Women's Human Rights- Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Human rights are important in our day-to-day lives, because of that recognition and application of the concepts and thoughts of human rights forms the basis of a just society. Today it has become clear that human rights' issues which affect women in particular and play a critical role in the quest to achieve a fair and just society. Women's place in every society is a vital to the well-being of that society, for without their work in the formal sector as well as in the informal sector and the family, most communities could not survive. The idea of women's human rights owes its popularity and usage to the fact that it is both prosaic and ground-breaking. First, the notion of women's human rights makes common sense. This asserts that women as human beings have equal rights. Incorporating women's experiences and lives into human rights' principles and practice, forces awareness of the shameful inability of countries around the world to give women equal dignity and respect they deserve-simply as equal beings. In India there are several reasons for the lack of women's rights. There are certain facts which cannot be over looked and are a telling commentary on the women's status.

The present paper gives the concept of women's human rights, its background and examines how the human rights framework can be used for women. It discusses various aspects and challenges related to women's human rights in India such as, the unwanted girl child, the gender gap, women's work, globalisation, poverty etc. It concludes, that we need realistic and innovative steps that promote women's human rights-civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development-to grow and advance our society. This can be achieved only by working in conjunction with all programs, governments, national organizations, academia and the culture of NGOs, but particularly women worldwide.

Key words: Human rights, women's rights, girl child, women and poverty, women and globalisation,

Introduction

Human rights are important in our day-to-day lives because the recognition and application of the concepts of human rights forms the basis of a just society. Today it has become clear that human rights issues which affect women in particular play a critical part in the quest to achieve a fair and just society. Women's place in every society is vital to the well being of that society, for with out their work in the formal sector and in the

informal sector and the family, most communities could not survive. A fundamental women's right is to bring out equality and remove all kinds of discriminations against women across the world. **The Concept of Women's Human Rights:**

The expression "Women's Rights are Human Rights," introduced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, acknowledges that without women's rights there can be no human rights, but also that women's rights have been marginalized in the past since their advancement challenges deep-seated cultural values and social structures. This famous slogan was then used by the women's rights movement at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (Boyle, 1995: 91). That 1993 Women's Rights Caucus in Vienna made it unmistakably clear to the World Conference participant states that much of what women face as daily violence in their lives was still held outside the realm of mainstream international human rights. This despite the fact that it was common knowledge that women were regularly subjected to batter and torture, humiliation, sexual harassment and exploitation, forced marriages and pregnancy – issues that clearly violate internationally recognized human rights norms (Bunch, 1994: 33). The phrase "women's human rights" and the collection of policies that surround its use are the ever-evolving result of an international movement to improve women's status. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, women's movements around the world developed networks and coalitions to give greater attention to the issues faced by women on a daily basis and to the centrality of women's economic term "women's human rights" and the set of practices that accompanies social, political and environmental issues (Cook, 1994). The phrase "women's human rights" served as a locus for praxis in the evolution of what is becoming a global women's movement, that is, for the creation of political strategies formed by the interaction between theoretical perspectives and specific political practices. In addition, the vital resources, organized advocacy, and broad-based international networks that grew up around women's human rights movements have become a forum for women to develop the political skills needed for the twenty-first century (Byrnes et.al. 1997).

The idea of women's human rights owes its popularity and usage to the fact that it is both prosaic and groundbreaking. First, the notion of women's human rights makes common sense. This asserts that women as human beings should have equal rights. Incorporating women's experiences and lives into human rights principles and practice forces awareness of the shameful inability of countries around the world to give women equal dignity and respect they deserve-simply as equal beings. The human rights context of a woman equips women to identify, evaluate, and express their perceptions of violence, deprivation, and marginality. Eventually, the concept of women's human rights offers a popular basis for creating a vast array of ideas and practical strategies for change. Tradition, discrimination, social, cultural, and political interests, however, have combined

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to exempt women from dominant concepts of "normal" human rights, and to relegate women to secondary and/or "special interest" status in human rights.

