

---

## **Women Empowerment and Gender Crime**

**Dr. TH. Binarani Devi**

*Department of Political Science, G.P Women's College, Imphal*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women which are learned, and vary widely among societies and cultures, and change over time. Problems arise when patriarchy imposes one set of qualities on men and another on women. In India, women are taught to be submissive to their husbands and it hammered to their consciousness that whatever husbands do cannot be questioned by the woman. The problem is that this servile mentality is perpetuated by women themselves. Every day and everywhere there are thousands of Indian girls and women, who are kidnapped, tortured and trafficked. Rights are Human Rights', this famous phrase is a proclamation of justice and human dignity for women because whenever a woman is treated as inferior to a man, she is also being treated somehow less human than a man. It is a time to call upon policy makers to redefine social and economic policy to reflect the need to focus on girl's education globally so they can participate and raise the next generation of enlightened males. This small paper is an attempt to highlight the problems faced by the women due to gender discrimination and the importance of women empowerment for the development of the whole society.

**Keywords:** Democracy; Discrimination; Development; Empowerment; Gender; Rights; Subordination

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gender is used as an analytical tool to understand social realities with regard to women and men. It does not replace the term sex, which refers exclusively to biological differences between men and women. The term gender is used to analyze the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in all areas and in any given social context. Gender roles are learned behaviors in a given society, community or other social groups. There is a great need for changing the social relationship between male and female. The problems of increasing violence can be analyzed from various dimensions to fully grasp its genesis, forms of manifestation and ways to effectively combat crime and violence. Women empowerment is a process of social transformation, and it is the ability to mobilize the women themselves around self defined concerns and priorities and a surest way for removing the problems of gender discriminations.

### **GENERAL CONCEPT OF WOMEN**

Women are the beginning of everything. With the opinion of M. K Gandhi, they are the companion of men, gifted with equal mental capacity, if by strength is meant moral power, then women is immeasurably men's superior. If non violence is the law of our being, the future is with men. Feminine energy is distinctive, because it is powerful, yet tempered with virtue. The feminine is the embodiment of Shakti and the primal source of all manifestation. She is also full of wisdom, compassion and sacrifice. As 'mother', the feminine principle supremely embodies nurturing and caring instincts. Sai Baba said 'Men use their discriminative ability only to do their jobs, but women can discriminate and deal with any work according to the situation. People call women weak. Do not believe it. Women are not just homemakers; they have a crucial role in individual and social uplift. There is nothing in this world that women cannot achieve.' However, women do need to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. With access to education and good opportunities, women can get equipped for greater responsibilities and create a safer environment for all.

The Bhagavat Gita states that women are equipped with seven strengths, whereas men are equipped with only three. However, these qualities are rarely known because most women are homemakers and

---

*\*Address for correspondence*

thokchom2009@gmail.com

they labor without any material compensation that they would have received if they had put in the same effort and time in a job outside the home as an employee.

If men and women are equal in essence and equal to all modern day challenges in society and home, what is the edge that women have, in today's context/ the edge that women have is their basic qualities of compassion of mutual cooperation, tolerance and sacrifice. These virtues are abundant in the feminine psyche and not so evident in the male.

Another area of women's strength is in their spirituality. Their spiritual aspect makes women more reverent, humble and accommodating. Their innate wisdom comes from evolving over time in terms of handling and balancing multiple relationship as daughter, daughter in law, wife and mother. Their impulse is towards making not breaking since they are geared to nurture and not to destroy. Their natural tendency is towards rapprochement, not conflict. Feminine energy that inclines towards preservation, restoration and healing, is the very bases of creation. It is high time society understood the importance of allowing for expansion of the base of this energy for a better, more peaceful and balanced world for the benefit of all being.

