

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR IDENTITY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

Dr. Somenath Bhattacharjee¹

Joyshree Bora²

Abstract

Culture is the reflection of activities in human society. It has certain sanctions and restrictions which ultimately frames the social order and customs related to human life. The contemporary human society is the ultimate outcome of prolonged socio-cultural evolution through different stages and phases. Along with the process of cultural evolution remarkable changes could be noticed in the process of technological development and economic organization from subsistence to surplus pattern. Universally division of labour on the basis of sex is a common practice. However related to the authority and succession of economic resource, property and decision making a number of socio-cultural norms and restrictions have been imposed upon the female folk. Their roles have been specified and their rights have been reduced through patriarchal regulations particularly in the Indian Hindu society. Different forms of violence are a method to suppress the voice of the female and to restrict their opinions and decisions both at the familial as well as societal level. It has both the practices of physical abuse and mental-psychological torture. Such issues have become a cultural practice which is socially subjugating the women, creating conflict over the resources and severely violating their issues related to identity and rights to their dignity.

Keywords: Culture, Sanction, Restriction, Norm, Violence, Subjugation, Dignity.

¹ **Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology , Assam University, Diphu Campus, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam.**

² **IPP Student. Department of Anthropology , Assam University, Diphu Campus, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam.**

INTRODUCTION

The subject of human rights is gaining much importance in the present day world scenario. Today the wave of new world order exploitative attitude, consumerism and greed of a few refuting the needs of many. The right of life is the essence of human rights. Basically it refers to “those elemental rights which any human deserves to have honoured in order to survive, enjoy well being and flourish or fulfill him or herself simply by virtue of human being.” There are several attributes of human rights. The most important are right to individual dignity, right to equality, right to culture and religious freedom, right to life, right to justice, right to respect and privacy, right to earning and employment, right to property and right to women and child. Anthropology being the wholistic study of man deals with the social and cultural aspects of human life. Women are the reproducing unit of the world. Thus the continuation of generation and continuation of cultural heritage is taking place through the women ever since the beginning of human evolution in the world. Thus in this new world order of human rights the position and perspective of women must be analyzed from its own Anthropological dimension as a whole.

There is unquestionably a great deal of variety in the status and role of women in various cultures. However in considering culture as a whole, it is universally true that women occupy a secondary status. Sherry Ortner (1974) speaks of three factors by which the position of women in a society can be measured, these are –

- (i) Statements of cultural ideology which explicitly devalue women, their product and their role.
- (ii) Symbolic devices such as the concept of defilement associated with women.
- (iii) The exclusion of women from participation in the area believed to be most powerful in the particular society whether religious or secular.

In every human society women bear and rise up the children. The only way a home could exist was if there was a division of labour. In simple societies it was based upon needs and biological factors. Freed from biological imperatives the young males could roam from the home to the place of hunt. Women foraged too but they were constrained by the necessities of carrying and nursing babies and stayed closer to or at the home. The horizons of the women thus become more limited and seem to have cast the role of the female as a member of a private sphere a domestic world.

Status of Women From Prehistoric To Modern Period

Women in Middle Palaeolithic: The findings from the Shanidar cave reveals that at least women and children and occasionally elderly man remained close to the hearth fire while younger males engaged in activities that took them away from the cave. The findings of Neanderthal skeleton of a young girl in Siberia reveals that she was buried in skin clothing with jewelry of bone and shell whose grave was surrounded by antlers and horns. No doubt this girl so honoured had a high status in society.

Women in Upper Palaeolithic: About 25000 years ago we found a symbolic representation of women in the portable art of Upper Palaeolithic period in Western Europe. The most important one is the cult of 'Venus' which are the rough portrayals of females in which the sexual and secondary sexual characteristics are greatly exaggerated with swelling breasts, tapering legs which altogether symbolizes that the women are the productive unit of nature and they can nourish the descendents through her physical capability. It shows the natural fertility of mother earth as represented by the females in the society. Along with the Venus cult there were abstract female figurines, mother goddesses and agriculture paintings and sculptures.

