CHAPTER - I

GENDER AND WORK : THE FRAME OF REFERENCE
INTRODUCTION

Social factors are crucial contributors to existing differences in opportunities, rewards and limitations of women and men. It is through social processes including socialization, but most importantly through the effects of Social Institutions, such as the economic and political systems that 'Gender roles' are shaped and reshaped throughout the life cycle. Thus the single most important and basic idea is that the relationship between one's sex and one's gender role is socially influenced. The relationship is the basis for a 'Sociology of Gender'.

A 'gender role' is a set of behaviours, attitudes and motivations culturally associated with each sex. Gender roles are, therefore socially developed or encouraged differences between two sexes. Using the term 'Gender role' rather than sex role deemphasizes the biological aspects. Gender roles reflect gender differences, variations in the social positions, roles, behaviours, attitudes and personalities of men and women in a society.

SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER-THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

Sex-stratification suggests that the sexes and their related gender roles are hierarchically ranked in terms of ownership, power, social control, prestige and social rewards. The theories about sex-stratification may be grouped into those that focus on individuals and those that focus on societies. Theories about individuals, attribute different status and life chances to biological differences between the sexes, or they stress the unequal socialization men and women receive. Social theories suggest that gender roles emerge from the functions they serve in society or result from power and domination.
Individual theories are contradicted by the fact that behaviours prescribed for men and women vary enormously from one society to another. Studies reveal that socialization, the life-long process of learning socially appropriate attitudes, motivations and behaviours, is a powerful means of perpetuating gender roles.

Cultural values and socialization rather than biological necessity are instrumental in shaping gender role behaviours and personalities (Mead, 1935). Aside from being told that what girls and boys do and being rewarded or punished for what they do themselves, children take on gender role identities through a process called modeling - that is, copying the behaviour of the 'Significant others' - the people who surround the child and with whom the child interacts regularly.

On the other hand, functionalists - Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales (1955) have suggested that the division of labour by sex is functional for the modern family. They explain gender roles in terms of 'instrumental - expressive' diad. According to this, a modern family should consist of two adults, each of whom specializes in specific roles. One adult, usually the father, plays the 'instrumental' role, providing the link with the outside world, especially through the provision of income. The other adult, usually the mother, plays the expressive role. The instrumental role calls for its bearer to be dominant and aggressive, the expressive role calls for passivity and nurturance.

Conflict Sociologists attribute the inequality between the sexes to lack of control over property with its attendant lack of power and privilege. In another vein, Fredrick Engels (1972) theorized that, changes in the economic structure of societies brought about a lessening of status for women. In particular, he claimed that it was the transition from a kin society to a more complex kind of
Gessellschaft society that brought with it, patriarchy, followed by the emergence of private property and class inequality.

Randoll Collins (1975) argues that the superior Physical strength of men in relation to women is the source of their dominance. Once physical domination was established, men began developing ideologies to support their elevated position. To this phenomenon, he gave the name ‘patriarchy’. While the radical feminists admit that economic forces play a part, they see the manifestation of patriarchy as an over-reaching all pervasive phenomenon.

John Stuart Mill (1970), on the otherhand, thought that the inferior status of women would be eradicated with the modernization of societies. Mill was not alone in trusting technological progress to better the condition of women. Women themselves entertained similar ideas. In reality, however, modernity and the modern economies have not been total blessings to women. With the advent of factories and mass production, the market place became restricted for women. Thus a decrease in women’s participation led to decrease in their status.

GENDER AND WORK - THE SITUATION OF THE GIRL CHILD : INDIAN SCENARIO

In India, family enjoys little recognition without child and since time immemorial, male child is preferred to female as it is believed that sons are an assurance of social security and they perpetuate the family name. Thus, for the average girl child in India, the privations of poverty are significantly aggravated by value systems and cultural practices which define and determine their role.

