

WOMEN OPPRESSION IN BANGLADESH: AN ANALYSIS ON CAUSES, FORMS, AND PRESENT SCENARIO OF WOMEN OPPRESSION IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

In the new liberal era, women are considered as a commodity. Women are being continuously oppressed in the world. This study has been conducted for analyzing the causes and forms of women oppression in Bangladesh. This paper also describes the present scenario of women oppression in Bangladesh. The study has been conducted depending on secondary sources. Existing socio-economic, legal conditions are not appropriate for stopping women oppression in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Women, Oppression, Women oppression , Discrimination , Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

Women oppression is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. It's not a new scenario but it has a long history. Day by day the women oppression rate is increasing and it is an alarming issue for Bangladesh. The condition of women could be changed by the execution of a new women policy and CEDAW law (daily star, 2011). The basis of women oppression is their historical status. Historically, women are considered as a private property and men-women relationship is unequal (workers world, n.d.). Origin of personal rights in property and during determination of inheritance, women's freedom of life and free movement become obstructed. Women are confined in home. Men are considered as society's leader because they are owner of property. Men play dominating role in rule making, giving direction in family, society, state everywhere. Women are oppressed in family, society, state everywhere. Mainly patriarchic society structure, society's and state's support to men are motivating women oppression. Women oppression is considered as the main instrument for controlling women. The types of women oppression has changed from time to time (Ahmed & Bormon, 2012). Bangladesh is a third world country and also a poor country but here women oppression rate is high. As a consequence it obstructed the achievement of equality ,development and peace. (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 16). So, women

oppression should be minimized. This paper is an attempt to explore the causes and forms of women oppression existing in Bangladesh at the present time. And at the same time this paper will suggest some remedial measures to uplift this situation.

METHODOLOGY

This paper has been written with the help of secondary sources like related articles, journals, books, newspapers, annual reports of different organizations. Internet facilities are also used for collecting secondary data. Author also used data compiled by national NGOs such as Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK). Author's own observations are also incorporated .

Women's oppression

According to Cudd “Oppression is a harm through which groups of persons are systematically and unfairly or unjustly constrained ,burdened or reduced by any of several forces.” (Cited in Lund University Publications, 2007)

According to, Linda Napikoski and Jone Johnson Lewis “Oppression is the inequitable use of authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal. Oppression is a type of injustice.”(collected from Thoughtco.com ,2018)

According to F. Hacker-Oppression means to frighten, and by frightening, to dominate and control.

Men and Women do not have similar legal and political rights and in almost all societies fathers and husbands direct and control women (Thoughtco.com ,2018). So, Women oppression can be defined as injustice to women, dissimilar social ,legal and political rights, men-women unequal treatment, trying to control women and dominating women.

CAUSES OF WOMEN OPPRESSION

Due to lack of self-preservation

Women do not protect themselves because they are not socialized properly and in our country there is no active feminist movement and there are no facilities of physical training. As a result they are unable to protect themselves (Islam, 2015).

Lack of Education

In Bangladesh most of the people are illiterate. Especially the literacy rate of village people is very disappointing (Ahmed & Bormon, 2012) In our society, women are economically

dependent on male and as a result, men control women life. Women become vulnerable due to lack of education. (Islam, 2015). Day by day women oppression is increasing because of illiteracy. Women are not aware of their rights because they are not properly educated. Village women are totally unaware of their rights but sometimes we have seen exceptional cases in town. Though they are aware of their rights but still they are going through oppression because of our patriarchic society (Ahmed & Bormon, 2012).

Due to economic dependence and lack of income

Many women continue aggressive relationships because they have no self-sufficient income sources. The Labor force statistics show that men and women employment ration is not equal. Generally tenure of assets or property belong to men. In family assets women inheritance rights are discriminatory. As a consequence, women do not have self sufficient and considerable income. (Islam, 2015)

Preference of Son

Preference of male children to parents is defined as son preference. Many parents neglect, show inequitable behavior to girls. This detriments a girl's physical and mental health. In a family son preference is highlighted in every aspects like : nutrition, health care patterns, education and age of marriage, recreation and development of the child etc. Particularly in many countries in Asia, women are affected by the son preference. Many times, women are oppressed for son preferences (Islam, n.d.) .

Women security problem

When women enter into public field, they face many barriers such as family barriers, social barriers, cultural barriers etc. And joining a work becomes a challenge. Women friendly issues are absent in most of the institutions. Due to lack of transport facilities women cannot reach their home at night from their workplace safely. Besides this, there is no child care home, flexible working hours, separate toilet facilities in most of the organizations (Islam, 2015). As a consequence many women are losing their interest to join workforce.

Legal and political cause

Discriminatory inheritance and marriage law present in Bangladesh. Inheritance and ownership system is patrilineal which preserves male supremacy in relationship both individual and social. This unequal women status raises powerlessness and thus lead to women oppression. Unilateral divorce law is another reason behind women oppression because husbands enjoy more right to divorce without any major problem (khatun, 2012).

