

Status of Women from Times Immemorial

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ABSTRACT

As per the Gender Gap Report 2023, India ranks 127 out of 146 countries. To reduce the cases like female feticide, POSCO, sexual harassment, dowry, acid attacks, etc., one has to follow certain principles which may be the provisions of Indian Constitution or moral values and educating girls and women.

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I measure the progress of the community with the degree of progress women have achieved .. Dr.B.R. Ambedkhar.

In terms of gender parity, as per the Gender Gap Report 2023, India ranks 127 out of 146 countries. The term "women's status" refers to the condition of women, assessed both in absolute terms and in comparison to men. A closely associated concept is "women's empowerment," which emphasizes the extent to which women can govern their own lives and influence their surroundings, including the well-being of those they care for, such as their children. Given that gender disparities adversely affect the health and welfare of men, women, and children alike, numerous development organizations have made it a priority to advance gender equality alongside health and development objectives.

The World Inequality Report 2022 indicated that in India, labor income is distributed with men receiving 82% and women only 18%. The status of women in contemporary society remains vulnerable, as they encounter numerous obstacles in areas such as education, health, domestic responsibilities, political representation, and safety both in public spaces and workplaces. Since gaining independence, there have been ongoing efforts to fulfill the Constitutional promise of equality for all citizens. Nevertheless, deeply rooted patriarchy and various intersectional challenges continue to hinder progress for women. To realize genuine equality for all women, it is essential to implement effective governmental policies and laws, alongside fostering social awareness.

You love yourself, then your family, neighbors, friends, state, country .. Country is not only land, it is people, said by Gurujada Apparao. From childhood onwards, to develop moral values, let's remember once again few sentences from our National Pledge, written by a great personality born in Anneparthi Village of Nalgonda District Sri Pidimarri Venkata Subba Rao. "India is my country, All Indian are my brothers and sisters". One must think that all Indians are my brothers and sisters (except life partner), then, the cases like female feticide, POSCO, sexual harassment, dowry, acid attacks, etc., will be reduced.

Secondly, "The Constitution of India", written by Dr.B.R. Ambedkhar and he in 1950 as a first law minister wanted to introduce 'Hindu Code Bills' in the Parliament, but failed as such he resigned for his post which aimed to codify and reform Hindu Personal Law in India, but succeeded in passing four Hindu Code Bills in 1955-56: the Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act. It aims that all women must get equal right on par with men as women were treated as inferior to men before Independence to India.

The Constitution of India contains several provisions that support the cause of women's empowerment. Some of such prominent provisions can be seen under the following heads:

Fundamental Rights:

1. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to equality to all citizens, regardless of their gender.
2. Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination based on their caste, religion, race, sex and place of birth.
3. Article 15(3) permits the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women in order to mitigate their cumulative socio-economic and political disadvantages.
4. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens, including women, in matters of employment or appointment to any office under the State. It also prohibits discrimination or being made ineligible for any employment or office under the State on grounds of only sex.
5. Article 21 provides for the Protection of Life and Personal Liberty, contains within its ambit several rights, including the right of women to be treated with decency and dignity.
6. Article 23 prohibits traffic in human beings, including selling and buying of women, immoral traffic in women, prostitution, etc.

Directive Principles of State Policies:

1. Article 39 directs the State to secure equal pay for equal work for men and women.
2. Article 42 directs the State to make provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
3. Article 44 directs the State to secure for all citizens a uniform civil code throughout the country. Such a code will ensure equal rights for women in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.
4. Article 45 directs the State to provide early childhood care and education for all children, including female children, until they reach the age of six years.

Fundamental Duties:

1. Article 51A casts a Fundamental Duty on every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
2. Article 51A also casts a Fundamental Duty on every parent/guardian to provide opportunities for education to their child or ward between the ages of six and fourteen years.

