Refletion
The Muslim Women: Rights and the Reality
- Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam

Claim of rights from the part of Muslim women is actually the claim of Human Rights. Women, throughout the globe have raised voice against injustice and discrimination done to them. The history of recent two centuries has witnessed the struggle of the women against discrimination and for legitimate recognition. We have observed multiple facets of problem of the women in different contexts. Parameters like - country, society, religion, age-group, colour etc altogether have given birth to diverse dimensions of problems of the women. To the best of my appreciation in Indian context, the problem of Muslim women has two dimensions –

i. General problem - the problem being women
ii. Specific problem – the problem of being Muslim

So far as the general problems are concerned, the Muslim women too share all the problems that the women of the entire world have to confront within home and beyond. Problems like - domestic violence, teasing, physical assault, rape – are a few to mention in this context.

Referring to specific problems of the Muslim women in Indian context, I must mention that along with the general problems, Muslim women have some exclusive difficulties. These problems lie partly within the Muslim society itself and partly with the law and order of our country. The practice of abuse of talaque speaks of the endo-societal problem while there is no such clear cut measure in our law and order regarding the threatening of giving talaque.

To illustrate this point, I must cite one example. A man beats his wife (case of domestic violence) and threatens her with this logic that if she tries to take any measures against the physical assault, he will give her “talaque”. Incidentally, the threatening of giving talaque has become a ‘tool’ for some people to continue with domestic violence or physical assault and beyond. The problem is that, the case of legal talaque is followed by some procedures. But the case of illegal talaque (which is abuse of talaque) is followed by series of violation of rights of a women finally giving birth to multiple socio cultural and socio-judicial complexities.

It is even not clear that whether there is any law in Indian judicial system which addresses any measures for cases like - threatening of giving talaque. The law and order of Indian system should be updated to address such kinds of problems which have sprung up from the contemporary Indian society.

I agree that the right of giving talaque (legal talaque) is there in Islam. But abuse of talaque must be brought under the control of judicial vigilance to ensure the human rights of Muslim women as well as their constitutional rights as citizens of India. The practice of instant triple talaque (‘tin talaque’) should be declared ‘prohibited’ in India. Each case of talaque should be recorded or registered for verification of their legal authenticity (both in Indian judicial terms and Islamic terms) if necessary.
Socio-cultural reforms in Muslim society should come into existence when voices of awareness will come out from the community itself. Secondly, the state should ensure the educational and economic empowerment of women class including the Muslims and other. It’s a long term process for which a healthy collaboration between the effort of the state and the effort of the community is essential.

I congratulate all of them who have put their endeavour to facilitate such a process to bring about social justice and vertical advancement for human being irrespective of class, colour or gender.

Alef-Noor Bibi, A victim of unfortunate Talaque (Murshidabad district)
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Cultural Heritage of Coastal Odisha: theme Paper of National Seminar
- Dr. Santosh Kumar Mitra

The name Orissa, at present Odisha, originated from the name Odra or Udra, the ancient tribes, who originally inhabited the central coastal belt. So the original culture of Coastal Odisha can be termed as tribal culture i.e. non-Aryan culture which is evidenced from the Vedic Sutrakara Baudhayana of 6th century B.C. Tribal customs & traditions played a vital role in shaping the political and cultural practices right up to present day. However, in due course of time all types of Brahmanical developments began to inhabit social mobility and erode the ancient tribal culture of the subsequent and also contemporary periods. The Coastal Odisha better known as the "Hexadeltaic region" or the "Gift of Six Rivers" i.e. the Subarnarekha, the Budhabalanga, the Baitarani, the Brahmani, the Mahanadi, and the Rushikulya stretches from the West Bengal border, i.e. from the River Subarnarekha in the north to the River Rushikulya in the south almost covering the districts of Gunjam, Khurda, Puri, Cuttack, Jagatsimghpur, Kendrapada, Bhadrakh and Balasore was more prone to all these time to time developments in cultural behaviors which were easily adopted and adapted by the people of this reason and found its reflections in various types of cultural heritage in the form of art, architecture, painting, music, dance, literature, customs, traditions, etc. All these inheritances are definitely the products of long evolutionary process that got refined, rejuvenated, reoriented and thus became the proud and rich heritages of ours. However, under the pressure of globalization & modernization all our rich heritage is getting tarnished. It is also equally correct that neither we can thwart the process of globalization nor can keep our self free from the thralldom of modernization. It is thus a challenge to our present generation how to protect and preserve the brilliant age old cultural heritage of ours for the next generations. It can only be possible by creating ethos and environment to protect, preserve and highlight our fading & missing cultural heritage. It is thus an attempt on the part of our department to organize a National seminar on Cultural Heritage of Coastal Odisha.

