Belgachi Tea Garden had been a victim of domestic violence since early days of her marriage. Her husband would not go to work in the tea garden and instead demand for meat and ask for money to drink alcohol everyday. On denying she would be beaten with whatever came handy to him, like wood stick, rod, etc. It would leave her with a swollen face and injuries in her body. The result of which she has to pay even today when he lives no more with her. Pratima's body has become prone to many diseases due to the physical abuse of her husband, whatever she earns is mostly spend on procuring medicines for herself. She presently suffers from kidney stone problem and has to visit the medical hospital quite often. She remarked that she was never beaten when she was in her home and cursed her fate for having married an alcoholic husband. Her two sons, too are happy now without their father as they too remember how he use to ill their mother and bring disgrace to the family. Pratima said "it was very hard for me to manage the expenses at home as my husband did not go to work and I had to miss work as I could not go to work with a swollen face". New dresses were a distant dream for her and she felt sad as she could not fulfil her children needs in those days. Things are better now without him, she said with sadness in her voice.

Another women, Birjunia Xalxo, of Belgachi tea garden who was the member of the first Self Help Group established there is a active member in the community. She said earlier there was a group which looked into the cases of domestic violence in the area but it no longer exists. She said that cases of domestic violence have lessened since the past but it is still prevalent. The major cause being alcoholism and the other being jealousy and doubt among the couple. Gossip in these villages is common. Men and women back bite and create doubt in the minds of the husband. "We have solved many such cases through mutual understanding and few get reported," she said. On being asked if step for stopping the sale of alcohol has been started, she said, "Some women themselves sell alcohol and they abstain from cooperating." Few other do not want to get into bad books by reporting it to the police. She said women also go to Ojhas, the local exorcist to get their husbands out of the drinking habit, but it is of little help.

Maksudan Sah a civic police staff in Naxalbari said that cases of domestic violence is rampant in the area but does not get reported at the police station. Most of the cases are resolved through mutual understanding or through the panchayat. He said if the people do not report about it then the police is helpless. Many a time the police also campaign for awareness and have proved of much help he said. The people of the area should be made aware and should be conscious of the ill effect of alcohol he suggested. He said that it is sad to see that even young children and teenagers take ganja, alcohol and drugs since their parents are not aware of it. He agreed that change in faith has brought about positive change in the lives of the tea garden workers. Their standard of living too has improved after becoming Christians.

Amrita Oraon of Marapur Tea garden, a third semester student said that there are few cases of domestic violence in her area. The spread of education and Christianity has paved way for such a positive change in her area. The nature worshipping Adivasis have turned into God fearing people, perhaps for a better life.

It is therefore time to find proper solution to this issue of domestic violence in the tea garden areas. Even though they are marginalised from among the rest of our society, we cannot pretend to over look this serious problem. The teachers of the local schools should try to sensitize the people about it and create an awareness among the guardians and the students about ways to deal with such problem whenever their are parent-teacher meetings held in schools. Counselling should be provided to those who need assistance of any kind. Children in schools should be given guidance in order to overcome the trauma at home. Women should be made aware of their rights. Strict laws should be imposed on the abusers so that such cases can be controlled. As a party to CEDAW, India has a duty to ensure women's equal enjoyment of the right to work; however, unlike men who dominate better paid clerical and management positions in the plantations, women who work almost exclusively are barred from promotional opportunities. To end this viscous cycle the government needs to work hand in hand with the local administration, schools and NGOs to provide better standard of living, job opportunities to pave a way for a better and brighter future for them and for us as well.

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Legal Intervention in Conjugal Life: How Society is Influencing Law to Interfere in a Person's Conjugal Life.

Shruti Bhakat

INTRODUCTION

Conjugal life is a legal recognized social contract between two people, traditionally based on a sexual relationship and implying a permanent union. Marriage is one of the universal social institutions. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. According to Robert H Lowie “ Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates.” Thought marriage is a foundation in it self , but it works accordingly under societal pressure and control. In this paper we have tried to uplift the envolment and interference of law and society in a Conjugal life.

DIVORCE

Divorce usually entails the canceling or reorganizing of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the rule of law of the particular country or state. Detachment usually brings a whole level of physical and mental intimidation to the couple and people associated with them

While getting married there is mandatory law that the newly married couple has to get registered as a legal married couple In the book of law to legitimize their relationship while this being the perk there are some downside as the couple goes through a lot of

uncertainty through their new life they approach the only way to get out of this is separation or divorce which leads to an extreme outcome or destruction of their conjugal life let's take a glance of such life, when things doesn't work out between the two they approach the court for a legal counselling or intervention they usually get 3-6 months of counselling from a marriage counselor but if the things doesn't work out they can go ahead and file for a divorce and then the grueling process of divorce starts it can take months or years to grant the court a bipartisan solution while the procedure the couple has to go through the division of assets, properties, single authority of the whole or the sole custody of their children.

Marriage's sacretetism brings in all sort of justification to hold a marriage even if it is against one self respect. Quoted by Jack Kingston "Marriage cannot be severed from its cultural, religious and natural roots without weakening the good influence of society."

Society plays a vital role in this situations as being ambivalent in a relationship they try to give their upmost advice and go deep in their life to know all the unknown facts. The taunting nature of society influence the pair to rethink, fester or to disturb their nuptial life. And it also affects their present as well as future life

Living relationship and LGBTQ+(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/

In other name it's called cohabitation. Cohabitation is an arrangement where two people are not married but live together. They are often involved in a romantic or sexually intimate relationship on a long-term or permanent basis. Marriage is a big commitment that last for a lifetime therefore before tying the knot people prefer living relationship. This is mostly found in love marriage's. Though the living relationship is accepted in the book of law, still society has not accepted it with open arm. Living relationship is considered as a social stigma in the society. In Indian society the concept of marriage is so deeply engrossed that if two people engaged themselves in a sexual relationship without getting marriage it is seen as a taboo and they have to face exasperation of the society. With the help of law communities put a lot of obstructions for mingle couples like disrespect, dishonored, ill cultured, judge Their upbringing, socializing and culture. These couples

character is often assinated in the society. If the couple gives birth to a child without getting marriage the society levels these children's as illegitimate. Even though the law has ensured a few certain provisions in favor of these children's but the society still doesn't provides them with the equal respect, for which the life of the living couple turns miserable. Under the article 21 supreme court has considered the living relationship as legitimate and has given a few provision and freedom to these couple's. Although law has accepted living relationship but the society couldn't accept it to be legitimate. Marriage is deep down rooted in the Indian culture due to which any other form of sexual relationship is objectified in the society. It also includes LGBTQ+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER , QUEER, +) . The Indian culture believes a relationship can only take place in between two opposite sex and not accepting asexuality. Due to which LGBTQ+ are not encouraged enough in the community. They are often slammed for their preferences. In context to this many suppress their choices and gets fearful to reveal about their proclivity. They get often traumatized from suppressing their preference and opening up in fear of being judge. Even so now a days many have come up with their choices and has also turned the law in favor of them, still facing the wrath of people and is often being bullied for their fondness.

CONCLUSION

To conclude in my paper I have tried to prove how society directly or indirectly with the help of law tries to intervene or influence others life by giving their judgmental opinion to influence others life and we also see new law are being enacted in the constitution to help and protect our passed and future value but it has been seen therefore many people have not yet been able to adapt to the changes.

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Eradicate Dowry to Annihilate Domestic Violence

Dona Datta

INTRODUCTION

‘Any young man, who makes dowry a condition to marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood’—Mahatma Gandhi.

The practice of Dowry is deeply rooted in India which refers to “the property, money, ornaments or any other form of wealth which a man or his family receives from his wife or her family at the time of marriage. Dowry is both a practice and a problem with Indian marriage (Haveripeth, 2013)”. Dowry is a praxis in Indian society which results in numerous happenings like physical torture, harassment, even burn the bride if the dowry amount is not sufficient. Many studies have shown a link between domestic violence and dowry demands. Demand of dowry is the root cause of domestic violence.

When husband and/or his family believes that dowry payments are inadequate, wife abuse has been found higher (Banerjee, 1999; Bloch and Rao 2002), Dowry related violence has been regarded as a universal phenomenon, cutting across all sorts of boundaries and it is continuous increase in India (Singh, 2005). “When the dowry amount is not considered sufficient or the expected demands are not met easily, the bride is often harassed, abused and tortured (Singh, 2005)”.

According to The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, “dowry” means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly :

- a) By one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage; or
- b) By the persons of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person.

Reasons for increasing dowry: The reasons behind increasing dowry are as follows:

- i. **Social status:** Those who practice dowry take it as a status symbol. Increasing demands of higher status groom among women seeking “upward mobility” in status depicts that for most women this upward mobility comes through men, rather than their own efforts. Since, most families have a belief that marrying their daughter to a groom of higher status will make it easier for their daughters to adjust in such a family rather than the one with a low status.
- ii. **Tradition or custom :** Most of the people practice dowry as they have seen from their ancestor to do it.
- iii. **Avidity:** Avidity is another cause behind increasing dowry, as people want to be more rich by getting wealth and gifts from bride’s parents and want to spend their life without any trouble demand dowry.
- iv. **Lack of values and self-esteem:** People those who have no moral values and shameless demand for dowry. This type of people neither respects others nor have self-esteem. They never think from where and how the bride’s parents will arrange all the demands, they only want to fulfil their rein less desires which is devoid of ethical values.

Apart from this reasons, dowry death is increasing in our country due to greed of the groom and/or his family.

DOWRY DEATHS

Dowry is a social problem for which dowry deaths are increasing at the matrimonial homes of the brides in India. Husband and/or in-laws use(s) dowry as an instrument of torture and it begins when they demand more cash, jewellery, household items from the new wed bride as well as from her parents (kelkar, 1992). When cruelty, torture, is at the higher level for demanding dowry and cannot bearable by the bride

they commit suicide after dowry pressure called as “Dowry Death”. Due to extreme mental and physical torture one out of four dowry victims commit suicide (kumari,1989). Apart from this, once the daughter get married and due to dowry torture she return from her matrimonial house, parents do not want to except their daughter due to traditional thoughts and perception of society. As a result, they make suicide. This is the main reason behind many

dowry deaths. Dowry related domestic violence is increasing day by day in India, is the matter of deep thought about the death of females due to dowry (Singh, 2005). “Dowry death is one of the typical problems of Indian society (Singh, 2005: 199-220)”. Apart from this, “Bride Burning” has come in vogue. “In India an average of five women a day are burned in dowry related disputes and many cases are never reported (Ghansham, 2002)”. Newly married women are remorselessly killed by their husband and/or in-laws for dowry. According to National Crime Records Bureau 7634 dowry deaths are reported in 2015. In nutshell, we must not lose our precious daughters life because of some uncultured uncivilised morons.

To stop this hateful crime and inferior work Dowry Prohibition Act has been enacted by Government of India in 1961.

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: Dowry system is one of the social ills that is prevalent in the Indian society since ages back. In simple words, dowry can be defined as the payment in the form of property, cash and valuable goods made by the bride’s family to the bridegroom’s party in a marriage. It is regarded as an indispensable condition in a marriage. Failing to satisfy the demands put forward by the bridegroom’s family often results to the ill-treatment of the new wed bride by her husband and/or in-laws afterwards and sometimes may cost her life too. So, in order to break off this practice, an act named the “Dowry Prohibition



Act” was passed in 1961. The Act “Dowry Prohibition” entails that the giving and taking of dowry is a punishable crime.

Reasons for ineffective of anti dowry law: The Government of India had enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961 which was further amended in 1986 to deterrence dowry practice. As a social being we are not conscious enough about legislation and do not bother about ill social problems, which is very necessary to take prompt action. The main reason behind the ineffectiveness of anti dowry law is unacquaintedness of masses. Any kind of laws works when people really wanted to modify the situation. Only campaigning cannot “eradicate” this “social evil” rather laws must be more potential that people “be afraid of” giving and taking dowry.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Legislative measures : Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said that, “Legislation cannot by itself normally solve deep-rooted social problems. One has to approach them in other ways too, but legislation is necessary and essential, so that it may give that push and have that educative factor as well as the legal sanctions behind it which help public opinion to be given a certain shape”.

i. **Dowry Prohibition Act (1961):** In order to break off dowry practice, Government of India has enacted Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961 and it is amended in 1984 and in 1986 which applies to all (Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Jews). This act prohibits the practice of giving and taking dowry is a punishable crime. The punishment of this offence included imprisonment which shall not be less than six months but may be extending to two years and with fine.

a. **Penalty for giving or taking dowry:** Section 3 of the Dowry Prohibition Act provides punishment of imprisonment extending to six months or fine of rupees up to five thousand or both for giving or taking dowry.

The 1984 Amendment further enhanced of imprisonment shall not be less than six months and fine of rupees ten thousand.

According to the 1986 Amendment the imprisonment shall not be less than five years and fine has been increased from ten thousand to

fifteen thousand or the amount of the value of such dowry, whichever is more.

b. Penalty for demanding dowry: Section 3 of The Dowry Prohibition Act provides punishment of imprisonment not less than two years and with fine may extend to ten thousand rupees for demanding dowry.

In the 1984 Amendment has increased the amount of rupees fifteen thousand instead of ten thousand.

ii. New provisions in Criminal Law- IPC Section 304B and IPC 498A were inserted to stringent Dowry Prohibition Act.

a. INDIAN PENAL CODE Section (304B): IPC 304B is related to dowry death. It is an offensive crime. If death of a women is caused by any burns or bodily injuries or under normal circumstances within 7 years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassed by her husband and/ or any relative of her husband for/or in connection with any demand for dowry, such death shall be called “dowry death” and her husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused for her death. The offender shall be punished with imprisonment not less than seven years but may extend to lifetime.

b. INDIAN PENAL CODE section (498-A) : IPC 498A related to husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty. Harassment of the women and the women should be married. The cruelty should be done by the husband or by husband's relative only. Whoever, being the husband subjects such harassment to woman shall be punished with imprisonment extend to three years and also is liable to fine.

iii. New provisions in Indian Evidence Act: IPC 113A and IPC 113B was enacted in 15th March 1872 and it commenced from 1st September 1872 to stringent Dowry Prohibition Act.

a. INDIAN PENAL CODE Section (113A): IPC 113A is related to presumption as to abetment of suicide by a married woman. When a married woman commit suicide within 7years of the date of her marriage abetted by her husband or any relative of her husband and her husband or relative of husband had subjected to her cruelty, then the Court may presume, that suicide had been abetted by her husband or by relatives of husband.

b. INDIAN PENAL CODE Section (113B): IPC 113B is related to presumption as to dowry death. If a married woman faces dowry related violence by her husband just after her marriage and is murdered, then the Court presumes, her husband has committed the crime.

IV. PUNISHMENT ACT:

a. INDIAN PENAL CODE Section (302): IPC 302 deals with intentional death of women (bride burning). If a person causes woman death then he or she must be punishable under this section, imprisonment for life and also be liable to fine.

b. INDIAN PENAL CODE Section (306): IPC 306 deals with abetment of suicide of woman. If husband and his relatives create such a situation which leads to suicide of the woman within seven years of marriage punishable under this section, imprisonment extended to ten years and also be liable to fine. This section is non-bailable, cognizable and non-compoundable.

2. NON-LEGISLATIVE MEASURES:

i. Education: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”—NELSON MANDELA.

Through education women can aware about their rights, can overcome social taboos, reduce hesitation to lodge report against offences and through education we can make our girls strong enough to fight against evils.

ii. Education and Economic empowerment: Every woman must be highly educated and economically strong that husband and or in-laws think twice before harming the new wed bride.

iii. Role of parents: Parents must change their mindset that daughters are “PARAYA DHAN” and they must stand as a pillar by their daughters and support them.

iv. Modified culture: For many people those who practice dowry, they think it like a part and parcel of marriage as their ancestors used to do it, must change their view as it is not ethical and must change the culture of giving and taking dowry.

v. Compulsory marriage registration and marriage registration certificate: National Commission on Women recommended about

compulsory registration of marriage. So, every state must make it compulsory as well as marriage registration certificate, because without certificate women could not get success in dowry related cases in the court.

vi. Compulsory online marriage registration: Registration of marriage should be compulsory through online mode in each and every state of India. This will help the investigating personnel to deal with the cases more effectively.

vii. Preparation of list of gifts and Compulsory registration of gifts with signature: A list of presentations must be prepared with its approximate value by both parties with the signatures of bride, groom and parents of the bride and groom must affix at the time of registration of marriage.

viii. Role of Dowry Prohibition Officer: Dowry prohibition officer can play a key role to prevent or abetting of taking or demanding dowry. Every state must be appointed full time Dowry Prohibition Officer and DPOs must be given wide power. Section 8-B of Dowry Prohibition Act; also state that, “The State Government may appoint as many Dowry Prohibition Officers as it thinks fit”.

ix. Family court: Family court can be empowered to dissolve dowry related cases and must be merged with NGO’s and various woman’s organisations those who work for dowry victims.

x. Punishment: Terrible punishment must be given to offending husbands and /or in-laws/or ,relatives, so that others can take a lesson from it and afraid to do so in future. Furthermore, punishment for cruelty to women, persuade women to commit suicide must be increased.

xi. NGO-NGO’s can play a vital role in abolishing dowry related violence as social welfare workers have better communication skills and they act as a mediator in resolving the problem as well as women workers must be in a team. Like All Bengal Women’s Union, Village welfare society, etc are some of the NGO”S which work in the field of dowry in west Bengal.

xii. Moral values: Parents as well as teachers can inculcate good moral values in children from childhood that they can broaden their minds and widen their outlook and can taken ethical decisions.

xiii. Gender sensitization: Gender sensitization must be taught by teachers and parents.

xiv. Awareness programmes: Various kinds of awareness programmes can be conducted time to time to spread legal information, rights of women, welfare of the women etc.

xv. Role of mass media: We can use different Medias for launching various anti dowry programmes to arouse awareness among people that the practice of dowry is illegal as well as unethical. Through media we can arouse social consciousness also.

xvi. Anti dowry cell: Anti-dowry cells must be constituted in every district of each state (or any place where dowry related harassment is found more anti dowry cells can be constituted in sub-divisions also) that they can work as a local vigilant body to find out dowry related cases and extend their hand to the victim woman and her family to get legal aid.

xvii. Women's organisations: Women those who ill-treated, harassed by their husband and /or in-laws for dowry, for them women's organisations can play a vital role. These types of organisations help to make a woman independent. Moreover, they may provide guidance and counselling to the dowry victim.

xviii. Women police officer: Women police officers must be given preference for investigation in dowry cases.

xix. Campaigning: Anti dowry campaigning can be conducted in the towns, villages with the help of legal aid workers, law student and teachers to aware masses about legal literacy.

xx. National Commission for Women: Commission works for dowry victims.

xxi. Women court: it established for justice to women who deal with domestic violence related cases, cruelty by husband or in-laws etc.

xxii. Role of the youth: To eradicate dowry system youths are the light of the hope in the darkness. At the time of marriage youth can take an oath to "dowry free marriage" to eradicate "dowry" in true meaning.

CONCLUSION

It is the high time to stop dowry practice as it is unethical. Though different acts, laws have been made to curb dowry but it continues even

after marriage. Physical torture, mental harassment, bride burning, dowry deaths are still happening for inadequate amount of dowry. So, it can be said that, husband as well as the in-laws of the bride must change their mind set not to take dowry at the time of marriage or after marriage. Furthermore, change of oneself can alleviate this social evil as well as create a healthier society for all. Let us all say, “No” to “Dowry” and “No” to “Violence”.

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THEME :

IMPACT OF GENDER IN WORK PLACE

School as A Workplace : A Peep into Gender Issues with Adolescents

Dr. Nita Mitra

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization in a report of 2009 has indicated that schools are very important places where the value of gender equality can be nourished that can prevent gender violence in adult life.

One of the most important places where gender inequality may crop up is the work place. With the intention of inculcating the appropriate attitude at the school the authors examined whether the students can be offered an environment of work places in the school itself.

In that endeavor two academic contributions helped, the first one is due to Dewey, who said, 'school is miniature society'.

Another idea comes from a publication of Newman (1995) which categorically spoke the importance of making the school environment compatible with the environment of a workplace. Actually, the great educators in India have always insisted on work experience from the school level itself.

Unifying all these ideas, we concentrate upon a proposition which may be stated as: Students have a chance to be aware of the issues of gender discrimination at the school level itself and the rational ways of overcoming those in their adult life.

In this paper adolescents of the middle age group of 14-16 have been chosen as the students under study. The rationale behind doing so is the observation of Jean Piaget (1936). This states that the formal operational thinking starts roughly from the age of adolescence. It is expected that the students of this age group involve efficiently in peer-interaction and debates.

In this study 4 objectives have been chosen.

OBJECTIVES:

- i) To check whether there is a difference in the level of peer interaction motivation between Girls and Boys.
- ii) To check whether there is a difference in Anxiety level (STAI-I) between Girls and Boys.
- iii) To check whether there is a difference in Anxiety level (STAI-II) between Girls and Boys.
- iv) To check whether there is a difference in Depression level between Girls and Boys.

SAMPLE

The sampling used in this paper is a purposive one.

The distribution is like this: Total 240 adolescent students have been selected from the schools of West Bengal. Among them 30 girls and 30 boys are from each of the urban and rural areas of South Bengal. Again 30 girls and 30 boys are from each of the urban and rural areas of North Bengal.

METHODOLOGY

The method followed in this study is Quantitative Survey Method.

- We have checked the level of peer interaction motivation among the students with respect to sharing of work load. For doing this Likert scale has been used.
- We have also observed the anxiety level (STAI- I and STAI- II) for both boys and girls with the State Anxiety Inventory developed by Spielberger and others (1970).
- We have also observed depression level (based upon Beck Depression Inventory developed by Beck and others (1961) for boys and girls under study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

For the analysis of data, t-test has been used. From the analysis we have arrived at the following results. In this section the results have been presented in tabular form. On the basis of the results for the four objectives the interpretations have been made in the section-6.

With respect to the **objective-1** the results are presented in the **Table-I** given below.

Table I: Results obtained in relation to objective 1

Objective	Observations	Level of significance	General Observation
No.1	Result 1a: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of North Bengal differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of North Bengal with respect to Peer Interaction.	0.01	Girls seem to have better peer interaction. They indicate higher Mean values in two cases and equal value in two other cases.
	Result 1b: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of North Bengal with respect to Peer Interaction.	N.S.	
	Result 1c: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of South Bengal differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of South Bengal with respect to Peer Interaction.	0.05	
	Result 1d: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of South Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of South Bengal with respect to Peer Interaction.	N.S.	

With respect to the **objective-2** the results are presented in the **Table-II** given below.

Table II: Results obtained in relation to objective 2 (STAI-I)

Objective	Observations	Level of significance	General Observation
No.2 (STAI-I)	Result 2a: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of North Bengal differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of North Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-I)	0.05	Boys and girls seem not to differ significantly with State Anxiety(STAI-I)
	Result 2b: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of North Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-I)	N.S.	
	Result 2c: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of South Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of South Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-I)	N.S.	
	Result 2d: Adolescent Boys from English medium school(South Bengal)do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school(South Bengal) with respect to Anxiety (STAI-I)	N.S.	

With respect to the **objective-3** the results are presented in the **Table-III** given below.

Table III: Results obtained in relation to objective 3 (STAI-II)

Objective	Observations	Level of significance	General Observation
No.3 (STAI-II)	Result 3a: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of North Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-II)	N.S.	
	Result 3b: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of North Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-II)	N.S.	Boys and girls seem not to differ significantly with Trait Anxiety (STAI-II)
	Result 3c: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of South Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of South Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-II)	N.S.	
	Result 3d: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of South Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of South Bengal with respect to Anxiety (STAI-II)	N.S.	

With respect to the **objective-4** the results are presented in the **Table-IV** given below.

Table IV: Results obtained in relation to objective 4

Objective	Observations	Level of significance	General Observation
No. 4	Result 4a: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of North Bengal with respect to Depression .	N.S.	With respect to Depression, Boys and Girls do not differ much. Only in one case Boys of Bengali Medium indicated higher Depression Mean.
	Result 4b: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of North Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of North Bengal with respect to Depression .	N.S.	
	Result 4c: Adolescent Boys from Bengali medium school of South Bengal differ from Adolescent Girls from Bengali medium school of South Bengal with respect to Depression .	0.01	

	Result 4d: Adolescent Boys from English medium school of South Bengal do not differ from Adolescent Girls from English medium school of South Bengal with respect to Depression.	N.S.	
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INTERPRETATION

Here for convenience, the general observations with respect to the four objectives have been summarized in the Table-V given below.

Table V: General observations with respect to the four objectives I to IV

OBJECTIVES	GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
Objective-1	Girls and boys differ significantly with respect to the level of peer interaction motivation. Girls have better peer interaction.
Objective-2	Girls and boys do not differ significantly with respect to State Anxiety level (STAI-I)
Objective-3	Girls and boys do not differ significantly with respect to Trait Anxiety level (STAI-II)
Objective-4	Girls and boys do not differ significantly with respect to Depression level.

- It appears that girls have higher peer-interaction motivation in comparison with boys.
In this context we can note the observation of Melero (2011) which opined that women may be better in the execution of tasks that requires sincere effort and collaboration.
- However, differences in the psychological parameters i.e. anxiety and depression with respect to the participating boys and girls are remaining insignificant.

CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER WORK

Thus, from this study one can arrive at a tentative conclusion that girls are having better peer-interaction motivation that helps them to excel

in the execution of tasks that requires sincere effort and collaboration. However, the study is not an exhaustive one and there remains the room for repeating it with larger and representative sample.

The results of the study give scope for further researches as well. Two of those may be as follows:

- whether the inculcation of gender equality at schools is achievable with the help of improvements in peer interactions?
- whether a higher level of work environment in schools increases the differences in peer-interaction motivation.

Teachers have to take steps accordingly to motivate the young ones for having appropriate respect to gender equality. The author is continuing research in this area.

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Gender Related Issues in Agricultural Sector: Special Reference to Bangalore Urban District

Dr. Kavitha G. N

INTRODUCTION

In India, more than 70% of the population are involved in this sector. Basically, Villages are the backbone of our country, it's main artisan is agriculture. Majorities of women employed in Agricultural sector, it creates many jobs for women . but women are more than ever finally employed, differences in wages, access in resources, work segregation. History shows that, men dominate in this sector from past to till. Here women work has considered as service, unproductive background. More than, 80% of work done by women, but credit goes to men. This study find out, why women always subjugated by patriarchy? Why not considered her status, work as par with men? These are primarily arise factors in my mind.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To find out the role of women in agricultural sector.
- To analyze the gender differences in roles& activities in agriculture sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- BrohiSikandar (2005), has find out in his study argued that despite uncasing participation in socio-economic field, women role has been discarded, considered as unproductive work.

- ZarQuresh (2005), has mentioned in his paper role of rural women in agriculture sector is as important as men, therefore, women should educate themselves in agricultural. He also highlights the importance of education to rural female& proposed to educate women in floriculture & food preservation.

RESEARCH METHOD

It is a pilot study. The data were collected through qualitative research methods, following a simple random sample, which interviewed 50 rural women in a selected villages of TavarekereHobali, in Bangalore Urban District.

The Role of Women in Agriculture sector :

Rural women performs numerous labour intensive jobs such as-

- Weeding
- Hoeing
- Grass cutting
- Picking
- Cotton stick collection
- Separation of seeds from fiber
- Cleaning of animals& etc...

With these activities women can do the household works such as-

- Bringing drinking water from the remote areas
- Collection of wood
- Milk processing
- Preparing food & etc.....

The study also noted that majority of the rural women are uneducated, unskilled & tradition bounded, therefore their productive capacities are also low, & counted as unskilled labor. Though rural women also help to produce the staple crops like, Raagi, rice, maize & different kind ofgrains, but her contribution is secondary in staple crop production, however, in legumes & vegetables, her role is instrumental & unproductive.

- Gender differences in roles & activities:
Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women

typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid & unpaid labour they undertake, those are;

- **Productive roles:** this refers to market production & home/ subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income.
- **Reproductive roles:**
Child- bearing, child- rearing responsibilities borne by women.
- **Morework, lesspay:**
Employment in agriculture is available for fewer days per year. It is therefore becoming essential for men to migrate in search of better paid work. Women are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very bad conditions, because they cannot migrate as easily as men. The dependence of women's labour on family, especially during the peak periods of sowing& harvesting has become very common. Women can do same hours, same work with men in the field, but they get less pay compare to men. Men takes per day Rs450/-, but women get Rs 350/-. It is universal pay for agriculture sector.
- **Unequal distribution of work:**
In agriculture, women often do planting, weeding, sowing, seed sowing, digging, and so on. Men only work some time in the midst of work as supervisors. Women also work with livestock and some women take care of their young children. They collect leftovers, vegetables, and baking in their spare time. Majority of the women were doing same work.
- **Gender-based discrimination :**
In agriculture, more than 78% of women are of Scheduled Caste, and 5% of Scheduled Tribes and 17% of other backward classes are women. He said caste based discrimination in food matters. There is inequality in the workplace and in the sharing. Landlords say such work should be done by women of such species.
- **Gender based violence:**
About 78% of women are physically harassed, seek restrictions, put off restrictions, cut short breaks, carry 5% heavy loads, and

sometimes work overtime. 15% of women are facing a sexual harassment like, Exposing various amnesties to sex, touching them necessarily, not consenting to sex, making exceptions, exposing threats, Said to be inside. He said such harassment of women happens by landlords and men working with them. Men are also bullied here. But the harassment of women is different and more frequent.

- **Inequal distribution of resources & necessities:**

The distribution of tools, money, essentials and resources in the workplace is not properly distributed to women. There is also disparity in infrastructure, drinking water, toiletries and food sharing.

- **Technology-related issues :**

Technology has played an important role in the field of agriculture today, and if there is one thing that makes it easier for workers to work and save their labor, there is the fear of rising unemployment. So many women have lost their jobs today. As such it is reducing women's work participation. Women's labor power is considered inferior because of employers predetermined notion of women's primary role as homemakers. As a result of discrimination against female labor, women are concentrated in the secondary sector of labor market. Their work is low paid, low status, casual, lack of potential upward mobility, she has engaged home based work, outside of the work at the same time. Women's occupational choices are less than compare to men & also limited due to social, cultural constraints, gender bias in work, & lack of supportive facilities.

SUGGESTIONS

- The Government should encourage and encourage students to learn skills and skills related to agricultural activities.
- To Raise awareness of gender discrimination and bring about equality.
- To encourage women's participation in agriculture.

- To Enforcement of the government's separate functions and regulations for women.
- To Empowering rural agricultural women.
- Women must be involved in decision making bodies that have the potential to introduce structural changes. This action will bring some changes in the gender relations in the society.
- Women must be aware regarding their existing rights, access to judicial relief & redress, removing discrimination through legal reforms, & providing legal aid, assistance & counselling.

CONCLUSION

The agrarian sector alone needs to change in the attitude of 'patriarchy'. Also giving equal effort to participating women, who work harder than men. They should be honoured for their strengths and skills. The empowerment of women today can only be achieved by improving the social and economic status of rural women as well as agriculture-related work. Despite such as huge involvement, her role & dignity has yet not been recognized. Women's status is low by socio-economic & political indicators.

Finally, it is concluded that the rural women are exploited by landlords for their personal good & enrichment. Women are treated as sub servant or personal property. In this regard Government must formulate policies to enhance their skills & their work should be counted in economic indicators.

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The Gender Pay Gap: Unequal Pay for Equal Work

Sruthi. S

INTRODUCTION

Gender Wage Gap is characterized as the distinction between the middle profits of people, i.e., it considers all people who fall under the ambit of paid work. As per the Gender Gap Index in 2020, India has slipped to the 112th situation from the past 108th in 2018. As indicated by the report, it will take India near 100 years to overcome any issues in territories of legislative issues, economy, wellbeing and instruction. It positions 149th in monetary investment and opportunity, and 117th in wage equity for comparative work. While from the start, Gender Wage Gap just resembles the normal contrast between the profit of people (and in this manner an issue that needs to do dominantly with pay). In any case, there are a few layers that should be dissected inside this issue. Since it considers the profit of ALL utilized ladies, there are a few reasons why there is a wide compensation hole between the work of the two sexual orientations inferable from segregation regarding opportunity, instruction, and so on.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study about the Problems faced by the Women in the Work-place
- To analyze how to tackle the problems faced by Women
- To study about the concept of Gender Wage Gap

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is collected from various secondary sources such as articles, newspapers, magazines, and websites.

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Inappropriate behavior

Inappropriate behavior at the work environment is one of the most far reaching issues that ladies face. Sexual provocation is an unwanted sexual conduct, be it verbal or physical, and profoundly affects ladies. Inappropriate behavior doesn't really mean contacting the private pieces of any lady, it ranges from hostile remarks, demonstrating disgusting pictures or recordings, dangers to rape to undesirable sexual kindness. Consequently of advancement, compensation climb there are a couple of bosses who attempt to exploit or favors from female specialists. With regards to female specialists in low-wage employments, the negative outcomes of lewd behavior are the worse.

2. Pay imbalance

It is one of the most significant issues that ladies representatives need to look at their work environment. More often than not in spite of being more capable and qualified than individual male representatives, ladies laborers are paid not as much as guys for a similar measure of work. Ladies are practically 50% of the workforce still they procure not as much as men laborers in pretty much each and every occupation. According to analysts, word related isolation because of sexual orientation and hardly any different variables, assume the significant job in pay value at working environment.

3. Lesser women in the workforce

This is a tireless work issue in various created countries of the world and furthermore has gotten a matter of worry for the examiners. Studies have demonstrated that in the majority of the global organizations the proportion among men and female representatives are lopsided. Ladies are exceptionally separated and men consistently get an upper-edge contrasted with ladies during enrollment.

4. Cold working environment condition and absence of family support

Expanding work pressure joined with crisp working environment condition is by all accounts another primary factor that inconveniences ladies at work environment. The significance of working in a strong and sound office air with a gathering of understanding associates can't be exaggerated. A specifically satisfying activity and an attractive pay can't make a lady worker fulfilled on the off chance that she needs to go through her day at working environment with a gathering of unsupportive men associates.

5. Lack of security

Helpless security at the working environment is another critical worry that ladies need to manage. Ladies working in night shifts fall survivor of a few wrongdoings because of deficient security game plan by the higher administration. Occurrences of driver or another male representative attacking a lady laborer in office transport has been accounted for consistently day. Because of absence of legitimate security game plans by the organization, ladies uncommonly working in night shifts have become survivors of assaults and sexual maltreatment.

6. The absence of role model at working environment

We learn by following the strides of others. Indeed, even at working environment youthful experts admire senior partners to gain proficiency with the stunts and exchanges of business. In these male-commanded society ladies representatives regularly don't locate a female good example to follow, so they need to look for help from male partners for direction. Be that as it may, the subtleties in the correspondence style of men to a lady and absence of mentorship block the development of ladies at working environment.

STEPS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN

Despite the size of the organization or the assignment of the lady at the work environment, it is the duty of managers to give protected, cordial and helpful work environment to all the ladies representatives. So as to accomplish this, there are a few associations who make scarcely any successful strides and approaches.

1. Framing a complaint cell or objections advisory group

The board of trustees will tune in to the objections of ladies representative and explore autonomously, keeping the personality of the worker under wrap. The handiness of this sort of advisory group is common in inappropriate behavior cases. With this sort of examination board of trustees, ladies representatives feel more secure at work environments. Also, the board ought to sort out training efforts for ladies workers to assist them with realizing their privileges issue.

2. Proper work condition

Businesses should attempt to give appropriate work circumstance to ladies to ensure that there is no unpleasant climate for the female specialists. The businesses should cause the ladies representatives to feel simple, to come to them to share their work environment issues.

3. Ensuring Appropriate security

This is one of the most significant variables which are should have been dealt with well by the businesses. In addition, giving a protected taxi office they need to guarantee that ladies representatives don't work late hours. On the off chance that she needs to remain back to finish work, the workplace authority should take additional consideration of her security and wellbeing. Giving adequate maternity leaves and childcare comforts for working mothers is something that businesses ought to do to make a superior workplace for ladies.

CONCEPT OF GENDER WAGE GAP

The Gender pay gap or Gender wage gap is the normal contrast between the compensation for people who are working. Ladies are commonly viewed as paid not as much as men. There are two unmistakable numbers with respect to the compensation hole: non-balanced versus balanced compensation hole. The last ordinarily considers contrasts in occupations picked, training and employment experience. In the United States, for instance, the non-balanced normal female's yearly pay is 80% of the normal male pay, contrasted with 95% for the balanced normal compensation.

The reasons connect to legitimate, social and financial factors, and reach out past the 'equivalent compensation for equivalent work'. (The two terms, sexual orientation pay hole, and equivalent compensation are not the equivalent.) The sexual orientation pay hole can be an issue from an open strategy point of view in any event, when the purpose behind the hole is completely intentional, on the grounds that it lessens monetary yield and implies that ladies are bound to be needy upon government assistance installments, particularly in mature age.

GENDER NORMS

Another social factor, which is identified with the previously mentioned one, is the socialization of people to embrace explicit sexual orientation jobs. Employment decisions affected by socialization are regularly opened in to "request side" choices in systems of compensation segregation, instead of an aftereffect of surviving work showcase separation impacting work decision. Men that are in non-conventional employment jobs or occupations that are basically observed as a ladies centered occupations, for example, nursing, have sufficiently high occupation fulfillment that inspires the men to proceed in these activity fields in spite of analysis they may get.

As per a recent report, according to certain representatives, ladies in center administration are seen to do not have the mental fortitude, authority, and drive that male supervisors seem to have, regardless of female center chiefs accomplishing results comparable to their male partners as far as effective activities and accomplishing results for their utilizing organizations. These recognitions, alongside the components recently depicted in the article, add to the trouble of ladies to climb to the official positions when contrasted with men in comparative positions. Cultural thoughts of sexual orientation jobs stem to some degree from media impacts

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the Equal Pay Act, the wage gap perseveres. So as to accomplish equivalent compensation, we must reinforce our equivalent compensation laws with the goal that ladies can retaliate against pay separation. What's more, we should hold meeting and show ladies and

men over the word about the sexual orientation wage issue. I think settling this issue will require everybody input and less inclination individuals in the workforce. A few arrangements that will help decline the sex wage hole are: Fabricate stepping stools to better paying occupations for ladies by evacuating obstructions to section into male-ruled fields.

- Lift up the wages of ladies in low-wage occupations by raising the lowest pay permitted by law what's more, guaranteeing that tipped specialists get at any rate the normal the lowest pay permitted by law before tips.
- Increase the accessibility of high-caliber, moderate youngster care.
- Help forestall and cure guardian and pregnancy victimization ladies laborers.
- Provide reasonable work routines, paid family leave, and paid days off so that laborers with providing care obligations are not unreasonably hindered.
- Ensure ladies' entrance to the reasonable regenerative social insurance they need.

CONCLUSION

The gender wage gap is deserving of insightful investigation because of its noteworthy associations with regions, for example, social equity and decency, fairness and financial portability, what's more, ability obtaining, improvement and maintenance. The current investigation looked to recognize the causes and results of the sexual orientation wage hole, inspect individuals' impression of the sex wage hole, and propose a lot of conceivable arrangements that administrations and associations can consider to additionally decrease the distinction in remuneration between women and men. To tight the compensation hole, a scope of lawful (for example raising the lowest pay permitted by law), open strategy (for example making moderate and high-caliber youngster care progressively accessible), and Human Resources (for example more pleasant and progressively adaptable work plans) approaches should be given cautious thought.

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Gender Role in Workplace : An Effective Study to Bring Out Gender Inequality in Indian Society

Ipsita Chakraborty & Seonti Sengupta

INTRODUCTION

In the view of Indian society, the work of women is limited to giving birth to children, cooking for the family, taking care of her in laws and husband. Precisely, the position of women in a patriarchal society is subordinate to men. They are largely excluded from holding larger position in the social sphere or holding lavish titles and responsibilities outside the domestic locus. It is clear in that women are biologically different from men. It is the view of some *Sociologists* and *Social Anthropologist* that this stems out to the division of labour in all societies. In the view of Anthropologist Lion Tiger and Robin Fox, it is their belief that human beings exhibit oral patterns as a result of induced cultural traits. They clearly ignored, the reference to human 'biogrammar'. The biogrammar is a genetically based programme which predisposes man kind to behave in a certain way. Tiger and fox is of the opinion that men tend to monopolize positions of power. It is their view that the characteristics of aggression has been plunged into the future men from their private ancestors. Women are programmed by their 'biogrammars' to give birth to children and take care of them. Tiger and Fox argued that the basic family unit comprise of a mother and child. Earnestine Friedl defines male dominance as a situation in which men have highly preferential access, although not always exclusive rights to those activities to which society accords the greatest value and

the exercise of which permits a measure of control over others. She also observes that in some societies, activities like weaving, pottery making, and tailoring are chiefly considered as tasks that are naturally held by men. However it has been found that the societies in which women carries out the same task, it is not regarded equal.

STRUGGLE FACED BY WOMEN TO BRING GENDER EQUALITY

The initial years of providing employment to women were distinctively tough. The period of 1841 to the advent of First World war in 1914 works a combination of pressure from the male workers and philanthropic reformers. They saw the employment of women in factories as a threat. In 1841, a committee comprising male factory workers were found.

They called for the 'gradual withdrawal of all female labour from the factory'. In 1842, the Mines Act banned the employment of women in mining sites as miners. In 1851, one in four married women were employed. During 1911, this figure went down by one in ten. Helen Hacker was of the opinion that with the employment of women, men looked upon them as their rival group. Therefore, they made use of Economic, legal and ideological weapons to reduce their competition. Meanwhile, a set of steps were being taken by them which includes, exclusion of women from the trade unions, preventing the process of hiring women, passed laws restricting the employment of married women etc. The period of 1914 to 1950, brought forward a tendency towards the growth of women employment coupled with a retention of house wifery, as the primary role expected out of women. During these years women received legal and political rights. In 1928, they were allowed to cast their vote. In the works of Ann Oakley, industrialization has had the following effects on the role of women, these include:

- i) 'Separation of men from the daily routines of domestic life',
- ii) 'Economic dependence of women & children on men',
- iii) 'Isolation of housework and child care from other work'.

Engels was of the opinion that the primary cause of subordination of women is due to the private ownership of property entitled to men. Monogamous marriage protects the institution of private property. It was a joint opinion of Marx and Engels that the 19th century capitalist

society would provide base for women liberation. It shall pave the way for women employment and their economic independence. In due course of time, many feminist writers advocated the eradication of gender roles. Ann Oakley demanded for the abolition of the role of housewife, the very concept of family which is solely dependent on women for domestic work with little exposure to the outside world, Abolition of sexual division of labour in all areas of social life. Meanwhile, the women's liberation movement emerged during the 1960's. The headquarter was in America. The movement primarily focussed on the right to equality for all adults as citizens, regardless of sex. The battle for the legal rights of women has largely been won. In Britain, the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975. Simultaneously, the black power movement also began in the late 1960's after the legalisation of civil rights. Contrary to this, the blacks were far from being equal and free. On the other hand the declaration of civil rights did not bring forth women's liberation. Juliet Mitchell argues that, the Women's Liberation Movement was partially triggered by the radical movements of the middle and late 1960's. Several other movements like the Youth Movement represented by organizations such as students for a Democratic Society and the Peace Movement which coordinated protest against the war in Vietnam and later in Cambodia. These movements, emphasized freedom, questioned the established truths and attacked the ideas and practices of oppression and exploitation. These movements, in the word of Juliet Mitchell, provided part of the Impetus and philosophy for the Women's Liberation Movement.

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDIA

The current scenario in India, hasn't changed so far. The Gender pay gaps and inequality are unfortunately still issues that surround female in the workplace. 21st Century still witnesses the quaint practices of Gender Discrimination. 8th of March is celebrated world-wide as the 'International women's day'. The day commemorates the socio-cultural, Economic and political achievements of women. In India, this day holds a special significance as it brings forth the reminiscence of struggle and collective movements carried forward by women. The

World Bank reported that there has been a sharp decline of female workers of India in the last 25 years. This remains a striking societal challenge with respect to the rapid growth of economy. The world in 21st century is still not equal for men and women. A certain issues can be put forward in order to form a basis in favour of such a claim.

- 1) Women are still not taken seriously in the professional spheres. The backwardness of a civilized society still believes that the primary work of a women is to raise a child and perform household activities.
- 2) According to the 2015 report by BBC, the member of women in positions of power, be it heads of state, senior managers or CEO s, are a fraction of what it should be. Females made up only 11.2% of board members in Indian firms.
- 3) In 2016, an article was published in 'The Hindu' which stated that the gap in India was as high as 27%, which means we use being equal, a woman colleague would earn only three quarters of her male counterpart.

The international monetary fund (IMF) estimates that an equal participation of women in workforce shall initiate a sharp spike in India's GDP. A study conducted by Mc Kinsey Global institute calculated the economic input of achieving gender Equality in India to be US \$ 700 billion of added GDP by the year 2025. Participation of Indian women in workforce has been atrocious. At present, it stands at 28%.

According to the Global Gender Gap report released by the world Economic Forum (WEF) in 2017, ranks countries on the basis of gender equality in spheres of health, education, economics and politics. India finished 139 out of 144 countries on economic participation and opportunity. Notwithstanding the trial made to bridge the gap in primary and territory education, India ranked 112 on the education attainment metric. Overall, India ranked 108 out of 144 countries.

EXISTING GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN DIFFERENT WORKING SECTORS

In India, the concept of 'same job, different pay', is much prevalent. A group of researchers aimed at understanding this concept pinpointing

the excitement of strong gender stereotypes. After the condition of research work, it has been found that women with higher grades are less likely to get placed in wage–employment compared to men with lower grader.