Power and Authority of Women: Power is defined as the ability to make others conform to one's wishes while authority is defined as the legitimization of power by the society. Most likely any woman has a degree of power commensurate with network of people with whom she has influence. In patrilocal societies it is recognized that the women is being removed from her family and that her children will belong to her husbands group. Often the woman's family will be compensated in advance by a gift of bride wealth for this loss of labour or personnel. When both sets of kin had a financial investment in a marriage they were mutually interested in its success, because returning or forfeiting the bride wealth constituted a hardship. Consequently a woman could appeal to her relatives by marriage among whom she lived if she felt herself excessively abused by her husband or other women in group. Women are valued for their abilities as workers and producers of children. For example in Samoan society a woman who had produced children outside his marriage is considered a more desirable wife because she has already proven her reproductive capacity. Here a woman can find herself among a group of co-wives. Her status in such a group increases as her sons grow in age and in influence. I matrilocal

societies the women had their own status and position in comparison to the men. The mostly are the decision making authority in the family, here her brother has a key role to play.

Women in developing societies: These societies have generally been colonial possession which have recently found themselves independent or are forced by recent industrial development. Here the women have to play active role both in the family and outside of their family. Due to middle class income holding they have to make themselves directly involved in the source of earning. Her status in the family depends on the amount of her earning. Here they have to play a desirable role in the family altogether.

ROLE STATUS AND AUTHORITY OF WOMEN IN PRIMITIVE AND MODERN INDIAN SOCIETY

The concept of women has been best described in an ancient Sanskrit saying- “*yatra nari pujante tatra devo ramante*”. Women have been given the ascription of mother goddess and she is considered as the source of Shakti. Status of women in any society is a significant pointer to the level of culture of that society. Sex inequality denotes a condition where prevailing social norms, values and stereo types ascribe to women an inferior status to that of men and debar them from taking equal part in social, economic, political and cultural life of the community. In almost all societies women have been given inferior and unequal social position in the society. There are ample evidences to suggest that women have been subordinated, subjugated and exploited in the society.

In order to study the position of women the entire scenario has been divided into three broad periods viz.

The first period- from 800 BC to 1800 AD described as the pre colonial period.

The second period- from 1800 AD to 1947 described as the pre independence period.

The third period- from 1947 to till date described as the post independence period.

Normative Structure of Traditional Indian Society: The Vedic texts and the Dharmashastras are said to constitute the norms for Brahmanism and the religious practices for the upper castes. *Arthashastra* of Kautilya and *Manusmriti* broadly covering the period from 400 BC to 500 AD

are sources for getting insights into the normative structure determining the behaviour of women. It has been usually believed that except early Vedic period women was given a subordinate position to men. The women's place was by and large regarded as being in the home. During the period of *Puran* and *Smriti* the women were much respected and it was considered absurd to condemn a woman if she was empowered and ravished. The *Agnipurana* also asserted that a woman was not polluted by forcible assault or conception. Such cases were considered as accidental circumstances and the victim would be readmitted to her previous position after the birth of the child. Dowry system was rather unknown to the Indian society. A man who committed adultery with a woman of low caste shall be put to death so harsh were the laws against persons who committed crime against women. Woman is counted as *Shakti* in Indian mythology. The *Tantras* universally propounded the profound and revolutionary concepts of equality of the sexes when western countries were still slumbering in the dark ages. The glory and greatness of Indian womanhood is reflected in the unknown, unsung and unhonoured tales in our national heritage. The virtues and vigour has been brought to the fore in the murals of Ajanta, Ellora and other caves and in the sculpture of Khajuraho, Konark, Rajasthan and South Indian Temples.

Caste System in India: In order to properly estimate the position of women in ancient society a brief reference to the stratification system as expressed through Varna and Caste system is necessary. Features like caste system endogamy as a mechanism of recruiting and retaining control over the labour and sexuality of women concepts of purity and pollution segregating groups and also regulating mobility of women are very crucial. The other very important feature of caste system is its control over women's labour. India being primarily depended on agriculture, for instance, women can engage themselves in water regulation, transplantation of crops weeding but not ploughing. With upward mobility of the group women are immediately withdrawn from the outside work. The linking of women and Shudras together is one more evidence of the low position of women. Prescriptions and prohibitions for Shudras and women were the same on many occasions. The caste system not only provided a legitimization to feudal relation of production but ideologically also provided justification for the subordination of women.

