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Editorial

Welcome to the 2017 issue of Journal of Society in Kashmir. This issue has attempted to incorporate two major themes: Women and the Tribal perspective. The reason for such a coincidence is that the journal received most of the articles on Women issues and a few on tribal's in India. The issues of women and concerns of India's tribal populace are of extreme importance and voicing such marginalized and important sections of the society is the need of the hour. In Indian context the fact remains that right from sex selective abortions, female infanticide, son preference, unequal treatment to girl child, gendered socialization, domestication of female folk, early marriage, domestic and sexual violence, illiteracy, lack of opportunities in terms of socio-economic independence, less or no social security, poor health care and nutrition, gendered normative structure, oppressive value systems, cultural diktats and moral brigades to the widespread problem of poverty and a host of other related issues that take a heavy toll on women resulting in their surrender or internalization of everything ghastly, violent, unequal and discriminating as normal.

With increased government efforts and policies towards the social inclusion of the excluded communities into the mainstream and their empowerment, Women's question has gained momentum be it stringent anti-rape laws, sexual harassment Act, Prime Minister's *Beti Bachav, Beti Padhaav* slogan, Clean India campaign (*Swachhta Abhiyaan*), toilet construction across the country and opening of *Jan dhan* Bank accounts, etc, have been sincere efforts to embark change especially in the lives of women though it is yet to be assessed whether such measures have actually translated to change on the ground level. On the other hand the tribal question has once again assumed importance. The need is to delve deep into the problems that still exist and act as a road block to women's emancipation. Also we need to assess if the tribal's have been actually integrated or have they further been relegated to the margins in the contemporary times. There is also a need to have a fresh look on the tribal scenario of the country which calls for some path breaking sociological studies on tribes in India.

Further Tribal marginalization, caste based violence, community clashes, alienation of the dalits, poor and labour class along with the politicization of women's rights with regard to claiming their space in the public sphere, politics, inheritance rights, land and livelihood, decency at workplace and provision of both domestic and outer environment that is free of exploitation like domestic violence, trafficking, sexual harassment, women's plight in conflict zones, violence, killing of their bread winners, torture, disappearances, etc are some of the pressing issues which we are beset with today.

Also inequality has to be recognized and women's health concerns, illiteracy, slackened growth opportunity, forced migration and a vicious circle of poverty still remain the pressing concerns of our times. The myriad problems rampant among the tribal community in specific regions of the nation need to be seen both from the humanitarian and policy perspectives. The papers included in this issue somewhat raise the same concerns.

Dr Waheed Bhat's paper, '*Role of Women in Agrarian Society of Kashmir: A socio-historical perspective*' assesses women's contribution to agriculture and work. The article argues how much women contribute to the agrarian way of life amidst the dominant perceptions which are mostly gender biased.

Farah Qayoom's article '*Bride Buying in Rural Kashmir: A Sociological Analysis*' is an empirical study of the women most of whom have been bought and then sold in Kashmir like slaves. The paper covers the various sociological features of these trafficked women

who have become the victims of poverty, parental neglect, brokers and continue to live the life of indignity.

Sumeera Nazir and Shazia Manzoor's *paper*, 'Impact of Enforced Disappearance on Economic Status of Half-Widows in Kashmir' highlight the wrath of the conflict situation in Kashmir on its women folk who continue to be the worst victims of the decades old turmoil. The paper depicts how the families of disappeared persons are in a state of trauma and pains especially the wives of missing persons and how the disappearance of the bread earners have forced such women to assume the key role of ensuring family livelihood in the midst of chaos and destruction thereby pushing them further into poverty and suffering.

Rubeena Ali Bhat and Sheikh Idrees Mujtaba's article, '*Sexual Harassment as a Serious Hurdle in the overall Development of Women: An Analysis*' seeks to analyze sexual harassment as a social problem that needs to be understood as an unwelcome conduct and should be replaced by mutual cooperation and reciprocity to create environment where one works with dignity and perform as per one's capability. The study seeks to examine the issue of sexual harassment which is often neglected and ignored and not considered as a serious hurdle in the overall development of women. The paper Adfer Rashid Shah and Pirzada M. Amin titled *Women, 'Inequality and Reservation Debate in India* gives an over view of lack of political will or patriarchy that has stalled the Women's Reservation Bill for 20 years. The paper also highlights how identity politics has actually been a roadblock to women's movement and claim for their spaces and how still a large chunk of women globally continue to remain marginalized and ostracized and therefore need a certain push like reservations to get their due. The main questions that revolve round the reservation debate today include Women's Reservation Bill, (now a lapsed bill) also known as the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, that seeks 33 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha as well as in state legislative Assemblies are reserved for women.

Jayanta Kumar Behera's article '*Religion Practices among the tribes of Madhya Pradesh: An analytical Study*' is an attempt to explain the religious practices among the tribals in general and religious status of the tribal women in particular with special reference to Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh. The tribal people had a traditional religion which was a belief in the existence of spirits. The study reveals that how tribal communities embraced the religious practices, culture, custom, tradition etc. of other religions and continue to be major part of their culture. Article by Dr. Swaleha Sindhi focuses on the present paper brings out the cases of under-represented tribal women of the Dang district of south Gujarat, who are successful in empowering themselves by making use of education and training under corporate social responsibility and reviews vocational and skill based training among the women of several tribal villages in Gujarat.

Ajaz Ahmad Malik, in his article "Commercialization of gift exchange in Kashmir: A sociological analysis of emerging trends and practices" highlights the dynamic feature of gift exchange in which the quest and contest for honour changes the whole motive of gift exchange. Article by Kevin discusses the deep philosophy of critical realism's ontology and it discusses how it is closely aligned with a positivist paradigm. i.e. realism, how its epistemology and its connection with interpretive paradigm – hermeneutics, and its teleology aligns with a critical paradigm – emancipation. He argues that the philosophical underpinning of each of these paradigms can never be empirically proven or disproven, but critical realism bridges the divide between many of the polarities of the traditional positivist, interpretive, and critical paradigms and offers a post-postmodern paradigm for the next generation of social scientists.

Prof. Pirzada M Amin

WOMEN'S ROLE IN TRADITIONAL AGRARIAN SOCIETY OF KASHMIR: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr Waheed Bhat*

*I saw you on fields with sleeves folded
Singing lyrics & working hard
Your arms would have been tired by weeding
Oh! beautiful and pretty peasant girl
(Mahjoor, in poem grees kooer)*

Abstract

Rural society in Kashmir is characterized by farming engagements round the clock. Supervision of fields, vegetable cultivation in the backyards, horticulture, use of dung & dust as manure, domestication of cattle and rearing poultry are various facets of this busy village life. How much women contribute in this agrarian way of life is the theme of this paper. The dominant perception, projected under gender bias, has been that agriculture is the job of physical power and only male matter here. It was accepted without any contestation. However when women's role in agrarian social set up of Kashmir is viewed and watched it becomes clear that she has been as active in farming life as her counter gender- male. How is it so, an attempt has been made to present this in the contents of this paper.

Introduction

In the agrarian social structure women plays as active a role as men play. This fact is quite clear in the routine rural life in Kashmir. As a matter of fact villages engaged in food production is one of the ancient sources of sustenance. Some scholars, given the impact of social change that it brought call its discovery as the 'first great transition'. (1) It provided to man a sedentary life instead of nomadic one. He became

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food producer and was permanently relieved from the problems of insecurity of food. The other important point worth to be mentioned here is that the origin of farming or domestication of crops is credited to women. (2) Women active participation in farming fields is attested by the relief depictions on the walls of pyramids of Egypt. On the pictures depicted on them females are seen working shoulder to shoulder with men in hoeing, clod crushing and seed sowing. In the pages to follow we have attempted to present a graphic description of the role female section of the society played out side home in the cultivated fields without veil or seclusion in the rural agrarian sector of Kashmir.

Methodology

In this article we relied on the most useful research technique of interdisciplinary approach. We took insights from other disciplines to understand this theme. This largely helped in understanding various dynamics of the subject. Besides, field study was adopted without which subjects like farming can not be understood because it involves work in the field. In addition to this literature and materials based on memoir, written accounts, interviews with participate persons and various forms of folklore were consulted while preparing this paper. On certain points theme related local sayings have been quoted which are full of meaning and provide vital information pertaining to different aspects of farming. This is an exclusive conceptual and qualitative study where details have not been substantiated in the backdrop of mere statistical presentation. Despite the active role of women in farming in Kashmir, their contribution has not been given due recognition in academics. Although the fact remains that literature both written, remembered or visual are replete with references that reflect the participation of women in performing more or less all farming related activities.

Agrarian character of Kashmiri society

Kashmir is an agrarian society. Cultivation of crops for food is the major preoccupation of people. Both male and female share division of labour in this sector. Farming is considered to be the

backbone of economy in Kashmir. In one of the local social saying about agriculture it is said 'first came food and then came faith'. Given this primacy of this primary occupation every year working season in the vast and varied rural landscape of the valley start with *nawroz* (new year) festival and at the end of harvesting preparation of food with new crop is celebrated collectively. It is known as *nov karun* (taking new food). Keeping in view the crucial importance of agriculture in the day to day life of the people it is said in rural circles of Kashmir that 'the human deaths are mourned with ease and the crop failure is mourned with deep pain.' This way agriculture is the only hope of life in valley. The people living in rural areas have turned the lands around their habitations for crop cultivation for ensuring food security. This has been a major preoccupation of the masses throughout the history.

Familial food requirements and females

Catering family food requirements has been the primary concern of women folk. This they did with all care. Making curd, butter, ghee from milk and arranging necessary pots and pottery was their sole concern. The most important aspect of this activity was the transfer of these domestic industrial skills from one generation to another. This too was done by women. It made rural society self sufficient and self dependent in terms of primary day to day domestic requirements. This made knowledge of the food value much better known to women. As a mother she prescribed as per need and requirement food for family members. Knowing every family members tastes and reactions.

Kitchen garden vegetable cultivation

In the climatic conditions of Kashmir work on cultivated fields is possible only for a limited period in the year; at most for six months. The other half of the year is agriculturally inactive. But in that part of the year food preserved in various forms is consumed. These food items are gathered in different ways. Given this fact vegetable growing is of paramount importance. Vegetables, whether cultivated or wild, catered food need at crucial times. Wild vegetables were collected by

women in spring season, washed and dried for hard winters when Kashmir was cut off from rest of the world and vegetables were unavailable and scarce. They visited woods in groups and gathered herbs growing in open nature.

To ensure the uninterrupted supply of vegetables it needs to be mentioned here that a piece of land known as *vaer* supplied maximum vegetables required at domestic level. This *vaer* comprised of a prime piece of land measuring two to one and a half thousand square feet. It was a sign of self sufficiency. This land was generally selected near residence or around village. Its management was in the hands of women folk. It were they who selected seeds, determined the quantity of vegetables to be cultivated, type of manures to be applied, fencing for the field, scarecrow for avoiding the birds, daily care visit and other developmental measures. Gathering wild pot-herbs from field, forest and water bodies and storing them for winter season of scarcity was done by them all alone. Preserving food items safely demanded that they be dried and cleaned. This was done by ladies.

Crop selling

Besides labouring hard in the fields for the cultivation of crops, women took active part in their sale and marketing. They showed exemplary quality in this field. The ladies from agriculture families took vegetables on head load early morning and either put them for sale at some trade mart in the city or cried aloud in the city allies to get the attention of the customers. These ladies versed in the salesmanship & carried their work successfully. They usually came from the families having male members involved in other trades or lacking required qualities for business. They bought the goods of daily use not only for themselves but for others as well. In terms of their involvement in the agriculture trade this presents a healthy and encouraging trend. Agricultural trade in Kashmir was in the hands of other classes who acted as brokers and usurped maximum benefits. The proactive role by women prevented it. It encouraged the rural urban interaction at social level. Rustic rural populace was exposed to mechanical and commercial life of urban world.

Crop Carriage

In agrarian society transportation of farming products is a critical issue. In Kashmir land-form didn't permit smooth transportation. As a result head load has been the common means of transportation. Female were at forefront in this regard. Grain, fruits, vegetables, grass and other products were carried by women folk on head from fields to stores which was a routine one mile distance. Women head was an easily available means of carriage. On which she not only carried pitcher from water bodies to the home but things like manures, tools and implements were taken to the field on her head. Carriage implements, pots, baskets & basket bases (*aaer*) were designed for female. They also helped in rope & club (*sheru*) carriage which were used by males.

The food for agricultural labours was also carried by her. She could carry up to eighty kg at the young age of thirty despite being anemia due to the insufficient of food in terms of quantity and calories. Perhaps this was one of the factors that promoted fast ageing among the testified 'fairest beauty[ful]' women of Kashmir.(3)

Date remembering

Dates are important in agriculture society. And this job women did meticulously. Her memory was fast. When was cow covered, when were eggs laid under hen for hatching, how many calf cow bore, all these were recorded in her memory. She was quite literate in this respect. Male always referred their women folk regarding these issues. She was a readily available clock and calendar that kept rural society abreast of time.

Livestock rearing

Livestock was a part of agrarian life in Kashmir. The importance of cattle in rural areas in Kashmir can be well understood by the fact that livestock and peasants lived in the same house. Cattle were accommodated in ground floor and family members lived on the first floor.(4) Interestingly the more the cattle the rich and prosperous were the owner. Cattle were a friend in need. They were beneficial in many ways. One the benefit was their dung. Dung was a chief source

of manure which helped in maintaining the fertility of the soil. The crucial importance of manures can be ascertained by this fact that in spite of the vagaries of weather and climate, cultivators in Kashmir domesticated a good number of such animals which provided only manure. Women showed great concern for cattle rearing. They were major source of wealth in rural economy. They provided nutritious food & facilitated food availability. That is why they were taken as gifts and dowry as well.

Whenever women visited land she never visited empty headed. She took fertilizer for crops. She was aware of all possible sources of fertilizer. Collecting dung from shed, taking it to the field, collecting dust and litter, collections of leaves and putting them in the cowshed as a bedding for cattle, recovering ash from ovens, which manure is relevant to which crop, keeping them separate, spreading fertilizer on the field all these crop related activities were done by women.

Cattle were a status symbol. Oxen, cow, goat, sheep, hen, cock, swan and ducks were reared in villages. They were all under the care & supervision of women. Feeding them, taking their dung, providing them water, mending their horns, cutting their nails, collecting eggs and storing them at safe place, arranging baskets for hen to hatch eggs, leaving & locking poultry, all these little enterprises of rural economic life were carried out by women. No separate institution existed where these trades were taught. They were transferred in routine matter from one generation to another by elder people. In the traditional rural society women possessed a lot information about cattle. The major source of milk was cow. It was a full economic unit which was managed by women. Women were so familiar with cow that if they were not available, cow refused to be milked by some other person or it made drastic cuts in supply of milk. This situation didn't allow women to visit relatives for nights. Surplus milk was sold to milkman by women. Despite being illiterate she remembered all transaction or noted numbers daily on the walls of the kitchen with coal. In Kashmir there was peculiar way of promoting poultry industry. Ladies adopted or hired the hen or duck domesticated it for some time. Increased its

numbers and after completion of time divided all in two parts, returned half along with the hired one to the real owner. This practice was called '*aiduk*'.(5)

Calamities, agriculture and women

The desire for the safety of crops was a major concern of the women folk. To save crops from natural calamities like hailstorm, winds, blast & floods, they bought amulets from holy persons, prepared a special food called *tahier* at the time of sowing rice as a mark of gratitude and happiness, gave donations to sacred places & fixed totems in the crop fields. All this was done by women. They were extremely concerned about food. Regarding women it was a common notion in Kashmir that if a widow passes through a field uncovered head without scarf the crops would be safe from blast (*rai*) disease.(6)

Collection of firewood

Drying dung for fuel was wholly & solely done by women. In absence of a viable alternative dung which was actually a valuable fertilizer was dried in Kashmir during summers and was used as fuel to cook food. Young girls in rural areas during summers followed the herds and collected dung. In addition to this they also visited woods & forest and collected leaves & twigs in autumn. Women living in forest areas knew tree climbing and fetched firewood by covering rough and tough distance.

Seed safety measures

Seeds has a crucial significance in agriculture. Whenever a crop is harvested, the seeds of the best quality are preserved. This work is carefully looked after by elder ladies. Gathering seeds after crop is reaped, drying it and preserving it at a safer place, identifying the suitable and required seed at the time of sowing, all this was done by ladies. Rice culture is common in Kashmir, women did a pioneering work here also. They dried the seeds in sunlight and removed chaff and weeds by winnowing. They put it in sacks or pots & provide it water for germination. They load the germinated seeds on head, proceed toward nursery where it is sowed. As a mark of

jubilation prepare cooked rice of orange colour (*tahir*) and distribute it near the village shrine (*asthan*) or near nursery. This tradition is so rooted and respected that despite the revivalist movements and the process of modernization its use continues.

Land purchase by dowry

Hard cash has its own dynamics in rural society. At the harvest time flow of money is more and in spring pockets and purses are found empty in agrarian society. At these stressful times females didn't shy away from selling jewelry for buying seeds, tools or manures. In rural economy jewelry or ornaments in the shape of silver or gold are alternatives to currency which help to buy oxen for plough, seeds for sowing and cow for milk. Besides this, it is also found that women disposed of the jewelry or *mahr* and purchased land. This has been a popular way of investment in rural business by women. It eliminates the fear of theft to ornaments & made it more profitable as land has always a safe investment. Whenever women visited some shrine or place, her first preference was to get & purchase items such as seeds, saplings and implements. When they returned from parental families after marriage, cocks, hens, ducks or swan, seeds and brooms for sweeping were her best gifts. Apparently these items looked less important. However, they had great importance. This practice encouraged innovation in rural areas and the process of learning got stimulated. Marrying women out was a great catalyst for social change. She was born in one environment and married to family with a different environment. In this way she silently played a great role in connecting different environments.

Recreation in fieldwork

Women had no parallel in composing songs pertaining to agricultural operations. In Kashmir rice cultivation has been the dominant crop. Its cultivation lasted from April to September. The agriculturally active months were made joyous by the songs sung by women folk. Full of meaning, message and sense, these songs are rich repository of folklore. These songs were sung during rice cultivation when women working in groups sowed rice plants, and eased the

labour and fatigue caused by this work. The fields around villages presented a beautiful scene. Melodious voices reverberated all-around. Such scenes and occasions in rural life created an environment of festivity and fun which had a positive impact on tough and hard rural life.

Women as unifying element in rural society

Cultivation of crops requires human resources. Families with full members make agriculture work easier. However, keeping big families integrated and deferring split is a challenging task. Women played a positive role in this direction. Split was looked down upon in rural Kashmir till recent times. It was considered a major factor responsible for the ruin of family development. Women's cooperation made families prosperous. Familial progress was often credited to the patience, accommodating and adjusting capabilities of the women in the clan. Females run as a unifying element in rural society. For one of the definitions of village in Kashmir is that 'if you call someone names, before you reach home these abuses reach your home'. All village households are related in one way or the other. This is because females are married within the village.

Women activism on other fronts

Women were active on other fronts too. Families where women are decision makers are not lacking in rural areas. Which land was to be cultivated by a particular crop, with whom partnership of oxen had to be arranged, where to marry off children, all this is decided by women. In the villages the women of those families also worked as labour and added to the income of the family which possessed minimum land. An important trait of rural women was their economic living pattern. Saving money, using it judiciously, as per need, avoiding extravagance, in a nutshell they were conscious that spending money is more challenging than earning it.

So far as women's labour is concerned, this is quite revealing here that at some places women received half remuneration as compared to males. This was also applied where labour was shared to facilitate the crop cultivation. Rice cultivation was mainly carried on

collective level by peasants. The help provided to each other in this way was known as *kaad'*. In this practice if women helped for two days she received two women in return. But only one person in case of male.(7) The way the elder and aged women looked after homes and houses in rural areas is noteworthy. In families associated with agriculture, all members work on field during daytime. Only elders stay at home. Elder male members often go out but women don't go. In this way these elder ladies looked after households and kept vigil at home.

Conclusion

As such women folk in rural agrarian society of Kashmir were known for their contribution in almost every activity pertaining to farming. They started working in early morning before sun rise and stopped late at night. Before going to sleep made preparation for next days work. From dawn to dusk they happened to be busy in work. Litting oven after getting up in the morning, bringing fire from neighborhood, then setting free poultry- duck, swan and hen, before returning from there straight away visiting cattle shed was their routine course of work. Local poets were so impressed by these qualities of their hard work that they wrote poems in their praise. It was on the basis of these virtues that some western observers who at the end of nineteenth century closely studied agrarian society of Kashmir like participant observer called them 'real helpers'. (8)

References

1. Childe, Gordon. V. (1946). *Man Makes Himself*. London, P. 112
2. *Ibid.*, P. 122
3. Lawrence, *The India We Served*, p. 136.
4. Lawrence. Walter. R. (2000). *The Valley of Kashmir*. Srinagar: Chinara Publishing House, P. 363.
5. Based on field study
6. Lawrence. Walter. R, op. cit., P. 334
7. Based on field study
8. Lawrence. Walter R, op. cit., P. 277

BRIDE BUYING IN RURAL KASHMIR: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

*Dr. Farah Qayoom**

Abstract

The paper is an empirical study of the women from the rest of India most of whom have been bought there and sold in Kashmir. It throws light on the various sociological features of these women who have become victims of poverty, parental neglect, etc. the paper throws light on the various socio-economic aspects of these women like monthly income of the households, literacy, the amount of *Mehar* (Dower) granted at the time of marriage, age of the husbands at marriage, age of the women at marriage, the amount of money taken by the *Dalal* (Middleman) etc. the researcher employed the tool of in depth interviews with the respondents as well as non-participant observation. The paper also contains case studies of some women to highlight the practice of bride buying and the sociological causes and consequences of the same. Since majority of these women are illiterate so the researcher had to maintain utmost caution in making them understand the questions.

These women have been married to men who were otherwise socially excluded in the matters of finding a suitable bride from the erstwhile Kashmiri society. An over whelming majority of these men is divorcees and widowers. These women are treated as a piece of property by the people who sell them. Most of the sold women are at average between 18 and 24 years of age when sold.

Introduction

A cursory glance at the history of tradition-bound Indian society will lead us to an inevitable conclusion that the process of transformation of Indian society into a modern society has been slow and it got

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momentum during the British period and the pace of change was accelerated during the post-independence period. In the course of many centuries, several ugly social custom, religious dogmas, usages and traditions developed and most of these were responsible for creating hindrances in the way of progress and prosperity of the nation. Indian society suffered from various social evils such as Sati, child marriage, polygamy, infanticide, untouchability, Purdah system, caste system and ban on widow remarriage which gnawed at the very vitals of the nation leading to paralyzing immobility of social life and economic stagnation.¹

All these instances lead us to a single conclusion that it has mostly been the womenfolk which has been the victim of exploitation and inequality from times immemorial. The generations old patriarchal character is so deep rooted in our society that it has led to a series of exploitations the main victims of which have been the womenfolk of the society.

