

Cultural Practices and its impact on Educated Women: A Study on Nemuguri Village of Sivasagar

Happy Saikia

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Tezpur University

Email: happysaikia4ed@gmail.com

Swapna Sikha Das

Abstract

Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. In 21st century women's are going very high, where women's are able to rule the country, and do the military assignments etc. At the same time many educated women are not able to enjoy their rights due to some of the practices or belief systems of a society. Even the educated women in many areas are socially discriminated and suppressed with great consequences on their individual futures and that of the society. The present study provides an insight view about influence of culture and belief system of a society on women's right of educated women. The present study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprise all the educated women of Nemuguri village. The sample consisted of 25 educated women from the Nemuguri village. The researcher used a self- developed questionnaire to gather data. The collected data were analyzed by using simple statistical technique i.e., master table. Major findings of the present study revealed that culture and traditional belief of a society has major impact on women's right. Some of the socio -cultural practices militating against educated women and it creates women rights violation in many extents. Some of the recommendation made in the present study are women should be sensitized for ones right. There is need to create awareness among the people.

Keywords: Culture, Belief, Society, Education, Women's right, violation.

Backdrop of the study:

Women are generally considered to be at the lowest rung of poverty ladder. Women are more than fifty percent of the world's population. They perform two-third of the world's work, yet receive one-tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of the world's property. They represent a staggering seventy percent of the world's one billion poorest people. This is a stack development reality for our world (Elegbede, 2012).

Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Women's rights are the 'rights' and 'entitlements' claimed for the women of many societies worldwide. Women's have been claiming for the right since 19th century. Women's right which includes right to live freely, free from violence, slavery and discrimination to get education to earn property, to vote and earn fair and equal wage. As the

now famous saying “women’s rights are the human right” this is to say women’s are entitled to all of these rights. Winning rights for women is more than giving opportunities to any individual woman; it is also about changing laws and policies, winning hearts and minds and investing in strong women’s organization and movement. In some societies still there is some disagreement about what constitute women’s rights. Does a women have a right to control a family size like men? This is happening due to the typical cultural practices and mentality of people. People are making progress but are not yet. Women’s right and denied in every region of the world and discrimination persists.

Human rights of women imply that women have equal opportunity to realize fully their basic rights and to conduce and gain from social, economic, cultural, political and other kinds of developments along with men. There is no room for sex role within this concept. It negates the idea of discrimination on the basis of sex. These rights grant women an environment in which they can live a life with complete human dignity, freedom and individual personality. The term 'women's rights' implies that women, as much as men, are entitled to full protection of their rights and freedom because they are human beings and not simply because they are women. In spite of the progress made in the field of women's rights the present-day condition of women in India is very much traumatizing. Often, they are put in the realm of violence. In fact, the existence of all these protective measures itself indicate that women are in the state of violence both in public and private sphere. (kaushika, 2004)

The values and belief of different cultures significantly mould play. Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future.

Traditional culture, if understood in a broad sense, indicates all human activities such as religion, philosophy, moral standards, laws, politics, economic, society, history, literature and art, such as have been preserved, learned and transmitted in a given community or group over a long period of time. In traditional society characterized by an orientation to the past, not the future, with a predominant role for custom and habit. Such societies are marked by a lack of distinction between family and business, with the division of labor influenced primarily by age, gender, and status. (Perrie, 1997)

Most women have been politically, socially and economically oppressed, discriminated and repressed for so long that in these societies, they still encounter many impediments and they try to ascend to different positions apart from the ones “originally reserved for or expected from them Attempts by women rights advocates to challenge the status quo have often met with stiff resistance from the men and even some women of such societies. (Osher,2005)

Women’s Rights as Human Rights

Women have struggled in every historical epoch and in every part of the world for equal treatment. In the early part of this century, the right of women to receive an education, to obtain paid employment, to enter professions, to vote and to stand for elections were all highly contested issues. However, by the end of the century these rights, which could be described as a part of the “liberal democratic” political agenda, have been both recognized and established through law and customary practice in most societies. However, women in many parts of the world still face multiple obstacles in enjoying these rights. (H.R.C., 1995)

Women’s ability to enjoy civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is interlinked with the issue of discrimination. Discrimination based on gender ideology and patriarchy was not initially considered as part of the human rights agenda. Excluding sex discrimination and violence against women from the human rights agenda also results from a failure to see the oppression of women as political. Female subordination runs so deep that it is still viewed as inevitable or natural rather than as a politically constructed reality maintained by patriarchal interests, ideology, and institutions.

