



Urbanization: A Double – Edged Sharpener For Women Emancipation And Employment

Dr. Bulbuli Boruah Associate Professor, Department of Political Science H. P. B. Girls' College, Golaghat- 785621, Assam, India

Abstract:

Urbanization is considered as an index of modernization and industrialization but in the scenario of Assam in particular, it is the result of uncontrolled growth of population and declining opportunities in rural areas. The traditional society of Assam and the entire north eastern part of India has already come under the process of urbanization to welcome and accept the changes bringing along with it the process itself. The process of urbanization, which began with the Industrial Revolution, has now days become a predominant feature of developmental activities all over the world. The paper will study about Urbanization: A Double - Edged Sharpener for Women Emancipation and Employment.

Keywords: Urbanization, Double–Edged, Sharpener, Women, Emancipation, Employment

Introduction:

The tempo of urbanization in India has picked up fast after independence that full co-ordination between various developments programmes could not be maintained in practice. As a consequence, a host of prospects and problems, progress and degradation, relaxation and stresses and relief and strains have cropped up. There are noticeable changes brought about by the rapid growth of town and cities in India. With hardly any growth in employment in urban settlements, urbanization is becoming more and more an index of frustration, alienation and despair and also an indicator of socio-economic and political explosion.

Objective of the Study:

The very objectives of the study are-

1. To study the idea of Urbanization.
2. To analyse how the urbanization can be a Double – Edged Sharpener for Women Emancipation and Employment.

Research Methodology:

The paper is based on secondary sources which are collected from edited books, journals, periodicals, articles, Government reports, newspapers and website relevant to the study.

Discussion and Results:

The impact of urbanization on the human society is varied and complex but so far as women are concerned, it is both a bane and boon for them. On one side, it helps women to set them free from age old slavery of man, to establish their identity through higher education and eligibility, to enjoy economic independence and also to grab opportunity to feel their own life. But, on the other, it brings them multiple problems in different forms and at different levels of their life. So, in this paper, a humble attempt has been made to explore the various affects of urbanization on women, to locate the problems of urban women and also to put forward some concrete suggestions as means to bring effective solutions of the problems they face in life.

It is an admitted fact that over the last few decades of India's independence, the condition of women has changed tremendously. Increasingly, women are coming forward to challenge the ways they have been and try to claim the right path according to their own needs and experiences.

Today's woman is an individual who is meritorious and intelligent, who has power of speech and who has immense potentiality to have strong hold on the environment. All these are outcome of the rapid growth of urban areas. But side by side, it breaks down the traditional form of the society by bringing new and newer challenges to urban people in general and to women in particular.

The method of urbanization transforms the society as a whole though to certain extent. The most prominent change is the change of the economic scenario of urban Assam. As the economic scenario is changing women's lives in Assam are also changing. In spite of the adverse circumstances women more especially urban women, have started working hard for survival. They organize themselves against injustice, they work to preserve the environment and also to create new avenues of income. Thrown out into the competitive world, they discover their potential to earn, to survive and to develop self esteem.

In the field of higher education, urban women march much ahead of women from rustic background. The enlargement of choice and the advent of careerism etc are surely the consequences of urbanization and urban education. This guides them to be more careers – oriented and to keep a good balance between family and career.

One of the significant affects of urbanization is that the urban educated women have shown their interests in certain special areas and spaces they have carved out for their ascertainment and also in the empowerment they have exhibited through their behavior, attitude and plan for a better and secured future. Urbanization has also opened up the chained life of women because they have made significant progress in education and political participation. Even the middle class women have entered the

avenues of income generating works and the grass root women have demonstrated their empowerment through participating in struggle against women violence at different levels. The urban women have been holding decision making positions in education policy and economy and are fighting for command over matrimonial house and land. They do feel and understand that the challenge today is the capacity building of women so that they are not vulnerable but are able to protect their rights and counteract forces of oppression.

Even empowerment seems to have a different meaning for different groups of urban women. For upper and middle class women, being empowered indicates building up own career, articulate own views and preferences and readiness to enter new areas of work which lay open the path for progressing oneself to a prestigious position. And for the remaining section of the urban society empowerment means expressing their needs, asserting their identities by not submitting to the dictates of the husband or the family and the society. A close observation of the urban society has brought another fact to light that urbanization really leads to women emancipation and empowerment because during the last few decades, women's employment in teaching, finance, bank service, and the other areas of service sector is on the increase due to the fact that urban women are more educated, more advanced, more farsighted and more eligible to compete with men in the job avenues. The growth of financial and entertainment services in the private sector of urban areas also bring educated women into the areas of employment. Areas such as fashion designing and beauty care have started to attract creative urban women to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. Moreover, women in urban areas are entering the male dominated areas such as engineering, architecture, computer science, airlines services, mass communication journalism and so on. They can be able to make a conscious choice of career. At the same time, many of them choose to balance career with family so that they opt for specialized work which grants them flexibility in their profession. They prefer flexible schedule so that they can well manage between family and profession.

It is also the effect of urbanization that women in urban areas have developed their skills, upgrade their level of confidence and determination, make effective plans for the future of their children take good care of home and can be able to make a space in the society not as women but as human beings of special attention and attraction.

But the urban women are not totally empowered and emancipated for they have to face tough challenges in life more often which come to their life as different problems of different nature. Some of the problems are discussed below:

The life of an urban woman is more complex and complicated. The rising cost of living, new avenues of employment, career aspirations and the rising awareness are important forces urging them to climb ladder of success. They are even willing to take up new challenges and are becoming respected as successful individuals but in doing so they have to sacrifice some basic needs of their life as they are never helped and

assisted by their men folk to climb up. Most of the times, they feel alienated, solitary and helpless and get frustrated in overcoming the tough ordeals of their life.