Position of Women during Pre-Colonial Period: The birth of a daughter which was not a source of anxiety during the Vedic period became a source of disaster for father during the post Vedic period. Education of women which was an accepted norm during the Vedic period slowly began to be neglected and latter on girls were totally denied any access to education. *Upanayana* or the sacred thread ceremony which was performed to initiate a person into the Vedic studies was prohibited in the case of women and Shudras by the Manav codes the closing the door for any formal education of the women. By 8th century AD the marriageable age for girls was lowered to 9 to 10 years which not only gave a final blow to any effort at educating women but began the sinister practice of prepuberty marriages. In the medieval period she was even expected to die either on the same pyre with her husband or follow him and become Sati. Treatment of the widow thus at times bordered on the inhumane and callous levels. It is to be mentioned here that particularly after the establishment of class society and the rise of private property in the post Vedic period women's position in the society declines.

Position of Women during Pre-Independence Period: In this period the country passed through complex economic and political developments due to the working of merchants, industrial and political capital. The imperial system initiated the capitalist mode of production but retained many pre capitalist institutions like the caste system and inhuman socio- religious practices. During this period there were two major movements which affected the position of women. These were the Social reform movement of the 19th century and the Nationalist movement of 20th century. Both these movements raised the question of equal status of women. Specially the role of *Arya Samaj*, *Brahma Samaj* must be mentioned in this concern and the pioneers of these movements were Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Annie Besant etc. The prime important movements were Sati outlawed (1825), Widow remarriage (1856), Ill treatment of Widows, Child marriage, Denial of Property rights and education of Women. The Child Marriage Restraint Act or Shudras Act prohibited marriages below the age of 14 years for a girl. The middle class women entry into the world of work appears more significantly after the Second World War. A few women did take up some professions like law, medicine, teaching etc. But their number was very few.

Position of Women during Post-Independence Period: Middle class educated women particularly in large urban agglomerations, who are working and moving freely, generate an impression that Indian women's status has substantially improved. Moreover there is evidence of capable, efficient, powerful women at times with political clout, which reinforces this impression. But on the other hand in small towns or rural areas or in city slums, women still suffer from social and economic oppression. In small towns and villages upper caste women even today are confined to home bound activities and involved in responsibilities and interests limited only to their kith and kin. She is expected to look after domestic chores and her typical roles are those of a housewife and mother. Her role in the outside world has not yet been accepted in the same manner as men's. Women are generally treated as unpaid family workers. Free India adopted a path of development based on mixed economy with a great emphasis on industrialization. It accepted the pattern of dual sectors viz. public and private. In this concern poverty and unemployment have the worst effect on woman. It is now recognised that the policy of economic development which relies heavily on advanced technology, multinational collaborations, export promotion and encouragement to private sectors paves the way for a higher degree of concentration of capital and extremely exploitative relations of productions have a very serious implications for women.

VIOLENCE AND SUBJUGATION OF WOMEN

The problem of violence against women is not new. Women in Indian society have been victims of ill treatment, humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as written records of social organization and family life are available. These records are replete with incidences of abduction, rape, murder and torture of women. But, regretfully, female victims of violence have not given attention in the literature on social problems or in the literature on criminal violence (Ahuja, 2003:11).

Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Women in Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as the social organization and family life records are written. These expressions of violence take place in a man-woman relationship within the family, state and

society. Usually, domestic aggression towards women and girls, due to various reasons remain hidden. Cultural and social factors are interlinked with the development and propagation of violent behaviour. With different processes of socialization that men and women undergo, men take up stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women take up that of submission, dependence and respect for authority. It starts from the negligence on girl child from her birth. Nutritional imbalances for females have a far reaching impact on reproduction and the health of the infants they bear. In some cultures, the lower status of women has a direct bearing on their access to food. While the custom of feeding males first, is well known, it is less often realized that females end up with less nutrient food. Even deprivation of food starts in infancy where girl child are weaned earlier than the boys and it reduces the quality of protein among them. This helplessness has led to her exploitation at almost every stage of life. The family and its operational unit is where the child is exposed to gender differences since birth, and in recent times even before birth, in the form of sex-determination tests leading to foeticide and female infanticide. The home, which is supposed to be the most secure place, is where women are most exposed to violence.

Violence against women has been clearly defined as a form of discrimination in numerous documents. The World Human Rights Conference in Vienna, first recognised gender-based violence as a human rights violation in 1993. In the same year (1993) *United Nations* declaration defined *violence against women* as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”. United Nation’s special report, 1995, on *Violence Against Women* stated the following criterion as violence against women-

a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

- b) Physical sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

Essentially, violence happens in three contexts - the family, the community and the state and at each point key social institutions fulfil critical and interactive functions in defining legitimating and maintaining the violence.

