

## Womanism: Formulated by Society



## Literature

**KEYWORDS :** Womanism is not a born character, rather a character made by Society.

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### ABSTRACT

*Womanism is not a born character. It is a character made by society. We, the humans, when take a birth, biologically either as a man or a woman, but our authentic character of being a man or a woman, is shaped and developed by society or our families. The family and the society instruct the child, how to act as a woman or a man. A Female plays so many characters in one lifetime like as a daughter, wife, mother and so on. But all the sacrifices and adjustments she makes, has been taught by the people around, which she has to make because she is a woman. People always expect from women only to transform her whenever required because she is taught that since she is born. If we wish to vanish this gender discrimination, we have to instigate it from our families itself first. Liberty is for everybody. Let's give women also the rights, to live on her own terms and conditions, which bring a gigantic change in society. At last change is good.*

There is a question which every woman must ask herself: Am I glad to be a Woman?

In response to this question may lot of incidences come to one's mind. Instead of being happy as a woman, one may think am I happy to be a girl, am I happy to be a sister, to be a daughter, a wife, a mother, or may be to be a mother-in-law also? It may possible that the answer depends on the character one plays as a woman. For instance as a girl I am happy, as a daughter I feel beloved and cared, as a wife I feel responsible, as a mother I feel protective and the list goes on. Sometimes we are actually not like the role we play in our day to day life as a woman. Our behavior differs according to the role we have to play. When we reach 50's or 60's of age, we start believing that we have gathered all our experiences of different roles and now we are able to teach and prepare our young girls for their forthcoming roles in life. May be this is called life, a Journey towards life as a Woman. But the question is still unanswered. As a Woman, a complete Woman, (including all the characters we play in one lifetime) are you happy?

As a woman one has to face and go through different kinds of circumstances and experiences which make us a Woman or at least help us to become a Woman. When a child is born with female organs, the families, the people around, start instructing the child to behave like a girl, a woman. For an infant, the world is new. He does not know how to live in society. It is the family, the teacher, the guardians or the people around, who help the child to act like a boy or a girl. So the Gender Discrimination starts very early since the infant is born.

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" – Simone de Beauvoir, the author of The Second Sex.)

The very first character one has to play as a woman is of a daughter, a girl child. A girl child does not know what to wear or how to dress up. It is the responsibility of the mother or father to let her dress up like girls. A girl child till the age of 7 to 9 behaves like a normal child like a boy. She plays normally like boys, eats normally, behaves normally without being conscious of how should girls behave in society. But when she comes to the age of 10 or above, parents or guardians start training her how to live in society as a girl and later as a woman. They begin with the domestic works. Even if they have a boy child also, they ask their daughters to help the mother in general domestic works. Even if it about just to bring a glass of water for guests or anyone else. They look forward to their daughters to perform these duties. It has become very customary even in upper class families. It has come in our genes to expect a girl or a woman to take care of a house either herself or through someone else. And when a girl reaches to the age 15 and above, she has to be trained in cooking. It does not matter if she will get married in a very rich family where there will be maids and servants to perform the works. She is a girl, a woman, so she has to learn how to cook. Since very beginning we teach our girls their jobs as a woman.

Who had prepared these rules for women? Where from it had come that specific tasks are for men and specific tasks are for women? Is there any eligibility test which makes apparent that the women have to perform these jobs only and men have the options or choices not to perform? Why not the mothers or other people of family, start stopping this gender discrimination from very beginning in the families itself?

"The point is not that housework and child-rearing are meaningless and dull, but rather, that both the positive and creative aspects of their work as well as the drudgery of it, should be shared equally by men and women" (Seeing like a Feminist, 15)

There is no clear evidence who cooked the first time in history also. Then from where this rule invented that woman has to cook food only? If as a mother or father, one teaches our children that men and women are equal, and instead of teaching a girl to perform the domestic works, one teaches a boy also to perform the same tasks, then this rule will be vanish from the world sooner or later. It will not be compulsion for women only to take responsibilities of home or kids. Man and Woman, as a husband and wife, the life-partners, will share everything in lifetime, not just for the sake of the name. Then there will be parity between genders in true sense. To eradicate gender discrimination we have to begin with our homes first.

