Society Status: Rights for Woman and Children

U.T. Lindsey
Research Scholar, Cairo, Egypt

Abstract
This paper discusses the right and position of woman and children in society. Author also tells sometimes the tradition becomes the wrong things for woman. Here the NGO or world level organization’s role to change the position of woman and children in society is also discussed. Everyone in this world should do something for improvement the condition of woman and children in society.

Keywords: Woman Empowerment, Traditional Evils, Secure Woman and Children.

Introduction
There are many articles regarding woman and children in our constitution. According to Article 4 of the CRC says: “States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.” This article means that the State has a duty to act in the best interest of children when allocating the resources available in the society, no matter how small the amounts. The State must also demonstrate good faith by being able to show that actions have been or are being taken to give children the priority they deserve. While governments have the principal responsibility, this duty covers both governmental and other resources — human and financial — such as public and welfare institutions. Civil society organizations can also be very effective in mobilizing resources at all levels of society. Thus, States Parties are responsible for moving forward to implement the provisions of the Convention with whatever resources they possess. The challenge is, therefore, usually to ensure that the term ‘available resources’ is viewed as ‘total available resources’ and not just those currently allocated to the social sector. Efforts also are needed to mobilize additional resources throughout a country. Close attention should be paid to the extent to which all national resources, including institutional and privately held resources, are used to advance human development. In particular for UNICEF, this means determining the level and effectiveness of the resources devoted to children and women.

UNICEF and human rights programming for children and women
As a member of the United Nations family, UNICEF has an obligation to help countries honor their commitments to human rights. The CRC, which recognizes that individuals up to the age of 18 are children, provides a legal foundation for the ethical and moral principles that have always guided UNICEF’s work. UNICEF is committed to ensuring that country programs of cooperation are framed by the human rights approach and that global activities specifically support the implementation of the CRC. Human rights are fundamental to the work of UNICEF and guide all programming processes, such as how we assess and analyze the situation of children and women; how we build partnerships and alliances for children; how we influence public policy and resource allocation; and how we help ensure the realization of the full spectrum of children’s rights. The human rights perspective means that UNICEF is changing the way it analyses how children live at all stages of their development — from early childhood through puberty and adolescence. Analysis from a human rights perspective should lead to an understanding of the multiple and interrelated causes that together prevent some children and women from enjoying their rights. It should help us to more fully understand how law, social norms, traditional practices and institutional responses positively or negatively affect children and women. To deepen our understanding, we at UNICEF are working to ensure that data is disaggregated by sex, geographic origin, age and ethnicity in order to expose disparities, which are too often concealed by averages. We are reviewing national laws to see if they protect all children and women equally or whether in the
application of laws there is inherent discrimination. We are looking at whether the allocation of national resources actually reinforces discrimination against women, girls, certain ethnic groups or disabled children, or helps to overcome it. Also, we are determining whether macroeconomic and social sector policies and programs are consistent with the general principles of human rights (particularly the best interests of the child) and whether in fact they provide a sound basis for the ‘progressive realization’ of rights. At the same time, UNICEF is not only focusing on problems, but is also promoting ways to continually monitor progress in areas where gains for children’s and women’s rights are manifest.

**Tradition: A double-edged sword**

The legal systems of many countries are strongly protective of children’s and women’s rights, but these achievements may be negated or neutralized by traditional practices and local authorities. The law may be explicit about women’s rights to own land but traditional inheritance practices may make it nearly impossible for women to actually benefit from these clearly established legal rights. Traditional law can often be the dominant norm for the majority of a country’s population. However, customs that are incompatible with CRC and CEDAW must be identified and ways to change negative aspects addressed collectively. At the same time, those customs and practices that are positive for children and women should be recognized and promoted as important aspects of CRC and CEDAW implementation. Socio-political structures that create a strong sense of social cohesion can help to promote human rights and the recognition of basic needs. A human rights approach should identify, analyze and try to preserve those aspects of traditional society that advance social cohesion for the benefit of the child and the woman.

**Participation and empowerment**

A human rights approach recognizes that women and children should be central actors in their own development. The goal of development is therefore to create conditions that allow them to participate more fully in community life and in the creation of policies that affect them. Such a focus also helps to create a climate for the broader acceptance of human rights principles and leads to national policies and value systems that recognize human dignity, value tolerance and acknowledge the rights of people to be partners in the development of their communities. From a human rights perspective, broad participation is both a means and an end. CRC and CEDAW stress participation rights in particular, since traditionally women and children are those most marginalized and excluded from the processes of mainstream society. Children’s participation rights include their involvement in the social, cultural and political spheres of life. One of the more meaningful participatory roles of youth is in helping determine their ‘best interests’. This is already happening in youth HIV/AIDS prevention programs and increasingly in other program areas. Participation is an end in itself, and UNICEF is developing programs that have this principle as the main objective.

**Joining forces to secure human rights**

In the cooperation that has always been at the heart of UNICEF’s approach, governments are our principal partners. However, this cooperation becomes even more vibrant and productive when the groups and organizations of civil society that share common values join the partnership for good governance, which is an essential condition for the protection of children’s and women’s rights. For this reason, the alliance with civil society organizations is not an alternative to working with governments, but is a cornerstone of the effective private/public collaboration essential to CRC and CEDAW implementation. The well-being of women and children is heavily determined by what happens in the private spheres of their lives: within their families, households and communities. The ability of parents, especially mothers, to provide for and protect their children is the key determinant of their survival and optimal development. A human rights approach requires that the programs UNICEF supports develop genuine modes of partnerships and participation, which include communities and local associations as full actors in their own development rather than as participants in projects which are planned and managed outside their sphere of influence. The best UNICEF-supported programs have always given high priority to people-centred development and broad community involvement in decision-making. The ground is already fertile for using the principles of CRC and CEDAW as guiding frameworks for action.
Conclusion

In addition to the UN reform process, UNICEF’s growing collaboration with the international financial institutions — especially the World Bank in the context of sector-wide programs — represents another strategic opportunity to advance the human rights approach to development. A successful sector reform initiative should benefit those previously excluded as well as address issues of equity and participation. In this connection, it is useful to keep in mind the following recent developments within the Bank which augur well for stronger UNICEF-Bank collaboration in the pursuit of human rights-based development.

References


