

## LIBERATED WOMEN: A MYTH AND REALITY (In Indian perspective)

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**Abstract:** *The women's liberation movement is one of the most powerful social, political and economic effort. Women are still subjected to discrimination, ill treatment and is situated at the lower status to men. As a result of this there is a growing concern and resentment particularly among educated women against all such orthodoxy and ostracization those are subordinating a woman. A historical survey shows that despite their generally low socio-economic status, Indian women made significant contributions to social progress even while outside the formal power and profit structure. By the time the true essence of "liberated women" have been lost or is misconcepted. This paper tries out to clear out these myths revolving around the liberation. Due to Patriarchal phenomenon of Indian society women tried to build up their separate image and perspective in the name of liberation, however modernity moulded it in an absolutely wrong way. This revolution was adopted from western culture, this revolution when entered in India, it got circulated with several myths. Indian women got afflicted by these myths.*

**Key Words:** *Liberation, Women, Discrimination, Orthodox, Ostracization, Patriarchy.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Does liberated women thy the name is frailty, stupidity, stubbornness, selfishness and hypocrisy? This particular question always strikes in my mind Does a liberated women is the one who has sex before marriage or outside marriage? To ramble outside during night? To Inhale alcohol without any control? To that my answer is a big 'NO'. When talking about alcohol, it is injurious to the health of man as well as for women. Liberation of women never ever meant performing of tasks that are ethically and morally incorrect. There prevails a misconception about the meaning of 'Liberated women'. It is perceived that a women is liberated only if she can do things she would have been unable to do if she was a male.

Somehow, I disagree with this notion of paradigm. Liberty in my opinion is the Freedom of choice, a correct choice. Now who will going to decide what is correct or not? It is a women who would going to make a righteous decision, and her decision is totally governed by her will, this is according to me is liberty i.e. making decision of your own. Every human being has the right to do what they want, without hurting anyone, or breaking any laws. If the person can exercise that right properly, he/she is liberated.

### 2. ESSENCE OF LIBERATED WOMEN:

The statutory imagery of liberated women reflects the challenges faced by a women when fighting for her rights. The figure of young women taking of her veil was established on the pedestal-the symbol of social inequality of Eastern women. Terminologically a Liberated women refers to a feminist who pushes for more equality for women. In 1960s, a wave of liberated women fought sexism in culture and politics and tried to change the expectation of women should be in both dichotomy of public and private sphere. Instantly the notion and idea of good women v/s bad women is applied here. To liberate something means to release it from confinement (oxford dictionary).Vast researches, thorough studies and a lot has been said and done on the subject of women. I am thankful to my gone by women ancestors who made me free and unfettered on this ground when I have all my rights to write my heart out. For every opportunity, breaching of glass ceiling, and to proclaim my choice has all been contribution of those feminists.1970, a climax year which was declared as International Women's Year, has a significant in increasement in women's organization in India .It was result of rising consciousness women's rights and "women's liberation", where radical feminists took the forefront in the scenario. The growth of Left movements amid of the feminist movement are of great significance. The CPI (M) probably has a largest number of women participants. The National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) published plenty of material during International Women's Year. The NFIW grow significantly.

Coming back to today's scenario we teach our daughters to think for themselves, speak up for what is right and for their right, and so far to be financially independent. But how many of us are willing to let our daughter stay that way even after marriage. How many parents do not tell their daughter to keep everyone in your In-laws home

happy? Why is it not her own home? Why nobody tells a boy to take care of Brides family as well? So how come women is liberated.

If she is liberated from all the social nutshell of life, she is locked into the name of culture. You don't have to go much far, study Ads in India, you will find a depiction of women as the gender of species which takes care of the cooking, shopping, child rearing, teaching, and all the activities which can be called family welfare or society welfare....and obviously it shows all men folks as the one handling the stress and pressure at office, home and everywhere. Some even depicts housewives obsessed with spots on dishes and blot on clothes. The real women is never portrayed.

If we try to closely exhibit our history we will find out that at every stage of development patriarchal society has tried to maintain its domination through its different norms and regulation over women to make them a subordinate. Which made women as a secondary sex. The condition of women has always been deteriorated by men. An above all Caste system prevailing in Indian society made their condition worst. The discrimination against women at global level inspired them for a revolution which led to 1960s Liberated women movement. Gradually it got spread in all over the world with increasing awareness. With the motive of freedom from exploitation the concept of liberated women was revived.

