**An analytical account of women discrimination in the society and Church and its positive effects of women being recognized as equal**

**Introduction**

The meaning of discrimination is an unfavorable treatment to anyone based on sex, race, and so on. It is considered as an obstacle for the achievement of the objectives of equality, development, and peace. Discrimination is recognized as a form of inequality and issue for women around the world. It affects the capacity of women to participate freely and fully in society and brings psychological harmful consequences. Half of the population of the world consists of women, whose large portion is still discriminated in a different phase of life directly or indirectly, though there are some differences in each country, religion, society, or ethnicity.[[1]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) Thus, this paper particularly deals with the discrimination of women in the Church and society, their positive outcomes as being equal, and some of their contributions to the Church and society.

**Discrimination of women**

**Society**

Discrimination against women is defined as the “unfavorable treatment of women in the public sphere which results in their unfavorable position within the distribution of all important social resources (material wealth, power and status)” and it is based on the “logic” of the patriarchal/ traditional system of social power.[[2]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) Women in Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture, and exploitation for a very long time. Discrimination against women could also appear in the form of rape, abduction, murder, dowry, sexual abuse, female foeticide, refusing to give a share to women in property, sati, etc.[[3]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) In India women are still counted as inferior and many of the opportunities were not given to them. The raped case is frequent where India is considered to be the rape capital of the world and Delhi, with the highest number of rape cases. It is not only the poor girls who become rape victims but even the employees belonging to the middle class are sexually humiliated by their employers. Kidnapping and abduction are frequent in India. Kidnapping is taking away or enticing a minor without the consent of the lawful guardian. Abduction is forcibly, fraudulently or deceitfully taking away of a woman with the intent of seducing her to illicit sex or compelling her to marry a person against her will. In the kidnapping, the victim’s consent is immaterial but in abduction, the victim’s voluntary consent condones the crime. Dowry deaths either by way of suicide by harassed wife or murder by the greedy husband and in-laws have indeed become a cause of great concern for parents, legislators, police, courts, and society as a whole. Though the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 has banned the practice of dowry but in reality that the law does is to recognize that the problem exists.[[4]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) Therefore, women are discriminated everywhere, at all stages of life, from birth to death. The status of a girl could be learned from how her birth is received by society. The very right to exist is denied by their family members in many places. The negative response towards the “unwanted girl” starts even before her birth. Sex disparity is seen in literacy and education in India.[[5]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) Therefore, the status of women in India is still low as they were discarded for so many years. Opportunities such as education, leadership, politics, and women in the economy were scarcely given to them.

**1.2. Church**

The Bible was written in human language with the background of male-dominated cultures. Because of this, the Bible has been used to support the continuance of the tradition of male superiority, commonly known as patriarchy.[[6]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)The doctrine of forgiveness, the doctrine of the cross as a symbol of redemption, the myth and the mysteries surrounding the human body and human sexuality, the identification of son sin and temptation with femaleness, the image of God, the mind/body dualism that devalues female life, the depreciation of creation. These are some of the problems Christianity poses, giving subtle sanctions to the violence women experience. The Church’s reluctance to deal with the issue of human sexuality is at the heart of the problem.[[7]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) The Church has not been able to recognize the patriarchal violence that has persisted and persists in our societies. Women are downgraded to an inferior position in the Church. In most of the major denominations in India, women are prohibited from the ordained ministry.[[8]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)

**Equality of Women**

From the beginning man and woman were beneficiaries both of the divine image and the earthly rule. There is no suggestion in the Bible that either sex is more like God than the other, or that either sex is more responsible for the earth than the other. Their resemblance to God and their stewardship of this earth were from the beginning shared equally, since both sexes were equally created by God and like God. Man and woman are equal in worth before God- justified by grace through faith, equally regenerated by the outpoured Spirit.[[9]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)

**Education**

 Education develops the skills, imparts knowledge, changes the attitude, and improves self-confidence. It provides employment opportunities and increases income. Hence educating women is the prime factor to combat gender discrimination and for the upliftment of women. Not only the female, but society must also be educated to give equal rights to females.