The marginalization of women in the field of human rights has expressed global gender inequity and has also had a profound impact on women's lives. It has led to women's inferior status perpetuation, and indeed condonation. The distinction between the so-called "public" compounded the complexities of peripheral status of women within international human rights structures and organizations and "private" domains in so many societies. Life's persistent division into "public" and "private" domains is rooted in the desire to restrict government authority. For certain nations, this has meant that what individuals do in the "public" domain is restricted, whereas actions in the "private" domain are considered to be exempt from government scrutiny. Since this "public" domain is seen as the center of contact between state actors and people, the international human rights activism has centered on abuses of that relationship.

Background to Women's Human Rights:

The Charter of the United Nations, adopted in 1945, sets out as one of its aims "to reaffirm confidence in universal human rights, in the dignity and worth of the individual and in the equal rights of men and women." In addition, Article 1 of the Charter stipulates that one of the aims of the United Nations is to foster respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms "without regard to race, sex, language or religion." This prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex is reiterated in Articles 13 (General Assembly Mandate) and 55 (promotion of universal civil rights) (UNO, 2014: 3).

The year 2000 marked the fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, an event that heralded respect for women's human rights as a core part of all attempts to improve the status of women worldwide. Activists welcomed important signs of change, including greater recognition of women's human rights abuses; stronger international standards for prosecuting violence against women, especially in conflict situations; and some initial steps by governments and international actors to introduce initiatives to promote women's rights. A big explanation for this is the coming together of women in the public and private sectors for the growing abuse against women and girls. The family isn't always the place of care and nurturing for many women and girls around the world. While some are subject to the brutality of individual members of the family, others experience violence because cultural norms sanction the violence and make it legal and appropriate within the broader community. Such systemic types of violence are not often seen as violent, and are instead rooted in the community's economic and social life. Because of the relation to cultural conceptions, these types of violence are tenacious and exceedingly difficult to eliminate. However, these developments appeared to be few and far between, particularly when contrasted with the scale and scope of ongoing abuses of the most basic human rights of women.

All through the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), women from many backgrounds of geography, ethnicity, faith, community, and class united to boost women's status. The UN-sponsored women's conferences, held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, and Nairobi in 1985, were convened to assess women's status and devise women's development strategies. Such conferences were crucial spaces where women gathered, discussed their differences, explored their commonalities, and slowly started learning to overcome differences and establish a global movement. It was in the 1980s and early 1990s, that women in different countries took up the human rights system and started creating theoretical and political methods that together constitute the ideas and practices of women's human rights.

The Vienna UN World Conference on Human Rights held in 1993 in Vienna was the first such gathering since 1968, and it was a popular forum to illustrate the emerging conceptions of women's human rights thought and action. Global Movement for Women's Human Rights-a large and loose international collaborative initiative to promote women's human rights launched a petition calling on the World Conference "to discuss women's human rights comprehensively at all levels of its proceedings" and to acknowledge "gender abuse, a pervasive phenomenon that takes many forms through society, race and class... as a violation of human rights.

The agreements created by these conferences are not legally binding; however, they have ethical and political weight and can be used to achieve international, national or local goals. Conference agreements may also be used to reinforce and interpret international treaties such as the Treaty on Civil and Political Rights or Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. Such covenants, when signed by a government, have international law status and were used in court by lawyers seeking redress for human rights abuses. The most important international treaty directly addressing women's human rights is the Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), introduced during the UN Woman Decade and ratified by over 130 countries. However, local women's organizations incorporated the human rights context of women into their legal awareness services and legal strategies.

Gender analysis needs to be both quantitative and qualitative. The use of gender sensitive indicators in such areas as demographics, patterns of human settlement, households and families, education, health, economic activity, access to land and credit, legal rights, gender-based violence and macroeconomics can provide useful quantitative data. This should be complemented by qualitative data, which trace historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces in order to clarify how and why gender differences came about, and thus provide indicators as to how they might be changed(Chinkin,2001 : 12)
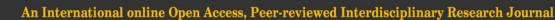
While the women's human rights platform has been immensely useful in lobbying state, national and international for legislative and policy reforms, it has become an equally valuable resource for grassroots organization. Incorporating women's experiences and lives into human rights principles and practice forces awareness of the miserable inability of countries around the world to give women equal dignity and respect they deserve-simply as human beings. The human rights system of a woman equips women to identify, examine and express their experiences of violence, deprivation, and marginality. Last but not least, the concept of women's human rights offers a common basis for creating a vast array of dreams and practical reform strategies.