A set of observation was held later on this. Such discrimination is not always intentional. It is often carried on as a counterpart of preconceived notion about ‘Masculine Occupation’ and ‘Feminine Stereotype’. It has been also found that women earned 3% lesser than men for the same job role. Zinnov, a global management consulting firm, in collaboration with Intel India, conducted a research. In depth research was based on “Zinnov-intel India Gender Diversity Benchmark”. It was found that 30% representation of women in corporate India, with 31% and 26% representation within non-technical and technical roles, respectively. Only 11% of senior women leaders are in the ecosystem, the junior and mid-levels fare slightly better at 38% and 20% respectively. Further, the number of women and company boards has increased from 5% in 2012 to 13% in 2018. The study also found that location is of utmost importance when it comes to gender diversity. Bengaluru has the highest gender diversity in workplaces with 34% of women employees, followed by Mumbai with 33%, and Pune with 32%. Global MNCs comprise of 25% women employees, while the domestic MNCs employ 30% women and non MNCs 31%. The study has put forward that even though women make up 48.2% of India’s population, a huge gender disparity still continue to exist in Indian workplaces.

- 1. AGRICULTURAL SECTORS:** In 1976, the equal Remuneration Act was adopted for equal pay both of male and female agricultural labourers for the “same work or work of a similar nature” in order to protect the rights of the female labourers against unjust wage practices. Yet, it has been observed that there exists certain inequality with respect to male wage rates. Such unjust trend is widely observed in the Indian Agricultural labour markets. As per the reports published by the census 2011, among the total rural workforce, the classification of female labourers as farm compared to the 28.8% male agricultural labourers. It has been found by conducting a researches that the female labourers, contribute

more than half of the total family income. In some cases, they happen to be the sole breadwinner.

Despite performing similar work under the same working condition, the female labourers are mostly sloppy and ignorant of their constitutional rights. As a result more than 90% of the rural females are treated as a cheap and secondary source of labourers. Since the period between 1964-65 and 1999-2000, an analysis has been drawn based on the long term trends of real agricultural wages of male and female based on secondary data from agricultural wages of India (AWI) and Rural labour Enquiry (RLE) across 17 major Indian States. The results of the study found that the real wages of male labourers have been expanding compared to that of the female labourers.

A research work has been conducted in order to bring out the gender wise wage gap in agricultural sectors between (2010-11 to 2015-16) in 18 major states of India. The states being Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The data obtained from the survey denotes a gradual enhancement of male-female wage gap among the agricultural labourers in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. In Jharkhand, Gujarat, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh the absolute gender gap has been observed quite low over the years. Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan, has revealed a declining trend over 2010-11 to 2015-16 with respect to the absolute gender gap.

2. **MINING SITES / SECTORS:** Mineral resources form the backbone of Indian economy. A substantial growth of Indian economy has been generated from the mineral wealth and its exploitation. The mining industry has been the parapet of male exclusivity in employment. Women's participation was restricted at a position above ground staff. The participation of women in mining industries has been sedate. It has been a patriarchal and orthodox industry since long time. Although women have been working above ground yet the number of women employed under and

above ground was traditionally been low. The Indian society has always been prejudiced. Myths and Superstitions has been an inextricable part of it. It was heard that the presence of women in the mine pits might lead to the collapse of mines and death of miners. Besides myth dresses of women in India did not suit the so called 'masculine' work in mines. Most of their work in the mining sites were confined to sweeping, cleaning or as attendants. In the coal and Iron ore mines in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa, women are employed as head loaders, stone breakers, cleaners and other forms of daily wage labour. In those areas, they are entirely at the mercy of petty contractors and have absolutely no work security or safety. In the gold mines of Kolar, they work with mercury and cyanide with bare hands and are much prone to accidents. Difference in Gender has made them vulnerable to exploitation.

They are forced to work beyond the authorised work hour, No maternity or child care leave is provided to them. They are always under the threat of being ostracized. In some of the quarries of Orissa, women are exposed to sexual exploitation. They are forced to work at night. Young girls from these region are branded as 'spoilt' and not respectable for marriage as a result of sexual abuse. 'NALCO', a large public sector mining company established in Orissa provided 80% of the displaced families with work of which there were only 8 women inheritor. The reports published by the statistical profile of Women and labour of the Ministry of labour in its Fifth issue (1998) has 'shown a decline in the employment of women in open cast mines and above ground works from the period of 1961-93. The overall employment in these areas during this time has increased. Certainly, this is indicative of the fact that women has been exploited on grounds of employment.

According to the second national labour commission Report (1999), there was hardly 1.6 of female labour force in the organised sector where they have been the first to cut break after the introduction to machines. The large scale mines which shifted to a technological base, have no scope for women's participation as they are illiterate, lack technical skills

and face cultural prejudices. From 30-40% participation of women in mining sectors, it has been reduced to less than 7% and in Coal Sector alone, to 4%. The Voluntary Retirement from Service (VRS) scheme has proved to be a death knell for women.

- 4) **MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES :** The growth of manufacturing industries in India has been vast. It contributes to 100% of man power utilization globally. Over the past ten years, it has risen to great heights and contributed alone 16.1% of India's GDP in 2009-2010. The industry majorly seeks to cheap labours. Female labourers easily fall under this category. The quality of employment in such sectors are quite exploitative. Tripura and Tamil Nadu, is considered as the largest manufacturing unit of garment in India. The workplace is largely dominated by men. Women on the other hand are insecure and unemployed. Presence of women in manufacturing sectors is mostly negligent or on decline. Therefore their opportunities in manufacturing sectors is bleak. From the 1920's and 30's till 90's, the manufacturing sectors have consciously eliminated women from their workplace. A recent report from the International Trade Union Confederation has claimed that women are paid 18% less than men for the same work. It has also been recorded as the 4TH largest gender pay gap of any industry. According to UNIDO Report, the share of women in the total employment in the Indian Manufacturing Sector remained stagnant at 10.9% between 2000 and 2007. The major employers of women in manufacturing include food and beverages, leather and leather products, paper and paper products, chemical products, communication equipments and furniture maker.
- I. A much higher participation of women in manufacturing sector has been observed in South India than North India. Countries like Sri Lanka and Vietnam provides more employment to women than men in the manufacturing industries. Despite that India is lagging behind in providing equal roles. At a seminar on Policies and Strategies for working women in the context of Industrial Restructuring, (New Delhi, 1997), Gita Sen emphasized that the new economic regime of the 1990's creates two disadvantages for poor women in India.

These include the following :

- i) Pressure to earn from petty self-employment, in the informal sector and in production for larger industries.
- ii) The crumbling society security systems force women to revert to being primary care givers and responsible for the well-being of their society and communities. Sometimes, they are expected to work along side nurturing the family.

BRIEF STUDY ON THE CONDITION OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL/ACADEMIC SECTORS AND ENTERPREVENSHIP:

In India, both enrolment and drop outs from education are crucial to analyse. The number of enrolments have not seen significant increase in the past year. The rate of dropout is rather very high throughout. After 1980, the National Government has shown serious interest in the education of women. Policies like New National Policy of Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992) were designed for six to fourteen year olds. Later in 2006, the Government of India took up policies of providing free textbooks and uniforms, scholarships and mid-day meal. 'The mid-day meal programme was successful in raising enrolment rates in the rural parts of India. Yet, the rate of dropouts still remain the same as most of them are confined to indoors or make for employment activities like agriculture. Shifting the focus from educational or academic sectors to Entrepreneurship, the pattern of gender equality shows uncanny resemblances. Since 1975, there is an awakening about women entrepreneurs. Yet women's contribution to development is underestimated and thus the social recognition is limited.

CONCLUSION

In order to eradicate sexual harassment of women at workplace, the POSH Act was passed by the upper house of the Parliament Rajya Sabha) in 2013. In the year 1976, 'Equal Remuneration Act' was passed in order to prevent discrimination against women. It is of utmost importance to raise awareness among employees to create a gender sensitive workplace. A clear set of grounds should be maintained to select

candidates based on the job requirements. The historic movements that were led in order to protect the rights of women and channelize their inner potential into the mainstreams of the world should be kept in mind, made into action and stir fight when necessary.

‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’

—*Simon De Beauvoir.*

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The Effects of Gender Discrimination in Workplace

Bisakha Shome

INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination in organizations is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be seen in HR practices that affects the signing, training, pay and promotion of women. Organizational decision creators also play an important part in gender discrimination. We suggest that gender discrimination in organizational constructions processes and practices affect organizational decision makers, sexism through attraction, selection, socialization and abrasion processes. So, a focus on organizational structure processes and practices is critical. Life style partialities could contribute to gender differences in the workplace. Though, it is important to reflect how women's activity in choosing professions and managing work-life stresses is controlled. Workplace discrimination contributes to women's lower socio-economic status. Importantly, such discrimination against women largely can be attributed to human resources (HR) policies and HR related decision-making (Cailin S. Stanarski & Leanne S. Son Hing. 2015). Women's decisions to interrupt their careers were difficult and were based on factors, such as workplace inflexibility and their husbands' lack of domestic responsibilities, rather than a preference to stay at home with their children (Stone and Lovejoy, 2004). In adding, notwithstanding of the gender configuration of the workplace, men are privileged, compared with women in positions of earnings and remuneration growth if organizational leaders respond to such demands for change by changing formerly gender cruel organizational structures, processes and practices, this can, in people's mind, open the

door for other changes. While in most cases women have on average less education than men, women workers tend to have more education than male workers and, if they are employed predominantly in the public sector, the gender wage gap tends to be narrower (ZafirisTzannatos, 2016). The gender discrimination may exist in various dimensions which include hiring discrimination, differences in salary and wages, discrimination/ differences in promotion and inequity related to different goods and facilities provided to different gender. (Qaisar Abbas, Abdul Hameed, AamerWaheed, 2011). This study exposed about the despite many advances and development gender discrimination still persists at workplaces, and it continues to be experienced by working women in the professional workplace. Workplace gender equality is accomplished when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, assets and chances regardless of gender.

Objective of the Study

To find out the underlying factors responsible for gender based discriminatory problems faced by working females. To gain an effective understanding of all those females who work in professional institutions are being discriminated and to find it or to analyze it on the ground of relativism is taken seriously into consideration.

Methodology

This study is an exploratory research in nature where working female related gender discriminatory factors are identified. Having work experience as a college teacher in the academic profession the researcher was easily got an opportunity to approach the respondents for data collection. Moreover, as a self-experience holder also got a chance to eliminate the biases which could cause hurdles while analyzing the data. Researchers acted as the instrument of the investigation as their presence in the lived experiences of respondents are vital. The purpose of this paper is to study gender issues like gender discrimination and gender typecast in the context of Indian environment.

Finding of the study

This study focuses only on the experiences and perspective of working female's only. As this study contributed significantly to the absence of

participation on the part of working female respondents in revealing the actual issues faced by them at the workplace, there are few limitations. To achieve moral and ethical stands on which how working female experience discrimination on and how they differently face this issue at their respective workplace due to various factors as every female relate to the different factor.

Types of gender discrimination

Gender discrimination, is a method of discrimination in which a person is preserved differently or unethically on the basis of a person's sex or gender. There are many types of gender discrimination in the workplace which are as follows:

- Different treatment based on sex generally mentions to the different or unfair treatment of an employee on the basic of their sex. Employees may experience this by way of discriminatory signing or firing practices, pay differences, or restriction of benefits or promotions because of their sex.
- Sexual assault is atreacherous form of sex discrimination that involves any unwanted conduct (oral or physical) of a sexual nature that affects with work performance, affects a person's employment, or creates aaggressive work environment. Many factors can affect the types of discrimination a woman may experience in the workplace, depending on her place of work, location and other identifying characteristics of herself and colleagues.

Causes of gender discrimination

Gender discrimination in the workplace usually stalks from women being in the sectional in certain types of industries. Men are not always very accessible toward their female workmates and may even be aggressive toward them, which results in a poor working environment. Gender inequality can be defined as allowing people different opportunities due to alleged differences based merely on issues of gender. It is the injuries treatment of an individual or group on the basis of gender. Gender inequality and discrimination are generally conferred as concerning to women, but anyone can experience gender-based inequality or discrimination (ShankySethi. 2018).The overt

social and economic inequalities more commonly experienced by women, such as lower rates of schooling and employment, less pay for similar jobs, under representation in leadership positions and the higher level of psychosocial stressors and problems, from care giving burden to intimate partner violence, all contribute to these disparities (Simone N. Vigod. Paula A. Rochon. March 2020).

How to guide gender discrimination

Discrimination is related with depressing symptoms and other negative health effects, but little is known about the mental health risk of workplace gender discrimination. Contradicting people the freedom to choose their route in life because of their gender averts them from satisfying their full probable. There are lots we can do to help build a more gender-equal world. Understanding the deep roots of gender inequality and challenging discrimination when we see it are the first steps. Just changing how we narrate with others and demanding that others do the same, will not end gender inequality. Lasting change will only occur if the institutions that effect our lives also change. Women have been disadvantaged as workers by the fact that central features of the workplace have been constructed by men, according to norms that exclude and devalue experiences and perceptions characteristic of women (Kathryn Abrams. 1989). The human resources executive should provide facilities and trial of goods according to the proportion of men & women. Top management must avoid discriminatory applies in hiring, promotion and facilities to the employees regardless of what is his/her gender. Therefore, positive and reliable culture will build in the organization which will raise the productivity and success of the organization.

Make a sustainable change

Gender stability in the workplace and exactly in leadership roles, it's not a part you want to spread. Only when we've all recognized why equity in the workplace is important and when we are all loyal to fight discrimination, we'll be able to truly make work environments where every employee has equal rights in leading and flourishing. It is clear a combination of personal, social, community, organizational and political change will be needed to address the various ways in which

gender discrimination impacts the health and wellness of individuals and communities (Kelly L. Hazel & Kerry S. Kleyman. 2019). When we think about gender equality, we incline to think about equal treatment and equal opportunities. We struggle to spark conversations about bias, educating others and ourselves through open and honest dialogue. In doing so, we produce a communal awareness of our biases so that we can work to overwhelmed them.

CONCLUSION

Moreover, distinct women can work to avoid stigmatization. Women in the workplace are not simply unreceptive targets of typecasting process. An organizations culture will provide its members with a collectivefantasy for how to behave. At an individual level, people engaged in policies to fight being discriminated against but these strategies are likely more forced for those who are most branded. So, changes to moderate gender discrimination within any organizational, structure, policy or practice could start a torrent of transformations leading to a more equal organization for men and women. We spend most of our waking lives in organizations, which are main to the distribution of material, social and emotional resources in society. The goal is to inspire researchers to develop schemes and visions into what works to increase equality and to endorse evidence based solutions to influence employers and policy makers. Instead, we need to develop sociology of the remediation of inequality focused on how to bring about change effectively. In line with this outline, this section highlights research particular and findings on change in gender inequalities at work. The aim of gender equality in the workplace is to achievegenerally equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men. Workplace gender equality is related with improved in national productivity and economic growth, increased organizational performance and heightened organizational reputation. Gender is a socio-cultural portent and organizations are a main aspect of a given culture.

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Gender Inequalities in Work Place : A Sociological Study in Calcutta

Dyuti Chatterjee

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequalities manifest itself in the most naked and abhorrent forms even in the 21st century. With mostly men at the helm, women and queers are left behind and often feel excluded and/or deprived. This not only demotivates them personally, the rippling effects of these dissatisfied employees resound in the productivity of the organisation too. This paper deals with the experiences of working women in Calcutta. Through various sections, the paper will elucidate the problem that gender inequality is, its various causes and what a potential solution of this problem could be.

SECTION A : WHY DOES GENDER INEQUALITY EXIST IN THE WORKPLACE?

There are many causes for the existence of gender inequality in the work place.

Psychosocial causes

Women have always occupied a lower position in the family and their consistent subordinate position in the family is what engenders their marginalisation in the work place too by the same men who act as active perpetrators and stymies to women progress in the intimate family spaces. One of the most stringent ways of dominating women is caging them within motherhood myths. Women seem to be caught up in a vicious cycle. With society forcing women into roles of a mother and thrusting the entire

responsibility of a child onto its mother, women are caught up in the family circles. And these family roles deny women their aspired positions in the corporate job market. When asked about the impact of motherhood on their work life one of my respondents, Sugata Marjit replied, "Its always the mother who is supposed to take a leave for her child's first day at school, illness, parties, exams, tuitions. This paints women as prioritizing family and thus not competent enough for a stellar job profile." Another respondent said "Its just how it is, work for women is still considered optional, while motherhood a necessity." There have been studies which suggest that a "motherhood penalty" exists that can negatively affect wages and performance evaluations. Moreover, attaching motherhood as a quotient sees all women as "potential mothers" and hence not as committed as their male counterparts.

Another psychosocial way of limiting women is by associating unhealthy, baseless stereotypes with them. These stereotypes breed and perpetuate inequality. So for instance, men are just 'better at' technical jobs while women are more 'creative' pushes back women and reduces their status to trophies in the job spectrum. Women often experience a "double bind". Consequently, if they conform to their gender stereotypes that endorse passive femininity, they are not taken seriously and if they try to break the gender stereotypes, they are still looked down upon as bossy and 'dangerous'. These stereotypes have additionally led to stringent job segregation. Certain jobs like nurses and primary school teachers are supposed to be women's arena while doctors, professors and engineers are thought to comprise mostly of males. Statistically it has been seen that these "men's jobs" are better paying than the jobs which are considered to be a woman's.

Educational and socio economic causes:

Even today education is considered a luxury for women. In developing countries especially parents are willing to forego the education of the girl child and spend more on their marriage. One of my respondents, Riya Tripathi said "I always wanted to be a doctor but my parents could afford such costly education only

for one of their children and they opted for my brother.” Riya who works as a receptionist said that her parents wanted her to study only till graduation after which she should go for marriage. Similar thoughts have been reiterated by another respondent Tabassum. She said “Because I could not do my graduation, there were no jobs that were quite willing to take mein. Degree matters and in absence of that women do not get equal opportunities like males.” Another important point is the educational segregation where women are supposed to study humanities whereas science is an area exclusively for men. These segregations and their varying job prospects also breed inequality. My respondent Sugata-Marjit who is a cancer researcher at a reputed laboratory in Kolkata, recounts “People were shocked when I told them that I want to be a scientist. They behaved as if women cannot be scientists.”

Institutional and organisational causes:

The most insidious and the most harmful form of gender inequality is embedded within the rank and file of the institutions, most manifest in the HR. In areas of pay, promotion, performance and termination, women face severe inequalities due to HR policies that happen to privilege men. Because of the previous two factors, the position of women in the workplace already dwindle much behind than men’s. On top of that, the glaring under representation of women in positions of power and authority make them more at the mercy of men and reinstates the myth of women as incapable in face of greater challenges. Women receive fewer opportunities at work, and managers (the direct spokesperson of the HR policy) do not consider women to be equipped enough to deal with high level responsibilities and challenges that are necessary precursors to a promotion.

With regards to the institutional cause of gender inequality, there are a set of theories called the human capital theories and the pollution theory. According to these, jobs which are considered a women’s arena, is considered deskilled and men begin to drop out because they do not want to be associated with women. Consequently the women dominated jobs become the hub of

gender inequality. The institutional practices of discrimination have been encapsulated in the glass ceiling effect, coined by many leading feminists to describe the invisible barriers that hinders the progress of women as they rise up in the job ladders. These barriers prevent women from rising to the top positions in jobs. The institutional practices get reflected in the personal practices of men in power too. From keeping women opinions unheard or assigning them petty jobs to something as severe as sexual harassment, they too ensure the perpetuation of gender inequalities.

How these inequalities manifest themselves in the work place scenario and what are their impacts on the women is the area of discussion of the second section.

SECTION B : DISCRIMINATORY AND HAUNTING WORK EXPERIENCES, THEIR IMPACTS.

The most significant way in which the gender inequality manifests itself is the gender wage gap. Because of the very many causes highlighted above, women are considered secondary in job positions compared to men. And hence women are also paid less. The Institute for Women's Policy Research suggests that women earn 49 cents compared to every 1\$ a man earns. The wage gap is evident even in cases of equal work by men and women, and shockingly even in cases where women are much more experienced and qualified than their male counterparts are. Almost all of my respondents working in the private sector are vocal about the unfair salary differences that are in place owing only due to gender.

Another horrible yet common place way through which gender inequality proclaims its glaring presence is through sexual harassment. One of my respondents, Tabassum says "Almost all my female colleagues are harassed by our boss on a regular basis. But even after excessive complaining, the HR rules its decisions in favour of our boss. Sukanya Sikdar had to say the same thing. "Men in power know that they will never be held accountable for what they do, especially to women." A survey conducted in January 2018 found 38 percent of the women have experienced sexual harassment in the work place. Other surveys also point out similar such alarming percentages. 79% of sexual harassment

victims are women in US. 12% of the victims received threats of termination if they did not comply with their predator's request.

Gender inequalities are also evident in the much lesser promotions of women and in the underrepresentation of women in positions of power. Despite higher qualifications and experience, women are not promoted as often as their male counterparts are. One of my respondents Megha says "I was shocked when my male colleague who is much younger to me and joined only 2 months ago got promoted and I didn't." Due to the lack of women in positions of authority, there is an acute paucity of female role models and even if women find their way up, they still are not bestowed with the same dignity and respect that males there enjoy. One of my respondents who shares the position of manager with a male says "Its always my male colleague who is asked to deal with clients, it is he who deals with correspondences, while I am there for whatever remains and that at best is tokenistic." Women indeed make up less than 5 percent of CEOs and less than 10 percent of women are top earners in the S&P 500.

While the ones discussed above were hostile manifestations of sexism, there are benevolent versions too. Cracking facile jokes, making hints to a woman's personal lives or just assuming that something is "too stressful for a woman to handle" are ways through which benevolent sexism is expressed. Benevolent sexism also indulges in excessive mansplaining with men speaking on behalf of women regarding the latter's concerns.

Due to all these discriminations, women's personal and professional lives are excessively hampered. Women often experience issues of extreme stress, depression and demotivation. They develop health conditions such as chronic anxiety disorder and heart problems from excessive worrying. Their personal lives and intimate relationships also get disorganised due to these. One of my respondents is a newly married woman. She in one of her responses recounts how all her pent up frustration would be invariably directed to her husband which caused rifts between them.

Apart from personal lives, studies have suggested that gender discrimination also leads to decreased organisational performance and productivity. With one half of the workforce always discontented, it

gives rise to increased work conflict and decelerates the morale of the employees. Productivity of the organisation is thus bound to fall.

SECTION C: WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS OF THE PROBLEM OF GENDER INEQUALITY?

Through the above sections, gender inequality has been established as a raging problem. This section suggests various steps to mitigate the problem.

First, the composition of the workforce should be more diverse that includes policies to recruit, retain and develop employees from underrepresented groups. There should be incentives advanced to the managers indulging in diversity. Attention is to be paid to the fact that the diversity does not get confined to mere tokenism and that it does not compromise talent and merit. Thus policies for diversity need to be supplemented by other facets of the structure and process of organisations like leadership and climate.

Second, It is vitally important for the organisational leaders to support and endorse such policies. The leaders play a significant role in instilling diversity. Additionally, its vital to promote a climate that engenders diversity. Women should be pushed to higher positions of power. This accentuates diversity.

Third, It is important to assist women in role conflicts of an employee and mother that they often face. Galinsky points out policies such as flexible schedules, telecommuting, compressed work weeks and part time jobs to reduce such conflict. Such family friendly policies destigmatize working mothers and is more equal.

Fourth, Apart from organisational bias, it is necessary to reduce personal biases too. Thus HR officials should be made to undergo sensitisation programmes to remove unconscious stereotypes. HR policies should also be reliant on objective criteria to evaluate performances so that bias does not creep in.

Fifth, There should be initiatives taken to neutralise salaries. Parity should be ensured in the salaries between the sexes by rooting out bias and basing salary on amount of work done.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research has been based on primary data collected through interviewing 20 working women who are spread across caste, class and religion from different parts of Calcutta.

CONCLUSION

The paper has intended to show the problem of gender inequality as it manifests in the current scenario. Delienating the causes and focusing on its impacts, the paper has suggested certain solutions for the problem of gender inequality. For a more productive organisation, it is utmost necessary to properly implement these solutions.

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কর্মক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য : একটি সমাজতাত্ত্বিক পর্যালোচনা

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ভূমিকা

লিঙ্গ বা জেন্ডার প্রত্যয়টির মাধ্যমে আমরা আমাদের সমাজে নারী-পুরুষের জীবনধারার একটি পরিচয় পাই। যা কিনা সমাজে নির্ধারণ করে দেয় নারী-পুরুষের পোশাক পরিচ্ছদ, ভাষা, চাল-চালন, আনন্দ-দুঃখ, কর্ম এই সকল কিছুরই বহিঃপ্রকাশ ঘটে ‘জেন্ডার’ বা ‘লিঙ্গ’ শব্দটির দ্বারা। আলিঙ্গ বিভাজনের ছাপ সুস্পষ্ট সমাজের সর্বক্ষেত্রে, সর্বস্তরে আর বৃত্তির ক্ষেত্রে, পেশা নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রেও এর ব্যতিক্রম ঘটেনি। আজও অনেক নারীর একটা বড় অংশই কর্ম বিমুখ নয়। আজও অনেক নারীর নিজ ইচ্ছামতো পেশা নির্বাচনের সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হয় তার জন্য আমাদের পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ দায়ী। পুরুষ-নারী ব্যতীত তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের অস্তিত্ব সমাজে বিদ্যমান থাকলেও তাদের গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়না। আজও মানুষ হিসেবে তাদের প্রাপ্য মর্যাদা-সম্মান তারা পায়না তাই বৃত্তি বা পেশার ক্ষেত্রে সমাজ এখনও তাদের সহজে মেনে নিতে পারেনা। এই সমাজকাঠামো একদিকে তাদের এগোতে বললেও, এই সমাজেরই মানুষ তাদের বিদ্রপ করতে, তাদের মনোবল ভেঙ্গে দিতে দ্বিধা বোধ করে না। তাই পুরুষ নারী বা তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ বলে ভেদাভেদ নয় ‘সবার উপরে মানুষ সত্য’—এই কথায় বিশ্বাস করে এগিয়ে যাব এবং দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ হব আর মানবিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি দিয়ে বিচার করব সকল মানুষকে যাতে প্রত্যেকটি মানুষ স্বনির্ভর হতে পারে।

কর্ম জগতে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য এই বিষয়টি জানার পূর্বে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য সম্পর্কে সন্মক ধারণা থাকা বাঞ্ছনীয়।

লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য

নারী ও পুরুষের মধ্যে প্রভেদ মূলত শারীরিক, কিন্তু উভয়ে উভয়ের পরিপূরক। ভারতবর্ষের সমাজব্যবস্থা প্রধানত পিতৃতান্ত্রিক। আর এই পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থায় পুরুষ সর্বদায় নারীকে নির্দিষ্ট গণ্ডির মধ্যে বেধে রাখতে চেয়েছে। তাই নারীকে নানান নিয়মকানুন এ বাধা হয়েছে এবং নানান অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করে রাখা হয়েছে। পুরুষ নিজেকে নারীর প্রভু বলে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছে, তার পরিচয় যেন নারী পরিচয়। ভারতীয় সংবিধানে নারী-পুরুষের সমান অধিকার ও সুযোগ সুবিধার কথা বলা হলেও এবং সমাজব্যবস্থাতে ও নারীর সমান অধিকার প্রদান ও অবস্থার উন্নতি ঘটানোর ওপর অধিক গুরুত্ব দেওয়া সত্ত্বেও এখনও পর্যন্ত নারীরা তাদের সুযোগ-সুবিধা ও নানান অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত হচ্ছেন। পরিবারে, কর্মক্ষেত্রে, শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রভৃতি নানান অঙ্গনে প্রায় সর্বত্রই রয়েছে পুরুষদের অধিক গুরুত্ব। পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থায় নারী-পুরুষের সমানাধিকার সাংবিধানিক স্বীকৃতি পেয়েছে কাগজে কলমে। বাস্তবে তার অভাব অতি প্রকট। কবি কবিতা সিংহ তাই বলেছেন—‘বিংশ শতাব্দীর শেষ সীমানায় এসে দাড়িয়েও এই পুরুষ-শাসিত সমাজ বুদ্ধিমতীদের জন্য অ-প্রস্তুত।’

লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য-এর আঁতুড়ঘর হল পরিবার। আর ভারতবর্ষের অধিকাংশ পরিবারের কর্তৃত্ব থাকে পুরুষদের উপর। পুরুষ মানেই সবল, কঠোর হৃদয় সম্পন্ন চঞ্জল তাই তারা বাড়ির বাইরে কাজকর্ম করে অর্থ উপার্জন করবে অথচ গৃহ বা পরিবারের নেতৃত্ব প্রদানের অধিকার থাকবে তার হাতে, অন্যদিকে নারী মানেই দুর্বল, কোমল হৃদয় সম্পন্ন, শান্ত ও নম্র প্রকৃতির তাই তাদের দায়িত্ব সংসার ধর্ম পালন করা ও সন্তানদের প্রতিপালন করা। পূর্বে নারীদের শিক্ষার আলো থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হত যদিও তা ধীরে ধীরে বদলাচ্ছে তা সত্ত্বেও সম্পূর্ণ বদল ঘটেনি কেবলমাত্র শিক্ষাময়, রাজনীতি, অর্থনীতি সর্বক্ষেত্রে আজ ও বৈষম্য বিদ্যমান। প্রচলিত গতানুগতিক মূল্যবোধ, স্বাক্ষরতার নিম্নহার, গৃহকর্মে অতিরিক্ত দায়দায়িত্ব, সচেতনতার অভাব, সঠিক পরিচালকের, অপরিপূর্ণতা, সচলতার নিম্নহার, আত্ম নির্ভরতার অভাব, পারিবারিক অনুসাহ প্রভৃতি আমাদের সমাজে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য সৃষ্টি করার মূলে কাজ করে। বহু সমাজতাত্ত্বিকরা লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য-এর গবেষণা করে দেখিয়েছেন যে, বিদ্যমান প্রথা-রাজনীতি, সনাতন বিধি-ব্যবস্থা, পুরুষদের সামাজিক মনোভাব প্রভৃতির পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে মহিলাদের বিরুদ্ধে অসাম্য-বৈষম্য রয়েছে।

এক কথায় বলা যায় বৈষম্যমূলক সামাজিক কাঠামোয় অবস্থিত কোনো একটি পক্ষের ব্যক্তিবর্গকে অবমূল্যায়নের দ্বারা পক্ষপাতমূলক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে গ্রহণ করাই হল লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য, পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থাকে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের শিকার প্রধানত নারীরাই।

কর্মক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য

কর্মজগত হল বৃহত্তর উন্মুক্ত পরিবেশ—যা মানুষকে স্বনির্ভর হতে শেখায়, আত্মনির্ভর হতে শেখায়, কিন্তু স্বইচ্ছায় বৃত্তি নির্বাচন করে কর্মজগতে লিপ্ত হতে ক’জন—সবাই হয়তো পারে না—আবার অনেকেই পারে—এই সবার না পারার কারণগুলির মধ্যে অন্যতম হল আমাদের পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজকাঠামো। ভারতবর্ষের ন্যায় তৃতীয় বিশ্বের দেশগুলিতে যেখানে কর্মের সুযোগ সংকুচিত—সেখানে নারীদের কর্ম নিযুক্তির হার কম হতে হবে একথা আর বলার অপেক্ষা রাখে না। ভারতবর্ষের বিভিন্ন কাজকর্ম নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে ও নারী-পুরুষের প্রতি বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ পরিলক্ষিত হয়। পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থার একটি সাধারণ ধারণা হল, নারী মাত্রেই গৃহবধূ অর্থাৎ ঘরের অভ্যন্তরেই তার স্থান—সংসারের যাবতীয় দায়দায়িত্ব, গৃহস্থালির কাজকর্ম, সন্তান প্রতিপালন, সকলের যত্ন নেওয়া প্রভৃতি পরিবারের অভ্যন্তরের সর্ববিধ কাজকর্ম মহিলাদের সম্পাদন করতে হয় অথচ সেই পরিবারের পারিবারিক সিদ্ধান্ত ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পদক্ষেপ নেওয়ার সময় সেই মহিলাদেরই কোনো কদর নেই কারণ তারা যতই গৃহকর্মে নিপুণা হোক না কেন তার জন্য তারা তো কোনো মূল্য পায়না তাই পিতৃতান্ত্রিক পরিবারে ‘কর্তার ইচ্ছেতেই কর্ম’ চলে। পুরুষ মানেই উপার্জনশীল আর নারী মানেই পুরুষের পরিচয় পরিচিত। তাই পুরুষতান্ত্রিক পরিবারে নারীকে বোঝা হিসেবে দেখতে অভ্যস্ত। লেখাপড়া শেখার দক্ষতা অর্জনের ক্ষেত্রে যেহেতু নারীরা পশ্চাদপদগামী তাই অর্থনৈতিক উপার্জনের দিকটি থাকে তাদের ক্ষেত্রে অবহেলিত। কিন্তু উপার্জনশীলা নারী কিছুটা হলেও পরিবারে মর্যাদা ও সম্মান আদায় করে নিতে সমর্থ হন। গবেষণার মাধ্যমে নোবেলজয়ী অর্থনীতিবিদ অমর্ত্য সেন দেখিয়েছেন যে, বাইরে কাজকর্ম জোগাড় করে অর্থ উপার্জন করতে পারলে সংসারে নারীদের প্রতি বিরক্ত ও অশ্রদ্ধার ভাব কিছুটা হলেও কম হয়। তাঁর ধারণা, বিশ্বের বহু স্থানে নারীদের বিশেষ বঞ্জন্যের মোকাবিলে অর্থনৈতিক কর্মকাণ্ডে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ দিক। কিন্তু ভারতবর্ষের ন্যায় পিতৃতান্ত্রিক দেশে যেখানে নারীদের উপার্জন করতে গেলেও পারিবারিক নানান অশান্তির সম্মুখীন হতে হয় কারণ

আজও অনেক পরিবারে মহিলাদের বাড়ির বাইরে কাজকর্ম করা পছন্দ করেন না—যদিও নারীরা কর্মক্ষেত্রে লিপ্ত হচ্ছেন কিন্তু বাড়ি ফিরে পারিবারিক দায়দায়িত্ব ও কাজকর্মও সামলাতে হচ্ছে। নিম্নবর্ণের শ্রেণির মহিলাদের উপর কাজকর্মের চাপ ও সংসারিক দায়-দায়িত্ব বহুলাংশে বহন করতে হয়। চাষ-আবাদের কাজে তারা পরিবারের পুরুষ সদস্যদের সঙ্গে সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করে। আবার কামার, কুমোর, তাঁতি প্রভৃতি কারিগর পরিবারের মহিলারাও পারিবারিক পেশাগত কাজকর্মে সুনির্দিষ্ট ভূমিকা পালন করে থাকে। সুতরাং, পরিবারে মোট আয়ের একটা উল্লেখযোগ্য অংশ পরিবারের মহিলা সদস্যদের অবদানের ফল।

পুরুষকেন্দ্রিক কর্মক্ষেত্রে তথা শ্রমকজারে নারীর প্রবেশ অধিকার সীমিত। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার অভাব, পারিবারিক কাজের ব্যস্ততা, শিশুসন্তানের পরিচর্যা ও প্রতিপালনের কারণে একদিকে নারী যেমন কর্মক্ষেত্রে অর্থনৈতিক উপার্জনের সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত হচ্ছেন তেমনি যে সমস্ত কর্মক্ষেত্রে নারী যৎসামান্য সুযোগ পাচ্ছেন সেখানেও তার না আছে অর্থনৈতিক সমান অধিকার (বেতন), না আছে পেশাগত নিরাপত্তা, এমনকি কর্মক্ষেত্রে নানান ভাবে হতে হচ্ছে লাঞ্চিত ও অসম্মানিত। কর্মক্ষেত্রে দেখা যাচ্ছে যে মহিলারা অসংগঠিত ও বিধিবিহীন ক্ষেত্রে, নিজস্ব মালিকানাধীন ও পারিবারিক পেশায় নিযুক্তি হওয়ার প্রবণতা বেশি। শ্রমক্ষেত্রে অসংগঠিত ক্ষেত্রে নারীর প্রবেশ ঘটেছে মাত্র ১৪ শতাংশ। ১৯৮৭-১৯৮৮ সালে অস্থায়ী কর্মনিযুক্তিতে নারীর হার ছিল ৩৮.৬ শতাংশ। ১৯৯৩-১৯৯৪ সালে কিছুটা বৃদ্ধি পেয়ে হয় ৪২.৯ শতাংশ। স্ব-নিযুক্তির ক্ষেত্রেও নারীর অবস্থান সন্তোষজনক নয়। ১৯৮৭-১৯৮৮ সালে ছিল ৫৩.১ শতাংশ, ১৯৯৩-১৯৯৪ সালে যা এসে দাঁড়ায় ২৮.৮ শতাংশ। বিশ্বব্যাংক কর্তৃক সাম্প্রতিক কালে সম্পাদিত একটি প্রাপ্ত পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী ভারতের নারী শ্রমিক হল মোট শ্রমিকের এক-তৃতীয়াংশ।

কর্মক্ষেত্রে নারীদের শারীরিক ও মানসিক দিক থেকে বৈষম্যের শিকার হতে হয় তা নিম্নে সংক্ষিপ্ত আকারে করা হল—

জৈবিক দিক থেকে কর্মক্ষেত্রে বৈষম্য

পুরুষ ও নারী জৈবিক দিক থেকে ভিন্ন তাই তাদের আচর-আচরণ, পোশাক-পরিচ্ছদ সবকিছুই ভিন্ন হতে হবে তা সর্বদাই সমাজ নির্ধারণ করে দেয়। আর কর্মপ্রতিস্থান যেহেতু সমাজ বহির্ভূত নয় তাই সেখানে সর্বত্রই বৈষম্যের ছাপ স্পষ্ট। ভারতের বর্তমান সংবিধানে রাষ্ট্র পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে নির্দেশমূলক নীতি সম্পর্কিত

চতুর্থ অধ্যায়ে ৩৯ ধারায় একই কাজের জন্য নারী-পুরুষ নির্বিশেষে সমমজুরীর কথা বলা হয়েছে, সমমজুরী সম্পর্কিত আইনও প্রণীত হয়েছে। এতদসত্ত্বেও পরিস্থিতির মৌলিক কোনো পরিবর্তন ঘটেনি। কর্মক্ষেত্রে পুরুষ শ্রমিকদের প্রাধান্য বেশি দেওয়া হয় এবং অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে তুলনামূলক বিচারে নারী শ্রমিক কম পারিশ্রমিক পায়। অনেক ক্ষেত্রে দেখা যায় নারীরা পারিশ্রমিক পায় না যদিও পায় তা যথাযথ নয়। এছাড়া কর্মক্ষেত্রে মেয়েদের যৌনহেনস্থা, নির্যাতন, লাঞ্ছনা ও নানান অপমানের শিকার হতে হয়। ২০১৩ সালে কর্মস্থানে যৌন হয়রানি থেকে মহিলাদের রক্ষা করবার জন্য (রোগ, নিষেধ ও প্রতিবিধান) POSH ACT (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal)—এই আইন জারি হলে ও কর্মক্ষেত্রে মেয়েদের যৌনহেনস্থা, লাঞ্ছনা, গঞ্জনা ও অপমানের শিকার হতে হয়। নারীদের জীবিকা প্রসঙ্গে সাধারণত শিক্ষকতা, অফিসের করণিক, নার্স বিভিন্ন স্তরের ব্যক্তিগত সচিব রিসেপশনিস্ট প্রভৃতি বৃত্তিগুলি ভাষা হয়, আবার নির্দিষ্ট কতকগুলি পেশায় সম্পূর্ণভাবে নারীকেই বিবেচনা করা হয় যেমন—পরিচারিকা, আয়া, নার্স ইত্যাদি। কর্মজগতে আরও একটি বিশেষ দিক লক্ষণীয় যেখানে নারীর নারীসুলভ বৈশিষ্ট্যকে কাজে লাগানো হয়, যেমন—‘টেলিফন অপারেটর’ কিংবা ‘রেলের ঘোষক’—এর ক্ষেত্রে নারীর স্বরলালিত্যকে কাজে লাগানো হয়। মনে করা হয়, নারীর কণ্ঠ স্বরের আবেদন এখানে অনেক বেশি। রিসেপশনিস্টের ক্ষেত্রে নারীর সৌন্দর্যকে কাজে লাগানোর প্রবণতা বর্তমান। পেশাদারির বৃত্তি যেমন—ডাক্তার, উকিল, ইঞ্জিনিয়ার এই সমস্ত পেশায় মেয়েদের স্থান ধীরে ধীরে বাড়লেও সংখ্যা অনেক কম। এছাড়াও পুরোহিত, ড্রাইভার সেই সমস্ত পেশায় মেয়েদের যেন প্রায় ভাবাই হয়না এইভাবে কর্ম জগতে লিঙ্গ বিভাজন সৃষ্টি হয়ে চলেছে এবং হচ্ছে।

মনস্তাত্ত্বিক দিক থেকে লিঙ্গগত বৈষম্য

কর্মক্ষেত্রে কেবলমাত্র শারীরিক দিক থেকে নয় মানসিক দিক থেকে ও নানা ধরনের বৈষম্যের শিকার হতে হয়। নারীদের পারিবারিক কাজকর্ম দায়দায়িত্ব পালন করে কর্মক্ষেত্রে নিযুক্ত হতে হয় কিন্তু কর্মক্ষেত্রে তাদের নানাভাবে গঞ্জনা অপমানের শিকার হতে হয়। বেসরকারি ক্ষেত্রে পুরুষ কর্মীদের ক্ষেত্রেও হিংসা দেখা যায়। তবে তা একটু ভিন্ন প্রকৃতির। নারীদের ক্ষেত্রে তারা যদি কর্মক্ষেত্রে যৌনহেনস্থার শিকার হন পুরুষকর্মীদের দ্বারা তবে তারা যাতে তার প্রতিবাদ করতে না পারেন সেই ক্ষেত্রে তাদের ভীতি প্রদর্শন করে, নিজেদের স্বার্থে তাদের

দমিয়ে রাখতে চায় পুরুষসহ কর্মী বা উচ্চপদস্থ পদাধিকারী ব্যক্তিবর্গরা। এছাড়াও তাদের কর্মক্ষেত্রে হয়ে প্রতিপন্ন করা হয় শুধুমাত্র তারা মেয়ে বলে তারা দুর্বল সব কাজ তাদের জন্য তাদের স্থান পুরুষের পরে।

এইভাবে মহিলারা কর্মক্ষেত্রে প্রতিনিয়ত জৈবিক ও মনস্তাত্ত্বিক দিক থেকে বিভিন্নভাবে বিভিন্ন ধরনের বৈষম্যের ও অমর্যাদার শিকার হন। পুরুষদের ক্ষেত্রে কর্মজগতের পথ প্রশস্ত হলেও একটু ভালোভাবে পর্যবেক্ষণ করলে দেখা যায়, পুরুষ মাত্রেই উপার্জনশীল, এইভাবে দেখতেই সমাজ অভ্যস্ত সাধারণ মধ্যবিত্ত পরিবারে পুরুষদের নির্দিষ্ট শিক্ষা সমাপ্ত করেই তাদের কর্মজগতে লিপ্ত হতে দেখতে চায় সমাজ। তারা যদি গান, নাচ বা থিয়েটার নিজের পেশা হিসেবে গ্রহণ করে তাহলেও নানান ব্যঙ্গ বিদ্রোপের শিকার হয় তাদের ওপর পারিবারিক দায়িত্ব থাকবে আর তা করতে গিয়ে অনেক যুবকেরই স্বপ্ন ভেঙ্গে যায়। এছাড়া কর্মক্ষেত্রের সুযোগের দিক যুবকদের একটা বৃহৎ অংশ প্রতি বছর বেকারত্বের শিকার হয় যা সমাজের চোখে খুবই দৃষ্টিকটু দেখায়।

তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ

সাধারণ লিঙ্গ বা ‘Gender’ শব্দটি উচ্চারণ করলে আমরা অর্থাৎ আমাদের সমাজব্যবস্থা পুরুষ ও নারী এই দুই লিঙ্গের মানুষদের মনে করেন কিন্তু পুরুষ, নারী ছাড়াও আরও এক শ্রেণিভুক্ত লিঙ্গের মানুষ আছেন তারা হলেন তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ। ‘রূপান্তরকামী’দের ২০১৪ সালে ভারতের বড় আদালত সুপ্রিমকোর্ট তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছেন। এছাড়াও রূপান্তরকামীদের স্বীকৃতি দেওয়ার লক্ষ্যে ও অধিকারকে সুরক্ষিত করার জন্য ট্রান্সজেন্ডার পারসন (প্রোটেকশনস অফ রায়টস) বিল, ২০১৬ সালে পেশ করা হয়েছে। সংবিধানে স্পষ্ট বলা হয়েছে লিঙ্গ, বর্ণ, ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে কারও প্রতি কোনো বৈষম্য করা যাবে না এবং সেই অনুসারে রূপান্তরকামীদের বিরুদ্ধে বৈষম্য দূর করতে এই উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ। আইন ও কয়েকটি প্রশাসনিক উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ হলেও বাস্তবে তার সুষ্ঠু বাস্তবায়ন এখনও তেমনভাবে হয়নি। যারা সমান স্বীকৃতি ও মর্যাদা পাননি তারা শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে ও কর্মক্ষেত্রে ও যে অবহেলিত হবে একথা বলাই বাহুল্য। তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের মানুষদের জন্য কর্মক্ষেত্রে আজও তেমন স্থান থাকেনা কর্মক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশের পূর্বে যে সকল কর্ম পূরণ করতে হয় সেখানে বহু স্থানে আজ ও নারী, পুরুষের নির্দিষ্ট জায়গা থাকলেও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের অস্তিত্ব থাকে না, থাকলেও তারা কর্মক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশ করলেও তাদের নানান ব্যঙ্গ বিদ্রোপের শিকার হতে হয়। মানবী বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