- 1) The family socialises its members to accept hierarchical relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over the allocation of resources.
- 2) The community (i.e., social, economic, religious, and cultural institutions) provides the mechanisms for perpetuating male control over women’s sexuality, mobility and labour.
- 3) The state legitimizes the proprietary rights of men over women, providing a legal basis to the family and the community to perpetuate these relations. The state does this through the enactment of discriminatory application of the law.

In the Indian context the incidences of violence against women are a common factor from her early childhood rather before her birth to the fag end of the life which can be categorized into following manner

Phase	Type of violence
Pre-birth	Sex-selective abortion; effects of battering during pregnancy on birth outcomes.
Infancy	Female infanticide; physical, sexual and psychological abuse.
Girlhood	Child marriage; female genital mutilation; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; incest; child prostitution and pornography.
Adolescence and adulthood	Dating and courtship violence (e.g. acid throwing and date rape); sexual abuse in the workplace; rape; sexual harassment; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking in women; partner violence; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; abuse of women with disabilities; forced pregnancy.

Elderly	Forced “suicide” or homicide of widows for economic reasons; sexual, physical and psychological abuse.
---------	--

(Source: Violence Against Women, WHO/FRH/WHD/97.8)

The main causes of these violences can be analyzed from several aspects. It mainly includes the attitude of male dominance over female and idea that woman is nothing but the property of man who can be utilized at his own desire. In many cases these offences are committed for forceful sexual relation, for selling and prostitution of the women, teenage daughters and even girl child. From the feelings of distrust, helplessness, fear, insignificance, emotional disturbances and inability to withstand frustration and find sufficient gratification by expressing hostile aggressive feelings, the women are even murdered. Another major issue is rape which is committed for sexual forcefulness of men to the womenfolk. Even the custodial offences, sexual harassment in working sectors and molestation of physically challenged women are quite common (UNICEF,2000). In India at every 54 minutes there is occurring a rape incidence and molestation at every 26 minutes (Crimes in India, 2003). Even the scenario of violence is started before the birth of a child. Indian society is very fond of preferring boy child inspite of the daughters. In this present era of modern medical treatment the foetus is detected early and if the forthcoming issue is girl then the mother are forced to go through the abortion of the baby. Even after the birth of the daughter child, she is being tortured and killed by the family members in many cases. The stunning fact has been revealed in census 2011 the sex ratio of 0-6 year old children is 913, in 2001 it is 927 where as in census 1991 it is 945. There are several forms of discrimination and violence against women in India. According to UNICE (2000) some of the most common feature are-

Physical Violence: The most common and frequently used forms of physical violence used against women are – (i) slaps, (ii) beating, (iii) pulsing, (iv) kicking, (v) throwing objects, (vi) beating with cane, (vii) burning with rod, (viii) holding with rope and (ix) sexual coercion or assault.

Mental/Emotional Abuse: The mental or emotional abuse of a woman may take the following forms – (i) using abusive language, (ii) blaming her for everything that goes wrong in the family,

(iii) charging her frequently on small and negligible issues, (iv) giving her threat of divorce, (v) threatening her from meeting her friends and relatives, (vi) prohibiting her on expression of her view on family matters, (vii) suspecting her for extra-marital relations, (viii) insulting her for house-keeping, (ix) threatening her to commit suicide or to kill or burn, (x) giving her verbal threats to use physical force.

Economic Abuse: Following are the most frequently used forms of economic abuse against women – (i) preventing her from taking a job, (ii) forcing her to leave present job, (iii) not allowing her to purchase things of her liking and choice, (iv) stopping her from access to resources or money, (v) pressurizing her to bring money from her parents and so on.

The Battered Girl Child and Wives: Children have been killed, neglected, starved or abandoned, and chastised with cruelty even to death. Battered babies involve mostly of 6 months to 5 years of age. The peak period is the initiating crawling nappy wetting, mopping unhappy 1 to 3 years when any child may drive its parent beyond endurance.

