

## AN UNENDING DEBATE ON WOMEN RIGHTS AND DUTIES



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### Abstract:

It is not the right of women it is the right of human being. Men should not forget that women is a human being and treat them equal on par with themselves. They must know that women need freedom rather than protection. If women have given freedom they can do wonders. Harriet Beecher Stowe has rightly remarks that, "Women are the real architects of society". The paper touches on some of the important issues of Women's Rights.

Keywords: *Gender, Law, Violence, Women,*

Women are the embodiments of culture, icons of traditions, symbol of love, caring and gentleness, hidden energy source of any nation. Though look exaggeration, the concept is true that women form a ground to any civilisation that has flourished in the world. But what is the status of women in the world scenario is a thousand million dollar question that has been lingering over. Women are emotionally stronger than men. At the same time they are subjected to exploitation and oppression for generations. Women, the only gender who always been in struggle for their rights and fighting to know their duties. One thing we should remember that women are not beggars to beg for rights. They are having the rights to enjoy. Talking about women rights is no doubt an unending topic but also reflects the symbol of barbarism and immaturity. There is a long history of women rights in the world. The equal status of women and their rights are frequently a controversial subject; this is a sensitive area, since the purpose of women's rights affects almost every human being in a very direct and personal way. Gender roles and the concepts of masculinity and

femininity vary from one culture or context to another. Nevertheless, gender is a universally significant factor in the interpretation and implementation of human rights. The conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the World Conferences on Human Rights demonstrated clearly that, throughout the world, women probably suffer more than men from human rights violations and all kinds of discriminations.

In this globalised, modernized, civilized world, women do not have their justifiable rights especially in Islamic, African and Asian countries. Most of the countries of the world feel proud to be developed or developing economically, but there is need to look or examine the situation and position of women in these countries. We can say that no nation is great without women development. For instance, in Asian countries such as China, India, Pakistan, and Islamic countries, the conditions of women are worst, even though these countries are reaching the heights of development and progress. These countries should know the very important constituent rule that, "the



extension of women rights is the best principle of all social progress”.

### **Rights of Women**

Though the world has transferred from Dark Age to enlightened one and from state of nature to civilised one, the position of women has not change. How could we call ourselves as modernised and civilised without recognising the position of women and without giving them their rights. No country would be great without recognising the position of women. According to Swami Vivekananda, “there is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the conditions of women are improved; it is not possible for the bird to fly with one wing”. Today several countries of the world are searching for the solutions to their stubborn problems from various directions. But they should know one thing that by giving equal rights to women, 90% of the problems could be solved. The recognition of women rights is the basic principle of social progress. No doubt, every nation recognized women rights and duties by amending their respective constitutions frequently, but there is no improvement in the positions and conditions of women.

The Constitution of India has granted equal rights to the men and women. According to article 14- “The State shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of laws with in the territory of India”. And Article 15 states – “State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them”. However, there is need to discuss the rights of the women separately as women represents more than half the population of India, yet she is discriminated and violated in every sphere of her life. Although special rights are being given to women as compared to men, yet they are least beneficial to them.

Women’s Rights protection in India

- *Right to equality*
- *Right to education*
- *Right to live with dignity*
- *Right to liberty*
- *Right to politics*
- *Right to property*
- *Right to livelihood*
- *Right to free choice of profession*
- *Right to work in equitable condition*
- *Right to get equal wages for equal work*
- *Right to protection from inhuman treatment*
- *Right to protection from gender discrimination*
- *Right to social protection in the eventuality of retirement, old age and sickness*
- *Right to privacy in terms of personal life, family, residence, correspondence etc*
- *Right to protection of health*
- *Right protection from society, state and family system*

Though the Constitution of India has guarantees equal rights to women, there exists a wide gulf between theory and practice.

