

Women Empowerment: Right Perspective

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Abstract

There is lot of hue and cry around the world what should be done for women empowerment, as if she is so weak that needs extra attention. Instead of treating as a sympathetic creature, first of all she should be considered just as a normal human being and all rights must be given on equal footing. A human being cannot be isolated from his circumstances of his condition. What a person is and what is his circumstances have been, both things are inter-related to each other. Marx is right to some extent when he says that it is not the consciousness which decides a being but the circumstances that decide the consciousness of a human being but it does mean that a person cannot change his circumstances. As far as the case study of various women is concerned, then it is proved that they are capable of doing even those hazards and herculean tasks which are considered exclusively in the domain of man. But it can be possible only when their faculties are used without any type of hindrances, by having the free choice of their career making. All occupations should be opened for both man and woman equally. Besides, favorable circumstances should be prepared, so that she may prove herself without any inhibitions. Besides, the other imperative is that the tendency of any type of domination and the unjustifiable use of power over others should be ceased in all social, political and economic institutions. To conclude it can be said that there is a need of creating such a social and political environment in which everyone can live a life of Socrates on his own terms irrespective of sexual identity. If social and political institutions force a human being to drink the bowl of poison at every moment of life, then cosmetic change is not sufficient. It demands drastic reshaping of every institutions of social life, especially for woman so that she may realize her multiple identities to the full extent.

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Introduction

Biologically most of human beings are divided into two categories: 'male and female'. There is also a third category of human being, that is named as 'transgender'. This is the rare category of human being in all human societies. The categorization of all human beings into three categories is decided by reproductive organ of a human being, that is called 'sex'. It is reflected in various research studies that the biological identity has nothing

to do with the nature of a human being. How a human being is nurtured in a given society, that becomes another ground of stratification of all human beings. The term gender is used by various scholars for this kind of stratification. It stands for all differences between male and female which are imposed by social and culture values without any scientific ground. But there is a blurring line between two identities and sometimes it may be difficult to make distinction between biological

and cultural influences. But it may be stated categorically that gender differences are not the expression of individual reality. Gender differences are more or less socially constructed facts. These social facts cannot be explained without understanding the various phases of their evolution. Although social life of human being has its root in the bio-psychic nature of man but it cannot be said unambiguously that the origin of all social facts are in the psychological constitution of human being.

Aristotle says that 'man is a political animal' and if a person lives without a society, then he is either a beast or a God but cannot be a human being. It means it is the natural inclination of human being to have its family and to live in a group. But further, he is of the opinion that without law man is the worst of all creatures. For smooth working of a group life, it becomes imperative to regulate all the brute natural tendencies of man in the common interest on reasonable ground. But unfortunately most of social and religious customs in the form of law have been serving the purpose of male domination in all civilizations. Male domination is not only justified in the interest of family and society but also in the interest of other sex called 'female' irrespective of sexual equality in all aspects of social life.

Contradictory Aspects of Both Sexes Based on Myth

Whether a child will be male or female or transgender in some rare circumstances is just only an accident of birth. In spite of this fact lot of myths are created in the history of mankind, which are responsible for the fortification of superiority of male over female in all domains of public and private life. The more peculiar situation arises when this biological division is expressed in conflictual terms like the word male is symbolic of strength, courage, truthfulness and so on and the term female is used pejoratively by depicting her only in sexual identity and this sexual identity is despised in every species. She is called argumentative, it is claimed that she does not have any deliberative or critical thinking to judge either of truth or accuracy. She is considered hippocratic as far

as ethical values are concerned, self serving selfish and so on. It is not only one civilization which is responsible for treating woman as sub-human being, more or less all civilizations justify her subordination to men.

For example Pythagoras was of the opinion that good principle has created order, light and man and bad principle has created chaos, darkness, and woman. Aristotle who is called the father of biology presents woman as merely matter and the male is depicted as principle of movement in all living organisms, that's why he is considered better and more divine. Besides it he assumes that male has superior intelligence than female and prepares ground for her subjection. In the laws of Solon she is confined to the duty of her domestic life.

In the Roman code she is not considered fit for holding any public offices and she is desired to live under the guardianship of man because of her imbecility. Canon law considers her "the devil's gateway". In Quranic law property rights of woman and free choice in marriage is recognized but in practice there are various social and religious rituals in Muslim societies which are sufficient to prove that she is considered just an object without having any idea of her own individuality.

It is written in Hindu Scriptures that if a woman is worshipped anywhere, then residence of Gods are guaranteed at that place. But unfortunately and willingly this glorification of dignity of woman has been limited only to scriptures. The social facts demand different interpretation of woman life which is identical to the laws of Manu. She is defined in most contemptuous manner. She is just considered a shadow of man without having any personality of being. Superiority of man is forcefully expressed when she is always advised to remain under guardianship of man in every phases of her life.