Many housewives suffer regular battering at the hands of their husbands or in-law. But domestic discord often in families with numerous children, ancillary housing, or sleeping accommodation problem women have for centuries accepted ill treatment at the hands of the men. They live with, especially in the lower social economic levels. The concept of equality among the sexes extends to the being of both men and women including the control over their own body and mind. The women's right to decide the number of children they wish to have and right to terminate an unwanted or forced conception is well recognized. Further the right to privacy is also recognized in the matters of whether to bear or beget children. Abortion in India, like any other countries, had been treated as a criminal offence under section 312 to 316 of Indian Penal Code.

Medical termination of pregnancy can be performed only in a Government hospital or any place approved by the Government. It is illegal unless the operation has to be performed to save the women's life. An unqualified doctor who performs MTP will be punished. A doctor who is negligent or acts without proper care, action can be taken for compensation.

Dowry Harassment: Dowry, a common phenomenon prevalent all over India was initially a kind of primo tem inheritance of daughters in parental property which was given at the time of

marriage ceremony for better status at the in-laws house. This social evil prevailed in India since ancient times. Dowry today is being demanded and paid without any relation to the bride's father's income and wealth. It has been usually found that attitude of women as a mother is different from that as a mother-in-law. Burning, poisoning, strangulation, battering and then setting on fire are some ways used to kill the women.

Dowry Death: It is a new term in criminology in India, and implies the death (by murder or suicide) of a young bride who is harassed by her husband and in-laws by making exorbitant and ever-increasing demands for money and for household articles to be brought from her parents' house or at their expenses. The phenomenon of demanding dowry has filtered down to the poorer sections of society. Some see this as a result of the devaluation of women. As women become housewives instead of earners or producers, they are considered to be economic parasites. Lack of property rights to women is a contributory factor. Rising consumerism on the part of the bridegroom and his parents is also a reason. Thus when the parents of a bride become unable to fulfill the demand of the groom then her in-laws makes her life almost miserable to lead a happy marital life. On the other hand she even being murdered by them and in most of the cases the crimes are hushed up behind the close doors.

Rape: It is a common crime against women all over the world. It is grossly under-reported because of the stigma attached to the victim. Even when reported, the culprit is rarely apprehended; and if he is ever brought to trial, attempts are made to exonerate him by casting aspersions on the woman's moral character. The high risk categories are young girls (including minor girls) in squatter settlements. Another major category is that of low caste and tribal women who are molested when their community launches a struggle for its rights. Rape is used in these cases as a form of retaliation and backlash against the community in question. Women belonging to religious and other minority communities also become victims during communal riots. The army and various paramilitary forces have been offenders in politically sensitive areas. The victimization of women during riots is common.

Widow Immolation (Sati): It is the burning alive of a widow on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, was an ancient practice in specific caste communities in some parts of India, and it

were legally abolished by the British Government. However, several cases have been discovered in the State of Rajasthan after Indian Independence in 1947. The most traumatic and widely publicized case was the immolation of a young widow, Roop Kanwar, in Rajasthan in 1989. It was made into a spectacular ceremony by her-in-laws and the local priests, and watched by thousands of people, while the police and the Government did not even attempt to intervene because they stated that it belongs as a part of the Rajput religious tradition. After continued public pressure, the government passed a law making the glorification of sati an offence, for which the woman attempting to commit it as well as the abettors are punishable. Once again, the law seeks to punish the victim.

Child Marriage: It has been the Hindu practice for centuries, and the lower age limit at marriage, set at 18 years by the Child Marriage Restraint Act, is often flouted. The physical injury to girls due to early consummation of marriage and early pregnancies can be fatal, while the emotional strain of domestic responsibilities at an immature age compounds the problem.

Female Infanticide and Female Foeticide: Female infanticides are common phenomena in societies which place a high premium on male children. Both are done clandestinely and are rarely brought to light, except in small pockets where the scale of female infanticide is discovered to be high. The use – or misuse - of amniocentesis to detect the sex of the foetus, and to abort it if female, is a relatively new but rapidly spreading phenomenon. Due to pressure from voluntary groups in Bombay, the Maharashtra Regulation of Prenatal Diagnostic Technique Act was passed in 1988, but its implementation has been indifferent and no convictions are made. Besides, the Act has become a mockery.