For many years the women's movement has organized women at local, national, regional and international levels. In recent decades, however, the movement has sought to use the human rights framework to mainstream women's issues, rather than have the movement remain on the sidelines, benefiting from special programs, or continuing as a movement separate and apart from the rest of the human rights movement. (Roy, 2005)

Background of Bokata Nemuguri village:

Before the British period, the Bokata Nemuguri place ruled by famous Ahoms. The Bokata Nemuguri the place which is stamp by the great history of Assam. Bokata the historic place which is situated in the middle path of historic city Sivasagar, Assam. It is also known as Ahom Raja's Place. It was the capital of Assam during Ahom period. In the middle of Bokata area the Nemuguri village is situated. Bokata Nemuguri is a medium size village located in sivasagar district. The nemuguri village has population of 1271 of which 618 are males while 653 are females as per Population Census 2011. The real beauty of the Earth is hidden in nature such like Bokata Nemuguri area also encircled by the beautiful nature, stunning physical and manmade atmosphere.

Social and Cultural Activity of the place:

Marriage: Child marriage is practically unknown. Among all people marriage by negotiation is common. Marriage ceremony of the people of different religious faith are performed accordingly to the customs of their own religion. monogamy is widely performed by all sections of people Polygamy is prohibited just like a Hindu wedding, an Assamese wedding also has pre wedding and post wedding rituals. it is simple and yet very elegant. One of the unique and indispensable characteristics of the wedding is the traditional "biya naam" song.

Festival: Bihu is the chief festival in the Assam State of India and hence for the people living in Bokata Nemuguri also. It refers to a set of three different festivals. Rangali or Bohag Bihu observed in April. Kangali or kati Bihu observed in October, and Bhogali or Magh Bihu observed in January. The Rangali Bihu is the most important of the three celebrating the Assamese new year and the spring festival. The Bhogali or Magh Bihu is the one that is all about food. The Kongali or the Kati Bihu is the somber, thrifty one reflecting a season of short supplies (Kashyap, 2019).

Namghar: Namghar literally Name House are places for congregational worship associated with the 'Ekasarana' religion of Assam. In the Assamese language, 'Naam' means prayer and, 'Ghar' means house. Hence, it is called Namghar besides forming the primary structure use for worship, they also function as meeting houses for congregation, as well as theaters dramatic performances (Bhaona). The Namghar also called the Kirtanghar, is also the center structure in the 'Sattras' (Monasteries of the Ekasarana religion) where the other buildings are position around it. Namghars are wide spread in Assam, and very often more than one Namghar exists in a single village signifying many communities. People living in Nemuguri belong to same religion and therefore there are also a number of Namghars, Bhaona and cultural events are performed by the people living there (Das, 2001 & Chandra 2011).

Rationale of the study:

Women as human beings and the individuals in their own right have the same claim to basic human rights as the men, including decision making as regards to their own lives. In this regard the law makers in India enacted laws for equal treatment of women.

The Constitution of India prohibits any discrimination based on the grounds of sex in general and in the matter of property rights and public employment in particular. This prohibition of gender-based discrimination has been given the status of a fundamental right.

The research reports revealed that women in North East India enjoy better position than its counterpart in the rest of the country. It is, therefore, pertinent to explore the condition of women in terms of culture and belief and social implications on women rights of educated women.

If we see in the context of Bokata Nemuguri village, 45% women are highly educated in this village but it can be seen that still women are not socially, politically, economically empowered like men. Therefore, it is a matter of regret that we cannot find out the real picture of women status of the village. Hence, the present study focuses on the of socio-cultural practices which influences on women's right of educated women.

Objectives of the study:

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the of culture and believes on women's rights of educated women in Nemuguri village.
2. To study the socio-cultural factors that militating women's rights of educated women in Nemuguri village.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology or design entails the methods used by the researcher to study a particular research problem and the reason behind the methods in the context of the particular research study.

