Discrimination among Tribal Girl Child in Jharkhand: A Study of Khunti District

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Discrimination against female children has been a topic of debate. It has been a subject of concern and sociological significance. This subject raises the cultural aspects about the role of a female child in society, what her human rights are as a human being and a no. of sensitive issues. This issue is important because there is nearly universal consensus on the need for gender equality. Gender based discrimination against female children is pervasive across the world. It is seen in all the strata of society and manifests in various forms. We had tried to see such kind of social discrimination in Khunti Area, a tribal dominated district of Jharkhand Province of India. Since this area is very close to the state capital of Jharkhand and Govt. as well as NGO's are running a lot of programmes and providing facilities to uplift the status of girl child. But the finding reveals all the efforts and result shows that discrimination is still in society not at social level but it happens at Home and school level also. Girls are not only tourchered by their parents and relatives but also sometimes school teacher as well as their batch mate tourcher them.
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Children possess innumerable potentials, the brain is 75% developed at the age of five to six years (Gardner, 1982)[1]. My observation about Khunti area and FGD with the childrensespecially from tribal society, reveals that of children in a natural setting demonstrates that tribal girls do not enjoy their rights. Even they do not get the chance to play and enjoy their childhood. From their early childhood, they are loaded with the responsibilities of adult women.

The motivation to attend to messages and take action takes strength, energy, will, time, an understanding of their importance and encouragement to engage in family enhancing behavior. From a social justice perspective, the issue of the quality of early learning experiences is bigger than parent messages and has implications for the positioning of children as a social or a private responsibility – being mindful of the maxim that it takes a village to raise a child! One might ask as FairClough (Wall, 2004:46)[2]

Are we constructing social problems as problems for individuals? Early disadvantage, such as the impact of poverty, ill health and other adversities, can have a significant influence on children's future progress, and are more often than not beyond the control of individual families (Siraj-Blatchford &Woodhead, 2009:4)[3]

Children are social actors shaped by their environment[4] who, in turn, play a role in shaping it. Young children develop best in warm, responsive environments that protect them from inappropriate disapproval and punishment; environments in which there are opportunities to explore their world, to play, and to learn how to speak and listen to others.[5] Stimulation has an independent effect on perceptual motor development outcomes among stunted children, over and above nutritional supplementation.[6] Yet for all these objections Marx appears in the end as a strong supporter of the system combining schooling with labour for children. In bringing his earlier reports up to date for the first volume of Capital, which was published in 1867, he added

a comment that "the obstacles in the way of the education clauses have, of late years, been to some extent overcome."[7]Further information will be found in senior's speech at the social science congress in Edinburgh in the year 1863. He shows there, among other things, how the monotonous and needlessly long school day for children of the upper and middle classes uselessly adds to the labour of the teacher. While he not only fruitlessly, but absolutely injuriously, wastes the time, health and energy of the children."[8]

In a footnote Marx adds a remark taken from the evidence to the Children's Employment Commissioners by the owner of a silk factory who naively declares…… I wish my own children could have some work as well as play to give variety to their schooling'[9]See e.g. the references to "self-evident laws of nature" in Marx, Capital, trans. E. and C.Paul (London: J.M. Dent, 1930), p. 817

In his two major works on education, Durkheim discussed both the nature of the secular creed and the means by which it should be transmitted to future generations. In moral Education Durkheim stressed the importance of the transcendental dimension of the secular ethic: let us not forget that we cannot institute lay education unless we assign to the individual and end that transcends him, unless we can provide some objective for the need for devotion and sacrifice that lies at the root of all moral life. If society is only an appearance and moral reality ends with the individual, to what can he become devoted? To what can he sacrifice himself[10] (1961a:260)

Therefore, it is worth spending some time looking at the ways in which early childhood care and development settings can address gender issues in Khunti District. We can observe that the social environment in Khunti District begins to favor a boy child.

Area of Study :

Khunti district is one of the twenty-four districts in South Chotanagpur division of the Indianstate of Jharkhand. The district of Khunti was carved out of Ranchi district on 12 September 2007. The average literacy rate of Khunti in 2011 is 64.51 compared to 52.92 in 2001. Moreover, gender wise male and female literacy is 75.33 and 53.71 respectively in 2011. The schools are:

Upg Ps Akta- Managed by the Dept. of Education, of Jharkhand, has classes from Standard- 1 and up to Standard- 5 (Primary only School).

