



A RESEARCH BASED ON A WOMAN IN NON-MILLENNIAL ERA AND PERSPECTIVE ON GENDER IN TERMS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL VIEW

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Introduction

Gender can be defined biologically and sociologically, where terms interpret different meanings. In terms of social interpretation, gender is constructed by norms, values and behavior of male and female, the roles played by each party and maintained of relationships according to the social view point. In a way to create the concept of gender tangible in the analysis of microeconomics three main roles have been identified as identity, relationships and roles. Gender plays a major role in society where inequality arises in different aspects such as socially, economically and politically. In the world context, gender inequalities are greater in South-Asian regions rather than in the Western and Eastern parts of the world. It can differ according to the location, parental education, religious backgrounds, social norms, culture in the world, which are external of an individual. (Roemer, 2006). According to the report released by the World Bank 2007, the women are subjected to lower level of economic opportunities, basic human rights, labor market and also lower level of entries to political participation. (Bank, 2007). Female labor force is a key measurement of a nation to identify the women empowerment. In the Sri Lankan context, the higher rate of women participation can be seen in education and health sector than in the past two decades. Analysis indicates that contribution to female labor force differs among married, single and mothers with children. Furthermore, gender division of labor and time devoted to unpaid work were higher in the present Sri Lanka and this is especially observed with mothers having children. The study intends to investigate how the evolution of a woman occurred from non-millennial time to millennial specifically investigating the woman's perspective on gender inequality in non-millennial era in terms of economic aspect.

The following objectives were addressed in the paper:

- To investigate if the gender inequality existed in the society in terms of economic aspect
- To identify the issues that exist for working/market/paid women while engaged in un-paid or household activities within an economic framework
- To explore the perspective of government policy framework and recommendations to reduce the gender inequalities in terms of economic aspect

Methodology

The case study focused with a single woman to identify her perspective on gender inequality in terms of economic aspect. This paper focused on the perspective on gender inequality in terms of economic aspect via the three sections of identity, horizon and decision-making. The research questionnaire was composed with ten questions covering the above objectives and a direct interview method was used by conducting face- to- face interviews.

Discussion and Results

The paper illustrates the perspectives of a woman upon the gender inequalities and issues that arise in the system coming to market work, based on the economic aspect. Here, the major idea was discussed via the three aspects of identity, horizon and decision making.

G.G T. Manike is a dedicated teacher trainer in Sri Lanka, who was born in 1938, 18th of April in Anuradhapura District. Due to the parents' business activities her family has moved to Matale District where she has spent her childhood from 1938 onwards up to her secondary education. In 1954 she has started her secondary education and opted to become a teacher for primary level in a government school. Upon this time, she recalls her memory on how she was brought up as a girl by her parents "After passing the secondary level examination I had opportunity to enter the Polgolla-Kandy Teaching Practice School in 1957. It was a tough situation where I had to take the decision according to my choice to study further while parents wish to get married to someone as soon as possible. I got married in 1963 after positioning as a primary teacher in a rural area of Matale and my



husband wanted me to take the career forward without giving up. When it was 1980, we had seven children three female and four male children”. According to the economic theory of marriage by Gary Becker in 1981 marriage defined as it is a mutual commitment of bringing resources and converting them to consumable form and raising children by committing to each other. (Becker, 1974). According to the terms of economy, marriage in a few decades ago, men were subjected to earn money and women depended on their husbands. Economically, domestic or unpaid work was not calculated in market economy and in terms of social conceptual model; it was a patriarchy system where the wife had to be in a lower position to her husband. The divorce was a huge blame to women because married women depending on men’s income had to endure their life. According to the interviewees statements, it could identify that from her mother’s generation to her, the thinking pattern has changed and women somewhat open up with their choices. When the marriage takes place after getting her employment, parents have proposed to a man to get married. Even though it was not her choice as a woman she had to get married because of her social status and getting married is the safest tool for a woman according to her parents. The bargaining power of women becomes lower when dependent on the men and as Iversena and Rosenbluth in 2010 demonstrated that in the early period of industrialization women had lower bargaining power after social community living period and post industrialization when service sector started and women’s bargaining power was increased. (Iversen, 2010) According to her, she identified that as an independent woman she has the power of bargaining in the paid and unpaid/household market work. A woman who has financial stability received the power dividend in a family to a certain extent yet the cultural framework has depressed the woman’s role in market work.

In 1956 appointed as a primary teacher she worked till 1989 in her service sector. She was a more career oriented woman and she decided to get trained in different places in the country including Peradeniya-Kandy, Naywala-Weyangoda and Muthukandiya-Halawatha in-house training centers from time to time. But she had to ask the husband because of the responsibilities of children she had as a mother. Further she recalled the memory when her parents did not agree with the decision at the time for vocational trainings because of perspective that they had was women to take care of the family and men to earn income (Manike, 2021) and thereby she has worked in several demographic locations in Sri Lanka in her career life. According to her reflection that women were more independent when having the financial independency at the period of 1970’s and the financial independency of women is more reflective in current society. When looking at statues of employment public sector has 16.0% of females and private sector has 42.8% of working women in Sri Lanka as at 2009 (Labour Force Survey , 2009).