Even India didn't left untouched to this movement. This concept of liberated women came from West. Nobody tried to understand that it was a demand of west culture, rather some orthodox found these as unfavorable to Indian culture. Beside I found many foreigners flaunting in Indian attire whereas Indian women find it outdated. See I am not against modernity but surely I am against the misconception of Modernity. In west women tried to control their sexuality by themselves inspite being assaulted by the man whom they did not wanted to have sex rather it was mistaken by the Indian women that it is their right to have sex outside marriage. Yeah I know that's your Body your soul but for me Adultery is a crime for everyone. Liberation of women is about women whose body is surrounded by coercion by Males not about adultery. If you want to have sex outside Marriage then for sure please get off the marriage and enjoy your rights over your body. I am repeating here again it is applicable for man as well. It was this movement that gave rise to Sexual freedom for women. Within feminist scholarship, sexuality has been an important issue. It is difficult to give a definite definition to sexuality. As per World Health Organization (WHO), sexuality is a central aspect of being human. It encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, and religious and spiritual factors. The importance of sexuality as a factor in gender relation has been recognized even in the international platform. At an easy level, sexuality is about our body and its drive for sex. It is actually something which is never being taught or asked not to be aware of this is truer in the case of women. Girls in India are taught not to speak or discuss openly about sex or sexual feelings .Else we have always been taught to hide it. Nobody sees the other side of coin that awareness about sexuality will help in matters such as what happens when one has multiple sex partners, or how does AIDS from spreads. A lot of problems in society is prevailing due to silence over issues of sexuality such as sexual violence, rape, reproductive rights, sexual identity and sexual pleasure.

It is the Radical Feminists movement of the 1970s that brought the issue of sexuality to the center of the feminist debate. These feminist made an attempt to explain various aspects for how sexuality are constructed, Institutionalized, and legitimized. The understanding of sexuality according to feminist focuses on female sexuality as oppressed and exploited by male.

A girl is always taught to cover their bodies while boys do not have any such hard and fast rules. According to me both boys and girls should be taught about their bodies before puberty hits. The positive affect of knowing Self body can be seen in novel '*Colour Purple*' by Alice Walker who has raised this issue as her main protagonist *Celie* explores her own body that had been used by men till then. This brings her closer to herself and ends her own alienation from her body. I have heard some saying that they do not need feminism because they are not 'lesbian' It is so saddening for multiple reasons that even women are so ill informed they believe this is what feminism means, this is because they might have some people around them who claim to be feminists and are actually using this movement to promote their misandry. Oh c'mon Feminism is not at all about being a Man-hater and liberation of women is not all about being liberated from man, it is about liberating themselves from ostracism and orthodoxy. Even I have myself have seen many man supporting feminism. In September 2014, the HeForShe campaign was launched, it was a campaign that invites people from all over the world to join together and fight against gender inequality and promote Women's rights. HeforShe was supported by UN Women and created a youth icon Emma Watson, unarguably the most prominent women to support this movement.

Yes, it is true that most important areas of Radical feminism has been its questioning of heterosexuality as the norm or as normal. Many feminists have gone so far as to think of building separate world of women where men are not allowed all with full regards due being fed up by this male domination over women prevailing in every phase of life. Many feminist writings such as Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf* have attributed Lesbianism or women's sexual orientation towards Lesbianism. I have countered one funny joke on social media saying-'Feminists be like why

Nelson Mandela and not Neldaughter Womandela? This was supposed to be funny because there were more than 500 laughing likes on the comment. This made me disappointed and angry though. This happens because a significant percentage of people have absolutely no idea about the feminist or Liberation movement by these feminists. "If someone touches a lady it is a rape but if a lady sleeps with many men it is modern feminism". No, feminism means a women has the right to say no when she don't want to get indulge in sexual intercourse. Probably a women who is sleeping with many men has some problem or an issue or she has been betrayed on the aspect of trust factor by those man. But how come you judged her being characterless. Liberation is not about having multiple sex partner but about the double standards of men in sexual behavior in most cultures, it is about equality if for a women it is wrong than it is wrong for man also. This has led a lot of literature within feminist thinking that questions the labelling of 'housewives' as a good women and 'prostitutes' as bad women. As per my view prostitution acts like a safety wall for the society, that is the reason for many feminists demanding to legitimize prostitution. It will also help in removing or eliminating these controversial categories of 'good women' v/s 'bad women'.

