

IMPORTANCE OF WOMENS' RIGHTS

Dr. Rajesh Shukla

Head, Department of Sociology
Durga College, Raipur (C.G.)

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Global Issues, 1998:2

Universal Declaration of Human Right is one of the most monumental event in the history of human right. It human nature and are essence of our humanity. As we are concerned with women studies, so question arises where and when women's right begin? What are the importance of women's right for the development of women? One of the most important milestones in advancing human rights was the world conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Austria) in June, 1993. The Vienna Conference focused on Women's Rights and their integral place in human rights in general. It helped in making the groundwork for historic Fourth World conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The international Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo in 1994. We know that there may exist vast cultural differences in our world, but there is one common truth that when a women dies becomes disabled, is abused or goes hungry, it can profoundly affect each of her children, her family, a whole neighborhood and an entire community. As early as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thinkers like Mary wollstonecraft and J.S. Mill, argued forcefully that women had the potential for full rationality and consequently were as capable as men of complete moral responsibility . Women could not realize their potential as they were deprived of education and confined to the domestic spheres. Women through ages, have been provided very little opportunity to develop their minds. August Bebel, in his text on Women Under Socialism (1879), said that Women was the first human being that tasted bondage. Women was a slave before the slave existed . He felt that physical inferiority and economic dependence were the root cause of women's oppression. From the very beginning we observe that women are consistently degraded whatever culture they belong to. The injustice of legal system treat women as less inheritance than male heirs .In most culture women receive less inheritance than male. Inequitable divorce laws compel women to remain in cruel marriage, In India a vast majority of girl children are kept away from school for providing for the family and taking care of the siblings at home. It can be easily said that women's rights are human rights but Hillary Clinton, the erstwhile First Lady of USA said, Rights on paper that are not protected and implemented, are not really rights at all."

Over the four decades (1951 to 1999) female literacy in India has gone up from 8.86% in 1951 to 54.61% in 2001. implying that still 46% of Indian women are illiterate, not knowing to read and write even their names. Drop out of girls still continues in the rural and lower class families. Women are excluded from better paying jobs and denied promotions. Women also suffer discrimination in obtaining credit to start a business or obtaining house loan and they face more difficulties than men in renting accommodation. Women have been Americanized and denied equal pay to that of men. They live disproportionately in poverty, making 70% of the world's poor. Women are in paid labour force. More than 70% are employed in agriculture as wage laborers, indicating economic disparity and poverty. Women and children are forced to face both physical and psychological insecurity. It is true that women are getting educated and employed often as a primary income earner . Still there are many shocking indicators a of gender insecurity and physical violence. Domestic and sexual violence remain the most serious, under reported and there are widespread human rights violations in the world. In almost every country domestic violence is one of the leading causes of injury to women. Rape and sexual assault is the cruelest injustice which trap women and children lives and compels them to go from bad to worse. Majority of women in rural and semi urban areas do not receive proper healthcare including access to family planning. The health of Indian women in intricately restricted to the socio economic status of household Due to competing demands on their time and energy and their socialization, women neglect their health.. We are to think seriously as to how best we empower women of our country through all spheres of their lives academically economically, socially and politically.

Academic Spheres

1. Instead of involving women in domestic spheres, we are to look for unpaid servants - a biological machine for bearing and rearing children and concentrate on women's proper education.
2. Awareness should be generated among the masses through educative seminars and workshops, specially in the rural and backward areas. Women's Day and Human Rights Day should be celebrated to make women of all ages conscious about their rights.
3. Student's are the future citizens of the country, so they can be empowered and initiated to spread message of ethos of human rights, particularly the violation against women's right among the rural community.
4. It will be better for the general people, especially illiterate ones. If Human Rights group or women study centres/ cells/ forums are formed at schools, Colleges and Universities to educate the student community and public about the importance of human rights and women's rights and their value in the society.

Economic Spheres

1. The right of child education can be achieved if, totally, child labour is banned.
2. Women should be paid equal wages for equal work. Employment laws relating to maternity benefits, prohibition of women in hazardous works old age pension etc. should be taken care of in right earnest.
3. Skill formation and training is very essential to enable women to break the shackles of unskilled low paid works of construction and agricultural works.
4. Credit and loan facilities should be expanded through formation of cooperative credit societies, credit institutions in order to promote self employment and entrepreneurship among women.
5. Effective measures should be taken for eradication of poverty.

Political and Socio-Cultural Spheres

1. Special training programmes for women should be undertaken for effective participation in politics as most women are illiterate, ignorant and shy away from politics.
2. Special monitoring and enforcement agency should be formed in each district to review and assess the crimes against women.
3. There should be 50% representation of women in the parliament, State Assemblies and Local Self Governments.
4. Women should be aware of their rights relating to rape, dowry, female infanticide, wife beating and other forms of violence against women.
5. Human rights cell should be formed in each district's headquarters and that should be linked with small women forums.
6. Women are deprived of their right in the name of customs religious practices values and traditions. This must be stopped through the attitudinal changes and value based education.
7. Women's right to healthcare should be recognized as an important factor and accessible Health Care Units should be set up, particularly for the poor, rural and tribal women.

Enhancing Women's Capabilities Towards Social Transformations- The Right to Decent Livelihood

Being unorganized conglomerations, women worker's earnings are so meager and irregular that they hardly make both ends meet. Further, their struggle for housing water and civic amenities are enormous in the urban slums. Their landless counterparts in the rural areas suffer equally due to under employment, low wages sometimes with limited work options to even 45 to 60 days in a year. If they happened to be a part of drought prone areas, it is even worse. Thus, it is more than an annual feature that rural poor are on their migrating journey to the already overcrowded city slums, in search of new work options and continue to be victims of vicious circles of poverty. There are women workers of women's working forums (WWF) who work as weavers of cloth, mats and baskets, cigar or agarbathi rollers, food processors, either work alone or collectively in other branches. They work as agricultural labourers on farm lands or they work for their kith and kin. They

are providers of their families working in service occupations i.e. dhobis, cooks, sweepers and water carriers etc. They are integral part of the production process and contribute to the informal economy. Unfortunately, they have little or no access to fruits of their own labour, not to speak of the government's assistance.

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