## **GENDER CRIMES**

Every day and everywhere there are thousands of Indian girls and women, who are kidnapped, tortured and trafficked. Rights are Human Rights', this famous phrase is a proclamation of justice and human dignity for women because whenever a woman is treated as inferior to a man, she is also being treated a somehow less human than a man<sup>1</sup>. Some are victims of honor killing (khaps, fatwas, customary laws etc). A large number of cases of domestic violence and marital raps routinely go unreported and unregistered. In spite of all the Declaration, Covenant, Constitutional Amendments, decisions, safeguards etc, women are subjected to various forms of discriminations in every sphere, be it at home or at work place. They become the worst victims in case of riot or conflict situations. If we use a spring board for investigation the most extreme manifestation of crimes against women, the glaring question that scares us in the face is: why are women generally raped in war which men are killed. The obvious response are multifaceted ranging from the cultural to traditional, Marxist to psychological realms, the honor of community is supposed to be vested to its women, so rape is a symbolic form of dishonoring the community; women and her sexuality are the implied property of men, so rape signified an appropriating of property; or a women's identity is presumed to be based on her sexuality, so rape denotes the making of her very identity, a devastation greater than death itself.

Rape and sexual violence, including sexual harassment, occurs at different levels of society and in distinct setting. Although all forms are connected as manifestations of crimes against women, they are distinct in that particularized strategies are necessary in order to provide appropriate remedies; the Indian Forum against the Oppression of Women has enumerated nine distinct forms of rape-1. Communal rape; 2. Gang rape; 3. Political rape; 4. Rape of minors; 5. Marital rape; 6. Army/Police rape (in situation of war or peace keeping); 7. Institutional Rape (in hospitals, remand homes, prisons etc); 8. Rape in economically dependent circumstances; and 9. Rape within political organizations<sup>2</sup>. Not only such mentioned gender crimes, young girls are circumcised, live under severe dress codes, given in prostitution, denied property rights and killed for the sake of honor of the family.

Crime against women does not happen without the active connivance or abject disregard of some basic norms by the police and judiciary. Miscarriage of justice can take place through prejudice and bias operating during the trial and the appeal. Unless these are reform and the rampant corruption that permits women trafficking across our national borders and from the villages to cities, countless and faceless Nirbhayas will continue to be kidnapped, tortured, raped and killed in our country. Even though the documentation of Nirbhaya rape case has been controlled in India, different media channels are so advanced in focusing weaknesses of women and advantages of men. There is a flourishing market for the documentation of crime fiction or, for that matter, recreating a crime on screen by interviewing a convict or narrating the sad stories. In connection with the documentary, India's Daughter, with the depiction of the real picture of Nirbhaya Rape case, the real image of gender mindset of Indian society is trying to depict, but only question is it interviews a convict when his appeal is still pending in court and there is no closure. With the controlled statement of convict Mukesh Sharma, women should not go outside at night, restricted dress codes, control relationship for girl and women etc. But women are also human beings like their male counterpart. They also have emotions like love, affection etc. The day shines equally on them. Yet the mindset of the populace is that man being physically/sexually different from women has 24 hours on one hand whereas women

get only 12 hours. As a matter of fact this is socially constructing gender difference. Such mindset reflects nothing but the socio, economic and political backwardness of the women. Women are commodified, made chief labors and are made instrumental enhancing the market for commodities. Atrocities on women at their working places, as well as, outside, which have resulted in rape, molestation including murder cited as instances of exploitation, oppression and subjugation of women. Rape of female patients by doctors and sexual torture of women in police custody are not unknown in this country. Trafficking, sexual abuses, violence against women and many other crimes like these are increasing against women. Food and health care is another domain where women are discriminated against men due to their economic position. It is advanced that women and the girl child are always neglected in this respect. It is abject poverty and deprivation that lie at the root of the problem and not the supposed discriminatory attitude. Except few lucky employees of central/private organizations millions of people belonging to lower and lower middle classes in India are left to their fate when they fall sick or suffer from serious ailments. Those who can manage and are economically well off do not make any distinction between boys and girls. But the fact remains that when the bread winner of a poor and lower middle class family suffers he is given more attention than females and girl child under similar circumstances<sup>3</sup>. These are the main causal factors for gender crimes. In spite of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under the United Nations' Organization and constitutional safeguards in India, women are subjected to various forms of discrimination in every sphere, be it at home or at work place. Violence against women in all societies around the world- remains one of the gravest and most common human rights abuse today. It thrives because of impunity, apathy and inequality<sup>4</sup>.