Conceptual Framework:

“But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: I am a woman”;
on this truth must be based all further discussion- Simone de Beauvoir (1945, 15)

Indian womanhood is yet to be explored, experienced and understood in all its vicissitudes, multiplicities contradictions and complexities. As a woman begins her journey at birth and proceeds through different stages she experiences herself and is in turn experienced by others in several forms. Yet she remains an enigma and an alien. Much of her life is shrouded in unfathomable dusk or twilight. Her childhood is like a dew-drop on a fragile petal which has a momentary radiance and vanishes sometimes. It is like a shadow to be avoided. Her adolescence is alluring and tantalizing, promising the unfolding of many a mystery. Her youth is like the waxing and waning of the moon in tune with the rhythms of the sea. Her middle and old age are like the return of a weary soldier, torn and battered in search of some peace and

¹ N. Jayapalan, (2000). Women Studies, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers, p. 89

tranquility. It can also be a moment of suspended animation, of duty done awaiting the final call. Whichever way her life meanders; a woman remains a mystery; full of contradictions, where opposites exist as of a see-saw.²

Despite having to agree with the assertion of the National Commission for Women that even 45 years after independence women continue to be treated as a single largest group of backward citizens of India. This is a contradiction that is inherent in a multi-leveled society raven by caste inequalities, regional disparities and a cultural diversity that draws sustenance from any point of time in a 500 year old past. Not to speak of the influence of several religions with their different codes as they applied to women.³

Since women are the source of family continuity, they have to encounter the male identity. This encounter is legitimized and sanctified in the institution of marriage. Social custom dictates that marriage for a woman means uprooting and re-rooting. It means an entry and acceptance into the space of others. This critical shift in the life of a woman is romanticized and its reality of anguish, anxiety and apprehension has been covered up.⁴

The position of women in a given epoch has to reflect both the material and spiritual culture of the society. In studying Indian women, some historians have attempted to link the economic development of the society with the position of women. Today, there is decline in the position of women on one side and rise to better position on the other.⁵

The conception that marriage and motherhood are a woman's true destiny has been in vogue for aeons. It is difficult to visualize a woman existing in an independent environment .should she design to be a

²Indira J Parikh, Pulin K Garg. 1989. Indian Women: An Inner Dialogue. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers. P.41-42

³ Joyati Mitra, 1997. Women and Society: Equality and Empowerment. New Delhi. Kanishka Publishers. P.v

⁴ Indira J Parikh, Pulin K Garg. 1989. Indian Women: An Inner Dialogue. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers. P.35

⁵ Noorjehan N.Ganihar, Shahataj Begum. 2007. Gender Issues and Women Empowerment. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House. p. 3

rebel where marriage is concerned she is pitied but rarely envied. The general impression is that she is missing out on something. This is entirely due to the glorification of wifely traits which in Indian eyes are associated with the ideal women of Hindu mythology and religious lore. They were steadfast and loyal and considered their husbands embodiments of divinity. They worshipped them. Today's maidens are enjoined to do likewise. Should they neglect to do so because of changing social mores, they are branded by the orthodox as cheap women.⁶

In the reality of marriage too, the hope of a romantic encounter remains unfulfilled creating feelings of meaninglessness in many women. Most women nurse a craving for space in which they can experience the splendor and glory of a fulfilling human relationship. They also hope to find someone who would receive and share the pathos of their being held for centuries in their symbolic identity of being women. Somewhere in their pathos, women wish to be free of captivity of the bio-social and bio-psychological symbols of society so as to be able to touch their existential quality and creativity. This longing continues to survive in women despite all the anguish, pain and misery that they experience.⁷

Indian Society demands that a female child grows up quickly. In the process she gets dislocated within herself. She has learnt to accept the burden of socio-psychological uprooting, but the burden of re-rooting herself is also entirely hers, and few support systems are available. The onus of fostering and sustaining and replenishing herself is also very often on her. The only guideline she receives is that she has to live upto a variety of expectations defined by social traditions.

Being a woman in modern India means to be entrapped into the inescapable cage of 'being a woman-wife-mother'. The three terms are equivalent. The ideal Hindu good woman must be a wife first then a mother. A woman cannot exist outside the boundaries of married life

⁶ Mayah Balse.1976.The Indian Female: Attitude Towards Sex. New Delhi: Chetana Publications. P.21

⁷ Opcit p.35

and motherhood, otherwise she is perceived as useless and unworthy according to traditional Indian views. Moreover, in India, a woman is an entity which exists only in a male defined and male-related context.⁸

Gender discrimination begins in the womb and continues till death. The girl child not only brings dowry debts and misfortune, but she can also ruin the Izzat- the honor of the family. Sexual constraints on unmarried girls, control on their sexuality are very common in India. Once again when it comes to women, the law of control is applied.

Manu clarified that in the marriage ‘the man is the one who owns the field’ and thus the woman is traditionally regarded as the field and the man as the seed. The body of a woman is equaled to a field where male seed must be sown for male progeny.⁹

The Manusmriti firmly and finally thrust woman into her new and eternally dependent role:

“Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families.....her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth and her son protects (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence.”

It is sometimes claimed that men are the natural protectors of women. Are they? Who is that the women fear on lonely roads at night, the members of their own sex or that sex that claim to be their natural protectors? Any observer of the World knows that while men may be very good protectors for the women of their own families, they are often very poor protectors for the women of other men’s families.¹⁰

Daughters do not have any role in their own family and their time in the father’s house is limited: marriage will bring them into another

⁸ Clara Nubile,2003. The Danger of Gender, New Delhi, Sarup & Sons, p.23

⁹ Ibid p.23

¹⁰ Indira Kulshreshtha Noopur,1992. Indian Women: Images and Reflection’s, New Delhi,Blaze Publishers and distributors Ltd, p. 4

family where they will have to play another properly submissive role. With regard to the non-role of Indian daughters, Vrinda Nabar writes: “Jaavayachi Baiko (the son-in-law’s wife) is often used jocularly to refer to the daughter, but it emphasizes the tacit assumption that the daughter is alien.”

This quotation pictures perfectly the daughter-wife-alien model: daughters are commodities to sell off at the best price. The daughter becomes the property of another man, the husband and she is bound to be a functional wife who stays in the house and looks after her kids and household duties.

It is because males have had power that they have been in a position to construct the myth of male superiority and to have it accepted; because they have had power they have been able to 'arrange' the evidence so that it can be seen to substantiate the myth. The myth was made a long time ago and for centuries it has been fostered by women and men so that now it is deeply embedded in virtually every aspect of our existence. It is a myth which may be attacked but one which is not easy to eradicate, for all myths still have a hold over us long after they have been intellectually repudiated, and this one, which is fundamental to our social order, is particularly pervasive and particularly hard to dislodge. The fabric of our social organization has been woven to support and substantiate it and nothing less than a restructuring of our beliefs and values is necessary, if it is to be laid to rest (*Goswami 1993; Angol 2005*). There may be numerous ways to respond and explode this myth of male superiority and one such response was feminism.

➤ **Methodology**

The researcher adopted the tool of in depth interviews with the respondents which were followed by non-participant observation. The method of case study was also adopted in case of some respondents whose study was considered sociologically significant. The respondents were selected among various villages of rural Kashmir particularly district Ganderbal. The field work was carried out in the villages of Arhama, Manigam, Bonizal, Wussan, Chettergul, Aadu,

Manegam and Chinnar. Since the topic under study was very sensitive, it demanded a great deal of rapport building with the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Some Case Studies:-

a) Case Study 1

Shafali is a woman from Barampur, West Bengal. She remembers her parents as Inder and Padu. She was 13 year old when she was illegally bought and brought to Kashmir by a dalal. He kept her in the house of one friend in Gund Kangan for some time and then when she was about fourteen year old she was sold off to Abdullah Lone who was 40 year old at that time. She was married to him after she was made to convert to Islam and was named Shafiq. It has been 20 years since then. She is childless and has been suffering from mental depression for many years now. When asked about her religion she says she does not have any individuality and religion is a secondary question.

b) Case Study 2

Rabia , a 40 year old woman from Kolkata. She was first married in Saharanpur Utter Pradesh and had three children two daughters and one son. When her husband died she was brought to Kashmir and sold to one Mushtaq Ahmed Sheikh (presently undergoing trial in a murder case) who brought her for a meager sum of 15000 Rupees. She lived with him for seven years along with her two daughters and a son when he divorced her and sold her to one Abdullah Khan, a 65 year old widower. Rabia alleges that the earlier husband took one of her daughters whose whereabouts are yet to be traced and also sold her son for 5000 rupees to a person from Gund Kangan and it was only by repeated attempts by Abdullah Khan (the present husband) and his brothers that she was able to bring back her son.

Tables:-

➤ **Present Age of Husbands**

25-35 Years	22.7%
35-45 Years	27.2%
45-55 Years	41%
55-65 Years	9.09%
Total	100 %

➤ **Present Age of Wives**

20-30 years	48%
30-40 years	40%
40-50 years	12%
Total	100%

From the above two tables, it is clear that while majority of the husbands are from the age group 45-55 years, a majority of the wives are from 20-30 years of age. This reflects the stark difference in age between husbands and wives.

➤ **Mean Age of Females at Marriage**

14-18	54.5%
18-22	31.8%
22-26	13.63%
Total	100

➤ **Mean Age of Husbands at Marriage**

➤ 20 Years	4 %
20-30 Years	36%
30-40 Years	24%
40-50 Years	28%
50-60 Years	8 %
Total	100

The above tables reveal that while majority of the husbands were married in the age group of 20-30 years and compared to them huge percentage of women were between 14-18 years of age at the time of marriage. Pertinent to mention that the legal age of marriage in India is 18 years for girls.

➤ **Monthly Income of Household**

< 1000 rupees	12%
1000-2000 rupees	12%
2000-3000 rupees	36%
3000-4000 rupees	24%
4000-5000 rupees	8%
5000-6000 rupees	0%
6000-7000 rupees	8%
Total	100

The above table reveals that the monthly income of the households in which the women were married is between 1000-7000 rupees a month. Reflecting the trend that the practice of buying brides is prevalent among the lower income group of the kashmiri society.

➤ **Literacy Rate of Females**

Literate	16%
Illiterate	84%
Total	100%

➤ **Level of Literacy**

Primary level	25%
Middle level	75%
Total	100%

The above tables reveal that an overwhelming majority of these women i.e., 84% is illiterate. Among the literate the level of literacy is till middle i.e. 8th class.

➤ **Mehar (Dower)**

< 1000 rupees	8%
1000-5000 rupees	8%
5000-10000 rupees	24%
10000-15000 rupees	20%
15000-20000 rupees	12%
Does not know	28%
Total	100

The above table reveals that 28% of the women do not know the amount of dower i.e, Mehar granted to them at the time of marriage which is mandatory for the consummation of marriage as per the Islamic tradition.

➤ **Amount taken by Middleman**

Does not know	44%
5000-10000	8%
10000-20000	16%
20000-30000	16%
30000-40000	8%
40000-50000	8%
Total	100%

Note: It may be mentioned here that the question regarding the amount taken by middleman was asked from the women and not to their husbands.

The above table reveals that 44% of the women do not know the amount of women taken by the middleman. The husbands revealed that they had to sell some property like land, cattle etc. to pay for the brides. The table reveals that buying and selling of brides is becoming a thriving business for the middleman and charges range between Rs. 5000 to 50000.

➤ **Marriage of Husbands**

Ist Marriage	20%
2nd Marriage	80%
Total	100

The above table reveals that for about 80% of the husbands it is a second marriage and the causes for the breakdown of earlier marriage vary from death of the wife, divorce due to conflict, estrangement of earlier wife, etc. The causes attributed by all men to buying brides from outside were lack of finding a suitable Kashmiri bride due to poverty, social stigma due to old age, baldness, handicap, poverty and finally second marriage. And poverty and social stigma were the most common reasons. The men revealed that they could not bear the cost of marriage had they married a woman from Kashmir due to poverty and the easiest and best way for them was to buy brides from outside the state. Moreover, the social stigma attached to old age, baldness, handicap etc. is huge in Kashmir society and that they would have to settle for a widow or a divorcee here.

Conclusion:

It may be mentioned here that about half of the women visit their families in two or three years. Some of the women who have been illegally trafficked do not even know where their home is. While others who have been sold by their own families do not want to visit

their home. These women have no where to go and if their husbands show them the door they have no option but to end their lives. Very recently a woman whose husband had divorced her tried to commit suicide and was saved by the local people. The government of Jammu and Kashmir should carry out a survey of such women and see to it that any act of injustice is on them is severely dealt with.

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IMPACT OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE ON ECONOMIC STATUS OF HALF-WIDOWS IN KASHMIR

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Abstract

UN (United Nations) Convention Article 2 defines Enforced Disappearance as “the arrest, detention, abduction or other form of deprivation of liberty committed by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law”. The phenomenon leaves the families of disappeared in a state of trauma and pain especially the wives of missing persons. They assume the key role of ensuring family livelihood in the midst of chaos and destruction. The struggle for survival with the sudden loss of the main breadwinner often pushes them to poverty and suffering. In this context the present paper makes an attempt to understand the economical issues of Half-Widows in Kashmir. Mixed methodology has been adopted for the present study.

Introduction

Women increasingly bear the major burden of armed conflict (ICRC, 1985). They experience armed conflict in a different way than men (Human Rights Watch, 1996). These effects differ widely across cultures depending upon the role of women in particular societies. The international community’s evolving recognition that conflict affects men and women differently is an essential first step in developing gendered responses to conflict, empowering women in prevention and

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ending of conflicts and rebuilding of communities after conflict. Recognition of gendered nature of conflict is codified in Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000) (Beijing Declaration, 1996). Armed conflict often exacerbates inequalities that exist in different forms to varying degrees in all societies (ICRC, 1997) and that make women particularly vulnerable when armed conflict breaks out. Of more than one billion people living in poverty today, the great majority are women (Beijing Conference 1995). The continued violence has affected livelihoods, as people lost their properties; there is lack of food and personal security even within one's own home. With many of the men killed or 'missing,' there is an increase in female-headed households. The women assume the key role of ensuring family livelihood in the midst of chaos and destruction. The struggle for survival with the sudden loss of the main breadwinner often pushes them to poverty and suffering. Under the circumstances, pressure mounts on the women to assume the role of breadwinners for their households. In the process, they struggle between new roles and responsibilities, on one side, and their own vulnerabilities and deficiencies, on the other. Kashmir conflict gave rise to a new section of society known as Half-Widows. Women are labeled as Half-Widows when their husbands have been disappeared but not yet been declared dead. Half-widows suffer more than widows because they can't prove their husbands death, they often face barriers to benefits like life insurance or governmental aid programs.

The absence of husband renders women economically vulnerable. In already socio-economically weak families, which are the status of most families that have suffered disappearances, such vulnerability leads to destitution. (APDP, 2011) Disappearance is a violation that largely targets men and is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. It is women however, notably the wives and the mothers of the disappeared, who are most impacted by disappearance and are themselves its victims (International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance, 2006) For the half-widows when the major breadwinner goes missing, and that too very suddenly,

the livelihood of the family left behind gets a severe setback. The household faces the risk of drifting into poverty, and some already poor families, face starvation (Qutub, 2011). Generally, the husband is the sole breadwinner in the family and his disappearance results in an abrupt paucity of income. Further, several other potential sources of relief- such as issuances of ration cards or transfer of husbands property or bank accounts- are also closed to half-widows. This is because these processes either require death certificates, which the half widows do not have since their husbands are not officially recognized as deceased; or involve government verification procedures, which mostly result in the inquiring officer noting the person is “missing” (often with the suspicion that he is an underground or over ground militant) (APDP, 2011) After disappearances the financial situation becomes very dire for the households. The wife of a missing Kashmiri man becomes a “half widow” facing extreme financial hardships and difficulties in sustaining herself and her children (Women’s international league for peace and freedom, n.d.). Half-widows are mostly not equipped, educationally or socially, to begin earning for their families (Kaur, 2004). As a result she, as well as any children she has, become dependent on others, most often the husband’s family (given the cultural context where parents live in a joint family with their sons and daughters in law, not with their married daughters). In the in-laws family, relationships often sour after the disappearance. The half widow and her children are seen as constant reminders of the family’s loss and as additional mouths to feed. Further, by Muslim law, if the son dies during his father’s life time, the father may, but is not required to give property to his son’s heirs. While deciding matters of inheritance, the disappeared sons are often counted out as deceased and their children’s inheritance comes to naught (or at the best remains undetermined till the grand father’s death). The half-widow thus often does not receive economic relief from this quarter either and remains solely responsible for supporting her children (APDP, 2011). The prolonged, often permanent, absence of male family members is particularly detrimental for women from weaker socio-economic backgrounds, where the absence of male kin has severe economic

implications (Kazi, 2009). In several cases, half widows leave or are forced to leave the in-laws home. Then, in most of these cases, the maternal homes become the source of shelter and food. However, once again, the half-widow and her children are seen as burdens; culturally, a daughter is not supposed to live with her parents once the parents have fulfilled their duty of marrying her (APDP, 2011). The condition becomes worst in cases where there is no family able or willing to support the half-widow and her children, they are rendered homeless which further pushes them to vulnerability.

Methodology

Mixed methodology was adopted wherein both qualitative and quantitative approaches of research were used by the researcher to collect the data. There is need to understand the issue in a peculiar way seeking the uniqueness of each case within their context. Both theoretical and empirical aspects of the study were very important to understand the issues and problems of half widows in holistic manner. In this study the universe was the district Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir state. The justification for selecting this district is that it is very close to the line of control, the district has been witnessing high rate of violence since the eruption of armed conflict in the valley. The district has highest number of enforced disappearance cases as well as the highest number of half widows (JKCCS, 2007). As per Asian Federation against Disappearances (AFAD) two districts Baramulla and Kupwara being nearest to the Pakistan controlled Kashmir has highest number of enforced disappearances cases which has been admitted by minister of state for Parliamentary affairs, Abdul Rehman Veeri in legislative assembly on June 21, 2003 and out of these two districts Baramulla has the highest number. (<http://www.afad-online.org/afadweb/home.html>). As the universe under study being finite the whole sampling frame also known as source list of the population was taken into consideration. The whole list of half widows that is 152 cases drawn by Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons were taken for study. However the authenticity of the data was

counterchecked with the police records and by considering their legal documents.

The sample for the present study was the whole list of half widows drawn by Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons in district Baramulla. However on the basis of evidences and present status of Half Widows, a sample of total 109 respondents has been studied for the present study. Out of the total 152 cases 16 half-widows remarried, 9 half-widows died, out of the total married disappeared men 5 have divorced their wives before disappearances thus they are no more half-widows. Of the total sample 3 families reported that they got the confirmation of the death of their disappeared persons thus their wives no more constitute half-widows. 10 cases from the total list were not traced as the complete addresses were not available.

Findings of the study

Economic crisis leads to significant changes in family life and life styles. Daily lives are highly influenced by various uncertainties and sudden role changes that occur in the life of a Half-widow. As societies increasingly become more complex, depending on the others causes a general deterioration of human relationships. The economic crisis in the lives of Half-widows has to a greater extent declined the living standard of such families. The paper makes an attempt to divulge the economic status and the problems of the half-widows. The various variables that has been studied are the occupation and skills of the Half-widows, level of income prior to disappearance, present family income and source of income, source, nature and frequency of support, current debits on Half-Widows name, information about the assets which Half-Widows or their children own and about the share received from husband's property.

1.1 Economic Profile of Respondent

Table 1.1: Occupation of half widows

S. No.	Occupation	Frequency	%age
1	Unemployed	88	80.73
2	Self Employed	8	7.34
3	Pvt. Employee	6	5.51
4	Govt. Employee	7	6.42
5	Other	0	0
	Total	109	100%

Half-widows are living in abject poverty as majority of them are unemployed and are living in highly deplorable conditions. They are dependent on others for meeting their daily requirements. The above table depicts the occupational status of the respondents. Out of the total respondents the majority that is 80.73% are unemployed and are dependent on others, very small portion of respondents that is 7.34% are self-employed and 5.51% are private employees, while as 6.42% of the respondents are government employees.

Table 1.2: Present Family income/month

S. No.	Present income	Frequency	%age
1	<5000	63	57.80
2	5000-10000	22	20.18
3	10000-15000	19	17.43
4	15000>	5	4.59
	Total	109	100%

Out of the total respondents 57.80% that is majority of the respondents have income level of below 5000 rupees, 20.18% of the respondent have income in the range of 5000-10,000, while as 17.43% have an income in the range of 10,000-20,000 rupees and only 4.59% of

respondents revealed that they have an monthly income of 15,000 rupees.

Field impressions

The disappearance of the bread earner rendered the family economically vulnerable and resulted in an abrupt paucity of income. In already socio-economically weak families such vulnerability had lead the family to destitution. We have a hand-to-mouth existence, have little earnings and that too are being spent on futile search of my husband.

Table 1.3: Source of family Income

S. No.	Source	Frequency	%age
1	Service	25	22.94
2	Farming/Agriculture	38	34.86
3	Business	13	11.93
4	Laborer	33	30.27
5	Other	0	0
	Total	109	100%

The above table shows the source of the family occupation. Out of the total respondents 22.94% of respondents have government services as the main sources of income, 34.86% of families have farming as main source of income, and 11.93% of families have business as main source of income, while as 30.27% of families work as daily laborers to sustain their lives

Table 1.4: Income prior to disappearance

S. No.	Prior Income	Frequency	%age
1	<5000	20	18.35
2	5000-10000	24	22.02
3	10000-15000	42	38.53
4	15000>	23	21.10
	Total	109	100%

From the above table it is inferred that 18.35% of the families have less than 5000 rupees income before the disappearance of respondents husband, while as 22.02% have income level 5000-10,000, 38.53% have income in the range of 10,000- 15,000 and only 21.10% have income level of above 15000 rupees. This shows these families already belong to lower economic class and the event of disappearance has further pushed them to poverty and sufferings.

Table 1.5: Skill to work on your own

S. No.	Skill to Work	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	8	8.33
2	No	88	91.67
	Total	96	100%

From the above table the data reveals that out of the total 96 respondents who revealed that they are unemployed and self-employed, majority 91.67% of the respondents does not have any skill to work on their own while as 8.33% of half-widows have any skills to work on their own.

Field Impression

“As I don’t have any skill to work, so during the day, I would beg and In the evening, I work at neighbors’ home. That’s how I pay the rent and fulfill other needs of the family.

Table 1.6: Nature of skill

S.No	If you have any skill mention the nature	Frequency	Total
1	Knitting	3	37.5
2	Beauty parlor	1	12.5
3	Handicraft	3	37.5
4	Spinning wheel	1	12.5
	Total	8	100

The above table reveals that out of total 8 respondents who have skill to work on their own 37.5% respondents know the skill of knitting, 12.5% work as a beauty parlor, 37.5% know the work of handicrafts, while as 12.5% have the skill of spinning wheel.