Identity of a woman is a major factor in present society rather few decades ago and formation of identity took an individual female the way she defines herself and identity subjected to formation in occupation, profession or the career. When describing the interviewee’s role as a woman and how she identifies herself in the terms of “identity” in aspects of economics; “I believe that the identity of a woman should form before she enters into marriage, and it should be her own decision. I’ve started my occupation before I entered into marriage and I was not in the attitude to drop off the career. Identity plays a major role and women get reflected in society with her Identity. When I was appointed as a teacher in 1956, I was accepted by the society with respect, honor more than other females. When I moved in the career I had many male competitors to compete with. It was not easy to handle the career and maintaining the role of a daughter, mother and women in the society and especially as a working woman” (Manike, 2021). Further, she demonstrated that marriage is the major obstacle for a woman to create her identity as a working/paid worker and further, she stressed on the issue of married women, when entering the job market of government and privet firms. Since, the non-millennial era it has been gazette under the government amendment that unmarried women are eligible to apply for the post of vacant and this created the wider gap in the gender inequalities. According to her “I have been in my service for 37 years and I had to face various discriminations while climbing the career ladder. I had to compete with several male parties with seven children and in many situations I could not get the opportunity for being a woman. In the job market, even though I wanted to step for a higher position I could not separate the adequate time for studies due to the household activities. Since, there is a rare number of women who work in the society, the occupation and care of family members is the greatest hassle a woman should come-a-cross. According to her view, even if a woman entered the labor market if she was not having children or if the woman was



not able to fulfill duties and responsibilities, society would reject womanhood. Even if the woman gets into the labor market it was for a short term and identifies as passive actors. The identity of the earning is defined as passive income where it supports the family to run but basically not to identify a woman as a financially independent female. Furthermore, in recent periods of time it has been identified that personality traits have influence on the personality of people irrespective of gender. In the current labor market the most common approach is to consider the personality traits as part of a person's traits such that, cognitive skills and these have higher demand in the market for women. (Bowles, 2001). Yet, from the past decades women are subjected to enroll specified occupations such as education, health or service sector which is formed to be 8-5 working hours.

Issues that she identified according to her experience related to the household/non-market and professional/market work, such that woman has to equally balanced the both household and professional career, yet many of the working women subjected to the discrimination of unequal pay gaps, career development, being in the higher positions due to extra responsibilities women needs to carry on. Labor market further basically tried to hire the unmarried woman though the qualifications applicable with married women and hence, the inequality in job opportunities available in the market is fewer. Further, she mentioned the discrimination in the job market for her as, "I was passed the examination for the Principal examination in Sri Lanka for IIIrd class. But I was disqualified for the final appointments due to the maternity I was experienced". According to the Seema Jayachandran in her research mentioned that analyzing the gender in micro-economic environment, though the policies has passed yet, Women faced different discrimination in terms of economics during the professional exposure as well as house-care works. Furthermore, G.G Tikiri Manike explained the scenario of being a working woman and becoming to the higher positioned/higher-chair as a woman, society tried to manipulate the women. The basic reason she recognized for the issue is that "economy holds a huge role in people's lives, and everyone tries to earn more assets in terms of money for being successful. It's more natural that a man becomes rich or high ranked and is considered to be honored. Yet, becoming a woman for the position is generally identified as an illegal crime such as she has been abused or her character is such questionable. After ages, I could see a good transmission of the bad view towards the women and most of the women tried to achieve the equality in power positions" therefore, Seema Jayachandran's articles demonstrated the major issue of becoming a woman is the gender differentiation and it has impacted in the economic market as well as in the economy of the household.

Perspective on Policy framework and Recommendations:

In 1957 when she entered the market she demonstrated that in 1993 after Sri Lanka reflected women's inspiration with laws and legislations which passed to working agendas in the public and private sectors. Moreover, she experienced that women empowerment programs have been initiated to start domestic earnings to uplift the wellbeing of the women in the community. She described that in their estates there were 10-12 working women and the income they had was identified as passive income and with the women empowerment programs they started to earn as individuals contributing to the national economy. In south Asian countries such as Thailand, Singapore has implemented paternity leaves in partially with maternity leaves to share the domestic activities, develop gender equality and to reduce the gender discrimination. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has implemented both the constitution and the general law of the country to develop the gender equality and to reduce the issues in marriage and divorce as well as act to protect the women employees in the organization against gender violence. Furthermore, she stressed that with the revolution of the society and women in working, the rate of divorce happened in the society started rising and it reflects that financial independency of women pushed to take decisions individually and part of men in the society do not accept the change of women, due to their attitude based on the background they were brought up. Women are basically nominated in doing what is known as unpaid labor in the household. Today statistically it is proven that a high percentage of women are entering the labor market majority are in the health, education and service sector. Further, based on the discussion it was identical that there were difficulties to climb the career ladder with comparison of males. Yet, there were few opportunities in the labor market for the women in society. The policies which were enforced by the Sri Lankan government were fruitful at the time based on her reflection pointing to maternity leave and work hours in the market works.



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