

Women in cultural society in India particularly focuses on Bihar

Rajesh Kumar

Ph.D., Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, B.N.M. University, Madhepura, Bihar, India

Abstract

Culture of India refers collectively to the thousands of distinct and unique cultures of all religions and communities present in India. India's languages, religions, dance, music architecture, food and customs differ from the place to place within the country. A woman is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. As India is called the nation of unity in diversities. Which have different and enriched cultural values that creates the women under the curtail because of our religious and social scripts shows that women are the things to be under control of the men and particular to the head of family. But in some tribal areas of India matrilineal society be seen where women lead on family. In ancient India the women enjoyed equal status with men in all aspects of life. But changing the phase of time women status gradually deteriorated. As family is the primary unit of the people living together women are considered to be the machine of children producing. The objectives of this research paper is to understand the problem and perspective of Women cultural values, their gestures and posters so that their means to be different from men.

Keywords: women, cultural, Bihar

Introduction

Women during the early Vedic period enjoyed equal status with men in all aspects of life. Works by ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana suggest that women were educated in the early Vedic period. Rigvedic verses suggest that women married at a mature age and were probably free to select their own husbands in a practice called swayamvar or live-in relationship called Gandharva marriage. Scriptures such as the Rig Veda and Upanishads mention several women sages and seers, notably Gargi and Maitreyi. On the other hand, the Rig Veda also mentions women lack discipline and intellect, and have the heats of hyena's. For the Shatapatha Brahmana, women, Shudra, dogs and crows are all untruth. through this script, women are supposed to be secondary in our society since beginning of Indian civilization.

Indian women's position in society further deteriorated during the medieval period, when child marriages and a ban on remarriage by widows became part of social life in some communities in India. The Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent brought purdah to Indian society. Among the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Jauhar was practised. In some parts of India, some of Devadasis were sexually exploited. Polygamy was practised among Hindu Kshatriya rulers for some political reasons. In many Muslim families, women's movement was restricted to Zenana areas of the house.

The status of women in India is strongly connected to family relations. In India, the family is seen as crucially important, and in most of the country the family unit is patrilineal. Families are usually multi-generational, with the bride moving to live with the in-laws. Families are usually hierarchical, with the elders having authority over the younger generations, and the males over females. The vast majority of marriages are monogamous (one husband

and one wife), but both polygamy and polyandry in India have a tradition among some populations in India. Weddings in India can be quite expensive. Most marriages in India are arranged.

With regard to dress, a sari (a long piece of fabric wound around the body) and salwar kameez are worn by women all over India. A bindi is part of a woman's make-up. Despite common belief, the bindi on the forehead does not signify marital status; however, the Sindoor does. Rangoli (or Kolam) is a traditional art very popular among Indian women.

Methodology

The proposed study mainly is descriptive in nature. It humourlessly based on secondary data and information which is collected from the concerned sources as per need of the research. The relevant books, documents of various ministries/departments and national and international organizations, articles, papers and web-sites are used in this study. Being a dweller at boarder of three states Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal I also studied and realised the culture based on primary data by meeting and asking questions to local people.

Social and family structure

In everyday life, women are socialized under the images of sati (true and devoted wife) and pativrati (faithful and devoted to the husband). These idealized images tress self-giving, asceticism, reunification, selfless honour, devotion, obedience and loyalty to husband and family. The traditionally ideal and virtuous wife, mother or woman earns respect from within and outside of her family. The socialization of women's femininity is not limited to the family agency but also to outer organized agencies like educational centres. Generally all education of women is welcome so long as it does not alter their

traditional role. Thus far, the traditional role of Indian women has not changed. Formal education of women in India is 'feminized' so that it is considered to be an instrument to promote and maintain a domestic system along the traditional line. In this context Karlekar states: 'Femininity means non-assertiveness, compliance, obedience, and in education, choosing options that will not conflict with these basic orientations. Clearly then, education has to be manipulated to provide goals and training for girls which are to be substantially different from those for boys. 'Women's association with housework is directly linked with the panorama of sati (true and devoted wife) and pativrati (faithful and devoted to the husband) doctrine in Indian, particularly Hindu, society. The proponents of these doctrines are Sita, Savitri, Lakshmi, Paravati, Anasuya, Gandhari, and Dropadi. Ideal images and stories of them are familiar to the masses regardless of their age, sex, caste and religion. The pervasiveness of the domestic role of women is so well established that, in general, they are expected to be domestically competent in the household. Therefore, in most cases girls are given domestic learning and recreation during their early induction to family life. It has also been observed that women learn their gender role expectancies in their families and afterwards transmit them to their children. Thus, women initiate and maintain ritualistic and traditional behaviour for the future lives of the female children. The deep-rooted and intensive idea behind the female's gender role responsibility is well expressed by phrases such as the 'house as the woman's natural place' or 'women are meant for housework'. This is because women have been responsible for doing housework for centuries, and they are necessary and skilled in this area. Also, due to the induction of the *parda* (this does not allow women to appear before others) system the role of women is either pushed or fixed in the household. Their careers are identified and understood through the heart hand home, regardless of their outside employment. They are also frequently called 'ghareluaurat' / 'gharkiaurat' (household woman), 'grha-patni' / 'gharerbaou' /'gharkibahu' (housewife), 'grhini' / 'gharvahu', 'grha-svamini' (mistress of the house). Guided by these social notions, women perform the unending tasks allocated to the domestic field in their families. The duties of women include taking care of the children (feeding, bathing and bedding, etc.); sweeping and cleaning the house; fetching water for domestic needs either from a well, a pond or a river; cooking and serving food for the men and children; scrubbing the utensils; washing the clothes of the men and children; looking after the storage of provisions. Along with these tasks, women also go to the market, engage in arts and crafts, knit and embroider, and perform agricultural tasks, such as preparing the ground, sowing, weeding, growing vegetables, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, drying, boiling (mainly paddy) and storage, etc., all of which are related to women's tasks as part of their 'gharkakam' (housework). However, the performance of all these tasks varies. Compared with women; the men's contribution to housework in the family is minimal. Normally, men are not expected to do kitchen work as it is against the social norms. Men even