Human rights are defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as universal, inalienable and indivisible. Such distinguishing characteristics are critically important for women's human rights. The universality of human rights means that, by virtue of their existence, human rights extend to each individual; this also means that human rights extend equally to everyone, because everyone is equal in being human. This universality concept can seem obvious in many respects, but its egalitarian principle has a revolutionary edge. Invoking the universality of human rights, women sought recognition of their own existence. The acknowledgement and co-recognition of women as bearers of human rights-mandates the integration of women and gender experiences into all ideas and organizations already dedicated to the promotion and defense of human rights. The argument that human rights are universal also contradicts the assertion that women's human rights can be restricted by cultural-specific interpretations of what counts as human rights and women's place in society.

The principle of human rights as inalienable implies that it is difficult for everyone to abdicate their human rights, even though they wanted to, because by virtue of being human every person is given those rights. This also means no individual or group of persons can deprive another individual of his or her human rights. For instance, debts incurred by migrant workers or women caught in sex trafficking can never excuse indentured servitude (slavery), or deprivation of food, freedom of movement, or compensation. The principle of inalienable rights means that for whatever cause, human rights cannot be stolen, ransomed, or forfeited. Throughout discussions over the priority given to social, religious and cultural activities throughout relation to human rights, the principle of inalienability has also been significant. Research has been especially difficult for decades to change behaviors that are physically or psychologically detrimental to women, and that have often been "protected" under the rubric of religion, tradition or culture, despite both the freedom of culture guaranteed by the Universal Declaration and the history of Northern dominance of much of the world. It was therefore significant that both the Vienna Declaration and the World Conference on Human Rights Programme, held in Vienna in 1993, and the United Nations Resolution Against Violence Against Women, adopted by the General Assembly the same year, reiterated that in cases of

conflict between women's human rights and cultural or religious traditions, women's human rights must prevail.

Taking up the human rights platform has brought about a double change in thinking about human rights and talking about the lives of women. This has included exploring the framework for human rights through a gender lens, and defining the lives of women through a human rights context. In looking at the human rights system from the viewpoint of scholars, scholars have demonstrated how existing human rights concepts and policies fail to account for the ways in which women are still affected differently because of their gender by already established human rights violations. As people use the context of human rights to express the overwhelming array of human rights abuses that women face, they bring insight analyzes and effective tools to bear on the experiences of women. This tactic has been instrumental in attempts to draw attention to gender-specific human rights that were historically seen as the rights of gender but not regarded as "individual" rights. Take the issue of violence against women for example. The Universal Declaration states: "No one shall be subjected to slavery or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" This language provides a framework for women to describe and express experiences of abuse such as rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence as breaches of the human right not to be subjected to slavery or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The concept of violence against women as regards human rights explicitly indicates that states are responsible for such misconduct. It also poses concerns about how governments can be kept responsible for their inaction in these circumstances and what kinds of measures are required to facilitate the resolution process.

Some Challenges:

In India there are several reasons for the lack of women's rights. There are certain facts which cannot be over looked and are a telling commentary on the women's status. Here are some of the challenges to Women's rights .

The Unwanted Girl Child in India:

In the Indian culture that idolizes sons and dreads a daughter's conception, being born a female comes dangerously close to being born less than human. Discrimination for a girl starts just before conception. Our figures clearly point to some evidence that abortion of female fetuses is on the increase, the ratio between female and male is on the decline, there is a reluctance to seek medical support for ailing mothers, girls are fed breast for a shorter time than boys and girls are easily drawn from school to look after their young sisters. No matter the economic history, at any point of time the status of a girl child has never been the same as that of the male child (Pande, 2004: 153-154).

