

## Erasing the Margins: Women As Demonstrators of Difference

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### Abstract

Women today are marching towards a triumphant future provided with great talents and they make an indelible mark in success of their given surroundings. Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need not look for perfect role models anywhere outside them. Let them strive to become one by liberating themselves from their fear so that their presence automatically liberates others. Therefore the women prove themselves as successful because of their positive attitude towards life.

**KEYWORDS:** Women, Society, Values, Upliftment, and Success.

**“Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity,”**

– Mahatma

**Gandhi**

History elucidates the path that women have tried from the humiliating status of a dependent, feeble, backstage performer to the elevated level of an independent, empowered, strong personality making powerful strides. Indubitably, this has not happened over night. It took centuries and is the outcome of the courageous voices and constant fight back against the suppressions that surmounted women. It is not untrue that history showcases a number of evidences that relegated women to the absurd places and number of humiliating, bitter experiences that women had to deal with. Even in some celebrated continents and countries, for instance, in china, the birth, the birth of a female was not met with joy and felicitation, instead with resentment. In Africa, women were seen as in as instruments of procreation, they were just a collection in ‘the glass menagerie’. In Europe, the beauty of the women was the yardstick to respect them. In India, where goddesses are much revered, it is believed that ‘women were worthy of being beaten’.

Manu, the founder of the patriarchal structure in Indian society, declared that woman can be subjected to corporal punishment, that they can be enslaved by their father, husband and son throughout their life. To quote Manusmriti, Manu said, “Animals, drums, illiterates, low castes and women are worthy to be beaten”. In another instance, Manu has said, “In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent” (148). Women are torn apart in the name of tradition and culture, they are thwarted in the names of values, belief, rites and rituals, and they are silenced, stripped, beaten and burnt in the name of colour, creed and sex.

According to Manu, the avenues of education, learning and knowledge which promote the growth of an individual should be blocked for them in all possible ways. In this view, since women are the property of their folk, they can have no right over the material property of their family. As though to culminate the worsening condition of women, there came voices pronouncing ‘Feminism’ with a view of freeing women from the clutches of chauvinism. All the feminist women writers started handling the theme of female exploitation in the patriarchal society. They started voicing the helpless cry of female exploitation. The outcome is the ‘Women Suffragists’ in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century which gave women the right to vote as her birth right. Gradually,

this courageous and victorious move took wings and gave way to 'feminist' movement, 'Women's Right Movement' and 'Women Libration' in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Over a period of time, all these movements gained mass momentum and instilled in women the power and the authority to question the inequalities of laws, cultural prejudices, traditional bondages and abuses and atrocities that held back women for centuries. Many laws were passed to enable women to learn, work, own property, to be on par with men and essentially, to unleash themselves from the shackles they had been forced into. This has been a marked change and now, women stand tall and elevated on an enviable pedestal.

Though education is a mighty weapon, it alone cannot be considered as the be-all and end-all of success. In spite of the fact that empowerment is necessary for the upliftment of women. Education and awareness are the keys in women empowerment over the world. Let the words of Swami Vivekananda echo in the ears of every woman, "Arise, Awake and Stop not till the goal is reached". Today, the era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands revolution, a revolution to shun traditional assumptions, hollow jargons, a revolution to achieve 'masculine-feminine balance' and thereby to demonstrate differences in our lives. In this modern era women trod the length and the breadth of the globe, they excel in sports, explore the space, chair political affairs, reform policies, revolutionize ideas, contribute for the development and challenge the existing patriarchal patterns.

Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need not look for perfect role models anywhere outside them. Let them strive to become one by liberating themselves from their fear so that their presence automatically liberates others. Let women not forget that with their special qualities to bear, nurture and raise also come special responsibilities to maintain uplift and improve. Hence, let women listen to their inner voice, tap the talent potentials, sow the seeds of love, compassion, harmony and make difference.

To conclude, women today are marching towards a triumphant future provided with great talents and they make an indelible mark in success of their given surroundings. Therefore the women prove themselves as successful because of their positive attitude towards life. Change that stems from heart with a powerful spirit and an illuminating mind can bring about miracles. No change is possible unless there is a change in mind. Every woman, must have the freedom to think and act independently. **"Be the change that you wish to see in the world"—Mahatma Gandhi**

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