

WOMEN'S STATUS IN PRESENT SOCIETY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO RURAL AREA IN DASPUR, PASCHIM MEDINIPUR, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the present study is to understanding the women's condition in rural area. We know the women's condition in rural area theoretically but here we have taken attempt to understanding the real situation. We have collected primary data to understanding this. From our database, it is clear very preciously, that women are oppressed. Women are confined in the house and they are overwhelming by others. Today we are frequently said the concept empowerment. To find out real empowered women in our study area is very real job. Puritan and orthodox concept of the women is another cause of their backwardness. It is very sorry to say, there is lack of strong determination of women's. Women's education is not so good in the study area. Poor work participation of the study area indicates that, lack of proper education. Therefore, guardian thinking regarding women education is very ineffable. They are very interested for male child education instead of female child. So, we cannot say it is common matter but it is the characteristics of patriarchy. Maximum women are housewife, so there is limited scope of economic empowerment. Domestic violence against women is very noticeable. Actually, patriarchy devouring everything in the rural society. The findings of the study can assist the sociologists and planners to introduce the new scheme for women's development.

KEYWORDS: *Women's Condition, Women's Empowerment, Gender Discrimination, Women's Literacy, Domestic Violence*

INTRODUCTION

Today women are participating in different social sectors, such as education, politics, sports, economics, management, information technology etc. Famous politician, Indira Gandhi was served the nation as a prime minister for long time. Pratiba Devi Sing Patil was Indian president for five years. At present Najma Hefatullaha is a governor. P. Sindhu and S. Mirza are famous sports persons; Smt. Sumitra Mahajan is an honourable speaker of Lok Sabha, therefore and so on. But few examples do not reflect the actual scenario of women's situation in Indian society. In Indian society women's status is variable over space and time. Women's status has been changed over time. Women's status is also variable from place to place or community to community. Women status is high in little tribal society, such as Khasi, Garo but most of the cases women are oppressed. Their position is inferior in respect of men. If we see women status according rural-urban scenario we will see that, women's status is different from urban to rural. Level of education, health status, mobility, expose to media and other activities of urban women are high than rural women. In rural area, women's status is depending on family background, social custom, social behaviour, folkways, religious status, etc.

Here We'll discussed women's status in rural area. Previous poor experience encourages us to discuss about this. This discussion will be helpful to make out the real situation of women in rural society.

OBJECTIVES

Major objectives of this present study are –

- To discuss the real situation of women's in a rural area.
- To identify the causes of gender discrimination.
- To give suggestions for women development.

METHODOLOGY

According to 2011 census, the study area has contained 5696 households. We have surveyed only 200 households out of 5696 in my present study. Actually, we have taken 4 % samples in respect of total households.

STUDY AREA

My study area is Basudevpur Gram panchayat. This is an important grampanchayat of Daspur – I block, Paschim Medinipur. It is extending from 22 ° 33' 51" N – 22 ° 35' 34" N and 87 ° 42' 29 " E – 87 ° 44' 37 " E. Area of the study area is 15.76 sq kilometers.

BASIS OF MY PRESENT STUDY

Women's status in the society can be discussed on the basis of several parameters or measurements. Here we have used few parameters to make out women's status in rural area, such as -

- Demographic Composition
- Literacy Rate
- Level of Education
- Age at Marriage
- Work participation
- Women's Decision Over Income
- Domestic Violence
- Women's Participation in Meeting

Demographic Composition

According 2011 census, total population of the study area was 26927. Male population was 13656 and female population was 13271. Sex ratio was 972 / thousand male (2011 census). National sex ratio was 940 at the same time. Sex ratio of the study area was better than national ratio. In my present study, sex ratio of the study area is 973. Gender gap of the study area is 27. There are many causes for low sex ratio, but one of the most important cause is abuse

of modern medical science. Most of the parents go for abortion when the foetus in prenatal period is detected as female foetus (H. Mahapatra, 2013). This social disease is active in the study area. Some respondents have agreed with this matter. Their thinking is that, girl child is a burden. This is the negative approach of patriarchal society. This is not good sign of the society. As the sex ratio is low, so women are vulnerable in the society.

