

Women and Importance of Human Rights

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The Civilization of the world can be judged on the way, how a country prioritizes women. Among the several factors it is the greatness in ancient culture where honoured positions are ascribed to women. It is a saying long ago by Mann the ancient lawgiver who has said that women should be honoured, as God resides in them. It is very important to achieve equality between man and woman and it is essential to eliminate the discrimination on every field that women face. It is hence considered to be the basic human rights for women all over the world. However, violence against women occurs throughout the life cycle from pre-birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood to senescence¹

Achieving equality between women and men need a complete understanding of the ways in which women experience discrimination and are deprived of equality so as to develop appropriate strategies and norms to eliminate such discrimination. Human rights for women are envisaged as the united rights of a woman which are seen and accepted in terms as a person who has the capacity to adopt or act on the woman's own behalf and to have equal access to incomes and possessions and reasonable social, economic and political provisions to improve her full potential exercise her right as a human being and to support the development of other. Some groups of women experience additional forms of discrimination, based on their age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, health status, marital status, education, disability and socio-economic status. These interconnecting forms of discrimination must be taken into account when expressing measures and responses to conflict on gender discrimination against women (Women's Rights are Human Rights, 2014). The universality of human rights means that human rights apply to every single person by virtue of their humanity; this also means that human rights apply to everyone equally, for everyone is equal in simply being human²

It is not by birth that determines a human to be man or a woman but it is the society that shows what it is meant to be a real man and woman. It is a taboo that is created by the society that women are not equal to man and hence the gender discrimination has given a

responsibility for the men to protect women at all times. But this gender discrimination has paved way for more negative effects like sexual harassment, gender inequality, suppression and many violences against them.

It has to be well remembered that according to the constitution of India Article 14 it is said that equal rights should be given to both men and women and “The State should not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of laws within the territory of India”³ and also according to Article 15 it is clearly stated that

- Any citizen should not be discriminated by the state on any grounds of religion, caste, place of birth and sex
- No discrimination shall be done on accounts of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth be subjected to any restriction or violation with regard to access to any public places that includes restaurants, hotels, entertainment, wells and many others.
- According to this article nothing in the state shall hinder the state from providing special facilities for women and children.⁴

Though the above articles stress on the fact that women should be treated equally and no discriminations should be imposed on women but women are facing a tough time in this contemporary world. They are treated as slaves and dishonoured in our Indian society. Though the government of India is proposing many ideas on imposing equal rights to men it is not becoming a reality.

Human rights for women

- Right to equality
- Right to live with dignity
- Right to education
- Right to politics
- Right to liberty
- Right to equal opportunity for employment
- Right to livelihood

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

Crimes against women

Violence against women is not taking place in recent times but it has been prevalent in ancient times also like **Devadasis** where a woman was married off to a temple and later women were exploited sexually. In **Jauhar**, where the wives and warriors of defeated warriors go under the practice of voluntary immolate themselves rather than to fall in the hands of their enemy. **Purdah** is a dress where a woman has to conceal herself from the eyes of the outside world and it is considered to be a symbol of women subordination. **Sati** is an old custom and tradition where woman is killed in the same funeral pyre of her husband. Though the Devadasis, Jauhar and Sati has been completely abolished or no longer in practice, it has to be admitted that different forms of violence has been imposed on woman

In this 72 years of Independence, every Indian is eligible for basic rights and it can be easily obtainable but the truth has to be admitted that women are facing significant problems in Human rights and there are violations in Human rights. Women are exposed to certain crimes in spite of the facts that Indian constitution articles emphasize on the equal rights to men and women. Crimes against women are increasing in a faster rate. Below are the states that share the major impact for violence against in India in 2017 as issued by The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). There is an increase in the percentage and there is no reduction of crimes so far.

