

15-8-11

Gender discrimination is more acute than said

Dr. M. Azizur Rahman

MEN and women ratio is about 50:50 worldwide including Bangladesh due to the magic of the nature. It is necessary that we have a good governance to provide a social welfare. Social welfare means we try to maximise the utility or happiness of men and women equally. An effort to increase the men's happiness and ignoring women's happiness is not a good governance. Normally we intend to provide or design a good governance implicitly for men only. If we go through the literature on good governance we find that we are asking everything for men only. This is a discrimination directly and indirectly against women and their empowerment.

Actually what we expect for the aggregate human development by ignoring a gender discrimination are the following : we need to develop men and women by providing them with education and training, knowledge, skill, experience, technological skill etc. Men and women can equally have an employment, good working environment, salary and benefits, for the betterment of their life jointly

and separately.

The related factors responsible for increasing women empowerment includes the women's public voice too. Normally the factors providing good governance are the following : Independent Election Commission, independent Judiciary and administration of law and order, independent media services and independent public voice, independent commission for anti-corruption, investment of social capital for the aggregate social benefit.

Also, the road map to good governance include an independent and effective Parliament, independent Human Rights Commission and the investment-friendly administration. According to others economic and political accountability, transparency, information technology and information availability, government response to the demand raised by men and women are also to be met positively. The equitable distribution of national income between men and women, employment and the poverty alleviation for of men and women equitably should be the agenda of the government.

The real picture of gender discrimination would be our expectation. Women are relatively more unemployed and more poor almost in any society including Bangladesh. There are so many factors behind it. Factors serving as a constraint to women empowerment are the following. Women are socio-eco-culturally weak, relatively less educated, more unemployed etc.

Even some women are employed, but they are relatively less paid. Women are deprived of their inherited properties compared to men. It is also very unfortunate to learn the fact that girls are given less amount of education and health services. In many societies women are traditionally viewed as the less preferred human being. Some times social rules also work against women empowerment. Men and husbands wouldn't want to see their women as the same powerful as they are. These husbands are in reality a part of the social policy maker. For example, in many teaching and related jobs, only 30% job-quota is maintained for women though they are 50% of the total population. It means that

the administration or the government itself does discriminate against women.

However, the social status of women has been increasing slowly. According to (source-www.d3systems.com.2007). women participated in the national election of 2007 or referendum are the following, Bangladesh 80%, Egypt 87%, and Jordan 88%. It may be noted that most of these women freely participated in the national elections and these women are mostly housewife or home makers. Participating in the national election is very important in increasing the women's public voice and empowerment.

In the middle eastern countries women are restrained to participate in many social or public function because of cultural and religious reasons. Some husband in these countries take the advantage of shari-a law to impose restriction on women movement. For example, in Pakistan and Afghanistan women participation in national election is relatively less, Pakistan 460/0 and Afghanistan 540/0.

However, women are also interested in doing business and earn-

ing money if they are provided with necessary resource structure and training. In Bangladesh 64% women would like to do business on their own. Among the rural and married women 77% are house wife.

About 50% of these rural house wife in Bangladesh lie below the poverty line. According to estimate of 2007, women lying below the poverty professional housewife, religious constraint, dominance by husband, gender discrimination etc. are the major constraint of women's public voice and empowerment. However, 80% of women's participation in national election of Bangladesh is really encouraging comparing to other developing countries.

Finally, women in Bangladesh love to earn income, acquire public voice and empowerment in the society. The government of Bangladesh, the politicians and the ruling class need to help eliminate the gender discrimination and to restructure the social opportunity and benefits to men and women equitably for women empowerment and for the greater interest of the human development.