



THE ROLE OF 'KHAP PANCHAYATS' FOR AMELIORATING SOCIAL PROBLEMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FEMALE FOETICIDE IN HARYANA-AN ANALYSIS

Dr. Rekha Rani

Deptt. Of Public Admn.

H.No.-414 Sector-4 Rtk

ABSTRACT

The role of 'Khap Panchyats' is appreciated by creating awareness and finding solution for curbing the social problems like dowery system, protecting the rights of the farmers, putting check on female foeticides etc. The present paper throw an adequate light on the various social problems with main focus on female foeticide problem in rural Haryana. The 'Khap Panchayats' have been playing a vital role to expedite the movement against the practices of female foeticide, which has been proved conducive to develop a positive opinion on this burning issue in rural Haryana. The role of Panchayat by creating an awareness among the rural masses through 'Khap Panchayats' may prove a 'right platform' to form a mass opinion at grass-root level in the changing scenario.

keywords: Khap Panchayats, social problem, female foeticide, opinion formation, strategies, grass-root level.

Introduction: The Khap Panchayat are the group of like-minded people who play a significant role for solving the socio-economic and political problems at a grass-root level. Meaning thereby; these are the forces which determine the behavior of social group or groups. These two forces determine the human behavior of the work force engaged in constructive or destructive works. As a result of these forces also determine the outcome of social harmony or disharmony, depend upon how these forces work. Khap Panchayat is an ancient, democratic and socially sanctioned institution of Haryana. The historic past indicates that the 'Khap Panchayats' have been playing a vital role and indulged in such Things which may threats to its social values. The Khap Panchayats play a significant role for raising the voice against discrimination, injustice and disharmony during pre and post-independence periods. Now there is continuity and change in their actions and reactions in the rural society in Haryana (Inder Singh, 2009) Now these Khap Panchayats are producing 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal' forces for integrating and disintegrating forces for mollifying the conflicting situation as well as creating disharmony in the rural society.

The initial unit of organizational hierarchy of Khap Panchayat is the village which spread over an area. It begins with the family and keeps on organizing numerous of families, known as 'Thola'. The formation of many 'Tholas', constitute a 'Pana' or 'Patti'. Village is formed by

many Panas. And further the group of different villages form a 'Tapa', 'Thamba' 'Chaugama', 'Pachgama', 'Athgama', 'Chaubisi' and 'Araha', is known as 'Tholedar'. The elder of the village is known as Pradhan. There is system of inherent appointment system of 'Khap Panchayat is still temporary in nature. Presently the headquarters of 'Sarva Khap Panchayat' is located at the village Soram in the district Mujjafarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

Historic Past of Khap Panchayat:

Khap Panchayats has a long historic past. It is one of oldest institution, evolved through different successive periods. Initially, establishment of 'Khap Panchayat' was began with 701 B.C. (Captain DilipS Singh, 1988) in the period of 'Samrat Harsh Vardhana. The meaning of 'Sarav Khap Panchayat 'means 'Sarva+Kh+Aap. Meaning thereby, the water-which is purity, Panch means unbiased, truthful, and practical and justice? And a person who is well acquainted with the subject matter is known as 'Panch.It is a group of five people? According to historical record the first meeting of 'Sarav Khap Panchayat was held in 1184 AD. The participants in this meeting were Mehar chand Tyagi, Hada Singh Ahir, Mohan Singh Kayath, Mat Ram Gujjar and Dewal Singh Saini.In 1287 AD, the 'Sarve Khap Panchayat' there were 60,000 Jats, 25,000 Gujjar and Deval Singh Saini who participated in this conference. During the 1857AD Revolution, the 'Sarva Khap Panchayat' had played a vital role for ruling out necessity of 'Akharas' in every village. It was also made mandatory for the youth within the age-group between 18-40, to recruit in their force and they have been trained accordingly. They have fought against the 'Royal Army' and the 'Despotism' imposed by the king 'Kutubuddin Aibak, who used to impose 'Zazia'and subsequently he had to unconditionally compromise in the year 1194 AD. In the year 1199 AD, under the leadership of Harpal Rana, a meeting of 'Khap Panchayats' was held at Tikri village and resolved for construct the 'Akharas' and imparted battle training for the youths within the age group of 18-40 years. In 1287 AD, another meeting was hold under the leadership of ch. Mastpal and condemned the 'Zazia' imposed by the king. In 1498 AD, CH. Devpal Rana organized a 'Khap Panchayat' at Nirpura village and passed a resolution against King Taimurlang. The other associates were Jagmohan Gujjar and Dhahia Balmiki.who were appointed as chief and deputy Chief of the force which they have constituted. Under the leadership of Ch. Shoshal Senapati and Ch. Ram Kala, who was deputy 'Senapati' and Ch. Ram kala, who was deputy Sena pati in the formed force for sending back all the foreigners immediately? According to 'Mistak Mirasi' Swami Vijranand, the Guru of Sawami Dyanand addressed," The life of slave is worse than a dog' and motivated to take an active participate in the freedom struggle. After the Independence struggle during 1857 AD the British were succeeded to split up of 'Sarve Khap Panchayats'. The western part of the 'Khap Panchayats' subsequently shifted to Punjab region, which is presently Haryana.