**Employment**

Employment gives the income and improves the economic position of the women. Employed women are given importance by the family members. Employment gives economic independence for women.

**Economic Independence**

In India, mostly, women at a young age – depends on her father, in the middle age- she depends on her husband and in the older age – depends on her son. A woman always depends on somebody for her livelihood hence, independence in economical aspects is imperative for women’s development. Economic independence will free women from the slavery position and boost self-confidence. The economic independence of women also helps in national economic development.

**Empowerment**

Empowering women with the help of laws, education, and employment will make society accept women as an equal gender like a male. Female also has all the potential and empowering women will help to use her full capability and mitigate the economic dependency of women.

**Self-confidence**

 Due to prolonged suppression, Indian women, especially uneducated and unemployed women haven’t had the self-confidence. Women need the self-confidence to fight against all the atrocities against her and to live self-esteemed life. Hence, boosting the morale and self-confidence of women is the key to eliminate the inferior complex of her.

**Decision**

 Making even in the family as well as in the society the decision making power of women is denied. Mostly males make important decisions in the family and society. This makes women as voiceless and destroys her self confidence and she feels less important in the family as well as in the society. So, to end gender discrimination women must empower with decision making power.[[10]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)

**Contributions of Women**

**Church**

Women have played a very important role in the growth of the Church and its ministries. But women’s work and efforts in the growth of the Church and ministries are mostly concealed, not recorded, and not even acknowledged because of their lesser status in the Church. Women’s part in personal evangelism and follow up is mentionable in the history of the Church. Almost all the programs of the Church are successful only because of women’s active involvement and interest. One important area of women in ministry is raising funds. They are meticulous in drawing up a plan to collect money and they are quite willing to make many sacrifices for raising the funds towards the projects of the Church. There is a progressive improvement in women’s attitude and they have begun to assume great responsibility for the Church’s mission. The number of women in professional theological and biblical studies has increased dramatically in recent decades. Women theologians are making significant contributions not only in the field of ‘feminist theology’ but in all areas of theology and biblical studies. Women started to enter the pastorate as men women find other ministries than the pastoral.[[11]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)

**Society**

In the contemporary world, many girls are getting an education at an equal level with boys due to various reasons such as getting a good life-partner, less requirement of dowry; maintain a higher standard of living, becoming independent in case of emergency and desire of honorable status in the society.[[12]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en) The traditional **Indian**woman has evolved to prove herself equal in many professions as well as proved better suited than men in others. The situation for the changing role of women is improving fast. On the other hand, female foeticide dowry deaths, and domestic abuse provide a macabre background of primitive barbarism. In the typical **Indian** Society, you find that there are still expectations and assumptions about women that are not so much relevant to their current status, but a clear hangover from our suppressive past.

Women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjusts to new realities and challenges. The contribution of women to a society’s transition from pre-literate to literate likewise is undeniable. Basic education is key to a nation’s ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of girls and women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and widely raise the standard of living. Today, the median female share of the global workforce is 45.4 percent. Women’s formal and informal labor can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. Despite significant obstacles, women’s small businesses in rural developing communities not only can be an extended family’s lifeline but can form a networked economic foundation for future generations.[[13]](https://www.blogger.com/blog/post/edit/3536959396896794181/8353022581623761319?hl=en)

**Conclusion**

A nation or society, without the participation of women, cannot achieve development. If we eliminate gender discrimination, women will deliver all the potentials, skills, knowledge to develop the family, the nation, and the whole world. Improving the general status of women through education, effective legislative measures, and providing training and employment opportunities will reduce women’s discrimination. Educating women can bring more educated children in society and the Church. Women should be given equal opportunities and privileges in the Church and society to enhance proper growth and development.

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