

STATUS OF WOMEN REFUGEES OF ODISHA: SOME REFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Refugees are victims of gross human rights violations. The overall women refugee status of Odisha shows their vulnerability to their basic necessities, social and economic rights, violence and community hostility. In the present study attempt has been made to study the socio, economic, legal and political status of women refugees of Odisha and to locate the strategies for uprooting the risks and hardships of the women refugees, which will help to strengthen their sustainability in the society. The present study has been carried out in three tehsils like Ranger, Mahakalapara and Pattamundai blocks of Kendra Para district. All total 100 refugee families have been selected for the study purpose through stratified proportionate quota sampling method. The present study is expected to yield deep insight and can serve as one eye opener to many development issues. It can improve the socio-economic status of women refugees by increasing their access to various resources. It can tap the potentialities of the women refugees and strengthen the capabilities of women refugees by enhancing their knowledge and awareness about various provisions of the Government.

KEYWORDS: *Dignity, Equality, Hostility, Hardships, Sustainability, Violence, Hostility.*

INTRODUCTION

The word “refugee” is used to describe a person who is forced to flee his home for any reason for which the individual is not responsible, be it persecution, public disorder, civil war, famine, earthquake or environmental degradation. However, in International law a “refugee” is a person who is forced to leave home for certain specified reasons and who, furthermore, is outside the country of his or her origin and does not have its protection.

To quote AstriSuhrke “Global Refugee movements and strategies of response” in M. Kraits ed. US Immigration and Refugee Policy: Global and Domestic Issues (1983) P.P. 157-62A “refugee” can be defined in three ways;

- Legally (as stipulated in national or international law)
- Politically (as interpreted to meet political exigencies)
- Sociologically (as reflecting an empirical reality)

A person becomes a refugee because of circumstances which are beyond that person’s control, often poignant. He/she is left with no other option but to flee from human rights violations, socio-economic and political insecurity, generalised violence, and civil war or ethnic strife all these leading to fear of persecution. Therefore, the need to give due importance to humanitarian and human rights aspects in dealing with refugees cannot be over-stressed. Thus, it may be noted that there are well-defined and specific grounds, which must be satisfied before a person can qualify to be a

'refugee'. These grounds are well- founded on fear of persecution and considerations of several factors which may operate individually or collectively.

It is estimated that more than 7, 00,000 refugees are living in various parts of Odisha. Most of them are Bengali refugees, the rest are from Tibet, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. After the formation of East Pakistan in 1948, thousands of Bengalis had left their homes to settle in India. After the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, more Bengalis (both Hindu and Muslim) sought refuge in India. Some of them were rehabilitated in Dandakaranya forest range of South Odisha by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Government.

The State Home Department in Odisha has identified for deportation of 2,867 Bangladeshis in six districts such as Kendra Para, Malkangiri, Bhadrak, Nowrangpur, Jagatasinghpur and Jabalpur. As many as 392 have been issued "quit India" notices; 21 from Nowrangpur district were recently handed over to the Border Security Forces (BSF) in neighbouring West Bengal for deportation. The rest will be deported in a phased manner as the process of identification is still underway with several districts yet to submit their final lists. Official sources said in the past too, the State Government has taken steps to deport illegal immigrants. About 102 Bangladeshi infiltrators were deported from 1973 to 1993.

Refugee women may face unique or gender-related forms of persecution or violence. Hence, they need to be safeguarded against arbitrary arrest or other forms of human rights violations. They also require a legal status that accords adequate social and economic rights and access to such necessities as food, shelter and clothing. This is one of the reasons why certain countries introduced special resettlement quotas and/or programmes for refugee women. Women refugees may be more vulnerable than other refugees, finding themselves uprooted and separated from their family members or traditional support mechanisms, or isolated from their communities. They may be at risk of or have suffered from a wide range of protection problems, including physical abuse, intimidation, torture, economic hardship, marginalization or community hostility. This may necessitate a specific response. The Women-at-Risk resettlement criterion is one of these responses. It calls for providing international protection and assistance through resettlement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present paper aims at making a review of the available literature on refugee Women. The basic purpose hovers around the interest to generate insight into the phenomenon of effective implementation of Govt. policy for refugee women and to study the socio, economic, health and legal status of refugee women of Odisha and to bring out correction in the implementation of safety and security measures for the refugee women that can ensure social and political harmony. The focus of the present review pertains to the following points.