যিনি প্রথম রূপান্তরকামী অধ্যক্ষ ও সত্যশ্রী শর্মিলা যিনি প্রথম রূপান্তরকামী উকিল—গর্বের বিষয় এরা উভয়ই ভারতীয়। এমনই বহু তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের এগিয়ে আসার সুযোগ করে আমাদের সবাইকে।

অন্যান্য সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য

কর্মক্ষেত্রে ছাড়াও অন্যান্য সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠান যেমন—পরিবার, শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ একাধিক সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে লিঙ্গ বিদ্যমান এবং অতিমাত্রায় প্রকট।

পারিবারিক ক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গবৈষম্য

বেসরকারি ক্ষেত্রে পুরুষ কর্মীদের ক্ষেত্রেও হিংসা দেখা যায়। তবে তা একটু ভিন্ন প্রকৃতির সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে পরিবার হল ঘনিষ্ঠতর আত্মীয়গোষ্ঠী। প্রকৃতপক্ষে পরিবার হল মানুষের নিরাপদ আশ্রয়স্থল ও ভরসার জায়গা। অথচ পরিবার থেকে সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের। বহু পরিবারে আজও কন্যাসন্তানকে সহজভাবে মেনে নেয় না, মেয়েদের বোঝাস্বরাপমেনে করা হয় তাই কন্যাক্রণহত্যার মতো নিষ্ঠুর ইত্যাদি আর ছোটো ছেলেদের খেলনা হিসেবে বন্দুক, গাড়ি ইত্যাদি দেওয়া হয় সেই ছোটো ছোটো শিশুকে বুঝিয়ে দেওয়া হয় তুমি মেয়ে তোমার মেয়েদের খেলনাই ব্যবহার করা উচিত। এছাড়াও মেয়েদের যত শীঘ্র সম্ভব বিবাহ দিয়ে দেওয়ার প্রবণতা দেখা যায়। পণপ্রথা, বাল্যবিবাহ ও নানা কুপ্রথাই আছে যদিও ইত্যাদি নানান প্রথার বিরোধিতা করে আমাদের দেশের আইন ও সমাজ ব্যবস্থা তা সত্ত্বেও এপ্রথাগুলির শিকার হচ্ছেন নারীরা, পুরুষরা নন। পরিবারই যেখানে মানুষের সামাজিকীকরণের প্রথম মাধ্যম অর্থাৎ প্রাথমিক সামাজিক সংগঠন সেখানেই নানান দিক হচ্ছে বৈষম্য প্রতিনিয়ত। প্রকৃতপক্ষে পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ আজ ও নারীদের ব্যাপারে উদার, সমদর্শী ও নিরপেক্ষ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি গ্রহণে অপারগ।

শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য

শিক্ষা আমাদের সমাজজীবনেরই একটি বিশেষ দিক তথাপি শিক্ষা হল এমন একটি অধিকার যা দিয়ে মানুষ তার জীবনের প্রায় প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে প্রভাবিত করতে পারেন, জীবনের মান উন্নয়ন ঘটাতে সক্ষম হয়। জীবনকে আলোকিত করে যে শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা সেই আলোর উৎসস্থলেই লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের ন্যায় অন্ধকার ছড়িয়ে রয়েছে। বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষায় জাতীয় স্তরে নথিভুক্তির নিরিখে ছাত্রীদের সংখ্যা ছাত্রদের তুলনায় অনেক কম। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় স্কুলছুট মেয়েদের হার ৪৯.৭

শতাংশ এবং উচ্চতর শিক্ষায় ৬৮.৩ শতাংশ। ১৯৯১-১৯৯৭ সালের নারী শিক্ষার হার একটু বৃদ্ধি পেলে ও এবং বর্তমানে মেয়েদের সমান ও সুযোগ শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে অধিক হলেও বহু নারী আজও নিরক্ষর। বর্তমানে আজও একটি বিশেষ দিক লক্ষণীয় শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রেও নারীরা সুরক্ষিত নন, তারা যৌনহেনস্থার শিকার হচ্ছেন। তাই বলা যায় নারীশিক্ষা তথাপি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা প্রসঙ্গটি একদিকে যেমন পারিবারিক সিদ্ধান্তের বিষয় তেমনি বৃহত্তর সমাজ ও রাষ্ট্রের সমান দায়িত্ব।

উপসংহার

দারিদ্র্য, অর্থনৈতিক বিকাশ এবং লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের মধ্যে ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক বিদ্যমান। পরিবার ও রাষ্ট্রে দারিদ্র্য দূরীকরণ করতে হলে চাই অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন ও সমৃদ্ধি আয় এই দুইয়ের জন্য প্রয়োজন লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য দূরীকরণ। এই লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য দূর করতে হলে নারী ক্ষমতায়ন অতীব প্রয়োজনীয় একটি বিষয়। শুধু পরিবার নয়, কর্মক্ষেত্রে নয় সমাজজীবন ও বৃহত্তর রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্ষেত্রে নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন কতটা দরকারি তা স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে স্বামী বিবেকানন্দের এই মন্তব্যটিতে ‘পাখি যেমন এক ডানায় ভর করে উড়তে পারে না, তেমনি নারী জাতির অবস্থার উন্নতি না হলে জগতের উন্নতি সম্ভব নয়। তাই সামাজিক-অর্থনৈতিক সকল বৈষম্য দূরে সরিয়ে দিয়ে পরিবার ও রাষ্ট্রকে লিঙ্গসমতা প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে, মানবিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি দিয়ে আমাদের বিচার করতে হবে যাতে সবাই স্বনির্ভর হতে পারে কারণ—‘সবার ওপর মানুষ সত্য’—তা আমাদেরকে মনে রাখতে হবে, এবং কর্মক্ষেত্রে সর্বোপরি আমাদের সমাজ থেকে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের ন্যায় অভিশাপ দূর করতে হবে।

তথ্যসূত্র

মুখ্যপাধ্যায় ড. দুলাল, কবিরাজ শঙ্কর ড. উদয় ও হালদার ড.তারিণী (২০১৭) ‘লিঙ্গ প্রসঙ্গে বিদ্যালয় ও সমাজ’, কলিকাতা, আহেলি পাবলিশার্স।

মহাপাত্র অনাদিকুমার (২০০২), ‘ভারতীয় সমাজতত্ত্ব’, কলিকাতা, সুহৃদ পাবলিকেশন।

ইন্দু কমল (২০০২), ‘ভারতীয় সমাজ’ (তৃতীয় খণ্ড), কলিকাতা, বাণী প্রকাশন।

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ইন্টারনেট সূত্র

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THEME :

GENDER ISSUES IN THE LITERATURE

Gender Representations in the Content of 8th Grade Bengali Language Textbook

Dr. Anup Biswas

INTRODUCTION

The sense of femininity or masculinity introduces a person as woman or a man. This gender sensation of a person is subjective. Sex is the biological sexual nature of a person by birth and gender is a social and cultural concept (Ahmad & Shah. 2019. p.3). From this point of view gender is primarily controlled by sex; it may not be compatible with it. The development of gender identity depends on personality and social development. However, the origin of all the characteristics related to the gender of men and women is the family. The role of gender inequality is determined on the authority of the family. The patriarchal society is the society entrusted to men. In many ancient societies the matriarchal social system was prevalent but now it has come down. In fact, the fear of patriarchy has been strengthened by the desire women to prove them weak, helpless and incapable. However, it is good to remember that gender bias is predominant in both sexes. After the family, the school is the most powerful institution for the socialization of the student. School education is conducted entirely on the prescribed curriculum. Textbooks are used as a comprehensive form of curriculum. As the textbooks are the most important tool for learning and teaching, those are also the source of gender inequality. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015, p.30) identifies three areas of gender inequality in textbooks- those are, gender inequality is due to predominance of masculine experience in content selection. Again, the traditional

feminist role of females in the selection of pictures also creates gender inequality. On the other side, this inequality is observed in the case of language.

So, in order to get deeper into gender issues, the textbook should not be narrowed down to the concept of gender. Present students are the good citizens of the future. It will depend on them which way the country will go in the future. But the question is why tried to find gender issues through textbooks. The reason is that the textbook is one of the tools to change student's behavior (UNESCO, p.16). It is very important to discuss whether the issue of gender equality has been properly addressed in the textbook. However, the role of the teacher here is undeniable because the teachers portrayed the sense of the journey from word to world in the minds of the students.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to evaluate the kind of gender role the Bengali textbook promotes. The qualitative research approach was used by the researchers as it was the most appropriate design for this research. Qualitative Content analysis approach was employed by the researchers to collect the data from texts

2.1 Source of the Data

The content for this study has been taken from the book of Bengali language Textbook taught to the students of Grade-8 for the academic year 2020-21. This book is prepared by Bengal Textbooks Board conducted by Expert Committee and published under the supervision of West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (W.B.B.S.E) , Govt. of West Bengal.

2.2 Tools

Gender representations are conveyed by the characters only. In the present study the researcher has employed some grids to record the data from textbooks which was recommended by UNESCO (pp. 52-54, 2009) such as Sex, age, designations, and actions only. Here the researcher has used the grids as checklist to compile the details characteristic of the gender.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative data analysis procedures were followed here in the following ways:

Step 1: The researcher has been selected the textbook purposively. The textbook has been also examined and studied thoroughly the contents regarding gender representations.

Step-2: a systematic data compilation of the characters as depicted in the books has been done by using content analysis approach such as appearance of male and female, of their age and occupational role or designations, domestic role of male and female, other activity of the men , women, boys and girls.

Step-3: Then numeric representations of the data have been prepared and the compiled data base has been disassembled for analysis and interpretation.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

Some important findings have been revealed in Bengali Language Textbook taught to the students of class- VIII for academic year 2019-20 in public schools in West Bengal as follow:

3.1 Less Representation of Women in Writing Textbook

The textbook has been prepared by the experts committee. There have nine numbers of experts in the committee. But there have only two females as experts in the committee only. The textbook 'Sahitya Mela' (সাহিত্য মেলা) has been enriched with the noble works of various writers and poets. There have thirty seven (37) numbers of authors in the 'Sahitya Mela'. women have less participation in writng textbook. There has only one (2%) glaring presence of female author in the textbook . Gender insensitivity and gender biases have been appeared in the textbook in selecting female authors.

3.2: REPRESENTATION OF THE FREQUENCY OF MALES AND FEMALES

Table No. 1: Lesson wise representation of male and female in the text-book.

Sl.No.	Page No.	Name of The Content	Male		Female	
			Men	Boys	Women	Girls
1	6	Strange Hospitality	2			
2	12	Chandragupta	2		1	
3	21	Picnic		4		
4	31	All Bengal Poem Association		2	5	3
5	40	Green Shirt		1		
6	42	Letter	4			
7	47	Conversation	2			
8	52	On The Way	1			
9	64	Society Of Village	4	1	1	
10	81	Bride of The Village			1	
11	92	How To Understand		2	3	
12	107	The Story of Natore	9			
13	114	Indigenouism	1	1		
14	119	Letter From The jail	2			
15	128	Manner	2			
16	139	No Fear To Die	1			
17	143	Haricharan Bandyapadhyaya			1	
18	150	Is The Love In Vain	3	2		
19	155	Subha	1	1	1	3
20	164	Defeat	4	1		
21	176	Aunty	2			
22	177	Album Of Ticket	3	1		
23	186	The Man Never Know	1			
		Total	39	18	15	7
		Percentage	49%	23%	19%	9%

From the Table and Figure no.1, it has been cleared that only seventy nine (79) numbers of characters have been appeared in the written part of the textbook. But male characters appeared more often (57 instances) than female characters (22). It is also shows that the highest numbers of male boy characters have been appeared than female girls across all the lessons in the books. So it has been cleared that male characters dominate the females in terms of appearance in written part of the text. About three-quarters of male characters (72%) have been appeared in the whole textbook. But only 28% female characters have been presented in the text which is one-quarter of the total proportion. So an unequal representation is found in favor of male in terms of the appearances of characters.

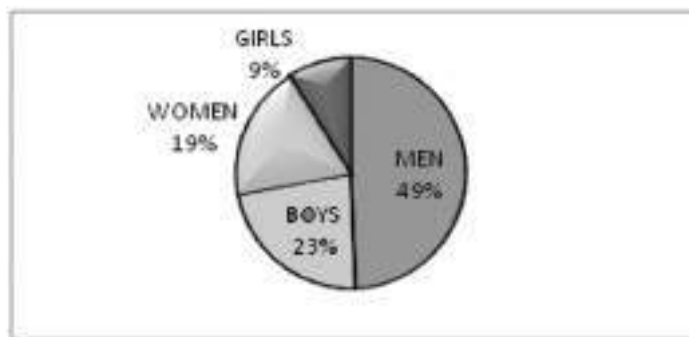


Figure No.1: Percentage of the Representation of Male and Female.

3.3: Representation of Designations depicting in textbook

It has been cleared (from table no: 2) that though the male characters have been substantially overrepresented in the textbook 'Sahitya Mela', it could be assumed that male characters occupied the maximum designated roles. There have thirty one (31) numbers of designations depicted in the textbook. Within those designations, sixteen (16) numbers occupational roles have been identified only. such as soldier, teachers, author, deputy magistrate, head master, musician, film director, landlord, farmer, body guard, yarn labor, layer, footballer, football coach, football secretary, vendor. It has been seen that males are more frequently portrayed in thirteen (13) numbers of occupational roles out

of sixteen(16). But only three occupational fields, females have been appeared. It has only in teaching profession that females appeared more than male and there have no males except one head master. There have only fifteen (22) numbers of females who have portrayed as teachers (5), landlord (1), vendor (2), freedom fighter (1), wife (2), mother (2), aunt (2), student (4) and daughter (3). So where male characters engaged in various field of occupational role, females have very few. All males have been identified with stereotypical role in respect of job such as solders, layers, authors, football players, body guard, yarn labor, film director, musician, and administrative sectors etc. but none of the image which have been portrayed for females, breaks the stereotype trend except freedom fighter, landlord and vendors. The results have been indicated that men's scope of occupations is wider than females. So in the textbook give the impression that all types of occupational role have male oriented and portraying a gender bias scenario.

Table No. 2: Identified Designations of Male and Female in the Textook.

Sl.No.	Designation/occupational role	Male		Female	
		Men	Boys	Women	Girls
1	Chief of army	4			
2	Wife			2	
3	Friend	1	5		
4	Students		9		4
5	Teachers			5	
6	Author/writer	2			
7	Social reformer	1			
8	Deputy magistrate	1			
9	Head master	1			
10	Musician	1			
11	Film director	1			
12	Traveler	8			
13	Landlord	2	1	1	

Sl.No.	Designation/occupational role	Male		Female	
		Men	Boys	Women	Girls
14	Farmer	2			
15	Bodyguard	1			
16	Mother			2	
17	Aunt			2	
18	President	2			
19	Speaker	1	1		
20	Brother		1		
21	Freedom fighter	1		1	
22	Yard labor	1			
23	Educationist	2			
24	Layer	1			
25	Father	1			
26	Daughter				3
27	Footballer	1	1		
28	Foot ball coach	1			
29	Football secretary	2			
30	Vendor			2	
31	Hunger	1			
Total		39(49%)	18(23%)	15(19%)	7(9%)

3.4: Domestic Activities Identified in the Textbook

It has been cleared (Table no.3) that very few numbers of males and females engaged in domestic activities. Serving have the highest appearance in the textbook. Male characters have assigned the role of serving dinner to the Chief of Army and Guest respectively. On the other hand, female character served tea to the relatives only. So despite of the participation of male and female in serving food or else, the role of women in domestic activities is predominant. Because there have

some stereotypes roles which have been performed by the females only such as lighting lamp under the basil tree, playing conch, feeding the cow. So in term of domestic role biasness to the male characters have been showed also in the textbook.

Table No. 3: Identified Domestic Activities in the Textbook

Sl.No	Name of The Content	Domestic Activities of Males	Domestic Activities of Females
1	Strange hospitality	Serving dinner to Chief of Army	
2	Society of Village		Lighting a Lamp Under Basil Tree
3	Lady of The Village		Playing Conch
4	How to understand		Serving Tea To Relatives
5	The Story of Natore	Serving Dinner to Guest	
6	Subha		Feeding The Cow

3.5 Other activities of males and females engaged in

It has cleared (Table No. 4) that male has engaged in the football as a sporting activity. Females have engaged in outdoor activity with dancing and selling only. The indoor activity has limited by writing poems. Indore activities of male have been identified through various activities such as speaking with solder, planning for picnic, writing letters, discussing on culture, checking accounts, eating, participating meeting, composing dictionary and watching ticket. And the outdoor activities of males have been appeared in the textbook through travelling train and going to school. Men have been depicted in a wide variety of activities.

Table No. 4: Identified Other Activities of Male and Female in the Text-book

Sl.	Name of the		Male		
No.	Contents				
1	Chandragupta				
2	Picnic				
3	All Bengal Poem Association				
4	Green Shirt				
5	Letter				
6	Conversation				
7	On The Way				
8	Society Of Village				
9	The Story of Natore				
10	Indigenouism				
11	Letter From The jail				
12	Manner				
13	No Fear To Die				
14	Haricharan Bandyapadhyaya				
15	Is The Love In Vain		Establishing schools		
16	Defeat		Playing football		
17	Aunty				elling
18	Album Of Ticket	Watching ticket			
19	The Man Never Know	Eating			

3.6 Gender Representation through Images

The study concentrated at picture or image representations within the textbook. This is because there have some relations between the written contents and the images of the text. The important concepts of the text have been illustrated more effectively through the

textbook. The illustrations have been presented in pictorial form of the texts which have been contained in a word form. So illustrations are very powerful to the students in shaping ideas and concepts and also making attitudes and values which depicting in the written parts of the lessons. The Study has been used those pictures where the human beings have been depicted. It has been cleared (table no. 5) that there have fifty nine (59) numbers gender related pictures. Through those pictures, only ninety five (95) numbers of male (83%) and nineteen females (17 %) characters have been represented. Thirteen numbers of Nobel characters have been represented in the image .Again twelve numbers of famous personalities have been represented through the Postal Tickets. Within those twelve personalities, there has one female character (8%) and eleven male characters (92%).

Table No.5: Male and Females depicting in the Images.

Particulars	Frequency
Pictures Depicting Gender	59 pictures
Female Characters in Pictures	19 females
Male Characters in Pictures	95 males
Nobel Characters in Picture	13(all are males)
Nobel Characters in Postal Ticket Image (no. of ticket: 10)	12(11 males +1 female)

In the images of the textbook, women have been portrayed as some so called feminine and stereotypical roles like village bride (in the Bride of the Village) , Loving sister (in the Society of village), animal lover (in Subha), vendors (in Aunt) and teaching in profession (in all Bengal poem association). They are not any challenging role. On the other hand men have been portrayed in the pictures as in many dignified as well as challenging role such as chief of army (In Chandragupta, Strange hospitality), writer (in Haricharan Bandopadhyay), traveler (in Traveler), footballer (in defeat), accountants (in the village society) etc. It has been cleared (figure no.1) that male characters have been portrayed more active and challengers than females.



Figure No.1: Gender Representation through Images.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study examined how the males and females have been represented in Government- approved Bengali Textbook using written content and images. The outcomes of the study point out an existence of gender biasness in favor of males. It is clear from the findings that the picture of gender inequality towards women is clearly visible in the textbooks. The presence of female writers in textbook writing is negligible and also the identity of women in the textbook is limited to the circle of wife, housewife, teacher, and daughter. In terms of serving food, the men are serving dinner to the army chief but the women are limited to serving tea to relatives there. Again, in the case of a variety of activities, the role of women is limited to writing poetry, dancing and selling where men are employed in school, train driver, planner, accountant, dictionary writing etc. Discrimination against women is also evident in the case of visual images. In the picture, men are playing football and women are playing the role of wives. Thus, equality between men and women was not maintained in textbook writing. The presence of men is more

in the textbooks than the presence of men in the professional world. Bengali language textbook taught to the students of Grade-8 in public in West Bengal is gender biased. There is an unequal representation of both genders in the said textbook. In this textbook, Male characters are shown in dominant and influential positions but females have been shown in comparatively dependent and inferior positions. So, the content of the eight-grade textbook seems to be manipulated in favour of males. This practice is not good sign and principle of both genders. Therefore, special actions should be taken to reduce gender bias and unfairness from the textbooks so that we might have a sound society where both genders be treated equally.

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Looking for ‘Escapes’ within the ‘Trap’ through Language and Behaviour

Nishantika Kundu

Swami Vivekananda was indeed true when he thought that the society cannot progress depending on men alone. Women comprise of the other pillar, apart from men, which serves as the backbone of the society as whole. In such a situation of equality, can only the world function smoothly, as one solid community. However, such a social condition has hardly been possible to achieve, owing completely to the fact that gender discrimination exists; from time immemorial, to this day. Since the patriarchal form of society has practiced and controlled power over every minute sphere of life, it was men's to dictate how a woman should live, or behave. This prevalence of gender based inequality has compelled many a genius, scholar and thinker to choke their dreams in their minds in the fear of being branded as a ‘fallen woman’, a ‘witch’ or a ‘simpleton’. Literary texts across the world serve as evidences to these condescending ways of treating women, irrespective of their social status. A remedy therefore was necessary and it was provided by ‘feminism’, a way of thought that ardently demanded equal rights for women and equal access to the resources provided by the society to guard their choices and preferences; which had been ‘supervised’ for them so long. Virginia Woolf is considered to be the pioneer for inspiring feminism, through her writings. In her essay *A Room of One's Own*(1929), she shed light on the fact how the literary tradition have been dominated for a long time, by male writers, whereas women were refused higher education at universities. She argued for a ‘literal and figurative’ space for the female writers, most of whom lived their lives in anonymity. Not only writers, women as a community needed

emancipation from this subjugation, which was curbing their basic rights to live a happy and healthy life; mentally and physically. The post-structuralist French feminist Hélène Cixous's pathbreaking essay, 'The laugh of the Medusa' (1975), is a commentary on how women have been repeatedly alienated from their bodies which in turn has impacted their creative genius, massively. Cixous has distinctly talked about a break from the normative, methodical and linear, therefore a 'masculine' narrative, to create a literary way for solely the female gender; also known as *écriture féminine*. This way of narrative, she argues should be 'excess', shaped in the plenitude of feelings; thus sharply contrasting the male ideal of laying emphasis on reasoning over emotions, by alienating the physical body and its certain 'experiences' and 'arousals'. So, keeping all these pieces of evidences in mind, the paper will focus on the topic of resistance put up by women and show that no act towards emancipation is ever small. For this purpose, the paper will course its way through Iranian graphic novelist, Marjane Satrapi's remarkable book, *Embroideries*(2003).

LOOKING AT THE SOCIETY THROUGH THE EYES OF THE NOVEL

Embroideries is the story of a group of women who have gathered in a late afternoon discussion about their psychological and sexual experiences encountered in everyday lives and how even after being educated and belonging from fairly privileged households, were exposed to the unpleasant feeling of being dominated, objectified and abandoned by their male partners or husbands. Satrapi's hilarious narrative style, veils the morose truth of the lives of these women and yet successfully brings forth their plight. The story is in much similarity to Cixous's arguments as well, because this group of women unapologetically discuss the otherwise 'repulsive' details of their conjugal lives, fulfilling the former's wish to craft a narrative style of the women alone. These 'extra' details and moments of laughter regarding the misadventures in the lives of these women, therefore becomes 'the ventilator of the heart', as mentioned by Satrapi's grandmother in the text. The lives which are otherwise in a constant state of mercy, at the hands of fathers, husbands and sons, find themselves comforted in similar situations as experienced

by the others. Momentarily though, the 'gossip' liberates them from their constricted experiences and unites them as a whole, in love and laughter. The alienation of the body that Cixous talks about becomes a focal point of their discussion through their arguments about keeping away from exploring it and also about keeping one's virginity intact before marriage, as prescribed by the society. Although they lack in freedom of choices practically, they choose to feel the liberation, in the company of fellow sisters, without being judged on the ground of so called morality. Another important aspect of this text is the treatment of the female body by the male counterparts. This aspect sheds light on women's constant struggle to stay 'young' (mainly through surgeries and medication), primarily to serve as the sexual pleasure for the males and then to serve as a 'trophy' in order to be shown around to raise envy among the other men. These imposed acts often become stifling for women, who ultimately lack control over their minds and bodies to put up any resistance at all, thus succumbing to the dominance.

UNDERSTANDING FEMININITY AND ITS MODES OF RESISTANCE

The factor of resistance does not always require to be something what one understands as being 'powerful'. Resistance may find its place in the most simple acts and gestures and that is enough to accelerate change. For long has the society dictated what should be constituted as right and wrong and has completely failed to perceive the importance of multiple narratives and experiences and although women have protested vigorously against these impositions to safeguard their choices, everything presumably doesn't require to be a spectacle for masses. A simple act of discussion might connect two or more people on a much personal level and they have the entire liberty to choose whichever way, to feel emancipated. Satrapi herself, denied the conventional way of illustrating within panels, as one finds common in comics and graphic novels, to set the background for the 'excess', 'eccentric', 'inconsistent' and 'incomprehensible' and demonstrates the obvious disruption of a prescribed method. The content of the discussion of these women, traditionally might not be considered as intellectual but however 'light hearted' it might seem on the surface, is actually crucial to the debate of

what liberty means. The narrative tone provides enough evidence for the forceful altercations that women brought upon themselves, unwillingly often, desperate to save the family where they are financially dependent on a husband, with children and not living up to his expectations might leave them homeless and alone. Therefore, they are alienated even more from their bodies, their originalities, through artificial treatments, to transform radically into someone the husbands desires and the women cannot identify with. This 'ventilation of the heart' thus gave them the opportunity to be their true selves, speak the language they prefer, sit the way they want and laugh 'loudly' on specific incidents like the one where one of Satrapi's aunts points out that her husband is completely clueless about how she 'removed fat' from her buttocks and implanted them on her natural but 'small' breasts to achieve the stereotypical 'hour-glass' body. Yet, this amusement somewhere is connected to a melancholy feeling of negating personal choices to serve as the 'choice' of the male counterpart. These women are very well aware of their situation, being mostly influenced by the staunch ways of religion and also the state. They realise that escape isn't easy and the utopian equal world they dream of, will not arrive anytime soon and they therefore have happily discovered their own space for themselves in the female friendships that Simone De Beauvoir describes as: 'women, confine within the generality as their destiny as women, are united by a kind of immanent complicity. And what they seek first of all from each other is the affirmation of their common universe.' (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 663); in her book *The Second Sex*. The women, clearly decline any form of male intrusion, precisely Satrapi's grandfather, in this discussion, to which he reacts in a derogatory way, calling the women a 'frog' who were only successful in excluding him because the 'snake' is old now. This episode, clearly hints at the superior and almost predator like dominance of patriarchy which consider women inferior.

CONCLUSION

This brings the reader back to the memory of the recent phenomenon called #metoo, when myriads of women took to social media, to serve as a platform for their narratives of trauma, turbulence and oppression. Many more joined, trending the #metoo to show the world that none

of them are alone and they have suffered similarly. #metoo entails immense power as it comforts; in the sense, that there are many who have suffered, not one, and this has brought women as a community closer, to be able to actually make spaces for open and ‘informal’ discussions about the experiences of oppression. Resistance, thus will continue coming in ripples and waves because its still a long way to the ideal equality, given the diversity of communities across the world. Freedom thus, will lie in laughing, like the monstrous Medusa, indoors or outdoors; on the face of supremacy. It also lies in the multiplicity of narratives and their acceptance. It will not bother itself essentially, with methods and rules that have tried to tailor them and will not keep quiet.

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The Position of Women in Urban Society as Presented in the Works of Chetan Bhagat

Sourav Dey

INTRODUCTION

Subjugation and abnegation are always the fate of women long back from the past. Actually, they suffer as dependent species. They are essentially tortured and downtrodden in the name of protection. Women confront oppression, aggression, inequality and discrimination in every walks of lives, be it family, society or the workstations. This phenomenon is not restricted to rural realm; rather, the same configuration is holding a prominence in social hierarchy of urban life. Many literary figures have depicted the oppression of women, but now this phenomenon has slightly changed, since education has, eventually, empowered women and provided them the impetus to have faith in them and help them consolidate their feet on the strong ground of their own identity, equal mentality and determination. Chetan Bhagat is a surging face who portrays the woman protagonists in a firm temperament. He depicts that females are not in any way beneath the males; instead, they are complementary to each other. However, he has brought up the family hierarchical system where senior male member, by tradition, has been endowed with the power of holding purse-string of the family. The mother figure, by the old age configuration of patriarchal society, demeans herself to the status of inferior member in a family, in terms of intellectuality, efficiency, eloquence and aptitude. The present paper will investigate and assess the efficacy and the perspicacity of women in the urban society and show their vigor and aggression and assert women's final victorious emergence as presented in the works of Chetan Bhagat.

MAIN DISCUSSION

Domestic violence has been a frequent occurrence and females are always at peril. In *2 States* Kavita, Krish's mother, is a female character who suffered a lot. She was a stoic character and she was beaten very often. Nevertheless, she never shirked her responsibility. She continued her daily chores. She confronted violence every now and then by her husband. She invited her sister Shirpa to her home for the discussion of Krish's wedding. Krish's father arrived in the meantime, out of courtesy, she said "... hello jijaji' ... and smile (85)." His father brusquely replied "I like your goodbye more than hello (85)." Here the father figure didn't like his wife's relatives visited his house. He wanted to sever every relationship with them.

Forgetting all her humiliation and the fear of upcoming aggression from her husband, she turned up to be very anxious about her son Krish, that is evident, when she said, "Don't walk barefoot, my mother called out. She bent to pick up the splintered shards. (p.86)?" Krish was gobsmacked to see the patience of her own mother. Patience, relentless and stoic characteristics, automatically, is born in the female.

Domestic violence in physical level is rampart in many families. Here Chetan Bhagat has depicted it very fervently. Father figure is the true manifestation of the personality who accused his wife for a very trivial incident, "You are responsible for bringing him up like this; my father screamed at my mother." (p.196) Women are very helpless and hopeless. They lived at the mercy of their opposite sex. Kavita is the representative of the entire women hood of her generation who face this blatant cruelty only because being weak in muscle power and the inborn mentality imposed on them since their birth. They bear excruciating, profound psychological pain and they have to swallow their own agony.

The next generation is not so meek that they accept orthodox without incurring any question. In the present novel, the female protagonist Ananya, is very smart, courageous and spunky to take her own decision and has the mental firmness to persuade people and protest against the wrong deeds. When all the elders apparently failed to save the wedding between Duke and Minti, Ananya turned up as savior. She persuaded Duke that the car as dowry, his parent demanded

was unjust. She said, "Do you know what Minti's parents had to go through to do this wedding for you? That car cost two and half years of your salary, Mr. Duke! These two parties have thrown him into debt." (p.253). Duke realized and stood straightforward and convinced his parents. Finally, marriage took place.

In Goa, there is a second meeting of Ananya's parents with the parents of Krish. Quarrel broke out on trivial matter. Ananya's father suddenly got heart attack. Under such condition, Ananya redefines her position and denying all limitation imposed by Krish, makes a direct dialogue to defend the welfare of her parents, "Aunty, I think you should apologise to my parents". Her mental strength is very vividly reflected through these words. Therefore, when the critical junction appears, she chooses standing with her parents and protests against the unjust behavior of Krish's mother.

In *Revolution 2020*, Aarti, female protagonist, was not good at studies. She aimed to be an air hostess, but even in the era of 20th century, society, despite being educated, does not allow girls to pursue their dreams. Girls are preys to the mental fabric of this patriarchal society. When Raghav stated, "You will make great air hostess" (p.25). Aarti retorted back " ...like dad is going to let me leave Varanasi. There are no airlines here." (p.25) She said everything humorously, but she had the apprehension that her father, D.M by profession would not allow her to do such job for which she had to leave Varanasi. However she retained a tinge sense of silver lining for her aspiration being materialized.

She strove for this very much. She knew very well that one must physically fit for this profession. In a restaurant, they preferred to soup and salad. She essentially, did not indulge into laying bare her heart about her career before others. Actually our society to some extent compelled her to shape that mentality. When Raghav asked her, "So, you aren't becoming an engineer. What will you do in life?" (p.24) she replied though humorously, "Do I have to do something? I am Indian women. Can't I get married, stay home and cook? Or ask the servant to cook?" (p.24). Here she has taken the assistance of humour and very cleverly made the sarcastic comment on the thought process of the chauvinistic society where girls are just the puppet to perform the

household activities. Her father Mr. Pradhan had no respect and regard for Aarti's dream. The casual referring to "of this air hostess business" vindicates his casual attitude towards the desire of his daughter. If we pay an analytical look at the perspicacity of Aarti's statement, "Dad insists" it shows that she had an argument with her father and ultimately she succumbed to his father decision.

Compassion is inherent to her. She always preferred her friendship to any other relation. In a weak moment Gopal hugged her and tried to kiss her, but she sternly asseverated "You will spoil our friendship". (p.44) She remains to be the loyal friend in every spare of her life. She knows the financial hardship of Gopal and she acknowledged the necessity of certain commodities that one must take for survival in a new set up place. She herself deliberately, accompanied Gopal for procuring all the basic items. She genuinely wished that Gopal would crack the entrance exam and fulfill his dream. As in Indian culture, one prayed for something by floating diya on the water. She also performed that ritual for his success. She was always hopeful and had high regard for Gopal. She said, "You have a big heart" (p.138).

She is equally compassionate towards Raghav. She fell in love with Raghav and was entirely devoted to him. Essentially, she possessed immense adjusting power. This adjusting power she garnered through her comprehensive ability. She felt the importance of one's passion. She perceived that Raghav abandoned everything in his life to pursue his passion. She liked most about Raghav that he was honest and did not compromise his integrity at any cost. When Gopal inquisitively asked Aarti about his parents' acceptance of his decision of joining the media house, she protested "He does not care. He feels the revolution begins at home. Society changes only when individual family norms are challenged"(p.149).

Raghav's article exposed the dishonest politician Shukla embezzling money allotted for GAP. She asked Gopal over phone whether he read the news. Gopal was upset as it indirectly harmed his reputation. Gopal in a cautious tone stated "He is taking on big people. He should be careful"(p.236). Aarti, instantly retorted, "But he is only speaking the truth. Someone has to stand up for truth"(p. 236). Aarti is a strong and

genuinely honest character. She has the power to discern the prevailing situation. She was with Gopal, but still retained her integrity intact. She was scrupulous of disclosing her relation with Gopal to Raghav. She was apprehensive that it might cause him a severe bolt. She proposed, "Shouldn't we wait to tell Raghav till he settles down? (p.245). Aarti and Gopal had sex in hotel room with mutual consent in a weak moment of their life. But, when normalcy restored back to her, she repented, 'Guilt', she (Aarti) said. (p.224). She told Gopal, "My parents are pressuring me to get married. I can't fight them forever"(p.226). Chetan has shown that it was the general mental fabric of our society to put pressure on girl child for marriage.

She finished her course in hospitality and she eventually, received a chance to do job in guest relations trainee in a newly set up hotel Ramada Hotel. But she did not incline to join the job and resorted to the mechanism of sitting sulk to make them realise her strong passion to become an air hostess. Nevertheless, she did not achieve what she wished, and subsequently she was bound to join Ramada Hotel. Finally, she decided to be with Gopal but fate had stored another plan for her precedently. An untoward incident just drove her far away from him forever and she tied herself in wedlock with Raghav.

Chetan Bhagat has very carefully delineated both the female characters Ananya and Aarti. Ananya is depicted in the light of strong character. She did not compromise with anything which is not in compliance with her consciousness. She went against her parents and made them realize that her choice for life partner is not worthless. Eventually, her parents agreed with her. But she also protested when she realized that her parents' honour was at stake. Aarti on the other hand was strong and determined, but circumstances made her do certain things which give us the impression that she is fickle minded and she is gullible in nature. Nevertheless, she cannot be judged as a caricature in the hands of the chauvinistic society; rather she is the girl who "aspired to be her own in the midst of the traditional ties with her inner strength of womanhood. Chetan has shown Aarti as an educated, determined and bright woman who is dutiful to her family's demands and has proven her identity in the society." (Livingston,1113).

CONCLUSION

Chetan Bhagat has shown his proficiency in treating the inequality of women characters. He has delineated her minor characters with less fervency; yet, he has foregrounded the character of Kavita to show the cruel inhuman torture inflicted on women in the society and the dominance and supremacy of men. In contrast of this, he has depicted his female protagonists in more strong and determined portrayal. They speak their mind and they have confidence, clear vision and noble freedom. He has suggested implicitly that it was education that inculcates freedom of speech, independent sensibility and clear vision to their mind and heart and all of these in return, ignite in them the fire not to follow the age-old traditional concepts and thinking percolated down to the young generations through ages, but to adjust between traditional value and modern life.

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Gender Issues in Selected Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De: A Comparative Study

Mohitosh Das

INTRODUCTION

Monopolization and abuse of power has been a tradition for long run, especially in Indian middle class society. Patriarchy, being the leading force, Indian middle class society has been in its claws and grip which adversely affects the lives of women. This in harmonious power structure results in women oppression of every kind. In spite of being in the 21st century, women of our country are compelled to face discrimination in various forms. Women are often considered as emotional, inconsistent, intuitive, subjective, and lacking self-confidence. Patriarchy has been a widespread and accepted norm of our society as patriarchal hegemony is being exercised in all ages. Consequently, most of the women are not aware of their own rights and freedom. It can also be referred as “to be male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways”(Bhasin 3).

THE THEME IN DETAIL

Shashi Deshpande, an eminent Indian novelist and prolific writer, pays a sincere visit to the women psyche and unveils truly in her fictions. In her novel *That Long Silence*, Deshpande vividly represents the inner conflict and the real life experience through her protagonist Jaya, who had to suffer a lot from the beginning to the end only for the quest for the self and identity. She had to undergo frustration, alienation and

over all emotional traumas as her adolescent dreams had been shattered. After her marriage, she managed to lead a satisfactory conjugal life for some time but gradually she appeared to be a docile, meek, passive, nervous and dependent upon her husband for sustenance and existence. Mohan, her husband, was an orthodox and did not allow much freedom to Jaya. She could not come closer to her husband mentally and emotionally. Consequently, in spite of being married to Mohan and being a mother of two children, she had to suffer from isolation. In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*, Sarita, the protagonist, had to undergo a trauma when her professional success cast a shadow on her married life and she courageously faces the situation and audaciously accepted the challenges. Deshpande portrays in her novel that woman, irrespective of her class and character, has no room of her own. Sarita was engulfed with a feeling of shame when at her age of sixteen, it was told to her that she was a woman and belonged to the class of her mother. In another novel namely *Roots and Shadows*, Deshpande deals with the predicament of contemporary Indian women through the character of Indu.

Thus Deshpande paints the grass-root picture of the patriarchal domination in the middle class Indian society. She treats the silent, sobbing women, mothers, grand-mothers, aunts, sisters, grand-aunts, daughters and above all the entire women world. She carefully deals with the predicament of such Indian women who are trying to discover themselves and to uphold their identity not only as a wife or mother but also as a human being.

Equally gender issues are recurring theme in Shobha De's fictions. She is very much concerned with the social challenges faced by the upper- middle class Indian women. She emerges as a spokesperson for the suppressed women of the upper- middle class society. De's novels incite the realistic presentation of life, the world of fascination in the Indian upper-middle class society. She highlights the true condition of the human being throwing light on the life-style of Mumbai High Society. Her novels offer a chance to the readers to peep through the artificial Mumbai elite life where the rich ladies live a life in the loveless marriages and portray the image of marital relationship affected with its stress, trials, and tribulations by varied causes like the big city,

fashionable life, modern life-style, capitalistic attitude and how women are compelled to go for extra-marital affairs.

De is greatly troubled by the sufferings of women in Indian urban world. She paints vivid picture of those women who are imposed on insignificant social pressure in the name of tradition and culture. In her novels, the city is presented as an overpowering and punishing force to her characters. In spite of all these adversities, she presents her women as innovative, courageous, advanced and the New Indian Women always ready to challenge definitely against the moral customs of the male dominated society. She says, "The women in my books are definitely not doormats. They are not willing to be kicked around" (De 49).

De has made a thoughtful study of man-woman relationship. In her first novel *Socialite Evenings*, De highlights the sufferings of women in Indian urban world, through the portrayal of Karuna. After her marriage, she is troubled because of the uncaring and unsympathetic nature of her husband who takes her simply as an object subjected to his desires. Soon she realizes that she is imprisoned in an insignificant marriage without any happiness. She is wedded to the wrong man for the wrong causes at the wrong time. He has never understood the emotions and aspirations of Karuna. He is busy with his own progress in the business world. There is no personal bonding between the husband and wife. Even her extra-marital emotional involvement with Krish, her husband's friend, does not succeed. Finally, being unable to adjust with him, she gets separated and begins to search for her own identity and settles herself in the advertising world.

In her another novel *Second Thoughts* a young middle class Bengali girl, Maya, born and brought up in Calcutta, is married to Mumbai-based foreign returned Bengali boy Ranjan. Maya is quite innocent by her nature and has a great attraction and love for the city. Thus after her marriage, Maya with the dreams in her heart arrives in Mumbai. She wishes both, as to be a part of Mumbai and a part of her husband's life. She made every possible attempt to please her husband, but Ranjan was of a different nature. He was aggressive and doubtful by nature. He began to find faults in Maya's works. He did not care for his wife's aspirations, desires, or feelings. She felt utmost isolation as of being an

alien in the suburban Mumbai, which is full of hollow relationship. Even she is involved in an extra-marital affair with Nikhil which ends up in utter frustration as she comes to know that he is married. She keeps on thriving for her own identity, her own voice and her own place in the world.

CONCLUSION

Deshpande's female protagonists, though search for their social identity, finally accept their lot and submit to the dominancy of patriarchy. She provides us a critique of the contemporary middle class society where women are the victims of social milieu. No strong female voice against patriarchy is found in her novels, only psychological conflicts have been reflected. On the contrary, almost all the novels of Shobha De are women-oriented, showcasing the life of a female in family and society. The entire fictional world of Shobha De is governed by her women characters. To obtain a new individuality, they think of treating the world on their own expressions. They make every attempt to free themselves from the chains of unfair restrictions and customs forced on them by the Patriarchal society. They are aware of their own rights and carry on battling against the human essentials like greed, ego, aspirations, and self-centredness. De delineates a significant change in the status of her women. They neither depend on their fathers nor their husbands. Rather they are capable of handling life with all its rise and fall.

To conclude, both the two novelists have applied their painstaking effort to paint the realistic picture of the life of women in the middle class society. Deshpande's females are destined to be traditionally submissive and remain in an insignificant existence provided by the marriage. On the contrary, De's women keep on struggle and end up settling themselves in the society.

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Sword and a Tiara: Stereotyping Gender Roles through Toys and Fairy Tales

Tania Majumder

INTRODUCTION

Gender Roles specify the type and kind of characteristics that are to be exhibited by men and women in the diverse areas of their lives. These are indoctrinated through the use of various agents, that though seem innocent, have the ability to get rooted in oneself, so deep, to the extent of stereotyping humans into behaving in a certain fixed manner. These agents are numerous that begin to operate since birth, and the very first examples of such agents are toys and fairytales. The toys segregated for the two genders, associate themselves with some typical features as strong and aggressive(masculine) or weak and meek (feminine). More over the toys also limit or widen the field of exploration for the male and female child, solely according to the age-old norms. The fairy tales also point out mannerisms that manifest men to be active and goal-oriented, and women to be passive and nurturing. They deem to restrict young minds from imagining beyond the conventional structure.

GENDER ROLES THROUGH TOYS

I'm a Barbie girl in a Barbie world
Life in plastic, it's fantastic
You can brush my hair, undress me everywhere
Imagination, life is your creation
Come on Barbie, let's go party ...

A very popular song sung and known by almost every child today and in the yesteryears showcases a doll, specifically for girls, all decked up

with beautiful makeup and shining accessories. It probably seems to be a very innocent song, that had been widely used as a promotion for the so-called dolls. However what one ignores is the fact that this song, very subtly portrays the qualities essential for a girl in order to grow up as the socially acceptable female. Just like the barbie doll, a girl in this world needs to know or learn nothing more than “brushing her hair” or literally beautifying herself, as that is what is deemed to be her only purpose in life. This is similar to what political activist Susan Stern (1998) notes, “Barbie is described in terms of her sexuality”. She is a “creation” that must only go “party” as her only aim in life is to entertain herself and others, without any productive output.

Another example of a popular toy song is,
“He’ll fight for freedom wherever there is trouble,
G.I. Joe is there!
...Fighting to save the day,
He never gives up, he’s always there...”

The above jingle composed for the toy G.I. Joe has one striking element in it- the only pronoun “He”. Its use makes it extremely clear that it is meant for the male children. Quite ironically and strikingly distinct from the earlier Barbie lyrics, this song has words such as “fight”, “freedom” and “save” in it, transparently symbolising the qualities of a boy in this society. A boy is one who can never give up and always has to fight or struggle or use aggressive force to achieve their goal. Interestingly, unlike girls, boys do have a goal, however productive or destructive it may be in reality.

