

Gender and Human Security in Asia: Women and Education

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Introduction

When I received the invitation to this "Gender and Human Security" workshop, I was first puzzled by the remote connection between my local community activity and "human security". The day-to-day struggle and the girl's education programme in rural Rajasthan of India seemed to have little relevance to this new concept of "human security", an idea that emerged from the recent history of internal civil conflicts. Global security issues entailed a complicated set of ideas such as national sovereignty, balance of power, nuclear deterrence and collective security. For someone like myself, working among illiterate women and children in a minority Muslim community, these issues seemed like the concerns of upper-class people in another world.

Through reading the Final Report of the Commission on Human Security and other conceptual notes, however, this mysterious trinity -community development, human security and national security- somewhat became clearer in my mind. As Sadako Ogata, the Co-Chairman of the Commission on Human Security, stated, the "nature and scale of 'insecurity' and 'crisis' have changed drastically over the decade." In the past ten years, international conflicts have become rare while internal civil conflict has victimized civilians all over the world. September 11th certainly reminds all of us that the real menace is not outside but inside the national boundary.¹ Hunger, poverty and social inequality create insecurity among individuals, become a platform for violence, and threaten a nation from within.

It is in this context that the conventional framework of national sovereignty and the state's role of protecting its citizens was severely challenged. With her ten years of experience as the High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), Ms. Ogata appealed, "we cannot rely on a state alone to protect human rights"². An endorsement of national sovereignty and a heavy military setup for self-defense no longer ensure national and social security. Rather, it is the empowerment of the people at the bottom of society – individual and community – that will be aggregated into social and national security.

Although the concept of "human security" is new and yet distant to development

field workers, the issues of "empowerment" and the "bottom up approach" are quite familiar. In fact, development workers experienced this paradigm shift, from the "trickle down" to the "bottom up", long before the security experts.³ The purpose of this report is to highlight the issue of women's empowerment from the development workers' perspective. The first two sections briefly sketch the relationship between women and poverty. The other sections narrate the real stories of the women and the girls in rural India. A critical analysis of women and education is made in the penultimate section, which reflects the anxiety of the field worker. This is not a comprehensive report on women and education in India, but rather, my own personal story and reflection upon women and education in a minority Muslim community of India.

Who are the Deprived?

Hunger and poverty are not new phenomena. Since the 1970s, billions of dollars of foreign aid have been spent on developing nations for economic growth and poverty alleviation. The amount of bilateral aid was reduced after the Cold War, yet the amount of loans through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was never reduced. What is new, however, is the sense of failure among policy makers to outreach the poor and to reduce their numbers.

It is widely recognized that the gap between the rich and the poor grew in the 1990s. On a macro level, the top thirty percent of people control the majority of wealth in the world. According to the Final Report of the Commission on Human Security,⁴ 1.2 billion people still live below the poverty line of one dollar per day and two-thirds of them live in Asia. On a micro level, a study published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* magazine found that a mere two percent of people have moved out from poverty over a period of 25 years.⁵ This household survey and interview within Andhra Pradesh of India, of course, did not depict the whole picture of rural development in India. This finding, however, endorsed many local practitioners' observations that the poor remain poor over generations.

In addition to this ever-increasing gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots', another characteristic of poverty was highlighted in the 1990s: the serious deprivation of women. On a macro level, internal civil conflicts left their utmost impact upon women who lost their husbands, houses, and source of income, as well as being subjected to

physical and sexual assault. Now, the majority of refugees are women and children. On a micro level, all the statistics indicate the growing, persistent gap between men and women in the population,⁶ infant mortality and literacy rates in India. The Human Development Report of 1995 encapsulated this phenomenon: "Poverty has a woman's face."⁷ Clearly, the majority of people swimming or sinking in the pond of poverty are women and children.

Reaching Out to the Deprived

Despite the reports and statistics that emphasize the relationship between poverty and women, "poverty" is often not enough to cover all the miseries of women. Economic dispossession is just a part of the misery in rural Rajasthan where I work. A woman at the bottom of society has many other faces: she is illiterate, lives in a rural area, works in the field, is married early, has five to ten children, has never been to school, has never voted, always feels depressed, has no self-esteem, and dies as early as fifty years of age. Robert Chambers,⁸ in his early book, provides five useful clusters of disadvantages that shed light on the other faces of woman.