Crime against Women State wise

Rank	Name of the State	Percentage of Crimes against Women in Indian Cities
I	Uttar Pradesh	15.6
II	Maharashtra	8.9
III	West Bengal	8.6
IV	Madhya Pradesh	8.3
IV	Rajasthan	7.2

Crime against women city wise in 2017

The crime against women when seen city wise Delhi seemed to be ranking high as of 2018. Though it has seen a gradual decrease from 2015-18, it is claimed that Delhi is an unsafe city for women. There is no security for women. Gang Rapes and acid attacks are targeted against women and many women have lost their lives. Assault on women determined to crime due to her modesty is 21.7 per cent, that are followed by kidnapping and abduction of women with 20.5 per cent and 7 percent of rape cases are reported and their freedom is curtailed. But Human rights of the accused is thought and tried to be saved rather than thinking about the life of the victim. Below is the table that describe the most number of cases recorded in the following cities during 2017:

Rank	Name of the State	Percentage of Crimes against Women in Indian Cities
I	Delhi	28.3
II	Mumbai	13.4
III	Bengaluru	8.7
IV	Lucknow	6
IV	Hyderabad	5.6

According to United Nations special report the CEDAW in 1992 has asserted that “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”⁵

There are types of violence and it is stated as:

- i) Physical, psychological and sexual violence that are happening in the family which includes buffeting, sexual assault on female children, dowry, marital rape, mutilation of female genital and other ancient traditional ways and practices that are harmful to women.
- ii) Women are assaulted sexually and psychologically where they face physical damage and psychological threat that occurs within the community which includes rape, sexual harassment and gender inequality and physical abuse at workplace, women trafficking and forced prostitution are life threatening for women.

Violation of Basic Human Rights

The basic violation of Human rights for women starts when she is in the womb of her mother. Female Infanticide is the major problem that every village or city in India is facing till date. The unborn child is exposed to number of sex-determination tests leading to death. Even if the child is born it is killed by cruel methods after birth. Next rejection of Human rights for education. Girl children are refused to give proper education and they are married off easily at a younger age. Women are then rejected rights for their paternal property rights though the government has initiated steps for women to have access of equal share in their ancestral properties. Gender discrimination is another feature where women are not given importance at their workplace. Though they share the same workload as that of men they are paid low and promotions are rejected. Women are acquired for certain kinds of jobs and are referred as “female skills” jobs. From agriculture to many jobs at shops and offices women are paid less than 30-40 percent of income than that of men⁶.

Violation of rights to protection against society and family

There had been many crimes against women that have been traditionally prevalent in India for centuries. Out of which certain crimes had been reduced while certain crimes have been increasing. Women are considered as burden of the family and hence they are married off at an early age though UNICEF has drawn 18 years as minimum age for women to get married. Child marriages has been done through India before, lately it has come down to 40% and around 56% of girls hailing from poorer families are married under the age of 18⁷. Dowry Harassment and death of the brides are frequent deaths in India. Many women are burnt in the kitchen fires and steps are taken by the government. Approximately 5000 cases of dowry deaths are happening in India every year. Rape and Gang Rape the recurring phenomena in India, where every Indian is with rage in responding to Rape news. In 2017 23,145 people have been punished for rape. In 2019 the rape of 26 year veterinary doctor in Hyderabad by four men who burnt her alive was shot dead in an encounter on 6th December 2019. This Gang rape has given an alarm for every rapist in India.

Every Human right is an excellent framework of the realization of women's ability to have their basic rights in action. Though women are abused or assaulted in state or in any part of the country they should recognize in every sphere that it is essential to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of a woman.

Human rights for women encompasses with the minimum rights which could be compulsorily accessible by every female individual in our country. The Indian constitution guarantees and fulfills the basic equality rights of men and women. The government strives to provide all types of securities for women in the society whose human rights are violated and needful actions are taken to protect women. More important the human rights of women has to be respected so that India would emerge as a safe place for women in the world.

References

¹ Florence: Innocenti Digest, No 6. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre; 2000. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls. Magnitude of Problem; pp. 4-7.

² Samantha Frost and Charlotte Bunch; Human rights women and universalism. Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge, Routledge, 2000.

³ Article 14 constitution of India

⁴ Article 15 constitution of 1949

⁵ OHCHR 1996-2019

⁶ Nagdevara, Vishnuprasad, Journal of International Business and Economics, Jan 2009 Edtn

⁷ Available at www.icrw.org, 'Child Marriage Facts and Figures' 2007