Table 1.7: Source of support

S. No.	Who supports you?	Frequency	%age
1	In laws	31	35.23
2	Maternal family	37	42.04
3	Government agencies	4	4.55
4	NGO's	14	15.91
5	Neighbors	2	2.27
6	Mohalla Committee	0	0
	Total	88	100%

As the majority of half widows are unemployed and do not have any skill to work on their own, the half widows are dependent on others for help and support. As per the above table 35.23% of half widows are being supported by their in-laws, while the majority of half widows that is 42.04% are being supported by their maternal families, only 4.55% of half widows receive support from governmental organizations, while as 15.91% are being supported by Non-Governmental organizations, only 2.27% of half widows reveal that they are being supported by their neighbours, and none of the respondents is being supported by Mohalla committees.

Field impression

“I am highly dependent on others for every basic thing, the least government can do is to provide job to one of my sons, so that we can stop burdening the extended family as much as we have had to in these last eight years.”

Table 1.8: Nature of support

S. No.	Nature of Support	Frequency	%age
1	Cash	57	64.77
2	Kind	29	32.96
3	Any other specify	2	2.27
	Total	88	100

Out of the total 88 respondents who are dependent on others, 64.77% revealed that they receive support through cash, while as 32.96% said that they receive support through kind means and 2.27% receive support by other means like concession in school fees, free tuition etc.

Table 1.9: Frequency of support

S. No.	Frequency of Support	Frequency	%age
1	Daily	48	54.55
2	Monthly	25	28.41
3	Quarterly	7	7.95
4	Six monthly	6	6.82
5	Annually	2	2.27
	Total	88	100%

Out of the total 88 respondents, 54.55% respondents reveal that they are being supported on daily basis as they are dependent on others to fulfill their daily needs, while as 28.41% of respondents reveal that they receive support on monthly basis and 7.95% of respondents are being supported quarterly, 6.82% are being supported six monthly and 2.27% are being supported on annual basis.

Table 1.10: Need to borrow money from others

S. No.	Need to Borrow Money	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	63	57.80
2	No	46	42.20
	Total	109	100%

The economic crisis in the life of Half-Widow forces her to borrow money in the case of unexpected events, in searching their husbands, or to attend certain urgent matters like illnesses etc, but due to low income most of them are not able to repay the amount which further pushes them into vicious cycle of poverty. The above table shows that 57.80% of half widows borrow money from others to fulfill their daily needs while as 42.20% respondents do not borrow money.

Field impression

“I spent most savings on messengers, an Army Major asked me to pay 50,000 rupees cash at the local military camp if I wanted to see my husband. Then there was no option for me other than to borrow money from others”

Table 1.11: Debts

S. No.	Debts on your name	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	41	65.08
2	No	22	34.92
	Total	63	100%

As per the above table out of the total half widows that is 63 who borrow money from others 65.08% of those respondents have remitted those borrowings while as 34.92% of half widows have still some debts in their name.

Table 1.12: Frequency of borrowing money

S.No	How often did you need money to borrow?	Frequency	Total
1	Very often	18	28.57
2	Often	14	22.22
3	Sometimes	24	38.10
4	Rarely	7	11.11
	Total	63	100

Out of the total 63 respondents who borrow money from others to fulfill their daily requirements 28.57% respondents said that they borrow money very often, whereas 22.22% borrow money often, 38.10% respondents reveal that they need to borrow money sometimes and 11.11% reveal that they borrow money rarely from others.

Field impression

“Every now and then people come up with different clues regarding my husband, due to which I often borrow money from others to reach that place, but all in vain”

Table 1.13: Amount of debt

S.No	If you have debts on your name how much is that?	Frequency	Total
1	Below 5000	12	29.27
2	5000-10,000	8	19.51
3	10,000-15,000	7	17.07
4	15,000-20,000	6	14.64
5	Above 20,000	8	19.51
	Total	41	100

Out of the total 41 respondents who have debts in their name 29.27% said they have a debt of below Rs 5000, 19.51% said that they have debts in the range of 5000-10,000, whereas 17.07 said they have debts in the range of Rs10,000-15,000 debts, 14.64% in between Rs 15,000-20,000 and 19.51% have debts above 20,000Rs.

Table 1.14: Assets, Property, or Productive land in the name of Half-widows or their children:

S. No.	Assets in children's name	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	90	82.57
2	No	19	17.43
	Total	109	100%

Although the majority of Half-widows have some sort of property in their own or their children's name which provides the basic need of shelter to these women, but for daily expenditures they still are dependent on others. As per the above table 82.57% of half widows reveal that they have some property in their own or children's name, while as 17.43% have no assets in their name or in their children's name.

Field impression

"I have some property on my name to atleast meet my basic requirements but everything appears to me of no use as the peace of mind is missing."

Table 1.15: Nature of assets

25	Assets Mentioned	Frequency	%age
1	Land	63	57.79
2	House	62	56.88
3	Any business venture	0	0
4	Cattle	0	0
5	Vehicle	0	0
6	Bank account	0	0
7	Gold ornaments	0	0
8	Other	0	0

Multiple Response Table

From the above table it indicates that out of total 90 respondents who have assets in their name or their children's name, 57.79% of the respondents have land in their own or in children's name while as 56.88% have houses in their name.

Table 1.16 Received the share of property

S. No.	Children's receiving share	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	82	75.23
2	No	27	24.77
	Total	109	100%

As per the respondents 75.23% have received the share of their husbands property, while as 24.77% have not received any share from their husbands property.

Table 1.17: If received Share was it as much as they deserve

S.No	If you and your children received share was it as much as they deserve?	Frequency	Total
1	Yes	72	87.80
2	No	10	12.20
	Total	82	100

Out of the total 82 children who have received share of property 87.80% said that they got the share as much they deserve, while as 12.20% revealed that the share was not as much they deserve.

Table 1.18: If not Received Share what are the reasons

S.No	If not received share what are the reasons?	Frequency	Total
1	Denied rights of inheritance	19	70.37
2	Property yet to be distributed among the legal heirs	8	29.63
	Total	27	100

Among the total 27 respondents who revealed that they didn't receive the share as much as they deserve 70.37% revealed that they were denied the right of inheritance by their in laws, while as 29.63% revealed that the property is yet to be distributed among the legal heirs.

Field impressions

For my in-laws the disappearance of my husband was a blessing in disguise as they could easily lay claim or grab his share in ancestral property. They did same without a bit of shame and made me and my children homeless. Had it not been there the help of maternal side we would have been roaming on roads like beggars.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The brunt of armed conflict is faced by the entire society; however women and girls are particularly affected because of their peculiar status in the society. Women do not remain only the sufferers of the armed conflict but they negotiated conflict situations by becoming combatants, heads of house-holds, peace builders, war resisters and political leaders. The years of pervasive conflict has left behind the women without male members in the form of widows and half-widows, struggling for survival. These women have been rendered helpless and destitute, living in abject poverty. The valley has witnessed an exorbitant increase in the number of widows and half-widows due to the augmented turbulence and had left the society crippled to meet their needs. Economic crisis has a great impact on day to day life of Half-Widows and their families. Decline in family income, savings, increase in indebtedness, and reduced finances for meeting basic needs creates more havoc in their lives. A holistic support system needs to be developed for the half widows so that their issues and concerns are addressed. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

- **Proper Compensation:** The state should make a smooth system for providing compensation to the Half-Widows. The authorities should focus on the plight of Half-Widows and prioritize their cases without any delays, harassment or bullying. As the present study indicates that majority of Half-

Widows are heading towards old age thus the authorities should take comprehensive steps in providing economic assistance to these women.

- Vocational trainings: The present study indicates that majority of the Half-Widows don't have any skill to work on their own, NGO's should take steps in providing some vocational trainings to them so that they can earn something for themselves as well as for their families. Support structures for Half-Widows must be created through vocational centers and self-employment units and efforts need to be taken to provide soft, interest-free loans.
- Understand the Issues of Half-Widows: The civil society must recognize the issues face by Half-Widows in Kashmir and should pressurize government to work on this issue and bring a meaningful change. They should also work to fight against the stigma related to the half-widows and ensure their acceptance in the society with dignity.
- Socio-Economic Support: The results of the present study indicate that half-widows face severe economic and social problems and need a support at local level. Civil society can play an essential role in mitigating the sufferings of the half-widows. It is recommended that local Mohalla committees should take steps in catering the needs of Half-Widows and help them in living a decent life.
- Leadership roles: Civil society should encourage Half-Widows in taking up leadership roles to empower them. This can act as confidence building measure for such women.
- Ensuring rights of Half-Widows: Civil society should keep a constant vigil regarding the rights of Half-Widows are concerned like property rights, right to marry, custody of her children etc. Civil society must ensure that the woman who is already suffering due to disappearance of her husband must not face more hardships at familial level.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS A SERIOUS HURDLE IN THE OVER ALL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN:AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon. Women have been the targets of sexual harassment from times immemorial. Whether we talk of home, street or workplace it is often experienced but seldom recognized and when recognized seldom reported or accepted of having experienced and in this situation women often have to face repercussions in terms of hostile environment affecting their performance. It is often referred to as natural attraction that men tend to have towards women and it is often conceived as a mere flirtation that women also enjoy as they like people praising them for their beauty. There is also a common belief that women dress up or beautify themselves to impress men and get compliments. But the issue is often neglected in terms of its impact on women's performance and is never considered a problem. It is often ignored and never dealt with strict warning or taking some assertive measures to stop the menace. Being in the environment wherein one has already work load stress and the hostile environment created by sexual harassment experience adversely affects the victims. Congenial environment brings best in a person and hostile environment worsens their performance. With this backdrop this paper seeks to analyze sexual harassment as a social problem that needs to be understood as unwelcome conduct and should be replaced by mutual cooperation and reciprocity to create environment where one works with dignity and perform as per one's capability.

Introduction

Women have a long history of being victims to the atrocities of men. Violence against women is not a new phenomenon; women have been facing such violence from the time immemorial no matter where they

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go and what they do though the recognition of such violence is recent one. Talking specifically of sexual harassment of women it is not considered as a problem as not many had awareness about what harassment is and it is regarded as a normal phenomenon which every woman faces where ever they go. It is hardly been considered as an issue often neglected as a flattering compliments any beautiful women should expect till it doesn't take any dangerous forms. With the increasing development more and more women started coming out of their homes and joining workforce in a huge number. And with the increasing workforce the vulnerability of women have also increased. Now women not only face harassment at home but also at workplaces. Sexual harassment though unrecognized as well as masked remains the central issue that women confront in contemporary times. Moreover, as we know equal treatment at work is the basic right of every individual. Right to work in a safe environment is a constitutional right governed under Article 14 & 21 of the Constitution of India. To differentiate or discriminate people in terms of one's gender is the violation of the very right. Sexual harassment is also a type of sex discrimination involving unwelcome conduct or pressure in the workplace. Sexual harassment though being the problem of both men and women but as per the studies and data available women are more prone to this problem than men.

Sexual Harassment

The EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) definition of sexual harassment is commonly accepted and appears in most states and local laws, court decisions, and employers' sexual harassment policies:

“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or

2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. (Howard, 2007).

Sexual harassment comprises of following three forms:

1. Gender harassment which includes verbal and nonverbal behavior that do not necessarily have any intention of sexual favor but includes comments that are gender specific and insulting for a person.
2. Unwanted sexual attention which comprises the behavior that is having an intention of sexual favors like touching, grabbing etc.
3. Sexual coercion comprises of behavior which includes compelling someone to do something if they want to have something else for instance sexual attention for promotion.

Objectives

The main objectives of the paper are as follows:

1. To assess the historical emergence and recognition of sexual harassment as a concern.
2. To highlight the increasing trend of sexual harassment in India as well as Kashmir.
3. To highlight the issue of sexual harassment as a social problem, often ignored as natural phenomena and often considered as an issue of west.

Methodology

The study is exploratory cum explanatory in nature where it seeks to examine the issue of sexual harassment which is often neglected and ignored and not considered as a serious hurdle in the overall development of women. It is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The study area of the paper is Kashmir division where

sexual harassment is mostly considered absent as there are only few reported cases. Through primary data the sexual experiences of women at workplace are highlighted. In order to get primary data purposive cum snowball sampling is used wherein the persons who are personally known were interviewed and who later gave information about the other persons having experienced the sexual harassment at work. Secondary sources of data include books, research papers, newspaper articles and other relevant literature wherever needed.

Historical background

It was during the International Decade for Women i.e. from 1975 to 1985, that need was felt to protect the rights of women at global front and since then it gained momentum. This recognition later became International Law in 1979 when UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (India became signatory to the convention in 1993). In India the legislative reforms were the reaction of highly publicized occurrence. For example, in 1983 India witnessed gang rape of tribal girl known as Mathura Case (Kapur, 2008). In this case Supreme Court of India branded the complainant as a 'vicious liar' 'habituated to sexual intercourse' and whose failure to 'resist' implied consent to the abuse. This case evoked national level outrage which led to the introduction of separate category of aggravated rape including custodial and gang rape in Indian penal code by way of Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983. But it defined sexual harassment as nothing short of attempted rape. However, Sexual harassment particularly at workplace was recognized by another case that took place in Rajasthan in 1992. That is the case of Banwari Devi¹¹ who was working in women development program in Rajasthan was gang raped by 5 upper caste men. It was an act of revenge for her campaign against child marriage. This case faced negligence by police, medical personnel and magistrate prevented her from registering the case. This enraged a

¹¹<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-39265653> Accessed on 1.02.2018

women's right group called *Vishaka*¹² that filed a public Interest Litigation in Supreme Court of India. Demanding comprehensive law on sexual harassment this group defined their human rights at work on the basis of an equality principle based on CEDAW (Hand book on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace by Government of India, 2015). However in 1997 Supreme courts gave orders to follow *Vishaka* guidelines nothing was implemented in reality. Pursuant to this government of India requested NCW (National Commission for Women) to draft legislation. Several women organizations were part of the drafting committee. The bill got introduced in the parliament and is known as "the Sexual Harassment of women at the Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Bill, 2004 (Kalyan, 2015). It provided the provision for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment of women at workplace. This bill couldn't get passed in the parliament and led to another nightmare in 2012 incident where 23 year old girl was gang raped in Delhi. This incident resulted in national outrage which made government to assign committee to review laws for sexual crimes. The commission was headed by former Chief Justice of India, Justice Verma, the former Solicitor General, Gopal Subramaniam and Justice Retired Leila Seth who found government failure as root cause of the problem and submitted its report to government (Kalyan, 2015) And finally on 23rd April 2013, the comprehensive legislation came into force which dealt with the protection of women against sexual harassment of women at workplace called as *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013*.

Trends of sexual harassment

In recent few decades as more and more women started to come out of their home we have seen increasing trends of harassment as well. In

¹² Endeavour of Vishakha group of Women: Our endeavor is to work towards empowerment of self and communities, ending violence against women and making systems accountable through rights-based intervention in education, health and violence against women. Parallely, we have created spaces for creative self-expression and development of self.

Accessed from <http://www.vishakhawe.org/> on 01.02.2018

India as per report of survey conducted by the Indian Bar Association in 2017 of 6047 respondents 70% women respondents don't report workplace sexual harassment¹³. However in reported cases as per NCW data has increased from 170 in 2011 to 336 in 2014. Talking specifically of the region Kashmir of the Jammu and Kashmir state, as per data, the local police has received 296 complaints of rape incidents in 2015. As per the statistics given by state government in legislative council in March 2013, 2763 cases were registered in 2010, 330 in 2011, 3541 in 2012 where Srinagar tops the list with 1189 cases¹⁴. But this data is on general harassment faced by women in Kashmir and is not particularly of women who face sexual harassment at work.

Sexual harassment is often neglected in this part of globe by seeing it the phenomena of the west and not something grave that women in this part also face and tolerate. Every day in and out, we come across the cases of sexual harassment of women at workplace in the state. While giving details in lower house government said that 27 cases of sexual harassment were registered since 2010 in the government departments. Of the total, 10 sexual harassment cases have been registered in the year 2015 while as six were registered in 2014 and 4 cases were registered in 2011. Two cases were registered in 2012 while as one each case was registered in 2010 and 2013 and 3 cases were registered in 2016 year respectively (Geelani, GK, 2016). These are not the only cases of sexual harassment, though these get into the limelight by some varying kinds of pressure situations. Thus, there are many more grievous cases that are unreported in order to save the sanctity of the patriarchal setup amidst the fear that the reporting may invite some unwanted results today and in afterlife of the victims as well. This victimization furthermore will lead to profound impact on the efficiency and performance of the females as a prospective worker in her respective field. For her security, in most of the organizations were

¹³<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/70-women-don-t-report-workplace-sexual-harassment-employers-show-poor-compliance/story-40pcb35iu328VSLjjjpotL.html> accessed on 01.02.2018

¹⁴<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/sexual-harassment-at-work-places/> accessed 03.02.2018

not having any working *Internal Complaint Committees*(ICCs).¹⁵ There are certain structural hiccups in furthering the propagation of the problem that if left unattended may be following the suits of an organized crime.

Some Highlighted Cases of Sexual Harassment in Kashmir

Nayeema Mehjoor, Chairperson of J & K State Commission for Women, in recent interview with the news reporter said that sexual harassment is quiet rampant in Kashmir as well but is seldom reported. Non-reporting of the crime makes it difficult for us to provide justice to the victims. However there are certain cases which came to lime light because of certain reasons, one being the case of 31 years old employee of HDFC bank from Sopore where she committed suicide and left suicidal note behind stating about the harassment by cluster Head of HDFC Bank¹⁶. Another girl of 24 years of age reported of having experienced sexual harassment through messages and phone calls by one of her colleague. She kept quiet because of the fear of society may blame her for inviting the harassment. She quit the job and the incidence still remains as a scar in her mind where she is reluctant to join any of the workplace¹⁷. In yet another case Lady employee working at Kashmir Tibya College complained that superintendent of hospital harassed her.¹⁸ Even the ministers are not spared. There was a famous scandal exposed in the state that too had many top level bureaucrats and officials involved. The J & K Health Minister Shabir Ahmed Khan faced arrest for sexual assault on women doctor¹⁹. This speaks volumes that even the custodians and the guardian are very involved. And when this state is exposed anywhere

¹⁵ As per Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 mandates to have internal complaint committee in every workplace to protect women from sexual harassment.

¹⁶<https://kashmirreader.com/2017/04/07/hdfc-employee-commits-suicide-sopore/> accessed on 03.02.2018

¹⁷ibid

¹⁸<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/panels-to-monitor-sexual-harassment-complaints-in-jandk.html> accessed on 28.01.2018

¹⁹<http://epaper.greaterkashmir.com/epaperpdf/822014/822014-md-hr-1.pdf> accessed on 31.01.2018

in the state, the condition, peace, and empowerment of women can never be guaranteed. The above reports are substantiated by few case studies described hereunder.

The Data Gathered Through Interviews

Many cases have been assessed for the study to get some more profound information about the ground realities on the sexual harassment. The cases have been enumerated below:

Case One

Women of 28 years of age working as a contractual lecturer claimed of having faced sexual harassment in college through one of her colleague. She said once they were discussing of the allocation of classes among themselves. They were three among whom the classes were to be distributed and the classes that were supposed to be divided among them were 10. She said I told them that I shall be taking all the sections of final year and rest you people divide among yourselves. It was 4 in number and they then had to divide 6 i.e. 3 each. One of the colleague started making comments that why I preferred final year is because I may be enjoying the company of young boys who prefer her over male teachers. That was annoying and I could not stop my anger and asked him if there is any reason of commenting this way. He did not answered but said sister I was just kidding and how can you take it so seriously etc. though he molded the things as joke but it seriously affected my performance, my interaction with my students.

Case Two

A private school teacher having appointed few months back said after few days of her appointment her colleague started having excuses to meet her again and again asking for number. She said initially I did not take it otherwise as we have to get information about the school so having contact was not having anything wrong. And one day he commented on her eyes calling them beautiful and attracting him towards her. "*Jeel se ankhein hai apke in meidhubnekajeekartahai*" (i.e. I want to flow in your beautiful eyes) were his exact words which made me uncomfortable but did not say anything. I started ignoring him as ignoring may make him understand that his behavior was

unwelcome. But when he still started pleading I left the school and blocked his number.

Case Three

Women of around 28 years of age working as contractual lecturer said she experienced sexual harassment by his librarian. Whenever she used to get time i.e. having free class or during summer breaks she used to prepare for competitive examination. She used to take books from library and study there. Librarian initially used to appreciate her for her hard work. But after few days he started gazing at me in a very inappropriate manner which was quite uncomfortable for me. I used to avoid him and study in reference room. He used to come there quite often. But one day he out of frustration started blaming me for being there all the time and not attending classes. It was probably as I did not give him lift. Had I given him positive response he would not have minded my presence in library. It mentally affected me badly. I never went to library from that day which affected my study as well.

Case Four

A woman of 35 years of age married shared an experience of having experienced sexual harassment. She said she qualified JRF and went to the University (name withheld) for PhD admission. Her supervisor was good initially but later started behaving strange where he used to behave inappropriately with her. She said that the behavior seemed inappropriate but I could not share my uncomfortable experience with him. He would offer lift when I never asked for and I often tried to ignore his demands by saying I have to go with my friends etc. out of frustration I left my PhD and preferred to stay at home. I could not get admission in any other university because my two years of getting admission got lapse. Now I regret why I chose that man is should have tried somewhere else at the very beginning.

Case Five

A woman of around 38 years of age working in bank shared her experience of sexual harassment in past. Where her manager used to use make gender based comments on her work where she was often degraded in front of her colleagues by saying you should stay at home

if you do not have the capability to work properly. He used to highlight my mistakes as big blunders and often degrade me in front of my colleagues. It was probably because I was not giving him much attention she added. It was disgusting to work in such environment and tolerate such behavior again and again.

Discussion and Conclusion

Above discussed cases are few among many that were important among the general cases of gender harassment. Gender harassment is the mostly experienced among women where they often are degraded for being inefficient as compared to men so often being asked to stay at home. The comments like “*aurat gharpe he ache lagti hai jab bahar aate hai to naaghar salamatrehtahi naa daftar*” (i.e. women looks best at homes only, when she comes out to work neither home nor workplace is at peace), are common among men while commenting on women’s abilities and capabilities. The sexual harassment can be seen as general phenomena where almost every woman has experienced it but often considered as ignorable as it is a common belief that women may have provoked them to behave in such a manner, men often say women initially show interest and take the comments positively but later start neglecting their interest by ignoring men. But the case is different the women initially are not able to understand that the behavior that they experience is going to take some serious forms when they take it normally or ignore it and do not react as having problems with the behavior as they know when they react to it quickly it would be said that they cannot take joke and react on small things without any reason and that men were just trying to be friendly and are misunderstood for flirting etc. It could be concluded that sexual harassment in true sense is the common problem that women face every now and then but is seldom considered a problem and often ignored which takes shape of big problems like losing one’s peace of mind and sometimes women even leave job when the things get above and beyond their control. The sexual harassment is thus a serious hurdle in the way of progressing women and should be recognized to handle the behavior of men at workplaces. It is to be

understood that when a women do not react immediately men tend to feel that their behavior is acceptable and welcomed but that is not the case women do not respond because they do not want to be considered as over reactive and taking joke seriously. But it is important to make a person know that their behavior is unwelcomed and should be stopped immediately. The behavior is not to be tolerated for not being called rude, unfriendly, over sensitive or over reactive.

