Family Socialisation in Empowerment of Young Girls in Manipur

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Abstract

Women in Manipur are not empowered in true sense and thereby, this article attempts to probe the nature of the role of socialisation of young girls to find some avenues to empower them. It specifically focuses on the process of family socialisation in gender construction among the Christian families in Manipur. This study also examines how the process of family socialisation impacts the empowerment of young girls.

Situating the Women's Position in Manipur

Women in Manipur, both in the hill and in the valley face a paradox. On the one hand, they enjoy a great deal of freedom and on the other hand, they are suppressed by patriarchal system. Manipur women play an important role in domestic affairs, participate in festivals, independent to choose life partner, fight against social cause, etc. However, due to various social restrictions, religious belief, polygamy, gender discriminatory customary laws, gender-unjust social norms and women bodies reinforcing these norms, it elevates the oppression and suppression of women in the society.

In economic domain, Manipur women play a critical role in trade and economy in the state. Their immense contributions in generating the income of the family are visible in the market places, colonies, highways, etc. Many women in urban areas are employed in both

Government and private sectors. Women are represented in the tertiary sector, educated women running weaving cooperative societies, running hostels for girls, self-help group (micro financing, locally called Marup), entrepreneurship, garments business, thereby, earning equally as that of men and deconstructing the stereotypical gender roles in the family. Ironically, there are not many women occupying high position in white collar jobs and no big women traders in the market and there are hardly any owners in the agricultural sectors of our economy. They still stand far below in the power equation in relation to men.

In the political arena, the active participation of Manipur women is laudable by the presence of the powerful women's bodies; Meira Paibis, Naga Women Union Manipur, Kuki Mothers' Association and others. They fight against alcoholism, drug addiction, gender violence, human rights violation, repeal of AFSPA, ethnic-clashes, gender unfriendly customary laws, etc. But one also notices that empowerment of women is inadequate in lieu of the tremendous works done by them. There is dearth of women's representation in Manipur Legislative Assembly, despite female voters outnumber male voters. In the Panchayat, women cross 33 per cent reservation in getting elected as leaders. Nonetheless, they also have not been able to break the patriarchal hegemonising ideology. This constitutional provision has been exempted from the hill areas on the ground that these districts have their own traditional system of local-self-government which are egalitarian in society. On the contrary, women are excluded from the traditional village councils. Learning their position in all aspects, it can be safely argued that Manipur women are not empowered in true sense. It is in this context that the researcher attempts to probe the nature of the role of socialisation of young girls to find some avenues to empower them. This study attempts to delve into the process of family socialisation of young girls with special reference to their empowerment among Christian families in Manipur. On one hand the study explores the gender construction through socialisation and on the other hand it deconstructs the myth of empowered women of Manipur by deconstructing the socialisation roles of family.

Conceptual Framework

Since decades social scientists, policy makers, academicians, social activists and feminists have defined the term 'empowerment' in numerous ways. This concept has been debated at length at global and local levels. It is strongly felt that there is still a room to reassess the means to empower women. Many have written and conducted research on women's empowerment at national and regional level. However, they have in some ways overlooked the fact that to empower women is to provide a gender sensitive environment

through the process of socialisation beginning from the family.

Manipur is a patriarchal society. The discrimination against women in Manipur is not overt but very subtle. Radical feminists argued that as long as there is existence of patriarchal system, women's subjugation will remain. The chief predicament of a woman lies in her very precarious condition of not being seen as a total human being. Deeply ingrained social beliefs, social customs, biased against women and various facets of popular culture such as cinema, TV and popular literature contribute to reinforce these overarching stereotypical images and identity of women. In simple terms, it is present in women's everyday lived experience. This is not to say that not much have been done for the income generation in the family, legal rights and importance of education, health issues, technological innovations, etc. Because of the efforts, many testimonials are heard and seen of women's emancipation both at the macro and micro level.

However, women socialisation under male dominance perpetuates women's age-old oppression. Thus, feminists argued that in order to bring social transformation, the 'mindset' of society needs to be changed. Perception and attitude towards them should be changed; they should be treated equally as their male counterparts in all walks of their life. As a result, this study attempts to unveil the gender socialisation process during the influential age in a male dominated society. Psychoanalysts like Freud (1964) argued that an individual personality is developed during the formative age and continue as they achieve adulthood.

