



Study of Constitutional Rights of Women in India

Dr. Rakesh Kumari, Assistant Professor, South Point College of Law, Sonipat

Abstract : Women's rights are entitlements and freedoms claimed for women and girls of all ages in many societies. In some places these rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local custom, and behavior, whereas in others they may be ignored or suppressed. Today, given the fact that the number of women in India far outnumbers the total population of many countries, one would expect the Indian woman to be a socially strong and empowered class. Despite the principles of gender equality being enshrined in our constitution and despite the state being empowered to adopt measures of positive discrimination in their favour, women of India continue to bear the brunt of societal discrimination.

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Women in ancient India enjoyed equal status and rights with men in all fields of life; they were educated; they married at a mature age and were probably free to choose their husbands. During the medieval period, the Indian woman's position in the society deteriorated. During the British rule many reformers fought for the social and economic upliftment of the women. Traditions such as Sati, Jauhar and Devadasis were banned. Today, whether it is health, education, mortality rate or any other development parameter, women of India are on very weak footing. Despite efforts to raise the social status of women for more than a century, India still ranks 118 among 177 nations on gender equity.

Constitutional Rights of Women in India

Fundamental rights

- Article 14 says that the government shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of the laws. The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favours to women. The principle of equal protection does not mean that every law must have a universal application for all persons, who are not by nature, circumstance or attainments (knowledge, virtue or money) in the same position as others. Varying needs of different classes of persons require separate treatment and a law enacted with this object in view is not considered being violative of equal protection. The