Grace Heart School Anigara--Managed by the Unrecognised, of Jharkhand, has classes from Standard- 1 and up to Standard- 8 (P. with U.Primary School).

Kundi Residential School- Managed by the T/Social Welfare Dept., of Jharkhand, has classes from Standard- 1 and up to Standard- 10 (P + UP & Sec School).

UpgGovtMs-cum-hsAnigara-Managed by the Dept. of Education, of Jharkhand, has classes from Standard- 1 and up to Standard- 10 (P + UP & Sec School).

Upg Ps Kundi-Managed by the Dept. of Education, of Jharkhand, has classes from Standard- 1 and up to Standard- 5 (Primary only School).

The criteria for selection of these schools was there should be more than 50 percent tribal students.

Background of Discrimination:

Discrimination among girls child in KhuntiDistrict: We should not believe that a girl child is inferior to a boy child. This is not inferiority but transferred belief and practices from generation wise. Any discrimination between male and female children at home and in society is simply criminal. Rights on papers that are not protected and implemented are not legal rights at all.

During my one month of field observation and FGD with the tribal girl childs of Khunti, I observed ,and get all the relevant information regarding gender bias and discrimination at grass root level at various places among the child like girl and boy. This observation is being conducted in khunti district of Jharkhand Province. This district is basically tribal dominated where more than 65 percent people are from this community. These communities basically follow their own culture and tradition but they are very much influence by Hindu religion and follow their culture as well as tradition in their day to day life, therefore as the restriction is being imposed among the girls of Hindu religion just like that tribal community of this district is also following the same. I found the following things-

1. At home level different kind of discrimination between and girl and boys can be seen-
    a. Brother watch TV and sister do household works
    b. Brother beats sister.
    c. Brother order sister to work
    d. Boy do outside work
    e. Boy play and girl do works at house
    f. Girl doesn't get new cloths but boy get it
    g. Girl are not allowed to go anywhere where as boys are allowed to go freely.
    h. Boy get food earlier than girl
    i. Boy gets their education from private schools whereas girls get it from govt. schools.
    j. Boys go to school for enjoyment where as some times girls could not go to school due to some household works.
    k. After doing household works girls are allowed to go to school i.e. work is their priority
    l. Girls cannot play outside but work like collecting wood items, cow grazing, Goat grazing, to bring water and fodder for animal all are the responsibilities of girls as well as decoration of house, throw dung, peas break, sow etc these all works are being done by the girls but they can never touch the haal.
    m. Boys do marriage with their own choice but girls are not allowed to do so.
    n. Boys earn and they expense the amount but when girls earn there is no right at earning they are not free to use accordingly.
    o. The girls are soon married, husband order the work to wife and she considers that order.
    p. Husband tires but wife never tire of lavishing
    q. Wife earns money but husband beat her and take the money.

Basically discrimination between boys and girls start at home basis. This shows that boy's gets various kind of opportunities regarding their life style, use of things/commodities where as girls are almost engaged in household works and are not entitled to supersede the boys. They had just to follow the direction of parents especially mother and brother also orders her to do specific works. When brother is passing such order no one is there to restrict over his order.

2. At school-
    a. Boys and girls have different seat
    b. Boys tease girls have different names
    c. Girls don't get toys
    d. Boys captures game field
    e. Boys get cricket, football items where as girls get Rssi jump and redesigned items
    f. Boys get punished only during study time otherwise they never.
    g. Girls punished every time but boys not.
    h. When boys go outside the school nobody complain but when girl go they punished.

i. Nobody listen the voice of the girls.

We can see school differentiation between girls and boys very easily. Either the matter is capturing seat to sit, control over game fields etc. boys always get priority. As we talk about the traditionalism of tribal communities they had their own school to which they call youth dormitory where boys and girls enjoyed (that has happens in traditional tribal society) their life without any kind of difference and discrimination.(different dormitory but with same process of living and behaving . They learn all the culture of society which is required for the betterment of tribal community. But in modern training centre like school they are being discriminated at every level. This has happened only with the impact of Hinduism and Christianity as well as modernization with modern life style, where people think that what the work that a boy can, no girl can do so.

3. At peer group level-
   a. Boy think girls are weak.
   b. Girls do friendship where as boys think that she loves him.
   c. Boys never do help where as girls always do the same.
   d. When boys take the assets of girls they never return it.

