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Kalyan Ch. Goswami
Sandeepa Gogoi

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বৈদিক যুগত নাৰীৰ স্থান

ড° মৌচুমী গৌ

সংক্ষিপ্তসার

ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ আৰ্য সনাতন ধৰ্মাৱলম্বী মানুহৰ প্ৰাচীনতম ধৰ্মগ্ৰন্থই হৈছে বেদ । বেদৰ দুটা বিভাগ আছে - মন্ত্ৰ আৰু ব্ৰাহ্মণ । মন্ত্ৰ বুলিলে সাধাৰণভাৱে প্ৰত্যেকখন বেদৰ স্তৱ, স্তুতি ও বুজায় । মন্ত্ৰভাগটোক সংহিতা নামেৰেও জনা যায় । আনহাতে ব্ৰাহ্মণ বুলি ক'লে বিভিন্ন যাগ প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰ বিৱৰণ, মন্ত্ৰৰ আলোচনা, যজ্ঞত মন্ত্ৰ বিনিয়োগ, শব্দৰ ব্যুৎপত্তি ইত্যাদি বিষয়সংগত গদ্যগ্ৰন্থক বুজায় । এই ব্ৰাহ্মণ ভাগৰ আকৌ দুটা ভাগ আছে - আৰণ্যক আৰু উপনিষদ । আৰ জ্ঞান-যোগমুখী আধ্যাত্মিক ব্যাখ্যা আছে । উপনিষদ গ্ৰন্থৰাজিত আৰণ্যকত সূত্ৰপাত আধ্যাত্মবিদ্যা আৰু জ্ঞান-যোগৰ পূৰ্ণ বিকশিত আলোচনা সন্নিবিষ্ট হৈছে । এই সমগ্ৰ গ্ৰন্থ-ৰচনাকাল খ্ৰীষ্টপূৰ্ব ৬০০০ পৰা খ্ৰীষ্টপূৰ্ব ১৫০০ বছৰ বুলি পণ্ডিতসকলে ঠাৱৰ কৰিছে । হিচাপে এগৰাকী মহিলাই যুগ-যুগান্তৰৰ পৰাই মৰ্যাদাপূৰ্ণ স্থান অধিকাৰ কৰি আহিছে । ঐ যুগৰ সামাজিক জীৱনত নাৰীয়ে মৰ্যাদাপূৰ্ণ স্থান লাভ কৰিছিল । বৈদিক যুগত ভালেসংখ্যক বিদুষী নাৰীৰ উল্লেখ পোৱা যায় । আমাৰ আলোচনাত বৈদিক যুগত নাৰীসকলৰ সামাজিক স্থিতি কেনেধৰণৰ আছিল, সেয়া সামৰা হৈছে ।

বীজ শব্দ : নাৰী, বৈদিক যুগ, সামাজিক স্থিতি ।

অৱতৰণিকা

ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ আৰ্য সনাতন ধৰ্মাৱলম্বী মানুহৰ প্ৰাচীনতম ধৰ্মগ্ৰন্থই হৈছে বেদ । বেদৰ দুটা প্ৰধান বিভাগ আছে - মন্ত্ৰ আৰু ব্ৰাহ্মণ । মন্ত্ৰ বুলিলে সাধাৰণভাৱে প্ৰত্যেক বেদৰ স্তৱ, স্তুতি আদিক বুজায় । মন্ত্ৰভাগটোক সংহিতা নামেৰেও জনা যায় । আন ব্ৰাহ্মণ বুলি ক'লে বিভিন্ন যাগযজ্ঞৰ প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰ বিৱৰণ, মন্ত্ৰৰ আলোচনা, যজ্ঞত বিনিয়োগ, শব্দৰ ব্যুৎপত্তি ইত্যাদি বিষয়সম্বলিত গদ্যগ্ৰন্থক বুজায় । এই ব্ৰাহ্মণ