The study argues that the subordinate/inferior position of women emerges or crystallises because the children, at the initial stage constantly interact in a 'differentiated' pattern in the society. In the patriarchal society, gender often operates through the unquestioned acceptance of power, for example, women internalising subordinate position in power relations with men through the process of socialisation. This is, due to the fact that structural and systematic gender bias exists in many societies and cultures. Thus, women seem to accept and reinforce their own oppression (Alva 1999: 11-14). Hence, the process of socialisation widely impacts the varied roles, identities and stereotypes that gender is expected to perform as they develop into adult. Margaret Mead (1935) observed that what is understood as masculinity and femininity varies across cultures. Feminists have argued that it is child-rearing practices which try to establish and perpetuate certain differences between the sexes. Therefore, sex-specific quality and the value that society attributes to them are produced by a range of institutions and beliefs that socialise boys and girls differently (Menon 2003: 8). As

De Beavoir puts it, "One is not born, but becomes, a woman" (1953: 257). In addition, Oakley observed that the gender identities of children vary with the kind of families they live in, the personalities of their parents and the way their parents behave towards them (1972: 180). Socialisation process is gendered starting from the time the child is in womb. Boys and girls from the age of four years are able to identify their gender (Oakley 1972: 177) from the way they are socialised in an expected role in the society. Gendered socialisation begins from family and thereby other social institutions follow.

It is considerably essential to look into the important agencies as they play a decisive role in a society in the process of socialisation. As Kerckhoff (1972: 2) states that these agencies' task are to prepare new members for their later activities and responsibilities. Bhogle (1999: 296) echoes that the development of gender-role behaviour is a gradual process that begins in infancy and continues throughout the life cycle. Gender roles are quite varied, and the socialising experiences required to prepare individuals to carry them out are also quite varied. The gender roles, gender biases and gender stereotypes are assigned and imbibed through socialisation (Beal 1994; Macrae, et.al, 1996). Thus, since childhood both boys and girls learn their ascribed roles and follow them throughout their lives. Hence, this becomes an impediment in empowerment of young girls in society. However, socialisation is an on-going process that needs to be studied.

The study focuses on the two significant concepts of socialisation and empowerment. Socialisation from the functionalist perspective is functional to the society in terms of inculcating the social norms and values in the young ones to motivate and able to perform role expectations to create a stable society (Durkheim 1965:70-71). Whereas Conflict theorists like Marx views socialisation as a way of perpetuating the status quo (Bottomore and Rubel 1963). It is a process devised by the ruling class for the perpetuation of ruling class ideology especially the patriarchy. The ideology of domination and subordination is found in socialisation process.

In a patriarchal society, women are socialised with norms and values internalising inferior position in the society. As a result they tend to accept their position as normal and natural, right and proper. In this way a 'false consciousness' of reality is produced which helps to maintain the unequal gender relationship. Therefore, it is imperative to understand in what type of social milieu, structure, and processes we can empower women through socialisation. Here, the term empowerment is defined as the process of socialising the young girls in a gender sensitive atmosphere to enable them to internalise positive self image and self confidence, develop

ability to think critically and organise in decision-making capacity enabling them to take control of their own lives against the gender oppressive systems.

Since socialisation is one of the most basic functions of society therefore it is necessary to understand the processes which hinder the empowerment of women. Thus, by intervention at the basic level through socialisation, the process of empowerment can become easier. Since socialisation creates the basic gendered personalities, it can become a potent weapon for empowerment of the women.

Therefore, in the light of the above arguments, this study seeks to understand and examine how family shape gender specific roles. Keeping young girls in the focus the study will analyse the gender difference through socialisation. This is so, because, the process of socialisation creates the gender difference and thus, results in young girl's disempowerment in their adulthood. It is in this context that the study looks at the important questions – how parents treat their children with reference to gender specific roles? How family socialisation hampers women's empowerment and how it effectively facilitates in enhancing their empowerment?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for the present study. Qualitative research helps to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. This involves a systematic and extensive study to analyse attitudes and behaviours of an urban village towards gender sensitive in the process of family socialisation. While quantitative methods enable the hypotheses to be tested through the primary findings such as the use of observations and interview methods. The aim of this mode of research is accurate understanding and presentation of the phenomena investigated. Furthermore, this research involves case study of the parents in order to present an intensive study of a case such as an event that focus on gender insensitivity in the society. Case studies sharpen the understanding of the researcher on several queries raised over the phenomenon.

Keeping in mind the descriptive nature of the research topic, the study is conducted through personal interview and observation. Open-ended interview schedule was administered to the respondents for the collection of data. The researcher used these methods because it was suitable for both the illiterate and the educated respondents. Respondents were personally interviewed by the researcher to allow comfortable understanding and to make subject's own knowledge/or feelings more meaningful. The basic tools the researcher used during field work were note book, pen, voice recorder and camera. However, personal interview method was time-

consuming; it took approximately 40 to 60 minutes per respondent. Nevertheless, it provided substantive and additional information focusing on the subject, which is vital for the study. Secondary Sources of data like Research works, books, articles and ethnographic accounts were studied.

The study was conducted in Dewlahland, one of the urban villages/colonies situated in Imphal East district of Manipur. Imphal east has four revenue sub-divisions and covers numbers of colonies. Dewlahland comes under Sub-division Circle, Porompat and the revenue village no. is 25 (A). Dewlahland was established in the year 1962 and is located 2 km away from Imphal ADP (Area Development Program) headquarter. The researcher chose this village as it is a Christian dominated village and is an amalgamation of multi-ethnic groups; tribals, Meities (Manipuri) and Meitei pangal (Manipuri Muslim).

