

Empowering Women in India

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Position of women in a society is a criterion to measure the status and progress of society and somewhere it reflects the face of a civilized society. The development of women is shaped and suppressed by society, cultural and religious beliefs. The history of women in India has been interesting and eventful from equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers. In the present scenario, Indian women have achieved many milestones and broken many boundaries. But still they are facing many challenges like gender inequality, sexual harassment, domestic violence and male domination.

Men and women are two wheels of a chariot of life; equally potent, equally important. We cannot say which one is better, both are indispensable for life. Without one we cannot imagine other. Problem arises when we start wrong comparisons based on biased beliefs, prejudices and ego dominated intellect. After 66 years of independence, still women are waiting and struggling for security, right and respect.

In the past few years drastic changes have taken place in women's lives, which have influenced their feelings, values, inspirations and attitudes. The new system of urbanization, education and employment has infused women with new avenues to present and express themselves. The social reforms, various legal provisions, and feminist activities of modern age have been trying to influence and change the status of the women. The women have stepped out of their homes in search of economic gain and fulfillment of their expectations and desires as human beings. The employment of women, mainly from the middle class, is a new phenomenon of the present era. The UN 'Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women' (1979) speaks out against gender inequalities and decided to observe 08 March as International Women's Day each year. The National Commission for Women (NCW) constituted on 31 January 1992 in India reviews the constitutional and legal safeguard for women recommends remedial measure and advises the government on all matters of policy affecting the welfare and development of women in the country. It takes notice of complaints involving denial of the rights to women. To spread awareness among the people against women abuses many reports have been published by the commission on the matters like-conditions of women prisoners in jails, torture of women, dowry-death etc. To safeguard the rights and welfare of the women, the commission on the status for

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