

DYSTOPIAN DELIBERATION OF ALDOUS HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD AND ITS RELEVANCE TO WOMB OUTSOURCING IN INDIA

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"Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear fruit upon my knees, that I may also have children by her."

-Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*

Abstract

"Trying to predict the future is a discouraging and hazardous occupation," Clark says in one of his audio recording in 1964. Though the task of science fiction is not to predict the future, it contemplates the possible future. At the same time, the message science fiction that comes with fanciful ideas warns us to be aware of the awaited risks. By using time machine, H. G. Wells takes his reader to the far future to witness the calamitous destiny of the human race. The dystopian novel *Brave New World* is set in 600 years in the future deals with the society devoid of emotion, love, beauty and true relationships which pervade in the present society and there will be no wonder in the future that one can get a baby of his own choice – Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon – the taxonomy of babies in Aldous Huxley's "Hatchery and Conditioning Centre" in his *Brave New World*. The dystopian deliberation of Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World* and its relevancy to the womb outsourcing in presented in this paper.

Keywords : Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Surrogacy, Womb Outsourcing

Aldous Huxley foreboded in 1932 over his science fiction *Brave New World*, by the way of predicting the future society in thrall to science had come true when Louise Joy Brown who conceived in a lab and implanted in her mother's womb was born alive on 25th July 1978 in Great Britain. Dr.Patrick Steptoe, a gynecologist at Oldham general hospital and Dr.Robert Edwards, a physiologist had successfully proved the technology of Aldous Huxley's Director of the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre and became the "Brave New Baby Doctors" by bringing out the first test tube baby to the world in 1978.

Today harvesting eggs from one woman, creating embryos in a lab, and implanting the embryos in a different woman becomes fairly a common process. Though this technology was heralded as a boon in medical field, many consider the possibility of its ill-use.

About thirty years after the publication of his dystopian novel *Brave New World*, Huxley checked the progress of his prophecies against the reality. For his amazement many of his fictional fantasies had come true that includes his views on over population, propaganda, advertising, government control etc., and he has made an

appeal for the defense of individualism in his 1958 novel *Brave New World Revisited* is applicable even to the twenty first century.

Huxley anticipated eight decades back that babies will be hatched in a laboratory and the pity is that India is gradually becoming the hotspot of hatching laboratory in surrogating outsourcing. Though surrogacy is hailed as a boon to the woman who could not bear the child of her own, it is a pity that it becomes a business that many westerners as well as the rich in India commit their burden of labour pain in the wombs of the poor Indian surrogate mothers, whose pain will be compensated by money with the commissioning parents and still worse that the doctors become the agents. In the globalised village, as everything is turned into a commodity, the wombs are not exceptional. "...these days we outsource everything to India. So why not pregnancy?"... surrogacy costs about \$12,000 in India, including all medical expenses and the surrogate's fee. In the U.S., the same procedure can cost up to \$70,000. Another example of third world exploitation? Globalization gone mad? asks Abigali Haworth angrily.

With the global success of India's IT and service sectors, the percent of the population living below the poverty line has fallen into 25% in 2007. Other development indicators like maternal mortality and education still require vital attention. The status of women in these settings is deplorable. Female infanticide continues to be a regular practice, with a recent BBC documentary "Petals in the Dust: India's Missing Girls", by Ashok Prasad exposing a grandfather who buried his newborn granddaughter alive.

Boys are more privileged than the girls in education and healthcare that the latter are considered as a burden in relation to the traditional responsibilities of dowry paid to the groom's family. Domestic violence is commonplace as are dowry deaths and honor killings, all of which are not often prosecuted by law. Under these conditions,

it is not curious to ideate on womb outsourcing. Surrogate mothers like Priyanka Sharma see surrogacy as an opportunity for survival. She is already looking to participate in a second round. "Yes, I might do this again because after all there's nothing wrong in this. We give them a baby and they give us much-needed money. It's good for them and for us."

On December 1, 2011, actor Aamir Khan announced that his son was born through surrogacy and he claimed that he wanted to popularize it. The secrecy of the identity of the biological mother is maintained by the clinic. According to surrogacy norms neither the surrogate mother gets to know about the family where the child is given nor does the family get to know the details of the mother.

Surrogacy is strictly banned in many countries like France, Germany and Italy. The countries like Canada permits altruistic surrogacy, whereas commercial surrogacy is forbidden. Since 2002, when the practice of surrogacy is legalized in India, it has become a world centre of 'surrogacy tourism'.

In Chandigarh, the slums are turning into a potential market for these mothers, who charge anything between Rs 3 to 4 lakh for renting a womb, observes *Times of India*. Dr Umesh Jindal, a pioneer in the field, said, "There has been a growing demand for surrogacy. We see at least 8 to 10 cases of surrogacy every month. Mothers are arranged by couples and our centre screens them medically." Most of those seeking babies are wannabe parents from the affluent countries and they're willing to pay fees it might take these surrogate mothers 15 years to earn from traditional jobs, observes the marketplace.org.

The process which was foreshadowed by Huxley, while describing the breeding farms engenders The Akansha Clinic in Anand, Gujarat, the frontier in outsourcing surrogacy is the forefront of India's

booming trade in the so called reproductive tourism.

Some advocate that surrogacy is a right of a woman to take a step forward in gender equality, whereas the opponents of surrogacy argue that the practice is equivalent to prostitution, and by virtue of that similarity, should be disallowed on moral grounds. Contract pregnancy transforms what is “specifically women’s labor...into a commodity,” an exchange of monetary compensation for the use of women’s bodies. Surrogacy demeans the unique mother- child bond as women can now solely be used as “Breeder Machines.” Raghav Sharma, a student at the National Law School of Jodhpur, believes that surrogacy contracts are “dehumanizing and alienating since they deny the legitimacy of the surrogate’s perspective on her pregnancy.