The two lyrics mentioned here inevitably reflects the supposed roles that girls and boys or men and women have to play, for validation in their environment. These gender roles compress characteristic behaviours of the two genders to promote a list of do’s and don’ts of each gender, stereotyping them in every field of life. This is outrightly harmful as both the genders might lose out if the kids are on one track and can’t explore.

GENDER ROLES THROUGH FAIRY TALES

Cinderella

This world-renowned fairy tale is a favourite work among parents and children all around. This story of a young girl, submitted to regular abuse from her step mother and step sisters, encounters a life changing transformation, after getting an opportunity to attend the Royal Ball. Not even halfway into the story, Cinderella is twice called out as, “What a mess!” and justified with a stronger affirmative saying, “You do look a bit of a mess, child”. This unwanted and repetitive stress on the word “mess” denotes a woman’s place or worth without a man- a disaster, a mess. The next emphasis is customary in all of fairy tales- appearance. Cinderella is worried as she cannot visit the Ball without a “beautiful dress”. Women, since beginning have always been judged on the basis of their outer selves, their beauty. It is still today considered to be the most essential part of a woman’s body, perhaps much more significant than all of her organs. It is this stereotypical beauty, an asset of her gender, that has to bring her to the fancy of a man, who will ultimately be her saviour; “The what of gender can be learned from physical appearance and from the tangible artefacts of social organization.” (Gergen, K., etc, 2009). This is exactly what happens in the end of the story as they live “happily ever after”. This “ever after” is highly questionable as it is based on superficial and conservative notions that objectify women to be mere decorations, that have to be domesticated and kept pretty, similar to that of a showpiece.

Sleeping Beauty

A marriage to unite kingdoms occupies a decent space in this story. There after this marriage of convenience between Princess Aurora and Prince Philip reeks of conventional roles to be played by men and women as responsible off springs of the royal family. As if this was not enough, the character of Maleficent, an evil fairy is introduced, whose rage of being uninvited looms so large on the royal family that Aurora is cursed to go to a deep slumber. The underlying meaning here portrays the female gender as shallow and wicked who easily gets annoyed by petty things as invitations. The most twisted part of the tale is that the cure to the

curse is a true love's kiss. Interestingly, this "true love" is none other than the prince, Philip; a man. This whole idea thereby professes the ultimate role of a male and a female. Women are always the "damsel in distress", who have to be saved by the protective and strong men. A role reversal is a definite No from the society. This tendency is termed as Cinderella Complex, "which assumes that women depend on men in the pursuit of a happy, fulfilling life." (Xu H, Zhang Z, Wu L, Wang C-J, 2019)

Snow White

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall...Who is the fairest of them all?" is the line that basically wraps up the entire tale. The term "fair" here is to be noted as the central source of conflict in the story. Narrating the exact same idea as in the earlier fairy tales; the female is the villain, stereotyped as an evil stepmother who cannot withstand the beauty of her step daughter. That the women are only bothered about their external attributes is nailed firmly here. Another traditional role attached to a woman is also enhanced- women plot and conspire against one another, only for the sake of attracting a man. A woman has no aim or objective, except wooing the man; an idea that is still held and practised even in the 21st century, earning the term "gold diggers" for womankind. A powerful woman is always described as "evil", as power can only lie in the hands of a man, while submission is for women. This is in tune with the notion that women are "consistently placed in situations where looks count more than brains and helpless and incompetent behaviours are expected". (Towbin et al., 2008:21)

CONCLUSION

The elaborate discussions assert strong gender prejudices reflected in the kind of toys and fairy tales, made mandatory for kids from an initial stage. These need to be curbed altogether in order to banish the differences that they are responsible of producing and disseminating all around; instead those toys and stories that promote gender neutrality should be introduced. As for toys, Duplo blocks or Toy Phones should be favoured, as they spark imagination within a child and help in their language development and encourages representational thinking. For

tales, ungendered examples are, “Allie’s Basketball Dream” by Barbara E Barber (1996) that narrates the story of the female protagonist’s dream of becoming a basketball player, and “William’s Doll” by Charlotte Zolotow (1972), that recounts a young boy’s wish for a doll to care for. A popular and current example of promoting gender sensitisation is the theatrical spinoff of the story *Snow White* into the movie “Maleficent.”. This movie is relevant as it overturns conservative gender roles to show a woman become the protector and rescuer of another woman and thus beautifully breaks standardized patriarchal ideology. These instances and alterations can be supportive enough to help build a society that learns to treat men and women as humans, who possess strength and fragility within the same flesh and blood, and not any gender that has to always bow down to specific norms and regulations.

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Gender Issues in Literature : The Portrayal of Women in Literature Based on the Views of Rabindranath Tagore and Ashapurna Devi

Pujita Roy, Priyambada Chakraborty &
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INTRODUCTION

Literature has witnessed several biased demolitions and ulterior abolishment of women's, evolving through times. Women were always treated as physically weak nothing less than a household commodities. Literature has always been ambivalent in its representation of women. A good women is always expected to follow the social norms and abide to it. Medieval culture had played a very essential role in portraying women's positions in the society. There are many poets, novelist who conveyed about women's emancipation, glorification and female sexuality. It has been very cleared from the ancient times that male's authority is constant. In those times educations was limited to only men's due to which broadening of female's was ceased. Though there is an uninterrupted discrimination of gender, brings in a very little enlightenment through the revolution brought in by the society. The paper depicts a concrete similarities in between the literature and the current situation. To develop our thesis we have chosen Rabindranath Tagore's "Choker Bali", "Yogayog". As well as Ashapurna Devi's famous triological novel "Prothom protishruti, Subarnalata, Bokul Katha.

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE VIEWS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Tagore's writings brings out the eras portion of women's experience and show tremendous sympathy towards the plight of women. Rabindranath Tagore is an important figure in the world of Bengali literature. He is known for his emphasis on social reformation including upholding the values of gender equality. He has made a notable contribution towards literature and highlighted the depiction of women in the society. In his famous novel "Choker Bali" written in 1903 and was also casted in television on 2 October 2003 by Shrikant Mohta and Mahendra Soni. "Choker Bali" is the first novel which highlighted the issues of women's education, child marriage, and treatment of widows in 19th and 20th century in Bengal. The story conveys societies negligence, rejection, envies between uneducated Asha and educated Binodini. It also brings in Binodini's increasing mental and sexual frustration that led her on a path of revenge and manipulation. Tagore presents the complexity and fragility through the relationship of the avatars drawn in novel. Binodini clearly denies to accept her faith and attempt to seek what she feels she deserve. She is smart, educated and tries to be more than just an inauspicious widow though she was a lonely widow, she did not want to suppress her sexual desire. The main character Binodini is not an idealist women but a women with shades of grey and human flaws. Towards the end Tagore tries to bring much change to improve the condition of women through Binodini's character. She highlights the importance of education "if I had been uneducated, like others, I would have been able to easily endure negligence." Rabindranath Tagore in his novel represent a new female subjectivity through Binodini's character and transform her into a women with her own heart and mind and who is not abide to traditional customs. He quotes, "if education is a tool for human development and if education is the birth right of a human being, I do not understand how we can deprive the women from education." Through the story of Binodini Tagore questions the societal norms, taboos, unjust and customs which deprive women of their rightful freedom and autonomy confines to live a mournful colourless life. However Tagore's efforts to voice against social unjust, brings not much revolution in the society. In the present

scenario we see an incline change in the procedure of widow remarriage though it is accepted lawfully but there are still stereotypical views, emotions attached to it. Yet widow remarriage is objectified and interrogated by the society and even many women's are blamed for an unsuccessful marriage. Next we come up to his another novel "Yogayog" which was published in 1929 and opens up with the rivalry between the two families Chatterjees and Ghosals. Kumudini plays the central character in the story. She has been brought up in a traditional way of life and has observed all the ways of religious rituals like all the other folk women in the family. Kumudini was married to Madhusudan who holds all the qualities of the male dominated societies. Kumudini looked up to him as a god who embodies all the qualities of Superiority. Later in the novel it shows kumudini was unaware of the dark side of Madhusudan. She was rudely shaken by the crude display of wealth and power by Madhusudan. She was often forced to share the conjugal bed. The novel highlights the marital rape, oppression towards wealth and power. Tagore depicts how marriage itself is a license to the husband to force his wife to impart sexual desires forcefully. It also shows kumudini's brother Bipro Das who is a vociferous supporter of equal dignity and right for women, was unable to bring much help to his sister under societal pressure. Till now in many cases we see marital rape to be the right of a husband in contrast to the society. Till now sexual abuse is very much prevalent in society . It has also rise in numbers. In this 21st century where men and women holds the power to have equal right, respect and power but still we see women are being crushed on a day to day basis on this men dominating world. A girl no matter what's her age often gets sexually harassed whether it's in professional, private or public sphere. The women's are being forced to silence there voice in marital Rape on the common basis of societal thought that men's have the right on their women to conduct conjugal bed without their concern. In many cases women's are subjected to physical and mental torture by their in-laws. We see now a days many male activist fighting for the right of women but as soon as the mater comes up to their personal life they take a step back. Basically a women who has went through this situation can understand what the victims are going through rather then men who has not faced any of this.

THE PROTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE VIEWS OF ASHAPURNA DEVI

Contradictory Asapurna Devi, she was an prominent Bengali women novelist. She focussed on women enlightenment, gender bias, sexist mind set of men. We have focussed on her trilogy novel. The novel deals with the life of three generation of women in the early 19th century, namely Prothom pratishruti, subernalata and last is Bokul kotha. Prothom protishruti is a story of Satyabati who got married at the age of 8. She had to maintain the norms and was kept in strict Brahmanical regulation. It basically shows the struggle of her fighting against the patriarchal society and not wanting her girl Subernalata to get married at early age. Subernalata mainly revolt around the pathetic circumstances and oppression women of that era who was subjected to an orthodox family who has no voices of their own thought. Subarnalata was strong and courageous but also kind and generous women. Her husband Feroz was an orthodox man who always looked upon her novel intentions with a suspicious thought. Later in the novel it presents Subarnalata realization is bringing about a change in the orthodox society. It also shows her daily struggle and turmoil's to win the little victory and hardship that she went through. Subernalata's daughter was Bokul kotha. Here they showed the struggle of Bokul kotha even though she was educated. She wasn't given the equal status as men. It has been relevant from the past that women has no shelter of her own. If both parents earn wages still women does twice as much household and childcare as men because its their duty. Still in the 21st century Female infanticide and girl's marriage's takes place illegally. Because in many places girls are seen as burden. India is one of the country where prenatal sex was banned (in 1994) to protect the females. Even though there are strict law but one's mentality has not changed yet. In recent case which happened in the year 2020 we see that a man rips open pregnant wife's stomach to find out the gender of baby in uttar Pradesh. Hence this situation proves how women's are unsafe in the society.

The novels of Rabindranath Tagore and Ashapurna Devi uplifts the similarities between the portrayed character and our real life. Though this novel brought up revolution still negativities exist in the society.

Candle march cannot help the society. Education to all and better law is a must. We see a lot of changes in society than in the previous time, but there is still peculiar mentality present in the society.

CONCLUSION

To conclude from the above paper we can say that Our hindu culture is very rich in itself. But it also holds back few orthodox mentalities due to which women are often deprived of their rights. Since medieval times it is very evident that Male dominated society has ceased the growth of women for years. In the present scenario though change has occurred but there are still biased judgments for the genders. Although the women's are proving themselves in the grounds still there same old ideologies and objectification of women.

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Ascriptions of 'Masculinity', 'Modernity' and 'New Woman' in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*: An Evaluative Study

Santadip Chatterjee & Eshita Das

The trend of the novel is the emergence of new woman and to idealize the passionate love in Jude and Sue without being sexual. Before actually meeting Sue Bridehead in this novel, we are made to see a photograph of her. It shows a pretty girlish face, and having seen it, Jude later refers to Sue as his 'sweet-faced cousin'. Later we are told that Sue has a light, slight elegant figure. Sue is highly intelligent and well educated woman. Jude calls her 'a creature of civilization'; through she herself asserts that she is a 'negation of civilization'. In Sue's character, we can find some unconventional and unorthodox views. Her unconventionality is seen her going with Jude for a outing for a sight of seeing exertion when she spends a night with him in the countryside at a shepherds cottage. Her unorthodox cal manners are like that Sue does not believe in prayer. Because of her attitude and views Jude several times calls her a 'Voltairean'. Now the question is how the concept of 'New woman' is related with Sue? In the early 1890's, the 'New woman' appeared in plays by Shaw (particularly Mrs. Warren's profession) and in numerous novels and tales, notably Sarah Grand's 'The Heavenly Twins', Grant Allen's 'The Woman who did' etc. Repeatedly, the fictional new woman in portrayed as 'intelligent', 'lively', 'capable of pursuing her own career', 'sexually daring', and 'resistant to the conventional claims of wedlock'. In the mentioned opuses and particularly in Shaw's play, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', we find all the qualities of a 'New woman'.

Hardy's heropines often display a lively degree of independencies, cytheria, fancy day, sthelberta, Bathsheba and Tess all earn their own livings. Through they are sexually attractive and they are pursued and sometimes harassed by their impatient or reproachful suitors. The pattern is maintained in Sue Bridehead, who offers a clear instance of new enlightenment linked to educational opportunity.

Sue was naturally intelligent and interested in ideas. Kathleen Blake observes that, "Sue's model of freedom comes from her childhood' Sue Bridehead, "The woman of Feminist movement". After leaving school, she had been further educated by the contact with the student at London with when she (to his frustration) lived in a calibrated companionship. Before meeting Jude, she had taught two years in the city and after meeting Phillotson, she won a queen's scholarship to attend the training college at Manchester and qualified fully for a career as a teacher. While Jude's advance towards the university was inexorably checked, her more modest educational ambition gained, at first, easy fulfillment. But the social stigma of her elopement with Jude ended her career. After that she initially married to Phillotson but she made clear her revolution from sexual union with him. Even when Phillotson had divorced her, she recoiled from the prospect of marriage to Jude. Sue thought that it might be blight their life and maintained her long time celibate state.

Sue thus remained 'riddle' and a 'conundrum' to Jude; to Phillotson 'puzzling' and 'unstable' and the narrator too is baffled by the state of that mystery, her heart. Defending sue, Hardy clarifies that, 'there is nothing perverted or depraved in Sue's nature'. When the book *Jude* appeared in 1985, George Bernard Shaw claimed that the discussion of the 'New woman' was at its height in 1893. The ambivalence of the treatment of Sue's revolt, which though sympathetically depicted, is also shown to meet its nemesis was certainly a common ambivalence in literature of the time.

In *Jude the obscure*, we find Sue as a narcissistic Victorian woman and similar to those women who need not, 'lie in the direction of loving but of being loved'. In the letter to Edmund Groose in 1895, Hardy wrote that Sue was always an attractive woman to him but it was difficult for him to draw the type of her. Shanta Dutta in his 'Ambivalence in

Hardy' states that Hardy gives us a compelling sense of Sue's uniqueness and Sue herself contributes to this view of her specialness. After her wedlock to Phillotson, her experience teaches her what is the actual meaning of wedlock is and she confesses to Jude.

Character results in her indifference or detestation to the opposite sex and helps to develop the character of the psychological elusiveness of her double nature.

Sue is a combination of two representative types of emancipated woman in the late nineteenth century—one that gravitated towards men because masculine contact means light, freedom and instruction and other that rejects men because of their reduction of women to merely sexual beings. The novel is as much a tragedy of Sue as of Jude. Though, her tragedy is partly of her own making. Sue Bridehead is a radical skeptic and it is her habit to ponder and question the arrangements and the tyrannies of the society. More or less self educated, she has encountered the avant-garde ideas about religion, art, and Biblical interpretation. When we first met her in the novel, she was reading the chapter in Gibbon on Julia the Apostate.

Sue appeared to our mind as a figure of Shelleyan idealism. Phillotson compared Jude and Sue to Laon and Cythna, the idealized pair of liberators and martyrs in Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*. Finally when Jude is compared with other novels of that time which depict the new woman, Hardy's novel is generally more vivid, intense and moving than they are. Hardy's shifts between general and the particular, between theoretical debate and the concretely realized details of life, and his strongly dialectical imagination which repeatedly generates ironic contrasts and juxtapositions: all of these give Sue a stronger reality than the fictional new woman customarily acquires. In Keatsian term, "Sue is *La Bella Dame sans Merci*".

Masculinity and modernity are two colossal points in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Masculinity relates to the gender relationship and modernity signifies the intellectual trauma of the modern man. The contemporary society in *Jude* is Victorian society, a symbol of Christian manliness. In Christianity, male sexual desire was not considered as prudent and postpondence of the catchwords. The ideology of masculinity was enthusiastically erected. The main features

of Victorian masculinity are competitiveness, personal ambition, social responsibility and emotional restraint. According to Penny Boumelha, "In *Jude*, the two are constantly juxtaposed, the dominance of his intellectual ambitions and vice-versa in a continuing series." Jude was slender boy who had craziness for the books. He always wanted to be a child forever because being grown up is a kind of responsibility. He is very kind hearted and tender that are the weakest point of his character. David Cecil points out, "Hardy's heroes are larger than life." Jude had the tendency to be bishop or to be an established person but he had an extreme weakness for the female. Jude remarked that, "it is better to love a woman than to be a graduate or a parson or a pope". A lot of u-turns are found in his character that though makes him epic hero but he fails.

We know that Sue Bridehead who is considered as a New woman for her certain qualities like, 'intelligent', 'lively', capable of pursuing her own career, sexually daring and resistant to the conventional claims of marriage. She is a female anticounterpart of Jude. While in Victorian society, a man should have a patriarchal structure always and a man must show his dominance over women through his masculine force. But here, Jude is heroically unaggressive and indulgent with Sue. It is like Sue's duty to hold a balance in the contemporary society. New woman Sue creates a corresponding new man Jude who would understand, reciprocate and adjust to the demands of the new woman. To fulfill Sue's all wishes, Jude became weak and all his patriarchal structure and ideas were gone. An unmanned manner is found in Jude. Though Allen Swelter points out that, 'unmanned manner' makes a man a likeable highlighted character. There is no stage in the novel to doubt Jude's integrity. He is not cunning, very much honest and truthful, the most self-doubting and passive man whom Arabella calls, "a tender hearted fool". There is a continuous confusion and complex, civilizations are found in Jude. His modernity is identified with woman and he is appropriately seen nervous, veiled, sexually abnormal and hysterical: nature, simplicity, rationality and sanity are masculine attributes. Jude's modernity is accepted how he negotiates a new woman.

We find that Jude did not stop himself to meet with Sue. In the course of one meeting their hands touched and they clasped each

other's fingers. But Sue did not seem to attach much importance to this contact. Jude seized an opportunity to kiss Sue passionately, holding her in a close embrace and she fully gave responds to his action. This kiss became a turning point in Jude's career. Once again his attention was diverted from his ecclesiastical studies. In fact, he burnt all the theological and ethical books. While Sue has the ethereality and incorporality to retain hold Jude. Like other Victorian man Jude should be emotionally disenfranchised. Victorian men were like that because of their virility, the trap of an essentially male-created, gender-defined personality. It is Jude who privately oppressed by the females because of his weakness. While in Victorian society female should be restless, alienated and sexually manipulative, Arabella is a 'female animal'. The Victorian masculinity is meant to balance feminine panic. But here Jude is engaging himself in sexual relationship with Arabella, Jude did not violated her, rather Arabella violated Jude. The relationship between them reminds us of Milton's Samson Agonistes, While in Samson Agonistes; it is Delilah like Arabella violates the life of Samson means Jude. But in that closet... Samson later became 'agon' for his philistine society but here Jude did not become 'agon' for the Victorian society. Annette Federico in his book 'Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing' points out that the male's subjective experience of being an alien in a feminine domesticated space of somehow polluting that space and yet being invited to participate in it. Sexual intimidation provokes retreat and suddenly Jude's folly as a strong desire to run away from the 'nasty' sensuality of Arabella and the disturbing presence of New woman. New man Jude was forcefully created for the emancipation of the new woman Sue, while the new woman was not willing to be the victim of masculine greed. Declan Kibard points out the concept of 'self doubting new man' which is similar with Jude.

There is no place in Jude the Obscure for the great heroic or poetic scenes, such as Sergeant Troy's sword play, Gabriel Oak's fight to cover the wheat ricks during the furious storm in Far From the Madding Crowd, the remarkable episode of Widdeve in The Return of the Native or the wonderful Opening of The Mayor of Caster bridge. Rather the position of Jude is apollonian, moves towards culture and knowledge and there is the conception of ideal beauty for truth and for

higher perfection, which is pointed out by Neitzsche. Here new man Jude is threatened by the new women. He is considered as marginalized man of 1890's. Ann Simson points out that Sue's challenge about the transparency and coherence of the feminine causes the terrible suffering to Jude. For Jude, 'Sue is more than intellectual mentor and sexual tease', is according to Marjorie Garson.

In the novel, Arabella and Sue are representing two different types of female sexuality, the scheming seductress and fascinating tantalizing prune that collude to destroy the protagonist Jude. We find a Misogynistic description of Jude by Hardy. His problem of masculinity if of Hardy's modern man, the protagonist here is idealistic, intellectual and introspective. In Rabindranath Tagore's 'Ghore Baire', Sandeep and Nikhilesh show us different kind of masculinity. Here Jude tried to form a new construct of masculinity to negotiate the feminine by this process he got intellectual anonymity sexual ambivalence of woman.

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বিভূতিভূষণের ‘পথের পাঁচালী’র নারী চরিত্র

সাথী মুদি

বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বাংলা সাহিত্যের তিন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (মানিক, তারাশঙ্কর, বিভূতিভূষণ)-এর অন্যতম। যে কোন মহৎ কাজ সময়কে ছাপিয়ে যেমন অমর হয়ে যায়, বিভূতিভূষণের সাহিত্যসৃষ্টি আজও অমর হয়ে আছে। পল্লীজীবন, পল্লীগ্রামের মানুষই তাঁর লেখার প্রধান উপজীব্য। প্রকৃতি তাঁর লেখার অন্যতম প্রধান উপাদান। মানুষের মনের সঙ্গে প্রকৃতির যোগসাধনে তিনি অসাধারণ। তাঁর উপন্যাস ও ছোটগল্পগুলিতে প্রকৃতি ও মানুষ বারবার মিশে গেছে। তার মধ্যে অন্যতম তাঁর বিখ্যাত উপন্যাস ‘পথের পাঁচালী’। ইংরেজিতে একটি প্রবাদ আছে—“Our sweetest songs are those that tale of saddest thoughts” অর্থাৎ অশ্রুসিক্ত কাহিনীই আমাদের জীবন ইতিহাসের শ্রেষ্ঠ তথা মধুর সংগীত। আমরা যখন সীতার বনবাস পাঠ করি তখন আমাদের অজান্তেই আমাদের চোখ অশ্রুসজল হয়ে ওঠে। সীতার বেদনা তখন আর একা সীতার থাকে না, তখন সেই বেদনাবিধুর অনুভূতিটা হয়ে যায় সকলের। জীবনের এই সূক্ষ্মাতিসূক্ষ্ম অনুভূতিগুলি প্রত্যক্ষভাবে সাহিত্যে ফুটিয়ে তোলাই ছিল বিভূতিভূষণের সাহিত্যালঙ্কার। ম্যাথু আর্নল্ড-এর ভাষায়, “Literature is the criticism of life” অর্থাৎ সাহিত্যই জীবনের প্রতিফলন। যে সাহিত্যে জীবনবোধ নেই, সেই সাহিত্য সার্থক সাহিত্য নয়। বিভূতিভূষণের সাহিত্যের সর্বত্রই এই জীবন আর জীবনবোধের সূক্ষ্ম প্রতিফলন আমরা দেখতে পাই। যার সার্থক রূপায়ণ ঘটেছে তার নারীচরিত্রগুলিতে। “In a novel there is always a clock”—ফন্টরের এই বক্তব্য অনুযায়ী বিভূতিভূষণের ‘পথের পাঁচালী’ উপন্যাসে আমরা কালপ্রবাহের একটি ধারাবাহিকতা দেখতে পাই। ঔপন্যাসিক উপন্যাসে তৎকালীন যুগের একটি সমাজচিত্র, জীবনভাবনার কালপ্রবাহকে স্পষ্ট করে তুলে ধরেছেন অপূর মাধ্যমে। বিভূতিভূষণের লেখায় নিষ্ঠুরতা, ক্রুরতা প্রায় না। থাকলেও গ্রাম্য কুটিলতা কিন্তু আছে। তাঁর লেখায় পুরুষ

চরিত্রগুলি একটু অতিমাত্রায় ভালো হলেও তুলনামূলকভাবে নারী চরিত্রগুলি অনেক বেশি স্বাভাবিক, জীবন্ত। দোষ-গুণে মিশ্রিত বর্ণনায় সাধারণ মানুষ। বলা যেতেই পারে, এটি নারীকেন্দ্রিক উপন্যাস। ইন্দির ঠাকরুণ, দুর্গা, সর্বজয়াই এর প্রধান চরিত্র—অপু কেবল এক দ্রষ্টা, ভাষ্যকার। অপুর মধ্যে দিয়ে লেখক ‘পথের পাঁচালী’ রচনার পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছিলেন। অপুকে উপন্যাসে নিয়ে আসার আগে অপুর অস্তিত্বের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িয়ে দিয়েছিলেন নিশ্চিন্দিপুর গ্রাম তথা তৎকালীন সমাজজীবনকে। আর সেই কারণেই তৎকালীন সমাজজীবনের সঙ্গে পরিচয় করাতে লেখক ‘বল্লালী বালাই’ পাঠের অবতারণা করলেন। আমরা দেখতে পাই অতীত থেকে বর্তমানের কালপ্রবাহে জীবনের পরিকাঠামোর ধারাবাহিকভাবে বিবর্তন হলেও প্রতিবারেই স্পষ্টরূপে প্রতিভাত হয়েছে নারীর আত্মসম্মানবোধ। উপন্যাসের প্রথম পর্ব ‘বল্লালী বালাই’—এই পর্বে ইন্দির ঠাকরুণকে কেন্দ্র করেই হরিহর রায়ের পরিবারে একটি চরিত্র আমরা দেখতে পাই যিনি, হরিহরের সংসারে ‘আপদ বালাই’ স্বরূপ প্রতিভাত হয়েছেন। তৎকালীন ঔপনিবেশিক সমাজে কৌলিন্য প্রথার যূপকাঠে ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের মত অসংখ্য নারীরা ছিল সেই নরবলির উপকরণ। পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের নিয়মকানুনের কাছে আত্মসমর্পিত নারীদের দুঃসহ বেদনার দৃষ্টান্তস্বরূপ ইন্দির ঠাকরুণকে আমরা দেখতে পাই। ‘বল্লালী বালাই পর্বে ৭০ বছর বয়স্কা এক বৃদ্ধা ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের সঙ্গে আমাদের পরিচয় হয়। জীবনের শেষ পর্যায়ে উপনীত এই বৃদ্ধাকে ঔপন্যাসিক আমাদের সামনে তুলে ধরেছেন অত্যন্ত দক্ষতার সাথে। বয়সের ভারে নুজ এই বৃদ্ধার বেদনাময় ও অসহায় জীবন-ইতিহাস যেন অতীতের কালপ্রবাহের দলিল। ইন্দির ঠাকরুণ হরিহরের সংসারের ছিলেন অবাঞ্ছিতা, আশ্রিতা। তার নিজস্ব সম্বল বলতে, সমগ্র জীবনে বার তিনেক স্বামীর দর্শন এবং অকালমৃত কন্যা বিশ্বেশ্বরীর বেদনাতুর স্মৃতি। ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের মত কৌলিন্য প্রথার বলি কুলীন নারীরা শুধুমাত্র সামাজিক স্তরেই নয়, সাংসারিক জীবনেও ছিলেন অবাঞ্ছিত। এই কারণেই ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের এই নিদারুণ পথহারা, দিশাহারা গ্লানিময় জীবন এক বৃহত্তর নারীবর্গের সামাজিক অবস্থানকে ব্যঞ্জিত করে তুলেছে। ‘দু-বেলা কথায় কথায় বুড়িকে সময় থাকিতে পথ দেখাইয়া দেবার উপদেশ ইঙ্গিতে জানাইয়া দেয়। সেই পথ কোনদিকে জ্ঞান হওয়া অবধি আজ পর্যন্ত সন্তর বৎসরের মধ্যে বুড়িকে তাহার সন্ধান পায় নাই, এতকাল পর কোথায় তাহা মিলিবে ভাবিয়াই ঠাহর পায় না।’^১

জ্ঞানাবধি ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের এই পথের সন্ধানটি ছিল মূলত ঔপনিবেশিকৃত সমাজ থেকে বেরিয়ে নিজস্ব স্থান তথা বাসস্থানের সন্ধান। তৎকালীন পুরুষশাসিত

সমাজে বন্দি নারীরা মুক্তি লাভের আশায় নিজস্ব পথ সন্ধানের সাহস করতে পারেনি। তার কারণ হলো, তাদের জন্মাবধি শেখানো হয়েছিল নারীর সকল চেতনা-অনুভূতি-উপলব্ধি পুরুষের কাছে সমর্পিত। কৌলিন্য প্রথার বলিপ্রদত্ত ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণের মতো বিধবা নারীরা চিরকালই দিশাহারা, গ্লানিময় জীবনের দিশারী। তাই এরা সাংসারিক জীবনে অবাঞ্ছিত। তৎকালীন ঔপনিবেশিক গ্রামীণ সমাজের রীতিনীতি-লোকবিশ্বাসকে ধারাবাহিকভাবেই বহন করে আসছিলেন তারা। অসহায়, নিঃসম্বল এই বৃদ্ধা দুর্গার মধ্যে স্থাপন করে দিতে চেয়েছিলেন নিজের উত্তরসূরি প্রতিকল্প সন্তাকে। ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ কখনো ‘মা’ ডাক শোনেননি। আগেই তার মেয়ে বিশ্বেশ্বরী পৃথিবী ছেড়ে অপর পাড়ে চলে গিয়েছে। কিন্তু ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণের মাতৃহৃদয়টা আজও শুকিয়ে যায়নি। “হরিহরের মেয়ের মধ্যে বিশ্বেশ্বরী মৃত্যুপারের দেশ হইতে চল্লিশ বছর পরে তাহার অনাথা মায়ের কোলে আবার ফিরিয়া আসিয়াছে। চল্লিশ বছরে নিভিয়া-যাওয়া ঘুমন্ত মাতৃহৃদয়ে মেয়েটার মুখের বিপ্লব অপ্রতিভ ভঙ্গিতে, অবোধ চোখের হাসিতে—এক মুহূর্তে সচকিত আগ্রহে, শেষ হইতে চলা জীবনের ব্যাকুল ক্ষুধায় জাগিয়া উঠে।”^২

উপন্যাসে ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ চরিত্রটির মাধ্যমে ঔপন্যাসিক অতীতের ঐতিহ্যের ধারাটিকে বহন করে বর্তমানের পটভূমিতে সংযোগ স্থাপন করেছেন। আর সেই কারণেই ‘বল্লালী বালাই পর্বে পাঠকের হৃদয়ে নিজের প্রতি সহানুভূতি আকর্ষণের আশ্চর্য প্রদীপটি অত্যন্ত সতর্কতার সাথে দুর্গার হাতে সমর্পণ করে বৃদ্ধা উপন্যাস থেকে নীরবে বিদায় নিলেন। নিজের অন্তরের অপ্রাপ্তির ক্রোধাগ্নিটি সন্তর্পণে দুর্গার মধ্যে জ্বালিয়ে দিয়ে গেলেন বৃদ্ধা ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ। ‘দুর্গা’ নামটা শুনলেই মনে পড়ে এক পা ধুলো, মাথার চুল রুম্ম, উস্কোখুস্কো তেলের অভাবে একটি মেয়ে। সম্মোহিতের মতো মেয়েটি ঘুড়ে বেড়ায় ওড়কলমি লতার বনে। তবে সে পথ চলে সতর্কতার সাথে, তার দৃষ্টি সর্বদাই পথের পাশে ঝোপের মধ্যে লুকিয়ে থাকা কাঁচপোকাকার প্রতি। তার সমবয়সীরা যেখানে তাদের সমবয়সীদের সাথে খেলায় মত্ত, সেখানে সে বনবাদাড়েজঙ্গলে ঘুরে বেড়ায়। মায়ের শাসনে পীড়িত দুর্গা তার দুঃখ ভাগ করে নেয় প্রকৃতির সাথে। এখানে তাকে প্রকৃতিপ্রেমী না বলে প্রকৃতির অনুষঙ্গী বললে বেশি ভালো হয়। দুর্গার শৈশবের সিংহভাগ দখল করে আছে তার পিসিমা ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ। দুর্গার সকল আশার-ভালবাসার সঙ্গী ছিল ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ। তাকে যেমন ইন্দির ঠাকুরগণ সকল অন্যায়ে প্রশ্রয় দিয়েছে, তেমনি কখনো বিদ্যালয়ে না যাওয়া দুর্গাকে নানা রূপকথার গল্প-ছড়া শোনাতেন। দুর্গাও বাগান থেকে তার জন্য নানা স্বাদু ফল তুলে আনত। হয়তো

গল্প শোনানোর পরিবর্তে সামান্য ঋণশোধ। কথায় আছে, যাকে ভালবাসা যায় তার সাথে যাবতীয় মান-অভিমান-আবদারও করা যায়। দুর্গাও ব্যতিক্রম নয়। পিসির প্রতি তার অপরিসীম ভালবাসা থেকে জন্ম নেয় যাবতীয় মান-অভিমান-আবদার। তাই পিসি বাড়ি ছেড়ে চলে গেলে দুর্গা তার অভাব বোধ করে। রাতে বিছানায় শুয়ে পিসিমার জন্য কাঁদে। বাবা-মার অপছন্দ জেনেও পিসিকে ফিরিয়ে আনার জন্য সে কাতর অনুরোধ জানায়। ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের প্রতি দুর্গার ভালবাসা সর্বজয়াকে ক্রমশ ঈর্ষান্বিত করে তোলে। লেখকের বর্ণনায়—“ইন্দির ঠাকরুণ ফিরিয়া আসিয়াছে ছয়-সাত মাস ইহল, সর্বজয়া কিন্তু ইহার মধ্যে একদিনও বুড়ির সঙ্গে ভালো করিয়া কথা কহে নাই। আজকাল তাহার আরও মনে হয় যে, ঐ বুড়ি ডাইনী সাতকুলখাগীটাকে তাহার মেয়ে যেন তাহার চেয়েও বেশি ভালবাসে। হিংসা তো হয়ই, রাগও হয়। পেটের মেয়েকে পর করিয়া দিতেছে।”^৩ উপন্যাসের কেন্দ্রীয় চরিত্র অপুকে দুর্গাই হাত ধরে পরিচয় করিয়ে দেয় প্রকৃতির নৈসর্গিক শোভার সাথে। সর্বজয়ার সকল শাসন উপেক্ষা করে দুর্গার অফুরন্ত দুরন্তপনা, বনে-জঙ্গলে কাঁচা-পাকা ফলের সন্ধানে ঘুরে বেড়ানো, অপূর প্রতি স্নেহের শাসন—এই সকল বর্ণনাই দুর্গাকে সাধারণ গ্রাম্যবালিকা থেকে প্রকৃতিবালিকা’য় উত্তীর্ণ করেছে। অপূর বর্ণনাতেও আমরা সেই ইঙ্গিতই পাই—“দিদির কেহ নাই, সে যেন একা কোথা ইহিতে আসিয়াছে, উহার সাথী এখানে কেহ নাই।”^৪ ‘আম আঁটির ভেঁপু’ অংশে যখন দেখি তখন তার বয়স দশ-এগারো বছর, “গড়ন পাতলা-পাতলা, রঙ অপূর মত অতটা ফরসা নয়, একটু চাপা। হাতে কাঁচের চুড়ি, পরনে ময়লা কাপড়, মাথার চুল রক্ষ—বাতাসে উড়িতেছে, মুখের গড়ন মন্দ নয়, অপূর মতো চোখগুলো বেশ ডাগর ডাগর!”^৫ কিশোরী দুর্গা ভোজনপ্রিয়া। আমের কুশি জারিয়ে খাওয়ার মধ্যে কিংবা খেলার সরঞ্জাম, ফলমূলের সন্ধানে সারাদিন একা একা সে বনজঙ্গলে ঘুরে বেড়ানোর মধ্যে এক অনন্য আনন্দের আশ্বাদ পেত। এসবেরই মাঝে তার জীবনে একটি বিশেষ রং লাগে, নীরেনের সঙ্গে বিয়ের প্রসঙ্গে। গোকুলের বউ এই প্রসঙ্গের উত্থাপন করলে দুর্গা আনন্দে আত্মহারা হয়ে পড়ে। লজ্জা নারীর অলঙ্কার, ‘পথের পাঁচালী’ উপন্যাসে দুর্গার দুরন্তপনার পাশাপাশি এক লজ্জাশীলা দুর্গার নারী স্বভাবের এক খণ্ড চিত্রাঙ্কন করেছেন ঔপন্যাসিক। দুর্গার মত চঞ্চল মেয়েও নীরেনের প্রতি আসক্ত হয়, তার সাথে ঘর বাঁধার স্বপ্ন দেখে। মধু সংক্রান্তির ব্রতের দিন সে তার মনের বাসনা জানায় নীরেন বাবু যেন ভালো থাকে। তার বিয়ে যেন নীরেনের সাথেই হয়। রানুর দিদির মতই যেন বাজি-বাজনা হয় তার বিয়েতে। দুর্গার একাকীত্ব এই

উপন্যাসের অন্যতম দিক। সিনেমাতে আমরা দেখি যখন রাণু দিদি বিবাহমণ্ডপে আসীন; তার সলজ্জ নেত্র পতির দৃষ্টি এড়িয়ে চলেছে, তার রূপে-রঙে লেগেছে বসন্তের আভা, দুর্গার চোখে তখন বেদনাশ্রু। এই বেদনাশ্রু রাণু দিদির মতো সঙ্গীকে হারাবার, দুর্গার মনের গহন কোণে লুক্কায়িত ঘরণী হওয়ার ব্যর্থ স্বপ্নের, সাথীহারার হয়ে থাকার কষ্টের। সত্যজিৎ রায় এখানে দুর্গার একাকীত্বের যন্ত্রণাকে নিপুণভাবে ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। সন্তানের সুখের জন্য মায়েরা সর্বদাই ত্যাগ করতে তৎপর থাকে। দুর্গা মা নয়, কিন্তু দুর্গার মধ্যেও আমরা এক মাতৃহৃদয়ের পরিচয় পাই। দুর্গা অপুকে বেড়ে উঠতে সাহায্য করেছে। দুর্গা নিজে বনজঙ্গলে ঘুরে বেড়াত, এবং অপুকেও সেই সঙ্গে প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে পরিচয় করিয়েছিল। অপূর সমস্ত দুরন্তপনা, মান-অভিমান দুর্গা বুঝতে পারত এবং অপূর সকল আবদার ও চাহিদা সে পূরণের চেষ্টা করত। অপুকে বরাবরই সে মায়ের মতো আগলে রাখত, চুরি করা ফল দিয়ে আচার বানিয়ে খাওয়ানো, বৃষ্টির মধ্যে বুকে টেনে নেওয়া— এসবই যেন তার মাতৃহৃদয়ের প্রকাশ। অপুও তার দিদির ভীষণ ভালবাসে। তাইতো দিদির মৃত্যুর পর সোনার কৌটাটি রান্নাঘরের তাক থেকে আবিষ্কার করার পর সে বিন্দুমাত্র বিলম্ব না করে সেটিকে বাঁশবনে ছুঁড়ে ফেলে দেয়। যেন আর কখনো কেউ তার দিদির ‘চোর’ অপবাদ না দিতে পারে। মৃত্যুর পরও দিদির যেন কেউ ঘৃণার চোখে না দেখে।

গ্রামের একপাশে প্রকৃতির নিস্তরঙ্গতা ভেদ করে রেললাইনের ওপর ছুটে যাওয়া বাষ্পীয় ইঞ্জিন পরিচালিত রেলগাড়ি। যার ঝিকঝিক শব্দে দু’ ভাইবোন মিলে নদীর পারে কাশবন দু’ হাতে সরিয়ে রেল দেখার আনন্দ যেন এক অজানা রহস্যের সন্ধান দেয়। সত্যজিৎ রায়ের এই অনুপম দৃশ্যটির শিল্পরূপ চলচ্চিত্রটিতে এক অনন্য মাত্রা এনে দেয়।

নিশ্চিন্দপুর ছেড়ে চলে যাওয়ার সময় অপূর মনে হয়েছে দুর্গা মারা গেলেও দুইজনের খেলার পথে-ঘাটে, বাঁশবনে, আমতলায়, নিশ্চিন্দপুরের ভাঙা কোঠাবাড়ির প্রতিটি গৃহকোণ, যেখানে সে তার দিদির সাথে তার যেন বিচ্ছেদ হয়ে গেল। তার মনে হয় গ্রামের শেষে বুড়ো জামতলাটায় তার দিদি যেন স্নানমুখে দাঁড়িয়ে তার দিকে চেয়ে আছে। অপূর মনে হয় বাবা-মা দিদির অপছন্দ করত তাই তো অবিলম্বে তাকে নিয়ে দিদির সেখানে একা রেখে তারা চলে যাচ্ছে। হঠাৎ মনে সাহস সঞ্চয় করে চোখ ভরা জল নিয়ে সে যেন দিদির জানাতে চায়—“আমি যাইনি দিদি, আমি তোকে ভুলিনি,...”^৬

ইন্দির ঠাকুরগুণের মৃত্যুর সাথে সাথে গ্রামে প্রাচীনত্বের অবসান হয়েছিল কিন্তু দুর্গার মৃত্যুতে অনেকগুলো স্বপ্নের মৃত্যু ঘটে গেলো। মৃত্যু হল নির্জন বাঁশবাগানের হীরকখণ্ড, দুই পয়সার মিঠাই ও মুড়কি খাওয়ার, বায়োস্কোপের ভেতরের অবাক করে দেওয়া সেই অভূতপূর্ব দৃশ্য কিংবা কাশবনের ওপারে না দেখা রেলগাড়ির স্বপ্নের। রাণুদের বাড়ির বাগানের মানুষ সমান উঁচু ঘন আগাছার বনে শুকনো পাতার সাথে সেইসব মৃত স্বপ্নদের গুনগুন শব্দ আজও শোনা যায় “হলুদ বনে বনে নাক ছবিটি হারিয়ে গেছে,—সুখ নেইকো মনে।”^৭ সর্বজয়া দায়িত্বজ্ঞান সম্পন্ন আদর্শ গৃহিণী ও স্নেহময়ী জননী। হরিহরের সংসারে সর্বজয়া যেদিন প্রবেশ করল, সেদিন থেকে সংসারের সমস্ত দায়িত্ব সে নিজেই বহন করে চলেছে। অভাবের সংসারের অকল্পনীয় দারিদ্র্যের সমস্ত যন্ত্রণা কষ্ট সহ্য করে গেছে সে। সর্বজয়া শান্ত-সুশীলা নয়, সে মুখরা-স্বার্থপর। সে ইন্দির ঠাকুরগুণের উপর অত্যাচার করে। বিধবা অসহায় ইন্দির ঠাকুরগুণ-এর জীবনের শেষ আশ্রয়টুকুও সে কেড়ে নিয়েছিল নির্দয়ভাবে, স্বার্থপরতার ন্যায়। কিন্তু পুত্র অপুকে সে চোখে হারায়। শিশু অপুকে কাজল পরিষে ঘুম পাড়াতে গিয়ে সে গান গাইতে থাকে—

‘আয়রে পাখি - ই- ই লেজঝোলা,—

আমার খোকনকে নিয়ে-এ-এ গাছে তোলা”^৮

সর্বজয়া নিজের সন্তান তথা দুর্গা ও অপূর সুখের জীবনের কামনা করে। তাইতো দুর্গা ও অপূর কুড়িয়ে পাওয়া কাঁচের টুকরোকে মূল্যবান হীরে ভেবে স্বপ্ন দেখতে থাকে সে—

‘রাঁধিতে রাঁধিতে সর্বজয়া বারবার মনে মনে বলিতে লাগিল—দোহাই ঠাকুর, কত লোক তো কত কি কুড়িয়ে পায়। এই কষ্ট যাচ্ছে সংসারের—বাছাদের দিকে মুখ তুলে তাকিও—দোহাই ঠাকুর।’^৯

তবে উপন্যাসে দুর্গার তুলনায় অপূর প্রতি সর্বজয়ার স্নেহ অধিকমাত্রায় দেখা যায়। কিন্তু তার কারণে দুর্গার প্রতি তার প্রেম কিংবা স্নেহের কার্পণ্যতা ঘটেনি। দুর্গাকে সে যেমন স্নেহ করেছে, দুর্গা অবাক ও উদ্ধত হওয়ায় সর্বজয়া তাকে শাসন করেছে। সেজ ঠাকুরের অপমান যখন তার সহ্যের বাঁধ অতিক্রম করেছে, তখন সে দুর্গাকে অমানবিক প্রহার করেছে। নিজের দারিদ্র্যের যন্ত্রণায় নিজে অনুতপ্ত হয়েছে এই ভেবে যে, দুর্গার মধ্যে আজ যে চৌর্যবৃত্তি এসেছে তা তাদেরই কারণে, দু-বেলা সন্তানদের দু’মুঠো অন্নের জোগান দিতে না পারার ফলে। এই অক্ষমতা

তাকে অন্তরে অন্তরে নিপীড়িত করে। কিন্তু অপরদিকে এই সর্বজয়ার আর এক মাত্ররূপ আমরা দেখতে পাই, যখন দেখি এক বড় বৃষ্টির রাতে অসুস্থ দুর্গাকে প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগের হাত থেকে রক্ষা করার জন্য সর্বজয়ার অদম্য প্রচেষ্টা, সে যেন প্রকৃতির সাথে লড়াই করে তার মেয়ে দুর্গাকে ফিরিয়ে আনবেই। কিন্তু সেই প্রচেষ্টার ব্যর্থতা তাকে প্রথমবার তার অক্ষমতার সম্মুখীন করায়। দুর্গার মৃত্যুর পর যখন হরিহর বাড়ি ফিরে আসে তখন সর্বজয়ার মাতৃহৃদয়ের বেদনা রোনোতিরূপে ফুঁপিয়ে বেরিয়ে আসে। “উচ্ছাসিত কণ্ঠে ফুকরিয়া কাঁদিয়া উঠিল—ওগো দুগগা কি আর আছে গো—মা যে আমাদের ফাঁকি দিয়ে চলে গিয়েছে গো—”

সর্বজয়া মাতৃ হৃদয় মাতৃস্নেহে পূর্ণরূপে বিকাশ পায় অপূর প্রতি। ‘অপরাজিত’ উপন্যাস স্মৃতিচারণের মাধ্যমে আমরা সর্বজয়ার মধ্যে পুত্র অপূর প্রতি ব্যাকুলতা দেখতে পাই। সে চায় না অপু শিক্ষালাভ করে বড় হোক, সে চায় অপু গ্রামে থেকে পৌরোহিত্য করে জীবন অতিবাহিত করুক। সর্বজয়ার কাছেই থাকুক সে। ভালো-মন্দ যাই হোক, সর্বজয়া লুকিয়ে ছেলের জন্য তুলে রেখে দেয়। কুণ্ডুদের বাড়ির বিয়ের তত্ত্বের সন্দেশ সর্বজয়া নিজে না খেয়ে অপূর জন্য তুলে রাখে। সর্বজয়ার কাছে অপু এখনো সেই শিশুটি। সর্বজয়ার প্রায়ই মনে হয় সে ব্যতীত আর কেউ অপুকে আদর করে, স্নেহ ভরে খেতে দিতে পারে না। সে জিজ্ঞাসা করে—“দুবেলাই মাছ দেয়? পেট ভরিয়া ভাত দেয় তো? কি খাবার খায় সে বৈকালে? কাপড় নিজে কাচিতে হয়?”^{১০} অপূর জন্য এত ভাবনা আর কে ভাবে!

