

新たな言説を通してのジェンダー観の
変容に関する一考察
—北インド農村社会における参加型開発を事例として—

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論文要旨

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—北インド農村社会における参加型開発を事例として—

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従来の研究では、個々人のイデオロギーやアイデンティティの形成に言語や言説の習得が密接に関わっていること、つまりある特定の文脈や他者との関係性のなかで使用される言説が個人のイデオロギーやアイデンティティを規定することが指摘されてきた。この議論を踏まえると、アイデンティティやイデオロギーを規定する言説は、個人が日常生活を通じて新たに接触する言説との相互作用を通じて再解釈され、再構築されていくことが想定される。もしそうであるとすれば、言説はいかにして再解釈され、再構築されるのか。またそれは人々のイデオロギーやアイデンティティの構築にどのような影響を与えるのであろうか。

上記の疑問点を論じるために、本稿では北インド農村社会で展開される女性対象の参加型開発に焦点を当てる。当該社会は家父長的性格が強く、女性の行動を制約するさまざまな規範が存在するといわれている。本稿で取り上げる参加型開発のプログラムでは、こうした社会の既存のジェンダー観にかわる新たなジェンダー観を普及する試みをおこなっている。ここでは、開発プログラムによってもたらされる新たなジェンダー言説の分析を通じて、それが参加する女性たちのジェンダー観にいかなる影響を及ぼすのかを考察する。

The changing process of gender ideology through acquirement of alternative discourses:

The case study of development programs in rural North India

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Key words;

gender ideology, discourse, development, India

Ideology and identity of individuals are closely related to language and discourse, and that identity of a subject and his/her experience is a variable phenomenon formed by discourse used in certain contexts and relationships with others. Accordingly, it is also justifiable that the discourse that affects identity and ideology construction is continuously reinterpreted and reconstructed through the interaction with alternative discourses. If so, how the discourse is reinterpreted and reconstructed? How it can affect the ideology or identity of the people who use the discourse?

To discuss these questions, I will focus on women participating in development programs conveying alternative gender discourses in rural North India in which women are imposed several restrictions due to an existing patriarchal system. From an anthropological perspective, I will analyze the process of reinterpretation and reconstruction of discourses and language brought by development programs, and how they affect the ideology of those women.

The changing process of gender ideology through acquirement of alternative discourses: The case study of development programs in rural North India

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Introduction

There have been many arguments that ideology and identity of individuals are closely related to language and discourse, and that identity of a subject and his/her experience is a variable phenomenon formed by discourse used in certain contexts and relationships with others (Johnstone: 2001, Speer: 2005, Wodak: 1997). Accordingly, it is also justifiable that the discourse which affects identity and ideology construction is continuously reinterpreted and reconstructed through the interaction with alternative discourses in a changing society. If so, two questions are proposed here. First, how the discourse affects the ideology or identity of the people who use it? Second, how the discourse is reinterpreted and reconstructed by them in a changing society? To discuss these questions, I would like to focus on a case study of a particular participatory development program in India. In India, women's movements and development programs have expanded since its independence and they have also reached to rural areas since 1980s. This type of programs in India are far more active and vigorous compared to those in Japan and currently, women have obtained one third of seats in the parliament.

On the other hand, many scholars have discussed about several restrictions and constraints imposed on women and the strong existing patriarchal system especially in rural north India in relation with Hindu ideology (Chakravarty: 2004, Derne: 1995, Mitter: 1991, Wadley: 1977,1994). It is also said that characteristics such as modesty, chastity, obedience, tenderness, self-sacrifice and devotion are given to Hindu women as an image of femininity. These preconceived images reflected in some particular behaviors in this region, such as women's seclusion, excessive house chores for women, women's meal time after men and so on. Actually, that is one of the reasons why such many movements have been deployed in India.

*Mahila Samakhya*¹ Program I will focus on in this paper is also one of these programs aiming at empowerment through the improvement of their own livelihood, and the provision of an alternative gender ideology. This program has started as a part of the National Policy of Education implemented with the financial support of the Dutch government since 1989 and whose activities are based on the ideology of gender equality, improvement of status and entitlement of political and social rights for women constructed largely by western feminist and shared in most of women's movement bodies in India. However, these ideologies can easily be in conflict with the conventional gender ideology. Then, how can the program affect the ideology of local women and how can it be accepted by them? Hence, I will focus on the process of reinterpretation and reconstruction of discourses and language brought by the development programs.

