

“Equals to Equality”

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Introduction

When we talk about gender biased attitude in the society we generally mean the difference between the stereotypical characteristics of the two genders that are mainly biological, for instance- women lack in intelligence or men are of wild nature, and also philosophical like women are supposed to be more quiet or those men who cries are not real men. These kind of norms imposed on men and women over the centuries brought a sense of inferiority complex and insecurities among the peeps which resulted in the huge gender based discrimination we get to see today, almost in all fields. It is difficult to understand as to how it started and why it turned this much toxic that now there needs to be an extra disclaimer of being neutral before giving any opinion on gender based topics. Also, since the beginning there has been many things said and done to diminish this gap among the members of the society but it is also important to understand all the aspects are touched in systematic order. First we have to make the right difference between being sexist and gender biased. Sexism is mainly when the discrimination is made, or a comment is passed individually on the basis of the physical aspects of the person and raises the questions on his/her physical ability. However, gender biasness is the result of social expectations and theories put on the person concerned, be it a female or male. Now, it is equally important to understand which one of them is more dangerous evil of society and also why women are mostly the victim of this discrimination.

What are the “wrongs”?

Any discrimination based on caste, race or gender leads to the exploitation of oppressed at the hands of the dominator. It is rather unfortunate that particularly women have been the soft target of such oppression over the years and their voices have been silenced time and again. In India, the oppression of women at hands of men and also sometimes by the powerful women themselves is no surprise. Practices like domestic violence, female foeticide, dowry deaths, rape are just few to be named. These are the practices that are criminalized under Indian Penal Code, but the question that often arises that is it enough to criminalize these practices? For when we look at ground zero domestic violence is a personal affair in sub-urban society and a common affair in rural areas; that being said even rape is a matter to be solved with “civil conversation” and there is no such thing as marital rape. Here, it is wrong to accuse the males of our society entirely when we must understand that every thought is propagated from home. It is a big responsibility of mothers in our country to instil right views in their child’s mind since the beginning as mother is our first teacher and a true builder of a healthy society. Even on mother with right way of thinking can bring a big change in future as she doesn’t teaches only her own

child but also the coming generations. They should retaliate when tortured and speak up when exploited by anyone so that her child, if son, should know how wrong it is to treat women badly and if daughter, she should know when to stand for herself. In rural areas, women are born and brought up in such conditions where there is least to no education and it is fine for people to be biased against women and oppress them. Some of these women don't even know that what they are suffering from is a crime and they are being assaulted; for them it is a normal situation where it is okay to be beaten up.

Gender biased society is a toxin that is poisonous to those who suffer and also to those who are the mediator of it. They are the main propagators of crimes against women even if they don't act directly. It is the soul idea of being superior and above all the laws that gives rise to any unlawful activities, which may not always be harmful but in most cases results in crimes. These crimes are not only initiated because of such domination but also rises to the extent of normalisation and becomes a culture and thus terms like "rape culture" comes into existence.

In India, Bollywood plays a major role in such practices. When we look back at the movies of past years, especially of 90s we can easily see how misogynistic and women oppressing storylines and songs were made in those years. It was quite normal for scenes like slapping woman for raising her voice and scenes where female artists are being raped by villains to take revenge from heroes. The notion was such that women are weakness of men and they themselves are so weak to stand for themselves so the hero must come to save them. Films with such scenes were limitless in number and played major role in spreading discriminative thoughts in already misogynistic mind of people. However, bollywood movies are result of already established mindset of people and only glorify the "wrongs".

Although Constitution of India has been amended time and again to give justice to victims of gender discrimination and provide appropriate justice, it is required for people to know and acknowledge the injustice they suffer from and speak for themselves when there is enough time left. Law is for everyone but it is people who needs to come forward and seek law at the right time to set examples in society for others.

What must should be done?

In 2008, the Secretary-General of United Nations launched a multi-year global campaign called UNiTE to End Violence against Women. He is appealing to all partners to join forces to eliminate this scourge. The Campaign recognizes the power of the law: one of its five key goals is for all countries to adopt and enforce, by 2015, national laws that address and punish all forms of such violence, in line with international human rights standards.

Nirbhaya Fund is Indian Rs. 10 billion corpus announced by Government of India in its Union Budget 2013. According to then Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, this fund is expected to support initiatives by the government and NGOs working towards protecting the dignity and

ensuring safety of women in India. Nirbhaya (fearless) was the pseudonym given to the 2012 Delhi gang rape victim to hide her actual identity. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, along with several other concerned ministries, will work out details of the structure, scope and the application of this fund. In November 2013, the Ministry of Urban Development asked states to propose and implement new plans that can be financed through the Nirbhaya Fund. The ministry has also notified States and Union Territories who would not get their quotas of new buses under the Jawahar Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission if they fail to put in place steps to make public transport system safe for women. Some reports have appeared in a section of the press stating that the Nirbhaya Fund is underutilized. The correct position regarding the utilization of the Nirbhaya Fund is given below. As far as application of the victim to access the benefit of the fund is concerned, very few applications are received by the department as compared to the cases. The fund has been allotted to the victim in very limited cases. There is an urgent need to sensitize the Nirbhaya fund officers to be more sensitive towards the victims and also taking special initiatives to make people aware about the benefits.

Beside these government work, women on their own needs to be trained in self defence to fight their assaulters and educated properly so that they are well efficient to feed and take good care of themselves. Also, diet is the most basic requirement for any lady and person for that matter. It is so common that many a times people forget to consider this as an important point but it is needful to instil the idea of having healthy diet to all the women as women are very prone to being anemic that causes weakness and they depend on others for their work. Independence is a whole idea and must be achieved on all aspects and not only financially. Today people, especially women are keen to lose weight and look beautiful but it is important for them to understand that health is not a choice and it shouldn't be taken for granted when the whole community is in dire need of independent and strong ladies. Financially, female members of our society can boost themselves without asking or rather begging for equality. Small businesses, teaching and many other ways are there for women to take up and stable themselves in terms of money. However, in corporate sector issues like unequal pay and sexual assault has been prevailing since a long time but now all female employees are aware of their rights and can challenge the company they work under. The sexual assault at work place became a punishable offence following the landmark case of Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan and women has been protected under its provisions.

Conclusion

When all is said and done, we come to square one when we see the gender discrimination on all levels in our country and in world at large. A healthy society is needed to be established with all it's pillars standing strongly, if even one pillar get's the society will eventually collapse. It is high time people start to take cognizance of issues related to gender biasness and that too by being neutral as it is high time we balance the equation between men and women.