When we discuss the discrimination at peer group or friendship level, boys think that girls are weaker than them, who have developed such kind of mentality in a boy mind. This all has happened due to the socio-cultural practices and pattern among the society.

4. Facilities and Restrictions-
   a. Drive vehicle to become boy, girls do so.
   b. Drive auto, bicycle
   c. Enjoy
   d. Drive bike and Girls play on.
   e. To help girls
   f. Boy's do hair cutting with own choice.
   g. Tilling the land
   h. Earn money
   i. Do study
   j. Study in private schools
   k. Dream is to be Doctor, Police, engineer
   l. Will play cricket
   m. Wear jeans
   n. Will do job
   o. Complete their education
   p. Will go to Procession and Guesting
   q. Wear sunglasses and drive scooty.
   r. Will study in good schools
   s. Wear new cloths
   t. Never marry in teenage
   u. Marry with own choice.
   v. Boys never face any restrictions.

Later we discussed about the facilities and restrictions, found that boys are allowed to drive each and every vehicle where as girls are not allowed to do so. As on the basis of such discrimination, girls are not able to fulfil their dreams like become doctor, engineer, completing education, wearing sunglasses, wear jeans, and competing boys. It really shows that there is revolution among girls to eradicate such restrictions and equal opportunities in context with boys.

Girls and boys enjoyed several privilege and restrictions in their life. In privilege, boys do, they go to school, Dhan in the field planting, plowing, bull running, line marna, najarladana, they indicate from hanky, drive vehicle, ladkipatana, citimarna, kiss karna, keep small hair, speak I love you, to go walk, drive vehicle in hero style, get money.But in restrictions mode they had to work house, to do cleaning Rice selection, sweeping, throwing dung, look after the children, Chopping vegetables, decorated, embellished, wear cloth like girls, to work outside the home, long hair, to wash cloth, clean school etc.

After this we had asked about the like and dislike of the girls regarding their socio cultural behavior and prosperity in society. when we asked to what they like the told that they want to play, want to run, reading, listen song, ladkapatana, do friendship, to wear new cloths, to speak all, go to outside, eat food at restaurant, to go to guesting, watch TV, walk in park, dancing, to play and walk with boyfriend, drive scooty.

About dislike to fled away from school, make a querral, to speak more, reading, taking bath, to work in house Plow, cultivate large, the bull phase, wash dishes, to beat anyone, to cook, wear dirty cloths, drink hadia (local wine) and wine, when some boy Chert.

The issues which make girls embarrassed is talking about MC, about boyfriend, matters related to love, abusing, matters of chert, when somebody aankh mare. It shows that girls are not ready to accept those activities which are related to their emotional and physical behavior. So basically girls want to make some kind of difference from these matters.

The female child in Khunti District is often deprived from her right of an education. The basic facility of education is deprived to her. Also, even if she is in school, the number of girls dropping out of school far exceeds the boys. Definitely, this is because she is expected to help at home, either in household work like washing, cooking or help in taking care of her younger siblings. Since girls spend more time completing domestic/household chores and this increases the gap between female and male equality in rural parts of Jharkhand, it perpetuates the myth that education is of no help to the girl and her primary job will be to look after the household work, get married early, have children and then raise them. Girls in khunti face higher risks of malnutrition, disease, disability and retardation of growth and development. They have no access to or control over the resources. Their work towards raising a family and in the household chores is undervalued.

I observed that due to parents' and teachers' different attitude towards the children, most of the girls were less confident while expressing their future aspiration as compared to that of the boys.

Overall, the gender differences in our society create hindrances in the developmental process of our children from the time of birth. Often parents, teachers and community lack understanding about the influence of gender biases in the children's progress and development. The parents, teachers and society at large should bring about positive changes in their socialization process of children. Equality and friendship are much better than gender differences and a sense of being strangers among children.

Suggestions:

1. Through media, TV, newspapers, posters - parents, teachers and community should be educated to bring a positive change in their attitude towards a girl and a boy from their birth.
2. The educational policy of India should motivate parents and teachers to encourage their daughters to be educated as well as use their rights to play and enjoy.
3. In a teacher education program, a module about how 'gender discrimination' plays a negative role in the developmental process of children should be introduced. The teachers should be given skills to nurture both boys and girls.

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