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WOMEN, INEQUALITY and RESERVATION DEBATE in INDIA

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Abstract

There are a plethora of debates and a range of questions hare being raised over the pending bill of reservation of women especially reserving one-third of all the seats in the Parliament and all legislative assemblies'. Will such a move bridge the gender gap? Is it a fair concept to mainstream women politically? What is the current power representation and men and women against such a reservation? The whole Uniform civil code debate and the tremendous politics over the reservation bill amid a dismal percentage of women in assemblies and the parliament raises further concerns towards a gender just society. This working paper conceptually discusses women's inequality and highlights some of the nuances of the women's reservation in India.

Introduction

"Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes."

-Article 15(4), Constitution of India

The larger debate of reservation or affirmative action or quotas for women actually emanates from the age old sociological discourses like social inequality, gender disparity, sexism and prejudice, patriarchy,

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women's limited access to job market, gate keeping and glass ceiling. There still are a plethora of other internalized discriminations that a majority of women continue to face even without any resistance or opposition. Theoretically the fundamental aim of any such effort towards affirmative action or the positive discrimination against women is to improve their status and work towards mainstreaming them by providing access to all opportunities at par with men. On the reservation discourse itself, there are mainly two lines of thought, i.e. the view points of 'Reservationists and anti-Reservationists'. While reservationists are for such a positive discrimination, the anti-reservationists are against it. However the fact remains that still a large chunk of women globally continue to remain marginalized and ostracized and therefore need a certain push to get their due.

In Indian context the fact remains that right from sex selective abortions, female infanticide, son preference, unequal treatment to girl child, gendered socialization, domestication of female folk, early marriage, domestic and sexual violence, illiteracy, lack of opportunities in terms of socio-economic independence, less or no social security, poor health care and nutrition, gendered normative structure, oppressive value systems, cultural diktats and moral brigades to the widespread problem of poverty and a host of other related issues that take a heavy toll on women resulting in their surrender or internalization of everything ghastly, violent, unequal and discriminating as normal. Such a scenario results to their low self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence and becomes a routine and therefore a way of life-a life of silence and a life of silent, invisible and never reported violence.

The implications and ramifications of such a context gets reflected in terms of women being half of the human society but having access to limited resources, property, politics, education, health, decision making, policy and planning, etc,. World economic forum reports that women own less than 20% of the world's land. A survey of 34 developing nations by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization puts this proportion as low as 10. More than 400 million

of them farm and produce the majority of the world's food supply. Yet female farmers lack equal rights to own land in more than 90 countries. They face discrimination at workplace as well and their plight is pitiable especially in the unorganized sector. Such a situation calls for strong and policy oriented affirmative action. A boost to equity is needed to empower the disempowered. The main questions that revolve round the reservation debate today include Women's Reservation Bill,(now a lapsed bill) also known as the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, that seeks 33 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha as well as in state legislative Assemblies are reserved for women. Are reservations for women are really needed to bring equality in the Indian scenario? Are reservation slogans merely the populist politics or is the call for quotas a serious question? Do women need positive discrimination in government jobs, education, legislatures and other important sectors in the contemporary Indian society? Is it a time to adopt further quotas or avoid any such measures, what other steps need to be taken to ensure women's representation in all important sectors in the country, etc?

Conventionally it is believed that there should be no discrimination or difference in the status of men and women and it is the fundamental right of women to be equal. Articles 14,15,16,17 and 18 of the Indian constitution though guarantee equality to all however, the fact remains that there is still a long way to go to achieve the target and actualize women's emancipation in true sense. At the same time it will not be wrong to add that efforts to improve women's status both globally and at the national level are not very recent. With the rise of the feminist movement in 1960's women's issues started gaining attention and began to be the focus of the development agenda by 1970's. Also the voices for women's political reservation are much older. Sociologist Raman (2007, p. 348) puts it as,

“The issue of separate political reservation for women came up during the course of the nationalist movement in the 1920s. The principal reason for opposing the idea of reserved seats was that it deflected from the demand for universal adult franchise and to stand for

elections on the same terms as men”. She adds that, “women’s reservation bill has to be viewed in the context of violence that erupted following the presentation of the Mandal recommendations and the vicious media campaign that ensued, which was soon followed by the destruction of the Babri Masjid”

While looking at the past, it would appear that world has made great strides in terms of abolishing some of the most blatant forms of gender inequality but underlying effects of patriarchy still permeate many aspects of society. Imbornoni (2009) argues, “In U.S only before 1809, women could not execute a will and before 1840, they were not allowed to own or control property. Also prior to 1920s, no female was permitted to vote and until 1963 even employers could legally pay a woman less than a man for the same work and till 1973 they did not had the right to a safe and legal abortion”.

Though in today’s context, it can safely be argued that many things have changed and are changing thereby shaping up new social realities however to actualize the goal of political participation in true sense, it is still a long way to go. The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report-2016 predicts that it will take approximately 158 years to achieve gender equity in America - not to talk of Asia and African regions and other poor belts of the globe. It also infers that four more generations of women still have to suffer to reach that era of emancipation. The term global feminization of poverty also reveals it, around the world; women are bearing a disproportionate percentage of the burden of poverty. This means more women live in poor conditions, receive inadequate healthcare, and bear the brunt of malnutrition and inadequate drinking water and so on. Women due to range of forces continue to live in poverty and this has shaped up feminization of poverty and feminization of labor.

Method

Keeping in view the nature and objectives of the working paper, the analysis is primarily based on secondary data in terms of newspaper columns, books, research thesis, reports, policy papers, official reports,

etc., Besides observation, witnessed incidents, personal experiences also proved a useful tool.

Reservations-An Overview

The terms Reservations, Positive Action, reverse discrimination, positive discrimination, affirmative action or corrective action have been used synonymously as measures to realise equity of the disadvantaged or marginalised. Also there is a widespread recognition that the issues of discrimination be that the problems of access to employment or education, etc, will not disappear on its own and therefore the need of positive or protective discrimination arises to ensure and achieve equal treatment for all. Further it will be apt to argue that the role of the governments in promoting the use of positive action measures to address discriminatory practices has been very significant though not without fallacies and unwanted outcomes.

Reservations or affirmative action is not just an Indian phenomenon as anti-reservationists keep arguing. Right from Africa to Americas, Europe to Asia and the practice of reservations is there. While Canada has a policy of employment equity which covers aboriginals and minorities, China reserves ethnic minorities and women. Countries like Finland have quotas based on language and Germany has a quota system called Gymnasium System. Israel and USA have affirmative action besides Japan has reservation policies for marginalized communities and Macedonia has reservations for Albanian nationals. Similarly, South Korea has quotas for Chinese and North Koreans. New Zealand has quotas for ethnic groups like Maoris and Polynesians and Sri Lanka has reservations for Christians and Tamils. Sweden has the system of general affirmative action and the UK has Equality Act of 2010. To prevent and address discrimination of the marginalised the United Nations convention of 1969 on the elimination of all forms of discriminations states that the principal of equality sometimes needs States to take affirmative action to eliminate conditions which cause or help to perpetuate discrimination prohibited by the Covenant. But such efforts still lack vigour and seriousness. India also has a bigger system of reservations/quotas which has both proved bone and bane. India's

Reservation system started in 1950 and till date three major stake holders of reservation are the Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). While 22.5 per cent of all government jobs, seats in educational institutions and electoral seats at all levels of government go to Scheduled castes and tribes. Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are entitled to a 27 percent quota.

Apart from the good they do the problems include ripple effect-after one community another community starts a struggle to get the reservation, long term continuation of reservation policy for certain groups, creamy layer gets benefitted only, lack of awareness among masses, poverty and ignorance restricts the benefits of reservations and marginalised continue to remain out of such schemes, etc. On the issue of women and their quest for reservation, Women Reservation Bill that aimed to reserve 33% seats for women in states legislatures and parliament is still pending in parliament as a lapsed bill now. The bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010 by a majority 186 members in favour and just one member against but the lower house never voted on the bill. The dire need for such quotas is reflected in the human development reports, gender gap reports, health, education and other reports annually where the country keeps lagging behind. India in 2015 was ranked 108th on the annual Global Gender Gap index as compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum. In 2016, India was ranked 87 out of 144, though improving from its 108 position from the previous year -2015. It has just been closing its gender gap by 2% in a year which still stands at 68% across the four pillars of economy, education, health and political representation. The major improvement, however, has been in education, where it has managed to close its gap entirely in primary and secondary education. In the economic sphere, much work remains to be done. Overall, it ranks 136 in economic domain of 144 countries, coming in at 135th for labour force participation and 137 for estimated earned income which is quite dismal. Such a situation reflects exclusion and reservation is one of the answers. The world in general is not doing too well on this index: globally, 54% of working-age women take part in the formal economy, as compared to 81% of men.

In India, just 28% of females participate in the formal workforce, in comparison to 82% of males. On this sub-index, India's rank is 135th. On wage equality, India ranks 103rd – worse than Nepal, Iran, Bhutan, Yemen, Uganda and dozens of other countries. The report notes that Indian law does not actually mandate wage equality for men and women. In 2015, report data had suggested that the economic gap could be closed within 118 years, or by 2133 which is too long to aspire or be optimistic about. As far as the Indian scenario is concerned millions of women are dropping out of work in India as per a recent BBC report by Sautik Biswas (May 18, 2017). The report titled 'Why are millions of Indian women dropping out of work' argues that the labor force participation rate for women of working age declined from 42 percent in 1993-94 to 31 percent in 2011-12. While more than 24 million men joined the work force between 2004-05 and 2009-10, the number of women in the work force dropped by 21.7 million. Such a situation is mostly attributed to marriage, motherhood, vexed gender relations, biases and patriarchy. India has a poor record of female participation in the workforce, the ILO ranked it 121 out of 131 countries in 2013. Clearly women need more jobs and for that they need certain safe guarding measures like reservations. The need of the hour is to identify the marginalized in all parameters of development and by virtue of efficient policies and reservations bring such groups including women to the path of progress.

Some Theoretical Injections

Discrimination against women is a collective discrimination which makes this half of the humanity as the minority. Louis Wirth (1945) defines a minority group as 'any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination'. Globally women feel themselves as the objects of discrimination be it refugee women, sex slaves, labour in unorganized sector, girls pushed to prostitution, etc.,. While Structural functionalism does not criticize gendered roles the fact remains that women also feel

more discrimination due to the interplay of many sociological factors like caste, race, class, religion, etc, that Kimberly Crenshaw calls intersectionality. The intersectionality theory argues that we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other attributes. The fact remains that the lower caste women go through far greater hardships and crisis in their life than their upper caste counterparts. They don't have the same economic and social security as that of the upper caste women. Dalits and other lower strata groups in India face more violence and oppression than others. The conflict theory explains the inequalities between groups based on gender or race. Janet S. Chafetz in her works like *Masculine/Feminine or Human* (1974), *Feminist Sociology* (1988), and *Gender Equity* (1990), use conflict theory to present a set of models to explain the forces that sustain a system of gender inequality as well as a theory of how such a scenario can be changed. A magnificent collection called 'Introduction to Sociology' compiled by Open Stax College of Rice University sums up Chafetz's take as, "She argues that two types of forces sustain a system of gender inequality. One type of force is coercive and is based on the advantages men have in finding, keeping, and advancing in positions within the workforce. The other depends on the voluntary choices individuals make based on the gender roles that have been passed down through their families. She quoting Turner (2003)." argues that the system can be changed through changes in the number and types of jobs available to increasingly large numbers of well-educated women entering the workforce. The reality of India is somewhat the same as women hardly reach to higher positions or are visible in all walks of life due to scores of invisible barriers and roadblocks put forward by the system. Another impediment becomes the socialization of women itself. They keep discriminating even against them thereby acting as the agency of patriarchy for the sake of so called culture or normative social structure. Conflict theorists therefore view social structure fundamentally as unequal, based on power relations of caste, class, gender, race, etc,. They see culture as reinforcing and as a maintainer of inequalities and power. To conflict theorists society is a struggle for dominance among social groups (like

women versus men) that compete for scarce resources. When we examine gender from this prism perspective, we clearly see men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. To quote from the same source, 'Friedrich Engels, a German sociologist, studied family structure and gender roles. Engels suggested that the same owner-worker relationship seen in the labor force is also seen in the household, with women assuming the role of the proletariat. This is due to women's dependence on men for the attainment of wages, which is even worse for women who are entirely dependent upon their spouses for economic support.' This burden of dependence needs positive discrimination to have a say at home and outside. Feminist theory also understands the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities and role of family in perpetuating male dominance. It sees a dangerous disconnect between women's personal experiences and the experiences upheld by society as a whole where women's viewpoints are taken as invalid. As for symbolic interactionism, the core concept of C. H. Cooley the 'looking-glass self can be better conceptualized in interactionist gender studies.

India's March towards Gender Equality-A Project under Construction

Are quotas for women justified remains a critical question? However critics like Uttara Chaudhuri and Mitali Sud (2015) believe that women's reservation is not a sufficient condition for politically empowering women and that women's access to public services are influenced by a variety of factors apart from gender. Quota for state legislatures and parliament is a long pending demand in India. Parween (2014) argues that women's reservation bill first appeared in 1935 as part of the government of India Act and in 1988 as part of the government of national perspective plan on women. Finally, the 81 amendment bill commonly known as Women's reservation bill in parliament was put in 1996. It is also the demand of the many women organizations which have been fighting for the extension of female suffrage and reservation in political affairs and to better represent women's interest in education and social welfare.

From time to time, several measures were taken to develop an Institutional mechanism towards the empowerment of women and for elimination of gender gap and inequality. Quoting XIIth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) it can be safely argued that right from initiating ICDS in 1975 to Matritva Sahyog Yojana to Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) to Rashtriya Madhayamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) to The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), maternity benefits/leave, etc, all empower women in one way or the other. In 2005 India initiated gender responsive budgeting as well to integrate critical gender concerns. Also in 2015, 194 member states, including India, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. Gender equality is one of the 17 goals to “transform our world”. Recently India also ratified the Paris Agreement. It is noteworthy that SDG 5 states ‘End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, to Eliminate all harmful practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation besides Adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

On boosting gender equality in politics more and more women are fighting Pachayat elections in India. European Commission on need for quotas to encourage women in politics states in its report, (2017, p.35) on equality between women and men in the European Union that;

“Formal quotas are an effective way to accelerate the pace of progress and encourage political parties to seek the participation of women but need to be well designed and effectively implemented to achieve good results. Compatibility with electoral systems, pressure from women’s organizations and media support are also important elements of success”.

The issue of women's reservation receded to the background and only re-surfaced with the Sixth National Conference of the All India Panchayat Parishad in 1973. The Parishad recommended starting with reservation for women in at least one third of the seats. This resolution was followed by a report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1974. The Committee rejected the demands for women's reservation in legislative bodies of the states and the Centre but recommended statutory women's *panchayats* at the village level because of the neglect of women in rural development programmes. The recommendations of the Sixth National Conference of the All India Panchayat Parishad were largely ignored for a period of more than fifteen years. The National Perspective Plan, 1988, recommended reservation of 30 per cent of seats at Panchayat and Zilla Parishad levels and local municipal bodies through nomination and co-option. Many experts do regard the 73rd Amendment as landmark legislation and indeed it was. Anne F. Stenhammer, UN Women Regional Programme Director (South Asia), argues, "India has nearly 1.5 million women elected women representatives at the local level - in terms of numbers, this is the highest globally. However, even more important than the numbers is the issue of actual leadership and action on women's rights".

Political parties have somewhat similar stance on the women and reservation. Some are ignorant of class distinctions on reservation for women, some advocate class as the basis of reservation, some believe that such reservations cannot restructure the system and improve women's lives and some believe that it will provoke other groups to raise such demands and will ultimately have undesirable ramifications and will be impossible to stop later. Also it was put argued that women in India are not a monolith and like a same group, hence cannot be categorized for reservations.

Towards a Conclusion

Undoubtedly women's representation barring education sector (that too limited to the primary level) is poor and immediate steps need to be taken to ensure their proper visibility in all the arenas of life. The

question that arises is how to make the reservation policy for women a desirable, free from politics and vested interests, widely acceptable, logical and a useful strategy for ensuring justice and equal opportunity. If such a demand is met with all political sincerity and practical accuracy, it can prove to be a serious step towards the successful women empowerment. Needless to mention that there are several arguments against the Women's Reservation Bill and a lot of politics has already been done in the name of the bill. Many political parties are in favour of the bill, which according to the opponents is only to appease and entice their voters or many believe that such a reservation cannot achieve much. Or the argument that our country is already divided into various groups and this reservation will further divide the population artificially, etc, have impoverished the bill. Having said this, it is to be understood that decisive transformation can take place only when women's reservation is accompanied by certain structural changes as well. Such changes at the social front can be achieved through comprehensive political education and gender sensitisation. Or with representation of not only women of political families- creamy layer or success stories-but women activists and other well-read women in political parties who would initiate public debate on the policy of reservation and thus help in developing a clear understanding on the need for women's reservations and other significant issues. Thus what we need today is to voice out in unity the demand for the revival of the lapsed Women's reservation, for fair representation. To end at a positive note the policy of reservation is sure to meet its goals if we can well diagnose the cure of its negative impacts and check the misuse of *panchayat* reservations where women are used as proxies and the actual role is played by their husbands/male members of the family. By bringing in equality would thus help checking exclusion of women in all sectors of life that should be the benchmark of modern India.

Women's Reservation Bill is indeed a feminist issue and needs to be understood in terms of the rising exclusion of women from the mainstream and effort towards inclusivity. The struggle to achieve the reservation is a feminist one and the opposition to it is also because of

its feminist nature and its possible attack to the structure of political patriarchy. Nivedita Menon's (2000) work on Elusive 'Woman': Feminism and Women's Reservation Bill has explained the feminist perspective of the same in a lucid perspective.

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RELIGION PRACTICES AMONG THE TRIBES OF MADHYA PRADESH: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

Religion as one of the basic institution in every human society is a system of beliefs usually involving the worship of supernatural forces or beings which continues to have major influence. This paper is an attempt to explain the religious practices among the tribals in general and religious status of the tribal women in particular with special reference to Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh. The tribal people had a traditional religion which was a belief in the existence of spirits. The study reveals that how tribal communities embraced the religious practices, culture, custom, tradition etc. of other religions and continue to be major part of their culture.

Introduction:

Religion is an integral part of tribal culture. It plays various roles for the tribal communities in the form of sustaining culture, uniting people and healing through faith. The traditional societies have high affiliation with religion. The tribals remained up to themselves and lived in seclusion. They have maintained and glued to their culture, values and religion for centuries. The religion in tribal areas centers entirely on the principal village deity who commanded the God's position. The principal village deity is a divinity, a doctor, a magistrate, a judge, the chief executive, an astrologer, the village hero, the cynosure of all eyes etc. rolled into one. The description, histories, tradition, songs and the origin of these village deities make a fascinating study.

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The key characteristics of tribal religion are identified as the following. There is an absence of any written scripture in tribal religion. It is the religion of oral traditions, corporate memory, rituals, teachings and principles are transmitted orally from one generation to another. No human-made images, holy books, temples, official founder of their religion and regular worship are used for worship of the Divine. Natural objects are accepted as symbols of the divine presence and adoration and oblations are given seasonally. Life-cycles, birth, marriage and death, and annual cycles of major seasons and changes of nature accordingly form an integral part of occasional and seasonal festivals and scarifies. A nature human spirit continuum is the key to the tribal vision of life. All religious rites, observances, festivities are based on this holistic vision of reality. Tribal religion accepts the integral relationships of nature, humans and spirit in their experiences. The tribal totem is one of the concrete examples of this continuum (Nirmal Minz, 1996:122). Another important characteristic of tribal religion is that tribals belief the world is inhabited by invisible supernatural beings of various kinds and benevolent spirits of the dead ancestors who continue to have interest in the affairs of their survivors. The tribals believe that they are living, moving and having their being in this world of supernatural entities (T. Hembram, 1996:34). The tribal's relation to these spirits is one of reverential fear, dependence, submission and propitiation. Communion with these spirits is concretely manifested mainly through supplications, rice-beer offering and animal sacrifice made on behalf of particular group. Some trees are considered as evil spirit possessed or haunted. These trees are not to be touched or cut. In course of time there gradually developed recognize of supreme deity whom they attribute as the source of everything that exist both in the visible and invisible world (J. Troisi, 1979: 71-74). The tribal's beliefs that Sun is one of the supreme deity. Supreme deity is the creator and sustainers of the universe and a benevolent spirit. They believe sun as god of the day and the moon as god of the night. In the traditional religion of some places their supreme God is worship 'Kattu Bagavathi' (god of the jungle). But the supreme deity has no specific worship but is reverentially remembered

in every important religious festival and in other important occasion such as marriage and death.

Research Problem:

A number of religious ceremonies are celebrated among the tribals. Their religion is a blend of the ideas and rituals of Hinduism, tribalism and Christianity. India as a whole is characterized by sharp gender disparities, although women's status varies considerably by region. On virtually all frontiers of human societal pursuits economic, educational, scientific, legal, political, official, political and religious sphere, tribal women suffer profoundly. For all time there are socio-cultural factors, which validate for the status of women in tribal society. It is always culture (set of collective experiences of ideas, norms, values and beliefs associated with a people) with its gender role inequalities and socialization determines the position of women in a tribal society.

Objectives of the Study:

This is a study that was undertaken to understand the present status, vulnerabilities, threats and gaps of tribal women associated to the religion. The study was initiated with the following objectives:

1. To find out the traditional religion beliefs system of tribals and its influence upon this tribal community.
2. To examine the extent to which modernization is affecting the religious customs and traditions of tribals.
3. To study the differences in religious practices existing between the tribal groups of the study areas
4. To identify the role of women in the religious sphere.

Material and Methods:

Dindori district in the state of Madhya Pradesh was selected to study the religious beliefs among the tribal communities in general and role of women in particular. Karanjiya, Bajag block representing tribal population of Dindori district was selected for the study. Under these blocks 18 GPs were selected. The respondents were 200 adolescents in the age group of 25-50 years belonging to three different tribal

communities namely Gonds, Baigas and Kol, out of which 150 were females and 50 males. The respondents were administered self structured interview schedule. The information regarding the different religious and cultural activities was collected from elderly person and religious headman. The survey was carried out among local population and the community people was met in their residential areas. The visit was repeated for several times as requisite information for proposed work until was completed. The data were tabulated and frequency and percentages were calculated.