Refugees can face a potentially long process of unsettling and/or settling, often carrying with them the pain that caused them to leave their countries of origin. For many refugees, the experience of settling and integrating into the community can be equally traumatic. Most immigrants have basic settlement needs when they come to a new country. However, refugees facing difficult pre-migration and migration experiences have greater such needs. Many social scientists and researchers have studied and analyzed refugee settlement programs, uncovering system-based issues like gender bias, culture discrimination and racism.

After the difficult experience of migration, a refugee approaches the new land with mixed feelings. The refugee left home to escape danger with no destination in mind, no "positive original motivation to settle elsewhere" (Collins¹,

1996). Often the country of settlement is chosen against or despite their wishes by UNHCR authorities (Hyndman², 2000), and the refugee is forced to take their chances based on the United Nations quota to fill for each host country. In the initial period, refugees will be confronted by the loss of their culture their identity, their habits and their place. There will be interpersonal struggles at home, because they are not sure how to adapt to the new culture (George & Tsang³, 2000). Nostalgia, loneliness, depression, anxiety, guilt, anger and frustration are so severe that many refugees may want to go back to their country of origin even though they fear the violent consequences (Mollica⁴, 2000).

Refugees today often come from countries where they practice a different way of seeking help. People from developing nations have the impression that Western governments provide social and economic services to their citizens without any obligation (Reese⁵, 2004; White, 2004; Hyndman, 2000). When refugees learn the difficult realities about settlement services, it greatly increases their anxiety and feelings of exclusion from their host country (George⁶, 2003). Research by White (2004) and Reese (2004) on refugees shows that the intersection of racism, classism and sexism lead to even more difficulty in obtaining the services they need.

Most of the refugee service agencies in Canada are funded by the government and managed by community organizations (CCR⁷, 2006). Unfortunately, refugee claimants are generally not eligible to receive these services. Refugee claimants must wait in limbo until they sort out their legal challenges. Many cannot even think about settling into society due to their ongoing legal battles for permanent resident status in Canada (Burgess⁸, 2004). Refugee claimants often do not have adequate government-sanctioned documents to prove their identity, having lost their documents during the flight from danger. There is a group of unsettled refugees referred to as security threats, who are not able to settle down because of the continuous interrogation by police (Burgess, 2004). Refugees who get legal status are eligible to receive settlement services, which include language training, housing, securing identity documents, etc. Until refugees receive their status, their life will be controlled by the government or refugee board.

Lack of coordination among refugee settlement support systems often increases the difficulty refugees face during the settlement process (Keung⁹, 2006). An example would be the lack of communication between the Immigration and Refugee Board which is under the Federal Government of Canada and the Ontario Health Insurance Program which is under the provincial government. To make things worse, many community-based agencies have suffered from budget cuts that have further reduced their capacity to respond effectively to the refugees' plight. Informal support systems can have a huge impact on the successful integration of refugees (Michlski¹⁰, 2001). Refugees are often stigmatized by their own communities, as well as by society in general, for utilizing the social welfare services. Compounding these issues, refugees find themselves isolated from the mainstream community due to their poor language skills and lack of knowledge on how to seek medical and psychological help (Fung & Wong¹¹, 2007).

A phenomenon of importance with respect to refugee behaviour during resettlement is many refugees' strong belief that they are owed something by someone. Since their persecutors are unavailable, many refugees shift their demands to the host government and the helping agencies. They continually complain of not receiving enough (Hyndman, 1999). This can create a feeling among refugees of being controlled by agencies (Crosby¹², 1999), causing them to become aggressive and demanding of resources. This is a re-traumatizing experience for refugees, who often feel a loss of their identity during this period and are not sure what behaviour is appropriate in the host country (Collins, 1996).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio, economic, legal and political status of the Women refugees.
- To assess their enjoyment of rights and access to resources.
- To take note of the challenges faced by them and their concerns.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The study has been carried out in three tehsils like Raj agar, Mahakalapara and Pattamundai blocks of Kendrapara district. The present study is basically based on a strong empirical investigation. It has taken recourse to both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The study have rely on stratified proportionate quota sampling method. For the purpose of the study refugees from young, middle and elderly age group has been selected. It has been decided to take 100 women refugees from Kendra Para district of Odessa.

Study Outcomes

Our present study aimed at making a comprehensive analysis of the status of women refugees from Bangladesh to Odisha during the period of pre1947-1979 onwards based on field survey. The survey was conducted in Kendrapada district of Odessa. From Kendrapada district, three tehsils were chosen and from among them, the survey villages were chosen. A total of 394 households were surveyed. The study located that disaster & violence are the two prime movers which propelled the refugees to move out from their place particularly the communal violence. The pre-Independence period had a traumatic experience on the people further the communal riots created a lot of insecurity for the women refugees as depicted by them. It created physical, food insecurity, loss of near and dear ones and forced them to quit their native place in Bangladesh and to come over this part of the country. When asked about the pull factor like security of life, livelihood opportunities, land to live etc were shown & the attracting force for this place. However, the sample women reported that they did not have any choice or voice to take up this refugee status. They were the followers of their families, friends and relatives to this locality. They were emotionally driven and were not empowered to take any decision to adopt on the life of a refugee.

