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WOMEN IN PERILS**

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REVITALIZATION OF ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS DOGMAS AND GENDER SENSITIZATION: A PRAGMATIC STUDY TO UNCOVER ENDURING SOLUTIONS TO ALLEVIATE THE WOES OF WOMEN IN PERILS

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Abstract

The identity crisis that women often confront with since times immemorial is perennial in nature. It seems that there is no retrieval from the stigma that has been forced upon women since long. Resultantly, gender-based chauvinism imposed upon women is there since long and it has penetrated so deep into the socio-economic-political fabric of India. In sharp contrast to the narratives of the well-heeled and affluent women, the uncanny preposition about the unvoiced rather voiceless class who contribute a lion's share towards Nation Building is never sung about. Every day the media uncovers stories of new incidents of injustice meted out to hapless women. Sexual exploitation, especially gang rape and intimidation of women in India has assumed a new dimension today. The unrestrained growth of capitalist culture and callous human psychology linked with urbanization paved the way for alarming rise in rape cases across the country. Another significant reason for the increasing number of violence against women is attributed to Digital Revolutions. Every Institution in the society is equally answerable for the inhuman treatment meted out to women. A revamping of the very edifice of the socio-political structures of the society has to be reinstated. Moral education is the most neglected area in our current system of education.

Keywords

Perennial, stigma, subjugations, chauvinism, well-heeled, affluent, uncanny, miasma, hapless, incontrovertible, niche, cutback, mettle, dichotomy, bedraggled, doleful, galvanize, lecherous, abatement, ignominy, impervious, intimidation, impetus, perpetrator, harnessed, grotesque, servitude, anecdotes, stomached, snubbed, Digital highhandedness, annulment, dispiriting, recuperation, scot-free, volte-face, edifice, revitalizing

The identity crisis that women often confront with since times immemorial is perennial in nature. It seems that there is no retrieval from the stigma that has been forced upon women since long. Resultantly, gender-based chauvinism imposed upon women is there since long and it has penetrated so deep into the socio-economic-political fabric of India. All these years what has noticed around us is the miasma of women's timeless crusade to establish their footing with the opposite sex. It is an incontrovertible truth that women ought to bear the brunt of uncanny ordeals throughout the saga of their lives-from womb to tomb. Over the years women have imprinted their niche in every sphere they walked in, sometimes even better than men, may it be globally or locally. But, there is no cutback in their agonies-rather it is perpetual in tone and tune. Regardless of the significant triumphs many women achieved in diverse spheres, they continue to suffer subjugations and thus they are victimized by men. It is indeed an absurd dichotomy.

Stardoms who have attested their mettle in different walks of life are acknowledged of their achievements on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th of March every year. Though the purpose of celebrating such events ought to sensitize women across the globe about their significance, most significantly about their contributions, whether it is in the field of education or Community Development, the enigma still persists uncared for. In sharp contrast to the narratives of the well-heeled and affluent women, the uncanny preposition about the unvoiced, rather voiceless class who contribute a lion's share towards Nation Building is never sung about. Mostly, these unorganized women work under bedraggled and unsafe living conditions adding more peril to their chaos. They too deserve recognition. However, they are the most vulnerable set of people who are subject to spineless exploitations by the privileged ones. They work sans adequate wages and social security. There is no job security for them. The predicaments of Domestic Workers are even more doleful. They are doomed to toil under unsatisfactory working conditions. They are not even provided with basic protections which are given to other workers and hence they are the most vulnerable ones in the world. They work relentlessly to feed their families amidst embarrassing working conditions. Guaranteed Legal protections are in fact a distant dream for these unorganized workers leading to their perpetual isolation and exploitation. Some of them even become prey to human trafficking and bondage.