Women trafficking and Prostitution: It has registered an alarming increase. It is a highly organized crime which takes place despite the Prevention of Immoral Traffic in Women Act. According to the provisions of the Act, the woman who solicits is liable to prosecution, but the abettors of brothels the pimps, male customers, corrupt policemen are able to escape. Poverty in rural areas makes women and girls easy victims of the prostitution racket, and their condition is pitiable. But the women rescued from brothels and sent to their families face rejection while their fate in rescue homes is also quite bad. One variation of prostitution is the dedication of girls as

'Devadasis' to specific deities in temples ostensibly to serve God, but in reality to be sexually exploited by men. According to the United Nations, approximately 4 million women, children, and men are victims of international trafficking each year (UN, 2000). A report by the joint standing committee on foreign affairs and trade of Australia in 1995 divulges that hundreds of Asian women have been smuggled without their consent. The report also disclosed that there could be more than 200 Asian women working as prostitutes. The United States Victim of Trafficking and Violence Act, 2000 mentions that seven lakh persons are trafficked globally and fifty thousand are trafficked to USA every year (Nandi, 2005:19). As the place of commercial sex trade, India is undoubtedly profitable and the demand of girls is very high. Apart from India, the other South Asian countries those can be regarded as the worst sufferer of trafficking are Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, the countries where poverty and unemployment is rampant and human development and dignity at its lowest (Ali, 2005:3-4). According to Human Development Report, 2000, most of the South Asian Countries like Sri Lanka and India fall under the medium Human Development group and Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan fall in low Human Development Group. Among the South Asian countries Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are the major countries of origin for trafficking. Pakistan is considered as the country of destination or transit country. India is simultaneously playing a dual role- country of origin as well as destination country. The major trafficking routes in the South Asian region have been grown up between India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka along with the Middle East countries (Nandi, 2005:20-21). India is a transit and destination country of women, children and men trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation. The women and children of Bangladesh are trafficked to India or transit through India en-route to Pakistan and to the Middle East. Hundreds of children and women from neighbouring Nepal are trafficked in India destined for the big city brothels and forced labours (Ali, 2005:4). It is to be mentioned here that, in India the recorded cases of women trafficking are increasing gradually. Everyday about 200 girls and women in India enter prostitution and among them 80 percent are without their will. In India, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are considered as "high supply zone" for women in prostitution (Ranjan, 2005:16). Along with the women of Bangladesh and Nepal, also the women of the districts of West Bengal such as Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Nadia, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, North and South Twenty Four Parganas are trafficked to Kolkata. In Kolkata they are kept in different red light areas like

Sonagachi, Bowbazar, Kalighat, Tollygunge, Chetla etc. From here they are supplied to Delhi and Mumbai. Meanwhile, the women are trafficked from Hyderabad to Mumbai also. From Mumbai as well as from Hyderabad the trafficked women are further sold to Karachi, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries (Nandi, 2005:21). In this context, it is to be mentioned here that, Siliguri is a very vulnerable area for women trafficking. It is located at the gateway of entire North- East India. A number of International borders are in its close vicinity. Further, the famous tourist spots of the Himalayan region, Darjeeling and of the Terrain and Dooars attract a large number of tourists through the entire year. In this regard a large number of authorized and unauthorized resorts, hotels have been build up in the Darjeeling district and neighbourhood areas. Most of these places also have the unofficial provision to satisfy the desires of their tourists through flesh trades. It is estimated that between 7,000 to 10,000 girls, between the ages of 9-16 years, are trafficked each year from Nepal to India. More than 200,000 Nepalese girls are involved in the Indian sex trade (Mac Girk, 1997). Being adjacent to Nepal these trafficked women are foremostly brought to the red light areas of Siliguri and from here they are supplied to different national and international centers.

Eve-teasing: It is sexual harassment of women in crowded public places, common in large cities as well as in villages. It is a minor offence, usually punishable by a small fine and one day's imprisonment. Until recently, the police did not register any complaints of this type, and even now the authorities seem to be unaware that there is a special department to handle such cases.

Pornography: It remains difficult to deal with, because obscenity is not easy to define. The Anti-Obscenity Act is problematic for women, because liberty of expression is advanced as a defense. Some vocal women's groups were inducted by the government in monitoring films, but were promptly dissociated when they criticized official apathy. The Internet pornography statistics shows that, in every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography, every second 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography, every second 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines, every 39 minutes: a new pornographic video is being created in the United States. Pornography revenues are not necessarily ranked according to population. China topped the list in 2006 with more than \$27 billion in pornography revenues. However, South Korea, only the 26th most populous nation on earth according to the U.S. Census Bureau,

is next in line with more than \$25 billion in pornography revenues. Pornography revenues are not necessarily ranked according to population. China topped the list in 2006 with more than \$27 billion in pornography revenues. However, South Korea, only the 26th most populous nation on earth according to the U.S. Census Bureau, is next in line with more than \$25 billion in pornography revenues. The internet is not the most popular form of pornography in the United States. Video sales and rentals accounted for \$3.62 billion in revenue in 2006 while internet pornography raked in \$2.84 billion. There are total 100,000 websites that offer pornography and 1 in 7 youths report being solicited for sex on the internet.