The age structure of the sample respondents varied from <25 years to more than 45 years. Maximum percentage of respondents belongs to elderly age group. Other backward classes women emerge predominantly in the sample coverage. The OBC women have a better share than other caste women in the study. Religious distribution of the sample is a reflection of the general religious composition of the country reflected in the census with Hindu majority followed by any other religions. Maximum percentage of OBC respondents are Hindu. The educational qualification that got reflected through analysis indicates that the sample is a representative one having educational qualification of sample respondents from illiteracy to higher education. The participation of sample respondents in higher education is gradually increasing. The occupational structure of the sample respondents notes that the adoption of different type of occupation except agriculture goes on increasing. It runs as a corollary from the occupational distribution of the sample, that the income position of both the self and family income is very less. Nuclear family structure dominates in the study. The burden of the single headed households in the sample are shouldered by women. The families of the refugee women are medium in size. Large size families are noticed among low income group. The accessibility to the land ownership reveals that the women refugee's households are well up in the sense of having ownership to land. It reflects the clear-cut empowerment of the women

refugees of Kendra pedal district. The involvement of women refugees in Self Help Groups is also a major determinant of their improved socio-economic status and their bonding relationship with each other.

Economically, the refugee women are in a state of acute poverty. A significant portion of their earnings is spent by the males and the rest is spent by the females because the refugee females are considered as inferior, ignorant, illiterate having no rights at all. The economic backwardness of the refugee women emerges from their low work participation rate. The Refugee women’s access to economic resources can be determined by several inter-related variables like land holdings, income sources, occupational characteristics, saving and investment opportunities, indebtedness etc.

In order to see the economic empowerment of women refugees, it is essential to know whether they are taking part in the decision matter of the family or not, their responses are reflected in the following fig 1.1.

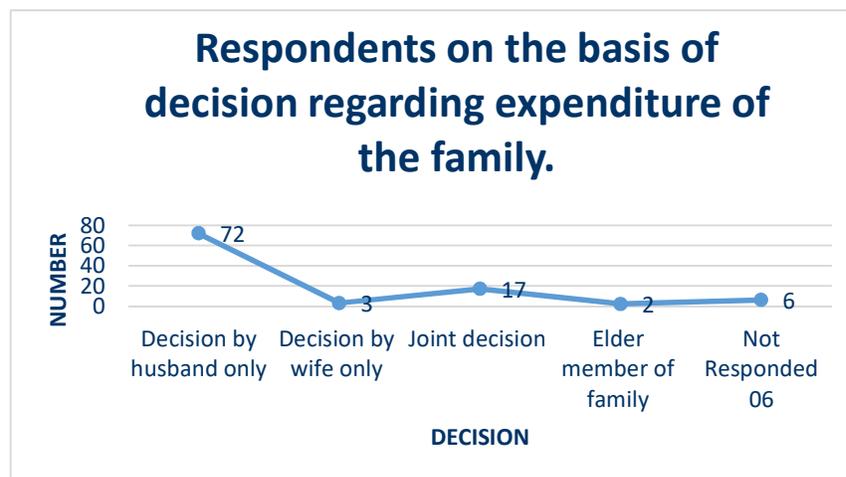


Figure: 1

The Figure 1 states that regarding the expenditure matter of the family about 72 % of decisions are taken by husband only this reveals that the male dominance is also prevails in the refugee families. About 17% of decisions regarding expenditure are jointly taken by husband and wife. This shows that even if they belong to lower socio-economic group still the gender equality is maintained relating to the decision about expenditure matter. Only 3% of decisions are taken by women only and 2% elder members of the family take part in the family expenditure matter. Around 6% of respondents do not give any response regarding this matter.

Poverty condition of the refugees is a major constraint on the path of better living standard of the refugees in general and women refugees. Poverty condition can be uprooted by enhancing the income earning sources. The children are the major economic assets for the refugee families. So the women refugees prefer to engage their children as labours in order to enhance the income potentiality of their families. Even if the child labour system has been prohibited by the Government, still then they engage them in different factories, restaurants as domestic servants to overcome the economic crisis of the family. They feel more the number of children more will be the income earners of the family. The following figure gives a clear picture of the refugee child labour of Kendrapara area.