In a democracy political leaders are expected to be change agents and not opportunists followers of social practices. So women leaders like Sonia Gandhi, Mamta Banerjee, Menaka Gandhi, Smriti Irani etc to take the opportunities to tell the nation about measures being planned to fight this social evil of maltreatment to women in India. Women on her side, she needs to understand everything, aware of all the consequences, be able to fight and challenge all those obstacles, to acquire all the knowledge in all around her all the time. But without empowerment, the above mentioned conditions are impossible. Women need protection of their rights and interests. Male alone should not make laws pertaining to the rights of women. Their active participation in law making is of vital importance as there are good reasons to believe that issues affecting women are not given adequate scope in public life.<sup>5</sup> In connection with the process of gender sensitization for removing gender crimes in the society, men and boys are also quite important not only the women and girls. In India, mother and elders are generally controls their daughters and youngsters (female) to go to the pub, restaurants, bars etc. and not so to their sons and brothers. Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi in his maiden Independence Day 2014 speech had given the lead by calling upon mothers to sensitize their sons against brutish behavior with women. There is a huge reform agenda to be taken up in earnest if we are serious about exercising our society of abuses against women and children. Legal provisions against amniocenteses, child marriage and dowry death violate the rights of the girl child and these are first necessary steps to be taken up. These have to be backed by social mobilization a massive education effort and well advertized deterrent punishments. The agenda for rooting out unacceptable attitudes and malpractices against women -as reflected in the rapist's statement in the documentary Indian Daughter- must also include police and judicial reforms.

## **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Women empowerment is a process of social transformation, and it is the ability to mobilize the women themselves around self defined concerned and priorities. The concept of women empowerment is empowering women socially, economically and politically, so that they can break away from male domination and claim equality with them. This concept was first introduced at Nairobi in 1985. It claimed women empowerment in terms of redistribution and utilization of social powers and control of resources in favor of women. The Director of UNIFEM on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Women in Beijing 1995 said that empowerment has four components-

- A women's sense of self worth;
- The right to determine choices;
- The power to control their own lives within and outside the home; and
- Their ability to influence the direction of social change and to create social and economic order nationally and internationally<sup>6</sup>.

In the 2015-16 budget, Tarun Gogoi Chief Minister of Assam marked Rs 62,142.17 crore by SOPs to woo women and there is no new tax burden on the common men. This is the final budget presentation of Tarun Gogoi Ministry before the next election. So many comments may be there like election oriented budget so on and so forth but such type of gender budget will be a clarion call for giving information about the need for gender equality.

### **ASSAM C.M'S SOP OPERA 2015-16**

- Working women hostels in all districts.
- Women and child development authority to be set up.
- Rs.10, 000 each for 1 lakh women self help group.
- Rs. 10,000 assistance to BPL families for marriage expenses of their girls.
- Rs. 10,000 to each unmarried women of 40 to 60 years.
- Rs. 10,000 each to 200 widows in every assembly constituency.
- Rs. 5000 to every new mother for her diet.
- At least one women director in board of directors of PSUs
- Women cells in all police stations.
- 30% reservation for women in unarmed police constable recruitment.
- IT-enabled women friendly rural buses for women.
- VAT exemption for sarees below Rs. 500.

(Source: Times of India, Dt. 11.03.2015, P 1).

United Nations declared 25<sup>th</sup> November as the ‘International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women.’ And, the year 2001 was declared as the ‘International Women’s Empowerment Year’ by the United Nations. Simultaneously the government of India also declared the same year as ‘Women Empowerment Year’. Empowerment of women is essentially a broader concept heralding a shift from unjust to just, subservient to successful, passive to active womanhood. It refers to reversing gender base social, economic and political inequalities. It involves a complex interplay of various factors like physical, social, economic, political, psychological and attitudinal. The theme of International Women’s Day 2015 is ‘Empowering Women- Empowering Humanity. Picture it.’ It envisions a world where each women and girl can exercise her choice, such as participating in politics, getting an education, having an income, and living in societies free from violence and discrimination. In 2015, International Women’s Day will highlight the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a historic roadmap signed by 189 governments 20 years ago that sets the agenda for realizing women’s rights. While there have been many achievements since then, many serious gaps remain. This is the time to uphold women’s achievement, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on women’s rights and gender equality to mobilize all people to do their part. In connection with International Women’s Day 2015, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon remarked ‘To be truly transformative, the post 2015 development agenda must prioritize gender equality and women’s empowerment. The world will never realize 100 percent of its goals if 50 percent of its people cannot realize their full potentials.’ International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change, to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

