



A Brief note on Women's Rights

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Abstract: The role of women is assuming greater importance with the transformation of society and socio- economic changes taking place in modern India increasingly. At the dawn of India's independence, the constitution of India recognized equality of sexes. Article 51 A of the constitution on Fundamental Duties, introduced by 42 Amendment, makes it the duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. The women's movement has emerged as one of the most vibrant and the longest running social movements in the world. Apart from the primary goal of improving women's lives, the women's' movement has wide ramification on various other movements- social, economic and political. Indian women who enjoyed a high status in the early years played a prominent role in the advancement of society. A nation's progress can be judged by the way it treats its women folk. Men must recognize and accept the fact that women are equal partners in life. Hence this paper attempts to highlight on certain rights that are vital to women and projects the fact that women, the 'symbol of goddess' should not be deprived of their humans rights by anyone especially men, as such a thing will be a stumbling block in the progress of a developing country like India.

Key words: advancement of society, equality of sex, symbol of goddess', Human rights

*"Unless you turn and become a child you shall not enter the kingdom of God."
"Yatra naryantu pujanya tatra ravanta devataa."*

Introduction

The role of women is assuming greater importance with the transformation of society and socio- economic changes taking place in modern India increasingly. At the dawn of India's independence, the constitution of India recognized equality of sexes. Article 51 A of the constitution on Fundamental Duties, introduced by 42 Amendment, makes it the duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. The women's movement has emerged as one of the most vibrant and the longest running social movements in the world. Apart from the primary goal of improving women's lives, the women's' movement has wide ramification on various other

movements- social, economic and political. Indian women who enjoyed a high status in the early years played a prominent role in the advancement of society. The call for gender justice and gender equality has become one of the important rights to claim. Thanks to the Indian constitution for bestowing equal rights on women. Today women enjoy all social, political and economic rights. They are coming up in all walks of life. They are joining the universities and colleges in large numbers. They are entering into all kinds of profession like engineering, medicine, politics, teaching, etc. A nation's progress can be judged by the way it treats its women folk. Men must recognize and accept the fact that women are equal partners in life. Hence



this paper attempts to highlight on certain rights that are vital to women and projects the fact that women, the 'symbol of goddess' should not be deprived of their humans rights by anyone especially men, as such a thing will be a stumbling block in the progress of a developing country like India.

The most essential and fundamental human rights are denied to women. For instance;

- The right to equality
- The right to freedom from gender discrimination
- The right to life, liberty and personal security
- The right to freedom from slavery
- The right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment.

Universal declaration of rights

However the universal declaration of rights includes:

1. We are all free and equal. We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.

2. Don't discriminate. These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.

3. The right to life. We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

4. No slavery – past and present. Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone our slave.

5. No Torture. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.

6. Innocent until proven guilty. Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proven. When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true.

7. The right to privacy. Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters or bother us or our family without a good reason.

8. Freedom to move. We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.

9. The right to a nationality. We all have the right to belong to a country.

10. Marriage and family. Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.

11. Your own things. Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.

12. Freedom of thought. We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have a religion, or to change it if we want.

13. Free to say what you want. We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.

14. Meet where you like. We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights.



Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.

15. The right to democracy. We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown-up should be allowed to choose their own leaders.

16. The right to social security. We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and child care, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill or old.

Women's place in society has been extremely fixed in nature, and has kept Women at a low rung on the 'status-ladder'. According to the census 2001, the sex ratio in India is 927 females to 1,000 males. Dowry has become common. The more educated and well employed a groom, the higher is the dowry demand. The birth of a girl child is, therefore, considered inauspicious. In many parts of India, women are viewed as an economic liability despite contribution in several ways to our society and economy. Early marriages lead to teenage pregnancies which often prove risky to both the mother and the child.

Rape, sexual harassment, molestation, eve-teasing, forced prostitution, etc are a common affair today. The crime graph against women is increasing at an alarming rate. The condition of an Indian widow is quite deplorable. At home, the woman's contribution towards home as a housewife is not recognized. Sexual harassment at work places is also a common affair. Exploitation and victimization of women have been a common and perpetual phenomenon since gone days. With the passage of time and growing consciousness the

deplorable condition of women has improved somewhat

It is a shame that even after over sixty years of independence women are still exploited. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have provided 33 percent reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj System. Women have now started demanding their rights. They want to work side by side with men and contribution towards the social, economic and political development of the society. Swami Vivekananda has rightly remarked, "It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing."

Women themselves should come forward and unite in the march towards improving their status. They should draw inspiration from empowered women like Indira Gandhi, the first woman Prime Minister of India; Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the first woman President of the UN General Assembly; Kiran Bedi, India's first woman IPS officer; Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian-American woman astronaut, Pratibha Devsingh patil, the first woman President of India, and many others. Some of the great women of the pre-Independence periods are Rani Laxmi Bia of Jhansi, Chan Bibi, Ahilya Bai, Razia Sultan and others.

Today modern woman is so deft and self-sufficient that she can be easily called superwoman, as she juggles many fronts single handedly. Women are now fiercely ambitious and are providing their metal not only on the home front, but also in their respective careers, education in the society.



The Indian Constitution has bestowed equal rights on women. They enjoyed all social, political and economic rights. For equal work, both men and women are eligible for equal wages. Women in Indian are coming up in all spheres of life. They are joining the universities and colleges in large numbers. They are entering into all kinds of professions like engineering, medicine, politics, teaching, etc. A nation's progress and prosperity can be judged by the way it treats its women folk. Men must recognize and accept the fact that women are equal partners in life.

Many organizations and governments worldwide focus on improving the status of women and girls. According to the International Labour Organization, 11.4 million women and girls are victims of forced labor in different forms – including debt bondage, trafficking and forced prostitution. As global leaders seek to improve the status of women and girls, it's critical to focus on decreasing women and girls' exploitation in forced labor, trafficking and slavery. It is high time that women should fight for their human rights and make sure that they are not deprived of any these.

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