The national trend shows an adverse female male ratio and a sharp decline since the beginning of this century. The ratio of 972: 1000 girls in 1901 have dropped to

945:1000 by 1991, 927:1000 in 2001 and 914 :1000 in 2011. In many parts of the country, female feticide, the process of aborting perfectly healthy fetuses after about 18 weeks of gestation just because they are females is very common. This is primarily due to the continued socio- cultural environment which is biased against women and the new sophisticated medical technologies which strengthen such biases. Even before their birth, girl children experience, Feticide and infanticide. The pre-natal diagnostic tests initially meant for the detection of abnormalities, are also being used to detect the sex of the fetus. The implication can be seen in the demographic imbalance shown in states such as Haryana and Punjab. Reducing Infertility Systems like use of Net-en by women with disastrous side effects on women's health need to be challenged.

The girl child of today is the woman of tomorrow. Therefore, an integrated and holistic approach to the development of the girl child is necessary for creating a new atmosphere in which she can be respected and nurtured. This includes a cycle of social mobilization which will make us worried about the girl child. (WCD and UNICEF, 1999: 23). The media, the families, the advertising from the community as well as government and non-governmental organizations will join hands. By supplementing formal education with non-formal schooling that addresses local needs and constraints, and by expanding the scope of the child development program to include adolescent and pre-adolescent children, and by increasing awareness of the girl's rights, we can motivate the girl child to join the main stream of economic and social activity. Only then will the girl child work out of the labyrinth of abuse into which she has been lost for centuries.

Gender discrimination throughout a lifetime

Girls once they are born, continue to face gender discrimination through out their life time. A significant priority of the middle years of childhood and adolescence is ensuring access to and completion of high-quality primary and secondary education. It is mainly girls, with a few exceptions, who suffer from an educational disadvantage. Assault, abuse and violence and the lack of critical information about sexual and reproductive health, including HIV / AIDS, are serious threats to adolescent growth. A number of cultural practices such as, early marriage, female genital mutilation, and other forms of gender-based violence such as sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking; sexual and reproductive health; and HIV / AIDS are particular areas that impact women's human rights worldwide.

In many women's lives, motherhood and old age are two main periods when the pernicious effects of both deprivation and injustice will combine. It is estimated that more than half a million women – about one woman per minute – die each year as a result of complications of pregnancy and childbirth, 99 per cent of which occur in developing countries. And if they had access to adequate health care facilities, many of those women's lives could be saved. Additionally, elderly women may face double

discrimination based on gender as well as age. Many older women find themselves plunged into poverty at a time when they are very vulnerable.

There has always been female infanticide, but now modern science has replaced it with female foeticide, and the sexual ratio has decreased gradually over the decadal census. Portable ultrasound devices and readily available abortions have made it possible to decrease the number of baby girls, but their cause is a deep-seated preference for male offspring. A law of 1994 banning sex-selective abortions imposes stringent penalties, but its tight protections are easily circumvented with a smile and a nod. And while a declining birth rate will bring good cheer to those who favor limits on population growth, it makes the sex ratio even worse. When people only want to have one or two kids, they want boys. This decline is due both to an continuing socio-cultural climate skewed towards women and to the modern advanced medical technologies that reinforce these prejudices (Pande, 2013: 5).

Gender violence for girls and women is a reality of our society. Domestic violence is not unique to India, nor is it a recent phenomenon. But what is unique is the lack of recognition of this as a serious issue. The general assumption on the part of the society at large is that marital conflicts leading to wife beating is normal. The problems of women living in these poor and illiterate regions are compounded by the existence of patriarchal societal order (Haq, Khadija, 2000). The pervasive gender disparity exists in this region which effects access to education, health and employment. In situations of armed conflict, communal violence, women and girls are increasingly targeted for attack, mistreatment and rape because in these cultures there is a very strong notion that the honor of men reside in its women and one can get at the men by targeting the women. Masculinity is defined at the women's expense. So worst hit in caste wars and communal clashes. The violence against women is a manifestation of the unequal power relationship between men and women. The normality of violence and the wide acceptance of it by society trivializes any talk around it and refuses to take it seriously (Pande, et.al:2008, 123).