Literacy Rate

Missionaries began the first girl's school but their efforts were soon rivaled by Indian reformers. Despite their valiant efforts, there were no real advances in female education until the second half of the nineteenth century when the government offered financial support (G. Forbes, 1996). It was the real picture of women's education in the colonial period. After independence honorable govt. has taken different schemes for women's education, as a result, women's literacy rate has been increased. The male and female literacy rate of the study area is 78.01% and 61.45 % respectively. Male -female literacy gap is 16.56. According to 2011 census, male / female literacy gap was 16.68 in India. Literacy gap is slightly better than the national level. But literacy gap is wide. Existing wide literacy gap indicates that the female literacy rate is low in respect of male literacy rate. The low female literacy rate is the bad sign of educational empowerment. It also indicates gender discrimination in education.

Quantity	Number		Percentage	
	L	IL	L	IL
Male	738	208	78.01	21.99
Female	566	355	61.45	38.55

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

In rural areas, daughters of agricultural labors, small farmers and artisans and in urban areas, daughters of slum dwellers working in lowlevel occupations are most likely to be withdrawn from school early (World Bank, 1991). Despite the increase in enrolment ratio, women remain unrepresented at all levels of education relative to men. Fewer females than males receive technical education and vocational training and women account for a very small proportion of enrolment in post-secondary education (G. P. Kelly & C. Elliott, 1982). Yet in rural area, women literacy rate is not satisfactory in India. In our study area, women literacy is low. We have tried to find out the causes which are responsible for low female literacy rate in the study area. On the basis of respondent's opinion, we have found out few causes, which are given below -

Causes of Low Female Literacy Rate	Percentage of Respondents
Family Background	24.27
Early Marriage	17.46
Unavailability of Technical Education	16.58
Not Profitable	12.63
Lack of Job / Service	07.26
Distance	06.19
Low Family Income	05.41
Lack of Communication	05.32
Lack of Social Security	04.88
Total	100.00

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Family background is one of the most important factors of low literacy rate. Their views were that before nobody got a higher education of my family, proper guider absence in the family, etc. Most of the families do not come out from the traditional concept. Gender bias is prominent there. Nowadays so many families believe that girl child education is not profitable, because after marriage girl child will go to their father-in-law house. We could not get proper help from her. Marriage before matriculation is noticeable especially of old women in the study area. It indicates that early marriage was dominated in the study area. So, there was the limited scope of girl children for better education. Though young women's condition is better than old women. It is very interestingly found, 16.58% respondents answered lack of technical institute. So professional education is required for women, but unfortunately, technical institute is absence there. The demand for professional course is the good sign for women education. Therefore, so many factors are responsible for low women literacy rate.

Level of Education

Level \ Quantity	In Number	In Percentage
M.P or Below	321	56.71
H.S	122	21.55
U.G	88	15.55
P.G	11	01.95
M.B.B.S	00	00.00
B.E	02	00.35
Vocational Training	19	03.36
Others	03	00.53
Total	566	100.00

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

Almost 57 % of women's educational qualification is secondary or below. Secondary level education or below could not be established the women's properly in the society. This level of education implies that they are literate but not fit for any kind of better job. Poor technical education also reflects that women's participation is limited both education and job. Women's education as so neglected that we have not found any medical student. Though somebody can say that good merit is required for medical student. But we do not believe women's merit is lesser than the men. Actually, this is the bad effect of patriarchy, i.e. there is the absence of good environment for women education. As the level of education is low, so it is a barrier for women empowerment.

Age at Marriage

Respondents \ Marriage Age(yrs.)	In Number	In Percentage
< 18	97	48.50
18-25	89	44.50
25-35	14	07.00
> 35	00	00.00

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

Raja Rammohun Roy was fought against child marriage in 19th century. Though it is continued in rural Bengal. Almost 49 % women answered that, their marriage was completed below 18 years old. Early marriage is also barrier for women empowerment. Respondent's opinion were that, we were compelled to marry by family pressure. As our present society is patriarchal and in the patriarchal society women are insignificant, so their opinion is insignificant regarding marriage. Today father decision or elder men member decision is vital for women's marriage instead of women's opinion. Most of the cases women's have no choice of their own marriage. Women's have no control over their life. As my study area is rural, in the rural area women's status is very low. Yet they are not collectively protest against early marriage. Another important information is that, few respondents answered we did marriage of my son after matriculation. They think matriculation is sufficient for livelihood. So, matriculation is one of the important criteria of marriage in my study area. Age of matriculation is probably 16 yrs. to 18 yrs. That is another cause of early marriage.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence against women is very common everywhere. It is found both rural and urban area. It has several forms. In my study area 39 % of respondents answered that they have victimized by violence in the family. 61 % women answered that, no problem in the family. We think it is not the real picture. Many respondents remain invisible of the problem due to keeping her family dignity. Women are victimized not only by a male but also female. When women are victimised by a female, that does not mean female are responsible for this case, but it indicates that female is controlled by others. We mean this is also the drawback of patriarchy.