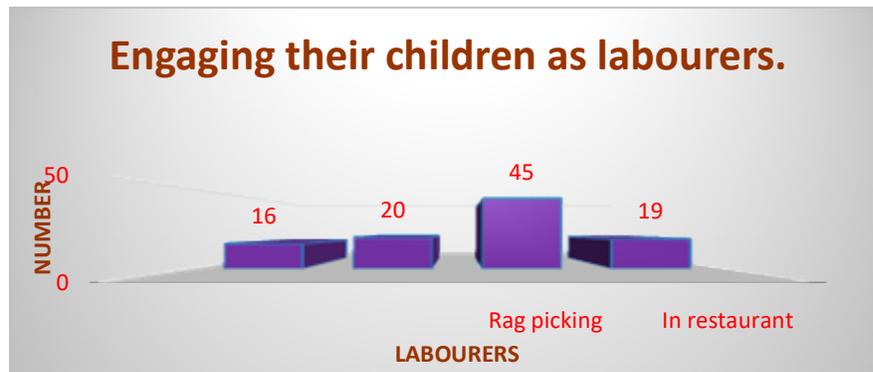


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Engaging their Children as Labourer.

Around 16% of women refugees have engaged their children as domestic servants in their villages, 20% of children work in factories and industries. Maximum percentage of children i.e. 45% are engaged in rag-picking. 19% of children are working in restaurants. The working of children as labourer in different sectors reveals the poor economic condition of the family. This gives a clear picture of the poverty condition of the women refugee's families. In order to enhance the economic condition of the family the refugee families prefer to engage their children as labourer.

The Refugee Convention recognises that refugees should hold certain rights. The Universal declaration of human rights is a milestone in human history. All the nations large and small were signatory to these rights. The 30 articles in great Universal declaration intent to provide a healthy living to the human being of the society and are expected to apply uniformly to all the members of the society irrespective of their class, creed, status, ethnicity and nativity so the refugees are not and cannot be an exception of this. The study affirmed that the refugee women have limited access various rights like land right, reproductive rights and right to education.

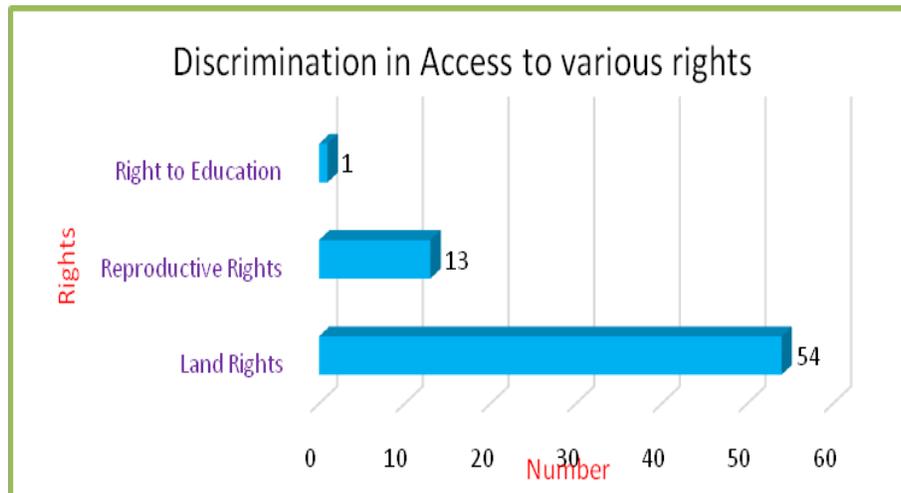


Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents based on Discrimination in Access to Various Rights.

The above figure reveals that about 54% of respondents face discrimination in their access to land right. 13% of respondents cannot able to exercise their reproductive right. They also face discrimination in deciding their size of family,

number of children and space between the children. All these are decided by the male member of the family. A marginal percentage of respondent i.e 1% also face discrimination in exercising their right to education which is very essential to improve the status of refugees. So, the role of Govt. Authority is highly essential for propagating the ideology of gender equality among the mindset of refugees.

Gender discrimination is very prominent in each sector of society and it hampers the status of women in general and refugees’ women. So, the refugees have expressed their views for ending the gender discrimination. The role of parents is very much important for ending the gender discrimination from the society.

Gender discrimination

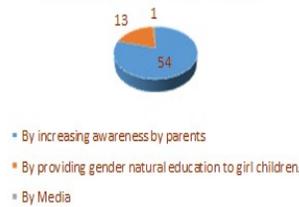


Figure 4: Distribution of Respondents Based on Feeling Towards Ending Gender Discrimination.