There are a large number of arguments given. Sex discrimination is trivial compared to the larger issue of human survival; Abuse of women is a private and not public matter. It could overwhelm all other aspects of human rights. That which is cultural, personal or religions cannot be intervened upon. While debating this it should be kept in mind that the language of human rights is accepted nationally and at the international level and by adopting this language, women can make their voice heard. Global concept like human rights can help build up links with different women's organization and can be empowering for women. International pressure is more effective in bringing about a change in the government position than merely local pressure.

Gender gap:

We find a lot of gender gap in every area in India. Literacy level among females is much less when compared to men. Drop out rates for girls have fallen at primary and middle stages but are still high at the middle and high school stages. Only about 15% of the women are in the organized sectors and more women are in unorganized sector and this number is on the increase. According to the Global Gender Gap Report released by the World Economic Forum (in 2020, India was ranked 112 on the Gender Gap Index (GGI) among 135 countries polled. India also scores poorly on overall female to male literacy and health rankings (World Economic Forum, 2019).

Women Work being invisible:

By and large women's work is seen as invisible or secondary and hence they are paid less. Women are the producers of over half of all the food that is grown on a global scale. They grow up to 80 per cent of essential food in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. They account for approximately 50 per cent of food production in Asia. They are primarily engaged in subsistence farming, horticulture, poultry and small-scale livestock rearing in Latin America. And despite this, women still get no respect. Many actually go unpaid. Women often do not have the financial resources required to buy equipment etc, as many societies still do not accept, or realize, that there is a change in the "traditional" roles. Hence by and large women are found in unorganized sectors and their work is invisible , undervalued and under paid. Be it agriculture (Pande,2000) Beedi making(Pande, 2019) and small trade activities (Pande, 2008) women a are by and large invisible.

Women and Poverty:

Equal dignity of women and human rights as complete human beings are enshrined in the fundamental instruments of the international community of today but there is a broad gap between theory and practice. Of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 per cent are women; the majority of the world's refugees are women; female illiteracy is invariably higher than male illiteracy. Women and girl-children in cross-border sex rackets and in the pornography, industry are regarded as commodities. Millions of girls are still subject to genital mutilation while women are frequent victims of domestic violence in every region. In many countries women have no access to reproductive health care and women are killed in armed conflicts every day. Health services need to be reformed and expanded to meet the reproductive and sexual health needs of their clients. All the institutions of civil society must be involved in this reformation. Sexual and reproductive health should no longer be the last on the funding list when it comes to meeting all those who need it. "Poverty feminization" is a trend which is sadly on the rise. In fact, women are disproportionately the ones who suffer the most from poverty. The Decade of Women's informal slogan was "Women do two-thirds of the world's jobs, earn 10 per cent of world profits, and own 1 per cent of the means of production," which often impacts women, making the grim situation much worse. For

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example, even in the world's richest country, women caring for children are the poorest. Sexual and reproductive health can no longer be last on the list for funding if it is to reach all those who need it.

Women, Reproductive Rights and Population Issues:

Addressing other factors relevant to the population includes addressing other women's problems such as greater awareness and access to quality health care, family planning and women's education. Such beneficial effects are passed on to the children, and ultimately to society. Reproductive health knowledge and services-related programs, including family planning and sexual wellbeing, are required. The service delivery systems work would help both men and women achieve their reproductive goals.

Gender Mainstreaming:

Gender mainstreaming is accomplished in the human rights system by an evaluation of the enjoyment of human rights for both women and men within the context of goals of agreed standards and the monitoring of treaty bodies on human rights. In practice, this includes data collection that assesses the enforcement of human rights principles and recognizes the obstacles that each gender faces as opposed to the other in achieving full realization of their rights. Gender mainstreaming also needs efforts to recognize contexts in which gender is a risk factor for human rights violations or abuses. Sex related abuse is one example of this. On a larger scale, gender mainstreaming of the human rights system demands that the system reconsider not only institutional processes but also cultural values and beliefs.