A total sample of 200 respondents was collected through purposive sampling and snowball technique. The researcher interviewed the following respondents: School going children – from classes' I-XII. The respondents were categorised according to their grades: primary (I-V), middle (VI-VIII), high school (IX-X) and higher secondary (XI-XII). 30 respondents from each group were interviewed that include equal numbers of boys and girls. In sum, the respondents in the study attending schools as students were 120. Another category of respondent included in the present study were the parents. The researcher interviewed 80 parents which included educated, literate and illiterate parents.

The researcher interviewed parents of young children which included combination of both the gender. These parents belong to the age groups 30-55 years. They include both landowners and tenants but focussed on those who are inhabitants for more than 10 years in the researched area. Majority of them are educated and are government employees, self employed (business) and works in private sector. It was found that mostly the students of classes I and II were not reliable as respondents and therefore their respective parents were interviewed on their daily societal interactions in order to substantiate the findings.

The researcher attempted a comprehensive understanding of the problems and tried to present it as objectively and accurately as she can. Three different languages were used to interview the respondents. They are Meiteilon (local-common language) to different ethnic group, English to school goers and Maola/Emela belonging to Mao community. Most of the respondents' identities are kept anonymous as per their request.

THE STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN MANIPUR/DEWLAHLAND

Family structure in Manipur can be broadly classified into two viz: Joint or Extended family and Nuclear family. On the basis of observation

and informal discussion with the residents of Dewlahland one can easily agree that with changes in the technological and economic structure of society, the traditional joint family structure changed to nuclear family particularly in urban areas. Manipur society follows patriarchal and patrilineal system. Dewlahland comprises of multi-ethnic groups. Some of the ethnic communities are Tangkhul, Mao, Maring, Mizo, Ruangmei, Liangmei, Maram, Kuki, Paite, Paomei, Anal, Chiru and Thangal. They are mostly Christians. There are also Meiteis, Meitei-Pangals (Manipuri Muslim) and other smaller groups. It is found that most of the Christian family follow nuclear system.

Post Independence, due to growth of education and job opportunities, social mobility became rampant and till date, the trend continues. Job mobility is one major reason that landed many senior inhabitants in Dewlahland. Progressively, young boys and girls migrates from hill to valley in search of better education or on demand of jobs and gradually bought land, constructed houses and since then generations have established their own roots in Dewlahland. Today, in this locality, most of the houses are pucca buildings and rooms are leased out to families, students, business persons, Government employees, etc. across communities. By and large, the tenants also exercise nuclear family.

INFLUENCE OF PARENTS ON CHILDREN'S GENDER SOCIALISATION

In Manipur, the role of parents in the family is not different from many patriarchal societies. They teach their children the social values, norms, social mores, beliefs and other traditional cultural practices especially on gender specific roles. Bandura (1973) argues that social learning takes place through observation and modelling. Parents become the role model in the family. The position of mother and father in the family plays a key role for the children at the influential stage to develop the sense of self, gender identity, attitude, behaviour, personality, beliefs etc. which they propagate in their later life.

From the time their children are babies, parents treat sons and daughters differently, showing different attitudes, dressing infants in gender specific colours, giving gender differentiated toys, and expecting different behaviour from boys and girls (Thorne 1993). The preference of son continues to exist in our society for various cultural reasons. The birth of a son is wished in the Christian family in Dewlahland however their attitude towards the birth of a girl child is equally a joyous moment. One of the respondents emphasised "Our way of welcoming the new born, be it a boy or a girl is usually a quiet affair. Unlike Hindu, Christians do not have the culture of distributing sweets or

celebrations which are prominent. Some invite pastors, church leaders and loved ones at home for a meal to bless the baby and the family."

Most of the families expressed the yearning for a boy in the family but young parents disagree that absence of a son in the family faced social stigma in the society. However, it is not to deny the talks of empathy that takes place by the elders mainly in the family including women on families that have no sons especially in regard to property and social prestige. An elderly man stated, "What is the use of buying lands and building houses when there is no son in the family and people do not much regard families that have no sons." The absence of sons in the family lessens self- dignity/prestige hitherto these feelings are not shared openly especially among the Christians but are usually shared in discrete. This mainly affects the dignity of men in the family. Male chauvinist attitude remain rigid among the elders, although this bias attitude persists among the educated men and women today as well but the perspective towards gender-acceptance has broadened with the embracement of Christianity. Many believe that life and death is in God's control and so human beings do not have the right to blame anyone for things which are beyond human reach.

Parents' Attitude on the Size of Family

Respondents (Parents) were in the age-group, 30-55 years. Majority of them are educated and well established. They are working both in Government and private sectors in Dewlahland. Their minimum monthly income is Rs. 10,000. Some of the respondents are tenants but majority inhabits in their own land. Parents are in professions such as Doctor, engineer, advocate, lecturer and primary teacher in a Government sector. Some are into business such as running lodging, food, and stationary shops and few are social workers. It is found that good numbers of young mothers (occupants) are into business and teaching. Some claim to be housewives but is ambiguous in their claim as they assist their husbands in family business.