Development Approaches And Social Inclusion of Women

Dr. Mitali Konwar

Abstract -

Social inclusion refers to the process of access to equal rights, such as participation in community level, employment, education, health care etc. Studies on women empowerment have focused that since long periods of time women have been suffering from discrimination. They have been kept apart from participation in political, economic and social aspects. To abolish such type of discrimination, many feminist writers and social thinkers are trying through their researches and writings from different approaches and dimensions. Through this paper it is tried to show the role of feminists' approaches and dimensions for the overall development and social inclusion of women in society. The study deals with the gradual growth of different development approaches of women and to understand social inclusion of women through development approaches of feminists and social thinkers. From the discussions included in this article, it has been clarified that through the depth studies, the feminists have been trying to find out the causes and consequences of suppression of women and to establish liberty, equality and rights through empowering women in male dominated society.

Key words : Development Approaches, Social Inclusion, Women, Empowerment

Introduction

Social exclusion refers to the processes in which individual or entire groups are deprived from rights, opportunities and resources by other individuals or group of people in society. The outcomes of social exclusion are that it excluded individuals or groups from participation in economic, social and political aspects of society in which they live. It seems in a patriarchal tradition, women are prevented from participation in decision making in household as well as community level. Social inclusion is opposite of social exclusion. It refers to the process of access to equal rights, such as participation in community level, employment, education, health care etc. Studies on women empowerment have focused that since long periods of time women have been suffering from discrimination. They

- অস্বাভাবিক -

have been kept apart from participation in political, economic and social aspects. To abolish such type of discrimination, many feminist writers and social thinkers are trying through their researches and writings from different approaches and dimensions. Through this paper it is tried to show the role of feminist approaches and dimensions for the overall development and social inclusion of women. The present study is based on secondary sources. All the information has been collected through secondary sources like books, journals and magazines.

Objectives

The study deals with the gradual growth of different development approaches of women and to understand social inclusion of women through development approaches of feminists and social thinkers.

Methodology

The present study is based on secondary sources. All the information has been collected through secondary sources like books, journals and magazines.

Discussion

From 1950s, onwards, the approaches relating to social development and empowerment of women in male dominated society prevailing in feminist discourses. These approaches are categorically Welfare Approach, Women in Development (WID) Approach, Development (WAD) Approach, Gender and Development (GAD) and Empowerment Approach. In the initial phase, development was basically welfare oriented. During the seventies there was a shift from welfare to development where women were recognised as participants in development programmes. During the eighties, a multi-dimensional approach adopted including health, education and employment. In the nine beginning of trying to empower women economically through training generating programmes.¹

¹ H.R. Singh, and N.D. Singh, (2011). *Microfinance: An Introductory text*. New publishing house. Pp. 310.

re approach

The Welfare Approach was introduced in 1950s and 1960s. It is the welfare approach and still this approach is considered as an important policy for the welfare of the developing countries in general and women in particular.² Moser (1993) stated that this approach was introduced for the implementation of policies concerned with women in developing countries.³ The major motivation of this approach was to provide free goods and services, food aid programmes, health programmes, family planning programmes etc.

As stated by Moser, this approach is based on three assumptions; first, women are passive recipients of development, rather than participants in the development process; secondly, that motherhood is the most important role for women in society; thirdly that child rearing is the most effective role for women in economic development.⁴ According to welfare approach, motherhood is the most important role of women in development of society. Therefore reproductive health services, programmes and strategies have been taken in this approach. In addition, women have been also targeted for improving the welfare of their children. Moser pointed out that women and children health programmes are popular in welfare approach.⁵ The welfare approach included two important programmes in developing countries; first the elimination of malnutrition through food and nutrition programmes and secondly population control through widespread dissemination of family planning information and technology.⁶

² N. Moser, (1993). *Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training*. Routledge publication. Pp. 58.

³ N. Moser, (1993). *Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training* London: Routledge publication.