The United Nations has described gender mainstreaming as the process of evaluating the consequences of any proposed action for women and men, including legislation, policies and programmes, in any region and at all levels. This is a policy to make the needs and perspectives of both women and men an important element in planning, implementing, tracking and reviewing policies and services in all political, economic and social realms so that women and men benefit equally and discrimination is not perpetuated. The main goal is to achieve equality of the sexes

Globalization and Women:

Institutions such as the IMF and World Bank's lending policies to developing countries have impacted many women in those countries. The global system today is marked with widening income disparities, economic growth disparities, human capital disparities in the distribution of global economic resources and opportunities. The dominance of rich nations, multinational corporations and international capital over markets, resources and labor in the developing countries through trade, aid and technology transfer has greatly weakened the capacity of nation states and governments to promote human development and offer protection to the poor people (Pande, 2001: 2). The rhetoric of globalization promises to remove backwardness and establish a truly

cosmopolitan culture. In actual practice since the global order is based on unequal power relations these concerns are put in hold. Globalization creates ghettoized of the weaker nations and the weak among them. Globalization seems to increase choices as trade does but only for those with money and access to the market. Due to the existing difference between women and men's access to knowledge, skills, responsibilities and concerns and control over resources they are affected widely by the global process.

Women continue to bear the brunt of gender and class inequalities, experience increasing marginalization and pauperization. Poverty, trade and economic problems are closely linked to women's rights concerns because of the possible impacts they may have (Pande 2007). Tackling these concerns also helps to resolve the problems around women's rights. And tackling gender problems helps solve poverty concerns.

Women and Information technology:

Information technology will be a major- if not the biggest development issue of the coming decades, according to the APC report. If women are not involved at all levels, we'll see new ways of marginalization that could undo other women's gains in the 20th century (APC Report,). This suggests a critical obstacle that women face in resolving these issues. The gender gap in the digital divide is of great concern because if access to and usage of these technologies are directly related to socio-economic growth, then it is crucial that women in developed countries understand and use the value of these technologies. According to the APC Report, Information technology will be a major- if not the major development issue of the coming decades. If women are not actively present at all levels, we will see new forms of marginalization that could undermine other advances made by women in the twentieth century (OCD Report). This suggests a critical obstacle that women face in resolving these issues. The gender gap in the digital divide is of great concern because if access to and usage of these technologies are directly related to socio-economic growth, then it is crucial that women in developed countries understand and use the value of these technologies (Kraemer, 1994).

As IT becomes pervasive in its impact on industrial and economic development in virtually every economic sector, policy makers in both industrial and developing countries have come to view this as a strategic industry that is also one of the fastest growing and likely to be the worlds largest by the turn of the century. Hence if women are not actively present at all levels then one could see new forms of marginalization that could undermine other advances made by women in the 20th century. This implies a crucial challenge to women to take up these issues.

The emerging gender employment patterns in the IT sector are a cause for concern. Over the years the gender inequalities that are well established in other sectors

of labour force are already being replicated in the It sector (Pande, 2006). By and large women are well represented in desktop publishing, software programming but not in design, operating systems of computer maintenance which are still seen as male jobs. But a large number of women are concentrated in the end user, lower skilled IT jobs related to word processing and data entry (Pande, 2012). Globalization has had a significant impact on women's work in the Information and technology in developed countries. In the first phase of industrialization in Asia women found many IT related jobs in the assembly of electronics. These assembly line jobs were more labor intensive and were in the assembly of electronics and women's wages in these jobs were low, hours of work long and working conditions harsh (Castells, 1996). However by the 1980's employment in information technology and manufacturing has changed from making information technology (eg. Electronic assembly) to using information technology in every manufacturing industry. As manufacturing became more automated, greater technical and cognitive skills were required than in the first phase and the number of women employed in IT manufacturing dropped. Also the first generation of women were no longer retained for the new job. Employment in Information technology in manufacturing has changed from making Information Technology (e.g., electronic assembly) to using information technology in nearly every manufacturing industry. Globalize manufacturing still demands cheap labor, mostly located in the developing world but with greater technical and cognitive skills. In the move to the knowledge economy, computer literate skilled technicians and engineers are needed and nimble fingers have become largely redundant (Hafkin et.all, 2001, p. 42). However the jobs that are created in the new technology sectors are fewer than had been created in manufacturing. While globalization has brought new opportunities to young women with familiarity with English in new service sector jobs, it has also made a vast number of over thirty-five years old redundant either because they are in declining industries or have outdated skills (Mitter in Hafkin et.all, 2001).