In Dewlahland, majority of the parents prefer small family, although it is not confined to two-norm child. The average number of children in the family is three. There is attitudinal change and increasing awareness on family planning among the young couples. Many families remain silent even if they are not so satisfied with uneven sex of children. Besides, the attitude of acceptance is apparently high among the Christians. However, there is preference of at least a son in the family to provide economic security and family line. This desirability of having sons is made explicit by women themselves. Parents who have only daughters are pitied. Their future is bleak for they will have no support or succour in old age. Some of the reasons they shared in regard to sons' preference

are not so uncommon in other patriarchal and patrilineal society. It is in this manner the social worldview has been shaped in Dewlahland, since time immemorial, which is transferred from one generation to another mediated by social change in the system.

ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS

The importance of education is embraced in recent times in urban – rural areas in Manipur. Agriculture is the economic means in Manipur but this is slowly diminishing due to globalisation where there is high demand of educated boys and girls in the larger market. Today, to meet the standards of living, education becomes an essential requirement for all. In Dewlahland, it is found that all families send their children to schools irrespective of gender. Majority of the children are sent to private schools. Gender is not an obstacle for choosing schools. Most of the boys and girls are sent to schools based in their localities. There are also children going to the neighbouring schools.

Today, one is apprehensive to comprehend life without education as most of teaching-learning roles have been taken up by the formal education in the form of schools, colleges, universities and institutions of learning. These days, most of the young and middle-aged parents are educated and therefore, gradually develop competent outlook for children to be independent, upward economic mobility and to carve a niche in the competent world. This is more so in the case of girl child, education is so fundamental to empower them bearing in mind their position in the society. As part of globalisation and modernisation, girls are encouraged to be educated, but personal laws and norms remain within traditions of patriarchal control.

Gender differentiation increases when it comes to higher education. The academic hierarchy remains very firmly masculine (David and Woodward 1998). Generally the attitude of parents towards girls' higher education is "It is more than enough if girls know how to read and write. What is the point of studying so much? Ultimately woman's place is in the household." Nevertheless parents, in Dewlahland do not discourage daughters who aspire to pursue further education but simultaneously, they are not persuasive if she shows disinterest in pursuing higher education. On the contrary, this attitude is not the same in the case of a boy child. Parents can go hundred miles for sons to pursue higher education be it in academic or any professional line. The gender differential treatment is intense in the family when it comes to higher education. As a result, traditional social acceptance - expectations of gender role in society reinforces the prejudices against women's higher education.

GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR WITHIN THE FAMILY

Different tasks and responsibilities are assigned to girls and boys, women and men according to their sex-gender roles, and not necessarily according to their individual preferences or capabilities (Bhasin 2003:32). This is true in the universe of our research. In Dewlahland majority women performed household chores such as cooking, serving, cleaning utensils, sweeping, mopping floor, dusting off rooms, preparing tea, washing clothes, and assist children in their studies, entertain guests, etc. They also execute outside work like marketing, pay children's school fees in schools, kitchen gardening, attend sick kins and neighbours in hospitals and at home, bank work, postal work etc. There are families who employed helpers to assist the family in their day to day chores. Helpers are common among affluent families or available in homes where both parents are working either in Government or private or in families that have toddlers. In this case, mothers get time to engage in outside work apart from household chores. Nevertheless, majority of the working mothers are not exempted from doing household chores.

Men, on the other hand go to office, manage business and does marketing and sometimes visit sick relatives, friends and neighbours. Normally, when at home, they read newspaper, study, do file work, and when it is necessary handful of them assist family in cooking on occasions when wife is busy or in case of sickness. A non-Christian father[1] cited, "ei thoina yumgi thabak toude, ei karbar oina yengsille. (I seldom perform household chores, I mostly look after the business)." Many respondents mostly women expressed that men's contribution in the domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning is not unacceptable when it is necessary but if it is done on regular basis then wives are often lampooned or ridiculed and are specified by different names such a 'women who dominates husbands', 'lazy', 'not a good wife' etc. In some cases, husbands are also called as henpecked. It is looked down upon as it is regarded as below dignity for a man if he had to do domestic chores on a regular basis and is regarded as shameful on the part of women in the family when their menfolk had to do it. Hence, men seldom do domestic work.

The traditional gender role still takes its own forms in the urban family. Likewise, parents' gender roles are reflected in boys and girls division of work at home. However, today, there are daughters who do not have adequate free time to perform housework because of the hectic schedules during week days. And in families where there are helpers, the amount of household work is less. In the case of boys, majority of them are exempted from doing household chores. However, both boys and girls are allotted household work but the difference between them is boys

perform on an uneven basis and regular in case of girls.