1. Poor (few assets / no land)
2. Weak (sickness / malnutrition)
3. Isolated (from information and support)
4. Vulnerable (to changes in situation / natural calamities)
5. Powerless (exploited)

Chambers argues that policy outreach becomes more and more difficult the higher the number is from 1 to 5.⁹ It is relatively simple to provide money, shelter and health care to the weak and poor, but reaching isolated tribes or protecting illiterate women from local exploitation is not. In the development sector, working among "deprived" or working for "empowerment" means tackling these difficult aspects of poverty (isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness). As the above-mentioned study of Andhra Pradesh suggests, lifting people out of the poverty pond is extremely difficult. This is a strenuous task and you may end up saving just two women out of a hundred over 25 years. Worse, you may end up sinking or swimming in the pond yourself while trying to save others.¹⁰

Having stayed in rural Rajasthan as a local NGO worker, not as a researcher, I have little knowledge of the size and depth of this poverty pond. In other words, I have little

interest in measuring the scale of poverty or identifying its causes. Many institutions as well as prominent economists have been working on poverty alleviation strategies in India, yet the poor remain poor over generations. To save the poor in the poverty pond, one needs to swim in the same pond. My story is about the day-to-day struggle in rural Rajasthan: about the women, the girls and the challenges in education.

Women, Girls, Challenges in Education

The State of Rajasthan is located in the west corner of India, sharing the longest border with Pakistan. It was also the land of the Maharaja and the warriors who left behind beautiful forts, palaces and legends. The Thar desert stretches from Pakistan to Rajasthan. Naturally, water is scarce in the state. The climate is extreme: summer temperatures can reach 45-50 degrees Celsius; winter can be as cold as 4-7 degrees Celsius. Although the land is a popular tourist spot in India, many outsiders do not realize the extent of poverty and illiteracy in Rajasthan, as they do not visit the poor backward inlands there. The Mewat area where I worked is one of the most deprived areas in the state.

Mewat is synonymous with Meos, the predominant Muslim population in the area. Although the Muslim population in the state of Rajasthan is around 10 percent, over 70 percent of Mewat residents are Meo-Muslims. Meo scores especially low on the social indicator scale. Women have 7 to 8 children on average, significantly more than 4 to 5 among the low castes in the region. The sex ratio is as low as 840 females per 1,000 males, indicating the high rate of female infanticide in the area.

Tradition and custom carry a lot of weight in rural Rajasthan. Child marriage and the custom of dowry are widespread despite federal law.¹¹ In the Mewat area, the average age of marriage ranges from 12 to 14, at times even younger. Parents often take advantage of marrying off the younger daughter with her elder sister to the same family to reduce the dowry.¹² Unlike other Muslim communities, marriage is arranged with a boy in another village, thus isolating the girl from her own family. The *pardah* system, the covering of heads and faces with shawls, is also prevalent even with girls as young as 5 or 6. After marriage, women must bend their shawls forward as a sign of submission when they meet with their husband and their in-laws.¹³

Meo women are known for their hard work. While men are killing time smoking water pipes and playing cards, women take charge of all the agricultural work, animal husbandry and household tasks. Being close to the desert, fetching water and collecting firewood requires tremendous labor. Consequently, women seek help from the eldest daughter to look after the younger children and the household. It is women and girls who do most of the fieldwork of sowing, weeding, harvesting, thrashing, and stacking. The buffalo, their precious asset and source of income, also add to the workload: collecting and cutting fodder, watering, bathing and milking.¹⁴

Although they are categorized as "Muslims", they have adopted many Hindu and indigenous customs. On one hand, they follow the rule of fasting, prayer and Muslim festivals, but on the other side, they celebrate Hindu festivals, spending excessive amounts for wedding and dowry in contrast to the traditional Muslim custom of bride-price.¹⁵ Meo women seem to bear a double disadvantage by both Hindu and Muslim male-dominating customs. When two Afghan women, both faithful Muslims, visited our project site for exposure in March 2004, they were stunned by the oppressive practices in this rural area. During the field visit and discussion, issues of sexual violence, incest, forced marriage and alcoholism among men were repeatedly mentioned by village women. They were also surprised by the amount of field labor women perform, as most Muslim women in Afghanistan do not even go out to the local market. "Women may be much better off in Afghanistan (than in Rajasthan)", one said.¹⁶