1. Summary of Research Field

I had conducted my fieldwork in S village, in Chandauli district, located in Eastern Uttar Pradesh State of North India. I had had a 19 month field work in this region since January 2003. *Mahila Samakhya* program has been implemented since year 2000 at S village and 18 members who represent 5% of village women, are currently participating in the program. In this village, there are about 1000 habitants consisting of almost a single caste, the Bind caste, which belongs to a lower strata of Hindu Caste System and their economic status is extremely low. *Mahila Samakhya* once attempted to initiate its program in 1998, but it was aborted a few times and therefore it took two years until the program settled properly. In this village, women are currently engaged in several programs such as the Saving Program, Women's Court Program, Health and Sanitation Program.

2. The Introduction of Gender Discourse through the Program

In this section, I will describe how and what kind of ideology *Mahila Samakhya* conveys to village women who participate in the program and examine how alternative gender discourse introduced by the program affects on gender ideology of the participants.

As mentioned above, *Mahila Samakhya* aims at women's empowerment and thus, the program expresses the women's current situation by using terms of 'subordination', 'oppression', and 'exploitation', and emphasizes that women should be 'brave (*takat*)' and 'strong (*himmat*)' as a way to change their situation.

Therefore, they indicate how women should obtain strength and bravery in a repetitive way through slogans of rallies², songs and conversations during group meetings. The Appendix 1 shows an example of a conversation among members, a *Mahila Samakhya* worker and a block director in a block level meeting called *Maha Sangha*, held in February 2006. As the program and the participants voice the gender ideology shown in the Appendix 1 repeatedly, those discourses gradually get attached on the participants mind as a phrase.

In fact, from interviews of some members of the program³, it can be perceived that they also copy the style of workers' talking. The followings are some phrases extracted from some interviews.

1. "Men had oppressed women for a long time."
2. "Now we talk to village men on an equal footing and we can make them understand what we say."
3. "Women can also obtain what men do have."

It is understandable that the interviewees imitate what *Mahila Samakhya* workers and the block director repeat at the meetings and other activities. In particular, the first three comments are made by some highly active members who have participated in the program for a longer period than the others, or those who take the leadership since the beginning.

On the other hand, the following two narratives are heard frequently among most of the members and include some key terms such as bravery and strength. However, the usage and context is slightly different from the one used by workers or narratives shown above (number one, two and three).

4. “If our economic conditions were good or we can have an opportunity to get a job, we will be able to be further stronger.”
5. “We have a lot of things to do the whole day at home and I don’t have the bravery to work anymore outside (to get an income)”

The last two narratives are more realistic but they do not directly express the gender equality discourse compared to the first three narratives, although the latter include some key terms. In other words, there are some discrepancies between usages of discourse.

Moreover, because members consider that gambling, fighting, drinking and abusing which occur frequently are vicious behaviors; they express how incorrect those manners are by using phrases such as ‘go to a jail’. For example, when a villager commits domestic violence, they say to him phrases such as “if you abuse your wife and get her out of your house, you have to go to jail”. Besides, these kinds of phrases are also used against closer persons such as neighbors and family members. Another example is that two girls who attended an educational program called *Kishori Kendra* said to their parents “if you get me married before I will be 18 years old, you will go to jail.” In this case however, those girls didn’t say it seriously but rather jokingly.

3. Formation of Conventional Gender Ideology in the Local Society

It is obvious that members copied the way of talking of *Mahila Samakhya* workers who use that phrase when they accuse villagers who have done something against the policy of *Mahila Samakhya* such as domestic violence and drinking. As women use this phrase to defend themselves against villagers, they also learn and understand norms and concepts of the alternative gender ideology. However, when they criticize those behaviors of villagers, they actually do not mention the concept of gender equality showing that probably they did not understand the real meaning and purpose. Therefore it can be deduced that the program’s gender ideology does not really suit women’s thinking and it is difficult to accept and internalize the alternative ideology for them.

So, why it is so difficult? To answer the question, it is necessary to consider how the relationship with villagers and family members affect on the internalization of the discourse. For, women have found their space among families and communities by their own strategies under the conventional gender norms. Living in accordance with the alternative ideology means that they have to break the conventional norms and they can be exposed to criticism by other villagers and families. Actually, during the interviews with members of *Mahila Samakhya*, I have heard some cases of villagers using abusive words towards members since they often go outside to attend the program’s meeting. The following narratives of members express this.

Ms. G⁴. (a member of *Mahila Samakhya*) expressed that:

“Villagers said that *Mahila Samakhya* women are dirty and they go outside to hang around. They go outside because they don’t want to do house chores anymore”

Ms. R⁵. (a *Kishori Kendra*⁶ member) said:

“The other day village men yelled: if you really want to go outside, then I will sell you to a brothel in town!”

