

## **Women in our society and the true meaning of feminism**

The status and situation of women in our society is not a new topic. It has been one of the most widely discussed topics in today's world, yet people need to understand the discussions' reasons.

Most decisions and massive changes in the past have been achieved with wars and leaders. But this change in people's view towards one particular gender needs to be brought by every person. A woman or a man, whoever it might be, deserve an equal place in the world.

The idea of feminism has been going around in the world for a few decades. While the definition of feminism changes from person to person, deep down, the meaning and goal behind feminism is a very noble, tough and important one to achieve.

Since the beginning of civilisation, they were given a passive role in society, mostly confined to recreation objects. Though the condition of women around the world varied with races and continents, the overall situation remained the same for many centuries. Both as wives or daughters, women were treated as assets to husbands and daughters, and most of the women lacked the courage or condition to speak their thoughts out.

Many women were bartered by their male family members and were sold as slaves. In some parts of the world, a few women have been documented to raise their voice equal to that of men, yet most other women's fate remained unfortunate.

In early societies, and still, men were considered destined for heavy work, intellectual work, and the house's ruler among many communities. In contrast, women were devoid of fundamental rights like education, freedom of movement or speech. Those women who gather the courage to speak for themselves or others were punished cruelly.

Women were seen as childbearing machines, and only a tiny portion of men treated them with respect and dignity. The women were assumed to be confined to home for domestic chores, and the men in the family rarely gave any regard to

women's physical or mental health. Domestic abuse and infidelity were common in many communities of the world, and few women had the opportunity to raise their voice against such atrocities. Such differences in the status of both the sexes in society paved the way for the increase in the so-called superior males' egoism. They created a sense of depreciation for themselves in the mind of many females. Besides, any considerate man who shares the burden of a female's problem was mocked and was barred from doing any work that was considered feminine.

Widows in many communities were considered as outcasts and often as bearers of ill luck. In certain traditions, a woman was supposed to sacrifice her own life during her husband's funeral. A woman's life was deemed meaningless without a man's support, and she was expected to fulfil her husband's needs without question.

As civilisations moved forward and societies developed, many women started coming forward to do jobs and learn to read and write. The number of men who were considerate towards women increased slowly. But a significant change in the situation of women employment was seen during the world wars.

As the war created many job vacancies, women came forward in many parts of the world to fulfil those duties and cater to the war's supply needs. Though there were increased protests about women doing a man's work, the urgent need for jobs clouded such protests, giving many women a chance to be independent and earn their own money.

Though many of these jobs were taken back by men after the war, women's opportunities grew in many different sectors.

The world today has seen significant progress in radicalising women's rights as equal to that of men. Women in many parts of the world have the right to vote and vocalise their views. Most jobs consider men and women equal, and many countries have passed numerous laws to protect these rights.

Yet, the condition of many women globally has been an alarming situation. From female foeticide to domestic violence or robbing them of their right to equality,

many men out in the world still view women as inferior and objectified in unacceptable ways.

Unpaid work and care work is not given equal respect when compared to labour intensive work in many societies. Violence against women is a significant problem in many parts of the world, yet some countries lack the basic laws to punish such perpetrators. Globally, it is estimated that one in three women are subjected to sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, and these statistics are just the official information.

Intimate partner violence, where her husband or other partners violate a woman, is also in a very high percentage. Most of the time, such violence goes without complaint due to emotional factors or being threatened by other family members or community members. Adolescent girls face such partner violence more often, almost one in four, either in the form of physical violence or mental abuse such as blackmail or torture.

One in thirty-seven women worldwide are being killed intentionally by their family members every day, and out of which more than one third are by their husbands. Almost 40 per cent of these women complain to any sort of authority against such abuse, and these numbers are worryingly higher in the lesser developed countries of the world.

Every three out of four human trafficking victim ends up being a girl, and almost one in 5 women aged 20-24 have been married before the age of 18, and most of them have been married off without appropriate consent. These statistics are something that indicates a significant change needs to take place.

The modern world has also invented new ways of women harassment in cyberbullying or cyberstalking. Almost 1 in 10 women have suffered some other form of cyber harassment, and many cases go unreported.

The fear of mockery or the dread of being disowned by family if such abuse is reported is some of the main reasons why most violence cases go unnoticed. In many cases, the women don't get the justice that she needs.

Many women and men have come forward and have begun preaching the idea of feminism. The ideals of feminism and the origin of it were noble and seemingly straightforward. The true essence behind that one simple word is an enigma to many people, including most women.

As important as it is to fight for women's rights, it is equally essential to interpret things in the right way before moving forward to criticise or bring about changes in people's thinking.

To start with, a few uninformed people assume feminism as the upliftment of the female gender, which is only a partial truth. Feminism is the concept where a person can be treated as an equal irrespective of their gender, let it be a man or a woman or any other gender.

Some people wrongfully assume that feminism can only happen when a woman leaves her home and her duties as a mother and comes out to do a 'man's job', which is far from true. The equality and respect that women deserve don't necessarily sprout by imitating a man. It can exist despite a woman being at her home or office or anywhere else.

Just like any other aspect of a person, gender is one of the characters of a person. Let it be a man or a woman, and it is a part of the whole person that no one needs to be ashamed of. Nature has decided the role of nurturing for females and the remaining responsibility of protection and financial support for a man. A woman can do a man's job without a doubt, which has been demonstrated clearly by many independent women worldwide.

But this doesn't necessarily mean that a woman should forgo her primary responsibility of nurturing the future generation like a tender sapling that needs care and love. Her need for independence should not overshadow this responsibility of a woman.

But in the current world, many women leave their children at home, using the internet as baby sitters and indirectly forget their responsibility. There is no doubt that children are the responsibility of both parents, but a mother is more pivotal in the child who will be part of society. A woman should never forget that she holds

an extreme power to shape humanity's future by guiding her children and responsibly utilising that power.

Feminism also is sometimes misinterpreted when women start wearing clothes that men wear. Though it is comfortable for that woman, it often leads to criticism when another woman wears traditional dresses regularly. This kind of criticism leads to peer pressure and indirectly defies the concept behind respect to women's choices.

Feminism is ultimately giving women or men freedom to speak their opinions without hurting others' feelings and moulding them in any socially acceptable way. It happens when a person is treated as an equal with respect and dignity irrespective of their gender.