হরিহরের সাথে সর্বজয়া বিয়ের পর প্রায় দশ বৎসর যাবৎ হরিহর ছিল নিরুদ্দেশ। স্বামীর এই নিরুদ্দেশকালে সর্বজয়া পাড়াপ্রতিবেশীর কাছে সহানুভূতির পাত্রী হয়ে উঠেছিল। কিন্তু তারপর যখন হরিহর ফিরে আসে তখন প্রবল আকাঙ্ক্ষা সত্ত্বেও সে হরিহরের কাছে তার সাথে চলে যাওয়ার ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করতে পারেনি। —“কেন বিদ্রোহ ঘোষণা করিয়া বলিল না নিয়ে যাক গো—আবার তা নিয়ে বলা, কেন এত ছোট হতে যাওয়া।”^{১১} সর্বজয়ার এই আত্মসম্মানবোধ পাঠককে চমৎকৃত করে। দারিদ্র পীড়িত সংসারে সর্বজয়া কেবল স্বচ্ছলতার স্বপ্ন দেখতো। স্বচ্ছলতার সেই স্বপ্নভঙ্গ হয়েছিল, যখন সে হরিহরের সাথে বাঁশবনের ভেতর ভাঙ্গা কোঠাবাড়িতে এসে উঠেছিল। কিন্তু এতেও সর্বজয়া হতোদ্যম হয়নি। সে নতুন করে স্বপ্ন দেখেছে—

‘অপু সকালে উঠিয়া বড় মাটির ভাঁড়ে দোয়া একমাত্র সফেন কাল গাই
এর দুধের সঙ্গে গরম মুড়ির ফলার খাইয়া পড়িতে বসে। দুর্গা ম্যালেরিয়ায়

ভোগে না। সকলেই জানে, সকলেই খাতির করে, আসিয়া পায়ের ধূলা লয়। গরীব বলিয়া তুচ্ছ তাচ্ছিল্য করে না—শুধুই স্বপ্ন দেখে, দিন নাই, রাত নাই, সর্বজয়া শুধুই স্বপ্ন দেখে।”^{১২}

রায়চৌধুরীদের বাড়িতে রাধুনী থাকাকালীন সর্বজয়ার স্বাধীনচেতা মন সেই পরাধীন জীবনকে মেনে নিতে পারেনি,—

“এ যেন সর্বদা জুজু হইয়া থাকা, সর্বদা মন যোগাইয়া চলা, আর একজনের মুখের দিকে চাহিয়া পথ হাঁটা, পান থেকে চুন না খসে। ছোট ছোট, তস্য ছোট... তাহার অসহ্য হয়ে উঠেছিল।”^{১৩}

নিশ্চিন্দিপুরের অভাবের সংসার হলেও সর্বজয়া সেখানেই ছিল সর্বেসর্বা। রায়চৌধুরীর বাড়িতে থাকাকালীন তার নিশ্চিন্দিপুরের সংসারকেই অনেক বেশি গ্রহণযোগ্য মনে হয়েছিল। কিন্তু রায়চৌধুরী বাড়ির অসম্মানের আশ্রয় ছেড়ে এসে নিশ্চিন্দিপুরের ফিরে আসতে পারেনি কারণ তার মনে হয়েছিল পাড়া-প্রতিবেশীদের কাছে সে কী জবাব দেবে! ছোট হয়ে যাওয়ার ভয়ে সে কাশীর অনিশ্চিত জীবনকেও শ্রেয়তর মনে হয়েছিল। রায়চৌধুরীর বাড়িতে অপু যখন গ্রামে ফিরে যাওয়ার কথা বলে, তখন সর্বজয়া বলেছে—“চল বরং,—আচ্ছা কাশী যাবি?”

‘অত্রুর সংবাদ’-এ কাশী প্রবাস। সেখানে খুবই অল্প দিন স্বাচ্ছন্দে থাকার পর হরিহরের হঠাৎ মৃত্যু সর্বজয়াকে তীব্র অসহায়তার সম্মুখীন করে। প্রতিবেশী লম্পট নন্দবাবুর উপদ্রব সর্বজয়ার সামনে নানা সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করে। ধনী পরিবারের রাধুনির কাজে নিযুক্ত হতে সে বাধ্য হয়। গৃহিণী থেকে পরিচারিকায় পরিণত হয়। দারিদ্র্য তার চিরকালীন সঙ্গী। কিন্তু এইরূপ আত্মসম্মানহীন পরাধীনতা সে মন থেকে মেনে নিতে পারেননি। ধনীগৃহের অনুষ্ঠানে এক সম্মানিতা বৃদ্ধা রাজরানীকে দেখে সর্বজয়ার আপন কৃত অপরাধ চোখের সামনে ভেসে ওঠে। সে এই সম্মানীয়া বৃদ্ধার মধ্যে দেখতে পায় অপমানিতা ইন্দির ঠাকরুণকে। জেগে ওঠে তার মধ্যে অনুশোচনাবোধ, অন্তর্দহন-এর অনলে প্রজ্জ্বলিত সর্বজয়ার অশ্রু বাঁধ মানে না। সর্বজয়া তার পূর্বকৃত অপরাধের ক্ষমা চায়। সর্বজয়ার মনে হয় তার নিজের তীব্র অবমাননাকর কৃতকর্মের কারণেই আজ তার এই পরিণতি। মৃত ইন্দির ঠাকরুণের প্রতি সমবেদনা জেগে ওঠে তার মনে। এককালে যে আশ্রিতা অসহায় ইন্দির ঠাকরুণকে সে নিরাশ্রয় করে দিয়েছিল, তারই ফলস্বরূপ আজ সে নিজে জাগতিক ভাবে আশ্রিতা হয়েও মানসিক ভাবে নিরাশ্রয়।

তথ্যসূত্র

১. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.১৫, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
২. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.২১, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
৩. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.১৫, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
৪. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.৬৩, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
৫. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (নবম মুদ্রণ, জানুয়ারি, ২০১৮). আম আঁটির ভেঁপু, পৃ.১২, কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস
৬. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (নবম মুদ্রণ, জানুয়ারি, ২০১৮). আম আঁটির ভেঁপু, পৃ.১৫৫, কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস
৭. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (নবম মুদ্রণ, জানুয়ারি, ২০১৮), আম আঁটির ভেঁপু, পৃ.১১২, কলকাতা: সিগনেট প্রেস
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৯. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.৬১, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
১০. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.৪৩, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
১১. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.৬, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
১২. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.৯৪, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স
১৩. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বিভূতিভূষণ (প্রথম প্রকাশ, ২৮শে ভাদ্র, ১৪০১), পথের পাঁচালী, পৃ.১৬৪, কলকাতা: মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স

বাণী বসুর ছোটোগল্পে পৌরাণিক ও মহাকাব্যিক আখ্যানের নবভাষ্যে নারীবাদী ভাবনা

ইন্দ্রাণী গাঙ্গুলি

পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসের অন্যতম যুগান্তকারী সংঘটন ফরাসি বিপ্লবের মূল বাণী ‘সাম্য, মৈত্রী এবং স্বাধীনতা’র রেশ ধরে ব্রিটিশ লেখক মেরি ওলস্টোনক্রাফট সমাজে নারীর সমশিক্ষা এবং সমমর্যাদার অধিকারের পক্ষে বলিষ্ঠ সওয়াল করেছিলেন (১৭৯২)। পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সভ্যতার অন্যতম দান লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে সমতা ও অধিকার অর্জনের লক্ষ্যে উনিশ ও বিশ শতকে পাশ্চাত্যে নারীবাদী আন্দোলনের প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় তরঙ্গ উঠেছিল। নারীবাদী তত্ত্বে এবং আন্দোলনে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্ব পেয়েছে আবহমান লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের বিরোধিতা এবং নারীর সমঅধিকার ও মর্যাদালাভের পথ অন্বেষণ। লিঙ্গবৈষম্য এক সামাজিক সমস্যা, যার নিরসনের পথে অগ্রসর হতে গেলে জানা প্রয়োজন বিবর্তমান সামাজিক ইতিহাসের ধারা, যার সাক্ষ্য বহন করে চলে সাহিত্য। প্রাগাধুনিক ধর্মকেন্দ্রিক সাহিত্য তৎকালের সামাজিক ইতিহাসের দলিল। অধিকার অর্জনের সংগ্রামে নারীর জয়-পরাজয়, অবমাননার বিবর্তমান আলোচ্য সন্ধান আধুনিক সাহিত্যকারেরা বারবার মহাকাব্য ও পুরাণের নবভাষ্য রচনায় ব্রতী হয়েছেন। বর্তমান প্রবন্ধের আলোচ্য বিষয় বাণী বসুর ছোটোগল্পে পৌরাণিক ও মহাকাব্যিক আখ্যানের নবভাষ্যে নারীবাদী ভাবনা।

পুরাণ এবং মহাকাব্যের নানা আখ্যানে ক্ষমতা কায়ম রাখার প্রশ্নে, উত্তরাধিকারীলাভের প্রয়োজনে এবং রাজনৈতিক তথা সামাজিক চুক্তির শর্ত হিসেবে নারীকে বারবার ব্যবহার করেছে পিতৃতন্ত্র। এই বিষয়ে প্রাচীন রাজতন্ত্রের সঙ্গে বর্তমান বিশ্বায়নের শরিক আধুনিক গণতন্ত্রের পার্থক্য নগণ্যই। নিজের জীবন, যাপন, শরীর সম্পর্কে যারা নিজেরা কখনোই সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে পারেনি, পিতৃতন্ত্রের ক্রীড়ানক হয়েছে বারবার, তেমন পৌরাণিক এবং মহাকাব্যিক নারীদের কাহিনি নিয়ে গল্প লিখে বাণী বসু তাদের নিরুচ্চার যন্ত্রণাকে নবভাষ্য দান করেছেন।

প্রচলিত কাহিনিগুলির কোনো বিকল্প ভাষ্য নির্মাণ না করে মূল কাহিনিক্রম অপরিবর্তিত রেখে নারীর অধিকারহীনতা, ব্যবহৃত হওয়া এবং লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের তীব্রতা কাহিনিগুলিতে স্পষ্ট করে তুলেছেন।

ইতিহাস বলে, গোষ্ঠী বা কৌমভিত্তিক সমাজব্যবস্থায় পরবর্তী ধাপে বৃহৎ যৌথ পরিবারের উৎপত্তি হলে সম্পত্তির উপর ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানার অধিকার স্বীকৃত হয় এবং পুরুষের কাছে উত্তরাধিকারীর প্রয়োজন নিরঙ্কুশ হয়ে ওঠে। একই সঙ্গে সমাজে উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থা থেকে বিচ্যুত হয়ে নারীর স্থান হয় গৃহে, দাসীরূপে। গ্রাসাস্বাদনের জন্য নারী নির্ভর হয়ে পড়ে পুরুষের উপর। স্বভাবতই এই নির্ভরতা নিপীড়নের সহায়ক হয়ে ওঠে। খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব সপ্তম শতক থেকে প্রায় দেড় হাজার বছর ধরে রচিত সব শাস্ত্রে (বলাবাহুল্য, শাস্ত্র গ্রন্থসমূহ সিভিল ল বা সামাজিক ন্যায়ের প্রতিনিধি হিসেবেই বিবেচিত হতো) নারীকে তার দেহ ও সম্পদের উপর সমস্ত অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হয়েছে। শাস্ত্রবেত্তা বলেছেন, ‘ন স্ত্রী স্বাতন্ত্র্যমহতি’। অন্যদিকে শাস্ত্রবচন বলেছে, ‘পুত্রার্থে ক্রিয়তে ভার্যা’। তাই সমাজের কাছে নারীর জন্ম ও জীবনের একমাত্র মূল্য ও সার্থকতা ছিল প্রজননার্থেই। এদেশে তাই নারীমন আশৈশব পুরুষের প্রতি বশ্যতাস্বীকারের শিক্ষায় লালিত হয়। বিবাহের পর নারীর যৌনজীবনের নিয়ন্ত্রণ হয় তার স্বামী। সুপ্রাচীন কাল থেকেই মাতৃত্ব নিরপেক্ষ যৌনতা ভারতীয় দাম্পত্যে স্বীকৃত নয় এবং সমাজ ও পরিবারে সর্বত্রই যাবতীয় উৎপাদনমূলক সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের অধিকারী যেহেতু পুরুষ, সে কারণে সহবাস ও গর্ভাধানে সাধারণত নারীর সম্মতির অপেক্ষা ছিল না। আবার মাতৃত্ব নারীর জন্য গৌরবের হলেও ভারতীয় ঐতিহ্যে শিশুপালন ও পরিচর্যা ছাড়া সন্তানের বিষয়ে পরিবারের মুখ্য হিসেবে সিদ্ধান্তগ্রহণের অধিকারী ছিলেন মূলত পিতাই। সাহিত্য সমাজেরই কথকতা করে চলে। মহাকাব্যিক ও পৌরাণিক কাহিনিসমূহ সেকালের সমাজবাস্তবতা তথা সমাজমানসের কথাকার উত্তরাধুনিক কালপর্বে দাঁড়িয়ে বাণী বসু তাঁর গল্পে পুরাণপ্রতিমার নবনির্মাণ ঘটিয়েছেন। সুপরিচিত কাহিনিবিন্যাসে পরিবর্তন না ঘটিয়ে আধুনিক চেতনায় চরিত্রসমূহের মনস্তাত্ত্বিক ব্যাখ্যায় নতুন আলোকপাত করেছেন তিনি। তাঁর রচনায় দাম্পত্য সম্পর্কের বিচিত্র বিন্যাসের প্রেক্ষিতে এই জাতীয় গল্পগুলোর আলোচনা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠে। সূর্যসংজ্ঞা’ গল্পে দেবশিল্পী বিশ্বকর্মানন্দিনী সংজ্ঞার সৌন্দর্য্যে আকৃষ্ট হয়ে মর্ত্তণ্ডদেব তার পাণিপ্রার্থী হন। মর্ত্তণ্ডদেবের গৃহিণীহীন গৃহে অনুভূত হয়েছে গৃহিণীর আবশ্যিকতা। এতদিন তার কল্পনায় ছিল এক বীরাস্ত্রনা তেজস্বিনী দীপ্তিময়ী জীবনসঙ্গিনী, সংজ্ঞাকে দেখার পর পরিবর্তিত হল তার মতামত। তেজে অগ্রগণ্য

দিবাকর নিশ্চিত হলেন, তাঁর যোগ্য সহধর্মিণী হতে পারে মধুরতায় অগ্রগণ্য এই নারী। অন্যদিকে সংজ্ঞার কাছে বড় আকস্মিক, বড় অতর্কিত এ প্রণয়, এ বিবাহ। ... প্রস্তুতিরও প্রয়োজন কি ছিল না?”^১ বৈদিক সভ্যতা বিবাহে নারীর ঐচ্ছিক অনুমোদন প্রয়োজনীয় বলে মনে করেনি। এক উদ্রাস্ত নববধূ যখন স্বামীর প্রবল তেজ সহ্য করতে অপারগ, তখন হতাশ ও অপমানিত সূর্যদেবের অভিশাপ নেমে আসে তাঁরই অনাগত সন্তানদের উপর। নিজের ছায়া থেকে নিজকায়ার প্রতিরূপ নির্মাণ করে সংজ্ঞা চলে যায় তপস্যা করতে। পিতৃগৃহেও স্থান হয় না তার, কারণ, চিরন্তন গার্হস্থ্য নিয়ম হল, “পতিগৃহ ছেড়ে অন্য কোথাও বেশিদিন থাকা তো যশস্কর নয়! সে পিতৃগৃহ হলেও না।”^২ তাহলে “এবার কোথায় যায় সংজ্ঞা? কোথায় তার অব্যাহতি?”^৩ না, অব্যাহতি নেই। তাই নারীকেই (সংজ্ঞাকেই) তপস্যায় সিদ্ধিলাভ করে স্বামীসৌভাগ্যে গরবিনী হতে ফিরতেই হয় গাস্ত্যে। অর্থাৎ নারীকে হয়ে উঠতে হবে তার স্বামীর যোগ্য। অথচ শাস্ত্রকার মনু বলেছেন, সর্বগুণহীন পুরুষও সর্বগুণযুক্ত নারীর পূজ্য। তাই স্বামীর যোগ্য হয়ে ওঠার পরীক্ষায় সফল হতে উমা, সংজ্ঞা, দেবহুতিদেরই কঠিন তপস্যা করতে হয়। পৌরাণিক কাহিনি অনুসারে পুত্রের প্রয়োজনে বিবাহ করেছিলেন কদম ঋষি এবং তাঁর সুযোগ্য বধূ হয়ে ওঠার জন্য রাজনন্দিনী দেবহুতিকে নিরন্তর কৃচ্ছসাধনা করতে হয়েছিল। বাণী বসু কপিল’ গল্পে কৃচ্ছসাধনরতা দেবহুতিকে ‘শ্রীকান্ত’ উপন্যাসের অন্নদা দিদির মতো ‘ভস্মাচ্ছাদিত বহি’ বলেছেন। সৃষ্টির আদিলগ্নে প্রজাসৃষ্টিতে ব্রতী কর্দম ঋষির চাহিদা “রূপবতী তাঁর ভার্যাকে হতেই হবে, কিন্তু রূপবতী হলে গুণহীনা হলে তো চলবে না!”^৪ অথচ এই সম্ভানোৎপাদনের যন্ত্রসম ভার্যাকে ত্যাগ করতে হবে তার বিদ্যাভিমান, যদিও তার চিত্ত-বিবেক-বুদ্ধি-সম-দম-চৈতন্য থাকা আবশ্যিক। কৃচ্ছসাধনের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হয়ে দেবহুতি তবু বলতে পেরেছিলেন, “আমি আপনার ভোগের যোগ্য হলেও, আপনি এখনও আমার ভোগের যোগ্য হননি।”^৫ একথা ‘রেণুকা’ গল্পের রাজনন্দিনী থেকে ঋষিপত্নী হয়ে যাওয়া সত্যবতী বা রেণুকা কেউই বলতে পারেননি। সত্যবতীর জীবন কেটেছে “এক কোপন বৃদ্ধের তটস্থ সেবায়।”^৬ পিত্রালয়ের সুখস্বৃতি যেন তার পূর্বজন্মের স্মৃতি, বাধ্যতাবদ্ধ দাম্পত্য যাকে মুহূর্তে মিথ্যা মায়া ও স্বপ্নকূহকে পরিণত করেছে। বধূ রেণুকার মুখে নিজের অতীতের ছায়া দেখতে পান সত্যবতী। তপোবনের আবহে বাল্য পেরিয়ে কৈশোরে পদার্পণ করে রেণুকার সন্তানরাও মায়ের সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠতা প্রায় মুছে ফেলে পিতার সঙ্গে নিবিড় সম্পর্কে জুড়ে যায়। স্বভাবতই প্রাণবন্ত রেণুকার জীবন যান্ত্রিক হয়ে পড়ে, তবু

তার চারিত্রিক প্রাণময়তা, স্বতঃস্ফূর্ততা, আবেগ সম্পূর্ণ নিঃশেষ হয়ে যায় না। অপচিত দাম্পত্য একদিন ডেকে আনে ভয়াবহ বিপর্যয়। একদিন রেণুকা সুপুরুষ চিত্রেরথের জলকেলি দেখার পর “গাণ্ডে অরুণিমা, চোখ দুটি লজ্জা আর স্বপ্নরাঙা, তনুদেহটি বাসনায় থরথর করে কাঁপছে। এইভাবেই তাকে আবিষ্কার করলেন জমদগ্নি। এই ‘বন্ধলবসনা তরী’কে এত সুন্দর ও অভীষ্ট আগে কখনো দেখেননি জমদগ্নি। কিন্তু তার পত্নীর এই মুগ্ধতা তার জন্য নয়, একজন পরপুরুষের জন্য। একথা বুঝতে পারার পরেই শমিত ক্রোধাগ্নির উগার হল বিধবংসীরূপে এবং কনিষ্ঠ পুত্রের হাতে স্বামীর আদেশে “মুহূর্তে ছিন্ন হয়ে গেল দেহকাণ্ড থেকে অপমানিত শিরা।”^৮ সেকালের সমাজ একথা ভাবেনি যে, বিবাহের ক্ষেত্রে পুরুষের সন্তান উৎপাদনের ক্ষমতা থাকলেই হল? কন্যার রুচি-অরুচির প্রশ্ন নেই? কিন্তু প্রশ্ন হল আজকের সমাজে বিবাহের স্বরূপ কতখানি পরিবর্তিত? যুগান্তরের পথ পেরিয়ে সমাজে ঘটে গেছে রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক পটপরিবর্তন যা, সম্পর্ক-পারিবারিক বিন্যাস-সংস্কৃতিকে প্রভুত প্রভাবিত করেছে। বাণী বসুর সাহিত্য রচনার সূত্রপাত উত্তর ঔপনিবেশিক পর্বে। আধুনিক ও উত্তরাধুনিক সময় অবশ্যম্ভাবী ভাবে প্রভাবিত করেছে তাঁর লেখনীকে। যখনই তিনি লিখেছেন অপচিত ও নষ্ট দাম্পত্যের আখ্যান, সেগুলো আমাদের সুপরিচিত সমসাময়িক হোক কিংবা মহাকাব্য, পুরাণের কাহিনি, গল্পকথনের মাধ্যমে পরিস্ফুট হয়েছে ভারতীয় জীবনের চিরকালীন সমাজসত্য।

আগেই বলা হয়েছে, গর্ভাধান নারীর আবশ্যিক পবিত্রতম সামাজিক দায়িত্ব—এমন ভাবনা আবহমানকাল ধরেই ভারতীয় সমাজমানসে দৃঢ় প্রোথিত। প্রাচীন ভারতে সন্তান প্রতিপালনের ক্ষেত্রে পরিচর্যা ছাড়া অন্যান্য বিষয়ে মায়ের পরিবর্তে বাবার কর্তৃত্বই সার্বিক স্বীকৃতি পেয়েছিল। সন্তানের মঙ্গলকামনায় ব্রত উপবাস পালনের দায়িত্ব মায়ের হলেও, শিশুর বিকাশপর্বে তার শিক্ষা, শাসন, পেশাগত বিদ্যালোভ সবই পিতার তত্ত্বাবধান ও পিতার সিদ্ধান্তের উপর নির্ভরশীল ছিল। কপিল গল্পে পূর্বশর্ত অনুযায়ী পুত্রসন্তান কপিলের জন্মের পর পিতা কর্দম প্রবজ্যা গ্রহণ করেন। কপিল আবাল্য তাঁর পিতার কাছে শুনেছেন তিনিই বিষ্ণু। বিষ্ণু লাভের জন্য হঠাৎই একদিন তপস্যা করতে মায়ের কাছে বিদায় চান কপিল। তখন “জননী স্থির অকম্প দৃষ্টিতে সেই পুত্রের দিকে তাকালেন, যে পুত্র অথচ পুত্র নয়,... সারাজীবন এভাবেই কেটেছে তাঁর। সংসার ছিল, অথচ সে সংসার নয়। স্বামী ছিলেন, অথচ ছিলেন না। কন্যাগুলি ছিল, এখন বিভিন্ন ঋষির পত্নী হয়ে ‘নেই’ হয়ে গেছে। এই পুত্রও...। এ তো তিনি জানতেনই!”^৯ দেবহুতি

জনতেন এই অবশ্যম্ভাবী বিচ্ছেদের কথা কিন্তু গুণাক্ষরেও নির্মম বিপর্যয়ের আঁচ পাননি পরশুরামের জননী রেণুকা। গল্পে স্বামীর আদেশে সন্তানের হাতে রেণুকার শিরোচ্ছেদের মায়ের প্রাণভিক্ষার জন্য পুত্রের শত অনুরোধেও নির্বিকার এবং অবিচলিত থাকলেন। পিতা। বাণী বসু লিখলেন, “পুরাণ বলে জমদগ্নি রেণুকাকে পুনর্জীবিত করেছিলেন। স্বামীর আদেশে আপন পুত্রের হাতে নৃশংস মৃত্যুর কোনও স্মৃতিই তাঁর থাকেনি। সবাই সব ভুলে গিয়েছিল। আমরা বিশ্বাস করি না স্বভাবতই।”

মহাভারতের অনুযায়ে লিখিত বাণী বসুর ‘পাঞ্চজন্য’ গল্পে দেখা যায় পাঁচ বান্ধবীর নিখাদ সমপ্রাণ সখ্যের চিত্র। ‘পাঞ্চালী’ নামে পরিচিত পাঁচ বন্ধু গার্হস্থ্য জীবনে প্রবেশ করে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে যায় পরস্পরের থেকে। গল্পকথক কৃষ্ণ একসময় অনুভব করে কুমের মতো গুটিয়ে কতকগুলো সৃষ্টিছাড়া বছর কাটিয়ে অপচিত হল তার জীবন। তাই সে নতুন করে পাঞ্চালীদের খুঁজে নেওয়ার যাত্রা শুরু করে। কৃষ্ণর নপুংসক স্বামী চোরাবাজারের কাজে তাকে টোপের মতো ব্যবহার করেছে বারবার। নষ্ট দাম্পত্যের নিগড় ছিড়ে অবশেষে সে বেরিয়ে আসতে পেরেছে। সীতার স্বামীর কারখানায় লকআউট চলছে এবং তার সাতটির মধ্যে চারটি সন্তানের অপুষ্টিজনিত অকালমৃত্যু ঘটেছে। অবিবাহিতা অধ্যাপিকা লোপামুদ্রা একজন বিবাহিত পুরুষের কাছে প্রেমে প্রতারিত হয়ে অ্যালকোহলিক হয়ে উঠেছে। সর্বস্ব বিক্রি করে মুক্তিপণ জোগাড় করেও অপহৃত শিশুপুত্রের নৃশংস মৃত্যু আটকাতে পারেনি ভদ্রা। চিত্রার স্বামীর লাগামছাড়া লাম্পট্য তার সুখী গৃহকোণের স্বপ্ন শেষ করে দিয়েছে। চরম বিপন্নতা ও বিপর্যস্ততা পাঁচজন নারীকে আত্মহননের পথে এগিয়ে দেয়, “মেঝেতে আগুন রঙের কার্পেট। পাঁচজনে সেখানে গোল হয়ে বসলাম। পরস্পরের গায়ে গা লাগিয়ে। ঘন হয়ে। দরজায় কি শব্দসৈন্য? আমরা কি জহর-ব্রত করব?... পরস্পরের মুখের দিকে চেয়ে দেখলাম গড়গড় করে উঠে যাচ্ছে সেই যাদু-দেয়াল। এতদিন যা আমাদের আলাদা করে রেখেছিল। একই অন্ধকূপে বন্দী পাঁচজন।”^{১২} সমাজনির্ধারিত সম্পর্ক যখন নারীর আশ্রয় কিংবা ভরসা স্থল ও রক্ষক হয়ে উঠতে পারে না, তখন স্বেচ্ছানির্মিত হৃদয়ের সম্পর্ক জীবনের ত্রাতা হয়ে ওঠে। রামায়ণে অশোকবনে সরমার সহর্মিতা পেলেও অগ্নিপরীক্ষার অবমাননার মুহূর্তে সীতার বান্ধব সহায় জোটেনি। কুরুসভায় লাঞ্ছিতা দ্রৌপদী তবু কৃষ্ণকে পাশে পেয়েছিলেন। মহারথী অর্জুনের স্ত্রী হয়েও অভিমন্যুকে বাঁচাতে পারেননি সুভদ্রা। কিন্তু এই গল্পের পাঞ্চালীরা ভাগ্য ও পিতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজের যূপকাঠে নির্মমভাবে বলিপ্রদত্ত হয়েও আত্মহননের সিদ্ধান্ত থেকে ফিরে আসে সীতার লবকুশদের গড়ে তোলার

লক্ষ্যে। আজকের পাঞ্চালীরা নিজেরা নিজেদের রক্ষা করতে যৌথশপথ নেয়। অতঃপর দেখলাম বিশ্বজুড়ে সভাস্থ নির্লিপ্তি। চিত্রাৰ্পিতবৎ। মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিয়েছে বয়স্ক বিচার। একটার পর একটা বস্ত্র খুলে যাচ্ছে—প্রেম, আশা, আশ্রয়, সম্মান... নিষ্ঠুর হাওয়ায় হুহু করে উড়ছে হত বস্ত্রের রক্তাক্ত জাঙ্গাল। তবু আমরা বীতবস্ত্র হইনি। জুড়ে গেছে ধরণীর বুকে গভীর ফাটল। ভুবন ভরে বাজছে পাঞ্চজন্য। আমাদের জন্য। ... আমরা যে পাঞ্চালী।^{১৩}

পৌরাণিক ও মহাকাব্যিক আখ্যানের নবনির্মিতির ক্ষেত্রে সমালোচকেরা পরশুরাম অর্থাৎ রাজশেখর বসুর সঙ্গে নবনীতা দেবসেনের সাযুজ্য খুঁজে পেয়েছেন। বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে আমরা আলোচ্য ঘরানায় বাণী বসু এবং নবনীতা দেব সেনের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা করতে ইচ্ছুক। বাণী বসুর ‘তুলসীপুরাণ’ গল্পে অনামিকের তুলসীপুরাণ রচনার ইতিবৃত্ত বিবৃত হয়েছে। প্রকৃতিলগ্ন যুবক তার আখ্যান রচনার সূত্র পেয়েছিল প্রকৃতির সাহচর্যে এবং অনুভবে সে শুনতে পেয়েছিল তুলসীর আত্মকথন। বিষ্ণুর প্রতি অনুরক্ত তুলসী বলে, “এই গোলোকরাজ যতই রূপবান গুণবান হন না, শত তপস্যাতেও তাঁর মন গলে না, এমনকি অনুরক্তজনের রক্ষার ব্যবস্থা পর্যন্ত ইনি করেন না।”^{১৪} এরপর তুলসী এবং শঙ্খচূড়ের গান্ধর্ব-বিবাহ ঘটে। কিন্তু দুর্লভ, অপ্রাপনীর প্রতি তীব্র আসক্তি এবং প্রকৃত প্রেমিকের প্রতি বিশ্বস্ততা, অনুরাগ ও সমর্পণের চিরন্তন দ্বন্দ্ব থেকে মুক্তি নেই নারীর। যে তুলসী হরির আরাধিকা, তাকেই হরি শঙ্খচূড়ের বেশে ছলনা করলেন। হরির উপস্থিতি বুঝতে পেরেও আত্মসম্মরণ করেনি তুলসী ফলে তুলসীর সতীত্বহরণ হয় এবং মৃত্যু ঘটে শঙ্খচূড়ের। যখন নারী নিবেদনরতা তখনই সমর্পিতার উপর বিশ্বাসভঙ্গের আঘাত নেমে এসেছে। নবনীতা দেব সেনের ‘সীতা থেকে শুরু’ শীর্ষক গল্পগ্রন্থের ‘রাজকুমারী কামবল্লী’ গল্পের সংঘটন বাণী বসুর ‘তুলসীপুরাণ’ গল্পের মতোই। ‘শূর্ণপথা’ তাঁর তপস্যালব্ধ দৈববলের ফলেই অজেয়া ছিলেন। দৈববলের নিয়ম স্বেচ্ছায় দুর্বল না হলে তাঁর বল কেউ হরণ করতে পারে। কিন্তু তিনি লক্ষ্মণের প্রেমে দুর্বল হয়ে স্বেচ্ছায় রাক্ষসী শরীর ত্যাগ করে সামান্য নারীদেহ ধারণ করেছিলেন।^{১৫} এই দুর্লভ সুযোগেই তার নাসিকা ছেদন করেন লক্ষ্মণ। বাণী বসুর ‘রেণুকা’ গল্পে জমদগ্নি তাঁর মা সত্যবতীকে বলেছিলেন, “নারী, নারীর কাজ করো মা।”^{১৬} নবনীতা দেব সেনের ‘সীতার পাতালপ্রবেশ’ গল্পে রাজমাতা কৌশল্যার প্রতি রামচন্দ্রের উক্তি জমদগ্নির কথার প্রতিধ্বনিসম। “মাতা, আপনি অন্তঃপুরে যান। যা বোঝেন না তা নিয়ে বৃথা বাক্যব্যয় করবেন না।”^{১৭} বাণী বসু তাঁর লেখায় যখন পৌরাণিক ও মহাকাব্যিক

কাহিনির নবনির্মিত ঘটিয়েছেন, সেখানে কৌতুক বা হাস্যরসের স্পর্শ নেই। নবনীতা দেবসেনের লেখায় আছে শাণিত ব্যঙ্গ ও কৌতুকের সমাহার। অথচ আশ্চর্যভাবে দুজনের লেখাতেই দেখা যায়, প্রতিবাৎসল্যের ক্ষেত্রে মায়ের প্রতি পুত্রসন্তানের অবজ্ঞা এবং দাম্পত্যে ও প্রেমে নারীর অবমাননা এবং নারীকে ছলনার ইতিবৃত্ত। বাণী বসু তাঁর লেখায় ধর্মের মোড়ক সরিয়ে সমাজবাস্তবতাকে নিরীক্ষণ করেছেন। অলৌকিকতার জাল ভেদ করে প্রাচীন কাহিনির চরিত্রের মনস্তাত্ত্বিক স্বরূপ অন্বেষণ করেছেন যুক্তিগ্রাহ্য পন্থায়। লিঙ্গবৈষম্যকে প্রাচীনতম শ্রেণিদ্বেষ হিসেবে চিহ্নিত করে নারীবাদ লিঙ্গসমতা অর্জনের উদ্দেশ্যে যাত্রা করেছে, যার লক্ষ্য নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের প্রশ্নে অধাধিকার নয়, সমানাধিকার লাভ। সাম্যচেতনার প্রয়োজনীয়তা অনুভব করেই প্রাচীন সাহিত্যে পুরুষের কলমে চিত্রিত নারীর নানা কাহিনির আধুনিকভাষ্য কালান্তরে নারীর কলমে রচিত হয়েছে।

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রবীন্দ্রভাবনায় চিত্রাঙ্গদা

শৌনক গুপ্ত

‘নবযুগ’ প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর (১৩৩৯/১৪১৭, পৃষ্ঠা ৬৭৬) বলেন, মানুষকে মানুষ বলে দেখতে না পারার মতো এতবড়ো সর্বনেশে অন্ধতা আর নেই। এই বন্ধন এই অন্ধতা নিয়ে কোনো মুক্তিই আমরা পাব না। যে-মোহে আবৃত হয়ে মানুষের সত্য রূপ দেখতে পেলুম না সেই অপ্রেমের অবজ্ঞার বন্ধন ছিল হয়ে যাক, যা যথার্থভাবে পবিত্র তাকে যেন সত্য করে গ্রহণ করতে পারি।

মানুষের ব্যক্তিসত্তার অস্বীকারই সমাজে বৈষম্যের অন্যতম কারণ—লক্ষ করেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। নারীর ব্যক্তিকতার প্রতি সমাজের অনাগ্রহই যুগ যুগ ধরে নারীকে বাধ্য করেছে সমাজ-চিহ্নিত কয়েকটিমাত্র বিশেষ পরিচয়ের সীমায় বদ্ধ হতে। পুরুষশাসিত সমাজবিধির আধিপত্য যে নারীকে আপন ব্যক্তিত্ব অনুসন্ধান ও প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রতি উদাসীন করে তুলেছে, এবং এই উদাসীনতাই কখনও বা আত্ম-প্রবঞ্চনের দিকে ধাবিত করেছে নারীকে তাও রবীন্দ্রনাথের লক্ষ এড়িয়ে যায়নি। এমনই এক সমাজব্যবস্থার প্রেক্ষাপটে, মহাভারতের আদিপর্বাস্তর্গত অর্জুনবনবাসপর্বে বর্ণিত চিত্রাঙ্গদা ও অর্জুনের কাহিনি অবলম্বনে, ১২৯৮ বঙ্গাব্দে রবীন্দ্রনাথ রচনা করেন কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’। কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ নৃত্যনাট্যে রূপান্তরিত হয় ১৩৪৩ সনে। তবে মহাভারতের মূল কাহিনি রবীন্দ্ররচনাদুটির কাঠামোমাত্র। কাব্যনাট্য ও নৃত্যনাট্যের প্রাণকেন্দ্রে রয়েছে রবীন্দ্রচেতনায় উদ্ভাসিত চিত্রাঙ্গদার সত্তার বিস্মরণ ও উত্তরণ। মহাভারতের অর্জুন-চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাহিনির কেন্দ্রে অর্জুন থাকলেও, রবীন্দ্রনাট্যের কাহিনি গড়ে উঠেছে চিত্রাঙ্গদার বিকাশকে কেন্দ্র করে। চিত্রাঙ্গদার আত্মোপলব্ধির মধ্য দিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ গণ্ডীবদ্ধ পরিচয়ের কুহক ভেদ করে মুক্ত ব্যক্তিপরিচয়ে উন্নীত হওয়ার যে ইঙ্গিতটি দেন, তার মধ্য দিয়েই তিনি আঁকেন বৈষম্যহীন সম্পর্কের অপূর্ব এক চিত্র—ব্যক্তির ব্যক্তিকতা যেখানে নিশ্চিহ্ন হয়ে যায়নি, হয়েছে সসম্মানে ঘোষিত, সাদরে স্বীকৃত।

বেদব্যাসের মহাভারতে [কুশকোন সংস্করণ] অর্জুনবনবাসপর্বের ‘অর্জুনস্য মণলুরথামগমনম্। পুত্রিকাপুত্রকধর্মেণ চিত্রাঙ্গদাপরিগ্রহঃ॥’ শীর্ষক অধ্যায়ের বর্ণনা অনুযায়ী মহেন্দ্রপর্বত দর্শন করে; গোদাবতী, কাবেরী, সাগরসঙ্গমে স্নান এবং দেবতা, পিতৃপুরুষ ও মুনীদের পূজা করে ধীরে ধীরে মহাবাহু অর্জুন সমুদ্রতটস্থ মণলুরে আসেন। সেখানে মণলুর-অধিপতি রাজধর্মজ্ঞ চিত্রবাহনের কন্যা অপরূপা চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে রাজপুরে স্বেচ্ছায় বিচরণ করতে দেখে তাঁর পাণিপ্রার্থী হন অর্জুন। চিত্রবাহন পরিচয় জিজ্ঞাসা করায় কুন্তীপুত্র পরিচয়জ্ঞাপন করলে চিত্রবাহন বলেন, তাঁর পূর্বসূরি অপুত্রক রাজা প্রভঞ্জন পুত্রলাভের জন্য তপস্যা করলে পিনাকধ্বক উমাপতি বর দেন যে তাঁর বংশে প্রতি পুরুষেরই একটি করে সন্তান জন্ম নেবে। প্রভঞ্জন থেকে চিত্রবাহন পর্যন্ত সব রাজারই পুত্রসন্তান হওয়ার পর চিত্রবাহন যখন চিত্রাঙ্গদার পিতা হন, তখন তিনি রাজকন্যাকে পুত্ররূপেই গণ্য করেন। এরপর চিত্রবাহন বলেন, চিত্রাঙ্গদার গর্ভজাত পুত্রকে যদি অর্জুন শুষ্কস্বরূপ তাঁকে অর্পণ করবেন বলে প্রতিজ্ঞা করেন, তবে তিনি চিত্রাঙ্গদা ও অর্জুনের বিবাহে সম্মত হবেন। অর্জুন সেই মত প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধ হলে বিবাহের ক্ষণ স্থির করা হয়। বিবাহের পরে মণলুর নগরে ত্রিশ মাস চিত্রাঙ্গদার সঙ্গে বাস করে অর্জুন পঞ্চতীর্থ অগস্ত্য, সৌভদ্র, পৌলম, কারন্ধম ও ভরদ্বাজ ভ্রমণের জন্য গমন করেন। ব্যাসীয় মহাভারতে পুত্র বক্রবাহনসহ চিত্রাঙ্গদার প্রসঙ্গ আবার আসে অশ্বমেধিকপর্বে। সেখানে যুধিষ্ঠির প্রেরিত যজ্ঞাশ্বের পথরুদ্ধ করে বিমাতা উলুপীর আদেশে পিতা অর্জুনের সঙ্গে যুদ্ধ করে, অর্জুনকে শরবিদ্ধ করেন বক্রবাহন। পরে পিতৃহত্যার শোকে নিজেও হন মূর্ছিত। মৃত পতিকে দর্শন করে এই সময়ে জীবনত্যাগ করার সঙ্কল্প করেন চিত্রাঙ্গদা। ইতিমধ্যে বক্রবাহনও সংজ্ঞা ফিরে পেয়ে পিতৃশোকে প্রায়োপবিষ্ট হন। তখন পন্নগনন্দিনী উলুপী সঞ্জীবনী মণির চিন্তা করলে নাগলোক থেকে মণি আগত হয়ে অর্জুনকে সংজ্ঞাপ্রাপ্ত করে, এবং অর্জুন পুত্র বক্রবাহনকে আলিঙ্গন করেন।

কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-য় রবীন্দ্রনাথ অর্জুনবনবাসপর্বের কাহিনিসূত্রটি অবলম্বন করে নিজস্ব কাহিনি নির্মাণ করেন। তাঁর রচনায় চিত্রবাহন চরিত্র অনুপস্থিত। অবর্তমান, চিত্রবাহন সমীপে অর্জুনের প্রতিজ্ঞার প্রসঙ্গ। চিত্রবাহনের বয়ানে নয়, নাটকে চিত্রাঙ্গদার নিজস্ব বয়ানেই ফুটে ওঠে শিবের বরের প্রসঙ্গ ও তাঁর জন্মের কথা। অশ্বমেধিকপর্বের ঘটনা রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাটকে না থাকলেও নাটকের শেষ অংশে চিত্রাঙ্গদা সন্তানসম্ভবা এবং পুত্রসন্তানের জননী হলে, তিনি পুত্রকে দ্বিতীয় অর্জুন করে তুলতে প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধা। ব্যাসীয় মহাভারতের অন্তর্গত চিত্রাঙ্গদার কাহিনির

পুনরাবৃত্তি রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ রচনার লক্ষ্য নয়। তাই কাহিনিসূত্র অবলম্বন করলেও চিত্রাঙ্গদার চরিত্রকে পুনর্গঠিত করেন তিনি। ব্যাসীয় চিত্রাঙ্গদা পুত্ররূপে গণ্য হলেও চারুদর্শনা। রবীন্দ্রনাটকে চিত্রাঙ্গদা পুত্ররূপেই শুধু গণ্য নন, তিনি ধনুর্বিদ্যাপরায়ণা, মণিপুরের [কুম্বকোন সংস্করণে রাজ্যটির নাম মণলুর হলেও, অন্যান্য সংস্করণের মত রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাটকে চিত্রাঙ্গদার রাজ্যের নাম মণিপুর] যুবরাজ এবং চিরাচরিত দৃষ্টিতে সুদর্শনা নন। এ হেন চিত্রাঙ্গদার, অর্জুনকে লাভ করার বাসনায় যে সাধনা, ও সে সাধনার যা পরিণতি, তা বর্ণনার মধ্য দিয়ে নারীপুরুষের চিরাচরিত সম্পর্ক ও তার শাস্ত সমস্যার চিত্রই আঁকেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, আলোচ্য নাটকে।

