



# A Study Of Power Relations Between Man And Woman: The Indian Context

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**Abstract:** Equality of man and woman has been, of late become a hot debate in society. Man and woman who are complementary to each other and bound with each other in perfect harmony are now posing as rivals one ready to overdo and overshadow the other. Feelings like competition, rivalry, envy, jealousy and bitterness are on an all time rise these days. Both are bent upon proving their metal and claiming superiority over the other. Both are not leaving any stone unturned to prove the other as less capable. Illiteracy, ignorance and ego are at the crux of the things which lead to disintegration, disharmony and malice between the two. The idea is that man and woman should take each others differences as qualities rather than as defects. Celebrating differences should be the watch word to create a sense of perfect union and harmony and therefore will help create a better world for everyone. Its ridiculous and disheartening to see the women holding the feminist flags in their hands on one side, whereas a major part of them are happy to be playthings and objects in the hands of their male counterparts. They are being instrumental in human trafficking and other such social malpractices for a handful of money. It is not good to eradicate one's self for money and other material benefits. These women may go to any lengths in order to serve their petty purpose. It isn't too late to wake up to this reality of coexistence and coincidence which make this beautiful planet worth living. Thus man and woman should learn to live in accordance with each other thereby teaching their progeny how to live in perfect harmony with each other as Mother Nature does.

Equality of man and woman has been, of late become a hot debate in society. Man and woman who are complementary to each other and bound with each other in perfect harmony are now posing as rivals one ready to overdo and overshadow the other. On one hand workshops and seminars are being organized for the woman's cause; very interestingly, on the other hand, man's predicament is also being discussed in an hushed manner and their position as victims being discussed and explored in literary and social circles. Feelings like competition, rivalry, envy, jealousy and bitterness are on an all time rise these days. Men and women, both, are bent upon proving their metal and claiming superiority over the other. Both are not leaving any stone unturned to prove the

other as less capable .Both are levelling charges against the other to belittle, criticize and demean them. Both are making and breaking relations with the other at their own conveniences which is quite hazardous for the propagation of Indian society and culture. It is worth thinking over the reasons of society's becoming so unforgiving , cruel and selfish that its sole function has become the debate to establish who's superior. The big question now arises-who plays a more important role in the family household?

It has become a common sight these days where educated middle class parents of a girl child claim to have raised her like a boy and as having no qualms of discriminating her with her male sibling. Statements like these are a tell tale of the concept which discriminates a girl from a boy in the first and smallest unit of society which is family. More interesting is the fact that parents say it out of their consciousness towards growing need for social justice and gender equality. It also holds testimony to the fact that we inadvertently discriminate between sexes as superior and inferior. Girls also point out to the fact that they have been brought up as boys, which indicates to the social conditioning of children at an early age.

The big question is why do we feel proud of giving those rights to women to which they are entitled since the time of their birth? Why do we oblige them of the freedom which are their birthright? The answer is simple and concealed in the age old tradition which makes them a second class citizen in society and home. More so , in the Indian context ,where a girl is often reminded of her limitations and confines. Isn't it that deep down we still believe that women are subordinate to men in physical, mental and moral strength and hence motivate them through such mannerisms? To strike a balance in nature and culture ,practices like these should be discouraged and shunned. Undoubtedly, and fairly, man and woman , both are carriers of culture, civilization and creation – **woman** , the carrier of human evolution.

The world is full of binaries-it is binaries in which we live and define ourselves. Be it male- female, earth-sky, tree-creeper, doctor-nurse, principal-teacher and so on; no matter what the two shall never meet and merge but at the same time ,each is an inseparable part of the other- deemed as an entity. The world is meant to be thus. I shouldn't be implied then, that one is superior than the other or vice versa. They are meant to each others foils and opposites, even contraries. These differences and contraries are the characteristics which define them, these are the qualities which make them distinctively unique-salt and sweet. Both, different from each other and yet unique in their own nature. The problem arises when sweet is adamantly changed into a flavour which is alien to it ; consequently, it turns out to be a disaster as remains neither sweet not salty. Likewise, nature has bestowed different qualities to man and woman separately, which are inherent to them. They can neither be taught nor taken away from them. Studies have revealed that man and woman are not only different from each other physically but they differ from each other in the expressions of their emotions as well. Distinguished psychologist and behaviourist B F Skinner is of the opinion that girls have better capacity to learn and memorize than boys who are better at physical activities. In subjects like maths and science boys outdo girls whereas girls are better at language and expression. Suggestions work best on girls than boys. Girls naturally are drawn towards fairy tales and day dreams ;boys towards war and heroic stories.

Since the seventh day of birth a child starts distinguishing between colours. Smith is of the view that girls react sensitively to colours between seventh to ninth day of their birth. Gassel believes that moral development of the girl child is greater than boys till she reaches adolescence. Hence ,they are less corrupt than males. It doesn't imply that a male is naturally corrupt and morally unscrupulous but that they are more freedom loving and frivolous which may lead to direful consequences if not guarded by peers and parents on time. The role of a parent is enormous in building of a human being who can distinguish between vice and virtue, moral and immoral and right and wrong. This can be achieved by teaching them the value of relationships- familial and social. This will , in turn pave the way to a healthy family and society free from inhibitions and suspicions and help grow each and every individual nurturing his inherent human qualities he/she is born with.

