

Human Rights and Women

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Abstract

Women's rights can be considered human rights. Negligence to women's rights is violation to human rights. The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women defines the rights of women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principle to protect this right. It establishes the agenda for national action to end discrimination, and provides the basis for achieving equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in political and public life as well as education, health and employment. The empowerment and autonomy of women and improvement of their political, social, economical and health states is highly important and in itself as well as essential for the achievement of sustainable development. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom sets forth therein without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex.

Methodology

The work is based on primary and secondary data. The primary source consists of contemporary records, confidential reports, public report, newspapers and dispatch, memories and autobiographies, authorized history, questionnaire method, government document, public opinion, literature proverbs and folklores. Secondary sources on the other hand are the testimony of someone who was not present at the time of the occurrences of the event. The book written by a historian is secondary source on which a large number of people are interested in the problem in which it deals, relies. The secondary source is the coherent work of history article, dissertation or book in which both the intelligent layman and the historians who are venturing upon a new research topic or keeping on touch with new discoveries in his chosen field or seeking to widen his general historical knowledge will look what they want. In spite of this the work will be narrative and descriptive following the rules and regulations of historical writings. Impartial attitude will be followed in writing the paper. Authenticity of document will be confirmed.

Aims and Objectives

The present paper intends to:

1. Present a brief idea on human rights and women.
2. How the problems related to human rights and women.
3. Discuss the challenges for women empowerment and gender equality.

In 1993, 45 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, and eight years after CEDAW entered into force, the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna confirmed that women's rights were human rights. That this statement was even necessary is striking women's status as human beings entitled to rights should have never been in doubt. And yet this was a step forward in recognizing the rightful claims of one half of humanity, in identifying neglect of women's rights as violation of human rights and in drawing attention to the relationship between gender and human rights violations.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women defines the right of women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principle to protect this right. It establishes an agenda for national action to end discrimination, and provides the basis for achieving equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life as well as education, health and employment. CEDAW is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women. The Convention has been ratified by 180 states, making it one of the most ratified international treaties. State parties to the convention must submit periodic reports on women's status in their respective countries. CEDAW's optional protocol establishes procedures for individual complaints on alleged violations of the Convention by State parties, as well as an inquiry procedure that allows the Committee to conduct inquiries into serious and systematic abuses of women's human rights in countries. So far the Protocol has been ratified by 71 States.

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (ICPD) articulated and affirmed the relationship between advancement and fulfillment of rights and gender equality and equity. It also clarified the concepts of women's empowerment, gender equity, and reproductive health and rights.

The Programme of Action of ICPD asserted that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social economic and health status was a highly important end in itself as well as essential for the achievement of sustainable development. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing generated global commitments to advance a wider range of women's rights. The inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals was a reminder that many of those promises have yet to be kept. It also represents a critical opportunity to implement those promises. In spite of these international agreements, the denial of women's basic human rights is persistent and widespread. For instance:

- Over half a million women continue to die each year from pregnancy and childbirth-related causes.
- Rates of HIV infection among women are rapidly increasing. Among those 15-24 years of age, young women now constitute the majority of those newly infected, in part because of their economic and social vulnerability.
- Gender based violence kills and disables as many women between the ages of 15 and 44 as cancer. More often than not, perpetrators go unpunished.
- Worldwide, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate.
- As a consequence of their working conditions and characteristics, a disproportionate number of women are impoverished in both developing and developed countries. Despite some progress in women's wages in the 1990s, women still earn less than men, even for similar kinds of work.
- Many of the countries that have ratified CEDAW still have discriminatory laws governing marriage, land, property and inheritance.

While progress has been made in some areas, many of the challenges and obstacles identified in 1995 still remain. In addition, the new challenges for women's empowerment and gender equality that have emerged over the past decade, such as the feminization of the AIDS epidemic, feminization of migration, and increasing of trafficking on women need to be more effectively addressed.

Any individual, non-governmental organization, group or network may submit communications (complaints/appeals/petitions) to the commission on the Status of Women containing information relating to alleged violations of human rights that affect the status of women in any country in the world. The Commission on the Status of Women considers such communications as part of its annual programme of work in order to identify emerging trends and patterns of injustice and discriminatory practice against women for purposes of policy formulation and development of strategies for the promotion of gender equality. Nothing is that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faiths in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human beings and in the equal rights of men and women.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom sets forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex. The States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

Considering the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women. Nothing, also the resolutions, declarations and recommendations are adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women.

It is concerned, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist. Recalling that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and humanity. It is concerned that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs. It is convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women, Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women. Affirming that the strengthening of international peace and security, relaxation of international tension, mutual co-operation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of people under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women.

It is convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields. Bearing in mind the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in

procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole.

A change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women, The principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all forms and manifestations are subject to be implemented.

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