Indian society is oppressively ‘patriarchal’ and it is the patriarchy, which perpetuated gender bias. In India, girls are socialized from the very beginning to accept their situation and the ideology of male supremacy which make them
subject to a whole range of discriminatory practices. Thus, in the absence of alternative models of role and conduct they expound and propagate the dominant social and cultural values which mitigate against the interests of their gender group.

While the male children are given extra care, the female child in India, is cared for less, given the least priority and is considered to be financial liability. The attitude towards the female child is a reflection of Indian Society's attitude towards women in general. Women are widely considered to be expendable, dependent and economically unproductive. Investment in them, like dowry in marriage, education and training is considered wasteful (K.D. Gangrade, 1988).

Gender roles in the family, through their asymmetry in demands of time and responsibility, produce very different outside employment patterns for men and women. The occupations which are held by the two sexes, once employed differ in a clear and persistent pattern resulting in 'occupational segregation'. Not only do men and women tend to do different kinds of work but they tend to be differently rewarded in pay, prestige and power. Both of these patterns-different occupations and differential rewards are socially defined as appropriate in light of stereotyped gender difference.

Once jobs become segregated, the pattern is perpetuated through social labelling of the job as sex-appropriate. Having limited the occupations for which women can be hired, the phenomenon of crowding takes place, whereby women who are seeking employment gravitate through lack of alternative opportunities to those occupations classified as women's work (Barbara R. Bergmann, 1974). An oversupply of labour for these positions results, and employers are able to
fill their needs while paying low wages. Thus, employers' acceptance of gender stereotypes is useful for them.

The above cited phenomenon is all pervasive throughout the world and India which is patriarchal is no exception. Despite the promulgation of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act in 1986, children and especially girls, continue to be involved in hazardous and non-remunerative occupations. The work of girls is usually invisible because it is located in the domestic sphere and as a rule, household tasks defy quantification and monetary valuation (Siddiquei, 1985).

Nevertheless, working girls in the urban unorganized sector remain largely unseen; they are overlooked by law, policy and programmes. According to the 1981 census 8.35 per cent girls under 14 years of age were main workers and 9.35 per cent were marginal workers. While the larger proportion of girls is involved on full time economic activity, boys are often marginal workers.

This is partly because boys go to school for some hours of the day. Interestingly, a comparison of the labour force participation rate of male and female children shows that between the years 1971 and 1981 there was an increase in the work participation rate of girls and a decrease in case of boys. However, some observers have noted that female participation rates tended to be underestimated in the 1971 census, since female respondents did not consider household work to be productive work.

Indicative though these general statistics may be, it must be noted that while child labour force according to the 1981 census was 13.59 million and the National Sample Survey estimate for 1983 is 17.30 million, that of the ‘Operations Research Group’ (a private organisation in Baroda) for 1985 was 44 million. One
reason for these large differences is that, while the census counts as workers only those children who are engaged in economically productive work.

A report on the 'Status of Women' from birth till 20 years produced for the 'National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development' further reveals the following:

(i) While the percentage of rural working girls in the age group 5-14 years shot up from 4.6% in 1971 to 7.8% in 1981, that of working boys declined from 11.7% to 10.05% in the same period.

(ii) In the 15-19 age group the number of female child workers has gone by 17% while the figure for boys has decreased.

(iii) Age wise, girls enter the workforce earlier than boys. Eight per cent of female child workers in the study were below 14 years of age. For boys the percentage was just 4%. Over all 20% of girls under 20 years are main workers, while the figures for boys is just 14%. And these figures do not take into account domestic labour in the girls' own home-from which boys are largely spared.

The above cited statistics reveal that the bulk of the working child population is found in rural areas. Significantly, while the work of girls in rural India is very visible, this is not so in the urban unorganised sector. Here girls are found in some concentrations of child labour but not in others. For eg., of the 45,000 working children in the Sivakasi Match Industry in Tamil Nadu, approximately 90% are girls under the age of 14.

