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Efforts to Defend Women Rights

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Women in Afghanistan have been suffering discriminatory behavior for a very long time. The religious extremism and obsolete tribal values have played a dominant role in making every sort of violation and violence possible against them. Though they have been raising their voices every now and then but in the noise of male shrieks they seem to be negligible and get faded away. In fact, the male-chauvinistic ears are not ready to hear them though they feel their

vibrations clearly. Nonetheless, the efforts in this regard must never be given up and they should continue in every possible way.

Both women and men have to bring about changes in their attitude. Fighting the discrimination and violence does not necessarily mean that women alone should shoulder the responsibility. The men can also play an important role and they have to be made aware of it. There should be efforts to bring about changes in the attitude of men towards women; otherwise, fighting for the rights of women would be very difficult.

Different strata in society can also play an imperative role. The different institutions, functioning in the society must ensure that there should be biased policies and attitude against the women. Their policies and practices must never be inclined towards discrimination and injustice on the basis of gender. Not only the women rights organization but different other social, political and administrative organizations can have a part in making sure that women are properly compensated within the system and are not neglected on the basis of prejudice.

In the countries like Afghanistan, the religious and tribal institutions can also play tremendous role in uplifting the position of women and giving them the status they deserve. As most of the people are religious and tribal, they can easily be motivated by such institutions for better and higher purposes.

Recently the efforts by the religious scholars in Ghazni province have to be appreciated as it is based on virtuous intentions. According to the reports the religious scholars in southern Ghazni province on Wednesday, March 05, urged families not to bar female members from casting their votes in coming elections. Religious leader Maulvi Tawassuli told a seminar – Women’s Participation in Elections from Islamic Perspective, that men and women had equal rights in Islam. He said, “Renounce inappropriate actions and allow your women the right to enfranchise.”

This is really important that the religious scholars must represent the true nature of Islam among our people. The way Islam, in its beginning years, raised the status of women in Arab society; in similar fashion, it is really important that it must support women in getting rid of the ideas and practices that violate their rights vehemently.

The religious scholars need to prove that they consider women human and Islam does not oppose positive participation women in social and political affairs. By doing so, they can also support in removing the tag of extremism and terrorism that has been attached with Islam mistakenly, because of the practices of the some extremist groups like Taliban.

Taliban’s era depicted the worst display of treatment of women. Violence was very common against them and they paid a heavy cost of display of extremist religious practices. They were trodden in public, stoned to death and, on certain occasions, even shot in the marketplace. They were imprisoned in their houses and were not considered anything more than a commodity. If the religious scholars really want to change such attitude they need to undo all the ill and extremist practices and strive to give women their due rights. Nonetheless, that would seem very difficult as the Afghan social structure has been fervently dominated by religious extremism and tribal partiality. Most of the self-designed religious doctrines and tribal norms are against the women

and discriminate their basic rights. Regrettably, these norms and principles have even gone to the extent of aggression and have tortured women physically – even in the public. They, in the name of dignity of women, have in reality dishonored them. With such a situation existing around, it is really difficult to see development in condition of women who have been undergoing discriminations since ages. Afghan authorities and all the Afghan people, both women and men, must strive to change the scenario as it would help the society as a whole as women are an essential part of it.

Let's accept that women form an integral part of society and have an imperative role to play. Their representation and participation in different walks of life can help society develop suitably. They cannot be kept on being discriminated and violated without letting up, because it is not only non-religious but at the same time atrocious because above all women are human beings. Unfortunately, this evident fact has not been realized by many in Afghan society. Starting with this very basic concept, the religious figures and institutions can start a comprehensive movement for the preserving women rights and uplifting their status in the society. This is what our Holy Prophet (PBUH) did while he was spreading the teachings of Islam. The women who used to be buried alive were given a new recognition in Arab society. Though the strict patriarchal society resisted against changing the attitude towards women, it at the end had to accept that women are human and must be given the opportunity to live their lives and participate in social and political activities. Keeping the same efforts in view, we can bring about necessary changes in Afghan society as per the demands of time and let women live their lives with dignity and honor.