⁴ Moser, (2003). *Women's socioeconomic empowerment and nutritional status: The case of a bank micro-credit programme in rural Bangladesh*. Retrieved September 20, 2012 from www.ir.canterbury.ac.nz

The welfare approach is criticised by some scholars as this approach could not change the traditional role of women which have been making them more vulnerable for quite long periods of time. Moser (1993) argues that welfare approach does not attempt to change the traditional role of women and this approach ignores women's multiple roles like productive and community managing roles and only addresses women's reproductive role as mothers and wives.⁷

Women in development approach(WID)

As a result of critique of welfare approach, women in development perspective became widespread as a movement during 1970's. This was based on modernisation and three feminist waves. It was aimed at integrating women in development processes. This widespread movement demanded social justice and equity for women of the world. Under this broad perspective, World Conference of the International Women's Year (1975) at Mexico city and the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) gave expression to the major preoccupations of women around the world, improved educational and employment opportunities; equality in political and social participation; and increased health and welfare services.⁸

In the late 19th century, women's suffrage movement emerged in North America. It was the first feminist wave or movement through which women fought for equal right to vote and participation in politics. The second wave of feminism is concerned with social and cultural inequalities, violence, reproductive right and sexual discrimination faced by the women in day to day life. This second wave of feminism was very influential as the United Nations (UN) organised the first global conference on women in 1975 at Mexico. The conference sought to address role of nations on fighting gender inequalities and support women's right. The third wave of feminism emerged by the influence of Ester Boserup's publication on

⁷ Kaan Tasli, (2007). *A conceptual framework for gender and development studies from welfare to empowerment*. Retrieved December 21, 2013 from www.oefse.at

⁸ Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller (1995). *From WID to GAD: Conceptual shifts in women and development discourse*. Occasional paper 1, United Nations research institute for social development. Pp.2.

en's Role in Economic Development in 1970. It was the first policy oriented that explained women's exclusion from development projects in the Third d.⁹ Boserup focused in her publication on the increasing specialized division our associated with development undermining or neglecting the value of en's work and status especially in the developing world. She tried to show women were being deprived of equal share with men in social benefits and omic gains and explained how women were marginalised in development ities.¹⁰

Boserup argued that lack of access to training and technology was the ury cause of economic marginalisation of women. Within the dominant colonial nistration system, men and development workers (male) were centralised in the ion making process and women were not prioritized. While the women performed work with their productive and reproductive activities, they enjoyed less power esser share in the fruits of any rural development. It is considered a waste of e resources for those who were less productive.¹¹ Boserup's works had an nce on making women more visible in development approach and as a specific ury when addressing women in development. Drawing the insights of Boserup's r, the WID advocates to reject the narrow view of women's role as mothers vives, underlying much of development policy concerning women.¹² The WID oach helped to ensure women's integration in work force and increase their of productivity in order to improve their lives.

Women in Development approach is categorised into three sub approaches equity approach, anti poverty approach and efficiency approach.

ia Akhter, (2003). *Women's socio-economic empowerment and nutritional status: The case of meen bank micro-credit programme in rural Bangladesh*. Pp. 32. Retrieved September 20, '2 from www.ir.canterbury.ac.nz

ia Akhter, (2003). *Women's socio-economic empowerment and nutritional status: The case of meen bank micro-credit programme in rural Bangladesh*. Pp. 32. Retrieved September 20, '2 from www.ir.canterbury.ac.nz

thrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller (1995). *From WID to GAD: Conceptual shifts in women and elopment discourse. Occasional paper 1, United Nations research institute for social development*. 4.

Equity Approach

Equity approach emerged in 1976-85 UN Women's Decade with the purpose to achieve equity for women in development process. It identifies the continuance of exploitation, subordination and oppression of men on women not only within household but also in work place. This approach recognises that women are active participants in developmental process who through both their productive and reproductive roles provide contribution to economic growth.¹³ In the review of 1976-85 UN Women's Decade Tinker and Jaquette defined the goal of women's equity as the right of divorce, custody of children, property, credit, voting and freedom of choice over child bearing. Under this broad perspective of equity approach, majority of implementing agencies and the government of developing countries had taken initiatives through legal measures.

Some criticized this approach as being more western and could not focus the situations of women of the east or developing countries. It fails to acknowledge the collective and cultural concerns of women in the developing world.