Traditional religion beliefs system of Tribals:

There are number of customs and cultures observed among the tribals of the study areas. The worship of ancestors is an integral part of their religion among the Gond. Bura Deo, the great God, was probably at first the Saj tree, but afterwards, the whole collection of gods were sometimes called Bura Deo. They believe also in a number of local deities. The Gonds have a highly developed aesthetic sense. They indulge in merry-making and pleasure seeking which is manifested in dancing and singing and in celebration of festivals. They are highly superstitious and are always afraid of 'evil eyes' and other misfortunes like epidemics etc. Every season and every socio-religious ceremony has specific songs. On the occasions of their important religious festivals and marriages, they are found dancing and singing. Both the sexes take active part in singing and dancing. The festivals of Gonds are not so much associated with religion as is the case with most Hindu festivals without understanding their religious significance. Their festivals are in response to the harvest season and local customs. Most celebrations consist of offerings to gods, feasts drinking and dancing. On the whole, their festivals tend to be recreational rather than spiritual. Their enthusiasm and zeal depends upon the success of harvest. Festivals are the only occasions in which Gonds ever indulge in any extravagance, otherwise they believe only in securing two square meals. Throughout the year a number of fairs, festivals and feasts are organized in the village. However, their distribution over a year is rather irregular.

The Baiga worship a plethora of deities. Their pantheon is fluid, the goal of Baiga theological education being to master knowledge of an ever-increasing number of deities. Supernaturals are divided into two categories: gods (deo), who are considered to be benevolent, and spirits (bhut), who are believed to be hostile. Some of the more important members of the Baiga pantheon include: Bhagavan (the creator-god who is benevolent and harmless); Bara Deo/Budha Deo (once chief deity of the pantheon, who has been reduced to the status of household god because of limitations placed on the practice of bewar); Thakur Deo (lord and headman of the village); Dharti Mata (mother earth); Bhimsen (rain giver); and Gansam Deo (protector against wild animal attacks). The Baiga also honor several household gods, the most important of which are the Aji-Dadi (ancestors) who live behind the family hearth. Magical-religious means are used to control both animals and weather conditions, to ensure fertility, to cure disease, and to guarantee personal protection. Major religious practitioners include the dewar and the gunia, the former of a higher status than the latter. The dewar is held in great esteem and is responsible for the performance of agricultural rites, closing village boundaries, and stopping earthquakes. The gunia deals largely with the magical-religious cure of diseases. The panda, a practitioner from the Baiga past, is no longer of great prominence. Finally, the jan pande (clairvoyant), whose access to the supernatural comes by means of visions and dreams, is also important.

Being Hindu, the Kol worship all the deities of the Hinduism. The Kol living in rural forested areas still worship their tribal gods. Their Hinduism is intermingled with their animistic beliefs. As H. H Riskey (The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, 1891) notes the Kol invoke their tribal god Sing-Bonga to avert sickness or calamity and to this end, sacrifices of white goats or white cocks are offered to him. They also worship Marang Buru, the mountain god, who is supposed to reside in the most prominent hill in the neighbourhood, and who controls rainfall and is appealed to in the time of drought and epidemics. Animals are sacrificed to him and the heads left and appropriated by the priest. Other such deities preside over rivers,

tanks, wells and springs, and it is believed that when these gods are offended they cause bathers to be afflicted by skin diseases and leprosy. Deswali is their traditional village god and every Kol village has a shrine to him. He is held responsible for a good harvest and receives an offering of a buffalo at their agricultural festival. The Kol visit the sacred places of pilgrimage. There is a strong belief in evil spirits and witchcraft and usually a sokha (witch-finder or witch doctor) is employed. Cases of possession by the Devi (goddess) are reported and involve piercing their cheeks with tridents.

Impact of Modernization and Urbanization on Tribal Culture:

This research is an attempt to analyze how the modernization and urbanization has brought major changes on the religious customs and traditions of the primitive tribes living in the study areas. With the progress of modernization the tribal people have undergone strong change in their life style and reduction in their religious practices, culture, customs and traditions, not only to be a part of the modernized world but to be acceptable to the society as well. (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1977). Even if to a greater extent the tribals have forgotten their age-old tradition like dance, music, songs, folk-tale, their own dialect and many more traditions, still when they were asked whether they would like their future generations to preserve their religious customs and traditions or become modernized in every aspect which would result in vanishing many of their traditional practices, the answer was quite obvious. To this they answered that they want to preserve their traditional values but be modernized as well. So that they can cope up with the drastic change occurring in the society, the rich cultural heritage that once was the identity of the tribes is no longer being followed and come out of the feeling of perennial backwardness. Modernization is seen to be slowly killing the tribal life as it is gradually disintegrating the cultural resources of the tribal community. The question here that has to be answered by us as a part of the society is, whether such modernization is to be accepted or to be repudiated. Yes be modern as well as preserve the culture. It is a contradictory situation where modernization has brought along with it both positive

and negative changes. It is very important for a nation to preserve its culture and tradition for overall growth of the country. In the rush of modernization they are leaving behind their own cultural heritage by adapting and accepting other cultures.

The cultural life of the tribal communities is very rich and music, dancing and singing occupy pivotal place in their culture. They have community entertainment with total village participating and the men, women, boys and girls all participate at equal level. They freely sing and dance with each other and joking, laughing goes on freely specially on the occasion of marriages and on festivals like Holi, Dashera, etc. Men and Women of all ages dance in ecstasy on the rhythm of the drums throughout the night. It is only in the tribal rituals connected with religious practices that the men folk get a priority over the women.

Religious Exchange:

Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism are the major world universalizing religions; faiths that claim applicability to all humans and that seek to transmit their beliefs through missionary work and actively seek converts. Hinduism is the predominant religion (91.1 percent) of the State. As many as 89.1 percent STs are Hindus. Tribes following other religions and persuasions account for 5.2 percent. Christian and Muslim tribes constitute 5.5 percent and 0.1 percent respectively. Tribal people have always been relationships with other religious streams, as well as with local cults and sects, not only borrowing from them but also, in some cases, influencing them. However, most of their interactions have been with the majority Hindu community, the structural principle of which is the caste system (Srinivas, 1952). It is worth noting here that Hinduism is a non-proselytizing religion (Srinivas and Shah, 1968): it does not have the idea of conversion. One is born a Hindu, or may be adopted by a Hindu family (Fuller, 1992). One need not be a believer to be a Hindu: a person may call himself a Hindu even when he or she does not believe in the existence of god; even an atheist can be a Hindu.

The first mode of interaction between tribal people and Hindus is a process of religious 'borrowing' or syncretism. Tribal groups have assimilated Hindu gods and goddesses in their religious system and parts of the complex of beliefs and rituals. Syncretism in Hinduism itself is also common; the religion is highly mouldable and adaptable. (Braden, 1967; Biardeau, 1989; Srinivas and Shah, 1968). Indeed, in some cases, Hinduism has been influenced by tribal religion. Some prominent Hindu deities had their genesis in tribal gods and goddesses. (Eschmann et al., 1978). As punitive sanctions did not exist, it was natural that tribes would borrow the things they most liked from others with whom they came in contact. In this way, the religious aspects of Hinduism spread to tribal communities. There were no pure categories; what existed was an embryonic form of 'mixed-up genre'. Economic interaction brought tribals closer to Hindu communities, from whom they periodically borrowed certain cultural and religious traits, such as apparently 'powerful gods', an 'effective language in which gods should be worshipped', and also 'life ways' that would appease upper caste Hindus (Furer-Haimendorf (1982). The process of borrowing occurred slowly and gradually, but demonstrates that tribes were not static and conservative, as presented in the anthropological literature. In spite of the interaction of tribals with Hinduism and later Christianity, and also other religious and sectarian groups, they have nevertheless been able to maintain some kind of autonomy in their religious systems. K. S. Singh (1994, p. 12) notes that, notwithstanding these ongoing interactions, the hierarchy of tribal peoples' clan and village deities generally survives intact: most of the sacred specialists among the tribals are from their own communities, with few from other communities. The calendar of festivals and festivities is also relatively intact. Regarding the tribal religion, it is often held that the tribals follow their own distinctive religious beliefs and practices, but as the census data tells us majority of them (over 75%) are Hindus. Tribal following Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions are lesser in number. Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are also contributed to some improvement in the status of tribal women, particularly in regard

to religious activities. However, they continued to regard women primarily as mothers and wives, and inferior to men in society.

The tribals those have been converted to Christianity, they follow the faith very rigorously. The women too equally worship in the churches along with the men. Christianity brought a great deal of change in the social outlook providing greater mobility to the women. Church provided them with a self-worth and dignity which helped to enhance their perception of self in the patriarchal social set-up. However, this is not to say that they acquired leadership roles because under the new ecclesiastical order women were still assigned a subordinate role. They are excluded from most decision-making bodies in the church. In fact, traditional patriarchal structures resembling that of the larger society can be seen reflected in the structure of the church ministry, in which women are consigned to primarily assisting roles. From the very beginning, it appears that Christianity has not encouraged women's leadership, except in the fields of education and health services. Christianity to a large extent was conditioned by traditionalism of tribal society. Even qualified and experienced women were denied of top leadership roles, such as pastoral work or to be head of the various mission fields. Women were inducted only up to the position of associate pastors. The churches are to be discriminating against the women. The pastors who are the ordinate priests are the top officials of the local churches. Only licensed or ordained persons have the authority to administer the sacraments. Women are hardly appointed as pastor. The women in these positions do not play a pastoral role in relation to the congregation as a whole. Women are chosen as the village councilors. No women have been elected to the office of deacon or church secretary or the church treasure. Women are thus excluded from the decision making process in the church, even as they were in the traditional village councils.

Beliefs and participation in the religious activities:

Almost all of the respondents had faith in Kuldevta with a negligible exception. The study finds support from Debbarman (1991)

who reported that all customs and beliefs of tribes were centered on their religion. The tribals used to worship the nature, like trees and mother earth and they protected them, but today there are very few persons left who follow these practices. Though the practice of sacrifice which was once practiced by tribals, and which is no longer being practiced today, is a positive change in itself. On being asked regarding the cultural activities, which they follow during ceremonies of celebration and sorrow, their answer to this was that during celebratory ceremonies like marriages, births and religious festivals, all cultural activities like songs, dances, offering prayers, sacrificing, fasting, stories etc. are practiced, but during sorrowful occasions like death, they mostly preferred only prayers and songs. The cultural activities reveals that the glory of God for the tribals. From all these cultural activities, offering prayers and fasting are regularly practiced in their day to day life. Sacrificing animals or birds are still in practice in the study areas by the tribals.

Magic, sorcery and witchcraft like phenomena form an interdependent complex of beliefs and practices in many tribal societies who believed that misfortune occurs because their moral relations with their fellows have been disturbed. In some tribes, it is believed that these disturbances provoke Gods or ancestral ghosts to send misfortunes. The data shows that nearly half of the both male and female respondents still had faith in supernatural powers which may be detrimental in their development on scientific lines. The results show that 65 percent of male and female respondents observed religious activities daily in the form of prayer mainly. Around 35 percent did it sometimes whereas negligible proportion did it never. It was observed that tribals were deeply rooted with beliefs in witchcraft.

The land occupies a very central place in the tribal worldview. Land is perceived as scared and co-creator with God. It is the land that owns people and gives them an identity. The temple through which people become one with the Supreme Being, their ancestors, the spirits and other segment of creation. The land belongs to the Supreme Being. Human ownership of the land is only temporary. The Supreme Being

is the real soil. The Supreme Being is the one who enters or indwells, into the soil. The Supreme Being is believed to enter into the soil with the seeds and rise again along with the crops. Thus the blooming flowers and rice signify the presence of the Supreme Being. The whole creation is the manifestation of the Supreme Being. The land is not a mere space to be exploited, but it is a place which gives personhood and identity to the community and people. The land holds not only the clan, village and tribe as one, but it also unites the Supreme Being, spirits, ancestors and creation as one family. Without the land, it is impossible for people to co-exist with other living beings, with their ancestor and creator. Land is conceived as mother: Most of the tribes have myths that they are born out of the earth that their fore parents emerged from stones or from a big hole of the earth or from the bowel of the earth. The religious practices, rituals, ceremonies, festivals and dance are all related to the land. The whole pattern of the tribal religious milieu moves with the soil. The pattern of the tribal people's social, ethical, economic life is directly related to the soil. The understanding of land provides an ethical basis of sharing, caring and responsible stewardship. The land is not a disputable property because it does not belong to humans. Land, according to the tribal perspective, cannot be commercialized; rather should be preserved and protected for the future generations. Also, it should be shared by all in the village (A. Wati Langchar, 2000: 79-80).

Women's role in religious sphere:

Traditionally the tribal women could not be religious head of her family, clan or the village and was debarred from performing religious rites and sacrifices. Women were not even allowed to come to the village common alter. The women were even religious prohibited to touch the arms and weapons used by the men in wartime (Shimray, 2004: 24-30).According to Horam (1975,) a woman in tribal society could not become the village chief as this was considered a breach of the divine law. The rationale behind this was that a village ruled by a woman is cursed in the sight of God as this is against his will. This view was particularly stressed by the village priests and was

accepted without questioning. A tribal believe that a man has three souls and three sprits while a women has two souls and three sprits. This difference was applicable in all the performance of ceremonies during birth, sickness, death, etc.

The tribal women who have played a predominant role in the economic sphere make their presence felt in the religious sphere as well. Tribals are the followers of Hinduism. Some have faith in Radha Swami Satsang institution. Bharmani Devi is the local Goddess of the tribals. A fast is observed during “Navaratra” (nine days fast) generally by women to seek her blessings for the betterment of their families. Several gods like Marali, Kiling, Lakhna mata Narsingh, Narayana, Hanuman, Banni mata, Kali, Sati are worshipped. Most of which are also associated with the Hindu religion. Every tribal family has its own lineage goddess which is decorated every morning by females. A fast is observed on every Purnima of the month by the females for the welfare and long life of their husbands. ‘Graha puja’ (planet worship) is performed by men and women alike because the ritual is believed to prove efficacious only when the husband is accompanied by the wife. Some temples are prohibited for the females to enter like Keling, Narsingh, Hanuman, Buhari, and Banni Deity. This prohibition was strictly observed during old days but now only married females are prohibited. Goat sacrifice is done only by males.

‘Raah Pujna’ (prayer performed of the pathway), a ritual is observed in which females worship the steep way of their village for the safe return of their husbands and children. ‘Kailu’ is worshipped only by the females having children. They also worship their ancestors. ‘Sradhas’ are conducted for the calming of ancestor spirits and soul. They are believed to be pleased and propitiated by receiving worship and water and other ritual offerings only from the hands of the males. This is so because only males are considered to perpetuate a family or clan name. This is why girls have no part to play in ancestor worship. This is also one of the reasons why the birth of a son is marked by ritual gaiety, though the birth of a daughter is not treated with contempt due to their enormous role in the economic sphere. A

tribal woman refrains from taking up religious tasks or entering the place of worship on certain special occasions of her life. As for instance during menstruation she does not observe fasts, feasts and religious rituals.

Women are debarred from attending funeral procession or ceremony. They cannot light the funeral pyre. They are also prevented from going to the jungle alone. These taboos are protective in nature as opined by the people of the village. Women owing to the weaker constitution are more vulnerable to the evil spirits that haunt the wilderness of forest or the cremation ground. It is interesting to note that on one hand women in the tribal society are considered easily susceptible to any evil spirits or evil eye, they are the ones who are most feared in their roles as 'Dayan' or witch and their activities are known as 'Khadra'. Not all women are witch or Dayan but certainly all Dayan's or any other individual having an unnatural death seems to be inexplicably attributed to Dayan. However, no instances of witch hunting have been reported from tribal women.

The role of women in decision-making is substantial and they are marginalized in the community as well as in the family religious rituals. In the tribal communities under study shows male dominance in ritual sphere. Three prominent religions such as: Buddhism, Hinduism and Traditional that are professed by the tribal communities under study operate with tenets that are restrictive of women's participation in their rituals. Women are never appointed as priests, and are skillfully manipulated against themselves. Both sexes participate in ceremonies, but men shoulder major responsibilities. Men were mainly play musical instruments. Women do take part in dancing but their movements are different from men. Tribals place great emphasis on coercive rights of exorcising and destroying demons. Tribals communities have trained male and female specialists for exorcising demons. Tribals male and female, who play part in exorcising rights. They are present only during festivals and certain ceremonies as spectators or at the time of earning merit for oneself. Tribal communities also make difference between the male and female

funeral pyres. In the case of female and male funeral pyres, eight and seven tiers of firewood are laid respectively for consuming the body into flames. Tribals explain this discrimination in a way that women are one degree below men in the society. To compensate this lower status of women, her pyre is raised higher (Bhasin, 1991).

Among Gaddis and Bhils as well men control ritual realm. Women participate in dancing and singing. In the rituals of Gaddi Chela or Bhil Bhopa, women merely participate as spectators. There are no female counterparts of Gaddi Chela or Bhil Bhopa. As the religious sphere is most dominating among tribals it constitutes a major field for male domination. The women are deprived of public authority. Religion legitimizes gender hierarchy. The subordination of women in religious activities and their denial of access to positions of religious leadership has been a powerful tool in most world religions in supporting the patriarchal order and the exclusion of women, from the public form (Ortner, 1974; Sered, 1994; Franzmen, 2000). The religious sphere is a major field for male dominance, and a strategy to deprive women of public authority (Scott, 1988; Jones, 1993). There are a few innovations in religious sphere, and hence these changes must exist within a traditional, ritual and textual structure. Religious institutions are resistance to gender equality. In structure an explicitly male religious framework contains the tribal societies. Though the secular institutions strive to eradicate inequality but it was seen that women of these areas were lagging behind in all fields.

In most of the patrilineal tribal society, women do not have an important role in religious activities. They are not allowed to officiate in any of the ceremonies, whether at birth, death or marriage, or in other occasions or festivals. But they greatly contribute in the ceremonies. It has been observed that many responsibilities connected with worship are allowed to them. Women, for example, clean and decorate the place of worship, prepare and serve the native drink and in some tribes sing to invoke the spirit. Among the tribes, each village has one or two women called Kuranbois who engage themselves in divination and the spiritual treatment of illness. They play an

important role in society because, in the absence of doctors, they are called to cure the sick. Similar type of institution has been found among all the tribes.

Conclusion:

It is concluded from the study undertaken that due to the tread of modernization in these tribal villages, the tribal's lifestyle are deteriorating. Tribal religious customs and traditions are not clearly definable as Islam and Buddhism or any other religion, (Chaudhuri, 1965). Hinduism, Christian missionaries and other religion have been played an active role in tribal areas to brought changes in their culture. The controversy here lies in how these indigenous people will merge with the homogenous Indian society, with its linguistic, religious and caste division which has been never uniform. And it has never been defined where these indigenous groups can be integrated. The tribals constantly face trauma and pressure from the society that they live in. Thus to be competent and to be a part of the society the tribals have undergone a major change in their lifestyle.

Tribal's have their own religious beliefs which they have maintained since long. Although these people are in transition phase and are coming to the mainstream, still they maintain their beliefs and customs. The beliefs and ideas held by locals have a vital influence on the lives of the men, women and children. It reinforces the gender division of work, place, tools and language. In tribal religious beliefs, women are considered impure, that's why they are not allowed to use plough and interact with supernatural beings directly. The present position and condition of the tribal women is not an accidental affair. It has evolved because of the operation of several forces in the past. Due to the religious exchange with Hindus and Christian in the tribal areas has given an important role to the women. This religious role has undoubtedly affected the social position of women, who have social freedom that is quite remarkable in its scope. There is cultural similarity among the different tribal groups in the respective areas under study, as the women from different areas have the similar religious roles to play.

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INTERROGATING TRIBAL WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: A CASE OF DANGS DISTRICT IN SOUTH GUJARAT

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Abstract:

Tribal population in India is an underdeveloped community both economically and socially. They mostly live in isolation from mainstream population. It is specially the women who find it difficult to be employed in the mainstream jobs. However, they are very good at traditional skills, which are tapped on by the Bank of Baroda under their CSR program. The Bank of Baroda through its CSR empower the rural and tribal women with skills development and provide opportunities and avenues for the women living in remote tribal villages to acquire essential knowledge and skills for their livelihood. Arrangements are made by them to encourage women to form self-help groups and seek answers to their own problems. The present paper brings out the cases of under-represented tribal women of the Dang district of south Gujarat, who are successful in empowering themselves by making use of education and training under the Bank of Baroda's corporate social responsibility.

Introduction:

Majority of Indian population lives in villages and far-flung remote areas. The interesting aspect is that every region of the country though connected with the cities now; however, still possesses its own peculiar traditional ethos. Most of the rural communities/Tribal are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water, health care, ample transportation, etc. But the lack of education in many of the rural belts of India is proving fatal and acting as the breeding ground for social vices, evils and paving the way to

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anti-social/national activities. Development of any region is possible if the women were uplifted and could contribute to the success of their family and community. The effect of empowerment of women creates a powerful influence on the norms, values and finally the laws that govern these communities (Page and Czuba, 1999). The income of the rural women is increased due to better skills as it is leading toward the better life and socio-economic structure too. Though the tribal in India is the second largest population in the world but its women continue to be under-represented in formal business and training programs, limiting their employment options, economic returns and long term career development. It is the poor and vulnerable women who are more interested in skills training that meets their immediate practical needs (Moser: 1989). Skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector are linked with poverty reeducation. (Fluitman: 2002). Therefore the present paper intends to review the skill development of the tribal as a corporate social responsibility of tribal women of south Gujarat. It intends to bring out the cases of successful tribal women belonging Bhil tribe. The training received by these women and the positive educational and economic changes that has happened to them after undergoing the training and developing skills for their livelihood.

Constitutional provisions of Tribal & Government's Initiatives

The constitution has given more than 20 articles on the redressed and upliftment of underprivileged with policies on positive discrimination and affirmative action with reference to S.T. Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities to all while the Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc; it makes provision for the states to make special provisions for advancement of any socially educationally backward classes; The State of Gujarat comprises of a total of 43 Talukas in 12 Scheduled Tribe dominant districts of total population, the population of scheduled tribes (ST also called „tribal“ and „adivasi“²) is 15%, i.e. about 75 lakhs. In Gujarat 28 scheduled tribes are enlisted and of them 8 are primitive tribes, mainly belong to Gir, Barda and Alech forests

(mainly Junagadh and Jamnagar district in western Gujarat) and Ahmadabad district in central Gujarat. About 21 tribes are spread over 12 districts (north-eastern belt) in Gujarat. Under the Tribal Special Program approach, almost entire tribal inhabited area of Gujarat has been covered. Specially empowered Project Administrators have been appointed to carryout development programs in these areas. The TSP approach ensures allocation of fund for tribal areas from State Plan in proportion to the ST population in the State. Unfortunately, the industrial houses have-not thought of engaging tribal educated youth meaningfully in respective units. Government has realized the need and importance of private sector participation in developmental activities for qualitative results.