Decision Making in the Family: A Male Bastion

Decision making in the family, prerogative to make a decision and who is given preference to participate in the decision making helps the process of socialisation of youth. In the universe of the study majority of the parents responded that decisions on family issues are taken jointly. But few wives stated that they stay aloof from issues that deal with husband's village. Some uttered that most of the major decisions in the family are taken by husbands especially when the issue is on land, some declared they feel it is the affairs of men. And some women are not interested and expressed "Mapu oibanina loinamak khang-ngi. (Husband knows best)." There are also women who are consulted on family issues but husbands are the ultimate decision makers. In this regard, a non-Christian father stated, "Eigi emungda eina No.1(ahanba) rai louwi. (I am the No.1 in decision making in the family)."

Children are not accorded the full respect to which they are intrinsically entitled as human beings. They are usually understood as "incomplete vulnerable beings" progressing with adult's help through stages needed to turn them into mature adults (Mayall 1994: 3). Their thoughts and deeds are weighed in the balance of "grown up" standard and are found immature and inconsequential (Pfeffer and Behera 1996:2). Young children may be considered immature in decision-making on adult issues but somewhere down the line, special importance is shown to boys in the family, their views are listened with appreciation whether they accept it or not but girls are asked to shut up without giving the room to share her mind. This form of suppression of freedom of speech in the family, young girls imbibe inhibition persona in a natural form in later life. This unequal treatment affects the mindset and demeans the personality of girls in general and in the universe of the study in particular.

Parents' Attitude Towards Gender Health

Health is another sphere which helps in the socialisation of the young persons. Many studies have been conducted in India showing the negligence of girl's health in the family. Feminists have also given numerous reasons on these grounds. According to them, one of the major reasons is due to the importance given to sons in the Indian society. However, in Manipur, the undesirable attitude towards girl child in the family is different. In Christian family, there is no deprivation on health issues on the basis of gender. They are taken care of equally when they get sick, though the level of concerns increases when sons and grandsons are sick, yet it does not deter them from providing medical care equally.

Gender bias is noticeable when it comes to nutrition. Nutrition does not mean daughters are underfed but it means the choicest items are reserved for them. Further, everyone is conscious that their sons should be strong and healthy for which they should be served good food. Though majority of the parents stated that there exists equal treatment in the family. However, girls expressed that their brothers most of the time get to eat their favourite parts of chicken or for that matter other good parts of meat. The girls also emphasised that parents, more often than not remember what their sons' favourites is. Even in sons' absence during the meal time, mothers do not forget to keep aside good pieces of meat for them. A young girl narrated her experience, which is revealing. Her mother keeps reminding her that local eggs are for her brothers saying they need to take care of health because they indulge in physical demanding activity. But these concerns are not visible in case of daughters.

In the light of this, it is not only girls that express the partiality but boys themselves are also aware of the special attention meted out to them. This form of partiality when it comes to equal share still prevails in the family and this is commonly carried out by the women. Women themselves treat motherhood with duality and ambivalence. Due to the dominance and universalism of patriarchal practice, women end up negotiating with patriarchy (Denniz 1988: 274-90).

Daughter's Contributions and 'Housewifisation'

Parents are delighted over children's contributions in the family. But daughters' contributions are normally less acknowledged. Daughters' work at home is considered as their duty, as a natural job, best fitted to the lives of women. They seldom receives acknowledgement. That is what it means to grow up female: to learn to work and live without being acknowledged (Kumar 2010: 79). It is this male exploited ideology that Mies (1986: 110) called the "housewifisation" of women. This means labour is considered as a natural resource, freely available like air and water. Many feminists are also critical because such an attitude affects the dignity of women. It is said that 'invisible', 'unrecognisable' labour is often taken for granted and unappreciated. As Gnanadason writes, what happens in actual practice is that women are taken for a ride, made to do thankless jobs and unrecognised sacrifices (1986: 39). On the other hand, sons' duties are acknowledged through affections, praise and fulfilling their demands. There are cases, parents defend sons even if they are not conducive to family's welfare or are credited for their occasional contribution time to time, just because they are males.

Thus, it is observed that women's works at home are undervalued in most cases be it conscious or subconscious. For this reason, young girls embed their contributions at

home insignificant and internalised acceptance of unequal treatment as normal in the society. As a result, young girls become accustomed to such cultural bias practices and inculcate self-denial and acceptance of a subordinate position since childhood. Self-denial is a special quality if a man possesses it, but defining characteristics of a woman (Wharton 2005: 79). The notion of tolerance and self-restraint are also rooted in a consciously cultivated feminine role which is embedded in and legitimised by cultural ideology (Dube 1988: 180). When they, in turn, grow up and have families of their own, they too implant the same biases in their daughter's psyches, consequently perpetuating this mode of character to generations to come. Differential treatment of female and male children by parents and other socialising agents creates gender differences in behaviour.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY AND WOMEN DISCRIMINATION

In tribal society in Manipur, as per the custom, women are not allowed to inherit ancestral property. Instead they are given certain moveable domestic articles like almirah, beds, furniture, clothes, shawls, kitchen wares, electronic appliances, etc. for their daily use at the time of their marriage, thereby reinforcing the notion that their role is confined to domestic chores, and her needs should be centred around her family and home.