About 54% of respondents are in favour of increasing the awareness of parents for ending gender discrimination. If the parents will be aware about the bad impact of gender inequality, then they can able to establish one gender neutral society and can mobilise their children to maintain gender equality in each sphere. Around 13% of women refugees have reported that it is very essential to educate the girl children regarding the gender-neutral education. If the girl children will be trained about the gender neutrality, then they will set up gender neutral society. Only 1% of respondents are focusing on the role of media in ending the gender discrimination. So, the respondents have expressed their differential feeling towards ending gender discrimination.

The respondents have also reported that early marriage is a major constraint for improving the status of women. The early marriage is a major constraint for affecting the health condition of women refugees. The good health of the women refugees’ is determined by their ideal age at marriage

Constraints for improving their status.

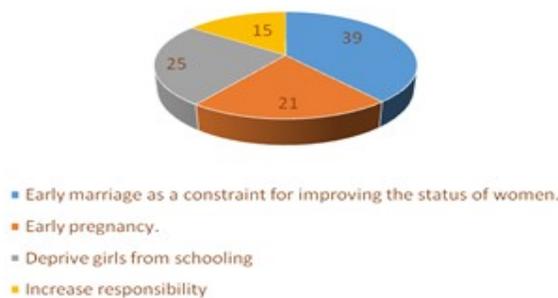


Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents Based on the Constraints for Improving their Status.

About 39% of respondents have reported that early marriage is a major barrier for hindering the status of women. The health condition of women is very much affected by early pregnancy. As the girls married an early age, so 25% of respondents are of the opinion that they became deprived of education and cannot attend the school regularly which is a major cause of increasing the dropout rate among the women refugees. As the girls share the household responsibility at an early age so about 39% of respondents have pointed out that their household responsibilities is a major constraint for improving their status. About 21% of women refugees are of the opinion that early marriage leads to early pregnancy which is a major cause of low birth weight babies. As our policy makers have highlighted the fact that early marriage leads to early pregnancy, low birth weight babies leading to increase in Maternal Mortality Rate and Infant Mortality Rate of our State. This fact also affects the development of our state.

The poor, innocent and illiterate women refugees face a lot of harassment at the workplace by their employers. Very marginal percentage of respondent's i.e. 3% know about sexual harassment at work place which reveals that either they do not know about the concept of sexual harassment or as it is a very sensitive issue they remain silent about it. Maximum percentage of respondents i.e. 39% have pointed out that they have been threatened by their employer to leave the job in case of delay in coming to the work place. Around 37% of women refugees are getting low wages for their work and they do not open their voice against it because of their lack of union and lack of knowledge about minimum wage act. 7% of respondents are of the opinion that they are doing more hours of work and getting low wages. In this way the women refugees are exploited by the employer at work place and facing a lot of problem.

Facing harassment at work place



Figure 6: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Harassment at Work Place.

Exercise of rights is must for each and every citizen of the country. It is also very essential to know whether the women refugees are exercising their rights in independent manner or they are biased by other male members of the society. Their access to voting rights will prove their political status. About 69% of refugee women are giving vote as per their own decision. They are not biased by any other male member. This proves their freedom in choice of their own leader. They are not influenced by any other member. Around 21% of respondents are biased by their male counterparts. Only 9% of respondents are influenced by the political parties to exercise their voting rights. This table gives a clear-cut picture of political empowerment of women refugees.

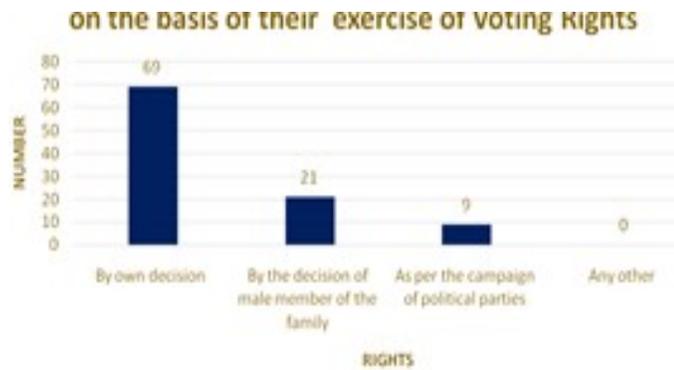


Figure 7: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Exercise of Voting Rights

As we know media is the mirror of society, whatever is going on in society that is reflected in media. So, in order to provide proper information to the large masses media plays a very significant role. In order to study the accessibility of women refugees to the electronic and print media, the questions were asked to the respondents. The accessibility of women refugees to the media can enhance their level of information regarding the various issues of the present-day situation. Besides accessibility to media, the ownership of the media also plays an important role in updating the knowledge and information of women refugees about the day to day situation of the society.