The Skill Development Initiative by the Tribal Development Department:

Government of Gujarat is one of the Chief Minister's Ten Point Programmes to enable tribal people to upgrade their skills in order to get sustainable employment and thus increase their incomes. Skill development initiative includes various types of training programmes, involving both conventional and non-conventional subjects, varying in duration and cost. These training programmes are implemented through NGOs and institutions having expertise in their respective fields. With a view to understanding Training for aged tribal especially women is emphasized in order to help them lead an independent and respectable life. As in any other case, tribal or not, aged women feel depressed and hence attention is given to them and are given proper medical aid, diet etc. Tribal Welfare Association has been giving much importance to equip tribal youth and women with alternative skills to supplement and augment their income and employment and to fulfill the community needs with locally available raw materials and human resources towards optimum use. Some of the important skill training programmes in equipping tribal youth and women are: Tailoring, embroidery, sanitary pads, cooking snacks, painting potteries, etc Women training programmes on eco-environmental issues, socio-economic and cultural aspects have found its effect in women taking

up issues affecting them, through collective action. The importance of such issues and problems are - women asserting property rights, free choice of their would-be husbands, organizing women against violence on women etc. Women training programmes have been effective to a great extent and now the women *sangams* activities are gaining momentum with steady improvements in small savings and loan schemes with support of TWA.

The farm forestry programme helps in empowerment of women; they are benefited by the easy availability of employment during the dry season. As a result migration of women to nearby industrial towns has come down to some extent. Nurseries for supplying seedlings to farm forestry and wasteland development programme are managed and run by villagers under the guidance of village institutions (both men's and women's village institutions) are allotted to poor women of the villages. Women have gained tremendously from this mini enterprise in the form of economic as well as social gains. It helps build their confidence and instill the spirit of entrepreneurial capacity in them. Two women nursery raisers from a remote tribal village participated actively and earned a lot of appreciation at a workshop held in this connection at Ahmadabad. Their knowledge of the problems and prospects of nursery rising as a profitable venture for tribal women was quite a revelation to the experts present in the workshop. Its aim was that women should involve actively in each and every stage of the farm forestry programme.

The Dang District of Gujarat

Dang district (also known as The Dangs) is a district in the state of Gujarat in India. It is predominantly tribal area with sparse population and rich forest cover. The administrative headquarter/ Taluka of the district is located in Ahwa. Dangs is located in the southern part of the state. To the north and west lie Surat and Navsari districts whereas to its east and south are the districts of Maharashtra. It lies between 20.39 degree to 21.5 degree North latitudes and 72.29 degree to 73.51 degree East longitudes. It is comprised of 311 villages and has an area of 1764 sq. km. The Dangs District's total Population is 202,074 as per the

2011 census, where the male population 100,868 and female Population 101,206. The Dangs district population constitutes 0.38% of Gujarat's population. It is totally a Scheduled Tribe [ST] area; about 94% populations in the district are Scheduled Tribe. In education, the Dangs district has an average literacy rate of 76.8%. Male and female literacy were 84.98 and 68.75% respectively. About every village has a primary school. Dangs is one of the two districts in the country having more than 80% rich forest-cover. Of the total population, 73.84 % falls in the BPL category. Although the district is mainly inhabited by 13 different tribes, about two third of the tribal population consist of Konkana and Bhil. There are three ethnic tribes identified as Primitive Tribe Group (PTG) also residing in the district: the Kotwalia, Kathodi and Kolcha.

Bhil Tribe of Dang and their challenges

Social Structure of Bhils in Dangs district. Bhil tribe is a homogeneous group with their own leadership, laws and customs. Bhils are the original inhabitants of this area, at one time they were organized under a powerful chief. Under the system of chiefdom, Bhils were not subjected to elaborate system of administration but they were socially economically and politically autonomous. They led a nomadic life and were dependent on hunting and agriculture. They worship various spirits which according to their belief inhabit their villages and forests. Most of them have no land, and whoever has, manage to get a crop in a year, i.e. the monsoon crop. The vast majority of the population is made up of landless poor and unskilled people who have few opportunities for full-time employment. As the Bhil (tribe) of Dangs district is that they are still not much exposed to the outside world and are confined to their community only they face the challenge of not having any social encounter. The changes taking place in the field of science and technology, development, etc., are laying their impact on the Indian society and the feeble winds of change have started laying their influences on the Dang tribal as well .The educated community leaders of Bhils are seriously concerned about the educational and economic development of their community. If we closely analyze

functioning of educated tribal, we notice two traits of transformation. One group of educated tribal argues that tribal should reform themselves with the mainstream society. The other group of tribal wants to maintain its tribal identity. Recently the tribal of Dangs have shown a lot of change in their outlook to cherish educational development programs carried out in their areas. Their children definitely get encouraged to join the boarding schools. The girls are doing much better in the field of education.

Skill Development Initiatives by Bank of Baroda as a CSR

There are many governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies (specially the Christian missionaries and Hindu groups) and the corporate sector that are working for the upliftment of the area. The goal of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to embrace responsibility and encourage a positive impact. Tribe Percentage of population Konkana 51.0 % Bhil 25.8 % Varli 14.7 % Others (Kotwalia, Kathodi, etc.) 8.5 % through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development. The Corporate Social Responsibility undertaken by the Bank of Baroda has been successful in the empowerment of rural women living in highly patriarchal and traditional societies. Bank of Baroda has a training centre at Ahwa and it offers Training to the tribal of this district. Tribal from different villages come to this training centre at Ahwa and avail of all the facilities provided by the Training institute. Bank of Baroda (BOB) founded by The Maharaja of Baroda, Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad on 20 July 1908 in the princely state of Baroda in Gujarat. It is the third largest bank in India. The bank, along with 13 other major commercial banks of India, was nationalized on 19 July 1969, by the government of India. Baroda Grameen Para marsh Kendra 3 (BGPK) – is another initiative undertaken by the Bank to help the rural community by providing Credit Counseling, financial literacy and other services like information on the prices of agricultural products,

scientific farming, etc. It has established 52 BGPKs in 2010. Yet another initiative is the establishment of Baroda Swarozgar Vikas Sansthan⁴ (BSVS) for imparting free training to unemployed youth for gaining self-employment and entrepreneurship skill so that they can help improve their family's economic status and thus give a boost to the local economic status in those locations. Till now 25 (BSVS) have been established by the Bank in which more than 37,000 youth have been trained and around 22,000 have gained self-employment. Furthermore, a special thrust is laid by the Bank in financing SC/ST under various government sponsored schemes namely Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Swarna Jayanti Shahar Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), etc. Under the guidance Bank of Baroda, Krushi Vigyan Kendra, Waghai (Dangs district) provides extension services in the district. It also plans and conducts need based production oriented short duration courses for farmers, farm women and rural youth and imparts vocational training to un-employed rural youths and school dropouts for the self-employment. It has developed and maintained instructional farm and demonstration unit (vermin compost) for training purpose. The bank organizes Extension activities between scientists and youth which include frontline demonstration, Vocational training, Krushimela, Khedut Shibir, Training (on Campus) Field training (off Campus) Agricultural exhibition etc. A few NGOs in the district are also providing extension services.

In the district of Dangs in Gujarat, Bank of Baroda with its head office and training centre at Ahwa has been working for the development of the tribals. Training to youth in different areas are given based on the availability of where job opportunities. The training needs are also consulted with the village community. The trainings are either given at the centre or in their villages depending upon the program. The programs are fully financed and the trainees are provided with all the basic facilities. After the training the feed- back also is taken. A helping hand is rendered even after completion of the programs. The bank of Baroda – Ahwa through the training programme for the Tribal (Bhil) Women of Dangs District gave their training through the

trainers in Cooking, Incense stick making, Sanitary pad making, Farm forestry, Stitching, Organic food, Pashupalan Kakshala, Snack making etc. The Training centre at Ahwa trained altogether 274 trainees from 100 % tribal Villages of Dangs District. The women's representation was 100 percent. It is not very easy for women without explicit family support to be away from their homes for relatively long periods of time. Also since women are less exposed than men, travelling to the different villages for the training workshops were a major hurdle. The women were successful in receiving training, and while evaluation it was found that 70% of the trainees are involved in development process: the nature of involvement depended very much on the motivation and capacity of the ex-trainees. Some are actively working as volunteers; others are working in their individual capacity in their own villages. About 10 of them are absorbed within the government structure as lower level functionaries. Increased efficiency in literacy levels was observed, of all those who went through the training process. This was evident from the nature of presentations made when they were called upon to do so during the workshops. This was also clear from their increased capacity to read materials and write reports in the local language by the end of the training programme.

**Two success stories from the Bhil Community are mentioned here;
CASE-1, (Village Ghadhav: Empowerment through Stitching and
Papad Making)**

Jyoti (name changed), 19, is a resident of Ahwa village. She belongs to a tribal family. She belonged to a very poor family and depends on daily wages for livelihood. She is now a mother of an illegitimate baby girl born out of her love affair with a tribal boy, who impregnated her but never married. Her teen age pregnancy dragged the whole family in mud and even villagers excommunicated with the family. She was abandoned by her family but she gave birth to her fatherless child, because of her decision her whole family was asked to go out of the village, somehow the family managed to stay in the outskirts of the village. Jyoti joined the training institute and learnt sewing and stitching in the training programme organized by the Bank of Baroda

in Ghadav. She underwent a 48 day training where the group of trainees not only learnt the skill of stitching and tailoring but communication, marketing and decision making skills also. Focusing on individual development the institution also offered as a part of the training module topics like personal hygiene and sanitation, stress management and interpersonal relationships. The Bank of Baroda distributed sewing machines to all the women who successfully completed their 48 days training to start their livelihood. Jyoti earned her living by stitching blouses and frocks for the tribal women and children. She also learnt the Papad making from the locally available product nagli. She with the help of three other friends tried to convince other women of her village to join the training institute and earn some money for their living. They were successful in it and today under their guidance total 10 SHGs are formed. This has brought a change in lives of these women today there are economically independent. This comprehensive training increased the confidence of these women and immediately after completing the course, they started a small tailoring unit. She shared that villagers from the nearby areas also come to get their clothes stitched with them. She expressed her happiness and said she feels empowered and confident. They are now proud to be able to stand on their feet. As people in the area celebrate Tribal fare in a big way, these women got good offers for stitching clothes and their skill and adherence to time pleased the people of the area so their business improved within no time. In just two months they were able to do a business worth Rs 15,000 which increased their confidence. Recently, the two tribal welfare residential schools of that area agreed to give them orders for stitching the school uniforms for 600 children. This is how this poor tribal girl is now economically independent to educate her girl child.

CASE-2: (Village Borkhet Empowerment through Farm Forestry)

Bhuki Ben is also a tribal women from Borkhet village. She had no means of livelihood before she undergone training in farm forestry. She had been an extension volunteer (EV) where the Farm Forestry advisory Service provided her with information and advice about

growing commercial trees on farms, with an emphasis on integrating trees into farming systems, to maximize total productivity and enhance sustainability. She was promoted to become a master extension volunteer (MEV) and was also successful in mobilizing her fellow women. Furthermore she has been successful in helping women realize their urgent needs like those of fire wood and timber for house construction. Consequently, women have been able to express their need and have been acting on preemptive ways of avoiding the crisis. The highlights of Bhuki Ben extension methodology are as follows:

- Mobilizing tribal women for plantation drive
- Sensitizing women folk about the rampant forest degradation
- Preparing women for creating sustainable sources of livelihood and homemaking be that widespread plantation drive etc and fostering in them the need for a collective involvement including male folk for the environmental cause
- Explaining them the correct way of plantation and benefits from timely completion of all planting operation.
- She is a success story of farm forestry programme in her village Borkhet by virtue of this training she has received and the confidence she has gained.

Change and Effect

The monitoring of Skill Training Programs is organized mainly by the following means: (a) Quarterly and Annual reports from the Workshop organizers (b) Periodical visits of officers from the Bank and their reports (c) Meetings with the training organizers at regular intervals Evaluation is a process wider than monitoring and its purpose is not only to improve the process of implementation, but also to review the very design of the programme in order to achieve its objectives. It should be carried out through an external agency and all the stakeholders should be associated “Improving the Skills and Productivity of the tribal women. Thus, assessment of these activities would help the trainees to improve and work with perfection. It will lead to better productivity and income of these tribal.

Suggestions

To consider tribal women not only as employee but as potential contributors to the growth of the region, community and economy of Gujarat will bring a positive change. When you engage women in income generating activities in home based or village based industries there is upliftment of the whole community and village. Therefore the trade should be innovative and strategic in promoting activities where larger share is received by tribal women and emphasis should be given to Women Friendly Special Projects to promote and facilitate participation in productive work. This ultimately leads to increase in social empowerment of woman, it is also important to implement the Farm forestry through Mahila Vikas Mandal (MVM) in the villages.

Conclusion

Any developmental process is the expansion of assets and capabilities of rural women to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold the institution accountable that affect their lives. Skill development among rural women is the need of the hour so as to make them confident, self-reliant and to develop in them the ability to be a part of decision making at home and outside. Indeed it may not be wrong to say that still tribal and rural women are the most disadvantaged and neglected section of the society for they are economically backward. Therefore there is a need on the part of the government and civil society to enable improvement in the quality of life of such vulnerable sections of the Indian population. By empowering rural woman through education can thus enable them to live with dignity and self-reliance cutting across the barriers of customary biases and prejudices, social barrier of caste, class, gender, occupation and institutional barriers that prevent them from taking actions to improve their state both at the individual and collective level. Therefore, free education and necessary and employable skill development programs must be launched for tribal students and women so as to make them self-reliant and economically independent. Furthermore, right to vote is meaningless unless rural women are made aware, educated and imparted skills to understand the order of the day

and this can bring change in their lives, in the family and lastly transform the holistic tribal landscape of India, through education, legal awareness, and socio economic independence.

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COMMERCIALIZATION OF GIFT EXCHANGE IN KASHMIR: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF EMERGING TRENDS AND PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Marcel Mauss (1954) in his famous work about “*The Gift*” introduced us to why we give and launched gift-giving as a major source of study. He taught us that Gifts are a primary source of social exchange within a society and valuable for the formation and maintenance of bonds in our social networks. Though, Mauss wrote about remote tribes in Polynesia, his conclusions seem to hold for our own societies as countless gift-giving events take place in our consumer societies. Mauss’s built theories on gift-giving are, however, difficult to apply on our modern consumer societies. Contemporary Gift-giving is different from what it has been in earlier times as broad societal changes have had an impact on the forms and manifestations of gift exchange and hence social ties. The gift exchange patterns have not remained the same as it were in the earlier societies but have come a long way and are different. The present paper shall probe such changes and the agents that have brought these changes within the peculiar culture of Kashmir. It shall explore whether the very basic function of gift exchange i.e. maintaining social relationship is being overshadowed by ostentatious nature of society. The paper also highlights the dynamic feature of gift exchange in which the quest and contest for honour changes the whole motive of gift exchange.

Introduction

The individualization process, the decline of religiosity, the economic reforms that have taken place in many welfare states, changing patterns in family life, changing gender roles, the development of the information and communication technology and the migration processes occurring throughout the world have changed the whole

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scenario of gift exchange. As a consequence of such changes, certain new patterns of gift exchange have evolved. These changes do not necessarily cause a decline in solidarity, as is often assumed. In certain domains solidarity may increase and in others it may merely adopt a new shape. Most of the gift-giving research and theories are based on the observation and understanding of pre-industrial societies and their rituals. While there are plenty of lessons to be learned from understanding exchange in these remote societies, it is no surprise that the theories have been difficult to apply concurrently to the contemporary society. While Mauss wanted his theories to be applied to Western society the reality is more difficult. As has been pointed out by Mary Douglas in her foreword to the most riveted book of Mauss, *The Gift*, “when it comes to applying Mauss’s insights to the contemporary, industrial society . . . his own attempt to use the theory of the gift to underpin social democracy is very weak.” (Douglas, 1990, p. XIX). While Mauss and the other theorists were launching their views on gift-giving, society was undergoing major social changes that are only apparent today. Every generation since the late 19th century has experienced rapid technological growth, longer life expectation and more liberal lifestyles, however, it can be argued that the current generation of 25–35 year old’s has undergone the most radical changes of all, feeling significantly different from their parent’s and grandparent’s generation. According to Bruck (2004, p.11),

‘They are the “never-marrieds” and the fastest growing segment categorized by the U.S. Census. Unlike previous generations who were defined by what they did (the roaring 20s, the depression 30s, the baby boomers, the hippies, the yuppies), they are a population defined by what “they are not doing”.’

If the new generation people are no longer getting married and forming traditional family structures that all the gift-giving theory was based on, then what was the “fastest growing” group of people doing with their time? This is one of the questions posed by Watters (2003) in his book *Urban Tribes*. Watters coined the term “Urban Tribe” to

embody his idea of innovative social relations, yet the expression also seems to provide this generation with an identity that accurately reflects what it is doing and not what it is not doing as defined by Bruck. Watters (2003, p. 24) defines, what is an Urban Tribe, best through his own description of his tribe,

‘Each of these people had a relationship with me, but they all had distinct relationships with each other. There was a web of love affairs, friendships, rivalries, work partnerships, and shared homes. Connect any two of those twenty-five people and you would find a history of activities and hundreds of hours of conversation that held shared secrets, gossip, and all manner of insight about the world’.

Watters (2003) is describing a tribe that is made up completely of “friendships” that have no blood bonds and exists solely in the Western world. For this reason, the nature of the bonds is very different as Komter and Vollebergh (1997, p. 756) conclude,

‘Ties to friends are chosen, not born out of obligation or tradition, but out of mutual affection... Family ties are relatively obligatory; the other side of the coin is relatively high level of stability... The ties of friendship have a greater risk of decay’.

The fundamental difference between Watters (2003) tribe and the pre-industrial tribes described by Mauss is that it can sustain large geographic distance and can exist in a superfluous state as members move in and out of proximity. This seems to be the very foundation behind their formation in the first place. To quote Watters (2003, p. 19),

‘Devotion to blood ties didn’t seem to interest us enough to stay in our hometowns, and the idea of finding community among our neighbors was a quaint anachronism’.

Just as the sense for blood bonds has weakened, so has the importance of geographic bonds. This all points to a new type of social network that is amalgamating the best from both friend and kin based networks. This does not mean that our kin-based networks have disappeared.

Quite the contrary, they still exist, the “never-marrieds” are just delaying creating their own families beyond the ones they already have. It is just now, as mobility, divorce, and smaller families have reduced the relative importance of kinship ties, especially among the more educated, friendship may actually have gained importance in the modern metropolis (Watters, 2003, p. 101).

Thus, in order to understand the gift exchange in the contemporary society where there is marked transformation from kinship to friendship based network, one has to peep in to the more sophisticated process of gift exchange governed by the changes in technological as well as the socio-psychological aura. It is not only the changes in the social network that has implications on the primeval system of Gift exchange as propounded by Mauss and others, but, certain deviations from the pre-industrial society have also visibly changed the overall gift exchange. The recent trends of globalization, commercialization and consumerism have noticeably brought new patterns of gift exchange in contemporary society. As has been pointed out by Bruck (2004), in the past century, apart from the changes in our social networks from being primarily dominated by the kins to being primarily made up of friends, there has been a major shift in gift exchange due to the rapid commercialization of our calendar. It is hard to believe, but the majority of the holidays we celebrate did not exist more than few decades before, yet, we still feel bound to recognize these events by engaging in various acts of gift-giving with our family and friends. As a result, major industries have grown to address this need or to create it. Concurrently, as our base level of education has increased, our social networks have moved from one primarily of kin or geographically constrained relationships to one dominated by friends. This means we not only have more gifts to supply in a given year, but because our friendship networks are based on feelings of affection rather than feelings of obligation, it is all the more important that these gifts be meaningful. In other words - when our social networks were primarily kin based it was the ‘act’ giving that was more important than the gift itself. Whereas, today both these aspects play an equally important role. Of course, this characterization is

slightly extreme, just as there can be a dimension of obligation in gift giving in our new, urban, modern network of friends; there is also a level of affection giving amongst kin.

Methodology

The paper is a part of the major work of my Dissertation submitted in the partial fulfillment of M.phil degree. The study was carried out in the year 2013-14. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was collected through face to face interaction with the use of an interview schedule. The process of data collection was divided into three phases. The first was that of the one month of Pilot study. This was followed by the intensive fieldwork of three months' duration. The third phase was of one-month duration in which the deficiencies in data were taken care of. A total sample of 120 households was taken across the Kashmir valley. Interviews were conducted in a controlled family setting but the elderly person was taken as representative sample of household due to their detailed lifelong experience which was valuable for the study as such.

From Kinship To Friendship: Transformation In Social Network

The shift in our social networks is a recent phenomenon and has violated most of our conventions for measuring social networks and thus, went by virtually undetected. Going by the traditional standards, it would lead to the conclusion that waters makes, "by virtually every conceivable measure, social capital has eroded steadily and sometimes dramatically over the past two generations" (Watters, 2003, p. 101). This is not surprising given the evidence that our grandparents belonged to almost twice as many civic associations as the current progeny is. One last aspect worth noticing in this shift is the high correlation to education. This observation is supported by Komter and Vollebergh (1997, p.756) in their study of Dutch social networks. They found that,

‘Giving mainly to extended kin is more characteristic of those with less education. Giving to friends is most common among those who can afford to withdraw from the obligations and dependencies inherent in family relationships: those who are

highly educated, nonreligious, and not (yet) obligated by marital ties’.

This correlation helps establish this shift as a concerted effort to change even if, subconsciously and as long as people continue to have access to higher education and mobility this trend will continue to grow. While the rise of a friend-based network is competing with our traditional kin-based networks, it is not accurate to say that it has or will replace it. Instead, it is more likely that these networks will simply coexist, each providing various positive attributes. The significance for individuals is that with the freedom of choice arising from more than one option, no one is locked into any specific community. It is also important to realize though, that with the different networks, comes different sets of rules for gift-giving. The challenge that arises from this new network is that it puts a higher value on the pure gift (higher level of affection), which results in a greater demand on the giver to meet this requirement. A greater emphasis is focused on the giver reflecting the higher emotional values as well as the unique attributes of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. Since friendship networks are more erratic than kin ties, they are also less transparent or predictable. Thus, the primary functions of the gift are to inform and support the relationship. It not only states that a tie is strong enough to warrant a gift, but tells the receiver how important he is to the giver. This contrasts with kin based gift-giving where obligation is a perfectly acceptable motive. Obligatory gift-giving in this context acts as a reminder of the relationship between the giver and receiver. Thus, in order to successfully evaluate gift-giving, it must be done in the context of our social networks.

Komter and Vollebergh (1997) showed that gifts given to extended kin are accompanied by feelings of obligation almost twice as often as to friends who are more often accompanied by feelings of affection. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rules as neither situation is mutually exclusive. The primary exception is relations between children and parents and amongst partners. Komter’s study found “as many as 71% of the presents given to partners are accompanied by

feelings of affection, and a mere 1% is reported to be accompanied by feelings of obligation” (Komter & Volebergh, 1997, p. 753).