In most cases, women are subordinated in the existing socio-political system. As a result they fail to find legal steps. In some cases, husband enjoy right to torture and it is socially accepted. (Talha, 2016)

Besides these causes there are many causes such as Child marriage, weakness of women organizations, negative role of media, limited women participation in politics, short presence in decision making process, gender based division of labor , religious orthodox and so on.

Forms of Women oppression

There are many forms of women oppression. “The main types of oppression include dowry, trafficking, kidnapping, rape, physical torture and acid throwing” and so on. (Akash, 2009). UNIFEM broadcasts gender based oppression list which is written by M. Schuler (M. Schuler, Violence Against Women: An International Perspective ,Freedom From Violence : Women’s Strategies From Around the world, Washington D.C: Women Law and Development, OEF International)

Table 1: Location and Issue of Women oppression

| Location and Issue | The Family | The “Community” | The State |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Forms of Gender Violence | <p>Physical Aggression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Murder (Dowry/Other) -Battering -Genital mutilation -Foeticide -Infanticide -Deprivation of food -Deprivation of medical care -Reproductive Coercion/Control <p>Sexual Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rape -Incest <p>Emotional Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confinement -Forced Marriage -Threats of Reprisals | <p>-Social Reference Group (Cultural, Religious etc)</p> <p>-Violence directed toward women within or outside the group</p> <p>Physical Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Battering -Physical Chastisement -Reproductive Coercion/Control -Witch burning -Sati burning -Sexual Assault -Rape <p>Workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sexual Aggression -Harassment -Intimidation -Commercialized Violence -Trafficking | <p>Political violence</p> <p>(Policies ,Laws ,etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Illegitimate -Detention -Forced Sterilization -Forced pregnancies -Tolerating gender violence by non state agents <p>Custodial violence</p> <p>(Military/Police, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rape -Torture |

| | |
|--|--|
| -Forced prostitution Media -Pornography -Commercialization of Women's bodies | |
|--|--|

(Cited in Ahmed and Bormon , 2012)

Present state of Women oppression in Bangladesh

Rape

| Age From of Rape | Under 6 | 7-12 | 13-18 | 19-24 | 25-30 | 30+ | Not Mentioned | Total | Death | Suicide | Case Filed | Not Mentioned |
|-----------------------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-------|-------|---------|------------|---------------|
| Rape | 50 | 77 | 57 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 248 | 454 | 22 | 4 | 320 | 134 |
| Gang Rape | | 7 | 43 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 108 | 183 | 15 | 1 | 125 | 53 |
| The type of Rape is not mentioned | 1 | 5 | 6 | | 1 | 2 | 10 | 25 | 20 | | 11 | 14 |
| Total | 51 | 89 | 106 | 18 | 14 | 18 | 366 | 662 | | | 456 | 201 |
| Murdered after attempt to rape | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 3 | | | | |
| Death after rape | 2 | 15 | 17 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 13 | | 57 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|---|---|--|----|----|--|----|----|--|
| Suicide because of rape | | | 3 | | | 2 | | | 5 | | |
| Attempt to rape | 9 | 15 | 5 | 3 | | 61 | 93 | | 62 | 31 | |

Source: Prothom Alo, Janakantha, Ittefaq, Samakal, Sangbad, Naya Diganta, Daily Star, New Age, Dhaka Tribune and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

Fatwa and Salish

| Nature Reason | Hilla | Lashes | Social | Physical Mental Torture | Divorce | Total | Cases | Death | Suicide |
|---|-------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Hindu Girl Marrying Muslim Boy | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| Love Relationship | | | | | | 0 | | | |
| Premarital Pregnancy | | | | | | 0 | | | |
| False allegation on character | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 1 | |
| Land Dispute | | | | | | 0 | | | |
| Family Dispute | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| Getting married again with the divorced | | | | | | 0 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| wife | | | | | | | | | |
| Oral divorced | | | | 0 | | 0 | | | |
| Attempt to Rape | | | | | | | | | |
| Rape | | | | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Source: Prothom Alo, Janakantha, Ittefaq, Samakal, Sangbad, Naya Diganta, Daily Star, New Age ,DhakaTribune and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

Acid Attack

| Nature | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Acid Attack | 7 |

Dowry

| Physically Tortured | Tortured to Death | Cases Filed |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 78 | 74 | 96 |

Sexual Harassment

| Women Were Harassed | Committed to Suicide |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 104 | 8 |

Domestic Violence

| Nature | Total |
|--|------------|
| Women murdered by their Husband | 160 |

[Collected from Ain O Salish Kendra Documentation Unit 2018, Time period : January to October]

CONCLUSION

Women constitute half of the total population in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a developing country and women oppression creates obstacles in development .Nowadays government emphasizes on women empowerment, on the other hand women oppression is increased day by day. Besides government, private organizations and NGO also work in this regard but still women oppression is not reduced in satisfactorily level. Women oppression started from the household and now they are becoming victim of harassment more or less everywhere. Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh incorporate important provision for ensuring women rights but women situation is not improved at a satisfactorily level. Government should take proper measures for implementing the steps which will help to improve women conditions. Unequal power practice of men and women should be stopped. Greater public awareness should be raised in this matter.

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