ব্যাসীয় অর্জুন চারুদর্শনা চিত্রাঙ্গদার প্রতি সহজেই আকৃষ্ট হন। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের অর্জুন চিত্রাঙ্গদার বালকমূর্তি দর্শন করে হন কৌতুকপ্রাপ্ত। অর্জুনের তাস্ছিল্যের উত্তরে চিত্রাঙ্গদা পরদিন পুরুষবেশ ত্যাগ করে রক্তাশ্রু, কঙ্কণ, কাঞ্চির অনভ্যস্ত সাজে, শিবালয়ে শায়িত অর্জুনকে প্রণয় নিবেদন করলে অর্জুন জানান তিনি ব্রহ্মচারীব্রতধারী। এ সময়ে চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তরে যে চিরায়ত ভাবনাটি জাগে তা হল, তিনি সুদর্শনা নন বলেই নিশ্চয়ই ব্যর্থ হয়েছেন অর্জুনের ব্রহ্মচর্যভঙ্গ করতে। তাঁর মনে যে আত্মমর্বাদা ক্ষুন্ন হওয়ার বোধ জন্মায়, তার সূত্র, পুরুষের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে তার দেহগত সৌন্দর্যের অভাববোধ। মদনের সঙ্গে কথোপকথনে ফুটে ওঠে চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তর্বেদনা। অর্জুনকে জয় করাই চিত্রাঙ্গদার একমাত্র লক্ষ্য। মদন সে লক্ষ্যে তাঁকে পৌঁছে দেওয়ায় সহায় হয়ে একবর্ষের জন্য বসন্তের পুষ্পশোভায় পূর্ণ করেন চিত্রাঙ্গদার দেহ।

যে বালকবেশিনী বীর চিত্রাঙ্গদা অর্জুনকে আকৃষ্ট করার চেষ্টায় ব্যর্থ হয়েছিলেন, সে চিত্রাঙ্গদাই নবলব্ধ অপরূপ দেহে অর্জুনের চোখে হয়ে ওঠেন কামনার ধন। অর্জুন করেন ব্রহ্মচর্যভঙ্গ। এই তথাকথিত প্রাপ্তির লগ্নেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ আরম্ভ ঘটান দ্বন্দ্বের। চিত্রাঙ্গদা বীরত্বেই পেয়েছেন আপন পরিচয়। নিজেকে বীরবেশেই দেখে এসেছেন তিনি। তাই বীরত্বের মালাতেই বরণ করে নিতে চেয়েছিলেন অর্জুনকে। সে বরণমালা বীর অর্জুন অবজ্ঞায় ত্যাগ করে, বীর চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে করেছেন অসম্মানিত। অথচ চিত্রাঙ্গদার সাময়িক রূপলাবণ্যে অর্জুন হয়েছেন আকৃষ্ট। সেই লাভগম্য দেহের সমীপে সমর্পন করেছেন সমস্ত শৌর্য, বীর্য। যে চিত্রাঙ্গদা অর্জুনের এই সমর্পনই কামনা করেছিলেন, সে চিত্রাঙ্গদার কাছে এ সমর্পনই হয়ে উঠেছে চূড়ান্ত পরাজয়। যে অর্জুনের কাছে তিনি চেয়েছিলেন বীরের সম্মান, শৌর্যের স্বীকৃতি, সে অর্জুনই হয়েছেন তাঁর রূপের মোহগ্রস্ত।

অসম্মানিত হয়েছে চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তরের পরিচয়। চূর্ণ হয়েছে তাঁর ব্যক্তিত্ব। এ অবস্থায় চিত্রাঙ্গদা আত্মসত্তা ও আরোপিত দেহসৌন্দর্যকে পৃথক করতে পেরেছেন পলে পলে। রূপলাবণ্য পরিনত হয়েছে অঙ্গসহচরী মহারাক্ষসীতে, যে রাক্ষসী গ্রাস করে অন্তরের পরিচয়কে, যার মোহ গ্রাস করে ব্যক্তির ব্যক্তিত্ব। চিত্রাঙ্গদা বুঝেছেন তাঁর ছদ্মরূপের চেয়ে তিনি শতগুণে শ্রেষ্ঠ।

এখানেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাত ধরে উত্তরিত হন চিত্রাঙ্গদা। তাঁর প্রকৃত পরিচয় পেয়ে যদি অর্জুন ঘৃণাভরেও চলে যান, তবু নিজের ‘আমি’-কে বরণ করে নিতে প্রস্তুত তিনি। চিত্রাঙ্গদার এই উত্তরণের বীজ তাঁর চরিত্রের মধ্যেই নিহিত রয়েছে। বীরের বীরত্বের মূলে যে অটল সত্যনিষ্ঠা থাকে প্রচ্ছন্নভাবে, সে সত্যনিষ্ঠাই চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে ছলনাময়ী প্রণয়িণীতে পরিণত করতে পারেনি। প্রথমাবধি তিনি নিজ সত্তার বলে থেকেছেন বীরাজনা হয়ে। অপরের সমর্পনলাভের জন্য সে সত্তাকে অসম্মান করে, মিথ্যার আড়ালে তাকে গুপ্ত রাখা চিত্রাঙ্গদার পক্ষে অসম্ভব ছিল। আপন ব্যক্তিত্বে উজ্জ্বল চিত্রাঙ্গদার প্রয়োজন শুধু ছিল সেই ব্যক্তিত্বের প্রতি অটল আস্থা প্রতিষ্ঠার একটি পরীক্ষামাত্র। এ পরীক্ষা রবীন্দ্রপরিকল্পিত। চিত্রাঙ্গদার মনে দ্বন্দ্বের যে বীজ বপন করেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, তার উদ্দেশ্য পুরুষতত্ত্বের বাস্তবকে তুলে ধরা। যে সমাজ বিশ্বাস করে “পিতা রক্ষতি কৌমারে ভর্তা রক্ষতি যৌবনে। রক্ষন্তি স্থবিরে পুত্রা ন স্ত্রী স্বাতন্ত্র্যসমর্হতি॥” (মনু-সংহিতা, ৯.৩) সে সমাজের বাস্তবতাকে অস্বীকার করতে পারেন নি তিনি। তাই চিত্রাঙ্গদার আত্মোপলব্ধিকে স্বীকৃতি দিতেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রস্তুত করেন অর্জুনের মোহমুক্তির সুযোগ।

অর্জুনকেও মহিমাহীন করে তোলেন নি রবীন্দ্রনাথ। অর্জুনের মোহমুক্তিতেই করেছেন চিত্রাঙ্গদার ব্যক্তিত্বের পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা। উত্তর পর্বত থেকে যখন ধেয়ে আসে দস্যুদল, ভীত বনচরেদের মুখে অর্জুন শোনে সেই রাজকন্যা চিত্রাঙ্গদার কথা, যিনি স্নেহে রাজমাতা, বীর্যে যুবরাজ। নবরূপধারী চিত্রাঙ্গদার কাছে সেই বিশ্বয়কন্যার কথা যখন বর্ণনা করেন অর্জুন, সেই সুবর্ণসুযোগে চিত্রাঙ্গদা তাঁর অন্তরের ক্ষোভটি প্রকাশ করেন অর্জুনসমীপে—“কে তারে দেখিতে পায়, হৃদয়ের প্রতিবিশ্ব দেহের শোভায় প্রকাশ না পায় যদি।” (ঠাকুর, ১৪১৭/১২৯৮, পৃষ্ঠা ২৩৬) কল্পনায় অর্জুন ছবি আঁকেন অশ্বারোহী, ধনুর্বাণধারী রাজকন্যা চিত্রাঙ্গদার। নাটকের এই পর্বে, মোহমুক্তপ্রায় বীর অর্জুন অনুভব করার চেষ্টা করেন বীরাজনা চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে। অর্জুনের অন্তরে স্বীকৃত হয় চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তর। এমনই সময় রবীন্দ্রনাথ মদনের বরের কার্যকারিতার সময়কালকে দেন শেষ করে। দেহলাবণ্যে অপরূপা চিত্রাঙ্গদার মিথ্যাকে ভেদ করে ফুটে ওঠেন অন্তরের

রূপে অপরূপা, প্রকৃত চিত্রাঙ্গদা। পূর্বের সমস্ত ইতিহাস অর্জুনকে পুনর্বীর স্বরণ করিয়ে ঘোষণা করেন—“আমি চিত্রাঙ্গদা। দেবী নহি, নহি আমি সামান্য রমণী।” (ঠাকুর, ১৪১৭/১২৯৮, পৃষ্ঠা ২৪১) নাটকের অন্তিমে সেই ‘সত্য চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-কে স্বীকৃতি দিয়ে ধন্য হন অর্জুন।

‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-র কাহিনি নারীর আত্মসত্তা প্রতিষ্ঠার যাত্রা হলেও, আলোচ্য নাটকে নারীর সেই প্রতিষ্ঠা পুরুষ অপেক্ষা নয় এবং কাব্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ ও নৃত্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-য় চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তিম উপলব্ধিতে, সমাজে নারীর পুরুষ-আপেক্ষিক পরিচয়ের সূত্রকে কেন্দ্র করে ভিন্নতা লক্ষ্য করা যায়। ১২৯৮ সালে যে চিত্রাঙ্গদাকে গড়েন রবীন্দ্রনাথ কাব্যনাট্যে, সে চিত্রাঙ্গদা পূর্ণতা লাভ করতে চান স্বামীর চরণাশ্রয়ে ও জননী হওয়ার সার্থকতায়। এখানে সেই চিরাচরিত ভাবধারার প্রতিফলনই যেন বলক দিয়ে ওঠে—“প্রজনার্থং মহাভাগাঃ পূজার্হা গৃহদীপ্তয়ঃ। শ্রিয়ঃ শ্রিয়শ্চ গোহেষু ন বিশেষোহস্তি কশ্চন॥” (মনু-সংহিতা, ৯.২৬) এ চিত্রাঙ্গদা আত্মোপলব্ধিতে মোহমুক্ত হলেও গৃহের ধর্মবোধে আবদ্ধ। প্রণয়েই তাই তাঁর কাহিনি শেষ হয়না। সে কাহিনি সার্থকভাবে পূর্ণতা লাভ করতে চায় তাঁর ‘অর্জুনভার্যা’ পরিচয়প্রাপ্তিতে, সন্তানসম্ভবা হওয়ায়। এই চিত্রাঙ্গদা বীর সন্তান গড়ে তোলার স্বপ্নে কল্পনা করেন পুত্রসন্তানেরই - কন্যার নয়। পুত্রের জন্ম হলে তাকে ‘দ্বিতীয় অর্জুন’ করে তোলার স্বপ্ন দেখেন তিনি, কিন্তু কন্যা হলে তাকে ‘দ্বিতীয় চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-য় পরিণত করার ভাবনায় ভাবিত হন না, স্বয়ং বীরাঙ্গনা হয়েও।

চারটি দশক পেরিয়ে, ১৩৪৩ সনে নৃত্যনাট্যের চিত্রাঙ্গদার অন্তিম উপলব্ধি ভিন্ন। এই চিত্রাঙ্গদা চিরাচরিত, সমাজসিদ্ধ ভাবনায়, পুরুষের জীবনসঙ্গিনী হয়ে নারীত্ব যাপনের সার্থকতাতেই পূর্ণতার অনুসন্ধান করেন না। তিনি গৃহিণী নন, জননী নন, বীরপুত্র গড়ে তোলার অভিলাষীও নন। তিনি ব্যক্তি চিত্রাঙ্গদা— তাঁর ব্যক্তিকতাই তাঁর পরিচয়। সেই ব্যক্তিকতার স্বীকৃতিতেই তাই তাঁর কাহিনির পরিসমাপ্তি। নৃত্যনাট্যের চিত্রাঙ্গদার আত্মোপলব্ধি স্পষ্টতই কাব্যনাট্যের চিত্রাঙ্গদার তুলনায় গভীরতর। লক্ষণীয় এই যে, ১৩৪৩ সন, অর্থাৎ নৃত্যনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’-র প্রকাশের সমসময়েই, রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর ‘নারী’ প্রবন্ধে লেখেন, “আমার মনে হয়, পৃথিবীতে নূতন যুগ এসেছে। অতিদীর্ঘকাল মানবসভ্যতার ব্যবস্থার ছিল পুরুষের হাতে। এই সভ্যতার রাষ্ট্রতন্ত্র অর্থনীতি সমাজশাসনতন্ত্র গড়েছিল পুরুষ। মেয়েরা তার পিছনে প্রকাশহীন অন্তরালে থেকে কেবল করেছিল ঘরের কাজ। এই সভ্যতা হয়ে ছিল একঝোঁকা।” (১৩৪৩/১৪১৭, পৃষ্ঠা ৬২৪) ‘ঘর’-নামক এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটি যে পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজে পুরুষশাসিত হতে বাধ্য, এবং তার

মধ্যে নারীর স্থান স্ত্রী, জননী, প্রভৃতি পরিচয়ের দীপ্তিতে আপাতভাবে উজ্জ্বল হলেও, প্রকৃতপক্ষে তা পুরুষের সমান হওয়া প্রায় অসম্ভব, তা অনুভব করেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। চিত্রাঙ্গদা অর্জুনগৃহিনী হলে, স্বয়ং বীরাস্ত্রনা হয়েও যে বীর পুত্রসন্তানেরই কল্পনা করবেন স্বামীর যোগ্য উত্তরসূরী করে গড়ে তোলার জন্য, কন্যার নয় - তা স্বাভাবিক। হয়ত তাই ‘নূতন যুগ’-এ চিত্রাঙ্গদার ব্যক্তিত্বকে নূতন রূপে সজ্জিত করেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, নৃত্যনাট্যে। তাঁরই কথায়, “আজ পৃথিবীর সর্বত্রই মেয়েরা ঘরের চৌকাঠ পেরিয়ে বিশ্বের উন্মুক্ত প্রাঙ্গণে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে।” (ঠাকুর, ১৩৪৩/১৪১৭, পৃষ্ঠা ৬২৪)

‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ নাটক, আত্মসত্তা অনুসন্ধানের মধ্য দিয়ে নারীর ব্যক্তিকতার পুনরাবিষ্কার, ও সেই ব্যক্তিকতায় তার পরিচয়ের অটল প্রতিষ্ঠার ছবিই তুলে ধরে। নাটকের কাহিনীতে, চিত্রাঙ্গদার যাত্রার মধ্য দিয়ে, পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থার নির্দিষ্ট করে দেওয়া লিঙ্গপরিচয় থেকে নারীর ব্যক্তিপরিচয়, অর্থাৎ, প্রকৃত পরিচয়ে উত্তরণের এক উজ্জ্বল ইঙ্গিত দিয়ে যান রবীন্দ্রনাথ। এই উত্তরণ নারীর কাছে যেমন তার আত্মসত্তার পূর্ণ প্রকাশ ঘটাতে সক্ষম, তেমনই সক্ষম পুরুষকে সেই সত্তার মহিমা উপলব্ধির সুযোগ করে দিতে। এই উপলব্ধির মধ্য দিয়েই নারী-পুরুষ নির্বিশেষে, মুক্তির সত্যালোকে সার্থকভাবে সহাবস্থান করতে সক্ষম হয় প্রতিটি মানুষ—রবীন্দ্রনাট্য ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ এই ইঙ্গিতই বহন করে।

তথ্যসূত্র

১. ঠাকুর, র. (১৪১৭), চিত্রাঙ্গদা, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী (দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড). কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী (মূল রচনা ১২৯৮ সনে প্রকাশিত)
২. ঠাকুর, র. (১৪১৭), নবযুগ, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী (দ্বাদশ খণ্ড). কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী (মূল রচনা ১৩৩৯ সনে প্রকাশিত)
৩. ঠাকুর, র. (১৪১৭), নারী, রবীন্দ্র-রচনাবলী (দ্বাদশ খণ্ড), কলকাতা: বিশ্বভারতী. (মূল রচনা ১৩৪৩ সনে প্রকাশিত)

সাহিত্যে নারী সমাজের প্রতিকৃতি :
প্রসঙ্গ রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘চোখের বালি’ উপন্যাসের
প্রধান দুই নারী চরিত্র

অর্পিতা রায়

সাহিত্য হল সমাজের প্রতিবিম্বন, অর্থাৎ সমাজের যা কিছু আলোচিত বিষয় তার সবকিছুই প্রতিফলিত হয় সাহিত্যে। বাংলার সাহিত্যে ও সমাজে যেভাবে পুরুষের প্রসঙ্গ বার বার এসেছে; ঠিক তেমনি এই নারীসমাজের প্রসঙ্গও বার বার উত্থাপিত হয়েছে। একসময়ে সমাজে নারীদের অবস্থান ছিল অবদমিত, নিপীড়িত ও পদদলিত। কিন্তু নারীদের ওপর পুরুষের এই আধিপত্য বেশিদিন স্থায়ী হতে পারেনি। সম্পদ ও বংশরক্ষার বাহক হিসেবে নারীরা পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের কাছে অবগত হলেও নারীরা তাদের এই নিপীড়নকে মুখ বুজে সহ্য করে নেয়নি। নারীরা নিজেই তার অবস্থা ও অবস্থান নিয়ে সজাগ হয়েছে, রুখে দাঁড়িয়েছে।

সাহিত্যে নারীর অবস্থান কোথায়?—এই প্রশ্ন যেন সর্বকালের একটি আলোচিত বিষয়। সমাজজীবনকে কেন্দ্র করেই সাহিত্যের মূল রস আশ্বাদিত হয়। আর এই সমাজের একটি বিশাল অংশ জুড়ে আছে এই নারীসমাজ। সাহিত্য প্রতিফলিত করে সমাজের এই নারী সমাজের জীবনযাপন, তাদের প্রেক্ষাপট, বেঁচে থাকার সামাজিক অর্থনৈতিক আচার আচরণ এবং প্রতিফলিত করে জীবনযাপনের প্রথা নির্ধারণের জন্য সাংস্কৃতিক বিন্যাস এবং শুভ অশুভের ভেদকে।

সাহিত্যে একালের নারীসমাজের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত যে লেখকের হাত ধরে অগ্রসর হয়েছে, সেই উল্লেখযোগ্য লেখক হলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যে নারীর অবস্থান হল একটি বিশেষ চর্চিত বিষয়। সমাজের নারীদের মনন, চিন্তন যেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখনীর দ্বারা সাহিত্যে প্রকাশ পেয়ে থাকে। নারী সম্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিখ্যাত উক্তি ধরা পড়েছে ‘চেতালি’ কাব্যের ‘মানসী’ কবিতায়—

শুধু বিধাতার সৃষ্টি নহ তুমি নারী!
 পুরুষ গড়েছে তোমা সৌন্দর্য সঞ্চারী
 আপন অন্তর হতে। বসি কবিগন
 সোনার উপমা সূত্রে বুনিছে বসন। ...

সে কারনে কবির মনে হয়েছে—

পড়েছে তোমার' পরে প্রদীপ্ত বাসনা,
 অর্ধেক মানবী তুমি, অর্ধেক কল্পনা।

নারীর সৌন্দর্য ও কল্পনালোকের যে বিশ্লেষণ কবি করেছেন তার প্রতিফলন পড়েছে তাঁর উপন্যাসেও। সমাজের নারীদের আন্তর স্বভাবের মান অভিমান ঘাত-প্রত্যাঘাত, বিরোধ-মিলনের সংমিশ্রণে রবীন্দ্রনাথ রচনা করেছেন তাঁর 'চোখের বালি' উপন্যাস; যা ছিল সাহিত্যে নারীসমাজের জীবনচিত্রের একটি উৎকৃষ্ট ফসল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ পরিপূর্ণ প্রেমের প্রতি চিরকাল তাঁর অন্তরের পক্ষপাতিত্ব দেখিয়েছেন। যে প্রেম খণ্ডিত, আত্মকেন্দ্রিকতায় সংকীর্ণ, পারিবারিক কর্তব্যকর্মের মধ্যে যে প্রেম বিকশিত নয় তাকে শ্রীহীন অসম্পূর্ণ প্রেম বলে লেখক-কবি মনে করেছেন। আর তাঁর এই ভাবনা থেকে সৃষ্টি 'চোখের বালি' উপন্যাসের আশালতা চরিত্র। যে আশালতা নিজের অসম্পূর্ণতায় পরিবারের ও নিজের কল্যাণ সাধনে ব্যর্থ হয়েছে। উপন্যাসের প্রধান দুই নারী চরিত্রের মধ্যে আশালতার চরিত্র যেন কিছু নীরব ও নিষ্ক্রিয়। কেবল সরলতা থেকেই যে জীবনে পরিপূর্ণতা অর্জন করা যায় না, তার দৃষ্টান্ত উদাহরণ এই আশালতা চরিত্র। উপন্যাসে আশালতা যেন এক ভীত সম্ভ্রান্তা নারী হিসেবেই উপন্যাসে স্থান পেয়েছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'নারী তুমি ধন্যা' কবিতায় কবি নারী সম্পর্কে লিখেছেন—

উন্মুক্ত করিতে থাকো আরোগ্যের পথ
 নবীন করিতে থাকো জীর্ণ যে জগৎ
 শ্রীহারা যে তার'পরে তোমার ধৈর্যের সীমা নাই,
 আপন অসাধ্য দিয়ে দয়া তব টানিছে তারাই।
 বুদ্ধিভ্রষ্ট অসহিষ্ণু অপমান করে বার বার
 চক্ষু মুছে ক্ষমা করো তারে

নারী চরিত্রের এমন করুণা, মায়া-মমতাময়ী মনের প্রতিফলন যেন পড়েছে আশালতা চরিত্রেও। তাই বার বার নিজের স্বামীর কাছে প্রলোভিত হয়েও নিজের চোখের জল মুছে স্বামীকে ক্ষমা করেছে এবং স্বামীর প্রতি নিজের হৃদয়ের প্রেম

ব্যক্ত করেছে বার বার। ভালোলাগা আর ভালোবাসার মধ্যে যে অন্তর আছে সেই ধারণা উপলব্ধি করার ক্ষমতা যেমন মহেন্দ্রের ছিলনা ঠিক আশালতারও ছিলনা। মহেন্দ্র আশার দাম্পত্যজীবন ছিল যেন নিছক একটি ব্যঙ্গনায় ঘেরা। রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেন তাদের এই বিবাহবন্ধনের আড়ালেই তাঁর উপন্যাসের কাহিনীর বৃত্তকে উপস্থাপন করতে চেয়েছেন। দাম্পত্য জীবন সম্পর্কে অনভিজ্ঞ ও অসচেতন আশাকে তাই পরবর্তীতে বিভিন্ন সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হতে হয়েছে। উপন্যাসে আমরা আশালতা চরিত্রের কোনো নারীসুলভ বিচার ক্ষমতার অনুসন্ধান পাইনা। মহেন্দ্রের ইচ্ছার দ্বারাই আশালতা নিয়ন্ত্রিত। মহেন্দ্র যেন তার জীবনের চালক শক্তি। রাজলক্ষ্মী দেশের বাড়ি ও অল্পপূর্ণা কাশীতে চলে গেলেও তাই আমরা আশাকে তাদের আটকাবার জন্য কোন প্রয়াস দেখিনা; আসলে তৎকালীন যুগে স্ত্রীরা স্বামীর বিরুদ্ধে গিয়ে কোন কর্ম করবে এমন কাজ ছিল প্রায় দূরহ। স্বামীর ইচ্ছা অনিচ্ছাই ছিল সর্বসর্বা। আর সেখানে আশালতার মতো সরল, ব্যক্তিত্বহীন নারীর পক্ষে এই কাজ ছিল আরও অসম্ভব। আবার কাহিনীর অন্য অংশে দেখা যায়, যখন মহেন্দ্র বিনোদিনীর সঙ্গে ঘর ছেড়ে যাচ্ছে তখনও এই আশার হৃদয়েও মনে ব্যক্তিত্বের কোনো স্মৃতি ঘটেনি। নারীধর্মের কোনো স্বাভাবিক চেতনার ইঙ্গিতই উপন্যাসের প্রথম পর্বে আশালতা চরিত্রে পরিলক্ষিত হয়নি। আশার জীবনে সাংসারিক বোধের পূর্ণতা লক্ষ্য করা যায় যখন উপন্যাসের শেষে মহেন্দ্র আবার সংসারে ফিরে এসেছে। উপন্যাসের শেষ পর্বে যখন রাজলক্ষ্মী অসুস্থ সেই সময় আশালতা রাজলক্ষ্মীর একনিষ্ঠ সেবায় যুক্ত থেকে কল্যাণময়ী মূর্তিরূপে নিজ চরিত্রের সৌন্দর্যতাকে বৃদ্ধি করেছে। মহেন্দ্র বিনোদিনীর থেকে যে চরম আঘাত আশা পেয়েছে সেই শিক্ষা আশালতাকে পরবর্তীতে নারীসত্তা জগরণে সহায়তা করেছে। আশালতা চরিত্র সৃজনের দ্বারা রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেন বলতে চাইলেন সংসারের মঙ্গলকারিণী মূর্তি হল এই নারী; যে নারী পরিবারের এবং সমাজের শ্রী ও সৌন্দর্যের প্রতিমূর্তি।

অন্যদিকে, আশালতা চরিত্রের ঠিক বিপরীতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সৃষ্টি করেছিলেন বিনোদিনী চরিত্রকে। উপন্যাসের সর্বাধিক চিত্তাকর্ষক ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ চরিত্র হল এই বিনোদিনী চরিত্র। আশালতার ধীর, শান্ত, সরল চরিত্রের বিপরীতে এই বিনোদিনী চরিত্রের মধ্যে আমরা যুক্তিবাদী, বুদ্ধিমত্তা, সজাগদৃষ্টি-র পরিচয় পাই। মহেন্দ্র-আশার সুখী দাম্পত্যজীবন; তার অপূর্ণ সংসারজীবনের ক্ষোভে, হিংসায় ভয়ঙ্কর পরিণতি লাভ করে। তার অকাল বৈধব্য জীবনের দুঃখ-যন্ত্রণা আশালতার সুখী দাম্পত্য জীবনেও নিদারুণ অভিষাপের মতো ছাপ রেখে গেছে। সম্ভাব্য

জীবনপ্ৰীতিতে দীৰ্ঘনিঃশ্বাস ফেলে প্ৰবৃত্তিৰ উন্মাদনায় সে মহেন্দ্ৰ আশাৰ সংসারকে ছিন্নভিন্ন কৰে দিয়েছিল। কিন্তু বিনোদিনীৰ এই প্ৰলয়ঙ্কৰী চৰিত্ৰ শেষ পৰ্যন্ত নিজৰ প্ৰেমৰ আত্মনিবেদনও কৰেছে বিহাৰীৰ কাছে।

মহেন্দ্র-আশার জীবনে এবং এই উপন্যাসের ট্রাজিক রসের সঞ্চারের জন্য বিনোদিনী চরিত্রের আবির্ভাব। রাজলক্ষ্মীর হাত ধরে মহেন্দ্র-আশার সংসারে বিনোদিনীর অনুপ্রবেশ। বিনোদিনী আশাকে সখীত্বের উপহার হিসেবে ‘চোখের বালি’ নামে ডাকার পেছনে যে আসলে তার অতৃপ্ত যৌবনাকাঙ্ক্ষাকে পূর্ণ করার বাসনা নিয়ে ছিল, সে বিষয়ে আশা অনভিজ্ঞ হলেও বিনোদিনী ছিল সর্বদাই সজাগ। আশার সূত্রে মহেন্দ্রর সঙ্গে বিনোদিনীর পরিচয় হয় ও পরে আশার অনুপস্থিতিতে সে পরিচয় নিবিড় হয়ে ওঠে। বিনোদিনী প্রথমে মহেন্দ্রের হাত ধরে গৃহত্যাগ করলেও আসলে নিজের মনের অজান্তেই ভালোবেসেছিল বিহারীকে। বিহারীর কাছে আপন অন্তরের শ্রদ্ধাপূর্ণ ভালোবাসার কথা জানিয়ে বিনোদিনী বলে যে—

তুমি আমকে ভালবাসিলে না কেন। আমার পোড়া কপাল। তুমিও কিনা
আশার ভালোবাসায় মজিলে।

বিহারীও কখনোই বিনোদিনী প্রেম প্রত্যাখ্যান করেনি। বিহারীর ভালোবাসা পেয়ে সে ধন্য কিন্তু প্রেমের প্রবল বাসনায় সে দায়িত্বকে সমাজ সংসারে ছোট করতে রাজী নয়; যথার্থ প্রেমের জন্যই তার এই আত্মত্যাগ। বিহারীর প্রেম নিবেদন ও ভালোবাসায় মত্তমুগ্ধ হয়েও তাই বিনোদিনীর বক্তব্য—“এই আমার শেষ পুরস্কার হইয়াছে।” কিন্তু বিধবা নারীকে বিবাহ করিলে সমাজের কাছে তার প্রিয়তমকে লাঞ্ছিত লজ্জিত হতে হবে তা বিনোদিনী কখনোই স্বীকার করে নিতে পারেননি। তাই সে কোনদিনই বিহারীর এই প্রেমে সম্মতি প্রদান করেনি। অত্যন্ত কাতরকণ্ঠে সে বিহারীকে জানিয়েছে—“তোমার ঔদার্যে সব সম্ভব হইতে পারে, কিন্তু আমি যদি একাজ করি, তোমাকে সমাজ নষ্ট করি, তবে ইহজীবনে আমি আর মাথা তুলিতে পারিব না।”—যথার্থ প্রেমের জন্যই বিনোদিনীর ছিল এই আত্মত্যাগ।

সূতরাং নিঃসন্দেহে বলা যায়, এই দুই নারী চরিত্র ভিন্ন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির আলোয় উপন্যাসে স্থান পেয়েছে। এই দুই নারী চরিত্রের মাধ্যমে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সমাজে নারী ভাবনার একটি প্রহ্ম আভাসকে তুলে ধরেছে। ঊনবিংশ শতকের নারীরা যেখানে নিজের ব্যক্তিসত্তা নিয়ে অবগুণ্ঠিত ও সমাজ সংস্কারের অচলায়তনে বন্দি ঠিক সেসময়ই-প্রচলিত সমাজের সমস্ত নিয়মনীতি, প্রথাগত সংস্কারকে

বুড়ো আঙ্গুল দেখিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর এই উপন্যাসের দুই নারী চরিত্রকে অঙ্কন করেছেন। প্রেমের পরিপূর্ণতায় অভিষিক্ত করে এই দুই নারীর নারীসত্তার উন্মোচন ঘটিয়েছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ সমাজের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন পরিস্থিতির কষ্টিপাথরে যাচাই করে।

তথ্যসূত্র

১. ‘চোখের বালি’, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর
২. ‘চোখের বালি’ উপন্যাসের শিল্পরূপ, অধ্যাপক তরুণকুমার ঘোষ
৩. ‘সমাজ ও সাহিত্যে নারী’, বেলা দাস
৪. ‘সাহিত্যের সমাজ’, অশ্রুকুমার সিকদার
৫. ‘নারীচেতনাঃ মননে ও সাহিত্যে’, তপোধীর ভট্টাচার্য

শরদিন্দুর সাহিত্য-মানসে লিঙ্গ ব্যতিরেকে মানবতাবাদ : বিষয় বোমকেশ

ইনাশ্রী মণ্ডল

সমাজ গঠনের মূল উপাদান হল মানুষ। মানুষই ঐক্যবদ্ধ সভ্যতা গড়ার তাগিদে গড়ে তুলেছে সমাজ। নারী ও পুরুষ উভয় প্রজাতির সমন্বয়ে গঠিত হয়েছে সমাজ ও সভ্যতা। তবে এ সমাজে ব্যতিক্রমী ধারা হিসেবে উভলিঙ্গ মানুষেরাও রয়েছেন যদিও তাদের সংখ্যা মূল দুই ধারার অনুপাতে নেহাত নগন্যই বলা চলে। তবু তারা এ সমাজের অন্যতম অংশীদার তা অনস্বীকার্য।

সমাজে নারী পুরুষের কোনও এক পক্ষ আরেক পক্ষকে অস্বীকার করে অন্য পক্ষের অস্তিত্ব রক্ষা করা অসম্ভব কারন এরা একে অন্যের পরিপূরক। উভয় প্রজাতি অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয় সৃষ্টির গতি অব্যাহত রাখতে এবং মনুষ্য প্রজাতির অস্তিত্ব জগতে টিকিয়ে রাখার জন্য।

এহেন দুই পক্ষের দ্বন্দ্বও তাই অনিবার্য, এই দ্বন্দ্বের মাঝে কখনো কখনো কোনও পক্ষের অস্তিত্ব সংকট দেখা দেয়। ক্ষমতা দখলের লড়াইতে পুরুষের এখনও বেশি এগিয়ে থাকার নজির রয়েছে ফলে নারীকে তার অস্তিত্ব রক্ষা করার জন্য দৈনন্দিন জীবনে প্রতিনিয়ত সংগ্রাম করে চলতে হয় পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় নারীর সম্মান থেকে অস্তিত্ব সবটাই পুরুষের ব্যক্তিগত ইচ্ছাধীন হয়ে রয়েছে আবহমান কাল ধরে।

তবে পূর্বের পরিস্থিতি এত জটিল ছিলনা। সভ্যতার সূচনা লগ্নে নারীতান্ত্রিক ব্যবস্থাই কায়েম ছিল কিন্তু তার স্থায়িত্ব নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার বাসনা প্রকট হতেই নারীর অধিকার খর্ব করে শুরু হয় যুগান্তরব্যাপী নারীকে অবদমিত করার প্রয়াস।

সভ্যতা নারীতান্ত্রিক না পুরুষতান্ত্রিক হয়। উচিত সে আলোচনা ভিন্ন প্রসঙ্গ ও সমাজবিদ্যার অন্তর্ভুক্ত, তবু সাহিত্য যেহেতু সমাজেরই দর্পণ তাই সামাজিক সমস্যা সাহিত্যেও প্রতিফলিত হয় তাই এ প্রসঙ্গের উত্থাপন নেহাত অপ্রাসঙ্গিক বলা যায়না।

বাংলা সাহিত্যে সমস্ত স্তরে সব রকম লেখকের লেখনীতেই নারী পুরুষ চরিত্রের বিভিন্ন দিক উঠে এসেছে। একেকজন সাহিত্যিক একেকরকম দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে তাদের বক্তব্য তুলে ধরেছেন। এই ক্ষেত্রে শরদ্দিন্দু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় তাঁর ব্যোমকেশ সমগ্রের বিভিন্ন কাহিনীগুলিতে এইসব সম্পর্ক গুলোকে কিভাবে চিত্রিত করেছেন তা আমার আলোচ্য বিষয়।

ব্যোমকেশ আপাত দৃষ্টিতে সত্যান্বেষণের ধারাবাহিক গোয়েন্দা কাহিনীর সংকলন হলেও এর বিভিন্ন কাহিনীর মধ্যে চরিত্রগুলোর যে অতুলনীয় রংবাহার তা থেকে চিরন্তন বাস্তব বিভিন্ন সম্পর্কের আবেগ, অনুযোগ, সৌন্দর্য, বীভৎসতা প্রত্যক্ষ করা যায় খুব কাছ থেকে।

লেখক তৎকালীন আধুনিক জীবনযাত্রার প্রেক্ষিতগুলিকেই বেছেছেন কিন্তু এই কাহিনীর আভ্যন্তরীণ যে দ্বন্দ্ব ও আকর্ষণগুলো তা যুগান্তরব্যাপী ঘটে চলা সত্য। জীবনযাত্রার ধরন বদলালেও সম্পর্কের সমীকরণের কাঠামো একই থেকে যায়। এই বিষয়টিকেই লেখক বিশেষভাবে তাঁর কাহিনীগুলির মধ্যে তুলে ধরেছেন।

ব্যোমকেশ সিরিজের প্রত্যেকটি কাহিনীতেই অসংখ্য নারী ও পুরুষ চরিত্রের দেখা পাওয়া যায়। লেখক মনস্তাত্ত্বিক, সামাজিক ও সমসাময়িক প্রেক্ষাপটের ভিত্তিতে নানাদিক থেকে নরনারীর ভাবনাচিন্তা, ক্রিয়াকলাপ, অবস্থান প্রভৃতিকে তুলে ধরেছেন। আবার সেসব চরিত্রের সমান্তরালে এই সিরিজের মুখ্য চরিত্র ব্যোমকেশ, সত্যবতীর দাম্পত্য সম্পর্ক এবং অজিতের চরিত্রকেও লেখক এখানে প্রত্যেকটা গল্পে সমানভাবে পরিস্ফুট করেছেন।

‘প্রথম খণ্ডের’ অন্তর্গত চারটি কাহিনীর পর পঞ্চম কাহিনী অর্থম অনরথম গল্পটি থেকে ব্যোমকেশ আর সত্যবতীর সম্পর্কের সূচনা। পঞ্চম কাহিনী থেকে নারী চরিত্রের প্রবেশ ঘটেছে। ব্যোমকেশ সত্যবতীর মধুর দাম্পত্যের মাঝে বহু বিষয়ের মতবিরোধ দেখা গেলেও কখনো আবার সত্যবতীর উপর রাগ করেও তার পরামর্শ মত কাজ করার মধ্যে দিয়ে সম্পর্কের শক্ত বুনியাদটি স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। যেখানে মতবিরোধ পারস্পরিক মর্যাদা ও সম্মান প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে বাধা সৃষ্টি করেনি। ব্যোমকেশ পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের প্রতিনিধি হয়ে ওঠেনি। সে সত্যবতীকে যথাযথ মর্যাদা দিয়েছে এবং তার মতামতকে সম্মান জানিয়েছে আবার নিজের ব্যক্তিস্বাভাবের অবস্থানকে স্পষ্ট করেছে। অজিত-রূপী লেখক নিরপেক্ষভাবে পুরো ঘটনার সাক্ষী থেকেছেন।

ব্যোমকেশ সিরিজের প্রত্যেকটা গল্পের অপরাধী চরিত্র পুরুষ নয়, নারী চরিত্রও রয়েছে। প্রত্যেক ক্ষেত্রেই অপরাধ প্রবণতার কারণটা লেখক অসামান্য

মনস্তাত্ত্বিক দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে তুলে ধরেছেন। কিন্তু কোনও ক্ষেত্রে তা একপেশে বিচারে পরিণত হয়নি। অপরাধীও মানুষ তাই মানবিক মনভঙ্গিমায় অপরাধীর অপরাধপ্রবন হয়ে ওঠার নেপথ্যের কার্যকারণগুলোকে লেখক ব্যোমকেশের সত্য অন্বেষণের মাধ্যমে তুলে ধরেছেন। নারী চরিত্র পুরুষ চরিত্রের যোগ্য সহায়ক হয়ে উঠেছে প্রায় গল্পে আবার কোনও ক্ষেত্রে হয়ে উঠেছে যোগ্য প্রতিপক্ষ। প্রতিপক্ষ হোক বা পরিপূরক কেউ কোনও ক্ষেত্রে নিজের পাশাপাশি অন্যের মর্যাদা নষ্ট করেনি।

‘অগ্নিবান’ কাহিনীতে প্ররোচক নারী চরিত্রটি সুন্দর ভাবে ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। এখানে অপরাধী চরিত্র একজন বিজ্ঞানী। কিন্তু অর্থকষ্টে জর্জরিত জীবনে একটি কুটিল নারীর সংস্পর্শে আরও বিষময় পরিণতি ঘটে চরিত্রটি ক্ষুরধার বিজ্ঞানী থেকে আসামী হয়ে অসহায়ভাবে ভাগ্যের হাতে আত্মসমর্পণে বাধ্য হয়েছে। এখানে দ্বিতীয় স্ত্রীর অসহযোগিতা, কলহপ্রিয়তা, স্নেহহীন প্রকৃতি সংসারটিকে ছিন্নছাড়া করে তুলেছে। অদ্ভুতভাবে এখানে অপরাধী পুরুষ চরিত্রটি মমতাময়, ব্যক্তিত্বপূর্ণ অথচ সম্পূর্ণ বিরূপ পথে চালিত হয়েছে উপায়ান্তর না পেয়ে। এখানে দেবকুমার নামক বিজ্ঞানী চরিত্রটি সাংসারিক জীবনে পরিপূর্ণতা পেতে, শান্তি পেতে পারতো যদি তার দ্বিতীয় পত্নীর মানবিকতা, স্নেহ, মমত্ব, কোমলতার মত চারিত্রিক গুণাবলি সঠিক মাত্রায় থাকত। দুই চরিত্রের চারিত্রিক গুণাবলির মাত্রায় সামঞ্জস্য না থাকার ফলে এদের দাম্পত্য ভারসাম্য ক্ষুণ্ণ হয়েছে।

‘চিত্রচোর’ গল্পে দাম্পত্যের সমতার বিষয়টি ছত্রে ছত্রে ফুটে উঠেছে। ব্যোমকেশ—সত্যবতী জুটির পাশাপাশি কাহিনীর অন্যান্য প্রত্যেকটা জুটির ক্ষেত্রেই এই সমতার মাত্রা যেখানে ক্ষুণ্ণ হয়েছে সেখানেই সম্পর্কের অবনতি লেখক সুচারুরূপে তুলে ধরেছেন। প্রথমই ধরা যাক ডঃ সোম আর তার পত্নী মালতী দেবীর দাম্পত্যের কথা। উভয়ের দাম্পত্য জোর করে টিকিয়ে রাখা এক সম্পর্ক যেখানে না আছে পারস্পরিক সম্মান না ভালবাসা না রয়েছে একে অপরের প্রতি বিন্দুমাত্র বিশ্বাস। বিশ্বাসহীনতার কমতি ক্রমাগত আরও সম্পর্কের ভিত্তিহীন সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করেছে, আবার কোনও কোনও সময় সত্যিই বিশ্বাস ভঙ্গ করেছে আরেক পক্ষ। ড. সোম পত্নীর কাছ থেকে ভরসা, প্রেম, ভালবাসা না পেয়ে অক্লবয়সি, তুলনায় অনেক কোমল স্বভাবা রজনীর প্রতি অনুরক্ত হয়েছেন আর এতে মালতী দেবীর সাথে তার বিবাদ আরও বেড়েছে। এই কাহিনীতে দেখা যায় ড. সোম আর মালতী দেবীর বিবাদের রেশ ব্যোমকেশ-সত্যবতীর সম্পর্কের অন্দরেও অসম্ভাব্য সঞ্চারিত করেছে। অবশেষে এই কাহিনীর অন্তে ডা. ঘটকের সঙ্গে রজনীর বিবাহ,

ড. সোমের সঙ্গে মালতী দেবীর বিচ্ছেদের পর্বে খানিকটা স্থিতিশীলতা এনে দিয়েছে। তবে সেই সম্পর্কের ভিত ঘুণধরা ছিল বলেই তার পরিণতি কোনদিন ভালো হওয়া সম্ভব ছিলনা। কিন্তু ব্যোমকেশ—সত্যবতীর সম্পর্কের ভিত্তি মজবুত তাই তাদের দাম্পত্য সমস্যা কেসটি সমাধানের সাথে সাথেই প্রায় মিটে যায়। এক্ষেত্রে সম্পর্কের পারস্পরিক বোঝাপড়াই হয়ে ওঠে সমাধান সূত্র।

‘দুর্গরহস্য’ কাহিনীতে রহস্য জটিল, তার সাথে নর-নারী চরিত্রের পারস্পরিক সম্পর্কের জটিলতা যথেষ্ট ছিল। সমাধানের সাথে সাথে সেই সম্পর্কগুলির জট কেটে গিয়েছে। এই গল্পে নারী-পুরুষের সম্পর্কের সমতা বেশ কিছু ক্ষেত্রে নষ্ট হওয়ার ফলেই সমস্যা শুরু হয়েছে। অপরাধী চরিত্র মণিলালের সঙ্গে হরিপ্রিয়ার দাম্পত্য মজবুত ছিলনা বলেই হরিপ্রিয়াকে খুন করতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল মণিলাল। আবার তুলসীর সাথে রমাপতির সম্পর্কে পারস্পরিক ভালবাসা ছিল বলেই তা শেষে গিয়ে বহু বাধাবিপর্ষয় সত্ত্বেও একটি শুভ পরিণতির পথে এগিয়েছিল। ব্যোমকেশের সঙ্গে সত্যবতীর দাম্পত্যের সাফল্য সূচিত হয়েছে গল্পের শেষে তাদের সন্তানের জন্মের সুসংবাদ লাভের মধ্য দিয়ে।

‘চিড়িয়াখানা’ গল্পের ক্ষেত্রে নর-নারীর সম্পর্কের সামঞ্জস্য যেমন একটি নির্বিঘ্ন হত্যালীলা সম্পাদন করেছে আবার তেমন করেই ধরা পড়েও ফাঁকি দিয়ে নিজেদের মর্জি মত আত্মহত্যার পথেও একই সাথে এগিয়ে গেছে। সেখানেও তাদের পারস্পরিক সম্পর্কের সূত্র দৃঢ় হওয়ায় সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করার কোনও সুযোগই পায়নি পরিস্থিতি। আসল বিষয়টি হল যেকোনো সম্পর্কের এই আদান-প্রদান এবং সমতার মাত্রার যোগ্য সঙ্গত হলেই তা ভালো খারাপ সব ধরনের কর্মেই সাফল্যের সঙ্গে উদ্ভীর্ণ হয়। তার প্রকৃষ্ট উদাহরণ এই গল্পটি।