A girl child's wellbeing is largely negated in Meo due to extreme subordination practices. Girls spend most of their time engaged in domestic labor: pitching water from wells, feeding the buffalo, collecting firewood, preparing food, and taking care of younger siblings. These girls do not have time for school; following in the footsteps of their illiterate mothers. Even when they have a chance for an education, the quality of education is extremely poor in rural government schools. In our NGO's target area of Mewat, one teacher looks after 80-150 students in one classroom. These teachers are often absent from school or do not give any guidance to students. Consequently, children learn very little over the years. Some cannot even write their own names. This accounts for the high dropout rate and the functional illiteracy¹⁷ of government school children.

The Long Road Ahead for Girls' Education

Due to the extreme backwardness mentioned above, the well-meaning intentions of NGOs to educate girls is not well accepted by the Meo community. Villagers were already disillusioned by malfunctioning government school education and very cautious about outsiders who may do wrong to their women and girls. On top of these suspicions, there is a hardcore belief that "education does not make a good farmer." Agrarian life requires lots of manual labor, including washing buffalo, making fuel out of their dung, and fetching water from far away wells. Educated boys and girls frown on the dung and urine of buffalo, and look down on physical labor and illiterate elders. With the scarcity of job opportunities outside their villages, virtually none for girls, the community sees no benefit in educating their children.

To earn the trust of these disillusioned villagers, local NGOs start their work by building confidence. Initially, local field supervisors keep open dialog with the community, form women's Self-Help-Groups (SHG) for collective savings and gradually win the trust of village women. SHG and micro-finance programmes require a lot of input: how to count money? Who will keep the account? Who will borrow the money? What if she cannot repay the amount? Regular meetings and training sessions create a solid bond among illiterate women. By the time the women learn how to sign their names in an account book or visit a bank to open a group account, they have gained enough confidence to deal with other challenges in their villages.

Taleemshala, a non-formal school supported by NGOs, is introduced once the above process is completed. Women are consulted about building a village school where they can send their daughters. The NGO conducts a baseline survey and forms a Village Education Committee (VEC) in each village. VEC members and SHG women are responsible for: sending their daughters to school, providing a learning space, active involvement in meetings, and contributing grains and money to school events. Women become active and enthusiastic about Taleemshala in a village where they can safely send their daughters. It is the NGO that is responsible for recruiting and training teachers, providing study materials and maintaining the cost of running the school.

This scenario is exactly the path Ibtada¹⁸ has taken in the past seven years. An organization was established in 1997, and it supported a micro finance project that covered over 60 villages. An education programme was launched in 2000, three years

after the formation of SHG. Quality education now reaches over 1,000 students in 26 villages.

Education with No Discount

One of the advantages of non-formal education is an absolute freedom in its pedagogy and curriculum design. Generally, in non-formal or alternative education sectors, the purpose of education is narrowly defined. The emphasis is on writing letters or applications, reading street signs or newspapers and keeping the accounts of the *mazduri* (labor fees). Literacy and numeracy are essential in productive life, but do not necessarily make the individual an active participant in society. The main objective of primary education should be to encourage children to learn and to develop their confidence, skills and capabilities. Being a minority Muslim, it is more crucial for girls to learn how to work with diverse groups and accept different religions than it is to acquire simple literacy. Ibtada adapted its pedagogy and texts from an experienced education NGO, Digantar,¹⁹ to bring up students as independent thinkers and self-learners.

Taleemshala's education is unique: a multi-level learning system with no exams or competitions and an absolute egalitarianism between a teacher and 30 students. Its curriculum aims at making students vocal and rational. Therefore, almost 60 percent of school activities are spent on group discussion and oral exercises where students brush up on their reasoning and communication skills. Unfortunately, it is too complex to share the entire philosophy and pedagogy of Ibtada's primary education programme in this paper. This section focuses on one aspect of its education programme: the recruitment and training of teachers.

