

A WOMAN'S FACE VERSUS A MAN'S FACE IN INDIAN CIVIL SOCIETIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Paramjeet Kaur

Associate Professor, Music Instrumental, S D College, Ambala Cantt.

Abstract

India was once called country of missing woman by the Noble prize winner economics Amartya Sen. Since then a little progress has been made. Women are still fighting for their place in Indian patriarchal society. Most of the life of Indian woman is spent in marriage, childbearing and raising children. The Rural parts of India in some states haven't seen much difference from the years passed. Practices like sex-selective abortion, Dowry system, depriving girl child of education have made the condition worse. With Indian women accomplishing great milestone everyday inspite of all the difficulties, a wave of feminism has started in India. With education and end of all the malicious activities, the society needs to inculcate the idea of equality among genders. From the extreme rituals of murder of girl child we do have paved the way for feminism but there is still a lot to accomplish.

Man and woman are two sides of the same coin but treated differently in this utilitarian world. In India, Since the day girl child is born she becomes a liability. She is always thought to be a receptacle to learn discipline and social behavior . It is expected from her that she must sacrifice her time, energy and moments of comfort and happiness for others. She works for the upliftment of the males of the family. This is because India is a patriarchal society which makes father/husband in charge of the family. The idea of Man being superior to woman in the society and administration by virtue of mythical and religious scriptures from ancient times. Modern laws framed to improve the status quo has not changed the situation here in India.

In 19th century when the birth of the girl child was thought to be a bad news in the society, she was killed in her infant hood.

Many mythical stories about girl child plight were prevalent at that time in Punjab . At

one instance it was said that if the girl child after killing was taken by a jackal, next time definitely a boy would be born. Similarly, in another ritual after killing the girl child she was put in a deep pit and a spin wheel, cotton and some jaggery were also placed there. After that the pit was covered and pronounced:

Goor khai, poonia kati,

Aap na avi, veer nu ghali.

(Eat jaggery, spin cotton but do not come again instead send your brother.)

To end this practice, in 1870 a bill was brought to prevent Female Infanticide. Ofcourse, this bill repercussion was not promising. British Government was not fully committed to prevent this practice in business men and peasantry. Honour killing was prevalent in "Bedi" community. Similarly Jatt community did not want to marry their daughters among other castes. This status fight had adverse male & female ratio. Dowry system among rich people and sale- purchase of women among poor strata of society were the result of killing of female child. After the invention of sex determination test due to technological advancement, female killing while in Foetus took a new turn to upset the male - female child ratio.

New laws were again brought to correct the draconian practice of Female foeticide but little success has been achieved so far.

According to the Gender Inequality Index 2020, Women compare very unfavorably in relation to Men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and labour market. Maternal mortality ratio in India is 200 i.e 200 out of 100,000 child bearing mothers die. This ratio is 2 in Norway. Switzerland is the most gender equal ratio in the world. India ranked 132 out of 187 countries. Its low ranking is due to skewed sex ratio i.e 914 females out of 1000 males. Employment position is also disappointing; only 29 percent of women above 15 yrs are in labour force against 80.7 percent men and even our law makers in parliament constitute 10.9 percent women.

The most important causes of gender Inequality are poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, social customs, believes, and male chauvinistic attitude.

Poverty among women are because rights and obligations within a household are not shared or distributed evenly. Women get no money for household chores. Her dependence on male counter part becomes cause of gender inequality. In some communities such

unhealthy customs are imposed on women which even take their lives. Even UN has called for elimination of global scourge of female genital mutilation (FGM), in 2021, some 4.16 million girls globally faced the risk of undergoing (FGM) Covid-19 has only worsened the plight of women as it has exacerbated gender based violence.

Now the moot question is : can Indian society be given a Women's Face in civil and administration ? Yes. Why not? the society needs to inculcate the idea of equality. Males should be educated to understand the importance of equal opportunity for both the sexes. Unless ritual and rhetoric embded deeply in patriarchal society, will be fore saken by Males in his family , no amount of reservation can augment women status. It is time when every day is treated as Women's Day and not just March 8, and celebrated together by Men and Women.