

# Mills argument on the freedom and equality of women

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## Mill's argument on the freedom and equality of women in civil society

Introduction John Stuart Mill raises his concerns regarding the social and legal inequalities that women encounter in a patriarchal society. He further addresses the male dominance over their female counterparts and thus the need to provide women more freedom and equality in the civil society. A patriarchal society as observed by Mill propagates the use of physical strength and violence by the dominant gender. Mill also considers the voluntary submission by women as misleading. As such, it is important to give women freedom to express their genuine interests (Smith, 2001).

## Freedom and equality of women in civil society

Mill suggests that, if the society wants to know the true nature of gender relations, there is a need to create a free market for all the services that are provided by women. This plays a role in ensuring that women obtain a fair economic return for their contributions in the society. Conversely, a patriarchal society tend to restrict women to social role dictated, for instance by the traditional forms of marriage. Consequently, Mill disagrees with an arrangement where one partner in a marriage appears to dominate the other. In this regard, he proposes a marriage relationship that is guided by consensus building and free association for both partners. However, while, men may have difficulties tolerating the idea of living as equal partners with their female counterparts, Mill reiterates that equality between men and women is highly desirable. As such, liberating women from patriarchal culture presents a bright future for mankind (Smith, 2001).

On the other hand, freedom and equality also entails allowing women to own property and participate in politics. Mill also considers women to have similar

abilities to men; however, due to their thought process and experience, women tend to be morally superior to men. In essence, freedom and equality of women in civil society benefits the general welfare of society in terms of promoting, for instance, justice, liberty and moral sensitivity (Collini, 1984).

#### Strength and limitations of Mill's approach

Mill's focus on the freedom and equality of women in civil society serves to promote affirmative action. Further his approach to the issue also dissuades the society from viewing women as an inferior gender to their male counterparts. Mill also identifies patriarchal culture as an impediment to gender equality in the society. On the other hand, the limitation of Mill's approach with regard to freedom and equality of women in civil society emanates from a lack of focus on the needs and interests of women (Collini, 1984).

#### How Mills approach compares to Lockesian solution to subordination of women

Mills approach compares to Lockesian in the sense that, women can advocate for equal rights in a similar way to people's revolt to change their government. Some of the actions that women can take to improve their status in the society include, for instance, affirmative action (Smith, 2000).

#### Conclusion

Despite a patriarchal culture subjecting women to inferior roles compared to their male counterparts, equality is necessary to promote justice and liberty in the society in general. The dominance of men in the society tends to deny women an opportunity to contribute both in the social and political sphere. As such, gender equality is a necessity in enhancing the general welfare of

the society.

#### References

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