The quality of education largely depends on the quality of teachers, so recruitment and training are critical. From a management perspective, it is relatively simple to prepare the "hard" items for education: negotiation of the location of the school within the community, ordering the study materials from Digantar, and distributing stationery and books to village schools. Recruiting teachers is the difficult and risky part of the operation: Who is capable? Who is culturally sensitive? How long will they stay? For most candidates, working in rural Meo-village is quite a challenge. One needs to commute to a village under the extreme climate of Rajasthan and endure all the responsibilities of both teaching students and facilitating community meetings. Although the ideal

intervention is to recruit local people from a village itself and train them, this option is limited as not many Meos are qualified.

In the past four years, Ibtada has conducted teachers' recruitment six times and provided training for nearly 100 candidates. However, there is always the dilemma of finalizing teachers, as those who scored well in exam – commonly non-locals - will not stay long, while the local candidates perform extremely poorly. Female candidates are more than welcomed but their retention rate is low. The salary provides motivation but those who solely look for higher payment often lack the cultural sensitivity required to approach Muslim girls. There seems to be no golden formula to find committed and capable candidates in rural areas.

Teacher training is the most crucial part of school quality management. All candidates have to go through a 40-day residential training or three-month in-service training. Training covers five subjects (Hindi, Mathematics, Science, English and Art) in addition to the pedagogy of ancient Greek, local folk songs and poems, intensive group discussions and even the proper way of cleaning toilets. The purpose of training is to build skills and sensitize the attitude of teachers who will directly serve the Meo-community.²⁰

Frankly speaking, it took me a while to understand why such intensive training is required to teach a little child in school. When I was in Japan, I always felt comfortable tutoring elementary students at a cram school (*juku*), even though I had received no formal training. Later, however, I realized one basic principle in education through observation: one could only teach the way one learned. Those candidates who themselves received poor quality education at school were ill equipped to handle a large number of students without raising their voices, repeating the same instructions, and using physical punishment at times. Simultaneously, I realized that the primary education I received in Japan was extremely good in quality: most of the teachers were well-educated and patient, used many colorful teaching materials and paid attention to the progress of individual student. Ibtada's intensive training is an effort to bring local teachers up to the level of those in Japan.

In spite of such endeavors, there remains other problems for Ibtada to wrestle with. Notably, the recurring costs of the teachers' salaries and the frequency of meetings and training sessions are high compared with other local NGOs working in non-formal education.²¹ Results, in terms of student attendance and community appreciation, are

also not authentic. Although village women enthusiastically invited the Taleemshala, their habits of using elder girls for seasonal labors and house works did not change so quickly. When girls turn 14 or 15 years of age, parents automatically withdraw them from school for early marriages or housework. Teachers and field supervisors have the strenuous task of visiting parents and talking to VEC members. This never ceased over the four years. It could have been easier to reduce the number of subjects or school time, but no appeasement was made to accommodate the local tradition. It is, after all, the constitutional right of every child to receive good quality primary education.

The Reality Behind Empowerment

There are few counter arguments against the notion that education empowers people. The Co-Chairman of the Commission on Human Security, Amartya Sen, elaborated the link between basic education and human security in his speech.²² Although he defines basic education as narrowly as literacy and numeracy, he expects much from this: access to the law, political participation, employment, and increase of ownership and income of women. The Final Report of the Commission on Human Security also devotes one chapter to knowledge, skills, values and human security.²³ It highlights the educated women's positive impact on family and health. Although the Final Report is not as ambitious as Amartya Sen's speech about the benefits of basic education, both agree that the returns on educational investment are higher in women than men. Although I do not completely disagree with this notion, what is illustrated on paper seems like too rosy a picture of women and education, not entirely reflecting the bitter reality.

First of all, basic education does not directly contribute to income generation and employment.²⁴ In rural India, there are millions of educated men who can not get employment outside their villages. On the other hand, there are millions of illiterate women who are self-employed and able to generate income out of their small businesses in South Asia. The success of micro finance project such as that of the Grameen Bank proved that it was not the lack of basic education, but the lack of capital that kept women away from entrepreneurship. The micro finance project of Ibtada witnessed the empowerment of illiterate women many times. Examples of this empowerment include some SHG group calling on a bank manager (clearly an upper

caste male) for a loan and another group forcing the closure of an illegal liquor shop in their village. In a rural society, numbers count. Women who learn the strength of collective power can voice their issues without hesitation.