"There is nothing 'natural' about the sexual division of labour. The fact that men and women perform different kinds of work, both within the family and outside have little to do with biology. Only the actual process of pregnancy is biological, all the other work within the home that women must do- cooking, cleaning, and looking after children and so on (the whole range of work which we may call 'domestic' labour) can equally well be done by men. But this work is considered to be 'women's work'" (Seeing like a Feminist, 11)

The second most essential character of a woman is of a wife and a daughter-in-law the same time. The other character comes along with the first character as a present (buy one get one free).

The Indian parents have been teaching their daughters since centuries that their actual homes are of their husband's home and their in-laws become their so called parents suddenly for the rest of lives. Perhaps now this is an unfeasible dream of not leaving your maternal homes if you are born as a girl. But why it has been the most complicated task for a woman to make in-laws home as her maternal home since centuries? Why can not a woman live in their in-law's home like she has been living in her maternal home since birth? Why only she is expected to suddenly change herself according to their in-laws? Perhaps women only are capable of adjusting beyond limits or we have made our women like that. It is not unjust act to change as a woman once we are married either. But people do not label it being "Changed", instead for them it is just an "Adjustment" which we have to make as a woman to live in In-law's family with no trouble and to let them adjust with you. If adjustments are from both

the sides, then obviously it is a happier family. But the proportion of these kinds of families in India, are not much. The ratio of girls adjustments are much higher comparing to the adjustments of In-law's family. As said earlier, may we have made our woman more competent than a man in doing adjustments and compromises? As a wife one has to fulfill the husband's expectations and as a daughter-in-law, one has to prove again and again that her maternal family has given her good teaching (Good Indian Sanskars). Her whole life passes to establish herself a good Daughter-in-law ("Sanskarik Bahu" in Indian culture). But why she has to give proof for that?

"Nobody has the right to deny another individual his or her rights. Not even under the pretext of that most misrepresented term, 'adjustment'. Adjustment is a loaded word. What adjustment? Who is deciding this adjustment? Who gains it? Who loses? When I hear parents of young girls saying, 'We've brought up, our daughter in such a way; she'll be able to adjust anywhere'. I immediately think of a collapsible ladder or a reclining chair whose backrest can be suitably 'adjusted' to the user's convenience" (Spouse-The truth about marriage, 68)

Either it is a love marriage or an arrange marriage, the boy or his family already be acquainted with the girl and her family. After their satisfaction only the marriage take place. If it is a love marriage, then boy knows the girl very well and the boy's parents should trust their son's preference. And if it is an arrange marriage, the parents get agree to the marriage only after their full satisfaction. Then what happen after marriage? A girl leave her maternal home, her bed that she used to sleep, her room, her privacy, her siblings, her parents and the list goes on. Why can not the in-law's family give her time to get use to of new family and their way of living? It's not that they are not fine people. But they have to acknowledge that there is a disparity between every family's ways of living. If the girl is trying to adapt their way of living then they should also give her alternative to bring some changes in home if she wishes to, either it is about Kitchen works or changing the decoration of home. At last change is good. Let her feel like home. After all it is a host's duty to let the guest feel like home. Then only the guest can become one of the family members.