Generally a person is introduced in society in terms of gender and other grounds of discriminations; but sooner or later it is his /her humanly attributes other than these which create a lasting effect. As a seed contains the plant ; the plant grows into a tree, thus the seed holds the characteristic features of a fully bloomed tree at the time of its inception. In the same manner a newly born child regardless of its sex inherits several specific traits of its own which, when nurtured and groomed in a cordial and amicable atmosphere become a personality. And , man and woman are thus typecasted as strong and weak, harsh and vulnerable according to their sex which afterwards is termed as 'gender'. Nature has bestowed distinct features to each one of us regardless of our gender, which itself is a social construct. Each needs the other without which he or she is lacking and hence incomplete. This has been elaborated in Hindu scriptures as the concept of 'anrdhanarisvara'- nature defined as an amalgamation of 'shiv' and 'shakti' the male and the female as one and a complete force.

Illiteracy, ignorance and ego are at the crux of the things which lead to disintegration , disharmony and malice between the two. The idea is that man and woman should take each others differences as qualities rather than as defects. Celebrating differences should be the watch word to create a sense of perfect union and harmony and therefore will help create a better world for everyone. Nature has scattered colours of opposites on its vast canvas ; flowers stand with thorns, humour with pathos , truth with falsity, light with dark, good with evil, temporal with permanent...this alone is the beauty of life and nature. As darkness sets off light in the same manner differences and extremes set each other off.

However, in today's time and age each of the rat race is trying hard to win the rat race and be ahead of the other which is leading to all sorts of differences in social and familial existence. Rate of divorce and separation is on an all time high. Families are disintegrating. Ego which was essentially a male attribute is now been a part of a woman's demeanour. Reason she is now breaking the hegemony of man and making efforts to enter into his domain- the outside world, where men used to roam freely unchallenged and uninterrupted . she is also earning the bread and butter for her family . This has also led to dire consequences as her new status as the 'man of the family' is taking away her other womanly attributes which make her and define her. Motherly instinct is one such attribute. A girl inadvertently cherishes and plays with doll, decorates it and takes care of it. A boy at an early age starts imitating his father's ways, he finds delight and contentment in role playing his father. These examples are a testimony to the differences that a man and a woman have. The idea is to celebrate these differences rather than demeaning them. It is also high time that one introspects within to find and solve the root cause of the problems arising out of this situation. Male domination and patriarchal mind set should be controlled as it may lead to dire consequences . Men should stop treating their wives as objects and wives should also curb their ego. If ego is creating the chasm then it should be dealt with a positive attitude. And if this be not cured and taken care of it may lead to further widening of the differences and consequently may be catastrophic for a society.

Its ridiculous and disheartening to see the women holding the feminist flags in their hands on one side , whereas a major part of them are happy to be playthings and objects in the hands of their male counterparts. They are being instrumental in human trafficking and other such social malpractices for a handful of money. It is not good to eradicate one's self for money and other material benefits. These women may go to any lengths in order to serve their petty purpose. They forget that they are doing such disservice to the society which is not only irrevocable but also will land them up nowhere. So, a positive role on the side of both the genders needs to be played in order to run a healthy, hopeful and holistic society.

In an attempt to like and behave like others women are leaving behind their traditional roles and with this has also gone their traditional way of dressing up. Among these, when a woman who is still practicing her traditional role, wearing a 'chunni' is regarded as a backward and uneducated crap. In Indian context a woman has to play many roles and she is only playing a role of an Indian woman known for her modesty and simplicity. And then, it also does not mean that a woman who wears western clothes is a slut. Both are justified unless one doesn't make a fuss about it. Decency and simplicity are personal choices and should not be a botheration for any society. Modernism is defined not by the outward appearances and clothes, but by the enlightenment of the minds. Clothes and appearances have never been parameters of defining how modern we are! Some women justify it by

comparing themselves to men . ‘If they can we can too’. It is a faulty concept which doesn’t make them moderns at all. It only makes them blind imitators at the best. A woman is said to be more patient and better judge of human character. She plays a significant role in nurturing a family household. A child learns more from her mother than her father as she stays with him for a longer period of time than his father. It is often heard that elders of a family believe that the waywardness of a man can be curbed only by marriage as a sincere and homely girl would take care of the family well. These assumptions are not completely baseless. They are based on real examples from real life situations. This is also attributed to her womanly attributes of patience and forgiveness and not on aggression and egotism which can ruin the whole situation. Ironically women nowadays have forgotten their inner strength and have resorted to vanity and pride. A man was aware of these attributes of women and therefore they handed over the task of rearing children and bringing up a family together as they knew women are more apt when it comes to sincerity and dutifulness. This adversely affected the womenkind as they felt themselves to be inferior to their menfolk which was a false notion. As women also started going out of the four walls of the house and having their share in the earning they began to acquire manly qualities and drifted from their traditional roles. Women still feel inferior and subordinate to their male counterparts . Though , it is the other way round. A woman is ,has always been more efficient and powerful than a man as body is governed through mind and she is capable at mental and emotional levels more than her male counterparts which has been proved and testifies time and again. This is the reason that she comes out as a winner in the most adverse of circumstances.

A woman has to realize her potentials and qualities so that nothing can deter her; she can then claim herself proudly in all life situations and would never have to utter those pathetic words” Had I been a boy...” . Only a mother can teach her son and daughter to be happy in their own skin and not to ape the other. The earth cannot compete with the sky but that doesn’t mean that it has a lesser significant role to play than the sky. Both are equally important in the propagation of life. One is neither superior nor inferior than the other. Both play their roles which make this world go round .The sun and the moon, water and the air all are significant and coexist with each other. This coexistence is the beauty of nature. Opposites not only attract each other but also coexist each other and enhance the beauty of life and existence. It isn’t too late to wake up to this reality of coexistence and coincidence which make this beautiful planet worth living. Thus man and woman should learn to live in accordance with each other thereby teaching their progeny how to live in perfect harmony with each other as Mother Nature does.

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