The shift in our social networks can be viewed as part of a natural progression that began with the commercialization of our calendar system a century ago. It may seem a long time, but many of our contemporaries were born before Mother’s Day was invented and became an American holiday in 1914. While “holidays” have been known to exist for thousands of years, it is the gift-giving aspect of these rituals that is a recent advent. In Roman and Medieval times “the holiday season was not so much a religious observance or a harvest festival as it was a final splurge before the coming of lean times” (Hines, 2002, p. 172). Indeed, “magazine advertisements for contraceptives and drugs to induce miscarriage were far more numerous than those advertising gift items for Christmas,” (Hines, 2002, p. 177) as late as the mid-nineteenth century. It was the impact of the industrial revolution that set into motion a new kind of consumption, celebration and gift-giving. Industrialized societies were producing more and cheaper goods to buy and give. The key to the rise of commercial Holidays and Christmas in particular is what Hines (2002) describes as the rise of the sheltered middle class family. This change in the social fabric coincided with the new establishments of malls and retail outlets that were taking root at the end of the nineteenth century. Unlike the industrialist perspective that was focused on productivity and output, the retailers recognized that the power was in consumption. According to Hines (2002, p. 179),

‘Long thought to be impediments to industrial production, holidays were found, on the flip side, to have all kinds of possibilities when it came to consumption. Far from requiring suppression, such feast days were to be encouraged, promoted, even, if necessary, invented’.

Thus, whole industries began to sponsor various holidays and it was their relentless marketing of these holidays that allowed them to spread so quickly. The results are easily witnessed in the holidays celebrated today. Flowers for Mother’s Day, chocolate for Valentines, fireworks

for Independence Day and cards for all occasions are just a few of the industry promoted holidays. Hines (2002, p. 179) illustrates just how big a role the retailers and marketers played in creating these gift-giving events.

‘We often assume that the commercial Christmas we know was a fall from grace from a traditional religious holiday, but in fact, the secular and commercial holiday evolved simultaneously’.

By 1926 a ‘defining feature of the American calendar was its commercialization’ (Schmidt, 1991, p. 887). The other Western countries built on similar economic models were not very far behind in adopting this commercialized calendar which spread all over the country with the onset of globalization and more precisely westernization. This commercialization of calendar has occurred all over the country and there have evolved certain universal holidays which have their origins in the west. The valentine day, Mother’s Day and like, have all been the gifts’ of the West to the world and due to the global network one feels (especially the current generation) that such holidays have been there from the very past. To complement this, commercialism and consumerism through the Gift Industry has propagated these holidays, prescribing gifts for specific holidays and thus, creating needs for those specific gifts to increase their demand and subsequently maximize the profit. The effects of consumerism and commercialism on the gift exchange shall be dealt in detail in the ensuing section.

- **Consumerism And Commercialism**

Globalization, the growing interconnectedness of the world, includes many domains viz: the electronic transformation in communication and information (between universities, between nations and actors like political and military representatives, between companies doing business, etc.); the growth of a unifying, global culture, the development of a world economy, mass transport systems, a world system of tourism, and global social movements such as the human rights movement, the environmental movement, or the women’s

movement. The new society has been variously labeled as a “network society” (Castells 1996) or a “risk society” (Beck 1986), to mention just a few influential contemporary approaches. In Castells’s view the new information technologies by means of their pervasiveness and flexibility have created a universally integrated social world. He argues that transnational linkages of information, finance, and communication make the traditional conception of the nation-state obsolete. Instead, the network society emerges as the primary unit of sociological analysis. Networks differ from the old sociological units of the small group or the community, in that the latter refer to exclusive and closed linkages, whereas the new networks are dynamic, inclusive, and open. The network society not only has a major effect on the development of capitalism and commerce but also invades the worlds of politics and culture. While it enables cooperation on a much wider scale and allows for instantaneous forms of reciprocity, many of the institutions constructed around the democratic state and around the contract between capital and labor have lost their meaning to individual people. Not only political institutions but also the sphere of work and production seem to be losing its force to bind citizens in solidarity. The fact that information has become instantaneously available throughout the globe has enormous consequences. All this has changed fundamentally with the advance of the means to stretch these interactions beyond the reach of the human eye and arm. The globalization process has created new possibilities for solidarity but has also resulted in new forms of inequality, thereby putting new strains on solidarity. One paradoxical effect of globalization is that immediate reciprocity has diminished to the extent that justice, war, and democracy are not produced in face-to-face encounters any longer, while a new type of immediate, virtual reciprocity over the long distance has come into being.

The interaction with globalization in Kashmir was delayed due to many factors, be it geographical, cultural or political. However, in the recent decade the changes have been numerous. The mobile phones brought into arena during the latter half of 2004, has revolutionized the social networks. The society which was believed to be primarily kin

based has drastically changed. These changes have overall changed the cultural setup of the society. The increase in the connectivity has expanded the aura of friendship – based network. The society where gift of cash was most frequent has now evolved many other natures of Gift exchange. Due to the varied choices of the gifts available in the market, the gift in Cash, which was considered to be the most practicable option of gift is now moderated, especially among the new generation. Most of the informants of the age group of 18-30 years believed that the gift of cash culture in Kashmir is vague and should not be practiced anymore. Instead, they were of the view that the most effective gifts in today's world are some expensive branded things which the recipient would have curiously wanted to have. However, when the informants of old aged groups like 40's and 50's were asked about the changes, they were of the view that with the advent of new electronic age, where electronic gadgets rule the markets, such items constitute the most efficient gift. At the same time, the informants believed that such gifts can only be given between friendship based networks. That is why the most of the gifts given to kin based relations is still the “gift in cash”.

Another, remarkable feature of the globalization which has changed the Gift exchange pattern is the conception of occasion based gift giving. In the past, whatever be the occasion the “gift in cash” was the most viable option, however, this practice has now changed. The gift in cash now constitute the gift giving on the eve of marriage ceremony, nonetheless it is still given at other occasions but with meager occurrence. The gifts now given constitute a wide range from pens & books to memory cards and pen drives. The changes experienced by the Gift exchange are depicted in Table 1.1. It can be seen that the majority of the informants (particularly of lower age group) held that the gift of money is cash is not good as it hurts the relationship and it seems like a certain transaction is taking place in the relationship. Instead, they maintained that giving of gifts other than the money itself brings joy and cherish in the relationship especially friendship based. However, within the family set up and on traditional / ceremonial occasions like marriage, birth etc the gift in cash came

out to be the first choice of informants. The rise in the gifting of electronic items also came to surface. This is particularly due to the rise in the usage of electronic gadgets by the younger generation who prefer to give such items as gift and also dream of receiving the same from their family and friends.

Table 1.1. Changes in Gift exchange patterns under the influence of Modernization / Westernization

Changes in gift Exchange Pattern	Frequency N = 120
Gift of cash is not felt good	82
Electronic gadgets are mostly given	78
Branded Gifts like branded cloths, watches are given	56
Gift giving to friends is more than kins	42
Gifts are Given to have strong relationship with recipient	88

Source: Field Survey

With the rise in the access to social networking sites new ways of making friends have opened up in Kashmir. The younger age group informants affirmed the giving of more gifts to their friends than to their relatives. Many of the informants opined that the gifts to relatives are to be borne by the elders of the family and they have no such role to play. So they only give to their friends and receive accordingly which in turn establish a strong relationship between them.

Kashmir, in the recent past, has been a good appreciator of westernization and has adopted many contemporary trends and patterns of the West. In this way, Kashmir has been at the outset of consumerism and commercialization. Still, many of the holidays of the west are not being observed in Kashmir, and it appears that there is no

commercialization of the calendar like the west. However, such is the impact of these holidays of west on Kashmir that the days are also been celebrated in Kashmir, though not being holidays as such. No doubt, there is not that much of fervor on valentine day or the new year, but population of new generation are finding it quite an occasion to exchange gifts. The informants of age group 18-30 years were quite clear in their response that they exchange gifts on these days and also they prefer to give specific gifts on specific days as these specific gifts are nowadays, readily available in the market. Many of the informants opined that due to the recent online shopping sites it has become easy to find a specific gift for a specific occasion or a day. A new feature that also came to be known from few informants is the giving of the gift card.

A gift card is a prepaid stored-value money card usually issued by a retailer or bank to be used as an alternative to cash for purchases within a particular store or related businesses. Gift cards are generally redeemable only for purchases at the relevant retail premises and cannot be cashed out. However, Visa and MasterCard credit cards produce generic gift cards which need not be redeemed at particular stores, and which are widely used for cash back marketing strategies. A feature of these cards is that they are generally anonymous and are disposed of when the stored value on a card is exhausted. From the purchaser's point of view, a gift card is a gift, given in place of an object which the recipient may not need, when the giving of cash as a present may be regarded as socially inappropriate. In the United States, gift cards are highly popular, ranking in 2006 as the second-most given gift by consumers and the most-wanted gift by women, and the third-most wanted by males²⁰. Gift cards have become increasingly popular as they relieve the donor of selecting a specific gift.

Many of the informants unanimously mentioned of the "Archies Gallery" of gift collection as the new entrant in gift market in

²⁰Shinnebarger, David, Bora Arslan, and Joseph Vanek. "Gift card information sharing system and methods." U.S. Patent Application 13/154,701, filed June 7, 2011.

Kashmir. The greeting cards are a new phenomenon being followed in Kashmir. Many of the informants said that there was no concept of greeting cards in Kashmir some 20 years back, but today the greeting cards given is a normal phenomenon. One of the card gallery shops in Kashmir affirmed to this statement and reported an increase in the selling of cards from the past 5 to 10 years. The gifts of Archies being the most advertised brand on T.V and known locally is preferred over other brands. It can be said that nowadays, the gift selection has also become brand selective. To quote Baudrillard here (1968, p.11-12),

‘Advertising tells us, at the same time: “Buy this, for it is like nothing else!” (“The meat of the elite, the cigarette of the happy few!”etc.); but also: “Buy this because everyone else is using it!”’.

The confinement to selected brands of gifts by the new generation can be attributed to their psyche as most of them believed that by gifting certain branded and most publicized will enhance their status in the society. The giver feels honoured while giving such expensive branded gifts and is of the view that his / her status shall be raised in relation to the receiver who receives these gifts. This has been the effect of consumerism on the individual that one feels that the status is raised by propagating the branded / most advertised commodity. To quote Baudrillard (1968, p.19) here,

‘Within "consumer society," the notion of status, as the criterion which defines social being, tends increasingly to simplify and to coincide with the notion of "social standing." Yet "social standing" is also measured in relation to power, authority, and responsibility. But in fact: There is no real responsibility without a Rolex watch! Advertising refers explicitly to the object as a necessary criterion: You will be judged on ... An elegant woman is recognized by ...etc.’

As has been discussed, the commercialization of the calendar as holidays has blurred the line for the motivation of gift-giving. There are many positive attributes to the holidays and the celebrations of such events help us mark the passage of time. These rituals have

always been important to social bonds, but it is the commercialization and creation of the holidays in the past decade that has made this obligation at times overwhelming. The commercialization and associated consumerism has changed the context of gift giving, giving rise to new occasions of giving and also the varied options of gifts. Thus, it can be concluded that the recent changes have modified the patterns of gift giving (what to give on which occasion) but, not the gift giving as whole.

The commercialization of gift giving and the consumerism, particularly in Kashmir is often associated with the people of high income groups, the lower income groups are still following the same old tradition of gift giving²¹. This in a way has divided the society into two classes, one giving gifts of westernized nature and other the traditional ones. One class of people giving on the occasions fostered by westernization, and other, on the occasions of traditional nature. Thus, it can be concluded that the effects of consumerism on gift exchange can be strictly talked of in terms of higher income class. The lower class is unaware of the commercialization and is still to come out of its aura of traditionality and is yet to explore new gifts. Nonetheless, it can be seen in Kashmiri society the gift giving has been greatly affected due to globalization and commercialization. The givers now feel “Gift in Cash” not the perfect gift to give instead prefer the commercialized / advertised commodities as the most viable gifting options. This has also been advanced by the advent of peculiar gifts for prescribed holidays and occasions. In the past in Kashmir, whatever be the occasion the “gift in cash” was the most feasible gift, which has now been discarded as specific gifts for specific occasions are now being preferred. However, the “gift in cash” is still practiced

²¹It is imperative to mention here that the people of lower income group here constitute the ones whose monthly household income is less than Rs. 30000/- and the higher income groups have a monthly household income of more than Rs. 30000/-. The groups were not preconceived to be constituted to arrive at the effect of consumerism, instead were constituted from the outcome of the effects of the consumerism which was seen more in higher income groups.

on restricted occasions and still hold good among the people of remote areas where the effect of commercialism and consumerism is not markedly conspicuous.

Exchanging Class: A Relational Bargain

Gift exchange and the obligatory nature associated with it is pragmatically functionally important. However, at the same time it has some negative functions that somehow hinders the social cohesion and instead led to stratification of society. Gifts are at times inspired by a need for power and prestige or by considerations related to reputation and fame. By means of giving a gift, we are putting ourselves in a morally superior position; we may cause the recipient to feel indebted, sometimes to such an extent that we even claim some rights on the basis of our gift giving. As Komter (2005, p. 47) explains,

‘In many non-Western cultures gift giving was inspired by rivalry: givers try to surpass one another in generosity, thereby asserting their power. The more one gives, the more prestige, power, and honor one is accredited with. The most extreme example of this is the earlier potlatch. Offering exquisite banquets, giving expensive bouquets of flowers, or organizing fancy parties – these are all modern examples of potlatch where the recipient is, as it were, stunned by the gift’.

Thus, it can be inferred that giving an overly generous gift that cannot be reciprocated properly is humiliating. Giving gifts may serve to dominate and to make others dependent upon our benevolence and our willingness to share valuables and resources with them. Equality or equivalence, the idea of quid pro quo, is a common basis of exchange processes as well. To Malinowski the “pure gift” and barter are the more exceptional motives to give, and equality or equivalence is the most common pattern of exchange. Notwithstanding this equality, Gifts can serve as instruments of power, status, and honor and be used to fortify one’s own position and to protect oneself against the risks implied in ties with rivals. The motives used in this interactional process range from love and sympathy, to insecurity and anxiety, to power and prestige, to self-interest and overt hostility. Gifts here can

be conciliatory as well as estranging and distancing. They may be saving as well as sacrificing lives. This enormous psychological potential of the gift has been largely ignored so far. In order to prevent gifts from becoming perverted, it is extremely important to keep the subtle balance between giver and recipient intact. Giver and recipient find themselves involved in a debt balance with respect to one another. This balance should neither be in complete equilibrium nor disintegrate into dis-equilibrium. Giver and receiver should be in an alternatively asymmetrical position on this balance, each party properly reciprocating the gift received, thereby preserving the equilibrium. The extent of asymmetry can only be held in control by the specific type of feelings usually evoked by a gift i.e. gratitude. As described by Komter (2005, p. 54),

‘Not being able to feel proper gratitude, exaggerating or underplaying one’s own gratitude, not acknowledging gratitude in the recipient, under or overestimating his or her gratitude: all of these imperfections can severely disturb the debt balance and generate great relational risks’.

As we know, solidarity reduces social distance between the parties concerned, but dependency simultaneously increases social distance, at least until the gift is returned. Most of the analyses of exchange focus on the functional value of maintaining or expressing social relations, while ignoring the material side of transaction. Since Mauss (and, more prominently, Karl Marx) viewed the market economy as impersonal, as catering to interest groups and, in the end, as immoral, forms of economy in which exchange of goods and gifts assumed a dominant role in economic transactions necessarily seemed to them to be person-oriented, moral, innocent, transparent or non-exploitative. Presents and gifts as unalienable objects between economically dependent parties stood over against wares and goods as alienable objects between economically independent parties. Altruistic generosity, not to be confused with pity, is an ascetic virtue (and in some cases meant specifically for ascetics). In order to approximate the required motive of disinterestedness, the attitude of giver and

receiver must be, as far as possible, not of this world. Evans-Pritchard ascribes to the Azande a 'principle of equivalence'. This expression seems to be used as a synonym for 'principle of reciprocity'. To quote Maccormack (1976, p. 91),

‘Among the Azande, members of Group A give spears to members of Group B in order to obtain a woman; members of Group B in turn give spears to members of Group C in exchange for a woman and finally the members of Group A receive spears (presumably from Group C) in return for a daughter born to the woman acquired from Group B. The principle of equivalence expresses a continuing exchange of women against spears which leaves the groups concerned in an equivalent position vis-a-vis each other’.

Participants in reciprocal gift exchange are involved in a psychological balance of debt, which should never be in complete equilibrium. Someone has to remain in debt toward the other, but both parties may have different ideas on the magnitude of the debt and on how long it can last. The debt balance is, therefore, a source of relational risks. As one considers the materialistic side of the gift exchange, the mention of Marx's use value and exchange value of commodity is mandatory. It was Marx, in his famous work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) who recognized the use-value and exchange-value associated with the commodity. Marx saw the use value serving social needs and therefore, existing within the social framework, but they do not express the social relations of production. However, the exchange value is the expression of economic relationship between two exchangeable magnitudes. Although, the Marx analysis of exchange value was defined in different context, its domain can be applied to Gift exchange also. Gift, a commodity in nature, too possess the use value and an associated exchange value. Nonetheless, use value is the property inherited in the gift per-se, what matters most is the exchange value when considered in a dyadic relation of giver and receiver. It's the dynamic nature of exchange that both giver and /or receiver consider equivalent exchangeable gifts the

most stable. The obligation of giving equivalent gift is a dynamic cycle and the recipient feels always indebted to giver till the return of the gift. Obligatory nature of gift exchange, thus, comes in to forefront to negate the power of indebtedness the giver has on the recipient.

Both the aspects of obligation, be it reciprocity or ritual gives a different dimension to gift exchange. The ritual provides the occasion for the gift giving and the reciprocity associated with it, puts the receiver in an immediate debt which he could only pay by giving back a gift of equal magnitude. The equivalent magnitude has to be considered here, in terms of Exchange value as propounded by Marx. Three situations arise in gift exchange in terms of its exchange value that are central to the understating of the dynamism of attaining the equilibrium:

1. If the recipient returns the gift of equivalent magnitude,
2. If the return gift is of lesser or higher magnitude and
3. The gift is not returned at all.

The third situation is rare one and arises in agapic love and under extreme conditions, if, such situations do arise, the relations comes to halt and cease to exist. What is important here is the second situation, which brings the poisonous dimension of the gift exchange in to practice. The disparity in the equivalent exchangeable magnitude of gift is dynamic in nature and continues till it attains equilibrium. A party giving a gift is for the period it is returned, putting the recipient in a sort of debt which the receiver is always trying to pay back. However, the recipient has to wait for a suitable occasion for its repay, as the untimely return of the gift is not being practiced in Kashmir. This dynamism of gift exchange has paved way for the ostentatious touch being induced in the gift exchange. The ostentatious nature has associated many negative aspects with the gift giving. Gift giving is used to convey the status of the giver and the value (cost) of the gift is more taken care off than the love and care associated with it. Thus, it was observed in Kashmir that apart from performing the functions of binding the society together the gift exchange is latently dividing it. The parties to gift exchange here are in continuous struggle to make

one another feel indebted till the gift is returned. However, the division is not stratified and rigid but fluidic in nature and changes with the continuous gift exchange. As there is continuous struggle to be on the higher side of class by giving the gift of higher value, the receiver is immediate in returning the gift of same value or higher, however has to wait for the suitable occasion for the return. Thus, the class keeps on changing with the gift given and received.

It was also observed that this kind of exchange based on power and authority mostly occurs between parties, where there is some element of expectation of return of the gift given and the relation has existed over an ample time. The secondary and tertiary kins, however, make most of these kinds of exchanges. It is due to this fact that the written accounts of gifts are maintained in Kashmir, so that in a family an exact track of what has been given and received from other family is kept. There is a sort of inheritance of Gift exchange found in Kashmir where any exchange made between the forefathers has to be carried by the next generation strictly as per the previous give and take, mentioned in the written records. This is exactly to meet out the debt under which a party may be at a particular time. This dynamism of give and take and tracking system of gift exchange through written texts is of particular salience in Kashmir. There was seldom any informant who denied of keeping any written records for the gifts received and given. At times the written records (usually a notebook) were some 100 years old and have been inherited from the ancestors that is accordingly being updated at the times of any gift exchange made between the already mentioned parties and relatives. The new parties are also added or a new notebook is kept for such new relations which have been supplemented over the time. All these practices in a way depict the sanctity of the equivalent exchangeable magnitude so as to nullify the debt and supremacy of one party over the other.

Conclusion

As an outcome of the changes that have been experienced by the society in Kashmir, it can be concluded that the gift exchange has come a long way from indigenous ways to the innovative ways. New

occasions for gift exchange have evolved over the time breaking the old aura of few occasions. Likewise, new gifts are now being exchanged instead of the most viable option of gift in cash. The mobilization of the masses of the current generation is more into the consumer culture of gift exchange, opting for the gifts that are being commercialized and consumed globally. The status and honour is more taken care off than the affection and love associated with gift exchange. The Contest for honour and the vitality of gift to attain equilibrium by equivalent magnitude of exchange has set the society in a dynamic game where the dyadic status is continuously changing over the time.

From creation of fluidic class in the society to the use of gift as bribe, the gift has travelled a cumbersome trajectory. The gift that was solely meant to be a token of love, has become a symbol of status. However, it should not be ripe to outrightly assign the changes in Gift exchange a negative prospect. It should not be reasonable to view the changes altogether through the prism of negativity. One has to accept the changes, as the change is inevitable, and then look for the underlying principle of reciprocity and its sanctity. No doubt, the social network is changing from kinship to friendship, but it at the same time is expanding its aura of relationship. Thus, a person has more relations to exchange gift with, more people to interact with, varied gifts to exchange and numerous occasion for the exchange. All these changes point out to healthy social interaction and hence social ties. Though, the gift exchange patterns have changed to great extent but what is important is that the Gift exchange is still practiced and remains to be an institution of great importance and study. It can thus be concluded that the gift irrespective of the fact that there are certain latent functions which may not suit the functional perspective of Gift Exchange, it still has made a general conception in people, as being the most common practice of social interaction and hence solidarity.

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CRITICAL REALISM: A FOURTH PARADIGM FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Kevin Brinkmann*

Abstract

For nearly a century, there have been three major paradigms in philosophy of the social sciences: positivist, interpretivist, and the critical paradigms. Recently, a fourth paradigm has emerged – critical realism. However, it has been overlooked, because it has mistakenly been categorized as a subset of the critical paradigm. While critical realism adopts a critical teleology, its ontology aligns most closely with a positivist paradigm, and its epistemology aligns most closely with an interpretive paradigm. Critical realism’s synthesis offers a fourth paradigm that fits neither modernism nor postmodernism. It is best understood as a post-postmodernism paradigm in the history of philosophy.

