

## WOMAN IN INDIAN SOCIETY- IS IT EASY?

Do we actually live in a free India???

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It is quite surprising in a country like India, where women deities are revered, that women in India still face countless time and space challenges. Our country's medieval past reflects the adverse issues that women faced during those days. Today the issues have changed but the savagery and maltreatment has continued through ages. Issues like child marriages, devadasi system, the sati system, dowry deaths, that already existed are no longer rampant; there are new challenges women in India face in their day to day life. The brutality against women has increased and hindered the growth and development of a country. In order to improve the position of women in India Jawaharlal Nehru stated that 'India to awaken the people, it is the woman who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves'.

Women's role in India has always been a matter of grave concern. As opposed to their male counterparts, women of India never enjoyed equal status in all social spheres, they were subjugated, and the vicious patriarchy persisted over the various periods of time. Although the

patriarchal society has bestowed respect on women as they are our mothers, daughters, and sisters but it also had disastrous effects on the independence and safety of women. The Constitution of India grants all the women in India, Right to equality under Article 14, no discrimination by the State on the basis of gender under Article 15(1), equality opportunity under Article 16, and equal pay for equal work in Article 39(d). The supreme law of the state also provides for special provisions which maybe legislated by the State for the benefit of the women and children in accordance with Article 15(3), for practices which deviate from the dignity of women in Article 51(A) (e) and for other provisions which allow States to legislate for the protection of women from inhumane treatment and maternity relief in Article 42.

According to the former Union Minister for Women and Child Development, domestic violence in India is a major challenge to about 70 per cent of women in India experiencing mistreatment by their husbands. In 2005(Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005) the issue of domestic violence is still an epidemic in India. Dowry deaths are still prevalent and there is a lack of special legislation on marital rape that should be given the utmost attention. Various sociologists have opined that the structure of the family determines the status of women in the family like the transformation from joint family to the nuclear family would result in a change in the status of women but it proved wrong with the passage of time as the domestic violence on women never stopped or decreased rather it increased considerably. The structure of social institutions like family and marriage needs redirection to protect women from domestic violence.

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In the famous case of Vishakha vs. the State of Rajasthan, the honorable high court of Rajasthan has put forth guidelines for the safety and security of women in the workplace. What the judicial system failed to curve was the exploitation of women as the #metoo movement garnered huge momentum when the victims spoke about their exploitation at the workplace. Women in India often face extreme gender inequality and stereotypes, gender wage differences and other informal boundaries that have negative impact on the growth and development of the country, and the patriarchy unconsciously governs the lives of women unjustly. Of every 100 women employed in India, 28.56% of them have studied only up to elementary level and 52.59% of them are illiterate. In the unorganized sector, these illiterate women are totally

exploited by the employers. Women working in factories, building construction processes, mining industries, in dams, construction workers are paid less and they are made to work in an unhealthy surrounding with lack of proper sanitation facilities.

Sexual abuse against women presents a big threat India. The culture of rape and the patriarchal society have proved to be a serious concern, despite the numerous laws in place in the country. Here, men are assaulted sixty year – old women as well as eight month – old infants. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) made rape a punishable offense. However, according to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) 2019 annual report, 32033 rape cases have been reported across the country, or an average of 88 cases daily, this record clearly convey that normalizing male dominant behaviour has lead to the present scenario which is extremely disheartening.

India is failing to stop acid attacks, it has increased with time and has a disastrous effect on the lives of the victims, and the poor enforcement of the laws is the possible reason for the surge in the crimes against women. In order to protect women from abuse, certain provisions have been introduced in the Indian Criminal Code, such as Sections 509, 294 and 354, which deal with the exaggeration of women's modesty and there have recently been several incidents of eve-teasing, harassment in social media by defaming women and other types of harassment. The primary cause of these crimes can be traced in our ancient history, when writers like Manu advocated low status for women, according to Manu a woman should always be dependent and should live under the control and regulation of males. The glory given to women in the ancient Vedic age was snatched later by the writers of Manu and the ill-effects of patriarchy prevailed in India.

News reports and figures from government agencies speak for themselves, the cruelty of women in this world; it is a disturbing situation as everyday women go through mild to serious form of abuse in the workplace, in public transport, on the streets and inside the family as well. This is the time to question how long will this peril continue? What the citizens and the government should do to control the crimes against women? Almost 50% of India's registered voters are women, so the demand for a tougher India yet an India that will be sensitive to

women should be achieved. The police authorities and the media must play an important role and there should be mass awareness to protect our women. Women issues need to be pushed forward so that the government can take immediate action on these sensitive issues. The current structure of society needs to be fundamentally modified in order to give women equality. There should be strict support of existing laws and new laws should be placed in place to protect our women, countless measures are needed to make India safe for women. As we know, changes starts from ourselves, so it's high time to step up and stand up for ourselves, so it's high time to step up and stand up for ourselves and others to stop all kinds of violence against women in this world.



**LeGal ZeMs**

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