

ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Women have been intermittently and sporadically visible, and inadequately acknowledged. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. The position of women and their status in any society is an index of its civilization. Women need to be taken as equal partners in the process of development but centuries of exploitation and subjugation made women to remain at the receiving end. Gender disparity is not one affliction but a multitudes of problems. Man, who is the master of the world , label her to be the second sex , to be his slave , if not his slave, his dependent. Whether it was Rousseau or Rigveda or Napoleon –all talked of subjugation of women. Without distinction of caste, colour, creed, or civilization , the male sex is determined to bring down women. Women though eulogized religiously, empowered legally, emancipated socially, enriched economically, and enhanced personally, still remains a non -entity in the society. Swami Vivekanand's ideal of equality between men and women needs to accepted in its true spirit . Since soul has no sex , why should women be regarded as inferior to men ?

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'The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world', seems to have lost its relevance in the present scenario as the hands are the same but they are bruised, the heart tortured and the head tormented. The oppressed, suppressed, and depressed self of women cannot even shatter itself of those shackles that rattle around her all the time. Man, who is the master of the world label her to be his slave, his dependent. Men are satisfied in feeling that they are lords of the creation. Woman , who has given birth to men , is to look up to him to identify herself and Jew man , in his morning prayers would say," Blessed be God... that He did not make me a woman." This is man's sense of gratitude to women.

To call woman , the weaker sex, is a libel. It's man's injustice to woman, his false notions about his superiority. If , by strength is meant , moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. If power and strength means courage, endurance, self-sacrifice, woman is the supreme power. Conscious of his physical power, led by his

greed, with the help of the society, man moved forward to make woman , his eternal captive. Various thoughts, be it political, religious, social, cultural arose from the subjugation of women in all times. Whether it was Rousseau, writing, the whole education of women ought to be relative to men- to please men, to educate them when young, to look after them when grown , to counsel them , to console them and to make life sweet- are the duties of a woman which are to be taught to her from infancy. Or the Rigveda describing the duties of a woman to grind the corn prepare and cook her husband's food and wait upon him at meals, clean the pots and pans, smear the floor with cow dung and above all to bear him a son to carry on the family ties. Or it was Napoleon saying nature intended women to be our slaves , they are our property, we are not theirs. They belong to us just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener or the familiar male psyche : the women, a spaniel, the walnut tree – the more you beat them, the better they be.

Just look at the whole scenario, from one end to the other end of the world, without distinction of colour, caste, creed or civilization – the male sex is determined to bring down women to her knees. In Delhi, the daughter of a former Union Minister is mentally tortured by her well known businessman husband in New York , a leading actress contends her actor husband kicked her while she was pregnant. In Kolkatta , neighbor respond to distress calls from a woman battered by husband's family for refusing to join his drinking revelry. And in Chennai, the wife of a highly placed bureaucrat finally speaks up after enduring years of physical and mental abuse for being unable to bear a child. Atrocities against women is neither culture nor region specific , it cuts across community, class, or country making on distinctions.

The Indian woman's tale is an endless saga of heart rendering woes and despairs. They are abandoned, divorced, bought, sold and killed at the mere whim of men. Incidents of wife beating, molestation of women, eve teasing, rape, dowry deaths, suicides are mounting year after year. Women are subjected to physical assaults, mental tortures, psychological tensions, and social strains. They are battered, betted, bartered, beaten, and even burnt. Right from 'Sati' to dowry deaths, and now female foeticide, women in India have been tortured and tormented at all stages .

There is a pressing need to fight dowry menace. Hapless modern young brides subjected first to emotional abuse and humiliation, finally meet with a horrible and degrading end by being doused in Kerosene and set ablaze by greedy in-laws. Instead of boycotting the ruthless murderers, the society provides him another bride. The traditional burden a prevailing male superiority, an insensitive police force, an archaic judicial

system and a society that condones violence create an arena of horrors where even angels fear to tread in a society where father considers a dead daughter better than a divorced daughter who has to live with a stigma to crush her spirits.

Dowry has degenerated into a female mortality multiplier mechanism. She feels as if there is deep ditch of darkness where there is only depression, dejection, despair and denial of everything. It is high time that the society should realize that the divorced, separated or raped women who choose a life of dignity and self-respect should not be looked as deviants but as other normal human beings who have every right to choose their own way of life. It is the time when legal pundits and honourable judges should be prepared to admit that these atrocities are a brutal exhibition of the satanic impulses of animal in man. Man needs to bridle the brute within so that no bruises are caused outside.

The female infanticide is another form of oppression that haunts the so called modern civilized society of today. Whatever justifications of committing such a brutal crime are given, in no way they minimize the brutality, inhumanity of those who are involved in it. Law and Govt. can take various measures to curb this menace but certainly a change in the mindset and outlook of society is required. Infanticide may be more prevalent in one state, or in one district or in one community but it should be a mirror in which all human beings must look and come face to face with the ugliness that surrounds their well made up faces. No wonder, right from the beginning of her life, despite the strangulating strife, shattering strains, suffocating jobs, she continues to drag a subdued life which one day silently takes her to the doom.

Love of power is one of the passions of man's life. Physical violence is perceived to be noemative within the realm of man-women relationship. So innate is the practice that it occurs unconsciously. Men describe it unquestioned acceptance as hitting a wall or beating a cow or any other animal since it has been mostly met with stoic acceptance from the woman. Women though eulogized religiously, empowered legally, emancipated socially, enriched economically and enhanced personally, still remains a non-entity in the society. Interventionist strategies need to focus on attitudinal changes in families and the negative impact of use of violence has to be stressed in a structured form in schools and colleges towards promoting gender equality. Both boys and girls have to be brought up in a genderless milieu so that their impressionable minds are kept chaste and uncontaminated by the pollution of sexism. Swami Vivekanand's ideal of equality between men and women needs to be accepted in its true spirit. Since soul has no sex, why should woman be regarded as inferior to man? This would require not only mythologies and text books etc. but also a process of self-appraisal and self-correction on

the part of the parent, teachers, administrators, and policy makers etc. When roles would not be defined in terms of masculinity and femininity, when the heart of parents would not sink at the birth of the daughter and spirit of near and dear ones would not be dampened, when the daughter would show the path to the society like Chitra of Tagore by uttering these words, "I am no goddess to be worshipped nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside in the path of daring and danger, allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self." We need an adequate appreciation of the fact that woman's power and initiative can uplift the lives of all human beings—women, men and children. This social understanding is urgent and as well as momentous.

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