Other Constitutional Provisions:

1. Article 243D provides for reservation of not less than 1/3rd of seats for women in various levels of PRIs.
2. Article 243T provides for reservation of not less than 1/3rd of seats for women in various levels of ULBs.
3. Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyan (Women's Reservation Act) 2023 [128th Constitutional Amendment Act] has added three new articles providing for women reservation in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies:
 - a) Article 239AA provides for reservation of 1/3rd of seats for women in Delhi Legislative Assembly;

- b) Article 330A provides for reservation of 1/3rd of seats for women in Lok Sabha;
- c) Article 332A provides for reservation of 1/3rd of seats for women in State Legislative Assemblies.

To inculcate moral values, family is the basic institution, where a child is taken care of by their parents, their love, etc. But, now a days, due to busy schedule, parents, their job, nuclear families, crutches are growing and lack of support to children, Sunday father or mother exists. Next, comes friends, school college and office premises where moral values are learnt and to be implemented.

All our contribution plays a vital role and it's responsibility too to respect women. About, women, there are many words to says. It is a fact to say that without women, there is no men. Women have played a crucial role in the cultural and societal fabric of India since ancient times. Nevertheless, the position of women in India has been a subject of discussion and concern for an extended period. Although advancements have been achieved in recent years, numerous challenges continue to confront women in India today.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, makes it mandatory for all children, including girls, between the ages of 6 and 14.

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, ensures that men and women receive equal pay for the same work. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, provides a framework for addressing complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace. After marriage also, for additional dowry, harassment will be done.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, was amended in 2005 to give equal inheritance rights to daughters in Hindu families.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, gives women the right to seek divorce on various grounds, including cruelty and adultery. Even though she will have patience, whatever the marriage it may be, if they don't get suitable partner, divorce will take place.

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, provides women with paid maternity leave and other benefits during pregnancy and childbirth. The sex ratio of women in India as per the Census of 2011 is 940 females per every 1000 males. This points to sex selective abortion of female child before birth. The National Family Health Survey 5 also pointed to a 929 sex ratio at birth, indicating sex selective abortions.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, gives legal protection to women from physical, emotional, and verbal abuse by their spouses or relatives. They also lack access to health care. Women have many problems which one will not be able to see. When she is in a group, nobody will say anything, when she is not in a group, everybody try to frighten her. Sexual abuse of adolescents constitutes a significant issue in India. Victims may include infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children up to the age of 18 or older, hailing from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds as well as various ethnic and religious groups. India holds the third position globally in terms of the number of reported rapes annually. Women continue to face significant dangers in public spaces, encountering issues such as groping, eve teasing, molestation, and even rape. According to the most recent statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau for the year 2022, there has been a 4% increase in crimes committed against women. Notably, one-third of the reported cases involved cruelty by husbands, while abduction and kidnapping ranked as the second most prevalent crime against women. The total rate for the 'rape' category has undergone a decline from 6.1 in 2014 to 4.3 in 2020. A similar decline is seen in the total rate for the 'dowry deaths' category, going from a rate of 1.4 in 2014 to 1.1 in 2020. Centrally

Sponsored Scheme for prevention of trafficking in women and rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration & repatriation for victims is Ujjawala Scheme.

Proverbs like banana leaf and thorn are told, following traditions and customs, jogini system is adopted. Under the veil of religious faith, girls and women from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes continue to be sexually abused by upper caste men in most of the parts of Telangana. Some of the causes are disability, poverty, traditions and lack of education among the poorer communities.

She plays different roles as a mother, sister and also as best partner are wonderful. They are contributors to economy staying as backbone to families and communities. They provide support and care, nurturing to their families and are essential to the development of children. The mother serves as the child's initial educator, imparting social heritage and cultural values. It is through her that the child acquires an understanding of societal norms, human behavior, moral principles, and aspirations. Due to her close and continuous interaction with the child, the mother is uniquely positioned to identify and cultivate the child's individual characteristics, talents, and dispositions, which are essential in the development of his personality.

Hence, Education makes everything to set aside all these practices. Lack of education limits women's opportunities and hinders their ability to contribute fully to society. An African proverb says "if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation" remind us of the importance of education for girls and women.

Smt.Indira Gandhi said about the greatness of Constitution, "I am not allowed into temple, as I am a widow, but Constitution made me Prime Minister of India". Political participation is also growing now a days with fifteen percent in Panchayat Raj institutions and also Assembly and Parliament.

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