Ms. L⁷. (a member of *Mahila Samakhya*) said:

“Village men said ‘we have to beat the members of *Mahila Samakhya*.’ Once, when we were cleaning the temple of Hindu goddess, they said that the members polluted the temple.”

These narratives show a contrast with the image of an ideal Hindu woman depicted in the beginning. “*Mahila Samakhya* women are dirty” in the first narrative contrasts with the image of chastity and modesty, and phrases such as “They go outside to hang around” and “They don’t want to do house chores” contrasts with the image of devotion and self-sacrifice. The second narrative indicated that women who go outside are considered ‘dirty’ and thus, as ‘prostitutes’, and therefore those villagers who think that members who are no longer pure, pollute the temple which is a holy place despite they have cleaned it.

The critical point in these cases is how villagers consider women’s participation in this kind of programs that make women go outside more openly. From the perspective of conventional gender norm, going outside without an appropriate reason is not good for women and most of the villagers so far, don’t view it as an appropriate reason and afterwards members get confused and hesitate between conventional norms and the alternative one.

Conclusion

There were two questions proposed at the beginning of this paper. Regarding the first one (‘how discourse can affect people?’) it was found that repetitive actions of utterance in the development program can be the first stage for internalizing the alternative gender ideology. Although it is difficult to internalize this ideology coming from outside of the society since the society itself has strong norms and concepts regarding gender, it can probably be imagined that using or uttering the new gender discourse can generate a certain sort of a crack in the arena of conventional gender ideology and it can be the beginning of a changing process. Within that crack, which can be wider or narrower according to the situation or relationship women are located in, women can choose a different reaction, i.e., women can act more like village women or as members of the development program, in accordance with the people whom they talk to or behave toward.

Regarding the second question, (‘how the discourse can be reinterpreted and reconstructed?’) it can be concluded that women do not literally interpret or accept the alternative ideology the program proposes. In this case, they consciously or unconsciously, try to prevent denying or confronting the conventional gender ideology while criticizing some behaviors and situations which cause problems directly to those women, such as men’s drinking and abusing using the phrase of ‘go to jail’ or complaining about their scanty situation with words of strength or bravery. Even though they use such key terms, the usage or meaning is slightly different from what *Mahila Samakhya* proposes. Hence, it means that they interpret the gender discourse in their own context and reconstruct the meaning of the discourse and the nuance of those defensive terms.

Furthermore, through the examination of the process of changing gender ideology in rural North India, we also realize that women in this area are not always passive or they do not accept whatever those programs provide but they intelligently use these services or even the ideology offered by such development programs, in line with the situation and relationship they are located in.

Finally, in this discussion, I have concentrated on the relationship between changing ideology and usage of discourse and hence, I would like to show how the discourse can be practiced in daily lives and activities and

how this practice affects the changing gender ideology inside the local society.

Appendix 1: Conversation during Maha Sangha Meeting (23rd, February 2006)

Worker1	What is the meaning of <i>Maha Sangha</i> (great meeting)?
Member1	We get information (knowledge) from <i>Didi</i> (sister = MS workers). When a meeting is held, <i>Sakhi</i> (friend =MS members) from all the villages come together. This is <i>Maha Sangha</i> .
Worker1	What kind of information you get? What kind of topic you talk about at the <i>Maha Sangha</i> ?
Member1	At <i>Maha Sangha</i> meetings, for example, we make a group and get information about the group and decisions by upper people.
Worker1	You make a group and get information. Then ...
Member2	<i>Didi</i> , shall I say? Why <i>Maha Sangha</i> meeting is held is to improve our situation and to gain power (<i>Shakti</i>).
Worker1	You stand up and talk.
Member2	Men beat women at home, they drink and they beat them and turn them out from their houses, but still they don't quit drinking. But after making a group, they stopped beating (women), because of a suggestion for the group.
Block director(BD)	You have improved. Good. Then, for example, you are supposed to make a group and there.... What I want to ask you, O.K.... You make a group but do you know how many villages gather?
Worker1	Do you know it?
Member2	40 villages.
Worker1	40 villages...
BD	<i>Sakhis</i> from 40 villages gather. To hold <i>Maha Sangha</i> , I mean, what is the significance of it. Why do you have to hold it?
Worker1	Why do you have to hold it? (In local language: <i>Bhojipuri</i>).
Member2	What is good about <i>Maha Sangha</i> is family members don't let women go outside. But from there, they say "you just stop working (at home house chores) and attend the meeting. You have to bring something good. They talk about many good things at a meeting. <i>Didi</i> , they think (about <i>Mahila Samakhya</i>) in good way, they do.
BD	We get new information (<i>jankari</i>) from a new place. <i>Maha Sangha</i> talks to people outside. And what do <i>Sakhis</i> of our own community do? What kind of problem does she have? How we can talk about it. Other people also have an opportunity to know what <i>Sakhis</i> talk about here. If somebody has a problem, we can not care her alone. If it is a problem in other village, or if I need her help, then what can I do? I can come to <i>Maha Sangha</i> and talk about my own problem is... possible.