The data pertaining to violence against women, especially sexual abuse and physical assault, available with the National Crime Record Bureau, is appalling. Every day the media uncovers stories of new incidents of injustice meted out to hapless women, which speak about volumes of torments and trauma they have been undergoing. As has been reported in the media often, the percentage of atrocities, especially the heinous acts of rapes, are alarmingly rising without being thwarted. Rape is the worst ignominy that could be inflicted upon women by men ever. Not that this heinous crime did not awaken bitter reactions earlier. The media these days rises to the occasion and gives extensive reportage to such inhuman acts of violence against women. Obviously, the media succeeds to galvanize public wrath against the architects of such ferocious lechers. However, the media coverage and public agitations and uproars do not put an end to the ceaseless sufferings of women. On the contrary, the narratives of women's sufferings are on the constant rise. There may be scores of women, rather victims of such barbaric acts, who do not have enough nerve to report cases of rape to the authorities concerned due to social stigma making their lives more poignant than ever before. In fact, the

lecherous and barbaric assaults on women show no signs of abatement. Moreover, the ignominy attached to the disgraceful act that the victim is forced to undergo is so intense and devastating such that it makes her so apathetic and impervious towards everything that happens around her but swallows the pain mutely leaving her bruised for life.

The ordeal of the victim continues even after the rape case is reported. Later on, when it is brought under trials, the trauma of woman is repeated in the Court Room adding more injury to her already bruised wounds. This time woman undergoes psychological turbulences too-leaving her condition worse than ever before. The humiliating and disgusting reactions of the public towards the rape victims are inexplicable as if the victim is looked at as a ludicrous object of mockery. At times the Judiciary too remains a mere spectator due to the want of sufficient evidences to bring the real culprits under the ambit of law. Even if it is often proclaimed that truth prevails over falsehood, sometimes it appears that our criminal justice system concerns itself more with the offender and his constitutional rights rather than with the agony and stigma of the wounded.

Sexual exploitation, especially gang rape and intimidation of women in India has assumed a new dimension today. Lecherous gratification by men is not the lone reason for this heinous crime. There are myriad reasons attributed to the brutalities imposed upon women by the menfolk. Mostly such acts are perpetrated because of family feud, ancestral properties, religion, caste and creed or any other matter as the case may be. In some cases mere revenge ends up in gang rape. In a few cases people seated at the helm of affairs ask for sexual favours. Women at times become prey to such intimidation and extortion to fulfill their fancies. Sometimes caste dominations in some parts of the country lead to organized gang rape. There are cases where men rape women for fun. Inaction on the part of the legal system gives more impetus to such perpetrators. Whatsoever be the case women are always subject to grotesque subjugations by men under dissimilar situations. Sexual abuse takes an ugly turn when women from the poor strata of society are traumatized. Sexual gratification is not the only motto behind rape. It is more about fear and favour rather than domination and suppression. The grotesque turmoil and battles in the country, where women were subdued and exploited by the victors, had its lion's share. Then it was a forced servitude. At times it was covered up by the male community as false anecdotes. However, history beckons to that. Most convincingly, as understood, rape is stomached and even snubbed by the powerful, presumably often downplayed by the protectors of the secular and democratic fabric of our country, may it be politicians, legal fraternity, or even the medical system. The civil society, most apparently, seems convinced.

The unrestrained growth of capitalist culture and callous human psychology linked with urbanization paved the way for alarming rise in rape cases across the country. Another significant reason for the increasing number of violence against women is attributed to Digital Revolutions. Vulgarism is at its zenith today. Due to the unrestrained Digital revolutions, people of all age groups easily become prey to the alluring filmy world of Obscenity. Obscene films and videos readily available with the emergence of Smart Phones and Internet facilities gave stimulus to rape and similar crimes against women. 'Woman' the epitome of Indian culture, the well revered 'deity' in Indian ethos is purposefully depicted in the Digital world merely as an object of sexual gratifications. Incessant exposures to such wild scenes create lasting impressions in the inner psyche of men, which at length tempt them

to recreate whatever they have seen in the Digital World into reality. It is imperative to assert that the meddling of such unrestrained Digital highhandedness in maligning the people, particularly the tender ones, is to be harnessed judiciously. Mere amendments in the prevalent legal system are not enough to tame the menace. New laws are to be enacted to strengthen the legal system-empowering them to act heavily on the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. It is undisputed that today people react abruptly when a rape case is reported and at times they risk out to the streets to express solidarity with the victim. However, the worst part is still awaited. But nothing substantial has ever been done either by the authorities concerned or by the mourners for the recuperation of the traumatized.