While our ancient tribal culture was getting influenced by the Vedic culture, in its infant stage, a sudden turning point came with the historic Kalinga war that made Asoka instrumental to bring it into Buddhist fold. It was in first century B.C. under the great Kharavela the Jain traditions eroded the then coastal cultural developments. Subsequently under Samudragupta and Sasanka again the Brahmanic revival triumphed over. Once again Buddhism played a dynamic role in shaping our culture under Harsha. From 795 A.D. to 1568 A.D. the Brahmanism got a strong hold in this region. From 1568 Muslim attacks though could not shake our age old culture, yet influenced a lot in many ways. It was in 1576 A.D. Mughal conquered Coastal Odisha i.e. Bhadrakh Sarkar and Cuttack Sarkar. From 1742 culture of coastal Odisha came under the influence of the Marahattas. In 1803 Odisha was occupied by the Britishers and this Coastal region was kept under Bengal province and thus our culture was influenced a lot by Bengali culture. When Odisha got separated from Bengal and got merged with Bihar, no doubt it must have come under the Bihari influence. It was in 1936 it immerged as a separate state. Thus these political-Religious developments helped a lot in shaping the culture of Odisha in a
beautiful way by receiving the positive and colourful elements of others. It is thus rightly said “Dekha Sikha Odisha” but this eclectic nature of our culture has made our heritage certainly rich.

We have a long list of cultural heritage. Speaking about the literary heritage, the works of Jayadeva, Sarala Das, Pancha Sakha, Bhima Bhoi, Radhanath, Fakirmohan, Gopabandhu, Sachi Routray, Kalandi Prasad, Laxmikanta Mohapatra, Baladev Rath, Upendra Bhanja, Gopinath Mohanty, Surendra Mohanty, Manoj Das, Ramakanta Rath, etc must be illuminating the literary horizon of Odisha for all times to come. These works are great treasures for all the Odias for all time to come.

In the field of Music & Dance, Odissi has a long unbroken tradition of 2000 years. Mahari dance, Devadasi system, Nachuni, Bahara Gauni, the Bhitari Gauni, The Gaudasani, Gotipua, Dasa Kathia, Palla, suanga, Triswar, Chaturvarsi, Panchaswari, Jogi Gita, Kendera, Ghodanacha, Danda nacha, Kalisi Nacha, Chadhei- Chadhea, Sai Yatra, Ghata Patua, Naudi etc. have added much to our rich heritage. In addition to these, Musical treatises like Sangitamava Chandrica, Natya-Manorama, Sangita-Kalalata, Gita-Prakash, Chitrpadra, Dhruvapada, Panchala&chitrakala etc. are of great importance.

We have also a long textile heritage, like Khurda lungi, gamuchha and other cottage works like tarakasi of Cuttack, Jambura work, pottery, sola work, various types of paintings etc.

Not only these, we have a long list of customs, traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and myriads of cultural heritage like, Sculptural heritage, Architectural heritage, maritime heritage for which every Odia must feel proud of. But tragedy is that most of these valuable heritages are losing their glamour, flavor, and also some are getting extinct. So it is the call of the hour ‘O’ Historians, get up, rise up and save the rich heritage from getting lost failing which the coming generation may not excuse you. No doubt attempts are being made. Many more works have been undertaken in the field of art, architecture, religions. But it is meager. Many more have remained untouched. So we had organized a National Seminar on Re-Exploring Prachi Valley Concerning to a very small area OF Odisha. This time we have extended it to the Coastal Odisha with a great expectation that at least we can record some of our heritage before getting extinct. This is the Begging not the end.

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