Girls are found in large numbers in the Coir Industry of Kerala and in home based industries like incense making and papad preparation. There are many working in the beedi industry, the making of paper bags and garments,
cotton-pod and groundnut shelling; hand embroidery, block making and the sub assembling of electrical and electronic items. A rough estimate gives approximately 6,000 girls work in the gem polishing trade of Jaipur. Hundreds of girls work in the lock-making industry of Aligarh, the brassware industry of Mordabad in Uttar Pradesh, the carpet industry of Jammu and Kashmir and the Zari embroidery industry of Varanasi.

From the above cited instances and figures it appears that there is a strong ‘Sex typing’ of roles as regards the work that female and male children do in agriculture and in the household industry. All studies indicate that the burden of household duties falls largely upon the female child.

In rural areas girls are engaged in looking after younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and fetching water. Sex typing of work takes place also in the unorganised sector where certain jobs are considered female jobs and the evidence suggests that in India, girls in the unorganised sector are engaged in low paid or unpaid unskilled occupations which do not necessarily lead to skill formation (Neera Burra, 1989). The jobs that boys do, on the otherhand as Patil, B.R. (1988) points out in his study of working children in Bangalore, are closely related to apprenticeship training and skill formation.

Though not many studies were conducted on girlchild labour in particular, to be sure some insights in the area can be gained by reviewing the related literature.

Centre for Social Research (1984) in the unorganised sector at Sivakasi and a few others. All these studies report that most of the child workers are drawn from lower economic strata and the working conditions of the child labour are detrimental and hazardous to the child workers and they are subjected to exploitation by the employers for their economic gain.

However, a few studies as regards girl child labour are as follows:

The Madras Institute of Development Studies (1985) on the basis of their study on child labour in the Match Industry in Sivakasi observed:

"Female workers, both adults and children, are far more widely employed in the match industry than male workers. They are universally employed in piece rated work and not used in any kind of work requiring supervisory capability. On the other hand, there are cases of boys serving as apprentices or helpers in functions in which at least a small number will continue after growing up".

Patil, B.R. (1988) in his study on working children in Bangalore found a clear difference in educational status between females and males. He attributed this to the fact, that girls start working at an early age and poorer families do not attach much importance to the education of their daughters. He also points out that lack of education, training or skills make the girls involve in low paid or unpaid unskilled occupations.

Leela Gulati (1985) in her study on child labour in Kerala coir industry found that 21 per cent of the girls were illiterate as against 15 per cent of the boys. She also writes that there is a clear cut sex differentiation between the work that male and female children do in the coir industry. While both boys and girls are employed in rotating the spinning wheel, cleaning and winnowing the fibre. Gulati
says: "What can safely be generalised that even in the two operations, wheel spinning and husk beating, while girls tend to outnumber boys in a big way, it is especially so with respect to husk beating which is possibly one of the messiest jobs".

Ishrat Ali Siddiquei (1985) says: the underestimation of domestic and household work affects the attitudes of parents towards their daughters and confers on girls a status lower than that of their brothers. He shows that the average girl child contributes 29 per cent of the total time spent gathering fuelwood, and 20 per cent of that fetching water. In Eastern Uttar Pradesh, where women spend between one and four hours daily on household work in addition to a back-breaking day in the fields, at least 30 per cent of the household burden and 20 per cent of the agricultural work is shared by girl children.

Neera Burra (1987) in her study on child labour in the gem polishing industry of Jaipur and Brassware industry of Mordabad reports that while piece-rate wages and the system of subcontracting keep women and girls in low-paid jobs, whenever new technology is introduced in order to increase production, women and girls find themselves unemployed.

She observes: In the gem polishing industry, the task of piercing beads used to be predominantly a female job on which hundreds of women and girls were employed. This work is still done manually by them. But owing to the increased international demand for gem stones an ultrasonic machine has been introduced to do the same work. Though it is a relatively simple device, nowhere in Jaipur are women seen operating it. The wages paid to men working on the machine are five times higher than those of women and girls doing the same job manually because the output of the latter is much lower.
Ela Bhatt (1987) in her study on piece rate workers in India observes: In most home based industries - like the incense and beedi industries, the adult woman is paid at such a low rate that merely to earn a pittance she is compelled to enlist the help of her daughters.

