

A preview of issues surrounding women in china

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WOMEN IN CHINA

In the recent past, much has changed about women and other concepts that relate to their lives in China. Making a comparative analysis of women in the past and in current China, it is evident that a lot has changed regarding their lives especially when the concept of the family comes in handy. One factor that is so vital in China is family. It has always been seen as the core pillar of every person's life regardless of social status, education level or gender.

China has always upheld respect and value for the family and this is seen as a tradition to be treasured. Basically, viewing or considering various factors, women in China have always been in the forefront of upholding and supporting their families largely compared to men. They work hard, endure much and find means and ways to sustain them even in the quest to make sure that the families remain firm.

In current China, various issues have changed in regard to women. One of them is divorce. Unlike the past women are now filing divorce cases to move out of abusive marriages. Unlike the past women used to stay and endure mistreatment by their husbands all in the name of maintaining family stability. In cases of infidelity, women now prefer divorce and living on their own rather than coping with such hardships. Most women move out and focus better on having a financial stability which enables them to take care of their children. In addition, in the cases where there are disagreements in the family, women are now confident enough to seek counseling from various facilities in China that offer marital help. This has been seen as a new trend evolving as the tradition in China has always advocated for women to solve domestic matters using family-based guidelines like seeking help from

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both spouses` parents. The rate at which divorce is done on current China is increasing rapidly and most of the divorce cases are filed by women. Wu Meifen is one of the women who narrate divorcing her husband after cases of infidelity in their family. She rather considered moving out of the marriage without nothing rather than seeking legal help where she could have received 50 percent of the family wealth. Even though the stereotype that men are the caretakers in their families. Wu moved out with her three months old daughter and worked hard for her sake. She later went to a driving school, borrowed money from her sister and started her own business. After a while, she was financially stable and even planned to buy her own apartment. This has been the greatest change regarding women in China.

However, in the rural areas in China, divorce is not highly embraced. In the Urban areas, women are more focused on getting good education and well-paying jobs rather than depending solely on their husbands just like Wu Meifen. This approach is different from the perspective of women in the rural areas. Instead of divorce, women in the rural areas prefer committing suicide rather than leaving their spouses. Most of them are left with the burden of taking care of their families as their husbands contribute less to the family`s progress. Compared to men, the suicide rate of women is 25 percent higher. Mostly the main issue that leads to such is domestic violence and disagreements where women use suicide as the only alternative. The poor living standards in the rural areas in addition to domestic misunderstandings become unbearable for women to handle. Majority of the women in the rural areas are uneducated or have poor education, live in poverty and still carry

on the tradition that women are the core pillars of a family. Zhao deliberately wanted to commit suicide by consuming a pesticide liquid after having arguments with her husband. Although the issue that led to the quarrel was not serious, the stress and the burden of life triggered greatly her kind of decision. Most women between the ages of 15 and 34 commit suicide in China and this is the same age bracket of married women. The fact that she tended the farm, took care of a household of seven and catered for the needs of her two boys added the weight of her actions as she narrated in 2007. Most women like her, feel desperate especially when they consider the kind of life they lead.

It is undeniable that modernity has created significant changes in the women`s lives in China. However, a big number of them living in the rural areas have not seen the relevance of modernity holistically. On the higher end, men move to the cities to seek for good paying jobs and leave the responsibility of taking care of families to their wives. Compared to what they earn in the rural areas, men prefer living in the cities where some even earn five times more. This issue is challenging to the women in the rural areas seeing that they are left with no option but to do all the hard work like working in the fields which is seen as the man`s work. They carry on all the family responsibilities as their husbands are out there making money that mostly helps keep their children in school. Majority of women are uneducated and have lesser chances of getting jobs in the cities. Zhou Ximing is one man who moved out to the city to seek a good paying job. As he narrated, making good money in the city is much better than staying with the family in the countryside. Zhou was not disturbed by the fact that he had

been away from his family for a period of 10 years. 90 percent of men leave the countryside to the cities for better jobs leaving the women with all the responsibilities.

Illiteracy among women is also another concerning issue on women in China. Most women, especially in rural areas, have a poor education. However, even with the chance to attend adult education, most women are unable to do so because of the commitment of taking care of their families. They mostly work for over 12 hours in a day which becomes challenging for them to attend a class. In addition, women in China have the notion that education is for the youth. This concept becomes the greatest hindrance to having educated women even as the government seeks to give out funds to cater for adult education. They prefer working and taking care of their children as well as raising funds to keep their children in school. Most women are still confined to the fact that their main role is to cater and feed their families. Education becomes irrelevant in their lives. Unlike men who can do offer hard manpower labor and still earn good money, women can only get well-paying jobs with the consideration of their level of education.

Even though equality has improved over the years in China, some values and concerns have not yet changed. Largely, men still dominate in many ways over the women. For example, women, especially those who are young, are still wrongly used by men who are wealthy. The emergence of mistresses in current China is still a concerning issue. Young women as used as sex objects by men who are financially stable. The young women prefer this kind of lifestyle since they do not have to study or get good jobs for them to have a fancy life. From a specific perspective, the norm of polygamy slowly creeps

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in China`s culture. Men who are financially stable take advantage of young women who are desperate and in dire need of living good lives. Some go to an extent of keeping several women as their concubines. In 2011, Xu Maiyong who was the former vice mayor of Zhejiang was executed for bribery of over 30 million dollars, an act which revealed that he had numerous mistresses. Liu Zhijun, the railway minister was also reported to have over 18 mistresses. Most women are lured by wealthy men and find it a good option especially considering their low living standards. Even if they get information that the men are married, they still consider the option rather than sticking to young men who are financially unstable. The current trend shows that young women prefer dating wealthy and financially stable partners even without considering the art of love. In families, girls are encouraged to see marriage as a medium to change their lives. For example, Mr. Liu, a young man who is an accountant attests that he engaged himself in over 20 dates before finding the right partner. Most young women prefer dating men who have bought their own apartments. This area still remains to be one that women will struggle to effect change. The only option of this is getting the quality education and having financial stability of their own.

In a nutshell, much has changed in regard to the women in current China. Modern women are now moving out of abusive marriages and focusing on gaining financial stability to be able to take care of their children. They prefer relying on themselves rather than sticking to unfaithful husbands. Women contribute greatly in supporting their families, especially in the rural areas. However much still needs to be done on as women in the rural areas prefer committing suicide rather divorcing their husbands. Even with the

improvements regarding equality, women are still dominated by men in some areas. The fact that young women rely heavily on wealthy men pulls down the effort of women getting to same levels and positions with men.