Daughters' immense contributions are taken for granted. Their affection and concerns for parents, their financial aid and physical care rendered to parents in their old age has no recognition. This can be said first on the basis that when it comes to distribution of land in the family, only sons are considered worthy. Even if the sons do not live with parents. Secondly, the society and parents reinforce and perpetuate gender discriminatory customary law against daughter.

In cases where there are no sons in the family, men of immediate relatives will be requested to intervene in matters of property, even when daughters are capable to handle family property. Parents claimed to treat their children equally but most do not fight against social norms and cultural beliefs and practices that deprived their own daughters from being a complete human being and abstain from equal distribution of property. When asked about the gender-unfriendly cultural practices, one of the mothers, president of a women society replied, "In town, lifestyle and world view is different, beliefs and practices can be reconsidered but when in village it has to be according to the norms whether we want it or not." Most of the parents do not have the strong urge to fight against the gender-unjust social norms but accept traditional gender roles, prejudices against women, gender stereotypes. In Dewlahland, very few respondents

maintained that voice should be raised against the gender unfriendly cultural practices and beliefs.

DAUGHTER AS OUTSIDER

At home, young girls are socialised in a way that they are external. Girls at their young age are imparted the knowledge that the home where one is born and brought up is temporary, both in physical sense and in emotional sense. With this teaching itself, it makes the girls to feel like an "outsider" even at home by their own parents. It also underscores a woman's lack of autonomy with respect to her visits to the natal home. A young married lady [2] narrated, "I used to visit my natal home twice or more times in a year, however parents told me to restrict my visiting to them often. They make me feel like an outsider." Most of the parents do not encourage their married daughters to share the same kind of relationships as they used to share before their marriage, however, many parents do not hesitate to seek their help financially or in sickness more often than sons. On the contrary, in sons' cases, even if they are barely there when parents need them, they are the family's pride and permanent members in the family because they carry the family line. Girls are considered in lesser terms than boys. Patriarchal ideology constructs bias cultural arrangement against women. The ideology of women's subordination requires the precise creation of certain dispositions of mind, and not merely behaviours. Salient among these dispositions are self-denial, lack of autonomy, and acceptance of a subordinate position.

DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE

In tribal society, there are two types of marriages, firstly, arrange marriage where negotiations are conducted through an elderly lady and secondly, love marriage, here the young boys or girls choose their own life partners. In Dewlahland parents prefer their children to search for life partner when the time is right for they believe that children know what is best for them. One of the mothers[3] said "It is not easy anymore to find alliances for children like it used to be during early times. Today, most of the young boys and girls move out of state for their further studies and we hardly know them." Today, due to change of space and time, it looks like our society is turning into an individualistic society where children are given more liberty to choose one's life partner. However, parents do have certain desires of their children's choice. They prefer endogamous marriage (same community). "I prefer arrange marriage for my children and belonging to the same caste, it might be difficult to find alliance for them but if they are qualified then it won't be difficult" states a non-Christian father[4].

Parents are also concerned for the health of the spouse. A mother

emphasised 'health' as one of the important parameter for the choice of life partners for their adult children. This is because Manipur society today is stricken with social evils such as use of drugs, prostitution, sexual indulgence, alcoholism etc. She narrated the horrendous experience that her sister went through post marriage. Her sister is diagnosed with HIV+ which was transmitted by her husband who was oblivious of dreaded contamination. Thus, because of this reason, the mother stated that health becomes the primary concern factor and foster peruse medical check-up before the commitment.

Children are advised to be 'Shingba (clever)' in looking out for life partner. Clever for parents would mean for instance, boys should look out for girls who have good moral reputation, educated, and responsible and adapt family affairs with tolerance and submissive nature. If she is earning, working either in private and government sectors even in a low rank is a plus point for the family. For girls, the boys have to be economically established. The preference is Government employee or belongs to affluent family. Society is stricken with the awe of Government jobs whereas working in private sectors are yet to receive positive outlook. Government officials are highly respected in the society and therefore to earn social respect is considered imperative

for parents and kins. In the urge to gain social respect, a respondent [5] narrated her excruciating experience. Her mother forcefully marries her away when she was barely 18 years to a man double her age. She was studying in a reputed college and was very ambitious. She wanted to become a Doctor but this dream was short lived when her youth days and dreams were robbed by her mother's merciless insatiability for money and social status. Despite of the persistent protest by the relatives, she was married off to a divorcee man, father to a son. However, his marital status was not a factor for her mother as he was a Government servant in a good position.

According to the findings, it is observed that although the liberty to choose life partner is given to children, yet daughter's choices are more subjected to scrutiny. Their individuality is subdued and suppressed due to the greed of social respect.