Khap Panchayat in Post-Independence Scenario:

The role of Khap Panchayats has been remarkably appreciated by the scholars, belong to different streams. The 'Khap Panchayats' have been rising socio-economic and political issues from time to time. The pressing problems which includes prevention of drinking habits among the villagers, female foeticide problem and dowry system in the villages are some of vital issues raised by the 'Khap Panchayats.'In order to put check on dowry system, a vital role played by the 'Khap Panchayats' a conference was held in the year 1950 at the village Beri in the Jhajjar

district, where the rules framed by the 'Khap Panchayats' were to be followed by everyone, barring any caste, creed and religion (Chaudhry, D.R. 2006). Another burning issue of female foeticide problem was highlighted by the Bibipur Gram Panchayats of Jind district of Haryana. This Gram Panchayat invited all 'Sarv Khap Panchayats and made an extensive discussion on this burning issue of North West region of India. Similarly, the problem of land acquisition by the state has become another burning issue for the suffering farmers. The 'Khap Panchayats' are acting as a 'great pressure group' for protecting the peasants' rights. They are now raising voice against inadequate compensation for their fertile lands and wrong policy of state land-acquisition in the state.

Since formation of Haryana as a separate state which has experienced a rapid growth of urbanization and industrialization has given rise to urbanism in the countryside in Haryana. As a result a modernization process is influencing the rural youth to a considerable extent. It is because of rapid growth of rural income and education. As a result a confronting situation has been developed with the norms and changing attitude of youth of Haryana state. There are numerous of instances, when the rural youth got married within their own 'Gotras' or married within the villagers where it was a 'Taboo' due to practice of 'Bhaichara' between the two villages. In this situation, 'honour killing' honorific epithet for brutal murder of females for violating sexual norms set in patriarchal social set up (Chaudhry, D.R. 2010) the 'Khap Panchayat' is an endogamous clan institution, now largely a 'Jat outlet' around Delhi. Its concept of brotherhoods had to several taboos which have under serious strain these days. It is a matter of serious thinking and no 'panacea' seems to control this menace of the rural society.

Today, the traditional rural structure is cracking up under the impact of modernism, leading to increase intimacy between the two sexes in a village. So long as these relations remained wraps, there is no problem. However, when it takes a shape of marriage, as a result it leads to erode of social mores which invites barbaric edicts. There has been upsurge in such killing in the 'Khap belt' around Delhi of late, capped by the murder of two cousin sisters along with one's husband hailing from village Wazirpur in Delhi state. The fear of killing makes couples flee. Over three dozen couple of Haryana is now under police protection. The problem can be sorted out through mutual dialogue, keeping in view the need for harmonious blend of tradition and modernity, so essential for awards advancement of society. However, this does not seem to be possible in the changing scenario. Khap ideologies often refer to Vedic culture in support of their contention. There was a traditional concept of 'Swamvar' in the Vedic period permitting girls to choose their spouses, as it was depicted in 'Rig Veda' indicate a liberal attitude and open them the suffocating social set-up Khap custodians wish to perpetuate. The Arya Samaj has been the most powerful reform movement in the 'Khap belt.' Swami Dayan and, its founder, Characterize choice marriage as 'Uttam' in his book 'Satyarth Prakash.' However, choice marriage invites the wrath of 'Khap leaders' who mostly owe allegiance to the revered Swami.

The 'centrifugal force' has been developed when the 'Khap Panchayat' had a legal confrontation with some of judgments awarding exemplary punishment to the accused for murdering a couple in Haryana for marrying within the same 'Gotra' has provided to be



threshold. This confronting situation has given rise to agitating for an amendment in the 'Hindu Marriage Act' imposing a ban on the same 'Gotra' and same village marriage. The 'Khaps' are several centuries have portrayed the violation of marital taboos considered as 'sinful' which deserve stringent punishment, generating in turn, a culture of intolerance. The demarcated line between intolerance and violence is thin. The families with the girls, shown a deviant behavior, become a target of taunt and clammy make their life unbearable in their village itself. It is because of they carry the stigma of social dishonor which is shed off only through the alchemy of murder, which is executed as divine duty and killers feel proud of it.

SWOT Analysis of Khap Panchayat: On the basis of observed data, as indicated by the study, carried out in rural as well as urban areas of Haryana, worked out the SWOT analysis as follows:

Strength: The Khap Panchayat has a glorious historic past. The Khap Panchayats especially 'Sarv Khap Panchayats' have been playing a significant role since its formation year 1184 AD. It has a significant contribution in accelerating the national movements during different successive periods. These 'Khap Panchayats' have been producing a 'centripetal force' which have been proved conducive to generate cementing force for the people from different walk of life in different contemporary societies. Historic past of 'Khap Panchayats' indicate their success rate in success of peasant's movements, labour movement and socio-economic and political reforms for the deprived sections of society. It has been acting as a great 'pressure group' for collective bargaining on various issues, raised by the 'Khap Panchayats' in Haryana.