Anti Poverty Approach

Anti-poverty approach was introduced from the 1970s onwards. The aim of this approach was to ensure that poor women of low income household increase their productivity. This approach identifies poverty as a problem of underdevelopment of women rather than subordination. It recognises the productive role of women. Moser pointed out this approach seeks to meet practical gender needs to earn an income, particularly through small scale income generating projects.¹⁴ This approach emphasises that poverty is the main cause of economic inequality between men and women in society. According to this approach lack of access to private ownership of land and capital, sexual discrimination in the labour

¹³Caroline O. N. Moser, (1993).

Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training. London : Routledge publication. Pp. 64.

¹⁴Caroline O. N. Moser, (1993).

Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training. London : Routledge publication. Pp. 66-67.

market are the major attributes of the poverty of women. Therefore, this approach endeavours to increase employment and income generating opportunities for low-income women through better access to productive resources.

To abolish women's poverty through the idea of accessing women in income generating activities, this approach ignores to see the socio-cultural subordination of women in household as well as in community. In developing countries like India women are subordinated by men. Poverty is not only the cause of underdevelopment of women in developing countries. Men have the power of control over resources and income. Where men control household financial resources women are unable to save. There are many cultural constraints that restrict women's ability to move freely outside their domestic arena and to compete equally with men running similar enterprise.¹⁵

Efficiency Approach

During 1980s and 1990s due to the economic recession, World Bank and International Monetary Fund forcibly introduced Efficiency approach in developing countries to reduce economic crisis. Since 1980's efficiency approach is predominant in WID approach. The purpose of this approach is to ensure effective and efficient development through economic contribution of women. The assumption is that increasing economic participation of women in developing countries can increase equity. This has allowed organisations such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to propose that an increase in women's economic participation in development links efficiency and equity together.¹⁶

But in real sense, this approach focuses more on development than on women. To reduce economic downturn, export has been increased and import has been reduced and it resulted in raising cost of consumption goods and services. A number of studies carried out by UNICEF in 1987 shows that poor women and

¹⁵Caroline O. N. Moser, (1989). *Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic needs. World development*, 17 (11), 1813.

¹⁶Caroline O. N. Moser, (1993). *Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training. London: Routledge publication. Pp. 70.*

children are the hardest hit by neo liberal structural adjustment policies or b efficiency approach.¹⁷ Actually due to the reduction of employment and w and by restricting the labour market, the poor women are affected by incre food prices and the cost of basic services, lack of provision for skill training child care facilities.

Women and development approach (WAD)

In 1975 Women and Development (WAD) approach emerged as a new way of thinking about women's empowerment. This approach was theoretically introduced by the Marxist feminism. One of the best known and elaborate theories of Marxism is social oppression. Marxist feminism brings together Marxian analysis and feminist social protest. This mixer of thought produces not a strong theory of oppression but rather a more important statement of gender inequality. The foundation of this theory was laid by Marx and Engels. Their major concern was social class oppression, but later on they also turned attention to gender oppression. Engels presented about gender inequality and gender oppression, in his book *The Origin of the Family: Private Property and the State*, in 1884. According to this theory, women's subordination results not from her biology, but from social arrangements which is socially created. The basic cause of women's subordination lies in the family. Engels first identified women's subordination as being derived from their position within the monogamous family.

The WAD approach argued that women have always been present in development. Therefore, a focus should be given on women's integration in development. This approach identifies that capitalism is a reason of women's poverty and oppression. WAD perspective argued that capitalism exploits unskilled and poor women labourers through giving low wage. Therefore, the WAD approach tries to focus on the elimination of poverty and unemployment of women by increasing access of low income women to employment through in

¹⁷Safia Akhter, (2003). *Women's socioeconomic empowerment and nutritional status: The Grameen bank micro-credit programme in rural Bangladesh. Pp.48. Retrieved September 2 from www.ir.canterbury.ac.nz*

rating activities. Two income generating programmes intended to bring a rural change can be illustrated, Self-Employed Women's Association based in Medabhad (India) and Working Women Forum based in Chennai (India) provide credit for involvement of women in productive activities, control over production and redistribution through producer cooperatives and policy changes at national and international level.¹⁸

Gender and Development Approach (GAD)

Gender and development approach emerged in 1980s by the influence of socialist feminist theory. Both the socialist feminists and GAD approach give special attention to the oppression of women in the family. Socialists have focused attention on the social relations of gender. They have no interest to illustrate the importance of greater female participation in all aspects of social, political, and economic life. Their primary focus has been on an examination of why women have been automatically assigned to inferior and secondary roles. Socialist feminists have identified the social construction of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppression.