An example for the commercialization of surrogacy in India is that many websites like, <http://www.indiaparenting.com/>, www.surrogatemothers.com, <http://www.newlifeindia.com/>, www.surrogatefinder.com/ advertise to invite women to be surrogate and lure the poor women to earn many times more than most middle class Indians through becoming surrogate mothers. Moreover, these medical centers offer consultancy, the supplementary term for commercial activity - for medical, travel and legal procedures of surrogacy.

In India the expenses for surrogacy is less compared to the cost in the U.S. approximate surrogacy cycle cost at a reputed hospital in India is about US \$ 22 to 35 thousand, including clinical charges, surrogate work up, egg donor, antenatal care, delivery charges, surrogate compensation and drugs and consumables. (<http://www.medicaltourismco.com/assisted-reproduction-fertility/low-cost-surrogacy-india.php>) and it propagates that it is a “God sent option for women having trouble in conceiving in which the except for the fact that the embryo is planted in the uterus of a

surrogated mother, who can successfully carry the pregnancy to term”.

In case of surrogacy in India, it is very difficult to tell without personally interviewing the surrogate mothers, if they exercise their own personal rights to be surrogate or if they are forced by their in-laws or husband to earn money. Now a day as surrogacy turns into a business, many a women in politics and in the work force can now hire a surrogate mother, rather than taking time off from work. The primary concern is “contract pregnancy commodifies both women’s labor and children in ways that undermine the autonomy and dignity of women and the love parents owe their children.” Hank Greely, Chair of Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics feels:

"It's really a sort of libertarian versus sort-of paternalistic debate on inherent human rights; there are some things people shouldn't be allowed to inherently do. I'm not sure if there's a right answer or wrong answer. It's a philosophical question on how you look at humanity and the world. Should the poor be allowed to sell one kidney? Or sell a heart? Should prostitution be allowed? Should poor women be allowed to be paid surrogates? It isn't necessarily an issue that depends on whether they're poor or not, but it seems to gain extra force when they're poor, and particularly strong extra force when they're poor, they're foreign, of a different color. It reinforces a variety of traditional hierarchies of dominance, and nondominance. "

The confederation of Indian industry predicts the business will generates \$2.3bn annually by 2012. A recent report by the Indian Law Commission described it as a “Pot of Gold”. The Guardian writes:

“Mothers at Patel's clinic – there were 190 last year, a vast increase on previous years – live in a hostel so they are not forced to do housework and are sheltered from inquisitive neighbours or drunken husbands.

One couple who used the clinic are Nikki and Bobby Bains from Ilford, Essex.

Within a week they will fly to Anand to pick up their second child. Their first, Daisy, was born to a surrogate mother nearly two years ago after "a 13-year struggle".

Bobby, 46. said: "It's very difficult to find surrogates in the UK. There are lots of delays and surrogates are very rare. We had a couple of bad experiences too. So we ended up with 10 attempts, all in India. It has cost around £80,000 in medical fees.

Such care is rare in the sector, say campaigners."

Huxley's Hatchery and Conditioning Centre is epitomized by the present fertility centers, and the present brave new baby doctors symbolize are the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning of Aldous Huxley.

Though there is a lack of scientific proof regarding the direct relationship between the mother and the preborn baby, it's believed that the mother is the custodian of the physical as well as the spiritual components of the preborn child in her womb. "Even in the womb the baby can respond," says Luminare-Rosen. When the mother is frightened or upset, for example, the baby's heart rate can double, whereas the surrogate mother tries to avoid developing a special bond with the child in her and views the pregnancy as merely a way to earn the much-needed money and surrogacy disgraced the unique mother-child bond.

A research has suggested that the surrogate mothers are less attached with the fetus that they are encouraged by the agency to feel detached during the pregnancy. Yet it is admitted by the surrogate mothers that they felt a sense of sorrow and distress when relinquishing the child. These mothers who had already bore their own child might have developed a special bond with the pre born child and be pampered by their relatives with special attention and care, which is lacking when they are surrogate. They are supposed to stay in the clinic itself and allow meeting their relatives once in a week. Here the mother is simply treated as an

emotionless breeding machine. The surrogate mothers get the negative support from their husband and relatives than the corresponding support from the partners of the intended mothers.

In future surrogacy may be misused, overused or abused that the children may even used to sell the individual organs to the needy rich. When the technology develops the human are materialized, in future no woman may be willing to bear the baby and in order to avoid labour pain she may prefer to purchase babies from the commercial baby breeding farms based on the economic and social status of the individuals, what Huxley had categorized his babies in his *Brave New World* – Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons.

Ours is the land of Shakti, and women are the embodiment of "power" and "strength." All male power comes from the feminine. In such a state women should not be treated as a puppy mills to produce babies by the way of exploiting the economical handicap of her family.

Instead of motivating surrogacy for the issueless, more adoptions can be encouraged and the rules for adaptation may be made easy for the needy couple. Sadly in India, adoption relationship is given only limited encouragement by law. There is no uniform adoption law in India. Religious Minorities cannot adopt legally, in contrary anyone from outside India can take Indian Children under GAWA and convert their guardianship into adoption under the laws of their respective countries. The adoption procedures and paper works may be transparent and adopter – friendly, so by the way of adoption the surrogacy rate may be minimized and the exploitation of the poor women also be averted.

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