

Self reflection



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In a world divided between men and women, we may often wonder who has it harder. Do women enjoy a more enviable position because like men, they don't to go out and pursue a career. They can choose to stay at home if they wish to settle down and raise a family. But that is not the case. While men may have some societal pressures to succeed, women are facing a variety of problems ranging from self-esteem issues to discrimination to the super-human complex. They certainly have it much harder.

It is true that women around the world face problems because of the assumption that they are weaker and thus cannot perform many of the tasks that men can and because of biological differences which give men more physical strength, women have to face discrimination in many fields. While it is a fact that men are physically stronger, this doesn't mean they are intellectually superior to women in any way, thus discrimination against women at workplace or other areas is totally unfair. Even in the fields where physical strength is required, it would be unjust not to give women a chance to prove their worth. But this has been happening for a long time in every society, discrimination against women is what resulted in women rights movement in different parts of the world. One wonders why there has never been a men's rights movement, it is because men do not need any such movement, rights are given to them on a silver platter by virtue of their gender. A movement for rights is always meant for the disadvantaged or underprivileged. Black rights movement took place because this community was denied their basic rights because of the color of their skin. In the same manner women had to fight for their rights because they were refused the same because of their supposedly weaker gender.

While women in every part of the country have had to struggle for their

rights and the battle is still on, the results of the movement vary from nation to nation. While in some parts of the world women are now seen as almost equal at least theoretically, there is open gender discrimination in others.

But even the societies, which have granted their women most of their rights have not been able to adopt complete equality in all affairs.

Women are denied their rights not only in the outside world where they have to compete for educational and political rights, but even internally they are treated as the weaker sex. For example the role of women, which confines her to her household, had led to a diminished sense of self-respect. We would often notice how women is taking care of the children and is stay-at-home mother would often be embarrassed when asked about her professional as if being a house-wife was something to be ashamed of. This is something, which has been instilled in the society because of our traditional mind-sets. We feel that women who are working are superior to those who choose to stay at home to look after their kids, This has resulted from the social conditions which has made us believe that because men work outside the house, therefore they are superior to women and similarly when women also step out of the house, they make housewives insecure. This is something which must be understood in the context of women rights, why does a woman has to prove her worth by competing with the men, doesn't her job as a mother and a nurturer account for anything.

This is the case everywhere in the world, if a woman works, she does so for various reasons but that makes her neither superior nor inferior than the ones who stay at home. But this is what our society doesn't understand and continues to attach less importance to the role of housewives. With the women rights movement people may have changed in other regards but

women continue to feel that they wouldn't be given any importance if they chose not to work.

Simone de Beauvoir gained fame and established herself as an intellectual crusader with the publication of her book *The Second Sex* in 1949. The book was later translated in many languages and it is still considered to be one of the most valuable works on the subject of women and their identity in the society. Like most other feminist movement supporters, Simone was of the view that we treat women as alien and as strangers who have entered a world, which was supposed to be ruled, by men and thus their presence is not seen as something positive. To be precise, she labeled the women, as the 'others', which means that since women do not have any place in the society, they are termed as intruders and that, is how males treat them.

It should be understood that the primary reason why women sometimes feel inferior to men is because of economic reasons. Men have always been seen as the main earner in the family and thus immense importance is attached to this gender because of their role of the provider. On the other hand women are less financially independent and thus they have a diminished sense of self-worth. They have to depend on their husbands or other male figures in the family for financial support. In America salary for men is often higher to that of women but since there is always a great uproar in this regard, things are fast changing and the country has women in significant positions that are being paid more than their male counterparts. (Withorn, 1998)

In short, in the past 50 years, women have faced all kind of problems in the workplace, but still they have managed to perform better than they were expected to and thus they have managed to become an important part of

the American workforce. We need to understand that the reason why women are facing problems in the area of work is because they are expected to be super-humans, juggling between home and work and maintaining a perfect balance between their personal and professional lives. But amid all this, we simply forget that though a woman is certainly as intelligent or smart as any male worker still there is no way she can be queen of all trades.

But ironically while women who take up full time jobs are often criticized for neglecting their homes and children, still those who fail to contribute economically are also looked down upon. (Ely, 1995) This is a strange paradox as women who choose to stay a home are considered less intelligent than those who pursue a career and yet those who fall in the latter category encounter numerous problems once they decide to participate in economic activity. We need to understand that it is the traditional mindsets, which are contributing towards this paradoxical situation.

References

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2. Withorn, Ann, Familiar frustrations. Vol. 15, *Women's Review of Books*, 02-01-1998, pp. 15-16.
3. Ely, Robin J., The power in demography: women's social constructions of gender identity at work. Vol. 38, *Academy of Management Journal*, 06-01-1995, pp. 589(46)