In the present study the descriptive survey method has been used.

Population:

Population states the total figure which is targeted by the researcher in order to accomplish the present study and analyze the data. In this present study, the target population consisted the educated women minimum of graduation and maximum of Masters or other equivalent degree of Nemuguri.

Sample:

The researchers have drawn the sample from the population. The sample size is 25 educated women. For this simple random sampling technique has been adopted.

Development of the Tools:

A survey was set up to gather data from the educated women of Nemuguri village regarding the impact of socio-cultural factors on women's right. The researcher developed a structured self-made questionnaire to gather the data. The data were collected through the questionnaire which were distributed among the respondents. The questions were both close and open ended it includes 15 different questions in 4-point scale i.e., Agree, Disagree, and Undecided and No-Comment.

Procedure of the Data Collection:

To collect the requisite data related impact of socio-cultural factors on women's right of educated women self-developed attitude scale was used. The researchers established a rapport with them. Initially the researcher distributed the questionnaires and requisite directions and instructions were given.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

Analyzing of the data is of great importance in a research work. Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. Thus, after the collection of data, it has to be processed and analyzes in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan.

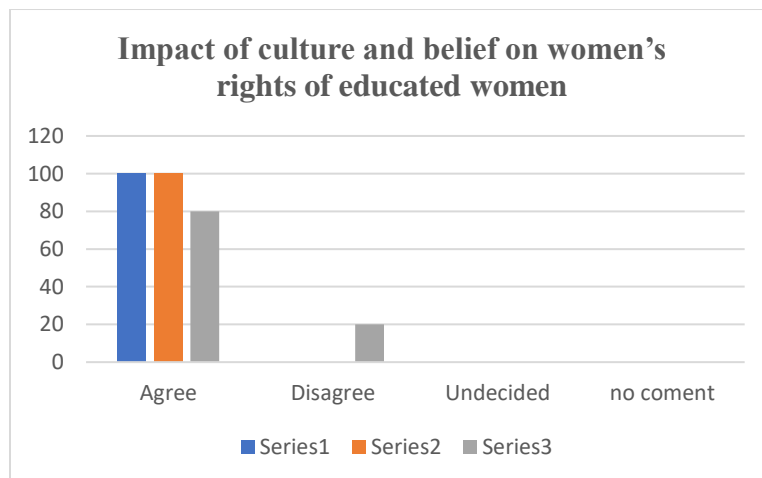
Then the data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore new facts. Keeping in view the objectives the data obtained from the sample were analyzed through qualitative and quantitatively.

Objective-1: To study the culture and belief on women's rights of educated women in Nemuguri village

Data representing the percentage of the responses of the educated women in connection with impact of culture and belief on women's rights of educated women (N=25)

Sl.no	Impact of culture and belief on women's rights of educated women	percentage of the responses of the educated women in connection with impact of culture and belief on women's rights of educated women							
		A		B		C		D	
1	Higher educated women get encouraged faster than men and other women do	A	%	D	%	UD	%	NC	%
		5	20%	20	80%	0	0	0	0
2	Educated women have courage to take stand against unsafe practices of society	2	8%	20	80%	3	12%	0	0
3	Higher educated women have significant autonomy in decision making at home and society	3	12%	22	88%	0	0	0	0

Graphical Representation-1.0



From the table and graphical representation no-1.0

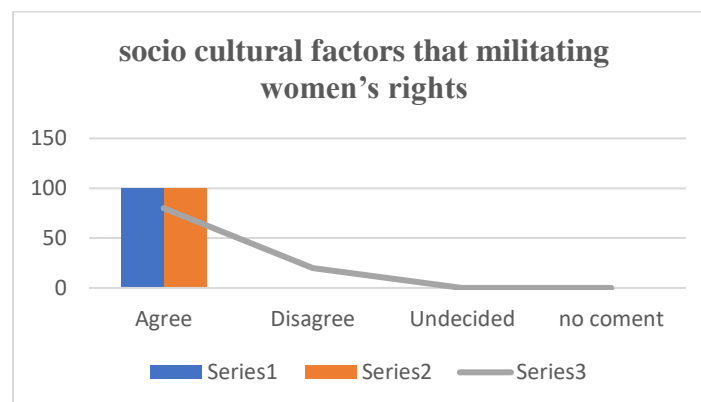
1. It is reveals that 20% of educated women have agreed that higher educated women get encouraged faster than men and other women do. While 80% of respondents do not agree with it.
2. It is also found that 8% of respondent agree that educated women have got courage to take stand against unsafe practices of society while 80% of respondent disagree with the statement and other 12% are unable to decide.
3. It is observed that 12% of respondent agreed that higher educated women have significant autonomy in decision making at home and society and other 88% respondent are not agreeing with it.