The literatures of this approach mainly focus on the patriarchal social system where the unequal distribution of power has been prevalent between the household and community level. Maguire (1984) argued that patriarchy as a process of exploitation that operates within and across classes to oppress women.¹⁹ This approach elucidates that the main cause of subordination of women is the household, where women lack control over income and property. Their involvement is not considered in decision making processes and they are not recognised as equal as men in their family. The basic aim of this approach is to change the structure of power within household into a long term where all decision making and benefits of

¹⁸ Akhter, (2003). *Women's socioeconomic empowerment and nutritional status: The case of women bank micro-credit programme in rural Bangladesh*.

1. Retrieved September 20, 2012 from www.ir.canterbury.ac.nz

¹⁹ Maguire, (1984). *Women and development: An alternative analysis*. Armherst: Centre for national education.

development are distributed on equal basis. The GAD approach is not just focused on the biological inequalities among sexes, however on how social roles, reproductive roles and economic roles are linked to gender inequalities of masculinity and femininity.²⁰ According to this approach to strengthen women, they have to organise themselves to create a common voice for their political, economic and social rights. This approach focuses on empowering women rather than helping them. It gives women a common, equal and strong voice by recognizing their knowledge, skill, experiences and activities, both in the household and outside of their household field.

Empowerment Approach

Empowerment of women is the outcome of several feminists' movements, critiques and debates raised by the feminists in developing societies. Thoughts on women empowerment have generally been flourished more in the hands of the third world feminist writers and grassroots development organizations than in the hands of western feminists²¹. The empowerment approach developed in the mid of 1980s as a distinctive approach from the standpoint of third world women. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), a network of activists, researcher and policymakers from Third World developing countries, is giving attention for development of this approach. It is argued by the feminists that empowerment should be one of the basic aims in life for those who are undergoing through gender inequality and gender oppression. Women get less of economic resources, social status, power and opportunities for self actualization than men. As women are the oppressed class of the society and therefore they should have to gain empowerment in the so called male dominated society.

The term empowerment is directly related to power. But this power does not refer to domination over others; instead it indicates the increasing strength in spiritual, political, social or economic aspects of life to free from oppression and

²⁰ Collins. (2013). *The WID, WAD, GAD approach on gender development*. Retrieved October 20, 2013 from www.wordpress.com

²¹ Caroline O. N. Moser, (1989). *Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic needs*. *World development*, 17 (11), 1799-1825.

inequality. The empowerment approach acknowledges the importance for women to increase their power.²² The term power can be defined from many perspectives. In feminist discourse, the concept of power is analysed in four dimensions as power over, power to, power with and power within. Williams et.al clarified the meaning of power that *power over* involves domination and subordination, associated with the conflict or violence between powerful and powerless groups. *Power to* indicates having decision making capacity to solve their problems. *Power with* refers to the power which involves people to organise themselves with common interest and understanding. *Power within* signifies one's self confidence, self awareness and dignity.

Empowerment is a process which comes out from one's inside. The term empowerment is consist of *power within*, *power to*, *power with* and *power over*. *Power within* indicates to articulate one's self and aspirations. *Power to* refers to develop one's own skills and ability to make success their self and aspirations. *Power with* which refers to people's collective aspirations to unify them and to connect with other persons or organisations. *Power over* indicates gaining capability to make changes and capacity over resources. Thus in feminist discourse empowerment is to be traced through the terms *power over*, *power to*, *power with* and *power within*.