Violence on Pregnant Women: The health consequences of domestic violence in terms of pregnancy loss and infant mortality are considerable. It ranges from miscarriage to low birth-weight infants to maternal morbidity and mortality. The battered pregnant women are twice likely to have miscarriage and four times likely to have a low-birth-weight baby than non-battered pregnant women. The children born to battered women are 40 times more likely to die before the age of five than children of non-battered mothers.

Thrown out from House: The most common form of domestic violence is driving the victim out of her home or forcing her to go to her parents' place. Women ejected from their homes in such circumstances often have nowhere to go. It is because of this threat of being thrown out without any viable options of living, millions of women today continue to silently tolerate and suffer extreme violence at the hands of their relatives, sometimes, even to the point of death. The following tables highlights on the issues that violence against women has become a gradually increasing phenomenon in the Indian context-

****Statistical feature:**

Table- 1: Incidents of crimes against women

Crime Head	Year					Percentage variation 2012-2013
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	

Rape (Sec. 376 Indian Penal Code)	21,397	22,172	24,206	24,923	33,707	35.2
Kidnapping and abduction (Sec. 363-369, 371-373 IPC)	25,741	29,795	35,565	38,262	65,461	35.6
Dowry death (Sec. 304B IPC)	8,383	8,391	8,618	8,233	8,083	-1.8
Cruelty by husband and relatives (Sec. 498A IPC)	89,546	94,041	99,135	106,527	11,8866	11.6
Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)	38,711	40,613	42,968	45,351	70,739	56.0
Sexual harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)	11,009	9,961	8,570	9,173	12,589	37.2
Importation of girls (Sec. 366-B IPC)	48	36	80	59	31	-47.4
Sati Prevention Act 1987	0	0	1	-	-	-
Immoral Traffic (P) Act, 1956	2,474	2,499	2,435	2563	2579	0.6
Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act, 1986	845	895	453	141	362	156.7
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	5,650	5,182	6,619	9038	10,709	17.9
Total	2,03,804	2,13,585	2,28,650	244,270	3,09,546	26.7

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi, 2013.

Table-2: Proportion of crime against women

Year	Total IPC Crimes	Crime Against Women (IPC cases)	Percentage to total IPC crimes
2008	20,93,379	1,86,617	8.9
2009	21,21,345	2,03,804	9.2
2010	22,24,831	2,13,585	9.6
2011	23,25,575	2,19,142	9.4
2012	23,87,188	2,44,270	10.2
2013	26,47,722	2,95,896	11.2

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi, 2013

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Society is an ongoing process and always we are in search of better livelihood. The present form of society has been evolved through cultural evolution. Ever since the early dawn of existence the human life is closely interrelated and interacted with the nature. The environment provides the raw materials to us. Human being gradually went through the stages of development by harnessing more energy from the nature with the application of complex technologies. In this regard, the women folk also took active participation and were directly involved in the process to acquire resources from the environment. But with the gradual progress and rapid increase in the harnessed energy the prime issue arose regarding the authority and control over natural resources. In this regard the men folk have imposed their dominancy over female and ultimately become the stakeholder of the economy as well as power and authority. Not only that, by imposing several norms, customs and taboos related with the social, physical and physiological aspects of the females, they debarred the women society from the outside world and has made them confined primarily within the household courses. The women have become bound to depend on male in every perspective of their life. On the other hand their voices were suppressed by imposing physical forces of male. This scenario is quite prevalent through the entire world and it is a common phenomenon in India too. In the present Indian society the status of women are quite degraded from the men particularly in social, economic and political sector. The men are the prime authority to control over the decision making aspects and resource utilization,