Members	Possible. (at the same time)
BD	For me, getting support from <i>Sakhis</i> is... possible
Members	Possible (at the same time).
BD	It is possible, isn't it? If you have something you can not do alone, we all can do it together. What I understood from long term activities of <i>Maha Sangha</i> is if you have something that only members of a village can not accomplish, then women from 40 villages get together and they can change the situation, and I feel easier.
Worker1	<p>If 40 villages will change, then your own opinion will change and whatever health condition and educational condition, information and anything, women from 40 villages get together, so 40 villages will change. At least, 20 will change and if they know how those villages change, they will imitate them and do the same in their own villages.</p> <p>You have to convey what you heard now (to somebody else). You have to convey what <i>Didi</i> said (to somebody else). When <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> came, we didn't know anything. We didn't understand anything like what is <i>Mahila Samakhya</i>. And then, we made a group and <i>Didis</i> came and talked. Then we started to participate. And we understood what <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> is. What kind of knowledge we get and what kind of help we can get. That's why <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> is very strong. Listen. <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> solves problems for women suffering from them. If you have some problems, you come and talk about your problem here and many of your fellows (<i>Sakhis</i>) will say. "Oh, its serious problem." "Then let's talk about the problem our sister is suffering from" (in the local language) isn't it?</p>
Members	Yes, it is.
BD	We can get strength. And we have brought a new strength today. That is ... what is significant regardless you make a group or not can be... we are having a meeting in this way... and <i>Sakhis</i> can get together to help each other and this group can prepare for help (<i>Sakhis</i>) forever.
Worker1	This is also the profit of our changing. <i>Maha Sangha</i> ...
BD	Whatever <i>Maha Sangha</i> or <i>Sanha</i> (village group) curriculum of <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> . All of <i>Sakhis</i> are being to understand through a participation (in the program). Preparation had started since 5 years ago but the curriculum had not started yet. Today, I feel strength inside of myself. Am I strong or not?
Members	You are (at the same time).
Member3	You are strong.
BD	<p><i>Sakhi</i>, new knowledge, new passion and new bravery. This curriculum worked. Then, why do you think I've got strength? I go outside a village to go to another village and meet others. Now I have such a big number of our <i>Sakhis</i>. If I have a problem, then I immediately think that I will call <i>Sakhis</i> and ask them for ...</p> <p>Help</p>
Members	Help.

BD	This gives you bravery or doesn't?
Members	It does.
BD	If you have a problem in your village, then you can immediately call <i>Sakhis</i> of other villages and ask them for help. (You say) lets go. If the <i>Sakhi</i> listens to your problem and accept your request, then you can get help.
Worker1	Can you get help of not?
Members	We can.

[Translated by Misako KANNO]

Appendix 2: Slogan of Rallies

- Boys are active/free but girls can not go outside their houses.
- Mothers give life to children, but fathers are called the successors.
- This world is full of men's eyes but women should take off their veils.
- Those who take care of sick and older persons are women, but those who get respect from others when getting older, are men.
- Those who take the liquor are the men, but those who take the beating are the women.
- The ones who coerce are men, but the ones to feel shame are women.
- The ones who cultivate the fields are women; but the ones who are called "farmers" are men.
- On mother's love and being fathers pride, why a daughter has a lesser right?

["Annual Report 2001-2002: Mahila Samakhyha, Uttar Pradesh, (2002), Lucknow.]

[Translated by Misako KANNO]

¹ *Mahila Samakhyha* means 'Women's Equal Evaluation' in Hindi which is a local language in this region.

² See Appendix 2.

³ I had had interviews with approximately 60 people including residents of S village, workers and members of *Mahila Samakhyha* and their family members.

⁴ Three of the informants are belonging to Bind Caste. Her approximate age was thirty six and a mother of 6 children at the time of interview (February 2004).

⁵ Her approximate age was 13 at the time of research (April 2004).

⁶ *Kishori Kendra* is an educational program of *Mahila Samakhyha* for adolescent girls.

⁷ Her approximate age was thirty one and a mother of 4 children at the time of interview (December 2003).

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