IMPACT OF LANGUAGE IN GENDER SOCIALISATION

It is not an attempt to conceptualise and explain how children learn to speak languages but, it is an attempt to investigate the use of language to boys and girls in mitigating their action in order to distinguish gender roles and examine the impact of language usage in emancipation of a girl child. Mead (1934) wrote about the importance of patterns

of language usage, primarily with reference to the implications for the listener. He emphasised the socio-generic origins of the self through interactions with others. According to Mead, the self was not an existential entity, but rather a construction of personhood through habitual interactions. Socialisation is a lifelong process which is accomplished primarily through communicative interactions in the cultural setting. These messages, communicated mainly through language, are the substance from which the child actively constructs a world view. Language is an extremely potent tool for repressing or emancipating any social relations (Cameron 1998: 148). It can play an important role in the development of individual psychology.

As seen in the light of the above, girls are constraints to do things that interest them such as playing outdoor games like football, carpentry work, and visit friends etc. which according to parents are labelled as work of boys. For example, if a girl climbs the tree then she is chided by saying 'Are you a boy that you are climbing the tree?' if a girl is good at playing football and volleyball then 'she plays just like a man', if she is not allowed to meet her friends while her brother can then 'boys are boys, they are different'. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), if we do gender appropriately, we simultaneously reproduce and legitimate patriarchal hegemonic standards that are based on sex category.

Girls are considered vulnerable whereas boys as strong in the socialisation process. Her capability is denounced by bias explanations and therefore, it leads to gradual developing of self denial in her personality. Language is patriarchal and therefore carries and reflects gender biases and gender inequalities. To make the matter worse is the use of abusive language such as Kashubi (prostitute), Hin-cha-bi (witch), which is sexist and directed mostly towards girls/women folk.

On the other hand, the use of gender-neutral language is important for girls in their empowerment. For instance, there was a 7 years old little girl crying bitterly, when enquired by her mother, she so innocently said that her friends (all boys) in a running race left her behind, they didn't wait for her in which her mother replied "why do you have to cry if you can't defeat them, you should have run faster". It is the use of gender just language that boosts the confidence of girl child and which will greatly impact her personality. This kind of gender just language mitigation on children's action needs to be used. From a contextual perspective, feminists claim that gender norms cannot be changed only at the institutional levels but also must be addressed at the interactional level (West and Zimmerman 1987). There are other factors also that restrict their movements in the name of gender and therefore pull girls down to subservient position which affects

not only their personality but also their mindset. It is through language that girls are learning that the relations between the sexes are power relations where men are dominant and in control, while women are subordinated and inferior. This leads to low level of confidence among women and they imbibe inferior complex which affects their everyday lives. Thus, there is a need to provide gender neutral or gender sensitive language so as to impregnate gender equality mindset.

POLITICS: A MAN'S WORLD

Both men and women, in Manipur, believe that politics is a man's world. It is men who occupy centre stage in the politics. At home, political talks are mostly dominated by men and this is more common in rural areas. Male headed society is yet to accept and encourage women to participate in political sphere, and so, women in Manipur still hold abysmal low position in political participation. A handful of women have become MLAs despite of women constituting half the population in Manipur. However, in almost every state election, it is reported that women voters outnumber men. Women actively participate in casting their votes but one should not overlook the adverse activities at the backdrop. Women outnumber men because female voters are the soft targets and are easily lured to perform unfair

means under men's control. These iniquitous practices are mostly instigated by men when it comes to politics. Women in the family are instructed whom to vote for and most importantly young children become aware of political socialisation and thereby young girls internalises that politics is a man's world.

GIRL CHILD: TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Due to emergence of education, social changes have taken place; change of house structure, lifestyle became westernised, local medicines were replaced by scientific medicines, food habits, better infrastructure, etc. A mother in 50s recalls, "We are grateful that Christianity came along with education. Our society has benefited in numerous ways. But, social relations today have become complicated due to the emergence of globalisation and sophisticated technology." Changes occur at fastest pace today, youngster considered the elders thinking belong to school of old thoughts. Moreover, the wide gap of behavioural and attitudinal changes between the girls then and now is conspicuous as many mothers shared their memories of their youth- as young and compared it with young girls of today. The table below shows the behavioural and attitudinal changes of girls in tradition and modern period as told by them to the researcher.