Malini Karkal (1989) brings out the fact that "Among the girls who do not attend school, a very substantial number are engaged in economic activities, in addition to taking responsibilities in the household. She opines that "child labour is exploited not only by their employers, but parents have a major role in it too. The engagement in labour denies opportunities of development, it means that continuance of child labour contributes to the perpetuation of social evils such as bonded labour and poverty in general".

Anandlakshmi, S. (1991), based on the empirical data gathered from a study on traditional craftsmen's families observes that adult behaviour, maternal socialization and sex-stereotyping, expected by society, are learnt within her own family by the girl child. And, here a girl child is at a disadvantage as the tradition of India is to over indulge the male at cost of the female. She shows that there is a discernible relationship between the nature of the parental occupation, the eco-cultural milieu and the specific aspects of the child's socialization.

Usha S. Nayar (1991) opines: Multi-dimensional exploitation is inflicted upon the Indian girl child labourers both at home and at their job-economically, sexually, personally and educationally. The discriminatory attitude of the family and society is contributing to demean the identity and self-worth of the girl child. As a way out, she calls for legislative/and social change through a mass movement on community awareness in the direction of compulsory schooling for girls which will enable the girl child to avail the rights of childhood.
Aparna Subramanian (1991) brings forth the problems of the work patterns and the relationship of the patterns to age, birth order, family type, family size, occupational status of other family members and educational status of siblings. She found that there is a definite, if varying connection between the patterns of work and these factors. The findings are substantiated by three case studies, which show that with responsibilities like care of siblings, cattle grazing or wage work, the opportunity for development is denied to the girl child, who has no time to play or learn.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The above reflections reveal the following trends of 'Gender and work' and point out issues that need further probing.

The social scientists point out that sex division and attendant roles are universal and are dependent on social factors. However, they disagree with the emphasis of certain social aspects. The 'functionalists' explain gender roles in terms of 'instrumental - expressive' diad, the conflict school of thought explains in terms of lack of control over property and production process and feminists point out to the overriding social phenomenon of patriarchy.

All these explanations are supposed to be more applicable to the pre-literate traditional societies and it is hoped the modernity, technology and modern economies would bring a change in the status of women. However, some observe that the modernity and modern economies have restricted the participation of women in modern economic activities (due to mass production by technology) and thus perpetuated the gender inequalities. On the other hand, the increased literacy levels and modern technical skills make women's participation
more flexible, easier and pave way for erasing sex-typing and gender role stereotypes.

What is not clear is that which of the above conceptual approaches will be more useful in explaining the Indian Scenario particularly with reference to the girl child workers, who are in a transitional phase of a society, that is itself is transforming from tradition to modernity; And, undergoing rapid changes in its socio-economic areas on one side and yet retains the dual perceptions on the other.

In the context of India, the literature suggests that there is a decline of male child workers and an increase in the girl child workers; predominance of girl child workers in the rural area; and their involvement in unpaid or low wage, unskilled or semi-skilled and messiest activities.

Further more, the review also indicates that there is a strong sex-typing in the activities of child workers. In addition, the literature reveals that economic factors are the overriding determinants of girl child labour while others indicate - it is a process of socialization for preparation of future roles under the influence of patriarchy.

As there is a paucity of literature on the girl child workers in India, the above observation has not been examined in depth in the context of girl child worker. Most observations were based on the loose findings as a part of overall study of child labour or based on secondary data. Hence, the ambiguity in the postulated concepts; And in the determinants of girl child labour. These ambiguities have naturally an impact on policy formulation on child labour as well as on the status of women.
Therefore, in view of the above reflections, in the present study, an attempt will be made to critically examine the determinants of girl child labour; and analyse the extent of gender-bias; and to examine the attitudes of girl child workers with regard to their work, life and status.