Biography

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Introduction

For nearly a century, researchers have had three options when choosing a philosophical paradigm in the social sciences: the positivist paradigm (associated with Comte and Durkheim), the interpretive paradigm (associated with Weber), and the critical paradigm (associated with Marx). However, in recent decades, a fourth option has emerged: critical realism. Though it is an equally comprehensive paradigm, critical realism has been overlooked because it has been misleadingly classified as a subset of the critical paradigm.²² This paper explores this fourth paradigm in relation to its three historical

²²Strydom, “Philosophies of the Social Sciences”; Mack, “The Philosophical Underpinnings of Educational Research.”

predecessors, in terms of its ontology, epistemology, and teleology. A comparative approach is adopted for three reasons. First, it shows the interrelations between philosophical paradigms, typically taught in isolation. Second, it models a new way to teach critical realism, by defining it in relationship to the positivist, interpretive, and critical paradigms. Third, it demonstrates that critical realism is neither modern nor postmodern; it is post-postmodern.

While reducing philosophy into four paradigms grossly masks the internal nuances and inter-category borrowings, they are a useful heuristic device, which has been adopted historically by other social scientists.²³ Thus, notwithstanding its limitations, this heuristic device will be used to argue that first wave critical realism offers a fourth alternative (a post-postmodern paradigm) by combining useful features from the three earlier paradigms: it adopts a positivist ontology, an interpretive epistemology, and a critical teleology. The nuances of this comparison are discussed below.²⁴

Ontology

Critical realists, like positivists, have always assumed an ‘intransitive’ or mind-independent universe.²⁵ This means that reality is what it is regardless of one’s perception of it. In its most extreme form, realism assumes that the world is unmediated by the senses. In its moderate form it assumes a consistency of properties in the natural and social world across time and space. This assumption introduces a host of opportunities and liabilities.

For positivists, science has always been dependent on a realist (versus idealist) ontology. According to positivists, without a fixed point, all truth claims are undermined. Without a fixed point, any theory may conceivably be equally valid as they may presumably be observing

²³Examples include Tashakkori and Teddlie, *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*; David and Sutton, *Social Research*; Strydom, “Philosophies.”

²⁴See Table one for summary.

²⁵Bhaskar, “Introduction to Critical Realism.”

different realities. Therefore, if different people have different theories about the same subject, it does not necessarily mean that they contradict one another, but it may simply mean that they are describing a different object.²⁶

If this is true, the science community is also undermined.²⁷ The science community assumes that knowledge is cumulative and comparative. One scientist's observation about a cell's properties contributes to the overall knowledge of the entire scientific community. However, if an ontology is not realist but idealist, then all knowledge claims become relative and only locally true. If all knowledge is only locally true, then it no longer demands (in the same way) being publicized through journals with the assumption that its findings are universal. All of this hinges on a realist ontology.

While critical realism shares positivism's realism assumption about the world, it departs from positivism's ontology in two major respects: its stratified reality and complex agency. Positivism, comparatively, maintains a simple ontology. For positivists, the universe is accessible through empiricism and the tools of technology and learning (e.g. microscopes, telescopes, psychoanalysis). Within a positivist ontology, variables can be isolated and studied. Within a positivist ontology, determinism is straightforward: structures and causal laws determine the physical and social world. Isaac Newton discovered the 'law of gravity' which explains why objects fall and humans float in outer space. In the social world, Emile Durkheim discovered 'social facts' which determine why humans behave the way they do. For the positivist, agency is determined by structures.

Critical realism offers a very different view. For the critical realist, reality is not single-layered, with a single law determining each outcome regardless of time or space. Rather, reality is stratified into three levels consisting of the empirical, the actual, and the real. The 'empirical' level describes the individual actions that are observable

²⁶Wright, *The New Testament And The People Of God*, 31.

²⁷McEvoy and Richards, "Rationale for Using a Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods," 73.

by humans (similar to positivism). The ‘actual’ level describes the sum of actions within events that may or may not be fully observable.²⁸ The ‘real’ signifies the causal mechanisms which are unobservable but which cause the observable acts.²⁹ For example, if a leaf falls from a tree and someone sees it occur, this is the empirical level. However, if all the leaves fall off a tree in the middle of a forest and no one sees it, it is the actual level. But if one asks what is causing the leaves to fall, that is the real level. This level touches on the non-observable causal mechanisms – gravity and molecular degeneration at a microscopic level. For a critical realist, the primary focus is the real level.

In this way, critical realism shares the bold ambition of positivism: to discover laws (in the form of ‘causal’ mechanisms) in the universe but with a humbler estimation of itself. Firstly, it does not assume it can access all levels of reality. Every theory of causal mechanism is held tentatively and must be inferred from the empirical level.³⁰ Secondly, it does not propose laws but rather tendencies and mechanisms. This explanation arises out of its view of complex agency.

Critical realism’s complex agency exists both internally and externally. Externally, critical realism is unique in its ontology, in that it allows for the existence and intervention of the supernatural.³¹ This means that even if all the laws of physics were true and accurate within a positivist paradigm, they may still be wrong in practice – if supernatural forces intervened within the natural world.

Internally, agency is also complex. Critical realism assumes some consistency and some predictability based on its (tentative) discoveries of causal mechanisms. However, each of these causal mechanisms interacts with other causal mechanisms, social contexts, and social actors to create new and often unpredictable results.³² This alone does

²⁸Zachariadis et al., “Exploring Critical Realism as the Theoretical Foundation of Mixed-Method Research,” 7.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., 8.

³¹Archer et al. *Transcendence*.

³²Tao, “Why Are Teachers Absent? Utilising The Capability Approach and Critical Realism To Explain Teacher Performance In Tanzania,” 10.

not invalidate a causal mechanism but recognizes its limitation to isolate individual variables within a complex ontology. Every factor enters into a larger system and is complexly interlinked.³³

Epistemology

The epistemology of critical realism most closely resembles an interpretive epistemology – hermeneutics, but within a rational framework. Hermeneutics began as a reaction to a positivist epistemology and its inherent assumptions. In short, hermeneutics adds a social context to all knowledge but at the expense of generalizability and transferability. Critical realism keeps the social context of knowledge, as well as the positivist assumption that reason and the senses (to a lesser extent) can be trusted. This is what makes critical realism’s epistemology unique: it is neither modern nor postmodern.

Positivism made three unique contributions to epistemology: a universal method, universal findings, and universal applications. The scientific method, with its roots in Parmenides, Aristotle, and Galileo, introduced empirical hypothesis testing that was ‘objective’ and universally reproducible. Because it was considered objective, its findings could also be considered universal and, by implication, its applications to society.

However, for positivism to sustain these contributions, it had to maintain three assumptions which the interpretive tradition (and critical realism to a large extent) rejected: (1) The subject is separate from the object (at the level of ontology); (2) Knowledge is value-free; (3) The knower is objective. First, is the subject separate from the object of study or embedded within it? This is one of the oldest questions of sociology. This assumption shapes one’s answer to the next two questions. If the object is separate, such as a chemist combining sodium and chloride in a test tube, then the resulting product should not change regardless of who conducts the experiment. But if the subject is embedded within the social system that it is studying reflexively, then how is objectivity possible? It is like a fish

³³Hollis, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 64.

trying to describe water. Only positivism maintains a strict separation between subject and object – as opposed to the interpretive, critical, and critical realist paradigms.

Second, can knowledge be value-free? Certainly something as innocuous as knowledge of gravity or the position of planets seems value-free enough. But what about knowledge concerning the social world? Can knowledge (even taken in isolation) of caste or poverty or corruption be value-free? Or does it inherently carry an implied agenda by the choice of the topic itself? Max Weber addressed this very question and made one essential distinction. According to Weber, while a trained researcher may be able to remain value-neutral in the process of collecting and analyzing data through practicing a type of reflexive sociology, the knowledge is still not value free by virtue of its topic.³⁴ The topic is chosen – presumably – with interest. The topic is published – presumably – with interest. That interest arises from values, such as it being a topic worthy of study or significant to others in some way. So even for science-oriented social scientists such as Max Weber, knowledge cannot be without value relevance.³⁵ The interpretive, critical, and critical realist tradition all agree: knowledge contains values.

Third, can the knower be objective? If the knower is separate and knowledge is value-free, then yes. If the answer to the first two questions is no, then the third answer is also presumably no. While hermeneutics may strive to attain the greatest level of objectivity as possible, it does not assume that it is fully possible. Hermeneutics, therefore, acts as a corrective mechanism to either expose (potential) personal bias in the data or as a contextual mechanism to embed the data within its object-embedded social context. Critical realism adopts hermeneutics' corrective and contextual mechanism through its principle of 'epistemological relativism.'

³⁴Hollis, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 203.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 208.

By epistemological relativism, critical realism signifies the following: (1) Objectivity is a myth. (2) Multiple perspectives must be valued. (3) Reflexivity is a necessity.

Built into critical realism's ontology is the assumption that humans never have direct access to the intransitive dimension of reality and thus all knowledge is socially constructed.³⁶ Therefore 'uncontaminated truth' is impossible and reduced to a 'modernist [or positivist] myth'.³⁷ It is not a 'naïve realism' where reality is easily captured and generalized in a context-free form.³⁸ Conversely, all objects of study are admittedly 'known [only] under particular definitions'.³⁹ The result? An 'epistemic humility'.⁴⁰

Second, under epistemological relativism, critical realism must value multiple perspectives. Since there is no single source for uncontaminated truth and no source of knowledge is flatly rejected for not following a universal method, then each perspective can be considered. Moreover, because each perspective is viewing the same reality (see ontology section), it is contributing some insight into reality as it is. While this is not possible within the ontology of constructed idealism (i.e. interpretive paradigm), it is possible within an ontology of realism.

Third, reflexivity is a necessity. If all perspectives are entertained, how are they judged? Critical realism provides two answers. Practicing reflexivity is the first answer: Who is the source? What is their social context? What may be their biases? And the second answer is that perspectives are judged by practicing 'judgmental rationalism.'

Judgmental rationalism may seem out of place within epistemological relativism, but it is actually one of the three central tenets of basic critical realism. It is this unique fusion of relativism with rationalism which becomes the 'primary means by which Bhaskar's critical realism

³⁶Wright, *Christianity and Critical Realism*, 4.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Zachariadis et al., "Exploring Critical Realism," 6.

³⁹Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science (2nd edition)*, 249.

⁴⁰Shipway, *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, 21.

discovers the ontological realism behind the epistemological relativism of human understanding'.⁴¹ Because reality is a fixed point, then all perspectives can be entertained and yet not all of them may be equally accurate descriptions or explanations of reality.

How is 'truth' decided? Through mutual critique. Each data point adds perspective to the other. Within critical realism, this process is called retroduction. Retroduction is 'a mode of analysis in which events are studied with respect to what may have, must have, or could have caused them.'⁴² The goal is to discover a 'best fit' explanation for all of the data – though every explanation is always held as tentative.

What is the result of this process of retroduction? Knowledge is progressive, as well as being open to criticism. Unlike a Baconian perspective, knowledge does not begin from an empirical blank slate.⁴³ Unlike a Kuhnian perspective, knowledge builds upon the past. Each generation builds upon the work of the previous generation. However, no knowledge claim is ever considered a 'completed system'.⁴⁴ Rather, all projects are treated as 'explorations of realities with inexhaustible depths'.⁴⁵ All knowledge claims are subject to further observation, new data, critique, and a more accurate 'best fit' explanation of the data.

The result of epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism is that all truth must be treated as mixed and partial. Whereas positivism may claim truth is objective, and interpretivists may claim that all truth is subjective, critical realists take a mixed stance. Data, in all likelihood, is a mix of objectivity and subjectivity. This mixed truth, however, does not mean that it should be disregarded for its subjectivity nor disdained for its universalism. Additionally, theory

⁴¹Meyer, *An Evangelical Analysis of the Critical Realism and Corollary Hermeneutics of Bernard Lonergan with Application for Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 66.

⁴²McEvoy and Richards, "Rationale for Using a Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods," 71.

⁴³Wright, *The New Testament And The People Of God*.

⁴⁴Shipway, *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, 1.

⁴⁵Collier, *Critical Realism*, 236.

should neither be enshrined as final nor ignored as a work-in-progress because of critical realism's stance toward knowledge as always an incomplete project. In summary, critical realism is a paradigm that recognizes the limits of knowledge (like interpretivists) without relativising ontology (like positivists).

Teleology

The teleology of critical realism most closely resembles a critical paradigm – emancipation, but within a less politicized framework.⁴⁶ This section will outline five ways in which the two paradigms are similar in their emancipatory aims and four ways in which critical realism is less politicized.

Unlike positivism and interpretivism, both critical theory and critical realism fall within a Marxist tradition, in the broadest sense of the term. Roy Bhaskar, the founder of critical realism, is in fact unapologetic in claiming that Karl Marx was a closet critical realist.⁴⁷ This claim arises out of their shared focus on emancipation, and its observable (i.e. structures) and non-observable (i.e. ideology) constraints. Although critical realism is difficult to categorize within the existing options of positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory, critical realism has tended to be most commonly associated with the critical paradigm.⁴⁸

Second, both critical realism and critical theory see philosophy as an underlabourer. The underlabourer view sees philosophy as something with the 'potential to make a real difference in the lives of humans' through its necessary foundational groundwork.⁴⁹ Karl Marx is famous for saying, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point, however, is to change it.' Marx's successors within the Frankfurt School defined any theory as critical insofar as it seeks 'to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave

⁴⁶Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, 47.

⁴⁷Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, 73-74; Roberts, "Abstracting Emancipation," 240.

⁴⁸Strydom, "Philosophies Of The Social Sciences," 2.

⁴⁹Shipway, *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, 178.

them’.⁵⁰

Critical realism continues this underlabourer tradition. Roy Bhaskar describes his goal in philosophy colloquially as ‘clearing the rubbish’ that is an impediment to the production of knowledge.⁵¹ Without clearing the rubbish, an accurate diagnosis of what is happening in the world (i.e. causing poverty, causing alienation, causing inequality, etc.) is impossible. Without an accurate diagnosis, an accurate prescription is also impossible – except by fluke. To describe this commitment to underlabouring, critical realism uses the word ‘serious’, meaning the ‘pragmatic efficacy in empowering and improving real world practice; in short, theory-practice consistency (“walking the talk”).’⁵² The word’s usage derives from Hegel who regarded his predecessors as ‘unserious’ because their philosophy abstracted themselves from the real world.⁵³

Third, both critical realism and critical theory focus on structures *and* ideology. While positivists and interpretivists had always focused on structures and individuals within structures, the critical paradigm introduced the added dimension of ideology inherent within structures and individuals. Ideology may be defined as a ‘set of ideas which serve the interests of a particular social class’ and as a result form a ‘totality’ or ‘second nature’ to one’s social context.⁵⁴ Ideology is what neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci described as ‘the philosophy of common sense’ – assumptions about the world that are no longer questioned.

Similarly, critical realism focuses on both structures and ideology within its concept of four-planar social being, including material transactions with nature, social interaction with people, social structures and system, and the stratification of the embodied

⁵⁰Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, 244.

⁵¹Bhaskar, “Introduction to Critical Realism.”

⁵²Hedlund-de Witt, “Critical Realism: Synoptic Overview for Integral Scholars,” 10.

⁵³Bhaskar, “Introduction to Critical Realism,” 2013.

⁵⁴Craib and Benton, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 111.

personality.⁵⁵ If emancipation only required one to change material structures, the task would be comparatively simple. However, ideology is embodied *within* structures and, thus, emancipation must focus on both material and non-material forces restraining freedom.⁵⁶

Fourth, both critical realism and critical theory focus on freedom as a central goal. In fact, Bhaskar attributes his conception of freedom to the co-father of Marxist theory, Frederick Engels.⁵⁷ Freedom entails both a negative and positive dimension. The negative dimension includes freedom ‘from an unwanted and unneeded’ source of determinism to a positive ‘wanted and needed’ source of determinism.⁵⁸

In order to achieve this movement from negative to positive freedom, five conditions must be met. The person must have awareness (‘one’s real interests’), the ability, the resources, the opportunity, and must be disposed to do so.⁵⁹ While the first three are expected, the latter two deal directly with ideology. One must be self-aware of an alternative and must have imbibed the beliefs or values necessary to dispose them to new and wanted tendencies.

Fifth, both critical realism and critical theory focus on the ideal society. Critical theory from its beginning was a ‘form of resistance to contemporary society’ with its basic method being an ‘internal or immanent criticism’ showing the ways that contemporary society failed to live up to its own claims of the ideal society.⁶⁰ For example, critical theorist Theodor Adorno (1967) criticised mass media for creating false psychological needs that could only be satisfied by more consumption. Herbert Marcuse (1964) criticized mass media for undermining autonomous decision-making of the individual – thus

⁵⁵Bhaskar, “Introduction to Critical Realism.”

⁵⁶Roberts, “Abstracting Emancipation,” 240.

⁵⁷Archer, *Realist Social Theory*, 463.

⁵⁸Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, 171.

⁵⁹Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, 171.

⁶⁰Geuss, “Critical Theory,” 182-183.

undermining democracy.⁶¹

Similarly, critical realism focuses on the ‘eudemonistic society’ (or ideal society) through a transformation of structures. The eudemonistic society is one where, in the words of Marx, the ‘free flourishing of each is the condition for the free flourishing of all’.⁶² It is one where all are free to flourish. Like the Marxist tradition, this is accomplished through the transformation of structures, not simply the ‘amelioration of the states of affairs’.⁶³ Both are society-wide in their emancipatory aim, though their strategies differ.

While critical realism and critical theory share these five similarities, critical realism is less politicized in its approach than the latter, in four major ways. First, critical realism’s approach to emancipation is more individualistic. While Marx takes class-conflict as the means, critical realism takes the ‘concrete self’ as the object of emancipation.⁶⁴ Unlike Marx, it intends to reach the whole society but through individuals who progressively and cumulatively achieve emancipation.⁶⁵ This small-scale approach resists politicization in the same way that Marx and radical critical theorists have attracted it.

Second, critical realism’s approach is ‘in-gear’, versus out-of-gear.⁶⁶ In-gear emancipation ‘recognizes the mind-independent existence of durable social structures’ which constrain emancipation efforts while they are in process.⁶⁷ In contrast, out-of-gear emancipation ‘eschews all restraints (even helpful ones), and as a result is concerned with completely disengaging oneself from the world’.⁶⁸ The latter is necessarily revolutionary (or isolationist). Critical realism is, again, progressive and more gradual in its approach.

Critical realism’s in-gear approach to emancipation is rooted in its

⁶¹Craib and Benton, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 112.

⁶²Hedlund-de Witt, “Critical Realism,” 10.

⁶³Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, 171.

⁶⁴Bhaskar, *Dialectic*, 278.

⁶⁵Shipway, *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, 184.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 182

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸*Ibid.*; Collier, *Critical Realism*, 98.

realist ontology. Critical realism's realist ontology means that all oppressive structures and ideology have a real existence – not just a constructed existence. Therefore interventions require more than mere ideological deconstruction. All interventions will require persistence and time.

Third, critical realism is less deterministic, rooted in its transformational model of social activity (TMSA). TMSA, like Giddens's duality of structures, 'revolves around the claim that society is both the condition and outcome of human praxis, while praxis is the (conscious) production and (unconscious) reproduction of society'.⁶⁹ People are always either reproducing or changing that which is always given.⁷⁰ As a result there are 'no inevitabilities'.⁷¹ All structures are not static, and do not change only by a structural revolution. Rather, structures are always in a constant process of change or reproduction.⁷² TMSA, therefore, affirms individual agency to gradually change structures, without necessitating political revolution.

Within the transformational model of social activity, what enables change? Human consciousness. Human consciousness is the 'causal power' that distinguishes the social world from the natural world.⁷³ While the natural world may be determined by laws of gravity and thermodynamics, the social world is affected by the unpredictable – human consciousness. By becoming conscious of one's own reasons to act in one way or another, one is simultaneously 'free[d] to act otherwise'.⁷⁴ This conception of consciousness mirrors Giddens's concept of reflexive monitoring and acting.⁷⁵ There is no economic determinism. There is no cultural determinism. There are not laws of social action but only tendencies of action.⁷⁶

⁶⁹Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, 92.

⁷⁰Hedlund-de Witt, "Critical Realism," 9.

⁷¹Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, 47.

⁷²Craib and Benton, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 109.

⁷³Roberts, "Abstracting Emancipation," 237.

⁷⁴Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, 114.

⁷⁵Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 16.

⁷⁶Roberts, "Abstracting Emancipation," 239; Tao, "Why Are Teachers

Finally, critical realism is less politically aligned than the traditional critical paradigm. Marx and neo-Marxists within the Frankfurt school have tended to align themselves explicitly against capitalism and towards a socialist political agenda. Critical realism, however, ‘does not *necessarily demand* the adoption of any specific political position’.⁷⁷

While its political ambivalence may be seen as a strength within a pluralistic society, it has also been critiqued for this characteristic. Hodgson (1999) argues that the main problem with critical realism’s teleology is that it ‘contains no clear normative evaluation’ and is ‘too high a level of abstraction to be meaningful for political action’.⁷⁸ Moreover, its concept of human freedom has been critiqued for being trans-historical and thus too general for practical use.⁷⁹ Whether this is taken as a strength or a weakness, it reinforces critical realism’s less politicized approach to emancipation.

Conclusion

Critical realism does not easily fall into a positivist, interpretive, or critical paradigm. However, as shown above, it draws heavily from each of them, while adding its own particular nuance to each. In summary, critical realism’s ontology most closely aligns with a positivist paradigm – realism, but within a stratified reality and complex agency. Its epistemology most closely aligns with interpretive paradigm – hermeneutics, but within a rational framework. And its teleology most closely aligns with a critical paradigm – emancipation, but less politicized. Though the philosophical underpinning of each of these paradigms can never be empirically proven or disproven, critical realism bridges the divide between many of the polarities of the traditional positivist, interpretive, and critical paradigms and offers a post-postmodern paradigm for the next generation of social scientists.

Absent? Utilising The Capability Approach and Critical Realism To Explain Teacher Performance In Tanzania,” 10.

⁷⁷Shipway, *A Critical Realist Perspective of Education*, 178.

⁷⁸Roberts, “Abstracting Emancipation,” 254.

⁷⁹Hodgson, “Structures and Institutions,” 3; Roberts, “Abstracting Emancipation,” 254.

Table 1: Summary

	Positivist	Interpretive	Critical	Critical Realism
Ontology	Naïve realism	Constructed idealism	Constructed idealism	Complex realism
Epistemology	Empiricism	Hermeneutics	Skeptical rationalism	Hermeneutical rationalism
Teleology	Predictive understanding	Interpretive understanding	Radical emancipation	Progressive emancipation
Methodology	Deductive Quantitative	Inductive Qualitative	Abductive Mixed	Abductive Mixed
Proponents	Hume, Comte, Durkheim	Weber, Schutz, Berger and Luckman	Marx, Marcuse, Adorno	Bhaskar, Archer, Collier

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