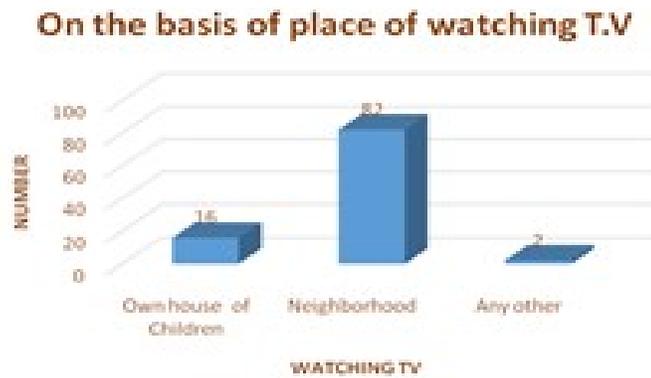


Figure 8: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Place of Watching T.V.

Poverty is a major hurdle on the path of ownership of media for many women refugees. About 16% of respondents is watching T.V. at their own home. Even if 25% of respondents have T.V. but due to their household responsibilities they cannot able to watch T.V. Around 82% of respondents said that they are watching T.V. at their neighbourhood. In order to entertain themselves they are watching it even in other’s houses also. Only 2% respondents are interested in folk theatres like pala, Daskathia and opera etc. As they are elderly women, they are interested in folk theatres. Participation of women refugees in various festivals, observance of various rituals and performance of various folkal music and dance determine the cultural status of women refugees. Even if they have been migrated from different areas, their participation in various festivals and rituals proves their cultural exchange of ideas and knowledge. Such type of active involvement determines the feeling of brotherhood and enhances their social integration.

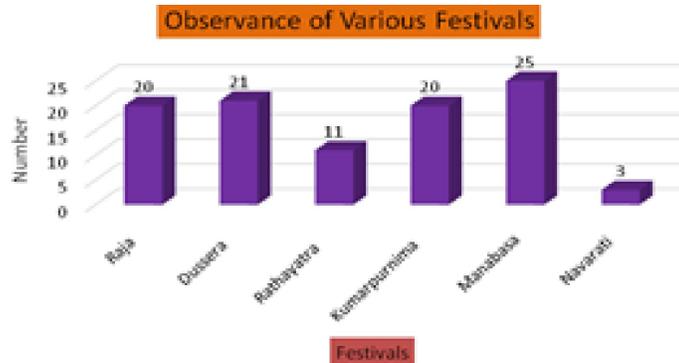


Figure 9: Distribution of Respondents Based on Observation of Festivals.

The above figure reveals that around 20% of respondents are observing the two festivals Raja and Kumar Purnima. 21% of respondents are celebrating the Dissert. Whereas, 25% of women refugees are doing the Laxmi Puja which they celebrate it in Mombasa 11% are also take part in RathYatra. This shows that even if the women refugees are migrated from other areas still then they prefer the Hindu Culture and observing all the festivals in the Kendra Para district as the other general people. This reveals their interest in adoption of new culture. They also observe all the festivals collectively. This shows their bonding relationship with each other.

Age at marriage plays an important role in determining the health status of the women in general and refugee women in particular. Early marriage leads to early pregnancy and which also leads to low birth weight babies and increases the IMR and MMR rate of the state. So, in order to overcome this problem the respondents were asked about their knowledge regarding ideal age at marriage for boys and girls. Their responses have been depicted in the following fig 1.10.

Ideal age at marriage for boys & girls



Figure 10: Distribution of Respondents Based on Awareness About Ideal Age of Marriage.

The above figure 1.10 shows that about 56% of respondents are aware about the ideal age at marriage for girls that is 18 years and for boys it is 21 years. Whereas 33% of respondents are pointed out that ideal age of marriage is 20 years for girls and 25 years for boys. Whereas only 11% of respondents said that the late age at marriage for girls is ideal age at marriage. So the above table reveals that except 56% of respondents others are not aware about the ideal age at marriage for boys and girls. Proper knowledge about ideal age at marriage will improve the health status of refugee girls.

The Protection of health of children is a must on the part of refugee women. But they lack the information about the precautionary measures for prevention of diseases of their children. The role of health workers is important to acknowledge the respondents about the immunisation of their children.