Same type of ideas about man and woman are expressed in Old Testament and New Testament. Christian scholars also justify the interpretation of man and woman which are expressed in these Holy books. For example 'Saint Paul affirms, "the man is not of the women; but the woman for the man" and

"neither was man created for the woman but the woman for the man" And elsewhere: "the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church". When forbidden fruit (symbolic of breaking a rule) is shared both by Adam (symbolic of man) and Eve (symbolic of female) jointly, then why Eve is considered as culprit for leading Adam into sin by various Christian scholars. Because of this sin, she is ordered to accept Adam as her master. Like Eve all woman are considered voluptuous and the greatest impediment in realizing the Ultimate Truth of life.

This trend is reflected in the rest of her history till the present age. She is still subordinated to man's will in various spheres. If this scenario is to be continued, then what is the meaning of talk of woman empowerment. Melinda Gates writes, "When social norms help everyone prosper they have natural support because they are in people's self interest. But when norms protect the power of certain groups or forbid or deny things that are natural part of human experience, the norms cannot stand on their own; they have to be enforced by some sanction or stigma."¹

Manipulation of woman in the name of Sanctity of Marriage and Motherhood

If woman like man is just only human being then why she is not considered fit to live together as equals. For example, why her life becomes just duty after marriage. No doubt the right of marriage and the family are included in the fundamental rights of man and the preservation of these institutions is necessary not only for keeping the evolution of species and culture, but also for the respect of inner biological urge of human being but conflict arises when this biological relationship is established without any obligation to each other. More complicated situation becomes for woman when is not entitled her of deserving dignity in domestic life. In this concern Simone de Beauvoir writes.

"The paradox of marriage is that it brings into play an erotic function as well as a social one: this ambivalence is reflected in the figure the husband presents to the young wife. He is a demi-god endowed with virile prestige and destined to replace her father: protector, overseer, tutor,

guide; the wife has to thrive in his shadow; he is the holder of values, the guarantor of truth, she is ethical justification of the couple. But he is also a male with whom she must share an experience often shameful, bizarre, disgusting or upsetting and in any case contingent; he invites his wife to wallow with him in bestiality while directing her with a strong hand toward the ideal."²

J. S. Mill also presents pathetic aspect of married life: "Her consideration is inseparably connected with that of her husband and after paying the full price for it, she finds that she is to lose it, for no reason of which she can feel the cogency. She has sacrificed her whole life to it, and her husband will not sacrifice to it a whim, a freak, an eccentricity; something not recognized or allowed for by the world, and which the world will agree with her in thinking a folly, if it thinks no worse!"³

What is to be Done for Equality of Both Sexes

Biological necessity is not sufficient to define a person's identity. "One sees the human significance of work-not merely as the means of biological survival, but as the giver of self and the transcender of self, as the creator of human identity and human evolution. Woman as well as man can only find their identity in work that uses their full capacities"⁴.

It is not the need of hour to treat woman as sympathetic creature. Voice must be raised in every sphere where wall of false hierarchy are created artificially in the name of sound culture. If woman are treated just like an object then it is nothing else but an abusive culture. In this concern one of the biggest dilemmas is projected by self appointed leaders and groups in the name of protection of cultural values particularly in developing countries. Even some developed societies are facing this same kind of dilemma because of rediscovery of religious myths. Is it appropriate to defend unreasonable values in the name of value pluralism on human ground?

There are various examples of patriarchal societies in which a person's identity is decided only by her sexual relationship. In such a society any talk of women empowerment is frivolous until the

societal value system is adjusted on equal plane for men and woman in every sphere of life. In this concern the role of woman is more important. She herself should take initiative by leaving the margins and she should take her place not above men or below men, but besides men at the powerful center of state and society.

There may be plenty of resistance but see change in the patriarchal value system of society won't be possible through power struggle because it is based on exclusion. If the abusive trait of culture is to be transformed, then it can be possible only when everyone recognizes his role as inclusive member of this large process. There should be no dividing line between public and private virtue. As Marry Wollstonecraft writes.

"Public spirit must be nurtured by private virtue, or it will resemble the factitious sentiment which makes women careful to preserve their reputation, and men their honour. A sentiment that often exists unsupported by virtue, unsupported by that sublime morality which makes the habitual breach of one's duty a breach of the whole moral law"⁵.

Virtue cannot be acquired merely by talking in public places or codification of equal rights on the paper but it demands an honest and unflinching commitment to one's duties without any feeling of procrastination. But if the structure of society is designed in such a way that demands so much sacrifice from a woman by suppressing her natural inclinations, then the talk of virtuous equality is totally absurd. If a human being is denied liberty or refused to govern the existence of his own then how can he assert his personality. Power also has

many constructive forms but when it is used over others for the mischievous management of their life then it is most degenerated form of power and antagonistic to liberty.

In most of modern democracies special provisions are made for the upliftment of woman as if she is so weak, whereas there are various empirical studies which have proved that she has an extraordinary resilient power even in tackling most difficult situations. There is need to treat her not as an object of charity but a subject of parity capable of exercising their genuine free will.

Conclusion

If equality is established in conjugal relationship, if equality is established in upbringing of girls and boys alike if, if equality is established in all social and religious rituals, if equality is established in all economic and political spheres and public offices, then there is no need to talk of women empowerment because it is not concerned with battle of two sexes.

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