Secondly, property ownership and legal protection have almost nothing to do with the educational background of women. The majority of women whether they are educated or uneducated, do not seek legal support against unjust actions done to them. Victims of rape and sexual assault would rarely file the cases in court, because they are afraid of tainting their family name. The cost of justice is so high that blackmail to the family, rumors about the victimized girl and insensitive investigations continue until the day of final judgment, which only comes 5-10 years later. Numerous cases of dowry harassments and massacres are also rarely brought to court but settled between families. The precondition of property rights and legal support for women is the rule of law, protection of privacy and swift judgment. If none of these exist, what is the use of basic education?

Last but not least, education does not necessarily make women happy or secure in society. A predominant reason for not sending a girl to school in a rural village is the fear of her gaining the ability of articulation. Educated girls start asking many questions and often speak out against men. In extremely male dominated societies, this is not welcomed at all. An outspoken girl may have a hard time in securing a marriage arrangement. If a woman is extremely vocal but her family is too poor to provide many dowry items, she can be ostracized by her in-laws. For educated woman themselves, it is quite frustrating to live in a traditional society after many years of education and exposure to a new world through media and books: there is no job outside the home for woman, no educated friends to talk with, and no choice of when and whom to marry. At least in rural Rajasthan, unfortunately, women are more secure being illiterate, obedient to men, and quiet at home.

Then why do we need to educate girls? Working in the primary education programme over the past two years, I still do not have a good answer, except that basic education is a fundamental human right. The majority of our students' families are illiterate farmers. Raising a first generation learner²⁵ is always difficult. There is always almost no support or understanding from the family, no role model in the village and little chance to pursue higher education. Having being an English teacher for village girls, I worried a lot

about the future of these outspoken angels. All of us treated the girls with respect, but respect is something they would probably never receive in their new married lives. Their desire of pursuing higher education may never be fulfilled.

However, despite my concerns, the very girls who studied at Taleemshala are positive and confident about basic education. Our first batch of 29 girls delivered their messages before their graduation. From hearing their voices, I realized that besides basic literacy and numeracy, they have learned to think, to speak, to laugh and cry, to clean up, to read the time, to make a phone call and to work with others at Taleemshala. As for their future dreams, a variety of images came out: to learn how to drive a car and motorcycle, to visit new places faraway from the village, to learn stitching and sewing, to become fluent in English, and to continue studying at school. The social environment is extremely harsh for women, but when these girls strived to fulfil their wishes, the results also embraced them. This April, 29 girls surprised all of us with their incredibly high scores in the first 5th Standard Exam. What surprised us more were the 26 families who agreed to send their daughters to Class 6 of the government school. Never before did we expect the Meo-community to send their unmarried daughters outside their villages. Now some girls are studying at a school in the city, commuting from their relatives' homes.

Empowerment is not a linear process. Whether it is an individual or community, we sometimes do not see much change while we are working hard. Empowerment is often compared with the process of heating water: you do not see the change until water boils. Only when it hits boiling point, a community is transformed. What we can do, at least, is to keep providing good quality non-formal education for girls as long as possible. When Ibtada educated 1,000 or 2,000 girls and sent them back to the community, the stream of girls' education become irretrievable. Our micro finance project became the platform for 2,500 women in the Meo-community over a period of seven years. Taleemshala would be the platform of change in the next decade.

Conclusion

In the past two years, I had the opportunity to work with a grass-roots NGO in rural Rajasthan and witnessed the empowerment of women and children. Not many Indians have a chance for such an in-depth experience of the field. Adjusting my life to local

customs was not easy, but through that process, I learned the social norms, Hindi conversation and even how to ride a motorcycle through the chaotic traffic in India. For foreign aid workers, it is always difficult to reach the poor and find out their real needs. Looking back on my thirty months in India, I am content with the path I took to see the reality.

Today, many international organizations have become keen on participatory community development and the empowerment of women. Little however is known about the reality of these rural people and the strenuous work done by local NGO workers. Stories of empowerment are not as vivid as they are reported. Effects of basic education on women's employment, ownership and security are not as clear as they seem. Many international donors tend to overlook these bitter realities and just publicize the "positive reaction" of the community as a sign of empowerment. This is inherent to the short project cycle and result-oriented approach adopted by many donor agencies. Real empowerment requires strenuous work and long-term commitment. The study of gender and human security needs to focus on the real empowerment process and the real people working at the bottom echelons of society.