These three issues put together, it is hoped, would lead to delineate the existing conceptual approaches for a meaningful study of girl child worker in the context of India - a Society under transition from tradition to modernity. The above issues are considered in the context of girl child workers of a medium town in Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed for the present study is as follows:

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the present study:

1) To portray the profiles of the girl child workers and analyse the various factors that facilitate girl child labour;

2) To examine the extent of gender bias at home and work place;

3) To analyse the attitudes of the girl child workers; and

4) To delineate the existing conceptual approaches for a meaningful study of girl child worker in the context of India - a society under transition from tradition to modernity.

UNIVERSE

The studies conducted so far on girl child labour pertain to Match Industries and fire works of Sivakasi, Agricultural sector, beedi industries, glass
industries and Carpet weaving industries etc. No studies have been conducted on girl child workers in the unorganised twisting units of silk weaving industries.

The study area, Dharmavaram situated in Anantapur district is a growing town, famous for its silk weaving industry. Silk Weaving Industry has different components like yarn production, twisting, dyeing.

Twisting of the raw silk is necessary to give strength to the fibre and the quality of silk fabric depends on it. Considering the delicate nature of the work, by and large girl child workers are engaged in this activity.

The Pilot enquiry from the employers revealed that in Dharmavaram, there are as many as 110 twisting units. In these units machines are used for the purpose of twisting. An estimated number of 400 girl children are employed in these units. These 400 girl child workers constitute the universe for our present study.

SAMPLE

To represent all the age, Socio-economic groups of the girl child workers under reference, it is felt that a sample of 40 per cent of the girl child workers would be appropriate and more representative.

For this purpose, the girl child workers of the existing 110 twisting units have been enumerated and 160 girl child workers constituting 40 per cent of the universe are selected randomly.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

A structured interview schedule has been administered to collect the primary data. The schedule consists of five broad sections. Section-I consists of questions related to Socio-economic profile, Section-II pertains to the determinant factors
of girl child labour, Section-III contains questions on Gender bias at home, Section-IV on Gender bias at work place and lastly Section-V includes questions regarding attitudes of the girl child workers. In many cases, data collected through the schedule was supplemented by Non-participant observation and interviews with the employers. The secondary data has been gathered from books, journals and official reports.

ANALYSIS

For the purpose of analysis, the influence of such independent variables such as Age, Birth order, Family size, Family nature and Family Income on the determinant factors of girl child labour; gender bias at home and work place; and attitudes of the girl child workers are considered. Statistical computations such as percentages, averages, standard deviation, chi-square, ANOVA (Analysis of variance) and co-efficient of correlation are carried out wherever necessary.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

i) GIRL CHILD WORKER: The girl child worker in the present study refers to a female in the age group of 6-15 years engaged in full time employment for the sake of reward or remuneration.

ii) GENDER BIAS: Girls, getting secondary position to all male members in the access to Physical, Social, Cultural privileges, opportunities, facilities, rewards and is reckoned as gender bias.

CHAPTERIZATION

The present thesis includes the following Chapters.

CHAPTER - I GENDER AND WORK- THE FRAME OF REFERENCE:
It includes - Introduction; Sociology of Gender - Theoretical frame of reference; Gender and work - The situation of the Girl child: Indian Scenario; Statement of the Problem; Methodology.

CHAPTER - II THE SETTING

It comprises - General features of Dharmavaram town; Profile of the Silk Weaving Industry.

CHAPTER - III GENDER AND WORK - THE DETERMINANTS OF GIRL CHILD LABOUR

It includes - Introduction and Review; Determinants of Girl child labour: Some Issues; Demographic determinants; Social determinants; Economic determinants; Summing up.

CHAPTER - IV WORK AND GENDER BIAS AT HOME AND WORK PLACE

It includes - Work and Gender Bias at Home; Work and Gender Bias at Work place.

CHAPTER - V ATTITUDES OF THE GIRL CHILD WORKERS

It presents the analysis of the attitudes of Girl child workers towards i) Job, ii) Education, iii) Life and iv) Status perceptions.

CHAPTER - VI MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.
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