Respondents Violence By	In Number	In Percentage
Male	12	15.38
Female	15	19.24
Both	51	65.38

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Respondents Measures Taken	In Number	In Percentage
Adaptation in Family	43	55.13
Decide of Both Family	18	23.08
Help of Local Representative	14	17.95
Help of Local P. S	03	03.85
Legal Advice	00	00.00
Total	78	100.00

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

Domestic violence is dominant in my study area. 55 % respondents answered we have adjusted in the family. A traditional view is active in this situation. Most of the women's thinking is that, this life of women. Our social marriage was done by our father. So, there is no alternative way. That's why nobody has got legal advice. They are victimized by violence but have not taken proper step due to the orthodox concept. Law against domestic violence has been proclaimed,

but they did not get it. We think women should be forwarded to check the domestic violence.

Work Participation

In our study area housewife and women employees is 86.5 % and 13.5 % respectively. It is a very common scenario of women's in rural area. Most of the women are housewife, because they are confined by patriarchal rule. As a result, they are also confined to the room. In our study, we have not considered, daily wages worker as an employee, because it has no significant role in family development.

Job Type \ Respondents	In Number	In Percentage
House Wife	173	86.50
Employee	27	13.50

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

Only 13.5 % (27 out of 200) women are employees in our study area. Out of 27, 59.26 % women are a primary school teacher. Last five years, many primary teachers were recruited in Bengal, as a result, this type of employee is high in the study area. Both high school teacher and engineer is 7.41 %. Others type job of women's is 25.93%. Few women are engaged as a private employee. We have considered the private employee in our study. Low work participation rate indicates that there is no proper women empowerment. It includes social empowerment and economic empowerment.

Women's Decision over Income

Answer \ Respondents	In Number	In Percentage
Yes	06	22.22
No	21	77.78

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

Women who are socially and economically empowered, but they have no control over their income, 77.78 % of women answered this. Their bank account controlling by others. Here others mean, controlling by father, controlling by the brother or controlling by the husband. This is not the proper empowerment. If we ensure the actual empowerment, then there will be ensuring of women to control their income. Expenditure of empowered women should be controlled by her. Perhaps we cannot drive out from the patriarchy in anyway.

Women's Participation in Meeting

Answer \ Respondents	In Number	In Percentage
Yes	11.00	05.50
No	189.00	94.50

Source: House Hold Survey, 2016

Analysis of Result

In the decentralized planning, grass-roots decision is very important for development. Gram Samsad is a vital platform for taking the decisions in grass root level. Only 5.50 % of women answered that, they are participating in the meeting. 94.50 % of women answered that; we are not attending in the meeting. Their simple answers were, maximum men are participating of that meeting and they take decisions, so our role is very negligible. Therefore, it is not a best job as a housewife. Overall, yet our society cannot give enough permits to women, that they can do everything outside the room. By those answers, it is very clear of negative approach of patriarchy, and at the same time it indicates the traditional view of women in society.

SUGGESTIONS

- The first priority of women is education, so special attention should be necessary for that purpose.
- Women should be given enough safety and support to work as they can be empowered.
- Law should be strictly followed for any kind malpractice against women.
- Women should be divulged from their traditional concept.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, it is clear that gender inequality and gender discrimination is dominant in the rural society. Elimination of gender discrimination is very necessary. There is necessary for creating consciousness in a rural society that, firstly we are a human being then men or women. The approach must be holistic instead of fragmentary. Women are the important part of the family as well as society. Equal opportunity is required for both male and female. If we create any gender discrimination, it will be carrying the society towards backward instead of forward. Any kind of violence against women is the great humiliation. So, it will be eradicated from the family or society.

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