International Women’s Day is celebrated throughout the globe on 8<sup>th</sup> March every year. It is a day women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. International Women’s Day first emerged from the activities of labor movement at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe. Since those early years, International Women’s Day has assumed a new global dimension for women in developed and developing countries alike. The growing International Women’s Movement, which has been strengthened by four global United Nations Women’s Conference, has helped to make the commemoration of a rallying point to build support for women’s rights and participation in the political and economic areas. In 1909 the 1<sup>st</sup> National Women’s Day was observed in the United States on 28<sup>th</sup> February. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honor of the 1908 garment workers’ strike in New York, where women protested against working conditions. In 1910, the Socialist International, meeting at Copenhagen, established a Women’s International in character

to honor the movement for women's right and to build support for achieving universal suffrage for women. The proposal was greeted with unanimous approval by the conference of over 100 women from 17 countries, which included the first three women elected to the Finnish Parliament. No fixed date was selected for the observance. In 1911 as a result of the Copenhagen initiative, International Women's Day was marked for the first time (19<sup>th</sup> March) in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, where more than one million women and men attended the rallies. In addition to the Right to Vote, and to hold public office, they demanded women's right to work, to vocational training and to an end to discrimination on the job. In 1913-14, International Women's Day also became a mechanism for protesting World War I. As a part of the peace movement Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February. Elsewhere in Europe, on or around 8<sup>th</sup> March of the following year, women held rallies either to protest the war or to express solidarity with other activities. Women could play an important role in the development process; the need of improving the status of women was felt accordingly, the General Assembly proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year. In 1975 First World Conference of International Women's Year was held in Mexico City, where three themes-equality, development and peace were emphasized. In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March. The Indian Constitution also lays down some provisions for the enforcement of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution. Clause 3 of the Art 15 provides that this world not prevent the step from making special provisions for opportunity in the public employment, education, exercise of political rights, and enjoy same kind of judicial protection in case of infringement of any rights. The National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions are working for the protection of human rights against all forms of discriminations at the National and State level. There still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analyzed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India: "Towards Equality," 1974 and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000, the Shramshakti Report, 1988 and the 'Platform for Action, Five Years After-An Assessment'.<sup>7</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

It is a time to call upon policy makers to redefine social and economic policy to reflect the need to focus on girl's education globally so they can participate and raise the next generation of enlightened males. Democracy should not be afraid in facing the dark reality of sexual violence and gender crimes. We are feeling ashamed of expressing such issues in the name of stigma, social norms etc. but it only makes one question if we can boast to be a democracy that allows freedom of choice, expression and speech. We need to know and understand what we are up against in order to deftly and strategically deal with the ongoing sickness of certain mindsets which are full of gender differences. Here women plus women support system is quite necessary. They need to make each other's welfare a priority and to refuse to shame another woman for her choices. We should not expect for receiving empowerment, we should try to empower ourselves. We should not feel happy with the gift of saree and jewelers from others but we should try to buy saree and jewelers for ourselves. With all of us doing these things, and educating our children to do the same, we may have the chance to finally shift the paradigm which led to the despicable and heart -rending events in the media channels like India's Daughter.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Women's Rights are Human Rights, Amnesty International India, 2004
- [2] Chouhan Laxmindhar, Women and the Law, Mittal Publication, 2007, P.38
- [3] Mao Xaveir P, Men verses Women-A critique of Emancipative Ideology, in Gassah L.S (ed), Women Empowerment Movement in North East India, Omson Publication, New Delhi, 2008, P.196
- [4] Amnesty International Report 2007, P.12
- [5] Anjan Jyoti, Literacy-Education and Political Participation of Women in Meghalaya: With Special Reference to Garo Hills-A Study, in Gassah L.S (ed), Women Empowerment Movement in North East India, Omson Publication, New Delhi, 2008, P124
- [6] Ritimoni, Empowerment, Education and Social Development Women of Asom, in Ray B Dutta and Ray Asok Kumar (ed) Women Emancipation, Focus North East India, Om Publication, New Delhi, p183,2008

- [7] Singh K.K, Women Empowerment in Relation to the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, in Anjali Gandhi (ed), Women’s Work Health and Empowerment, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2006, P26,