‘আদিম রিপু’ গল্পে মিস ননীবালা অবিবাহিতা চাকুরিরতা এক নারী, যিনি আজকের ভাষায় ‘সিঙ্গেল মাদারের দায়িত্ব নিজের কাঁধে তুলে নিয়েছিলেন। একটি অনাথ শিশুকে মাতৃস্নেহে লালন পালন করেছেন কিন্তু শিশুর প্রকৃত পিতা দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীন, লম্পট এবং অসচ্চরিত্র ব্যক্তি। তার চারিত্রিক দুর্বলতাই গল্পের শুরু থেকে শেষ পর্যন্ত পরিনতির জন্য দায়ী। মিস ননীবালার একার সামর্থ্যে কুলোয়নি শিশুর রক্তের থেকে পিতার পরিচয়কে মুছে নতুন মানুষ গড়ে দেবার স্বপ্ন সার্থক করার। তাই অনাদি হালদারের স্বভাবোচিত লাম্পটা আর নৃশংসতা ননীবালার স্নেহে তৈরি হওয়া ভালোমানুষ প্রভাতকেও খুনি করে তুলেছে তার রক্তের সুপ্ত পরিচয় জাগিয়ে। সংসারের একটি যে কোনও কাজেই নারী ও পুরুষের বিপরীত মেরুর ভাবনা সে কাজ পণ্ড করার পক্ষে যথেষ্ট এর থেকেই বোঝা যায়।

‘বহ্নিপতঙ্গ’ কাহিনীতে যতদিন শকুন্তলার সঙ্গে রতিকান্তর সম্পর্কের সমতা ঠিক ছিল ততক্ষণ পর্যন্ত তারা অধরা ছিল। যে মুহুর্তে রতিকান্ত ধরা পড়ার ভয়ে শকুন্তলাকে মেরে ফেলার চেষ্টা করেছে তখন সে নিজেও মারা পড়েছে। সমাজের অসুখটি উপেক্ষা করে তারা নিজেদের প্রেম সার্থক করার উপায় করতে পারেনি বলেই এত জটিলতার আবর্ত সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। এই কেস সমাধান করার ক্ষেত্রে দুই ডাক্তার মিস মান্না আর ডা. পালিত যোগ্য সঙ্গত করেছিলেন বলে এই বিশেষ কেসটির সমাধান সহজ হয়। অন্যদিকে বলা যায় শকুন্তলার সঙ্গে দীপনারায়ণ বাবুর কোনও সখ্যতা বা স্বাভাবিক দাম্পত্য প্রেম গড়ে ওঠেনি বলেই হয়ত শকুন্তলা বিবাহের পরও ব্যাভিচারে লিপ্ত হয়ে পরেছে। এখানে সম্পর্কের সমতা নষ্ট হয়েছে বলে অনর্থ ঘটেছে। নইলে শকুন্তলার মত সুন্দরী, শিক্ষিতা, রুচিশীল, আধুনিকা মহিলা দীপনারায়ণ বাবুর সংসারে উজ্জ্বল হয়ে থাকতে পারত।

‘রক্তের দাগ’ গল্পে সত্যকাম খুনের কিনারা করতে গিয়ে ব্যোমকেশ খুঁজে পেয়েছিল তার মূলে তার মায়ের বিবাহ পূর্ববর্তী জীবনের কেচ্ছা কেলেকারির হৃদিস, তার মায়ের সঙ্গে বর্তমান সমাজ স্বীকৃত পিতার সম্পর্কের শীতলতা এবং আসল পিতার লাম্পটের নিদর্শন। একটি শিশুর জীবন নষ্ট করে দেবার জন্য সংসারে সংসারে নারী পুরুষের সম্পর্কের তিজ্ঞতাই যথেষ্ট বা বলা যেতে পারে নারী ও পুরুষের মধ্যে যদি কেউ দায়িত্ব বেড়ে ফেলে অমানবিক হতে পারে তবে সংসারের কাঠামোটাই বিনষ্ট হয়। যা এই খুনের নেপথ্যের কারণ। লেখক এই বিষয়টিকে লেখার মাঝে এমন করে মিশিয়ে দিয়েছেন আলাদা করে চোখে পড়েনা কিন্তু পদে পদে উপলব্ধি করা যায়। আবার এর সমান্তরালে ব্যোমকেশ-সত্যবতীর মধুর দাম্পত্য চিত্র উঠে এসেছে যা আদর্শ সংসার-চিত্র বলা যায় উষাপতি-সুচিত্রার দাম্পত্যের সাপেক্ষে।

‘কহেন কবি কালিদাস’ গল্পে এই সম্পর্কের সমীকরণের মজবুত দিকটা উঠে এসেছে। সেটা ফণীশের সঙ্গে তার স্ত্রী ইন্দিরা হোক বা ভুবনের সঙ্গে মোহিনীর সম্পর্কের রসায়ণ। দুটো সম্পর্কের দুরকম পরিণতি হলেও তাদের সম্পর্কের বন্ধন দু’ক্ষেত্রেই পোক্ত ছিল। এক দম্পতি মিথ্যে অভিযোগের মুখে সবরকম পরিস্থিতির সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে লড়াই করে নিজেদের সম্পর্ককে টিকিয়ে রাখতে সমর্থ হয়েছে এখানে দুই দম্পতিই নিজের নিজের পরিস্থিতি এবং ক্ষেত্রে সফল। সফলতার মূলে একে অন্যের পরিপূরক হওয়া একে অন্যের প্রতি বিশ্বাস ও ভালোবাসা বজায় রাখা। খুনের অভিযোগ সত্ত্বেও ইন্দিরার বিশ্বাস তার স্বামী নির্দোষ আর মোহিনী ভুবনকে খুনি জানা সত্ত্বেও সে জানতো খুনিটা তার সম্মান রক্ষার্থে করা তাই সে

সর্বতোভাবে স্বামীকে নির্দোষ প্রতিপন্ন করার সমস্ত রাস্তা তৈরি করে রেখেছে। ভূবন যেখানে যেখানে ভুল করেছে মোহিনী ঠিক সেখানে সেখানে নিজের বুদ্ধিবলে পূরণ করে দিয়েছে এত নিপুন ভাবে যে তারা ধরা পড়তে পড়তে বেঁচে পালিয়ে যেতে পেরেছে। এখানে তাদের সম্পর্কের পবিত্রতা প্রাণহরি পোদ্দারের মত অর্থপিশাচ ব্যক্তির নোংরা মানসিকতার সাপেক্ষে ব্যোমকেশ তাদের খুনের আসামী সাব্যস্ত করা সত্ত্বেও যাতে তারা ধরা না পড়ে সেই প্রার্থনা করেছে।

নারী-পুরুষের দ্বন্দ্ব উঠে এসেছে ‘অদ্বিতীয় গল্পে। এক মহিলা জালিয়াতের নারী-পুরুষ উভয় ভূমিকায় অভিনয় করে জোচ্ছুরি করা, খুন করার ঘটনায় রীতিমত তাক লাগিয়ে দেবার গল্প এটি। এখানে মেয়েরা খারাপ কাজে অগ্রণী হয়না এই বিষয়ের স্বপক্ষে সত্যবতী আর বিপক্ষে ব্যোমকেশ-অজিত দু’জনে বিতর্ক শুরু করে। এই গল্পে শেষ পর্যন্ত দেখা যায় আসামী মহিলা এবং জেল ফেরত দাগী আসামী সে। প্রমাণিত হয় মেয়েরা ভালো মন্দ সব কাজে সমানভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করে। লিঙ্গ পরিচয় কখনো অপরাধমূলক কাজের ক্ষেত্রে বড় হয়ে ওঠেনা। নারী হোক বা পুরুষ ক্ষেত্র ও পরিস্থিতি বিশেষে অপরাধ যে কেউ করতে পারে। লেখক সে বিষয়টি দেখিয়েছেন এই গল্পের ক্ষেত্রে।

সব মিলিয়ে দেখা যায় প্রায় প্রত্যেকটি ক্ষেত্রেই নারী পুরুষের যৌথ প্রয়াস গুলি সফল আর যেখানেই সম্পর্কের জটিলতায় সমস্যা দেখা দিয়েছে সেখানেই সম্পর্কের ভিত্তি হোক বা কোনও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কাজ সেটাই পণ্ড হয়েছে। তাই নারী পুরুষের সম্পর্কের সমতা অতি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সমাজ থেকে জীবন সব ক্ষেত্রে। লেখক সে কথা মাথায় রেখে তাঁর রচনায় নারীবাদ পুরুষবাদের ঊর্ধ্বে উঠে মানবতাবাদকে স্থান দিয়েছেন। কোথাও নারী পুরুষকে ছাপিয়ে যায়নি আবার পুরুষরাও নারীদের অবদানিত করেনি। মানবস্বত্বকে সর্বাধিক গুরুত্ব দিয়েছেন লেখক লিঙ্গ ভাবনাকে পিছনে রেখে। সেদিক থেকে বলা যায় লেখক মানবতার আদর্শে সজ্জিত করেছেন তাঁর সাহিত্য ভাবনাকে, নারী পুরুষ বিভেদ ভাবনাকে সরিয়ে রেখে। এদিক থেকে তাঁর রচনা অন্য এক নজির সৃষ্টি করেছে বাংলা সাহিত্যে।

সহায়ক গ্রন্থপঞ্জি

আকর গ্রন্থ ;

১. শরদিন্দু অমনিবাস, প্রথম খণ্ড, ব্যোমকেশ, প্রথম সংস্করণ, শ্রাবণ ১৩৭৭, একত্রিংশ সংস্করণ, ফাল্গুন ১৪১৭, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, ৪৫ বেনিয়াটোলা লেন, কলকাতা-৭০০০০৯।
২. শরদিন্দু অমনিবাস, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, ব্যোমকেশ, প্রথম সংস্করণ শ্রাবণ, ১৩৭৮, উনত্রিংশ সংস্করণ, শ্রাবণ, ১৪১৭, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, ৪৫ বেনিয়াটোলা লেন কলকাতা ৭০০০০৯।

সহায়ক গ্রন্থ

১. বাঙালী জীবনে রমণী, চৌধুরী নীরদ চন্দ্র, প্রথম প্রকাশ, চৈত্র ১৩৭৪, পঞ্চবিংশ মুদ্রণ, বৈশাখ ১৪২৫, মিত্র ও ঘোষ পাবলিশার্স প্রাঃ লিঃ শ্যামাচরন দে স্ট্রীট, কলকাতা ৭০০০৭৩

সাহিত্যে লিঙ্গগত সমস্যা : তৎকালীন সময়ে নারী শিক্ষায় বিদ্যাসাগর

দেবস্মিতা দাস ও প্রীতি শাহ

ভূমিকা

ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর (২৬ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৮২০—২৯ জুলাই ১৮৯১) উনবিংশ শতকের একজন বিশিষ্ট বাঙালি শিক্ষাবিদ, সমাজ সংস্কারক ও গদ্যকার। তাঁর প্রকৃত নাম ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। সংস্কৃত ভাষায় ও সাহিত্যে অগাধ পাণ্ডিত্যের জন্য তিনি বিদ্যাসাগর উপাধি লাভ করেন। বাংলা গদ্যের প্রথম সার্থক রূপকার তিনিই। তাঁকে বাংলা গদ্যের প্রথম শিল্পী বলে অভিহিত করেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর। তিনি রচনা করেছেন যুগান্তকারী শিশুপাঠ্য বর্ণপরিচয় সহ একাধিক পাঠ্যপুস্তক, সংস্কৃত ব্যাকরণ গ্রন্থ। নারীমুক্তির ও শিক্ষার আন্দোলনেও তাঁর অবদান উল্লেখযোগ্য। অন্যদিকে বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় ছিলেন একজন সমাজ সংস্কারকও। বিধবা বিবাহ ও স্ত্রীশিক্ষার প্রচলন, বহুবিবাহ ও বাল্য বিবাহের মতো সামাজিক অভিশাপ দূরীকরণে তাঁর অক্লান্ত সংগ্রাম আজও স্মরিত হয় যথোচিত শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে বাংলার নবজাগরণের এই পুরোধা ব্যক্তিত্ব দেশের আপামর জনসাধারণের কাছে পরিচিত ছিলেন ‘দয়ার সাগর’ নামোদরিদ্র, আর্ত ও পীড়িত কখনওই তাঁর দ্বার থেকে শূন্য হাতে ফিরে যেত না। এমনকি নিজের চরম অর্থসঙ্কটের সময়ও তিনি ঋণ নিয়ে পরোপকার করেছেন। বাঙালি সমাজে বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় আজও এক প্রাতিঃস্মরণীয় ব্যক্তিত্ব। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুরে তাঁর স্মৃতিরক্ষায় স্থাপিত হয়েছে বিদ্যাসাগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়। রাজধানী কলকাতার আধুনিক স্থাপত্যের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ নিদর্শন বিদ্যাসাগর সেতু তাঁরই নামে উৎসর্গিত।

প্রেক্ষাপট

এক বিশেষ প্রেক্ষাপটে বিদ্যাসাগরের আবির্ভাব। ঔপনিবেশিক পরিকাঠামোয় বিদেশিদের দ্বারা অবদমিত, নিয়ন্ত্রিত ও নিপীড়িত ভারতীয় তথা বাঙালি জাতিরই প্রতিনিধি ছিলেন ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র, স্বভাবতই প্রতি-পদক্ষেপেই তাকে বইতে হয়েছে পরাধীনতার গ্লানি। সেখানে নিজস্ব ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতিকে চর্চা ও রক্ষার বিষয়টি আরও কষ্টকর হয়ে উঠেছিল। ঔপনিবেশিক শোষণ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট নানা কারণে সমাজের অধিকাংশই ছিল দরিদ্র পীড়িত ও শিক্ষার আলোয় বঞ্চিত। স্বভাবতই নানা কুসংস্কারের মায়াজাল তাদের আবদ্ধ রেখেছিল। মধ্যযুগীয় পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজে নারীদের না ছিল কোন অধিকার কিংবা কোনো স্বাধীনতা। পুরুষদের বহুবিবাহ, কৌলিন্য প্রথা, পণপ্রথা ও বিধবাদের ওপর নানাবিধ নিপীড়ন ছিল স্বাভাবিক চিত্র। প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলে বসবাসকারী জনজাতির এক বৃহৎ অংশ ছিল শিক্ষার অধিকার বঞ্চিত। শিক্ষার যে সংকীর্ণ সুযোগটুকু ছিল তাও সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল উচ্চবিত্তের মধ্যে। সাধারণের মধ্যে ছিল না কোন শিক্ষা তেমনি কোনও সচেতনতা ও ছিল না, এই প্রেক্ষাপটে বিদ্যাসাগরের প্রাসঙ্গিকতা। মানুষের সার্বিক কল্যাণ প্রতিষ্ঠা করাই বিদ্যাসাগরের যাবতীয় কর্মের প্রেরণা ছিল। ভারতীয় সমাজের চিরাচারিত রীতিনীতি, তার পারিপার্শ্বিক ও আবহ ইত্যাদি ও তাঁর মানবতাবাদি দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি গড়ে তোলার পিছনে সক্রিয় ছিল। সমাজের সবচেয়ে অবহেলিত ও উৎপীড়িত নারীদের সর্বাঙ্গীণ উন্নতি, সমানাধিকারের জন্য বহুবিবাহ ও বাল্যবিবাহ রদ, বিধবা বিবাহ প্রচলন, স্ত্রী শিক্ষা তথা নারী-পুরুষ নির্বিশেষে সকলের শিক্ষার উন্নয়নের জন্য তাঁর নিরলস প্রয়াস অতুলনীয়।

বাংলা সাহিত্যে বিদ্যাসাগরের ভূমিকা

ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগরকে বাংলা সাহিত্যের প্রথম সার্থক গদ্যকার মনে করা হয়। যদিও তত্ত্বগত ভাবে বাংলা গদ্যের জনক তিনি নন। কারণ বাংলা সাহিত্যের আঙিনায় তার আগমনের বহুপূর্বেই গদ্যরচনার সূত্রপাত ঘটেছিল। কিন্তু সেইসব গদ্য ছিল শিল্পগুণবিবর্জিত নীরস এবং অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই অসংলগ্ন বাক্যসমষ্টি। বিদ্যাসাগর সর্বপ্রথম বাংলা সাধু গদ্যের একটি মান্য ধ্রুবক নির্দেশনা করেন। প্রয়োজনবোধে সেই গদ্যে চলিত ভাষার গতিশীলতাও যুক্ত করেন। কল্পনা ও স্বকীয় পাণ্ডিত্যের সংমিশ্রণে যে গদ্যভাষার জন্ম তিনি দেন, তা ছিল সরস, সুমধুর, সুশ্রাব্য, ছন্দোময় ও গতিশীল। এই অর্থে তিনি ছিলেন বাংলা গদ্যের নব জন্মদাতা। তিনি বাংলা আধুনিক গদ্যের জনক। সাধু বাংলা গদ্যের শিল্পরূপটি ঠিক

কিরকম হতে পারে, তার প্রথম আভাস পাওয়া গিয়েছিল, সংস্কৃত সাহিত্য থেকে অনূদিত বিদ্যাসাগরের বাংলা রচনাগুলিতে। ১৮৫৪ সালে শকুন্তলা ও ১৮৬০ সালে সীতার বনবাস গ্রন্থে তার সেই বিশিষ্ট গদ্যশৈলীর পরিচয় পাওয়া যাবে :

“শকুন্তলার অধরে নবপল্লবশোভার সম্পূর্ণ আবির্ভাব ; বাহ্যুগল কোমল বিটপের বিচিত্র শোভায় বিভূষিত ; আর, নব যৌবন, বিকশিত কুসুমরাশির ন্যায়, সর্বঙ্গ ব্যাপীয়া রহিয়াছে। (শকুন্তলা, প্রথম পরিচ্ছেদ)”

লক্ষ্মণ বলিলেন, আর্য্য! এই সেই জনস্থানমধ্যবর্তী প্রস্রবণ গিরি। এই গিরির শিখরদেশ আকাশপথে সতত সঞ্চরমান জলধরমণ্ডলীর যোগে নিরন্তর নিবিড় নীলিমায় অলংকৃত; অধিত্যকা প্রদেশ ঘনসন্নিবিষ্ট বিবিধ বনপাদপসমূহে আচ্ছন্ন থাকাতে, সতত স্নিগ্ধ, শীতল ও রমণীয়; পাদদেশে প্রসন্নসলিলা গোদাবরী তরঙ্গবিস্তার করিয়া প্রবলবেগে গমন করিতেছে। (সীতার বনবাস, প্রথম পরিচ্ছেদ, আলেখ্যদর্শন)

সংস্কৃত কাব্যসাহিত্যে বিদ্যাসাগরের অসামান্য দখল ছিল। আবার নিজ চেষ্টায় ইংরেজি শিখে সেই ভাষার সাহিত্যের সঙ্গেও সম্যক পরিচিত হয়েছিলেন তিনি। সংস্কৃত শব্দ ও পদবিন্যাসের শ্রুতিমাধুর্য ও গাভীর্যকেই তিনি স্থান দিয়েছিলেন বাংলা গদ্যে; দুর্বোধতা বা দুরূহতাকে। গ্রহণ-বর্জনের যে অসামান্য ক্ষমতা তার মধ্যে ছিল, তার মাধ্যমে ফোর্ট উইলিয়াম কলেজের পাঠ্যপুস্তক গদ্যের অসামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ ব্যবহারিক গদ্য ও সমকালীন সংবাদপত্রগুলির নিকৃষ্ট গদ্যানুনা সব থেকেই ছেকে নিয়েছিলেন প্রয়োজনীয় সাহিত্যগুণ। আবার ইংরেজি সাহিত্যের আদর্শে যতিচিহ্নের ব্যবহার করে বাংলা সাহিত্যে কালান্তর সূচনা করতেও পিছনপা হননি তিনি। নিছক ব্যবহারিক বাংলা গদ্যকে তিনি উৎকৃষ্ট সাহিত্যিক গদ্যে বিবর্তিত করতে তার প্রয়াস ব্যর্থ হয়নি। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ যথার্থই বলেছেন, “বিদ্যাসাগর বাংলা গদ্যভাষার উজ্জ্বল জনতাকে সুবিভক্ত, সুবিন্যস্ত, সুপরিচ্ছন্ন ও সুসংহত করিয়া তাহাকে সহজ গতি ও কর্মকুশলতা দান করিয়াছিলেন।”

স্ত্রী শিক্ষা বিস্তার

বিদ্যাসাগর নারী জাতিকে শিক্ষিত করে তুলতে অক্লান্ত পরিশ্রম করেন। বেথুন সাহেব যখন স্ত্রী শিক্ষা প্রসারের জন্য নানা উদ্দেশ্য গ্রহণ করেছিলেন কিন্তু কুসংস্কারচ্ছন্ন ভারতীয় সমাজ তাকে বিভিন্নভাবে বাঁধা দিচ্ছিল, ঠিক তখনই বিদ্যাসাগর ও তাঁর অন্তরঙ্গ বন্ধু ও সহকর্মী মদনমোহন তর্কালঙ্কার তাঁকে

আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা করেছিলেন। বিদ্যাসাগর মনে করতেন কষ্টে নিমজ্জিত নারীসমাজের মুক্তির একমাত্র উপায় ছিল শিক্ষা। তাই বেথুন সাহেবের অনুরোধে স্কুল পরিচালনার জন্য অবৈতনিক সম্পাদকের দায়িত্ব গ্রহণে কুষ্ঠাবোধ করেননি। এই বালিকা বিদ্যালয় চালু হওয়ার প্রথম দিনই মদনমোহন তর্কালঙ্কার তার দুই কন্যা ভুবনমালা ও কুন্দমালাকে ভর্তি করেছিলেন ও নিজে কিছুদিন পাঠদান করেছিলেন বিনা বেতনে ও তাদের জন্য বইও লিখেছিলেন। এই কারণে মদনমোহনকে গ্রামচ্যুত হতে হয়েছিল তৎকালীন গোঁড়া ব্রাহ্মণ ও পণ্ডিতদের জন্য কিন্তু বিদ্যাসাগর কঠিন পরিস্থিতিতেও নিরুৎসাহিত হয়ে পড়েননি। তাঁর মনে এই বিশ্বাস ছিল যে তাঁদের নারী জাতি শিক্ষার জন্য যে কঠোর পরিশ্রম তা কখনো ব্যর্থ হবে না।

বিদ্যাসাগর আদর্শবাদী হলেও তিনি ছিলেন অত্যন্ত বাস্তব দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি সম্পন্ন মানুষ। যেমন-যে সময় ছাত্রীদের বাড়ি থেকে বিদ্যালয় নিয়ে আসার জন্য ঘোড়ার গাড়ি ব্যবস্থা ছিল। তার পরামর্শে পালকি গাড়ির পাশে “মহানির্বাণতন্ত্রের” একটি শ্লোক—“কন্যাপ্যেবং পালনীয়া শিক্ষানীয়াতি যত্নতঃ”—খোদাই করে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। যার অর্থ—‘পুত্রের মত কন্যাকেও যত্ন করে পালন করতে ও শিক্ষা দিতে হবে’। তিনি বিলক্ষণ জানতেন যে শাস্ত্রের দোহাই না দিলে এদেশে ধর্মভীরু মানুষকে কিছুই বোঝানো যাবে না। যদিও তিনি জানতেন শাস্ত্রের চেয়ে মানুষ অনেক বড়। স্কুল ইনস্পেক্টর থাকাকালীন বিদ্যাসাগর নদীয়া, হুগলি, বর্ধমান ও মেদিনীপুর এই কয়েকটি জেলায় বালকদের জন্য বিদ্যালয় স্থাপনের পাশাপাশি তিনি বালিকা বিদ্যালয় স্থাপনের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করেছিলেন।

স্ত্রী শিক্ষার সবচেয়ে বড় অন্তরায় ছিল শিক্ষা সচেতনতার অভাব। প্রবাদ ছিল যে মেয়েরা লেখাপড়া করলে বা বিদ্যালয় গেলে অল্প বয়সে বিধবা হবে। যা সবটাই মিথ্যা। ঠিক এই সব কুসংস্কারাচ্ছন্নতা ও অশিক্ষার জন্যই সমাজে এক সময় চালু ছিল সহমরণ বা সতীদাহ প্রথা। স্ত্রীলোক হয়ে জন্মগ্রহণ করাটাই ছিল বিষময়, রামমোহন রায় যুক্তি ও কঠোর সংগ্রাম দ্বারা ১৮২৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে নিষ্ঠুর সতীদাহ প্রথা রদ করেন ইংরেজ সরকারের সহযোগিতায়। কিন্তু পরবর্তীতে বিধবাদের সংখ্যা বেড়ে যায়-কোলিন্যা প্রথার জন্য। প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত বিদ্যাসাগর খুব দুঃখিত চিন্তিত হয়ে পড়েছিলেন এইসব বাল্য বিধবাদের জন্য। শাস্ত্র সিদ্ধান্তই একমাত্র এই কষ্ট ও চিন্তা থেকে মুক্ত করতে পারত গোটা নারী সমাজকে। তাই বিদ্যাসাগর সমস্ত হিন্দু শাস্ত্র নিখুঁতভাবে পড়লেন এবং পরাশর সংহিতার একটি শ্লোক কে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ করলেন :

“নষ্টে মৃত্যে প্রব্রজিতে ক্লীবে চ পতিতে পতৌ
পঞ্চস্বাংসু নারীনাং পতিরন্যো বিধীয়তে”।

১৮৫৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ইংরেজ সরকারের প্রতিনিধি লর্ড ক্যানিং এর সহযোগিতায় বিধবা বিবাহ আইনসিদ্ধ হল। স্ত্রী শিক্ষার অন্তরায় বিষয়ক একটি প্রবন্ধ প্রকাশিত হয় ১৮৬৫ সালের ‘সোমপ্রকাশ’ পত্রিকার সম্পাদকীয়তে। পাঁচটি বিশেষ অন্তরায় এর কথা উল্লেখ করা হয়।

১. এদেশে পুরুষরাই আজ পর্যন্ত ভালো পড়াশোনা শিখতে পারেনি, সুতরাং তারা স্ত্রী শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে সচেতন হবে কি করে?
২. বাল্য বিবাহ প্রচলিত থাকার ফলে মেয়েরা বেশি দিন স্কুলে লেখাপড়া করতে পারে না।
৩. অল্প বেতনের লোক দিয়ে শিক্ষার কাজ চালানো যায় না।
৪. ছেলেবেলায় স্কুলে যেটুকু লেখাপড়া শিখে, বিবাহের পর শ্বশুর বাড়ি গিয়ে মেয়েরা তা ভুলে যায়। এদেশের জাতিভেদ প্রথার জন্য সাধারণত উপযুক্ত পাত্রী মেয়েদের বিবাহ হয়না এবং সেইজন্য বিবাহের আগে তাদের যে যৎকিঞ্চিৎ শিক্ষা হয় তা বৃথা হয়ে যায়।
৫. ইউরোপের মেয়েরা নিজেরা বিশেষ রান্নাবান্না করে না, হোটলে খায়। সুতরাং তাদের লেখাপড়া করার অবসর আছে কিন্তু এদেশের মেয়েদের যেহেতু গৃহকর্ম রান্নাবান্না করতে হয় সেই কারণে তারা লেখাপড়ায় মন দেওয়ার সুযোগ পায় না। এতসব প্রতিবন্ধকতা থাকা সত্ত্বেও বিদ্যাসাগর অর্জিত অর্থ ব্যয় করে বাংলার প্রত্যন্ত গ্রামে গিয়ে বালিকা বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে লাগলেন। যদিও তিনি এই কাজে ‘উডের ডেসপ্যাচ’ অনুযায়ী সরকারি সহযোগিতা লাভ করেন।

বর্ধমান জেলার জৌগ্রামে একটি বালিকা বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠার পর ১৮৫৭ সালের ৩০ মে একটি চিঠিতে তিনি দিরেক্টর অফ পাবলিক ইন্সট্রাকশনকে লিখেছেন:

‘it is with great pleasure I have the honour to report that the inhabitants of jowgong in in Bardhaman have at the suggestion of the the headmaster of the model school at that village established a female school there...

Having however I visited it during this week, I have been led to hope that there is the every chances of it flourishing within a short time. Not only do the the inhabitants take the liveliest interested in youth success, but the girls themselves appear to prosecute their studies with great delight and attention...’

স্ত্রী শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে আরেকটি বড় অন্তরায় ছিল—এ দেশীয় শিক্ষিকার অভাব। শিক্ষা অনুরাগী মিস. মেরী কার্পেন্টার এদেশে স্ত্রী শিক্ষা বিস্তারের জন্য যথাসাধ্য সাহায্য করার জন্য কলকাতায় আসেন। বিদ্যাসাগরের সঙ্গে কলকাতার কাছাকাছি কয়েকটি বালিকা বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শন করেন। বিদ্যাসাগরের সঙ্গে তার একটি বিশেষ মত পার্থক্য লক্ষ্য করা যায়। মিস. কার্পেন্টার এদেশীয় শিক্ষিকা গড়ে তোলার জন্য বেথুন স্কুলে একটি নর্মাল স্কুল স্থাপনের চেষ্টা করতে লাগলেন। তখন একটি পত্র বিদ্যাসাগর তৎকালীন ছোটলাট উইলিয়াম গ্রে-কে লিখেছেন—

“...আমাদের দেশে হিন্দু সমাজে গ্রহণযোগ্য এক দল দেশীয় শিক্ষয়িত্রী গড়িয়া তুলিবার জন্য মিস. কার্পেন্টার কি পথ অবলম্বন করতে চান তাহা কার্যে পরিণত করা কঠিন।...এদেশের ভদ্র পরিবারের হিন্দুরা যখন অবরোধ প্রত্যাহার করার জন্য ১০, ১১ বছরের বিবাহিত বালিকাদিগকেই গৃহের বাইরে যেতে দেয় না তখন তাহারা যে বয়স্ক মহিলাদিগকে শিক্ষার্থীর গ্রহণ করতে সম্মতি দেবে, এ আশা দুরাশা মাত্র। বাকি থাকে ও অসহায়তা, অনাথা, বিধবারা এবং তাদেরকে একাজে পাওয়া যেতে পারে। শিক্ষকতার কাজ যে তারা কতদূর উপযুক্ত হবে সে প্রশ্ন আপাতত বাদ দিয়ে আমি নিঃসন্দেহে বলতে পারি যে বিধবা যদি অন্তঃপুরের বাইরে এসে সাধারণ শিক্ষয়িত্রীর করে যোগ দেয় তাহলে লোক চোখে তারা অবিশ্বাসের প্রার্থী হয়ে উঠবে, তা হয়ে থাকে তবে এই প্রতিষ্ঠান সমস্ত মহৎ উদ্দেশ্য ব্যর্থ হবে।”

বিদ্যাসাগরের এই অভিমত ছিল অত্যন্ত বাস্তবোচিত ও দূরদৃষ্টি সম্পন্ন। ১৮৫৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মে মাসের মধ্যে নদীয়া, বর্ধমান, হুগলী ও মেদিনীপুর জেলায় ৩৫টি বালিকা বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। প্রায় ১৩০০ ছাত্রী এই স্কুলগুলিতে পড়াশোনা করত। ১৮৬৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে বাংলায় বালিকা বিদ্যালয়ের সংখ্যা দাঁড়ায় ২৮৮টি। এরপর কলকাতায় ১৮৭২ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মেট্রোপলিটন ইনস্টিটিউশন (যা বর্তমানে বিদ্যাসাগর কলেজ নামে পরিচিত) এবং নিজের মায়ের স্মৃতির উদ্দেশ্যে নিজ গ্রাম বীরসিংহে ভগবতী বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন।

তিনি তাঁর উন্মিল্ল পর্যন্ত নারী শিক্ষার অগ্রগতি ভীষণভাবে চাইতেন। তাই যদি কোন মহিলা উচ্চশিক্ষিত হতেন তিনি অত্যন্ত খুশি হতেন। তার প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায় যখন শ্রীমতি চন্দ্রমুখী বসু ১৮৮৬ সালে কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এম. এ পরীক্ষায় পাশ করলেন তখন বিদ্যাসাগর শ্রীমতি চন্দ্রমুখী বসু কে সচিত্র শেক্সপিয়ার গ্রন্থাবলীর একখণ্ড উপহারসহ একটি অভিনন্দন পত্র পাঠান। তিনি এই গ্রন্থে স্বহস্তে লিখেছেন : “To shrimati Chandramukhi Basu, the first

Bengali lady who has obtained the degree of masters of arts of the Calcutta University from her science well-wisher Iswar Chandra Sharma.”

বিধবা বিবাহ আইন প্রচলন

সংস্কৃত শাস্ত্রের বিরাট পণ্ডিত হয়েও পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সংস্কৃতি গ্রহণে দ্বিধা করেননি ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর। নারীমুক্তি আন্দোলনের প্রবল সমর্থক ছিলেন তিনি। হিন্দু বিধবাদের অসহনীয় দুঃখ, তাদের প্রতি পরিবারবর্গের অন্যায়, অবিচার, অত্যাচার গভীরভাবে ব্যথিত করেছিল তাকে। এই বিধবাদের মুক্তির জন্য তিনি আজীবন সর্বশ্রম পণ করে সংগ্রাম করেছেন। হিন্দুশাস্ত্র উদ্ধৃত করে প্রমাণ করেছেন, যে লোকাচার ধর্মের নামে সমাজে প্রচলিত, আসলে তা ধর্মবহির্ভূত স্থবিরতার আচারমাত্র। ১৮৫৬ সালে সরকার বিধবা বিবাহ আইনসিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করেন। তবে শুধু আইন প্রণয়নেই ক্ষান্ত থাকেননি বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়। তার উদ্যোগে একাধিক বিধবা বিবাহের অনুষ্ঠান আয়োজিত হয়। তার পুত্রও (নারায়ণচন্দ্র) এক ভাগ্যহীনা বিধবাকে বিবাহ করেন। এজন্য সেযুগের রক্ষণশীল সমাজ ও সমাজপতিদের কঠোর বিদ্রোহ ও অপমানও সহ্য করতে হয় তাকে। বিধবা বিবাহ প্রবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বহুবিবাহের মতো একটি কুপ্রথাকে নির্মূল করতেও আজীবন সংগ্রাম করেন বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়। প্রচার করেন বাল্যবিবাহ রোধের সপক্ষেও। এর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নারীশিক্ষার প্রচারেও যথায় যথায় গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেন তিনি। শুধু কলকাতায় নয়, নারীমুক্তির বার্তা বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে ঘরে ঘরে পৌঁছে দিতে, বিভিন্ন জেলাতেও বালিকা বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করে নারীশিক্ষার সপক্ষে জোর প্রচার চালান তিনি। যদিও তার এই উদ্যোগও সমাজের অনেক গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তিত্ব দ্বারা নিন্দিত হয়। কবি ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত পর্যন্ত অত্যন্ত হীন বাক্যবাণে নারীমুক্তি আন্দোলনের ব্যঙ্গ করেন। তবু তার জীবদ্দশাতেই নারীশিক্ষা আন্দোলন ব্যাপক জনপ্রিয়তা অর্জন করেছিল।

গ্রন্থ রচনা

কুসংস্কারযুক্ত ও অশিক্ষিত মানুষকে শিক্ষিত করে কুসংস্কারমুক্ত করার জন্য তিনি অনেক গ্রন্থ রচনা করেন, কিছু কিছু অনুবাদ ও করেছিলেন। তাঁর সাহিত্য রচনা শুরু হয় হিন্দি বেতাল পঞ্চ-বিংশতি অনুবাদ দিয়ে। তিনি শকুন্তলা, সীতার বনবাস ও ভ্রান্তিবিলাস রচনা করেন, যেগুলি ছিল যথাক্রমে কালিদাসের অভিজ্ঞান শকুন্তলম্, ভবভূতির উৎসাহ রামচরিত সঙ্গে রামায়ণ উত্তরকান্ড এবং শেক্সপিয়ারের ‘কমেডি অফ এবরস’ নাটক অনুসরণে তিনি মার্সিয়ান সাহেবের রচিত ইংরেজি

গ্রন্থ— ‘History of Bengal’-এর অনুসরণে লিখলেন বাংলার ইতিহাস ‘বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস’, ‘বিধবা বিবাহ’—যে শ্রাস্ত্রসম্মত যে বিষয়ে জনসচেতনতা গড়ে তোলবার জন্যে তিনি লিখলেন—‘বিধবা বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না এতদ্বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব’ (১৮৫৫ খ্রি.) জাফত কালীন শিক্ষিত ও পণ্ডিত সমাজে আলোড়ন তুলেছিল। তিনি ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মূলক রচনাতেও ছিলেন সিদ্ধ হস্ত। ‘কস্যাচিৎ উপযুক্ত ভাইপোস্য’ ছদ্মনামে লেখেন—‘অতি অল্প হইল, আবার অতি অল্প হইল’, ‘ব্রজবিলাস’। এই গ্রন্থ গুলিতে তিনি শ্লেষাত্মক বাক্য পণ্ডিতের মূর্খামি অমূর্খের পণ্ডিত্যকে তীব্র কষাঘাতে জর্জরিত করেছেন।

শিশুদের জন্য গ্রন্থ রচনা বিদ্যাসাগরের মহান ও অতুলনীয় কাজ যা চিরস্মরণীয় হয়ে রয়েছে। ১৯৫১ সালে তিনি সুকুমারমতি বালক বালিকাদের জন্য নানা ইংরেজি পুস্তক থেকে সংকলন করে রচনা করলেন ‘বোধোদয়’। সঠিকভাবে সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার জন্য রচনা করলেন—‘সংস্কৃত ব্যাকরণের উপক্রমণিকা’। ১৮৫৩ সালে তিনি রচনা করেন ‘ব্যাকরণ কৌমুদী’। ১৮৬৪ ও সালে বাংলা অভিধান শব্দ-মঞ্জুরী রচনা করেন। এছাড়া বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় যে সমস্ত ঘটনার জন্য চিরদিনের প্রাতঃস্মরণীয় তা হল—বর্ণপরিচয় ১ম ভাগ, বর্ণপরিচয় ২য় ভাগ, নীতি-বোধ, কথামালা, চরিতাবলী এবং আখ্যান-মঞ্জুরী।

সিদ্ধান্ত/উপসংহার

মানবতাবাদী বিদ্যাসাগর, তিনি তাঁর আদর্শ চিন্তাভাবনাকে প্রকাশ করেছেন শিক্ষাদর্শনের মধ্যে দিয়ে। শিক্ষার ব্যাপারে তার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি ছিল অত্যন্ত বাস্তবমুখী। নিজে সংস্কৃত পণ্ডিত ও শাস্ত্রজ্ঞানী হয়েও শিক্ষাকে তিনি আধ্যাত্মিকতার প্রভাব থেকে মুক্ত করতে চেয়েছিলেন, যা তাঁর ‘সেকুলার’ চরিত্রের পরিচয় দেয়। সংস্কৃত কলেজে তার কর্মকাণ্ড থেকে প্রকাশ পায়—শিক্ষার অধিকার সবার -কোন একটি শ্রেণীর মধ্যে কুক্ষিগত করে রাখার ঠিক নয়। আবার প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষার মেলবন্ধন শিক্ষার প্রসার—তাঁর উদারতার পরিচয় দেয়। কুসংস্কারাচ্ছন্ন মানুষকে শিক্ষার আলোয় আলোকিত করার জন্য নিজের অর্থ ব্যয় করে বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন ও বিধবা বিবাহ চালু করা—সবাই তাঁর মহানুভবতার পরিচয় দেয়। সমাজের প্রান্তিক শ্রেণী সাঁওতালদের অধিকারের কথা ভেবেছিলেন যা আজ সংবিধান স্বীকৃত। সর্বোপরি তাঁর রচিত বিভিন্ন বিখ্যাত গ্রন্থের মধ্যে—বর্ণপরিচয় এর জন্য তিনি চিরদিন অমর হয়ে থাকবেন।

তথ্যসূত্র

ঘোষ, বিনয়, (২০১১), বিদ্যাসাগর ও বাঙালী সমাজ, কোলকাতা, বেঙ্গল পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড।

মিত্র, ইন্দ্র, (২০১৬), করুণাসাগর বিদ্যাসাগর, কোলকাতা আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট।

সন্তোষকুমার অধিকারী; আধুনিক মানসিকতা ও বিদ্যাসাগর, কলকাতা, ১৯৮৪, বিদ্যাসাগর রিসার্চ সেন্টার।

শশিভূষণ বিদ্যালঙ্কার; ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর: জীবনীকোষ, ভারতীয় ঐতিহাসিক, কলকাতা, ১৯৩৬।

মজুমদার, রমেশচন্দ্র; বিদ্যাসাগর: বাংলা গদ্যের সূচনা ও ভারতের নারী প্রগতি, কলকাতা, ১৩৭৬ বঙ্গব্দ, জেনারেল প্রিন্টার্স অ্যান্ড পাবলিশার্স।

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THEME :

EMPOWERING THIRD GENDER

A General Study on Empowerment of Third Gender through Education

Kamal Mahanta & Dipankar Paul

INTRODUCTION

The “Third Gender” is a contemporary concept. The third gender is those peoples who are classified by themselves or society as they do not belong to the two category men and women. They are classified as transgender or third gender or third sex. It is a social category that presents in societies that identify three or more genders. Biology defines whether a human’s chromosomal and anatomical sex is male, female, or one of the extraordinary variations on this sexual dimorphism that can create a degree of ambiguity known as intersex. Historically the third genders (Hijras) are facing problems for their identity and rights in our society. They are also part of social order and have equal right in everything and every resource that is available to all over the world.

Education is important in everyone’s life. Education is a human right and a major tool for achieving equality. Only education can help them to empower themselves.

PRESENT STATUS OF THE THIRD GENDER

The third gender signifies those individuals who are different in their biological construction. The third genders are an integral part of our community but the most neglected one also. This community is living on the edge of society. They are socially, educationally, economically, psycho-socially, and psycho-sexually backward class. Hijras are living on the fringes of society. In India, the total population of transgender is around 4.88 lakh as per the 2011 census department and the literacy

rate is 56.07%. They typically earn money for their survival by asking for volunteers in exchange for their blessings, performing at wedding and stag parties, begging, and engaging in sex work.

In October 2014 Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) now the Ministry of Education and University Grant Commission (UGC) decides and to include a column for the transgender community in all colleges and universities application forms for their inclusion in higher education. Therefore, they can apply along with another gender.

PROBLEM FACING BY THE THIRD GENDER

They belong to a marginalized group of society. The major problems that facing by the transgender community are avoidance, unemployment, absence of educational facilities, homelessness, and lack of medical facilities, etc.

1. The major problem facing by transgender is discrimination. They are discriminated in terms of education, unemployment, justice, etc.
2. Family and society avoid these people.
3. Transgender people have difficulty in exercising their basic civil rights.
4. Sexual activity between two persons of the same gender is criminalized and is a punishable offense.
5. Transgender have very limited employment opportunities.
6. Transgender people have difficulty in exercising their basic civil rights.
7. These people are treated badly and they face struggle for social justice because they are transgender.
8. When they are identified as transgender then they are forced to leave their parental home by the society, as they cannot be a part of normal community and class.
9. Like normal people, they are not entitled to take education in school and colleges. In everywhere they are treated differently.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR THE THIRD GENDER

India is a country where we have a well-established framework of Fundamental Rights joined in the constitution. April 15, 2014, in the National Legal Services Authority and Union of India stress, in which it asked the government to take necessary steps for the welfare of transgender persons and to treat them as a third gender for the purpose of protecting their fundamental rights. Just like the other two genders, Transgender is entitled to various important provisions of Fundamental Rights. Their Fundamental Rights are:

1. Article 14 stated that the State shall not deny any person equality before the law or the equal protection of laws within the territories of the State.
2. Article 15 stated that the State should not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of race, caste, religion, sex, place of birth, or any of them.
3. Article 19 stated that All citizens shall have rights of Freedom of speech and expression, Freedom of assembling peaceably and without arms, Freedom to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, Freedom to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.
4. Article 21 guarantees the right to privacy and personal dignity to all citizens.
5. Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings as beggars and other comparable kinds of pressured hard work and any contravention of those provisions will be an offense punishable according to law.

THE SOLUTION TO PROBLEM FACING BY THE THIRD GENDER

The transgender community is facing various problems therefore the problems have to be solved immediately. India is a democratic country every people of the country have an equal right in everything to live their life. Therefore, the government should take necessary steps and ensure them that they can able to live their life like the other two genders. Flowing are some suggestions for the development and inclusion of the third gender:

1. Everyone must have the right to choose their gender expression and identity including Transgender, Third gender, hijras.
2. The government of India must plan and include an inclusive approach for the transgender.
3. Sex-Education programs and sex education awareness should be included in a school curriculum.
4. Vocational training centres should be established for the transgender that they can learn new knowledge and can self-sufficient.
5. Focused approach should be there to provide a protective shield to their problems.
6. Policies established for the welfare of the transgender must be implemented effectively.
7. Strict action must be taken against the people who commit violence against Transgender people.
8. Appropriate steps must be taken against families who ignore, abuse, or leave their children because of their biological difference.
9. Law and regulation of free legal aid must be ensured for the Transgender community at the grassroots level.
10. All educational institutions have to play a supportive and incentive role in providing education and value-system to Transgender.
11. Different policies related to health care must be framed and communicated in all private and public hospitals and clinics.
12. To change the negative attitude towards the third gender therefore awareness programs must be organized at the mass level.

CONCLUSION

The evidence we have seen that third gender people are socially, educationally, psycho-socially, economically back warded and they don't have sufficient opportunity to improve themselves in society. We know that education is an important tool for improving everyone and society. Government of India provide different type educational opportunity like Rights to choose their gender expression, include inclusive approaches, sex education, vocational training, and different type of educational program and opportunity to include and provide equal status in everywhere. We have to change the negative attitude

towards the third gender community and give them the respect that they can live freely.