Regarding the lives of women and children in other parts of India, I am not as fluent as one particular American journalist who spent six years in India. Her honest and detailed reports about women's lives provided me with many fresh insights. Her words below perfectly synchronize with the very feeling I have right now. I hope this paper on women and education will draw your attention more to the lives of women in South Asia.

But slowly I realized that the way Indian women live is the way the majority of women in the world spend their lives: it is Americans who are peculiar. Ultimately, I realized my journey to India was a privilege. Rather than going to the periphery, I had come to the center.

Elizabeth Bumiller²⁶

Endnotes

¹Ogata, Sadako. "Human Security and Global Security," Speech at Columbia University, March 2002.

²In my mind, "human rights" and "human security" are almost synonyms, yet the latter refers to an elementary human right such as the "right to live". For the distinction, please refer to Sen, Amartya. *Basic Education and Human Security*, 2002.

³The "trickle down effect" is a classic theory of economic development. It suggests that national economic growth and its benefit would "trickle down" from the top to the bottom. India adopted this approach in the 1960s for its Five Year Plan, but the effect was widely disproved and replaced by bottom-up approach in the 1970s.

⁴The Commission on Human Security. *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*, 2004

⁵ Krishna Anirudh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17 July 2004

⁶The latest census data shows that the sex ratio in India has fallen from 945 (1991) to 927(2001) per 1000 males. Census 2001 is available at <http://www.censusindia.net/>

⁷UNDP "Human Development Report 1995," UNDP, New York

⁸ Robert Chambers is probably the biggest academic figure in the development sector today. He focuses on the knowledge and capacity of local people and enhances their active participation in situation analysis, policy making, and implementation. His empirical studies heavily relies on fieldwork in rural India and the local workers' approach to poor illiterate peasants. This approach and method are called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), later referred as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). PRA-PLA had a great impact on the development sector in the 1990s.

⁹Chambers, Robert. *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Longman Publishing Group, 1983.

¹⁰Grameen Bank is the micro credit pioneer which reached over 43,000 villages across Bangladesh. Grameen's borrowers are almost exclusively women, 96 percent, with no access to other credit. Founded in 1983, its loan recovery rate still remains at a miraculous 99 percent (Muhammad Yunus 2004). Little reported however, is the number of field supervisors who outreached the bottom and went bankrupt. Those local workers who themselves possess little, sometimes repaid the money instead of the borrowers. This emotional attachment or obligation is the challenge of any field worker who directly caters to the poor.

¹¹The Dowry Prohibition Act (No. 18 of 1961) stipulates a penalty of seven years imprisonment and a fine for giving or taking dowry. The minimum age of marriage is stated by the Indian Constitution as 18 years of age for women and 21 years for men.

¹²In rural Rajasthan, poor farmers commonly practice arranged marriages of two daughters with two sons from another family. This saves the amount of dowry items - money, motorcycle, color TV and other furniture - at one time.

¹³ Literature on Meo-Muslims is almost non-existent. Hashim Amir-Ali's socio-economic

survey (1970) provides details about Meo's socio-economic background. Almost 35 years after publication, the social codes and practices noted in this book are still dominant in the area. Another recent baseline study was conducted by SRIJAN in 2000.

¹⁴ Northern Indians consume lots of milk for tea. In Rajasthan, milk is mostly taken from buffalo not from cows. The dairy programme, which forms women's groups for milk collection and selling, is popular in Rajasthan and the adjacent state in Gujarat. Institutionalization of these local dairies became a major movement in Gujarat in the 1970s. Counter to the "Green Revolution (agricultural renovation)" in the 1960s in Punjab, this community mobilization is referred to as the "White Revolution" in India.

¹⁵ In Muslim custom, the groom has to pay a high bride-price at the time of marriage. At the time of divorce, he is also responsible for paying the living expenses of his ex-wife.