Table 1

Presenting behavioural change among young girls

Behaviour in Traditional society	Behaviour in Modern society
Ignorant	Clever
Performed household chores dutifully	Focus on studies
Less competent	More competent
Conventional in dressing sense	Fashionable
Respect elders	Lack of respect
Less worries	Pressure and tensions
Limited wants	Unlimited
Introvert	Extrovert

Source: Compilation of information collected from 80 respondents (parents), Dewlahland

From Table 1, it is observed that due to urbanisation, modernisation, globalisation and hi-tech era, a shift has taken in the process of socialisation. The table depicts colossal differentiation between the young girls of past days. Conflict and resistance in the family has aggravated because there is an imbalance in the interests, attitudes and behaviour pattern between children and parents. This is evident because gender stereotypes of a girl child continue to withhold traditional mindset. There is constant conflict of self identity and interests of oneself among the younger generation. Due to competitive world, children have become more individualistic and do not have many friends. They have become aggressive by nature and suffer from mental stress. It is found that girl child are becoming bold and independent. It is precisely because of different types of exposure. In sharing the power relations with men, many women have started to share the parallel space, however, due to constant cultural negotiation of gender identity, women still continue to witness the secondary position in family in particular that has a huge impact on women becoming fully empowered. The dynamism of patriarchy is the biggest enemy for women's empowerment in Manipur society, which can be generalised to whole Indian society and the world.

Globalisation and its impact on gender differences in the family

Manipur, as we know is a small state in North East India could not remain unaffected by Globalisation. At the outset, in economic terms globalisation keeps Manipur connected with the rest of the world at large. Due to increased job opportunities in market, the attitude of people has changed towards education, lifestyle, health, fashion, outlook on male and female etc. Everyday there are advertisements for the new jobs on the one hand and government reports on the creation of

new jobs on the other. These media advertisements and reports also highlight specific educational and professional qualification required or necessary for applying. It is found that in Dewlahland, parents give importance to education. They send their young children to schools based in the valley and adolescence children post-higher secondary are sent to other neighbouring states such as Shillong and Guwahati and mostly to metros like Delhi and Bangalore for further studies. The education of girl child in Manipur has been an important issue for a lot of women and progressive minded men.

It is believed that, formal education is clearly one of the strongest assets for the growth and development of confident and progressive women. Education facilitates women to have a better chance in life. However, it is observed that at the primary level of education, there is usually a high female enrolment, but by secondary and tertiary levels enrolment drops. One of the mothers said that "boys education is taken more seriously, we neglect to encourage girls when they do not want to pursue further studies." Thus, many women who have higher education today have either achieved it on their own or were simply lucky to have found themselves in a place, where they could be educated outside their nuclear families. The low level and lack of education seriously disadvantaged many women that they are unable to reap the positive fruits of globalisation, which makes them

worse off as they have to survive in an inflation prone economy/society. Economic fluctuation has taken a toll in the lives of people in Manipur. Due to this reason, monetary security has become the central focus for the families. Parents opined that they will want their educated daughter-in-law to earn if there is a need to generate income in the family. Moreover, their attitude towards sending their daughters outside the state has changed. They have started sending their daughters to cities like Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai to pursue education and to earn.

The impact of globalisation on the young girls has been interesting. On the one hand, it has allowed them to occupy the economic space, with opportunities for higher education means higher pay raising their self-confidence and independence. Globalisation has provided a power to uproot the traditional views about women that have kept them economically poor and socially exploited. The growth of the computer and technology sector has provided middle class young girls the capacity to negotiate their role and status within the household and society. On the other hand, gender traditional roles continue to hinder their movements. For most women, their domestic responsibilities are not alleviated. Additionally, prostitution and abuse are on rise in Manipur despite globalisation and some say that the materialistic greed is one of the main causes. Globalisation

has not improved much the lives of women. It has not been able to bring transformation in the attitude to eliminate gender bias. There is no or less sign of resistance from the women sides against the discrimination and deprivation meted out to young girls in the society. Most of the respondents are happy to perform the role assigned to them since their childhood by their parents and other social agencies.

Conclusion

Differential treatment of boys and girls in the family socialisation is insidious. The practice of traditional gender roles shapes one on the basis of gender stereotype, gender identity and places the young boys and girls in masculine and feminine roles by creating boundaries, for the two, with dos and don'ts. Gender ideologies are frequently hierarchical and sexual inequality is embedded in thought, language and social institutions. The socio-cultural practices and social norms that favour men in turn deprive the freedom of young girls in the family in particular. For this reason, the preference of son is inherent in the male dominated society. Socialisation process in the family is gendered and

produces gender inequality. Since childhood, young girls are socialised to internalise certain dispositions of mind vis-à-vis self denial, lack of autonomy, and acceptance of subordinate position, thus depriving of her individuality. Therefore, the whole process stops young girls from becoming an empowered being in their later life. Today, the grave concern is to socialise young girls in a gender sensitive atmosphere for them to inherent the right mindset of gender equality and developed personality that enables them to stand in equal footing with men.

End notes

1. Interview with Mr. Singh, a businessman on 28th September 2010 at his residence, Dewlahland.
2. Interview with Mrs Komuni, an educated housewife on 22nd November 2010 at her residence, Dewlahland.
3. Interview with Areiti, a private teacher on 11th December 2010 at her residence, Dewlahland.
4. Interview with Mr. Singh, op.cit.
5. Interview with Mrs. Kayini, an educated housewife on 12th December 2010 at her residence, Dewlahland.

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