Women and children: gender equality's double dividend:

Gender equality and children's well-being go hand in hand. Gender equality fosters the cause of child survival and growth. Gender equality yields a double dividend, benefiting both women and girls. Safe, educated, and motivated women have safe, educated, and confident babies. Gender equality will not only enable women to conquer poverty and lead complete and prosperous lives, but will also boost children, communities and countries' lives. In crucial decisions that form their lives and those of children, women's equal rights and power must be strengthened in three distinct arenas: family, workplace and political. Change for the better in some of these areas affects women's empowerment in others, which has a profound which positive effect on the

well-being and wellbeing of girls. Gender equality is not only morally right, it is fundamental to human advancement and sustainable development

Women and the Media

Media representation of women is often distorted more for a capitalist profit making society. While women increasingly join the media, top management is still predominantly male-dominated and this gap perpetuates patriarchal culture. There is a gender division of labor that is apparent by assigning stories. 'Soft' topics such as fashion, music, arts, and lifestyle are mostly limited to women media practitioners, while 'hard' and 'serious' topics such as economy, economics, and politics are mostly under their male counterparts' purview. Newsworthiness requirements are also understood through this gendered prism. Headline articles also represent 'hard issues,' while 'soft issues' are shunted to 'special' and media supplements. Gender-stereotyped views and behaviors, such as attaching productive incapacity and reproductive roles for women, can impede women's opportunities to assume decision-making positions. Women's positions in the media, from talk shows to variety programs, as well as news coverage may also end up upholding the status quo and cultural expectations that encourage many women to follow suit. It happens in all countries, from wealthiest to poorest. Continuing implicit biases etc. may have a detrimental effect. Press has tremendous influence in this cycle. It's one of the key institutions that help shape the environment, and how we as individuals make sense. Taking responsibility in this position and challenging one's own attitudes, beliefs, aspirations and ambitions is essential to imagining a diverse society that is tolerant of injustice and immune to marginalization. Gender unbinding is central to this cycle and one of the biggest challenge.

Women's participation in the political process:

Women's contribution to societies' social and economic growth is more than twice that of men because of their dual positions in productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their presence in formal political systems and processes where decisions are taken on the use of male and female-generated societal capital remains negligible. Presently, women's representation in legislatures around the world is 15 percent. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on October 31, 2000 acknowledged that women worldwide play an important and constructive role in conflict resolution and building peace. It acknowledged that peace can not be sustained unless women play an equal and active role in formulating political, economic and social policies, and unless women participate fully in peace processes, there can be no justice or sustainable development in societal reconstruction.

Women in executive and parliamentary representation in India is extremely small, both in absolute numbers and globally. In the entire post-independence period just a miniscule development is observed. There were only five women ministers out of a total

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of 27 ministers in the government, which was created after the 2014 general election. According to the 'Women in Politics Map 2017' released by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women, India's global rank is 88(Press Trust of India, 2017).

The representation of women between First Lok Sabha (1952) and Sixteenth Lok Sabha (2014) has increased from 4.4% to 11.9%. Similar pattern of low female representation is also observed in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) in the post-independence period. Representation of women in Rajya Sabha rose from 6.9% in 1952 to 11.4% in 2014. However, these numbers are slightly lower than the global average of 22.9 per cent and the Asian average of 16.3 per cent of Upper House female members. Given the proportion of women (49.5 percent) in India's total population, their parliamentary representation represents a distorted figure that is not in line with the largest democracy in the world.

Representation of women in executive government and parliament is extremely low in India, both in absolute numbers as well as globally. Only a miniscule progress is observed in the entire post-independence era. In the cabinet, formed after the general election in 2014, there were only 5 women ministers out of total 27 ministers. India's global rank is 88 in this regard as per the 'Women in Politics Map 2017', published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women.