Objective 2: To study the socio-cultural factors that militating women's rights of educated women in Nemuguri village.

Data representing the percentage of the responses of the educated women in connection with different socio-cultural factors that militating women's rights of educated women (N=25)

Sl.no	socio cultural factors that militating women's rights	Data representing the percentage of the responses of the educated women in connection with different socio-cultural factors that militating women's rights of educated women							
		A		B		C		D	
		A	%	D	%	UD	%	NC	%
1	Some stereo type beliefs affect women rights such women cannot lead society like men.	25	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	In your society male authority over women's behaviour is considered normal and violence against women is seen to be acceptable.	25	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	It is very necessary to create awareness to promote holistic approach regarding women rights in society.	20	80%	5	20%	0	0	0	0

Graphical representation 2.0



From the table and graphical representation 2:

1. It is reveals that 25 % (cent percent) of respondent agreed that some stereo type beliefs affect women rights such women cannot lead society like men.
2. It is also found that 25% of respondents do agree that in their society male authority over women's behavior is considered normal and violence against women is seen to be acceptable.
3. It is also found that 80% of women agreed that there is need to create awareness among the people of society to promote holistic approach regarding women rights. While rest 20% of respondents are not agree with this view.

Major findings and discussion:

From the analysis of collected data it is found that

1. Some stereo type believes effects on women's rights of educated women gender inequality is exists in the society.
2. Belief in the inherent superiority of Man.
3. Socio cultural factors militating women's rights.
4. Patriarchy is the main cause for violating women rights of educated women.
5. Due to social force of uneducated people even educated women are bound to follow some unethical traditional practices.
6. In the society male authority over women's behavior is considered normal and violence against women is seen to be acceptable.
7. Most of the time educated women are also not able to take part in decision making process of family and society.
8. Accepting violence as a way of resolving conflict.
9. Gender specific socialization process.

Suggestions:

1. The society should abolish the unethical cultural beliefs and traditional practices that militate against women.
2. This will accord the women equal opportunity with their male counterpart in developmental issues.
3. Women should be sensitized for ones right.
4. There is need to create awareness among the people to promote a holistic approach to protect women rights.

Concluding Remark:

To conclude it can be said that in 21st century people are going very high, whole world is becoming a global village through the help of advance information and communication technology where women are able to perform better than men. Women are able to rule the country, and do the military assignments etc. But still there are many women who are not able enjoy their minimum rights due to some social or cultural forces of the society. From the present study it can be conclude that though the rate of women education is growing yet most of the women are oppressed with humiliating and dangerous widowhood rites, relegated to low-income jobs, denied the right to own land or property as well as denial of the right of daughters and widows to inheritance. Women with higher education are also not free from male domination or they are subjugated with household's activity all in the name by discrimination and cultural beliefs. Therefore, it is very necessary to create awareness among the people to remove all the unethical practices and pitfalls from the society and to protect women rights by establishing equality in society.

References

- [1] Burton, C. (1997). Gender equity in Australian university staffing. (3rded.). Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service. Retrieved from [http:// www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca)
- [2] Elegbede, R. (2012). Commission on human rights, preliminary report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. Retrieved from UN doc. e/cn.4/1995/42, 20-21
- [3] Dingell, J. D., Maloney, C. B. (2002). A new look through the glass ceiling: where are the women? Journal of Public Relation Research, 14(1), 27-55. Retrieved from [http:// www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca)
- [4] Perrie, P. (1997). Culture and beliefs: social implication on education of women in Nsukka local government area, Enugu state, Nigeria. International Journal of Scientific and Research, 6(2), 2250-3153. Retrieved from [http:// www.jisrp.org](http://www.jisrp.org)