**Woman in her own Eyes!**

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“There’s so much more about us, beyond the gender philosophies and school(s) of thoughts everywhere. Woman, it does not matter what the world thinks of you, what matters most is what you think of yourself”-Lhonde D.A. Imoiseme on Twitter

Each year we celebrate 8 March as Women’s Day with great fervour in our quest to unravel the mysteries of gender we have grown to either love or hate. She is nothing but just another form of human being who is at times, worshipped and at times, demonized. Her proportion in the world’s population is almost fifty per cent then why the need to celebrate a particular day? Why do we also not have a ‘Men’s Day? After all, if women are fighting for their rights then there definitely must be some men fighting for their rights. What about the suppressed male farmers who could be victims of arrogant feudal lords, the male, the poor brick kiln workers, enslaved by the owners, the petty borrowers subjected to exploitative financiers? All should have a day marked to celebrate their peculiar woes. Perhaps a neutral observation can be alluded to the Labour Day, commemorated for the Haymarket incident of Chicago in 1886 that converted into labour rights but applicable across genders.

Women’s Day was launched in 1909 on February 28, at the first National Women’s Day. The Socialist Party of America designated the day to honour women in the garment industry who went on strike in New York to mark their protest against their working conditions. From then on began the need to emphasise the world problems faced by working women and Europe too jumped on the bandwagon of having annual gatherings for this purpose. Thus, 19 March 1911 saw many European countries holding rallies for the right to vote and against gender discrimination after the second International Conference of Working Women held in Copenhagen represented by women activists and political organisations, approved the idea of an international day for women. The United Nations officially recognized Women’s Day in 1975.

In today’s patriarchal society, the position of women is continuously debated from various aspects. They are treated as if they belong to another cosmos and are new to Earth and constantly trying to adapt to a predominantly male environment. From their physique to their mental capabilities, from their strengths to their weaknesses, from their prowess to their decision making senses, everything has become a topic of discussion, especially after the initiation of the Feminist Movement. Anyways, in this materialistic world where selling ideas, commodities and such other items have become the norm, it is not surprising that each day we come up with innovations that are oiling the economic machinery to churn out more and more for the money starved population occupying this amazing planet.

Against this backdrop, it is important to acknowledge the women who have truly broken glass ceilings and the men too, who have been instrumental in making this a reality. Finding excuses and faults to do or not to do is rather easy but to perform to the optimum level is what matters. Women need to see themselves as they are and not what and how others think of them. They are a power to reckon with when they realise their worth, their talents and their self-esteem. Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand’s Prime Minister says: “I never grew up as a young woman believing that my gender would stand in the way of doing anything.”

True. The woman of today has developed the nerve to abandon all those clichés that were being invented to undermine her importance as a human being. The so-called beauty pageants no longer hold any attraction for the young scholars who have discarded all those notions that view women only as sex symbols. If Thomas Hardy could break the traditional image of a hero depicted as a Greek god by introducing Gabriel in his novel Far From the madding Crowd why cannot women be portrayed on the same lines? The typical hourglass figure or the rigid vital statistics are meaningless if not accompanied by a healthy body and mind and this is exactly where the woman today is heading towards. If she is exercising, she is doing so for her satisfaction and well-being and not to participate in some phoney beauty parade.

No doubt there are challenges and struggles for ones who are emerging from the lull of false imaging, but these are beatable as proved by many. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw remarked: “I faced a number of challenges whilst I built Biocon. Initially, I had credibility challenges where I couldn’t get banks to fund me; I couldn’t recruit people to work for a woman boss. Even in the businesses where I had to procure raw materials, they didn’t want to deal with women”. Despite these obstacles she has built herself an empire and is a famous Indian billionaire. Dorothy Height appreciates such achievers in the following words: “Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes, but by the opposition, he or she has overcome to reach his (and her) goals.”

From the chronicled perspective too, women who have mustered courage and reposed confidence in themselves have risen to etch their names permanently in the annals of history in all fields. Whether she was Hazrat Zainab AS, sister of Imam Hussain AS, who in the capacity of a prisoner, fearlessly faced the tyrant of her times rebuking him before his courtiers or a frail woman as Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah who bravely stood against a military dictator to be eventually eliminated by him, or all those incredible ladies who have proved their mettle in a variety of fields under the most adverse of circumstances, were women of substance.

Woman of the twenty-first century is much enlightened and emancipated; not exactly needing some weird support system to elucidate her capabilities or fight her battles because she is now looking at herself with her own eyes. She understands the depth of her personality and is fully geared to take on whatever difficulties come her way to meet her ambitious goals. She recognizes that if anyone can handle multiple problems, no one can do it better than herself. “Woman is a ray of God. She is not that earthly beloved: she is creative, not created,” Rumi.

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