Between the First Lok Sabha (1952) and the Sixteenth Lok Sabha (2014) women's representation has increased from 4.4 per cent to 11.9 per cent. Similar trend of low representation of women is also observed in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) during the entire period of post-independence era. Women's representation in Rajya Sabha has increased from 6.9 per cent in 1952 to 11.4 per cent in 2014 . Again, these figures are substantially lower compared to the global average of 22.9 per cent and Asian average of 16.3 per cent of women representatives in Upper House. Considering the share of women **(49.5%)** in the total population of India, their representation in Parliament represents a skewed statistic, which does not befit the world's largest democracy.

Women on the forefront in peace:

Women are leading the world's peace efforts. Women's participation in the peace process should not be seen exclusively in the light of women as victims of war and conflict, but as women taking a constructive role in the post-peace agreement peace talks, peace building and post-conflict activities. Women, individually and collectively, made significant contributions to conflict resolution. Their efforts are frequently ignored as non-traditional or outside of the conflict's formal issues. When women engage in peace talks and create a peace agreement, they bear in mind the future of their families, their communities. They think of how their future generations, their children and

grandchildren will live in their country, how the peace agreement will help them. We find society's greatest concern. Women have plenty to contribute to dispute resolution and peace-building. In times of tension, they unite groups as caregivers/providers, counselors and negotiators. Therefore, the involvement of women's experiences in peace initiatives is crucial to ensuring that local people's interests are heard in the preparation and execution of peace operations. Women, while less visible than men, must be actively engaged in seeking solutions to issues inherent in building peace and sustainable economic, environmental and political growth. Women's full potential can be realized, and it is mainly women who will start a 21st century period of peace. although less visible than men, have to be integrally involved in seeking solutions to issues intrinsic to building peace, and sustainable economic, environmental, and political development. Women's fullest potential can be realized and it is primarily the women who can usher in an era of peace in 21stcentury.

Monitoring Human rights issues:

The biggest challenge is to mobilized and educated people to monitor human rights issues in their communities. Organizations focused on human rights, women's empowerment, and health and reproductive rights need to continue to forge alliances to promote their shared concerns. Greater attention has to be paid to broader human rights issues, especially to those that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Laws and procedures must be reformed and existing rights protections better enforced. Procedures to document human rights violations are needed. Both government and civil institutions must become more accountable for protecting rights. Education about human rights should be undertaken, and alliances developed among institutions concerned with rights. Internationally, human rights goals must be given greater priority in assistance programmes. Education, both general education and specific education on sexual and reproductive health, is needed at all levels. After primary health care, the most valuable investment a country can make is in closing the gender gap in education for girls and women. Boys and men have specific educational needs, notably in the area of gender relations, so that they can take their proper place as equal partners with women in family, community and national life. Domestic and sexual violence will not end while inequality exists between men and women. Health services need to be restructured to meet the reproductive and sexual health needs of clients, including currently underserved groups. Guidelines, standards of conduct and evaluation methods need to be developed. All the institutions of civil society— governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector—must be involved in designing,

Conclusions:

The idea of women's human rights has become a meeting-place for women across many borders, whether used as proponents of legislation, in court proceedings, mass

advocacy or large awareness initiatives, and promotes the creation of new approaches to the promotion, defense and improve the quality of life of women's human rights. Fighting for the rights of women is a positive fight that recognizes the importance of the involvement of women in every field of society: politics, industry, trade, education, academia, farm and household. This acknowledges women as real pacificators and builders of peace — in the table of talks and elsewhere in war-torn societies. We need realistic and innovative steps that promote women's human rights-civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development-to grow and advance our society. This can be achieved only by working in conjunction with all programs, governments, national organizations, academia and the culture of NGOs, but particularly women worldwide. The definition of women's rights has allowed people across the globe to ask tough questions about official carelessness as well as general indifference to the systemic sexism and abuse experienced by women on a daily basis.

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