Weakness: In order to analysis the weakness of 'Khap Panchayats', we review the outcome of actions and reactions of 'Khap Panchayats' on various socio-economic and political issues which have not been tackled by the 'Khap Panchayats' from time to time. Its rigidity on 'Gotras' issue, dominance of single caste, no active participation of other castes, excessive participation of illiterate or semi illiterate people, taking extreme steps for 'honor killing' of youth for getting married within the same 'Gotras,' irrational thought dominance, no change in accordance with time, absence of legal entity and existence of unorganized institutional support, are some of weakness of 'Khap Panchayats' in Haryana.

Opportunity: The 'Khap Panchayats' had some of good opportunities in past, when it would have been better to modify its 'organizational behaviour' in accordance with the change of time. As a result, the conflicting situation has been rising from time to time. Keeping in view the changing scenario, it become imperative to review the functioning of 'Khap Panchayats' and should be modified with modernization of society. There is an opportunity to remove a 'cultural lag' which is

continued till now. It is expected to pave the way to produce more 'centripetal' force which will ensure to render a 'cementing' force for communal harmony in Haryana.

Threat: The 'Khap Panchayats' which have been some of threats, associated with their functioning itself. The 'Khap Panchayat's organizational behaviour which has been threat to the rational human being, legal entity, threat on the spirit of human justice, threat on the communal harmony, threat to human rights, dominance of 'despotism' within the 'Khap Panchayats', probability of creating disharmony are some of threats of 'Khap Panchayats'.

Keeping in view the SWOT analysis of 'Khap Panchayats', it require some of reforms, which can be proved conducive to make the 'Khap Panchayats' more effective to 'human problem solving' measure rather than problem creating. It require legal entity with an institutional support from different social, economic and political institutions so that the 'Khap Panchayats' may produce 'centripetal force' for social stability in the countryside of Haryana. As far the head of 'Khap Panchayats' is concerned, it also require a 'periodic elections' so that a right person may provide 'good leadership' and guidelines for 'constructive' Khap Panchayats in Haryana. They should follow the status of old age institution which has been played a constructive role in the medieval times. The Khap Panchayat should continue with some of modifications in accordance with changing scenario. There should be a formal membership of a Khap, so that the Khap Panchayat may be recognized universally, not only in Haryana, but in the whole country too.

STRATEGIES TO BE ADOPTED FOR AMELIORATING THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- The 'Khap Panchayats' may organize the meeting at a grass root level for inculcating the right things in to wrong minds.
- The 'Khap Panchayats' may make a co-ordination with the Gram Panchayats may be proved more effective in accordance with prevailing local conditions.
- The 'Gram Panchayats' may provide an institutional support to the 'Khap Panchayats', so that the crucial decision, taken by these institutions may a 'legal entity' so that the probability of acceptability may be increased in this regards.
- It has been observed that the 'Khap Panchayats' are constituted with a 'dominant caste'. It is therefore, it become imperative to include other castes too, so that this rural society based institution may become fully competent to review this problem in accordance with a social problem for the society as a whole.
- The Gram Panchayat of Bibipur village of Jind District can be a role of model for strengthening the functioning of 'Khap Panchayat', for rendering its role to curb this social evil to considerable extent;
- A joint venture between 'Khap Panchayat' and the 'Gram Panchayat' may develop a great 'pressure group' for helping to change the attitude and mind set of the people, who often prepare a 'male child' of the people, who often prefer a 'male child' and keep on increase . the population in accordance with their pre judicious attitude towards this social problem.
- The NGOs which have been involved to curb this social evil, may take the help from 'Khap Panchayat' for supporting their views on this burning problem. By adopting this strategy, it is



expected to pave the way to make the problem easier to inculcate by the people who have been fixed with their mind-set in this regards.

- The 'Khap Panchayats', however, dominant by the men, which is not fair for the fair sex. It is therefore, it is become imperative to include the females too. It is because of female, who is equally share holder of the problem, like female foeticide particularly in rural areas of Haryana.

Conclusion: Khap Panchayats have been playing significant role in its functioning for raising the socio economic and political issues in the rural areas of Haryana. Now these Khap Panchayats have become a nuisance, rather than solving any problem of different problematic areas. The surveys conducted from the respondents from different districts of Haryana, indicate a considerable variability in their attitudes of the people belong to rural and urban areas. This difference has also been tested by t-test. The SWOT analysis of Khap Panchayats also indicates its strength, weakness, opportunity and threat to this unorganized social institution, working in rural society of Haryana.

The ends of the justice would be met if the contemplated law brings into its ambit all those who glorify killings along with the actual perpetrators of the crime and infringement of any of the rights of a citizen guaranteed under the Indian constitution. The enactment of a stringent law and its effectiveness is very essential. A collective psychosis has been spawned by the Khap Panchayats over the issue of tradition and there is need to build a vibrant civil society, fragile in the khap built at present to usher in an inclusive and human social set up. Only then the Khap Panchayat like institution may be in a position to ameliorate the mind- set of the people for make out the problem like female-foeticide and also may ensure to lead a social stability for the people, living in thousands villages in Haryana.

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