while the females have to be depended totally upon them for the requirements. In this regard the females have to accept all sorts of restrictions upon them as imposed by the patriarchal society. Even though the females have to face a huge discrimination, maltreatment and deprivation from the men throughout their life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahuja, R. 1999. *Indian Social System*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.
- Annual Report 2004-05 of Department of Women & Child Development, Government of India
- Barman, M. 2002. *Persecution of Women Widows and Witches*, Indian Anthropological Society, Calcutta.
- Beteille, A. 1969. *Social Inequality*(ed), Penguin Books, Middlesex.
- Channa, K(ed).1988. *Socialisation, Education and Women, Explorations in Gender Identity*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi.
- Chapman, J.K. and Gates, M (eds), 1976.*The Victimization of Women*, Sage Publications, California.
- Desai, N. and Thakkar, U, 2001. *Women in Indian Society*, National Book Trust, India.
- Desai, N. and Patel, Y, 1990. *Indian Women Change and Challenge in the Inter national Decade1975-1985*, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai.
- Desai, N. and Krishnaraj, M (eds), 1987. *Women and Society in India*. Ajanta Publications, Delhi.
- *Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls* in Innocenti Digest, No.6, June 2000. UNICEF, Florence, Italy
- Dube, L. 2001. *Anthropological Explorations in Gender, Intersecting fields*, Sage Publication, Delhi.
- Eighth Five Year Plan Document, Planning Commission, Government of India.
- Ember,C, M.Ember, P.N.Peregreine, 2002. *Anthropology* (Tenth edition), Pearson Education Asia.
- Ghadially, R.1988. *Women in Indian Society*, Sage Publication, New Delhi.

- Ghotaskar, S(ed). 1992. *Struggles of Women at Work*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Goyal,A. *Women's Empowerment through Gender Budgeting- A review in the Indian context*, <http://wcd.nic.in/gbsummary> (accessed on 08.8.08)
- Jha, U.S. and P. Pujari (eds), 1996. *Indian Women Today: Tradition Modernity and Challenge*, Kaniska Publisher, New Delhi.
- Kaushik, S. 1997. *Knocking at the Male Bastion: Women in Politics*, National Commission for Women, New Delhi.
- Kessler, E.S. 1976. *Women an Anthropological View*, Rinenhart and Winston, New York.
- Leonard, E. B. 1982. *Women, Crime and Society*, Longman, New York.
- Lokhande, M.A. February 2009. Microfinance Initiatives In India, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-57 (4): 16-18.
- Mishra, S. and D.P. Mishra, January 2008. Why Gender Analysis In Agriculture, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-56 (3): 34-36.
- National Crime Records Bureau, 2013. Government of India, New Delhi.
- Nayar, S. and Mankekar, K (eds), 2005. *Women Pioneers in India's Renaissance*, National Book Trust, India.
- Ninth Five Year Plan Document (1997-2002), Planning Commission, Government of India
- Paliwal, D. and R.C. Paliwal, January 2008. Drudgery Among Women In Rural Hilly Areas In Uttarakhand, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-56 (3): 22-26.
- Peoples, J. and G. Bailey, 1997. *Humanity: An Introduction To Cultural Anthropology (Fourth Edition)*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, USA.
- Raju, H.S, M.M.R. Reddy, and B.B. Reddy, February 2009. Outreaching Unbanked Rural Marginalised Groups, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-57 (4): 10-12.
- Robinson, Marguerite S. 1998. Microfinance: the Paradigm Shift From credit Delivery to Sustainable Financial Intermediation, In M. S. Kimenyi, R. C. Wieland and J. D. Von Pischke (eds), *Strategic Issues in Microfinance*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot.
- Roy, K. 2001. *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.

- Seth, M. 2001. *Women and Development, The Indian Experience*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Seventh Five Year Plan Document, Planning Commission, Government of India.
- Sharma, K.L.1997. *Social Stratification in India Issues and Themes*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Sharma, S. January 2008. Empowering Women Through Education: Strategy for Sustainable Rural Development, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-56 (3): 3-7.
- Singh, G. February 2009. Microfinance- An Innovation In Rural Credit System, In *Kurukshetra*. Vol-57 (4): 3-6.
- Sixth Five Year Plan Document (1980-85), Planning Commission, Government of India.
- Tenth Five Year Plan Document (2002-2007), Planning Commission, Government of India.
- Wilson, E. 1977. *Women and the Welfare State*, Tavistock, London.
- World Health Organization, 1997. *Violence Against Women InformationKit*, WHO/FRH/WHD/97.8, Geneva.