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পৌরুষ: এক বৃহন্নলার আত্মত্যাগের কাহিনি

ড. সৌরভ দাস

বন্ধুমহলে ‘ভার্জিনিয়া উলফ’ নামে পরিচিত, কবিতা সিংহ (১৯৩১-১৯৯৮), বাংলার নারীমুক্তি আন্দোলনের অন্যতম পথিকৃৎ। বিশ শতকের পাঁচের দশকের কবিতা আন্দোলনের সঙ্গে তিনি যুক্ত ছিলেন। একই সঙ্গে অমৃতবাজার পত্রিকা, আকাশবাণীতে কাজ করেছেন, করেছেন স্কুল শিক্ষকতা-গৃহশিক্ষকতার মত কাজও। সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে তাঁর অভিনব বিষয়বস্তু পরিবেশন ও স্বচ্ছ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির কারণে তিনি স্মরণীয় হয়ে থাকবেন। তাঁর লেখা ‘পৌরুষ’ (১৯৮৪) উপন্যাস যেন কিম্পুরুষের জীবনদর্পণ, প্রকৃত পৌরুষভাব যে কেবল পুরুষ কিংবা নারীর করায়ত্ত নয়, তা যে সব কিছুর উর্ধ্বে, একজন কিম্পুরুষও পারে তা নিজ কর্ম-কীর্তিতে অর্জন করে নিতে, সেই তাৎপর্যই যেন এই উপন্যাসে পর্যবসিত হয়েছে। আর সেই অনুষঙ্গে স্পষ্টতা পেয়েছে হিজড়ে জীবন ও সমাজের প্রতিচ্ছবি। ষাট/সত্তরের দশকের দেশপ্রিয় পার্কের উল্টোদিকে ‘লা-কাফে’ রেস্টোরাঁয় প্রতি রবিবার সকালে লেখক-শিল্পী, সাহিত্য প্রেমীদের আসর বসতো। সেখানে কোনও একদিন কবিতা সিংহ একটি দুঃসাহসিক ঘোষণা করেন—

ওঁর আকাঙ্ক্ষা হয়েছে থার্ড সেক্স ওরফে কিম্পুরুষ ওরফে হিজড়েদের নিয়ে একটা উপন্যাস লেখার। সময়টা ঠিক মনে পড়ছে না, তবে ১৯৮৪-তে ‘পৌরুষ’ উপন্যাসটা বেরোনের কয়েক বছর আগের কথা অবশ্যই। ৭০-এর দশকের শেষ দিকে। (সেনগুপ্ত; ২০১৩, পৃ. ১৩১)।

তিনজন প্রধান চরিত্রকে নিয়ে কবিতা গড়ে তোলেন তাঁর উপন্যাসের আখ্যান। অবিবাহিত শিবনাথ, বিধবা সরলা এবং হিজড়ে সখীসোনার জীবনের বৈচিত্র্যময় টানাপোড়েন এই কাহিনির মূল রসদ। যদিও সবকিছুর উর্ধ্বে হিজড়ে সখীসোনাই হয়ে উঠেছে কাহিনির সবচেয়ে গভীর ও হৃদয়স্পর্শী চরিত্র। অবিবাহিত শিবনাথ ডালাউসির এক বেসরকারি বড় অফিসের, ছোট কেরানি। বিবাহিত ইন্দ্রনাথ ও

চন্দ্রনাথ, দুই ভাইয়ের সংসারে সে তচ্ছিল্যের পাত্র। একইসঙ্গে অফিসেও সকলে তাকে অবজ্ঞা ভরেই দেখে। বছর দশেক আগে দেনাপাওনার তারতম্যের ফিকিরে তার বিয়ে ভেঙে যায়। মা-বাবার আদেশে পছন্দ করা পাত্রী সরলার বাড়িতে তাকেই বিয়ে ভেঙ্গে দেওয়ার চিঠিটা পোস্ট করতে হয়। বাবা-মার মারা যাবার পর বিয়ে করে ওঠাটাও তার পক্ষে আর সম্ভব হয়নি। হঠাৎ বছর দশেক পর আচমকাই এক বিকেলে সরলার সঙ্গে দেখা হয় শিবনাথের। টেলিফোন ভবনের পাশে সুমতি পানওয়ালির কাছে পান ও অদূরে সখীসোনার আখমড়াই কলের তৈরি রস খেতে খেতে তাদের একে অপরের প্রতি আকর্ষণ ও ঘনিষ্ঠতা বাড়তে থাকে।

অফিসের ইউনিয়নের ভাগাভাগিতে শিবনাথ নবাগত হিমাদ্রি সঙ্গে মনে মনে থাকলেও প্রকাশ্যে পুরনো ইউনিয়নের অসাধুতার প্রতিবাদ করতে ভয় পায়। এহেন শিবনাথ এক সন্ধ্যায় ময়দানে সরলার সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠ মুহূর্তে পুলিশের হাতে ধরা পড়লে, কাপুরুষের মতো শিবনাথ সরলাকে ফেলে রেখে পালিয়ে যায়। কিন্তু তার মানসিক যন্ত্রণা আরও তীব্র হয়ে ওঠে, ভাই ইন্দ্রনাথের রক্ষিতা, পেশাদার বেশ্যা সোনামণির কাছে সে ছুটে যায়। সেখানে প্রতিহিংসার দাঁত-নখ বার করে হিংস্র শিবনাথ সোনামণিকে খুন করতে উদ্যত হয়। সময়মতো ইন্দ্রনাথ এসে পড়ায় সে ব্যর্থ হয়। ইন্দ্রের লাঠির আঘাতে তার মাথা ফেটে যায়। এই ঘটনার ঠিক পরের দিনই শিবনাথের যেন নবজন্ম ঘটে। পুরোনো ইউনিয়নের গুণ্ডারা তাদের দুষ্কর্মের নথিপত্র লোপাট করতে সত্যনিষ্ঠ হিমাদ্রির উপর চড়াও হয় ও তাকে হত্যার চেষ্টা করে। ভীতু শিবনাথ স্বভাবসিদ্ধভাবেই নির্বিকার চিন্তে ঘটনাটি দেখে যেতে থাকে। এই সময় হিজড়ে সখীসোনা তার মধ্যে মানবতার বীজমন্ত্র বপন করে তাকে ধিক্কার জানিয়ে,

তা তুমি উখানে দাঁড়ায় কি করছ বাবু?—দেখছ ? শুধু দেখছ?—যাও ছুটে যাও বন্ধুকে বাঁচাও। (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ১৯৭)।

শিবনাথ এগিয়ে যায় হিমাদ্রিকে বাঁচাতে, আহত হয়। এরপর হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসার পর একদিন বাড়ি ফেরে ভাইদের সঙ্গে সরলাকে পাশে নিয়েই। সরলাকে সকলের সামনে স্বীকার করার মত বাঞ্ছিত ও সঙ্গত পৌরুষ তখন তার মধ্যে জাগ্রত হয়েছে। কারণ সে বুঝেছে পৌরুষের প্রকৃত অর্থ, সে পৌরুষের অনুভূতি যে বড় আনন্দের,

দু'হাতে হিমাদ্রিকে ধরে, হিমাদ্রিকে আড়াল করে দাঁড়িয়েছিল শিবনাথ! সে দাঁড়ানোটা অলঙ্কণের, কিন্তু বড় আনন্দের। সে আনন্দ সরলার বুকের উপরের

সেই কয়েক মুহূর্তের স্বর্গসুখের চেয়েও অনেক বেশি। অনেক খানি। সেই আধখানা সেকেন্ডের মধ্যেই শিবনাথ বুঝেছিল এসব কথা সে বহুবার শুনেছে। কিন্তু বোঝেনি। শুনে শুনে কিছু বোঝা যায় না। নিজে করে দেখতে হয়। (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ২০২)

কাপুরুষ শিবনাথের পৌরুষত্বে উত্তরণের সঙ্গে জড়িত সরলার জীবনও। শিবনাথের সঙ্গে বিয়ে ভেঙে যাবার পর, তার বিয়ে হয় বিজয়ের সাথে। কিন্তু বিয়ের ক'বছরে মধ্যে তার মৃত্যু হয়। স্বামীর অফিসের সামান্য একটা চাকরি পেয়ে, নিজের পায়ের তলার মাটিটুকু খুঁজে পায় সরলা। ঘটনাক্রমে প্রবীণ বড় সাহেব মিঃ চৌধুরী সরলাকে কিছুটা স্নেহের চোখেই দেখতেন, কিন্তু সরলার মন হিসাব করে নিতে থাকে এই সুযোগে কত টাকা মাইনে বাড়িয়ে নেওয়া যায়। শিবনাথের সঙ্গে ময়দানের ঘটনাটি ঘটার পরের দিন মিঃ চৌধুরীর ওল্ড আলিপুর্নে দোতলার বাংলায় সে যায় বড় সাহেবের সাথে দেখা করতে। সেখানে সরলা মনে মনে তাকে দেহদানের জন্য প্রস্তুত হয়, কিন্তু শেষপর্যন্ত বোঝে চৌধুরীসাহেব তাকে কন্যাস্নেহে দেখেন, এবং নিজের পালিয়ে যাওয়া মেয়ের জন্মদিনে মেয়ের অভাব পূরণের জন্য তিনি সরলাকে আমন্ত্রণ করেছিলেন। মেয়ের শোকে চৌধুরীসাহেব আত্মহত্যা করলে সরলা মরমে মরে যায়। তাই নিজের মধ্যকার কাপুরুষতাকে জানতে পেরে শিবনাথের কাপুরুষতাকে সে ক্ষমা করে দেয়। সে ফিরে আসে শিবনাথের জীবনে, হিমাদ্রিকে বাঁচাতে গিয়ে যে পৌরুষ শিবনাথের মধ্যে উদ্দীপ্ত হয়েছিল, তাকে সঞ্জীবিত করে রাখার দায়িত্ব যেন অজান্তে সরলা তার নিজের কাঁধে তুলে নেয়।

উপন্যাসটির মধ্যে সব থেকে আকর্ষণীয় ও হৃদয়গ্রাহী হল হিজড়ে সখীসোনার চরিত্রটি। একজীবনেই যেন সে দুই জন্মের গল্প শোনায়। কল্পগ্রামে শৈশবের বারো বছর কাটানো দুঃস্বপ্ন জীবন যেন তার পূর্বজন্ম। আর পরবর্তী জন্ম সে কাটিয়েছে হিজড়ের দলের সঙ্গে এবং সেখান থেকে সে পালিয়ে এসেছে সংসার জীবনের আশায়। ট্রাম কোম্পানির লাইলম্যান রামধারিয়ার কথায় ‘ডালাউসি কা রানি’ এই সখীসোনা জন্ম হিজড়ে হলেও তার মা তাকে আড়াল করে রাখতেই চেয়েছিল।

সখীসোনাকে ছেলে বলাই উচিত মনে হ’ত মায়ের। কিন্তু সে ঘুরত মেয়েদেরই সঙ্গে। সমবয়সী মেয়েগুলো যেই হিলহিলে দীঘল হয়ে উঠত অমনি সখীসোনা তাদের সঙ্গে ঝগড়া করে অপেক্ষাকৃত ছোটদের দলে যেত। পুকুরে ন্যাংটো হয়ে তাকে স্নান করতে দিত না মা। (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ৮৬)

লেখিকা স্পষ্টতা দিয়েছেন জন্মগতভাবে ত্রুটিপূর্ণ লিঙ্গচিহ্ন নিয়েও সখীসোনার পাশ্চাৎ কিছুটা হলেও পুরুষের দিকেই ভারি। একদিন তাদের গাঁয়ে ঘুরতে আসা হিজড়ে দলের কাছে ধরা পড়ে যায় দুগ্ধী, বেখেয়ালেই তাদের মত করে অদ্ভুত কায়দায় হাততালি দিতে গিয়ে। গ্রামশুদ্ধ লোকের হিংস্র উল্লাসের মধ্যে বারো বছরের দুগ্ধীকে তার মায়ের কাছ থেকে টেনে হিচড়ে নিয়ে যায় হিজড়েরা তাদের আস্তানায়। হিজড়ে সমাজের গুরুমার সামনে নগ্ন করা হয় তাকে। মাঝ থেকে জনৈক হিজড়ে বলে ওঠে,—‘হঁগ মা, ইটা জন্ম হিজড়া গ মা!’ হয়তো সেই কারণেই তার মা তাকে কোনদিন সকলের সামনে পোশাক বদলাতে দিত না। এরপর হিজড়েরা তাকে গুজরাটে নিয়ে যায় বহুচারা দেবীর মন্দিরে,—

মন্দিরে ঢুকলো সে। মন্দিরের পশ্চিমের দেওয়ালে একটা গভীর কুলঙ্গী। প্রদীপের আধো আলোয় দেখা যাচ্ছে। সেখানে কোন মূর্তি নেই কেবল একটি যন্ত্র। মা বহুচরার যন্ত্র। যন্ত্রটা অদ্ভুত দর্শন। সখীসোনা এখনও যন্ত্রটা চোখবুজে ইচ্ছে করলেই দেখতে পায়। তখন বোঝেনি। পরে বুঝেছিল বহুচারা মাতার যন্ত্রটি ঠিক যোনিদ্বারের মত দেখতে। ভারী চেহারার, ভারী গলার হিজড়া সখীসোনার ঘাড় ধরে ছেঁট করিয়ে দিয়ে বলেছিল, পেলাম কর, পেলাম কর। সখীসোনা পেলাম করে বলেছিল, মাগো, তুমি যদি ভগবান, তবে আমাকে আমার গাঁয়ে, আমার মায়ের কাছে ফিরায়ে নিয়ে যাও গ মা! এরা আমায় যন্তুনা দেয় গ, বড় যন্তুনা দেয়— বলে বিয়া হবে না আমার। আমারে বেঁট্যাছিলারা বউ এর মত রাখবো না, বউ-এর শক্তি নেই আমার। বউকে লুকে সুজা সুজি পায়, আমাকে উল্টা কর্যা নিবো—মা বহুচারা সখীসোনার কথা শোনেনি। (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ৮৮)

যদিও সখীসোনা জন্মগতভাবে ভবরাশি পর্যায়ভুক্ত হিজড়া, কিন্তু তার অপরিপক্ক পুংলিঙ্গটিকেও কর্তন করা হয় ভয়াবহ প্রথায়া। জবরদস্তি তাকে ছিঁবিড় করা হয়। লিঙ্গকর্তনের যন্ত্রণা সহ্য করতে না পেরে অতিরিক্ত রক্তপাত হয়ে বহু মানুষ মারা যায়, সখীসোনা অবশ্য বেঁচে ফিরেছিল। সে চেয়েছিল নারীর শরীর। পুরুষকে নিয়ে সংসার বাঁধার স্বপ্নে বিভোর সখীসোনা হিজড়ে পোশা ছেড়েছিল। তিলে তিলে জমানো টাকা দিয়ে সে আখমাড়াই-এর কল কেনে। শক্তসমর্থ পুরুষ লক্ষ্মণকে নিয়ে জোড় বাঁধে সে, মনে মনে লক্ষ্মণকেই নিজের মরদ বলে জানে। বুপড়ির ঘুপচিতে তার সাধের সংসার গড়ে তোলে। লক্ষ্মণকে গরম রুটি সৈঁকে দেয়। লক্ষ্মণকে সে প্রাণাধিক ভালবাসে। এহেন লক্ষ্মণকেও একদিন সে খুঁজে পায় অন্য এক নারীর বাসায়। তার নাম সুমতি। সুমতির সঙ্গে জোড় বেঁধেছে লক্ষ্মণ। যে সুমতি একদা সখীসোনার সঙ্গে লক্ষ্মণের সম্পর্ক থাকায় তাকে ধিক্কার দিয়েছিল।

ধন্য মেয়েমানুষ। সখীসোনা সুমতির সেই ভেঙে আসা ফোল্যা পেটটার দিকে চোখ রেখে পেছু হটতে লাগলো। তার মনে নেই সে ভুলে গেছে। পিছন ফিরে পাগলের মত ছুটতে লাগল সখীসোনা। সে মেয়েছেলের কাছ থেকে পালাচ্ছে। গর্ভবতী মায়ের কাছ থেকে পালাচ্ছে—সে স্বভাবের কাছ থেকে পালাচ্ছে—সে মানুষের সংসার থেকে পালাচ্ছে—তার হার হয়ে গেল। (সিংহ; ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ১৮১)

সুমতির পোয়াতি শরীর ও কোলের বাচ্চাকে দেখে সখীসোনা একটা কথা স্পষ্ট বুঝেছিল, তার নারীমন যতই পুরুষের ভালবাসা খুঁজে ফিরুক না কেন, পুরুষকে সে তার শরীরের টানে বন্দী করতে পারবে না। জন্মগত নারী সুমতির মতো শরীরের তৃপ্তি সে কোনোদিনই লক্ষণকে দিতে পারবে না। তাই সে ডালাউসি ছেড়ে বরাবরের মতো চলে যাবার সময় সরলাকে বলে যায়,—

দিদিমণি তুমাকে মায়ের কাছে হেরে যেতে হবেই গ। মা বড়, খুব বড় জিনিস!
—মা কে?—সুমতি। সুমতিটা মা ত্য বটে! (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ২০৭)

ব্যর্থ জীবনযন্ত্রণা নিয়ে সখীসোনা ফিরে যায় হিজড়েদের সমাজে। নিঃস্বার্থে ‘এত কষ্টের আখের কল’, ‘নতুন বাসা’—সব কিছুই স্বত্ব দিয়ে যায় লক্ষণ ও সুমতিকে। সেখান থেকে তার উদার মানসিকতার চিত্রটিও ফুটে ওঠে।

লেখিকা উপন্যাসটিতে একদিকে যেমন শিবনাথ ও সরলা চরিত্রের মধ্যে কাপুরুষতা থেকে পৌরুষত্ব উত্তরণের ক্রমপর্যায়কে তুলে ধরেছেন, পাশাপাশি দুই চরিত্রের মধ্যবর্তী চরিত্র সখীসোনা, যে ক্রমাগতভাবে মধ্যবর্তী লিঙ্গের, তার মধ্যকার জন্মগত পৌরুষত্ব ও ঔদার্যকে দেখিয়েছেন। স্পষ্টতই সমান্তরাল যৌনতা বিষয়ক ধারণা উপন্যাসটিতে প্রত্যক্ষভাবে ফুটে উঠেছে। হিজড়ে সমাজে তাদের জীবন, প্রথা, আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষা বেদনার কথা উপন্যাসিকের বর্ণনায় জীবন্ত হয়ে উঠেছে। যে সখীসোনা লক্ষণ ও সুমতির সম্পর্কের সত্যকে জেনে প্রতিহিংসায় মেতে না উঠে ত্যাগের আগুনে নিজেকে আরো পবিত্র ও শুদ্ধ করে তুলেছে। আর তার মধ্যকার নারীমনের আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষা সব কিছুই উর্ধ্ব গিয়ে পরিপূর্ণতা পেতে মেয়েলি শরীরের কামনা করেছে, সরলাকে জানিয়েছে,

অনেক অনেক ভাগ্যে মেয়ে শরীর পেয়েছ গ। পেটের ভিতর মাটির ঘট আছে তুমার। গরম রক্ত, গরম জল ভরা ঘট। পানমুচকি ধরে তুমার ফুল আসবে। বীজ ঘুরে বেড়াচ্ছে। জন্ম বীজ। বীজ খুঁজে বেড়াচ্ছে পরা হবে বলে গ দিদিমণি। এ দেহটা বেরখা দিও না দিদিমণি। তুমার নিজের ভালো চেয়েই মা হও। আমি অনেক মা দেখেছি। মা হওয়া সি অন্য জিনিস গ দিদিমণি। তুমার শরীরের

অনেকটা ঠাকুর দেবতা হয়ে যাবে গ দিদিমণি। আমি বলছি- সরলার চোখ দুটি
বিস্ফারিত হয়ে উঠলো। (সিংহ, ১৯৯৯, পৃ. ২০৭)।

কথাগুলোর অন্তঃস্থিত বেদনা যেন কম্পুরুষের চিরকালীন শাস্ত বেদনার রূপ
পরিগ্রহ করেছে।

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আইনি ঘেরাটোপ থেকে সমকামিতার উত্তরণ

আবির মণ্ডল

ভূমিকা

আমার আশা আমার ভাষা
জানি শুধু আমি
জানি না তো জানেন কিনা
স্বয়ং অন্তর্যামী।
মা বোঝে না, কেউ বোঝে না
কোথায় আমার আমি।
ব্যঙ্গ করে বলতে পারো।
তুইতো সমকামী।

হলদে গোলাপ, ২০১৫

এই লাঞ্ছনা সমকামী বা সমকামের নয়; এই লাঞ্ছনা সমাজের বিপ্রগতি মানসিকতার। লেখক স্বপ্নময় চক্রবর্তীর কলম সেই মানসিকতাকেই প্রশ্নের সম্মুখীন করেছে। তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ নিয়ে আলোচনা-সমালোচনা বহুদিনেরাকিন্তু দুর্ভাগ্যবশত সমাজ আজও এই বিষয়ে একমত হয়ে কোন ইতিবাচক সিদ্ধান্তে উপনীত হতে পারেনি। শুধু আইনি স্বীকৃতি কখনও সমকামীদের নিরাপত্তা, স্বাধীনতা ও মানবাধিকার দিতে পারে না; এর জন্য প্রয়োজন এক বিরাট মানসিক পরিবর্তনের। স্বপ্নময় চক্রবর্তী লিখেছেন, “ছোটবেলা থেকেই তথাকথিত ‘মেয়েলি ছেলেদের’ অপমানিত হতে দেখেছি সমাজের নানা ক্ষেত্রে। ওদের কষ্ট পাওয়া উপলব্ধি করেছি। মানুষের লিঙ্গ পরিচয় এবং লৈঙ্গিক আচরণের আলোছায়া বুঝতে চেষ্টা করেছি’ (হলদে গোলাপ, ২০১৫)। লেখকের এই সংবেদনশীল মনোভাব সমাজের জন্য কাঙ্ক্ষিত।

Sexologist John Money প্রথম ১৯৫৫ সালে জৈবিক লিঙ্গ ও সামাজিক লিঙ্গের মধ্যে পরিভাষাগত পার্থক্যটি ব্যাখ্যা করেন। যদিও ১৯৭০ সাল পর্যন্ত

Moneyর তত্ত্বকে গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়নি। প্রথম Feminist Theory(নারীবাদ)-তে তাঁর তত্ত্বটি গৃহীত হয়। সামাজিক লিঙ্গ বুঝতে আমাদের LGBT শব্দটির মর্মার্থ বুঝতে হবে। LGBT শব্দটি মানুষের যৌন আগ্রহের দিকেই নির্দেশ করে। LGBT পূর্ণরূপ হল—

L=Lesbian (নারী সমকামী)

G=Gay (পুরুষ সমকামী)

B=Bisexual (উভকামী)

T=Transgender (রূপান্তরকামী)।

পরবর্তীতে এর পরিবর্তিত রূপ হল LGBTTQIAP যার অর্থ

T=Transsexual (রূপান্তরিত লিঙ্গ)

Q=Queer (উদ্ভট)

I=Intersex (মধ্যবর্তী লিঙ্গ)

A=Ally (বন্ধুত্ব-এক্ষেত্রে LGBT-র প্রতি সহানুভূতিশীল মানুষদের বোঝানো হয়েছে)

A=Asexual (নিষ্কামী)

P=Pansexual (সর্বকামী)

অর্থাৎ LGBTTQIAP শব্দের মধ্যে সব ধরনের যৌন মানসিকতাকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হয়েছে (বিপরীতকামী ব্যতীত)। একসময় এদের সামাজিক স্বীকৃতি ছিল না। বর্তমানে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থার মাধ্যমে স্বীকৃতি এসেছে। নিম্নে সেই বিষয়ে আলোকপাত করা হল।

সূচনাপর্বের আইন

৬ই অক্টোবর, ১৮৬০। Indian Law Commission Thomas Babington Macaulay-র তত্ত্বাবধানে ভারতীয় দণ্ডবিধির ৩৭৭ ধারার সূচনা হয়। যেখানে বলা হয় “Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years or with a death penalty, and shall also be liable to fine” (Criminal Love, 2017)

এই ধারার মূল বক্তব্যটি হল যৌনমিলনে সঙ্গম আবশ্যিক এবং পায়ুকাম, পাশবিককাম দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ। প্রকৃতিবিরুদ্ধ যেকোনো যৌন সঙ্গম যা পুরুষ-

পুরুষ, পুরুষ-নারী(পায়ুকাম), নারী-নারী ও মানুষ-পশুর মধ্যে হয় তা অপরাধ বলে গণ্য। এই ধারা শুধু বিষমকামিতা বা বিপরীতকামিতাকে বৈধ বলছে (বিপরীতকামী সঙ্গমে সন্তান উৎপন্ন না হলে তাও অবৈধ)। অর্থাৎ মানুষের যৌনজীবনকে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে চাইছিল রাষ্ট্র।

এবিভিএ

১৯৯১র নভেম্বর-ডিসেম্বরে H.I.V. বা AIDS আক্রান্তদের উপর বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণের বিরুদ্ধে সোচ্চার সংস্থা- এইডস ভেদভাব বিরোধী আন্দোলন (এবিভিএ) ভারতে সমকামীদের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কিত একটি নথি প্রকাশ করেছিল যেখানে সমকামীদের উপর ব্ল্যাকমেল, নির্যাতন এবং হিংস্রতার বহু তথ্য প্রকাশ করা হয়েছিল। এই প্রতিবেদনে প্রথম ৩৭৭ ধারা বাতিল করার কথা হয় কারণ ধারাটি LGBTQ সম্প্রদায়ের সাথে বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণকে প্রশ্রয় দেয়।

১৯৯৪ সালের মে মাসে দিল্লির তিহার কারাগারের মহাপরিদর্শক কিরণ বেদি কারাবন্দিদের জন্য কন্ডোম দিতে অস্বীকার করলে বিতর্ক শুরু হয়। তাঁর বক্তব্য ছিল এটি সমকামিতাকে উৎসাহিত করবে। তিনি স্বীকার করেন যে বন্দিরা সমকামী যৌনসঙ্গমে লিপ্ত রয়েছে। জবাবে, এবিভিএ দিল্লি হাইকোর্টে একটি Writ পিটিশন দায়ের করে, যাতে বিনামূল্যে কন্ডোম সরবরাহ করা ও ৩৭৭ ধারাকে অসাংবিধানিক ঘোষণা করার দাবি করা হয়। এই আবেদনটি শেষ পর্যন্ত ২০০১ সালে খারিজ হয়।

নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন

ডিসেম্বর ২০০১-এ সমকামীদের যৌন স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থা এনজিও নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন দিল্লি হাইকোর্টে একটি জনস্বার্থ মামলা (পিআইএল) দায়ের করে, যেখানে ৩৭৭ ধারার সাংবিধানিকতাকে চ্যালেঞ্জ এবং সমকামিতা বৈধকরণের কথা বলা হয়। সেপ্টেম্বর ২০০৪-এ দিল্লি হাইকোর্ট এই মামলাটি খারিজ করে দিয়েছিল। নাজ ফাউন্ডেশনের দায়ের করা একটি রিভিউ পিটিশনও কয়েক মাস পরে খারিজ হয়।

ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০০৬-এ নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন এই মামলার জন্য বিশেষ লিভ পিটিশন করার পরে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট জনস্বার্থের বিষয় উল্লেখ করে দিল্লি হাইকোর্টে এটি পুনঃস্থাপন করে। পরে এনজিওগুলির একজোট হয়ে Voices Against 377 গঠন করে প্রতিবাদে যোগ দেয়। তখন স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক সমকামিতার নিষেধাজ্ঞার বিরুদ্ধে একটি হলফনামা দাখিল করে।

জুলাই ২০০৯-তে দিল্লি হাইকোর্টের দুই বিচারপতির (অজিত প্রকাশ শাহ ও এস. মুরলীধর) বেঞ্চ প্রথম রায় দেয়, ৩৭৭ ধারা ১৮ বছরের উর্ধ্বে LGBTQর সম্মতিসূচক যৌনমিলনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য নয়। বিচারকদ্বয় এই রায়ের পিছনে যুক্তি দেখান প্রাপ্তবয়স্কদের সমকামী যৌনসম্পর্ক যদি সম্মতভাবে হয় তাহলে তাকে অপরাধ গণ্য করলে তা ভারতীয় সংবিধানের মৌলিক অধিকারকে লঙ্ঘন করে। এই ঐতিহাসিক রায়ের পক্ষে-বিপক্ষে দেশজুড়ে বাড় ওঠে। সুরেশ কুমার কৌশল নামক জনৈক জ্যোতিষী এই রায়কে চ্যালেঞ্জ করে সুপ্রিম কোর্টে আবেদন করে।

সুরেশ কুমার কৌশল বনাম নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন মামলা

ডিসেম্বর ২০১৩, সুপ্রিম কোর্টের দ্বি-বিচারক জি.এস. সিঞ্জিভি ও সুধাংশু জ্যোতি মুখোপাধ্যায় দিল্লি হাইকোর্টের রায়কে খারিজ করে দেন। অর্থাৎ সমকামিতা পুনরায় দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ। দেশজুড়ে তুমুল সমালোচনা হয়। বহু সংবাদমাধ্যম সমকামী কর্মী ও আইনজীবীদের নিয়ে আলোচনা সম্প্রচার করে। তখন সরকারের উপর দায়িত্ব এসে পড়েছিল প্রচলিত আইনধারার সংশোধন সরকারকেই করতে হবে। এটি নির্ভর করছে কোন সরকার ক্ষমতায় আছে তার উপর। কিন্তু সুপ্রিম কোর্টের রায়ে সংখ্যালঘু (Minority)-রা গুরুত্বহীন—“While reading down Section 377, the High Court overlooked that a miniscule fraction of the country’s population constitutes lesbians, gays, bisexuals or trans-genders, and in the more than 150 years past, less than 200 persons have been prosecuted for committing offence under Section 377” (The Hindu, 2013)। মনে হচ্ছিল বিচারকগণ সংখ্যালঘু সমকামীদের অশুভ কলঙ্ক থেকে দেশকে মুক্ত করেছিল।

মামলা-পরবর্তী প্রতিবাদ

উক্ত রায়ের বিরুদ্ধে দিল্লির প্রতিবাদসভায় বহু সমকামী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের মানুষ সমবেত হয়। তথ্যচিত্র নির্মাতা শ্রীধর রঙ্গায়ন, সমাজকর্মী লক্ষ্মীনারায়ণ ত্রিপাঠী ও জাতীয় মানবাধিকার কমিশনের চেয়ারম্যান কে জি বালাকৃষ্ণন এই সভায় বক্তব্য রাখেন। বালাকৃষ্ণন বলেন, “Human rights of the LGBT Community need protection and they should not be classified as criminal” (Criminal Love, 2017)

Visible Evidence নামক তথ্যচিত্র সম্মেলনের বিষয় ছিল ‘LGBTQ Documentary in India After 377: Where are We Coming from; Where are

We going' (Criminal Love, 2017)। সেখানে নানসি নিকোলের তথ্যচিত্র 'No Easy Walk to Freedom'-এ বিচারক এ.পি. শাহ 'সাংবিধানিক নৈতিকতা' ও 'সাধারণ নৈতিকতা'র পার্থক্য ব্যাখ্যা করে বলেন সমকামীরা সংখ্যালঘু হলেও ভারতীয় সংবিধানে উল্লিখিত মৌলিক অধিকার খর্ব করে সমকামীদের বেআইনি ঘোষণা করা অনৈতিক।

SPACE(Society for People's Awareness, Care and Empowerment) নামক NGOর নিরীক্ষায় চাঞ্চল্যকর তথ্য উঠে আসে। সুপ্রিম কোর্টের রায়ের তিন মাসের মধ্যে একজন সমকামী ও তিনজন রূপান্তরকামীকে নৃশংসভাবে হত্যা করা হয়। বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে সমকামীরা অত্যাচারের শিকার হচ্ছিল। পুলিশকে জানানোও সম্ভবকর ছিল না কারণ সেক্ষেত্রে পুলিশ সমকামীদেরকেই গ্রেফতার করবে কারণ আইনে সমকামীরাই 'Criminal'। অনেক সমকামী ভাড়াবাড়ি থেকে বিতাড়িত হচ্ছিল। অনেকে দাবি করে আগের মত কন্ডোম সহজলভ্য ছিল না। অর্থাৎ সমকামীদের নিরাপদ যৌনসঙ্গমের অধিকারও নেই। AIDS-আক্রান্ত সমকামীদের সরকারী হাসপাতাল Antiviral Therapy(ART) দিতে অস্বীকার করছিল।

এতদসত্ত্বেও লড়াই অব্যাহত ছিল। অঞ্জলি গোপালান, আনন্দ গ্রোভার ও গৌতম ভানের মতো Lawyer's Collective-র বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিবর্গ পিটিশন দাখিল করে কোর্টকে মামলাটি পুনর্বিবেচনার আর্জি জানায়। অনেক সমকামী ব্যক্তি এগিয়ে আসেন। যেমন—Humsafar Trust-র অশোক কবি, Sangam-র মনোহর, 'Because I Have Voice' বইয়ের সহসম্পাদক অরবিন্দ নারিন।

স্বাস্থ্যমন্ত্রক প্রথম এই পিটিশনকে গুরুত্ব দেয়। অন্যদিকে স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রক সমকামিতাকে ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির পরিপন্থী বলে। Queer তত্ত্ববিষয়ক ঐতিহাসিক সালিম কিদবির বই 'Same Sex Love in India'-তে বলেন প্রাচীন ভারতে সমকামিতার প্রচলন ছিল। তাই সমকামিতা ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির পরিপন্থী একথা সম্পূর্ণ ভ্রান্ত। কিদবির বক্তব্যের সত্যতা চতুর্থ শতাব্দীর চান্দেল রাজাদের নির্মিত খাজুরাহো মন্দিরের সমকামী যৌনসঙ্গমের ভাস্কর্যতে ও বাৎস্যায়নের কামসূত্রে উল্লিখিত তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ থেকে স্পষ্ট। গীতা, রামায়ণ, মহাভারত, উপনিষদেও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ বা সমকামিতার উল্লেখ আছে। মহাভারতে ভীষ্ম শিখণ্ডকে 'কন্যা ভূত্বা পুমান জাতঃ' (স্ত্রী থেকে পুরুষ হয়েছে) বা 'স্ত্রীপুমান রূপদাত্মজঃ' (নারীপুরুষ সম্মিলিত) বলে সম্বোধন করেছে যা তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের ইঙ্গিত করে। (মহাভারতের ছয় প্রবীণ, ২০০২)।

রাজনৈতিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি

তৎকালীন সময়ে কংগ্রেস নেত্রী সোনিয়া গান্ধী ও রাহুল গান্ধী এর বিরোধিতা করে বলেন এই আইন মানুষের ব্যক্তিগত ইচ্ছার পরিপন্থী। দিল্লির মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অরবিন্দ কেজরিওয়ালের আম আদমি পার্টি (AAP) সমকামীদের মৌলিক অধিকার রক্ষার্থে সাহায্য করতে প্রতিশ্রুত হয়েছিল। কিন্তু ভারতীয় জনতা পার্টি (BJP)-র উদাসীনতায় স্পষ্ট ছিল তারা ৩৭৭ ধারা বাতিলের জন্য কোন সাংবিধানিক সংশোধন করবে না। একটি হিন্দু জাতীয়তাবাদী দল হিসাবে তাদের বিশ্বাস ছিল সমকামিতা ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির পরিপন্থী। BJP-র মতানুসারে, সমকামিতা পাশ্চাত্য ভাবধারা। ভারতীয় উচ্চবিত্ত সমাজের মধ্যে তা সীমাবদ্ধ। বিপুল সংখ্যক মধ্যবিত্ত ভারতীয়র কাছে এসব গুরুত্বহীন। অধিকাংশ ভারতীয়র কাছে বিয়ে, সন্তান ও পরিবারের মধ্যেই জীবন সীমাবদ্ধ। সরকারের কাছে সমকামীরা সংখ্যালঘু ও একপ্রকার অস্তিত্বহীন। কিন্তু ২০১৫র নভেম্বরে তৎকালীন অর্থমন্ত্রী অরুণ জেটলি প্রথম ৩৭৭ ধারা রদেব কথা বলেন কারণ এটি “adversely affected millions of Indian citizens and their right to live a life of dignity and equality”(Criminal Love, 2017)। কিন্তু তাঁর দল তা করলে তাদের দোসর রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সংঘ(RSS), শিবসেনা, মহারাষ্ট্র নভিনরামণ সেনা(MNS), বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ, হিন্দু মহাসভা, বজরং দলের রোষের মুখে পরতে হবে।

২০১৫র ডিসেম্বরে ও ২০১৬র মার্চে শশী থারুর সংসদে ৩৭৭ ধারার বিপক্ষে প্রাইভেট মেম্বার বিল পেশ করেন। দুটি বিলই সংসদে খারিজ হয়ে যায়। তিনি বলেন, “As far as I am concerned, this is not just one particular[sexual] practice, as the enemy is portraying. Instead, it is about freedom guaranteed by the constitution of India” (Criminal Love. 2017) তিনি দেখান ২০১৩-র ডিসেম্বরে ৫৭৮ জন সমকামীকে ৩৭৭ ধারায় গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে। RSSর জেনারেল সেক্রেটারি দত্তাত্রেয়া হোসাবেল সমকামিতা বৈধকরণের সপক্ষে বলেন “no criminalisation, but no glorification either”(The Economic Times, 2017)।

৩৭৭ধারা সম্পর্কিত সমসাময়িক মামলা

- ২০১৪-র এপ্রিলে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট রূপান্তরকামীদের তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের আওতাভুক্ত করেছিল। কোর্টের সুপারিশ ছিল শিক্ষামূলক প্রতিষ্ঠান ও সরকারী চাকরিতে তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের সংরক্ষণ থাকবে। এই রায় ২০১৩-র রায়ের পরম্পরবিরোধী ছিল কারণ যদি একজন

সমকামী একজন রূপান্তরকামীর সাথে যৌনসঙ্গমে লিপ্ত হয় তাহলে শুধু সমকামী ব্যক্তিটি ‘Criminal’। কোর্ট রূপান্তরকামীদের অধিকারের কথা বলছে আবার তারাই রূপান্তরকামীদের যৌনসঙ্গমের অধিকারকেও খর্ব করছে। যদিও National Commission for Backward Classes(NCBC)-র সম্মতি ব্যতীত সরকারী চাকরিতে রূপান্তরকামীদের সংরক্ষণ সম্ভব নয়।

অনেকের যুক্তি ছিল সমকামী পুরুষ ও Cross-dresser-রা অনেকাংশে মেয়েলি হয় ফলে আইনের সুবিধার জন্য নিজেদের রূপান্তরকামী দাবি করতে পারে। সমকামী ও বিপরীতকামী পুরুষ শারীরিকভাবে এক ফলে তারা রূপান্তরকামী দাবি করে সরকারী চাকরির সুবিধা নিতে পারে। রূপান্তরকামিতা আসলে মনস্তাত্ত্বিক তাই চিকিৎসাবিজ্ঞানের ভাষায় প্রমাণ করা কঠিন।

- দিল্লির জনৈক আইনজীবী নগরদায়রা আদালতে মামলা করেন যে যদি ৩৭৭ ধারা অপরাধ হয় তাহলে Sex-toy ভারতে নিষিদ্ধ করা উচিত কারণ এটিও ‘অস্বাভাবিক যৌনক্রিয়া। পুলিশকে তদন্তভার দেওয়া হয় কোথায়-কিভাবে এগুলি বিক্রি হয় দেখা। প্রশ্ন ওঠে যদি এগুলি যৌনচাহিদাকে উদ্দীপিত করে তাহলে পান্থকামকে উদ্দীপিত করে এমন ফলের বিক্রি (কলা, শশা, পেঁয়াজ) কিভাবে নিষিদ্ধ করা সম্ভব? অর্থাৎ এই হাস্যকর মামলাটি নাকচ হয়ে যায়।

২০১৬-১৮ ধারাবাহিক আইনি পর্যালোচনা

- ২রা ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০১৬র নাজ ফাউন্ডেশন জমা দেওয়া আবেদনের চূড়ান্ত শুনানির দিন নির্ধারিত হয়। প্রধান বিচারপতি কে.এস. পুট্টস্বামী নেতৃত্বে তিন বিচারকের বেঞ্চ ৮টি Curative petition পাঁচ সদস্যের বেঞ্চকে পর্যালোচনা করতে বলে।
- ২৪শে আগস্ট ২০১৭। সুপ্রিম কোর্ট অবশেষে একটি ইতিবাচক রায় দিল। কোর্টের বক্তব্য ছিল গোপনীয়তার অধিকার ভারতীয় সংবিধানের তৃতীয় অংশের ২১ অনুচ্ছেদে সুরক্ষিত একটি মৌলিক অধিকার। বিচারক কে. এস. পুট্টস্বামীর নেতৃত্বে রায়ে বলে, “discordant note which directly bears upon the evolution of the constitutional jurisprudence on the right to privacy” (Criminal Love, 2017) নয় বিচারকের বেঞ্চের অন্যতম বিচারক চন্দ্রচূড় বলেন ২০১৩-র রায়ের পিছনে যুক্তি ভুল। বিচারক সঞ্জয় কৌল চন্দ্রচূড়ের সাথে সহমত পোষণ করে বলেন সংখ্যালঘু গোপনীয়তার অধিকারকে অস্বীকার করা যায় না এবং সাংবিধানিক অধিকারে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ ধারণা অগ্রহণযোগ্য। যৌন আগ্রহের ভিত্তিতে একজন ব্যক্তির বিরুদ্ধে বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ আপত্তিজনক। সংবিধানের ১৪, ১৫ এবং ২১ অনুচ্ছেদের দ্বারা গোপনীয়তার অধিকার এবং যৌন চাহিদা সুরক্ষার অধিকারে মৌলিক অধিকারের অন্তর্ভুক্ত।
- সমকামের সম্পূর্ণ বৈধকরণ তখনও হয়নি। ২০১৮তে প্রধান বিচারপতি দীপক মিশ্রের নেতৃত্বে ধনঞ্জয় চন্দ্রচূড়, অজয় মানিকরাও খান্ডেলকর, ইন্দু মালহোত্রা ও রোহিটন ফালি নরম্যানের পাঁচ বিচারকের বেঞ্চ ৩৭৭ ধারার সাংবিধানিকতার উপর শুনানি শুরু করে। আবেদনকারীরা যৌন গোপনীয়তা, বৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে অধিকার, মতপ্রকাশের অধিকারকে

৩৭৭ ধারার বিপক্ষে মৌলিক অধিকার হিসাবে দেখিয়েছেন। চারদিনের শুনানির শেষে আদালত ১৭ই জুলাই, ২০১৮তে রায় দেওয়ার দিন নির্ধারণ করলেও শেষ পর্যন্ত ৬ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৮ দিনটি নির্ধারিত হয়।

- ৬ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৮। বহুকাঙ্ক্ষিত দিন। রায়ে তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের সাংবিধানিক বৈধতাকে স্বীকৃতি দিয়ে ৩৭৭ ধারাকে “irrational, arbitrary and incomprehensible” (Nami Hans, 2017) আখ্যায়িত করে। সুপ্রিম কোর্টের স্পষ্ট জনিয়ে দেয়, “Consensual sex between adults in private space, which is not harmful to women or children, cannot be denied as it is a matter of individual choice. Section 377 results in discrimination and is violative of constitutional principles” (The Statesman, 2018)। এই রায়ের পিছনে তাদের যুক্তি ছিল, “Sexual orientation is natural. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is violation of freedom of speech and expression” (The Statesman, 2018)

মন্তব্য

অবশেষে সমকামীরা স্বাধীনতার স্বাদ পেল। তবে প্রাপ্তবয়স্কদের যৌনসঙ্গম বৈধকরণ হলেও অন্যান্য অধিকার এখনও অধরা। যেমন সমকামী বিবাহ আইনগত বৈধ নয়। শুধুমাত্র যৌনমিলনের ছাড়পত্র পেয়েছে তারা। এক্ষেত্রে উল্লেখ্য, সম্প্রতি LGBTQ সম্প্রদায়ের সদস্যরা দিল্লী হাইকোর্টের কাছে আর্জি করে হিন্দু বিবাহ আইনের আওতায় সমকামী বিবাহকে আইনসিদ্ধ করার জন্য। তাদের বক্তব্য ছিল হিন্দু বিবাহ আইন, ১৯৫৬-র ৫ অনুচ্ছেদে বলা হয়েছে কোনও হিন্দু উভয়ের মধ্যে বিবাহ বন্ধনে আবদ্ধ হতে পারে এবং তাই LGTBQ সম্প্রদায়ের দুই হিন্দুর মধ্যে সমকামী বিবাহ সম্পর্কে কোনও আপত্তি থাকতে পারে না। যদিও সরকার এই তথ্য নাকচ করে বলে সমকামী বিবাহ বেশ কয়েকটি ফৌজদারি ও নাগরিক আইনের বিরোধিতা করে। তাই সব পেয়েছির মতো চিন্তার অবকাশ নেই। এখনও সমকামের লড়াই বাকি। অন্যদিকে আইন বদলের পাশাপাশি সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি বদলের প্রয়োজন। কারণ সমাজ যদি সমকামীদের সাদরে গ্রহণ না করে সেক্ষেত্রে আইনের হাত বাঁধা। তবে আশার বিষয় হল মানুষের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি বদলাচ্ছে; মানুষ এখন Starley-র গানের সুরে সুর মিলিয়ে বলছে ‘Love is love’।

তথ্যসূত্র

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