

Significance of UN Commission on Status of Women for India

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ABSTRACT

The UN Commission on the status of women is a body under ECOSOC which aims of gender equality and women empowerment. As in the recent news, India won the election and now is a member of it. How will it helpful for women or what all is expected from this membership.

KEYWORDS: *women empowerment, gender equality, injustice*

INDIA WON, DID WOMEN TOO?

India along with Afghanistan beat China in United Nations ECOSOC body election- United Nations Commission on the status of women

Significance of this membership for the Indian women

The formation of the body- United Nations commission on the status of women under ECOSOC was a wonderful opportunity for women's right and equality organizations to discuss regarding the inequality or poor treatment of women around the globe but most importantly to advocate with the governments in the halls of the UN. Its a body that devotes itself to the gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Every year the government civil society and the general public gather together for two weeks to discuss the issues and review how governments are doing in terms of implementation of the discussed policies or agreements on the basis of international standards. In India, this could be a ray of sunshine and a helping hand for women through a international platform, as it works to strengthen women's economic empowerment through its support to women farmers, and manual scavengers.

Leadership and political participation

From the local level to the international level the participation and representation of women in the political field is compacted, let it be as voters, candidates or advisers. This could be due to the belief which has been there since time immemorial that women are not fit to be a leader, that they are not strong enough, wise enough or clever enough to be a part of politics. But these are all pathetic excuses to cover up the real reason for the lack of representation, which is, they are not respected enough and not trusted enough to believe that women can very well administer the society.

Every day the intelligence and skills of females are questioned and under-estimated by the society and made to believe that they can never pose as any sort of competition against men and achieve some higher positions than them, even if they do, others don't hesitate to bring up her self-

doubt and make it crystal clear that she is in this position because of her contacts or by the mercy of her superiors.

As the 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation notes that, "Women in every part of the world continue to be greatly marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women." So, the UNSCW encourages women to participate in political affairs as its participation and leadership training are supported by the history of international commitments regarding the women's representation in the society. The protocol of "Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women" vindicates the participation of women in the civil services and along with that the "Beijing Platform for Action" which has the aim of eliminating all the hurdles for the equivalent representation.

UNCSW also trains women, who are willing to pose as candidates, to their full capability on leadership and administration functioning and it backs up gender equality advocates who try to call out on government or political parties as well, provided that the allegations are right.

Economic empowerment

Funding in the struggle of women empowerment can be a major factor which could lead our country to inclusive economic growth, gender equality and poverty eradication. India may has economically developed since past two decades but according to the surveys, the rate of women's labor participation has reduced considerably from 33.2 to 17.2 percent during the time period of 1993-1994 to 2011-2012. It could be due to many factors including the lack of

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proper representation in various sectors of markets even in business, women are either under-paid or unpaid. Some women don't even have their own bank accounts and therefore no formal financial system for them. Surprising part is that more than 40 percent of agricultural labor consist of women but not even 9 percent of land is under them and on top of that they contribute only 17 percent to our country's GDP whereas globally its 37 percent.

With the growing evidences of women's empowerment is a path towards country's empowerment and sustainable development which is a main focus area for ECOSOC, UNCSW's main aim is to help and train women who are in need, which mostly include women of rural area, domestic workers, ill-trained or migrants, often engaging them to government established training centers and even upgrading them to the international standards. Because if women have their stable financial system, then better access to and from resources, better security including the violence against them.

Ending violence against women

In India violence against women is not something new or surprising. Everyday news channels and news papers are filled with crimes faced by women and in some cases they are not even alive to ask for justice. The impact of those can last to a life-time be it mentally, physically or sexually and things like that they just don't go you can never move on from that. Violence against females not only affects them but their family, the community and the country at large as well, in the worst way possible. Let it be for controlling the angry mob or instilling new methods for their safety but, unsurprisingly, with poor execution.

Years of witnessing the crime rate against women increasing day by day, the civil society and the women's society have tried their best to put an ending to the gender-based inequality and crimes by introducing laws against it like, for domestic violence, acid attack, eve teasing, sexual assault

and other forms of violence. But the problem lies in the proper implementation of them, sometimes the criminals get their punishment after people have even forgotten about it, and here we are talking about six to seven years, and sometimes they walk away as freemen.

Women's right to live freely without any fear is understood and respected all over the globe, many organizations and international agreements like "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women" CEDAW, especially through the general recommendations 12 and 19 along with 1993 "UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women". UNCSW works with various countries and help the government to facilitate the ending of violence by being the medium and helping the other bodies to spread awareness about the situation by upgrading and implementing the reforms for the safety of women, as per the international standards. There are many training facilities provided by them on how to respond to violence and at the need of time what should be done. They advocate the need of women participation in every sphere of work, they also promote and encourage the need to change and educate men and boys about their behaviour and the outlook and concept they have of women. The need of sex education and consent classes is known to everyone, they work with the education department to install this subject not only to the private schools but also to the rural areas.

The membership to the UNCSW may bring about many changes or may not, no one can tell but it has given hope to all the women who have been a victim of this gender based injustice and violence which has been going on since decades. After reading this, it might feel that everything will be fine or crime rate will reduce, but the fact remains that Rome was not build in a day, nothing can be changed overnight, it takes patience, co-operation, unity ,dedication and passion to make a change.

-Ipsita Biswal