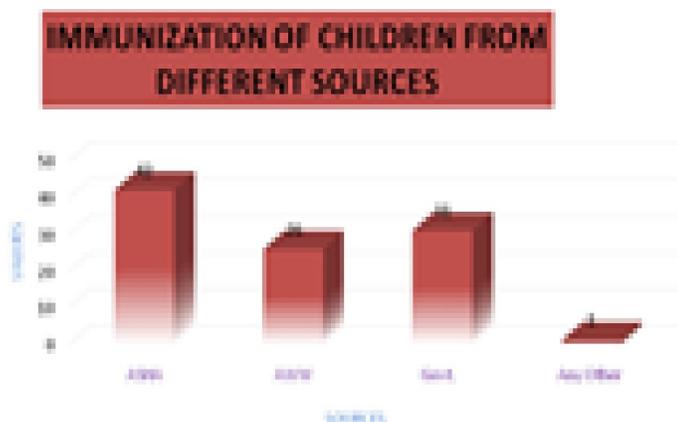


Figure 11: Distribution of Respondents Based on Immunization of Children.

The figure 1.11 states that about 42% of women refugees have immunized their children through ASHAs. 26% of respondents have immunized their children by Anganwadi workers. 31% of respondents have immunized their children in Government hospitals. So they immunized their children for protecting them against different infectious diseases like polio, diphtheria, pertusis, Tetanus, T.B. and measles etc. So, the role of different health workers is very important for prevention of diseases of the refugee children.

The overall increase in status of refugee women depends on their knowledge about the provisions of government. The refugees were asked about the Government provisions, whether they are aware about these provisions or not that can be know from their responses. These responses were reflected in the following table 1.1. The awareness regarding the Government provisions is very much essential for the upliftment of the status of women refugees.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on The Basis of Awareness Regarding Provisions of Government

Registration Provision of Government	Frequency	Percentage
Pregnancy Registration	30	30
Birth Registration	13	13
Death Registration	01	01
Marriage Registration		

The data of the above table reveals that 30% of respondents are aware about the pregnancy registration from T.V. About 13% respondents are aware about the birth registration of their newborn babies and only 1% of women refugees are aware about the death registration. Not a single respondent is aware about the marriage registration. So this table shows that even if they lack education and they are not much qualified still then they have their knowledge regarding the registration provision by Government. Through this registration scheme they will be able to lead a smooth life.

To lead a quality life is very much essential for each citizen of our country. So, the refugee women should not be debarred from the quality life. They are asked about the specific steps taken by the Government for improving the quality of life. Their responses have been reflected in the following table 1.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Specific Steps Taken by Government

Steps taken by Government to improve the quality of life.	Frequency	Percentage
For education of girls.	48	48
Formation of SHGs	45	45
Vocational training for refugee women	03	03
Job opportunities for women	02	02
Lady doctors in the hospitals	02	02

The table .2 states that about 48% of women refugees are aware about the SarvaSikhya Abhiyan Programme of Government to improve the educational status of girl children. About 45% of respondents are aware about the Government initiative for formation of Shelf Help Groups for economic empowerment of women refugees. Only 3% of respondents are aware about the provision of vocational training programme for respondents to make them self-independent. A very marginal percentage of respondents i.e. 2% are aware about the MGNREGAS of Government to provide job opportunities to them and the same percentage i.e. 2% are also aware about the provision of lady doctors in the hospitals for increasing the accessibility of women refugees to the health care institutions .This shows that the women refugees are aware about the Government provisions for improving the quality of life .

The women are the most innocent in nature. Our patriarchal system imposed some restrictions on them for which they cannot able to express their views before the male dominated world. The women being suppressed and oppressed by the society became the prey of all restrictions by the male members of the society. Their simplicity and innocent nature compel them to adopt the practices of some blind belief. The women think that they can able to overcome all the miseries of their life if they will observe all rituals, festivals, brats and follow the path of saints and obey the order of the elderly members of their family.

In this context, there is no exception for the women refugees. They also became with the prey of the evil practices and obey all the blind beliefs to bring perfection in their life. The stereotypical culture has compelled them to fall prey of all the blind beliefs.

The attitude of the women refugees regarding the various beliefs have been reflected in the following table 1.3.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Regarding Various Beliefs.