Human right violations especially women right violation is a huge and unsolvable problem before the world nations. Women have always been facing ill treatment and inferior, hence become the victims of exploitation by generations. They have been in restrictions both inside and outside the society. J.J. Rousseau, a French philosopher has rightly remarked that, “Man is born free, but bound in chains everywhere”. This surely is applicable to women. Hence I argue that, “women are born in chains and then continue to live in chains for the rest of their life”. This is not just an opinion but a social fact. By birth woman is chained – first as a kid in the protection of her mother, later by the norms of society being a girl, thereafter in the control of her husband of being a wife and finally in the control of her children in the



name of protection, care and concern as she grows old. In her journey of life, from childhood to old age woman has been facing inequality with men. Men are treating women even worse than an animal. They should remember one thing that a woman is not an animal but the cause for future generations. However the problems of women and the violation of their rights is not new to this modern world only, they have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation since the origin of the world. There are millions of women who deprived their rights around the world.

India has a great cultural heritage, traditions, civilization, religion and geographical features. On the other hand, it is also popular as a male chauvinistic society. In India, women are badly treated in family and in the society. They are limited only for the household chores or understand the responsibility of home and family members. They are kept totally unaware of their rights and their individual development. People of India used to address this country as "Bharat-Mata", however have never realized the true meaning of it, that Bharat-Mata means a mother of every Indian, whom we have to respect and care always. Though the articles contained in the constitution mandates equality and non-discrimination, women is always discriminated and dishonored in Indian society. Only women are a prey to crimes such as rape, dowry, bride burning, sexual harassment, selling and importation, prostitution and trafficking etc. Have you heard the men as a victim to all these crimes? The answer is "No". Though government is taking a number of steps to improve the conditions of women in India, there is a long way to go. The crimes against women in India are increasing at a very fast pace. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) had predicted that growth rate of crime against women would be higher than the population growth by 2010, which was found to be true. The following table shows the list of top 5 most dangerous cities in India in terms of crimes against women.

Time is the real eyewitness of the all sufferings and helplessness of women. Women are so helpless in the Indian society where in many women goddesses are worshiped. In the Vedas women are glorified as mother but now women are subject to suppression and subjugation by the men dominated patriarchal society. Violence against women which counted as crime under Indian Penal Code are rape, kidnapping and abduction, torture physically and mentally, dowry death, sexual harassment, molestation, importation of girls etc. The cases of violence against women are increasing day by day and becoming too broad. The following table shows that crime against women from 2009 to 2013 has incredibly increased.

. Now a days sexual harassment has become common and worst problem for women inside and outside home. There is no strict law even Nirbhaya Act also could not save women from this problem. The other cases of violations of women rights include: rape by state officials or private individuals, dowry deaths, domestic violence, forced prostitution and trafficking in women, denial of inheritance and property rights, denial of reproductive rights etc. However the violation of women rights is not a new it has been practicing since past in various forms such as Sati, Jauhar, Purdah, Devdasi etc., Age old religious beliefs always restrict women, for example entry of women into the temples and offering prayers. The recent phenomenon of Shani Temple in Maharashtra is the best example where Trupti Desai, Women Rights Activist has successfully launched agitation for the entry of women into the temple for offering prayers after so many difficulties. Now she turned towards the entry of women into the Shrine of Hazrat Hazi Dargah in Mumbai. Thus women in any religion are restricted to enter into the sacred places. This phenomenon revealed the narrow knowledge and backwardness of women and their understanding about their rights and freedoms.



However, the life of women in Muslim Community is very hard and fatal. Women are treated as slave and servant to their husbands and children at home. In the name of Islam and Sharia Law the equality of gender has been misused. There is a description in the holy Quran that, "Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave". There is no description that knowledge pertains only to men. So one does not have the excuse of religion for forbidding girls to study. In fact religion encourages it without any kind of discrimination. Girls who are well-educated can become better wives and mothers than uneducated ones. Unfortunately, most of the girls in India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and other countries in Africa have to give up their studies and ambitions. Their parents feel that girls should be married at the age of 18 or before 18 years. So their ambitions remain as dreams. In this 21st century millions of girls are deprived to the basic right of education, when no education, there is no way of women empowerment. Malala Yousufzai has rightly observed that, "I raise my voice – not because somebody attack me but for those who are suffering due to the lack of proper education and life". Of the more than 125 million people who need of humanitarian assistance worldwide, over 75% are women and children. Globally at least 35% of women have suffered from gender based violence. Hence there is no meaning to the terms Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Democracy.