Let me inform you one thing that being Liberated for a women has nothing to do with clothing. A lot of people think that feminism is about promoting and wearing modern clothes so my friend you are absolutely in a very wrong direction. We as a society need to stop being judgemental and to linking dressing sense with anything else. Liberation do not encourage women to drink or smoke. I don't know who spread all these myths. However I have a question-if it's okay for a men to indulge in these, what is the issue if women do so too? This is a choice made by an individual who is aware of the cons with respect to health hazards. And then everything which is taken in excessive amount is injurious to health irrespective of their sex. A feminist would probably say "One should limit drinking or smoking because of the repercussions on health" whereas a sexist would say "It doesn't look good when a girls drink or smoke" or "atleast girls should not Page | 358spoil our culture by drinking and smoking". Analyze a difference. I have also seen a belief that liberation of a women is about getting liberated from the marriage for no obvious reason however liberation means getting off from wrong marriage or abusive partner, a relation that doesn't brings you happiness. This misconceptions are the reason for Indian women have lost faith in marriage as an institution they get encouraged by Live-in-relationships, which according to them is a new example for modernity and freedom. There are many demerits of being I live-in-relationship, however there are laws who protect the economic rights of live in women but what about emotional exploitation if a men decide to dismiss live in relationship, a women who is still in love with that guy has to suffer from emotional trauma which lasts long. Increase in Live-in-relationship has resulted in direct and obvious increament in number of single mothers. Are we really ready for these kind of changes? I think this Liberation movement has spreaded in only urban metropolitan areas. Rather India need Liberation at rural level also. The notion of liberated women made a reason for young girls to party around the city late nights at disco, pub, etc. I mean I am not saying that partying out late is a wrong persona but I found it wrong to connect it with women's liberation. To ramble around for no reason during night time is not safe for anyone in the society. There are some obvious norms of society that must be followed by everyone.

### **3. IS LIBERATION OF WOMEN IS AGAINST MOTHERHOOD:**

It is totally a myth. Where do such questions come from? At times the kinds of questions and allegations are made against the movement. These are just exaggerating things one can do. Such questions often betray discomfort with feminism.

It is definitely not against women having children, but this movement do not consider motherhood to be every woman's destiny, nor do equate womanhood with motherhood. Every woman should have a choice to have or not have a children. At present such a choice does not exists legally, socially or psychologically in India. Therefore the struggle is for women to have more choices.

Furthermore anyone can bring it up or mother it including a man but it should also be her choice if she wants to rear the child all by herself or with her husband. There are many women who cannot bear a child but make an excellent mothers. On the other hand, there are numerous children but are simply bad and even violent mother. Women are glorified as motherhood, it's a personal view and it could differ. However such glorification is like the sugarcoating on bitter pills and for generations, women have fallen for this bit of sugar and accepted a role that has confined, suffocated and immobilized them. If the world really considered motherhood, sacrifice, caring for others to be most noble of activities and such things were allowed to be an eligibility for Nobel Prize than men would not have allocated women to monopolize it.

In my opinion one of the worst things Patriarchy has done is to create unnecessary dualities between women and men, nature and culture, emotional and rational. This explanations has turned most of the men as hard, harsh, insensitive and uncaring. I believe that everyone can be gentle and strong, nurturing and assertive, emotional and rational. Both men and women should have the so-called feminine and masculine qualities and responsibilities.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS:**

A Country like India where female chastity has always been a issue, there a movement like liberation is very important. Rape has been always used as a strategy to dominate women. The issue of Rape was dealt within feminist

literature in 1975 by Susan Brownmiller in her book *Against our will: Men, Women and Rape*. In this book women's experience of rape is being documented. In India also a lot of research has been done about the psychology of men who rape and women who have been raped. It is found that there are some communities who have rape-supportive attitudes as illustrates in Mahashweta Devi's *Draupadi* who is raped by a policemen does not seem out of place given the unequal power relations and injustice. We live in a country where victim of rape is considered as blameworthy then the one who raped her, where girls are killed in the womb, where new bride is harassed and killed for dowry, we desperately need these liberation and feminist movement. But the point is we as an Indian women want liberation from violence and discrimination against women rather from Indian Tradition. We particularly love our tradition and culture.

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