¹⁶ Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan. *Towards a Gender Strategy* – Report on Women's Tour of Rajasthan, April 2004

¹⁷ Functional literacy indicates self-learning abilities such as reading newspaper or books. It contrasts to simple literacy in which one can just write one's own name and address. In India, all school-enrolled children are considered as "literate" regardless of their actual attendance and literacy level. This policy hides a lot of functionally illiterate students underneath the literacy data.

¹⁸ *Ibtada* means "beginning" in Urdu. Meo-Muslims have a strong attachment to Urdu in which the *Holy Book of Qur'an* is written. Many Meos migrated to Pakistan during the partition between India and Pakistan in the 1940s.

¹⁹ Digantar is a distinguished resource agency of primary education and teacher training. They developed their own curriculum and numerous teaching and learning materials. Their multi-level learning and egalitarian system borrowed a lot from the Japanese schools *KUMON* and *Tomoe Gakuen*, the alma mater of actress Ms. Tetsuko Kuroyanagi.

²⁰ The trinity of "skill", "knowledge" and "attitude" is required of any facilitator or service provider working in local communities. In the field of social work and PRA-PLA in India, the major focus is on proper attitude and communication skills.

²¹ In *Ibtada*, per student annual cost is around 45 US dollars in comparison to 30 US dollars in other education NGOs such as BLACK in Bangladesh and Gyan Shala in India.

²² Amartya Sen "Basic Education and Human Security," Speech at Kolkata University, January 2002

²³ The Commission on Human Security "Chapter 7: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Human Security," *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*, 2004.

²⁴ UNESCO conducted a comprehensive experiment regarding literacy and productivity in the 1970s. Empirical studies in 15 countries did not find a clear link between them. For the details, please see the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) Final Report issued by UNESCO and UNDP, 1976.

²⁵ Many studies proved the benefits of second-generation learners, however, as first generations create the path and make sure to nourish and educate their children.

²⁶ Bumiller, Elisabeth. *May You Be a Mother of a Hundred Sons*. Penguin Books, 1991.

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Amartya Sen "Basic Education and Human Security," Speech at Kolkata University, January 2002.

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アジアにおけるジェンダーと人間の安全保障 —女性と教育— 田中真奈

「ジェンダーと人間の安全保障」をテーマとした報告の依頼を受けたときは多少困惑した。インドの片田舎で行っているコミュニティー活動が世界の安全保障と一体何の関係があるのだろうか？人間の安全保障に係る最終報告書を読み進めるうちに、その疑問が氷解していった。過去10年に世界各地で勃発した国内紛争の数々は、安全保障の問題が国内の貧困や不平等と密接に関わることを示す。従ってアジアにおける人間の安全保障を考えると、社会の底辺で暮らす人々のエンパワーメントの問題が重要となる。

国家の治安や集団安全保障は遠い世界の話であるが、貧困と不平等はインドに暮らす自分にとって身近な問題である。本レポートはインド・ラジャスタン州におけるイスラム子女の初等教育の取り組みを通じて、貧困とエンパワーメントについて現場のレベルから思うところを述べたものである。

開発分野では『貧困』や『欠乏』についての多くの考察がなされてきた。なかでもロバート・チェンバースの著書にある貧困の分析は、搾取や危機に対する脆弱性といった構造的な問題を明示している。この難しい課題に対して、息の長い活動と質の高い教育で応えるローカルNGOがインドには数多く、私が2年半を過ごした団体もそのひとつである。

イスラム子女への教育活動を通じて学んだことは、教育—とりわけ女子教育とエンパワーメントの関係が一般的に論じられるほど明確でないことである。家族や地域の理解も将来の展望も無い状況で、読み書きができることに一体どれほどの意義があるのか？むしろ自分の置かれた状況に疑問に感じたり、書籍を通じて外の世界に触れたりすることで、その後の人生が余計に苦しいものになりかねない。

エンパワーメントというのは女子の就学率や識字率といったことでは測れない。教育を受けた女性が、差別や抑圧のなかで他の非識字女性と変わらぬ短い一生を送るのだとしたら、それが何の“power”と呼べるだろうか。しかし開発機関の中には数値の上昇やコミュニティーの反応といった一過性のものにとらわれ、本質的な変化(Transformation)の重要性を看過するものも多い。アジアにおけるジェンダーと人間の安全保障の研究が、将来に渡って貧困や差別の中に暮らす人々の視点から行われることを望んでいる。