## Duties of Women:

Along with the rights there are several duties of women that should be performing by them. To the best of my knowledge, women are responsible for the oppression of their rights. As a mother, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, women restrict the other women from enjoying their rights. So one of the duties of a woman is that, as a mother, she should not discriminate her daughter. This attitude has to be change immediately for the sake of women welfare. Woman should respect herself first and then

struggle for her justifiable place either inside or outside the home. One of the primary duty of the woman is that she has to know her strength and role in the making the bright future of her family and nation. Women should perform their duties without fear and should not become the puppet in the hands of men. Women should stop thinking that only men can do anything. It is the time that women should realize the fact that they can do anything better than men. In fact great ladies like Margret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Benazeer Bhutto, etc., are the fine examples who gave their valuable contribution to the world better than men. Women should speak up for their rights and go door to door to tell the importance of the women upliftment, for those who keep silent without speak about their rights and duties. They came to know one crucial thing that no doubt mother hood is a great contribution of women but that is a part of her life like fatherhood and not a life. There are several duties for women to perform such as political leaders, economic advisers, and social reformers such as Arundati Roy, Medha Patker etc., One thing must be remember that earlier men take the responsibility of running house hold, but now a days women are also performing this responsibility, in fact women are playing double role one at home and another at working place. As for as working abilities are concerned women can do work with more commitment than men.

A woman plays variety of roles in everyone life in various forms by being involved in various relationships. From her birth till her end of life, she plays a various roles as a daughter, sister, wife, mother and other relationships however her main roles are as a wife and mother. A woman gives birth to a baby and considered to be only responsible for her baby regarding care, education, job etc., In her whole life she never demands anything in return for her service, instead she performs her duty without any argument. In this way, women play a great role in the growth and development of society and making it an



advanced and modern one. Brigham Young said, "if you educate a man, you educate a man only, if you educate a woman, you educate a generation". Educating and giving power to the women is of great importance, and there is a great need to be followed. By nature, women play their role with great responsibility and have capability to make a healthy family, solid society and powerful country. She knows how to handle all the situations because she knows the fundamentals of a good society and plays her roles politely as a main contributor in building up of a strong nation. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "To make a study of a nation study it's Women".

Women should stop thinking inferior and should give up superstitions immediately as soon as possible. There is misunderstanding about women duties among the people that housekeeping and feeding and brought up of children is the duty of women only. It is not the duty but responsibility of women like men. There is a lot of difference between duty and responsibility. Women are fulfilling this responsibility with great enthusiasm and care. Unfortunately their work has not been recognized in this male dominated society. Women should fight against the evil practices. Now it is time for women to rise up their voice for their rights and equality. As M.K. Gandhi gave the slogan "Do or Die" to his countrymen during freedom movement for the cause of independence, like wise now there is an alarming need for women that they should follow the slogan "Do or Die" for the cause of their rights and status in the society. Karl Marx made a great contribution to the universal work force through his slogan, "Labours of the world should unite and fight against the capitalists, and due to this the Proletariats have nothing to lose but their chains". Likewise if women raise their voices against male dominated society, nothing will lose but their slavery.

Changes are inevitable, everything and everyone has to change and nobody can avoid it. So why the attitude of men towards

women does not changing? There is a great need to change the outlook of men towards women. Women need liberty +equality. There is no meaning for liberty without equality. It is not the right of women it is the right of human being. Men should not forget that women is a human being and treat them equal on par with themselves. They must know that women need freedom rather than protection. If women have given freedom they can do wonders. Harriet Beecher Stowe has rightly remarks that, "Women are the real architects of society".

Most of the countries of the world already have taken steps to improve the conditions of women, but did not achieve the objective. Nations which are called stronger and powerful in creating war but weak in bringing women empowerment, why is it? Why it become easy for them to raise guns, but hard to give equal rights to women? We are living in modern age, where nothing is impossible. We have already landed on moon and making efforts to land on mars soon but not ready to give the due place and respect for women, which they deserve. They should be given encouragement in the areas of education, politics, business etc., then only we can establish a fair society. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "To awaken the people, it is the woman who must be awakened once she is on the move the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves".

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