Rape of women and young girls is quite common in urban areas. They do not constitute a homogeneous group. Like the women of rural places, they suffer from gender injustice and gender discrimination. They become victims of sexual harassment both at work place and in society. In fact, they do not feel safe and secured in the society where people from different family background live together.

The urban women are more exposed to social crimes and exploitation at home. It is a well accepted fact that family is the site of security and care for a woman and is a place where she suffers tensions and pressures. But sometimes, the husband or the other male members of the family give her trouble for easy fulfillment of their financial needs of daily life. There is growing violence on women, killing of unwanted fetuses, wide propaganda of use of harmful contraceptives, beauty contest parading women's bodies, various measures by which a women think of her body as an asset to earn hard cash, wife beating, eve teasing etc are the issues which spoil the serenity or calmness of family life and which make the life of an urban woman more miserable than that of a rural woman.

In urban areas there is both continuity and change of tradition. There is always a tug of war between intellect and emotion of urban women. When they get success in overcoming the problems of their life, transgressing boundaries of family restriction and social taboos to reach top position, they are branded as aggressive, masculine and neglectful of their families. Consequently, many urban women in white color jobs do not like to disturb the still water of family life. So burn off their hope and aspiration to glitter at work place work as champion among the lot, they respond to the direction of their emotion to keep the tie of marriage knot intact and unchanged.

Rate of divorce and separation is more among the urban women because they do not want to be sedate puppets in the hands of men. Higher educational qualification, job opportunity, self – confidence and the Instinct to lead a tension free life, make them more courageous to fight against injustice and oppression from the side of husband. It sometimes mars the marital bliss between husband and wife and found them to break off every emotional relationship with the spouse.

The urban women come out on the street to register their protest on both communal and secular issues but it is very surprising to find that they do not have courage to confront a violent or drunk husband. Maintaining double standard they bring more problems to their life.

In respect of dress and social behavior, the urban women are violating existing norms and codes. The environment, in which they get adjusted, teach them to be more liberal and free in choosing the dress they feel comfort to wear and pay little interest in the expectation of the society. They become self centered and family oriented and do not get bothered to look around the society of which they are part and believe that they

should look forward and not to look back to the past. According to them, they are progressive and well adjusted to the modern conditions.

These are some of the problems faced by the urban women which are to be solved through different ways -

Women should be seen as homogeneous group. Without distinguishing between castes, class, group, and economic condition. They should be given equal opportunity to fulfill the needs of their life.

Women should be allowed to go hand in hand with male so that they feel equals of their male counterparts and can be able to take active part in making the society developed, advanced and competent.

The evil elements of the society, who keep on disturbing the women, should be eliminated and wiped out through legal procedures. Conducive atmosphere at home and a healthy environment in the society surely help the urban women to lead a care free life like their male counterparts and to feel the equalization and due esteem.

Value oriented education at school and college will help mitigating the social crimes related to women life. A motivation drive among the youths is also of utmost need to teach them lessons on morality, courtesy, attitude and approach as a significant part of the society. This can be done by organizing workshop, seminars and symposium at regular intervals to save the young generation from moral and ethical degradation.

Need of more women organization is also felt at this crucial condition of the society. There should be common aims and objectives of this organization to voice for a healthy atmosphere for a good psychological growth of a girl child, for making the women aware of the rights framed for empowerment and employment of women, of constitutional safeguard aware of the thirty three percent reservations in politics and so on. They should also make arrangements for upgrading the economic condition of those women who have migrated from their rural habitation to urban areas by marriage but are eligible and energetic by providing special training on micro enterprise like handloom, handcraft, preparation of plastic toys, making jute bags and other decorative items so that they can easily avail bank loans with subsidy to establish themselves as bread earner or earning source of the family.

The status of women in the present economic scenario of urban Assam has not been raised so much to be equal with the male persons. Women, though are entitled to equal constitutional and legal's rights, do not enjoy all these because of their ignorance, age-long superstition, inferiority, complex, and discrimination in a male dominated society.

Of course in politics, in development, and in service, the presence of urban women is remarkable but their number is less in proportion to male representation. Even in the second decade of the twenty first century, they are still considered as 'weaker sex' regarded as only the 'object of enjoyment'. They are still voiceless as their active participation in decision making bodies is marginal and they still find themselves weak in taking decision at home and outside independently.

Conclusion:

The method of urbanization plays tremendous role to activate the emotion and intellect of women in Assam like a double edged sharpener. It shoots their mind, awakens their conscience, strengthen their instincts and sharpen their hopes and aspiration to do something worthy in life and also to establish their individual identity in the society. It is a great hope that a time would surely come when women of Assam, under the process of urbanization, would be conscious of their empowerment, identity, dignity, prestige and self-esteem in the society to lead the state along the path of progress, prosperity and development.

References:

1. Arunachalam Jaya, 2005: Women's Equality: A Struggle For Survival, New Delhi, B.R. Publication.
2. Kumar Roy, 2000: Discrimination Against Women, New Delhi, Anmol Publications.
3. Qureshi Maniruddin, 2003: Social Status of Indian Women, New Delhi, Anmol Publications.
4. V. GiriMohini, 1998: Emancipation and Empowerment of Women, New Delhi, Gyan Publications.