Kabeer (1999) defines the term power as the ability to make choices. According to Kabeer, in people's life there are some choices which have great importance than other choices. Kabeer refers to this type of life choices as 'strategic life choices' like choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children etc. In terms of strategic life choices she defines empowerment as the process where people acquire the ability to make and expand their strategic life choices. Empowerment refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. In other words empowerment entails a process of change. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered because they were never disempowered earlier.²³

²²Ibid. Pp. 74.

²³Kabeer, N. (1999). Resource, agency and achievement : Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and change*. Pp. 435-464.

Kabeer (1994) focuses on three dimensions of women empowerment and these three dimensions are Resource, Agency and Achievements. The states, these dimensions are interrelated and interdependent. Here resource to exercise choice can be understood in terms of these three dimensions. Both material and nonmaterial assets. Material resource includes material financial assets and non material resource includes skills, knowledge, ability to negotiate, participation in organised social associations etc. Agency refers to the ability of people to identify their goals and objectives and capacity to take action. Its enactment involves an interactive process whereby an individual is considered as the subject of an action rather than an object at the receiving end of an action. Behaviour, and is linked to empowerment that promotes egalitarian power relations. In male dominated societies agency is gendered and women have lack resource and agency.²⁵

Rowlands' (1997) three dimensions of empowerment can be helpful to understand empowerment. He has focused a scheme to indicate three dimensions of women empowerment and these are: personal empowerment, collective empowerment and empowerment within close relationship. Rowlands gives for each process of empowerment a set of 'core values' which she considers as product of empowerment. Personal Empowerment indicates psychological and psychosocial processes of change. As stated by Rowlands the core values to this personal empowerment are development of self-confidence, self-efficacy and a sense of agency of being an individual who can interact with his surroundings and cause things to happen. Collective empowerment is very related to the personal dimension. To achieve collective empowerment one needs to empower him or herself at personal level. Collective empowerment is that empowerment which is achieved as a result of the collective action of individuals. The core elements to acquire collective empowerment are

²⁴Dominelli, L. (2006). *Women and community action*. Jaipur: Rawat publication. Pp. 31

²⁵Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. London: K. Mason and H.L. Smith, (2003). *Women empowerment and social context: Results from five Asian countries*. Retrieved 9th, 2012 from www.swaf.popupenn.edu

ctive agency, self organisation, group identity, group dignity, group
gement and self management. The third dimension of empowerment refers
men's experiences with their close relations like family members. The core
s for empowerment within close relationship include ability to communicate,
y to get support, ability to defend one's self and one's rights, sense of self in
onship and dignity. She suggests that the increase in core values immensely
ases one's empowerment.

Empowerment approach suggests that socio-economic empowerment is
ficant, because self-dependence is the basis of empowerment, and attainment
lf-economic liberty is an important tool to achieve self-dependence. It seems
in patriarchal society male uses power over women because they are the
rs for their family. If woman can achieve economic liberty, then she also can
: a powerful place within her family and gradually in society. Through economic
ovement in the male dominated society they can absolutely achieve decision-
ng authority and contribute to the overall development, which will make an
tarian society. However, to achieve this capability of making decision and
tribution to the overall development woman must empower herself in the
estic sphere. Empowerment of women in domestic level is important and it is
use, it determines women's freedom from control by other family members
ability to effect desired outcomes within the household²⁶. The concept of
en's empowerment believes that in all societies, men control women. Once
:an gain the sense of empowerment in domestic level, she can also make
:lf equal with men in community level.

clusion

From the discussions included in this article, it has been clarified that through
lepth studies, the feminists have been trying to find out the causes and
equences of suppression of women and to establish liberty, equality and rights
igh empowering women in male dominated society. From 1950s onwards,
pproaches concerning liberty, development and empowerment of women in
:dominated society have been prevailing in feminist discourse. In recent times,

empowerment of women is taken as most effective strategy to abolish gender
inequality in our society. The main objective of these approaches originated from
last few decades to include the women of the world in different development
programmes to eradicate discrimination against women and try to establish the
importance of women's participation in societal functions and developmental tasks
of society.

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