The protectors of law sometimes turn into its perpetrators. There are instances of sexual abuses of women by the protectors of law and order. May not necessarily be all. In many cases the Police even refuse to register complaints brought by the survivors of sexual abuses and intimidations. Money plays a significant role in such cases. Even if such cases are registered in the Police Diary, most of them are not recorded properly and hence there is no satisfactory breakthrough in many rape cases. Because of this annulment, towards the end, the victim is deprived of proper justice while the respondent slips out of the hand and becomes scot-free. Presumably, in many cases, instead of dispiriting the rapists, the Investigating Agency's volte-face provokes the rapist to do such heinous crimes again. During the Trials too, rape victims are embarrassed to vindicate their evidences in defense of their allegations because of which most of them desist from reporting such matters before law. In spite of the fact that the Indian Constitution, which is considered as the most revered in the world, gives equal rights to men and women, women are most vulnerable to discrimination in every field. Though law guarantees to shield women from all sorts of exploitations, they are seldom given due protection and respect. Nothing substantial has ever been done in this accord. Feminists make hue and cry when rape cases are reported. Sometimes they conduct candle marches to show solidarity to the victim. However, such wild agitations fade away over a period of time. The truth remains the same.

It is unethical to blame the Judicial System alone for what has been happening around us against women. Every Institution in the society is equally answerable for the inhuman treatment meted out to women. Whether it is the unproductive legal system, male-dominated socio-political structures, outdated and sometimes repressive governance, the onus of this socio-political discrimination against women cannot be justified. A revamping of the very edifice of the socio-political structures of the society has to be reinstated. Basically, the prejudiced mindset of people ought to be sanctified. Religion, no matter, what cult one belongs to, can play a decisive role in sowing the seeds of virtues like unconditional love and respect towards fellow human beings especially towards women. Sarcastically speaking, the radicals take the support of certain Religious Scriptures, which endorse supremacy of men over women, to downsize the extent of discrimination they have been exerting against women in the society. These radicals desperately try to establish, on many counts, that men are superior to women.

It is an undisputed fact that in most of the religions across the globe women are restricted from performing religious rites. The reasons may be attributed to mere religious conventions, which would have been in force from centuries. Over the years, women themselves have conceded to this doctrine as part of their personality.

Law alone cannot give women the much needed solace and self-esteem. Unless the attitude of men towards women is changed, we cannot expect any considerable amount of reduction in injustice against women. There needs an overhaul of the existing educational system in the country. Moral education is the most neglected area in our current system of education. Though there had been many Commissions and Committees to frame Educational Policies and evolve educational strategies in India, no significant decisions or policies had ever been framed on gender sensitization. The current educational system in India seldom focuses on character formation, but mostly on academic results and employability. Lessons on gender sensitization must be introduced at the elementary level in the country. Lessons in good behaviour and decorum must be part of the pedagogy from the elementary levels of education. Showing respect and honour towards a woman was not old fashioned, but virtue for all times. Gender sensitization is an effective tool that can control, if not stop the misconducts against women. It is high time for the religious leaders to come out of the shell of religious hypocrisy. The orthodox mindset of the hypocrites must be ordained to accept the changes that have been taking place today due to the emergence of Science and Technology. All Religions should respect the unprecedented changes that Science brings in the lives of human beings. People should be taught to cope up with the innovations that have been taking place in the world today. Religion is nothing but a ray of hope-a way of life for leading a meaningful, yet respectful life. Religious leaders should not desist from reacting sharply when any injustice is done on any woman. They must stand with the victim and condemn the heinous act. They must teach the people to respect women and any discrimination against them should be considered as a sin. All organizations, whether they are Religious Organizations or Women's Movements, they should protest against all sorts of discriminations on women and must plead for dignity and equality for women in every sphere. The religious scholars of all religions must stand together and shall work for communal harmony and mutual respect-respect for women. United they must stand and denounce what is wrong in their practices and embrace what is good-good for revitalizing the morale and self-esteem of women in Indian Society and the world at large.