expect that a glass of water should be brought to them, that their bed should be made and folded, that their clothes should be kept tidy, and so on. Normally women perform such duties as a woman. Then the question arises whether men take any responsibility in performing tasks in the family. Actually men may take care of children, particularly in educating them; to a certain extent such a task is not gender specified. Men also do household tasks, such as fetching water and fuel, shopping, taking care of cattle and entertaining guests, sweeping and repairing certain parts of the house. These tasks are considered either masculine or not gender-specific tasks. In summary, women are still, as in former times, expected to be responsible for discharging domestic tasks. They do not ask their men to perform such tasks because the men would lose their dignity. In comparing the role of women and men in the household, Jain's (1985) and Ramu's (1989) studies are particularly interesting because of their greater empirical relevance. Jain's study based on cross-regional rural families in India, reveals persisting sex-segregated roles in families irrespective of caste, class and regional variations. Men are primarily responsible for an outside job, and spend most of their time there. Women spend time on housework as their primary function. This includes cooking, grinding, cutting, shopping, cleaning, sweeping, washing clothes and utensils, fetching fuel and water, and child-care-related activities.

Case studies of Bihar and west Bengal

This study was carried out in the rural areas of Bihar and West Bengal. Intensive and interesting features of women's roles are also visible there. In rural Bihar, though women are heavily engaged in agricultural work, housework is still left to them as their essential job. If a woman from the West Bengal region has an outside job, she most likely prefers to keep her traditional feminine role and work domestically in someone else's household. In these discussions, two things are revealed. Firstly, in the Bihar case, we notice a stress on the housework that women do regardless of their outside job. This is similar to other researchers' findings in case of Rajasthan (e.g. Chakraborty 1978; Karlekar 1982; Sharma 1986). Secondly, in West Bengal, we find an emphasis on the feminine identity and role performance of women. Such perception includes the type of job, i.e. housework. Also, this feminine perception itself shows that women naturally prefer housework. However, from these two separate regional cases, we find in general a perception of women as domestic workers. In this regard, 'Women perceive themselves as mainly engaged in activities within the household, of which their most regular engagement is in what are called domestic activities.

Now the question is what are the reasons for the differentiation of the roles of man and woman in the family. In this regard, Ramu (1989), highlights two dominant factors: gender identity and traditional values. These are responsible for determining the separate male and female roles in the household. Also other factors such as physical capacity, including maternal experience, are considered to function with or around the two factors on a broader level although the overall picture of the

gender roles in India seems to be very traditional, a number of studies deal with the normative evaluation of the position of women in society and the national reform movement. Some other studies concentrate on social, cultural, economic and other issues related to women's roles and lives. In these studies, women's position and dependency, deprivation and exploitation are examined in social and economic contexts.

Importantly, these studies also explore emerging issues such as role conflicts, social adjustment and the restructuring of status power, values and ideologies related to women's roles and lives. The studies pay attention to the role conflict of working women as they meet heavy responsibility both in the household and the workplace. Relevant to my study are those studies that specifically handle the conflicts women face when combining mothering and career. In this respect, Chakraborty's study is useful here. She informs that many university educated women from the middle class prefer to marry and have their regular role as wife and mother. These women seek employment so that their education can be used to raise the living standards of their families. One result of these goals is that many professional married women suffer in developing both their careers and domestic lives. However, most employed married women give low priority to their careers. They attach primacy to their role in the household. This tendency has to do with their self-image. In contrast, Karlekar's study on the women sweepers of Delhi reports those poor married women engaged in low wage occupations have difficulty in escaping from their jobs. In addition, these women are hardly concerned with role conflict. The reason for this is that they are concerned more with earning an adequate income to support their families even in a hostile economic situation than with the seemingly insignificant issues of role conflict. It proves that their responsibility to their families and their willingness to maintain them is privatized by them.

Participation of women in social life

The degree to which women participate in public life that is being outside the home varies by region and background. For example, the Rajputs, a patrilineal clan inhabiting parts of India, especially the north-western area, have traditionally practised purdah, and many still do to this day. In recent years however, more women have started to challenge such social norms: for instance women in rural Haryana are increasingly rejecting the ghunghat. In India, most population (about two thirds) is rural, and, as such, lives in tight-knit communities where it is very easy for a woman to ruin her family's 'honour' through her behaviour. The concept of family honour is especially prevalent in northern India. Izzat refers to a concept of honour prevalent in the culture of North India and Pakistan. Izzat applies to both sexes, but in different ways. Women must uphold the 'family honour' by being chaste, passive and submissive, while men must be strong, brave, and be willing and able to control the women of their families. The rural areas surrounding Delhi are among the most conservative in India: it has been estimated that 30% of all honour killings of India

take place in Western Uttar Pradesh, while Haryana has been described as "one of India's most conservative when it comes to caste, marriage and the role of women. Deeply patriarchal, caste purity is paramount and marriages are arranged to sustain the status quo."

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