Type of Beliefs	Frequency	Percentage
Son preference is essential	67	67
Education for girls is an unnecessary expenditure	07	07
Sons are the assets for the parents	10	10
Less Education of daughter is preferred by the parents	04	04
More no of children in the family	01	01
Women without son are not given due respect in the society	11	11
Daughter in law should bring dowry		

The observation of above table shows that 67% of women refugees are in favour of sons. Because they are of opinion that for the continuation of family and for the taking cares of the parents in future the son plays a very important role. 10% of respondent are of the opinion that sons are the assets of the family. They are the income earner of the family. They will enhance the economic condition of the family. So, they are the economic assets for the family. Only 7% of women refugees think that spending money for the education for girls is wastage of money. The daughter will marry and

will go to the inlaws house. So, the daughters should not be provided with any education. So, 4% of parents are of the opinion that less education will be given to the daughters, because less education means less dowry and the bride price in the marriage market will be less. About 11% of respondents are of the opinion that if the women will not able to reproduce the son in the family they will be treated as a witch. Nobody likes to see her face. The people think that she has committed sin in her life for which she cannot able to reproduce a son. She should observe some rituals or follow the path of saints to have a baby boy. So all these blind beliefs make the life of women refugees miserable They cannot able to lead a peaceful life and maintain their proper status in the family and in the society.

CONCLUSIONS

The women refugees of Kendrapada are practicing several societal stigmas to maintain their status. They are not interested to spend money on daughter's education because they think that it is an unnecessary expenditure. They are not sending their daughters to school. As the women refugees are being migrated from other places, so for them security and safety should prioritized based on support services. At the time of communal violence, natural calamities and in displacement they need the support of higher authorities. The refugee women have very limited information regarding the authorities to be contacted at the time of riot or violence.

Many women refugees in Odisha face protection risks and livelihood challenges, given their lack of formal status and in the absence of national refugee legislation, while opportunities for durable solutions are limited. At the same time, an increase in the number of asylum applications throughout the sub region has stretched UNHCR's response capacity.

In Odessa, poverty is a key challenge for most refugees and asylum-seekers, who also face discrimination from local communities with little understanding of refugee issues.

The health workers have tried their best to convince the refugee women for prevention of diseases of their children. The refugee women have immunized their children for protecting them against different infectious diseases like polio, diphtheria, pertussis, Tetanus, T.B. and measles etc. It is only because of ASHA, AWW they can able to immunise their children. The observance of festivals like Raja and Kumar Purnima, Dussera Laxmi Puja, Rath Yatra etc by the refugee women reveals the bonding relationship and feeling of sisterhood among themselves. They maintain the cultural exchange in an effective manner. The observance of various festivals give a clear picture of the dedication and sacrificing nature of refugee women and their interest for welfare of the family members.

As gender discrimination is a major factor affecting the status of women refugees so they face discrimination in decision making process in the family relating to the matters like their access to land right, in exercising their reproductive right and right to education which are very essential in empowering the women refugees of Odisha. Awareness generation for propagating the ideology of gender equality among the mindset of refugees is the need of the hour. It is highly essential to educate the parents of refugee families for ending gender discrimination. To educate the girl children regarding the gender-neutral education is also equally important. All the above the role of media is highly significant for the society.

There are number of constraints on the path of enhancement of health status of women refugees. Consequences of early marriage reveals that it leads to increase in household responsibilities and dropout rate, early pregnancy, low birth weight babies increase in maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate which also affect the development indicators of the State. The women refugees are exploited by their employers due to lack of any accurate information regarding

minimum earning per day. They are cheated by their employers in terms of wage and hours of work. So, the chance of exploitation by the employer is more in case of women refugees, because they do not have any proper information regarding the minimum wage per day.

The poor, innocent and illiterate women refugees face a lot of harassment at the workplace by their employers. Even if they are cheated by the employers in terms of doing more hours of work and getting less wages, they cannot open their voice against it because of their lack of union and lack of knowledge about minimum wage act. The refugee women are facing verbal violence in the family. All type of abusive languages are listened by them by their family members and husbands in case of any type of problem in the family. They are beaten by their husbands because of the habit of liquor by their husbands. They become mentally and morally suppressed and cannot share their problems with others. The refugee women also face cultural challenges because of existence of blind beliefs and superstitions of the society.

The refugee women also face cultural challenges because of existence of blind beliefs and superstitions of the society. They have been insisted by the elderly members of the family to observe all rituals, festivals, brats and follow the path of saints to overcome all the miseries of their life. As the blind beliefs are responsible for precarious condition of women so they also obey the taboos to overcome the specific problem what they are facing in their life. They are observing rituals, worshipping God or obeying the words of Gurus to beget son as if without son the life is meaningless for women. In that way they remain bind with several taboos.

The overall women refugee status scenario at the context of Odisha shows their vulnerability to their necessities, social and economic rights, violence and community hostility. The deep involvement of the Government authorities, activists and social organisations those who are concerned about the issue of women refugees can able to uproot the risks and hardships of the women refugees. This support and cooperation will strengthen their sustainability in the society.

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