"Inclusion rather than exclusion should be the mantra to follow. As the older, more experienced woman, it is the mother-in-law's responsibility to make all the first moves. She has to remind herself that her daughter-in-law is entering a new zone. The younger woman's insecurity levels are much higher. Reassurance on a day-to-day level is all she requires" (Spouse-The truth about marriage, 231)

An in-law's home includes the husband also naturally. Husband is the biggest strength of the girl to come to a new place to spend her entire life. But what happen when this strength turns to a weakness, when the husband is not able to take a stand for the correct things. It is not about taking favor of anyone. But parents only teach us to take a stand for right things. A man should not think as a husband or a son. He should sustain the right thing only, because he is the only intermediary who can deal with both the parties without difficulty. Whoever is wrong, he is able to make that person be aware of his wrongful act politely. He knows the state of mind and behavior of both the parties. He knows the best how to make them realize, even if it is about wife or parent. Instead of being the victim, who is getting hurt the most between both the parties; he can actually bring the feeling of relations for both the parties. At last nothing is bigger than the love and relations in life. In-law should also understand that their daughter-in-law is also a daughter of some parent. May be she was not the girl who she is now as a daughter-in-law because of them only. It is very simple to call the in-laws 'mom and dad', but do not disregard these words if you actually do not feel them as your parent. Some people call these words and in reality talk rubbish about them. The word "Ma" has a utmost position and power in Hinduism. One has to behave like a mother to become like a mother. Calling mother to your mother-in-law just for the sake of words is disrespecting the word "Ma". If you speak it, then speak with the spirit and with esteem. It is very

hard to call some other parent your parent. But the in-laws can facilitate their daughter or son-in-law to make them feel as their real children and the words will come out automatically from the core of the heart. A wise man said: Actions speak louder than words.

In current scenario, innumerable crimes are taking place towards woman. The national capital, Delhi has 1,121 rape cases registered in the year 2013, the highest in the last 13 years. According to the Mumbai police's data, the number of cases of rape since 2002 has risen by 80 per cent. The reports of other metropolitan cities are also not very good. Women harassment cases are instead of falling, rising day by day. It happens with working women, with college going girls and even at home. No place is safe and sound for women anymore. Some people (including the great personalities like Politian's, lawyers or other celebrities) often speak that somewhere the mistake was of a woman if any incident happened to her. According to them, nowadays girls or working women only provoke the men anyhow to act such kinds of mistakes, provoking by wearing inappropriate clothes or gestures or by being out of the home late nights. Some guys believe that if any girl smokes or drinks, then that means she is very advance and is available anytime they approach her. Smoking and drinking is naturally not good for health, for both men and women. If it creates wrong or bad impression for the girls who do this, then it is applicable on boys also. Too much smoking or drinking damages the health of humans, not specifically of particular gender. It does not do anything with gender or character. It is the society who made such rules for women which insist women to stay at home, wear fully cover clothes, should not get familiar to any male except the family males and so on.

"Women find themselves arguing futilely that just because I go out to work/smoke/drink/wear unorthodox clothes/ enjoy male company- that does not make me a whore. Is there any comparable good/ bad imagery for men?" (Seeing like a feminist, 135)

Here only one question arises: Does the rape cases happened only with the women who put on western clothes? Or do these crimes take place in nights only? Mumbai is a film city and women wear more western clothes there as compare to Delhi. It is famous for night life. Girls work at odd times also there. But there are more rape cases in Delhi than Mumbai. Clothes and time are not the only reasons for rape cases in Delhi. Guys who do these crimes just wait for the opportunities, which they can get anywhere anytime. Woman is not the Criminal, but the Victim. Stop blaming victim for provoking the criminal! The problem is with men to whom women look naked, even in full covered clothes.

The word "Ma" has the supreme place and power in the entire universe. A Mother can surrender the whole world for her children and family. But it was centuries ago when mothers have to stay at home for bringing the children up. At present women are very career oriented and ambitious. They work day and night like men and at times do not have sufficient time to take care of the children. But in today's highly developed standard's living also, there are families or husbands, who expect or insist the mothers to leave the jobs for the wellbeing of the children or families, even if they are more successful in career or if they earn much more earnings than their husbands. The reason is: people still believe that being ambitious is not for women. Husband's career is more significant than wife's. In India, there are still several families, where women live their career or jobs behind just to take care of children. It is not a hard core rule or not mention in history or in any religious books that women can look after the children better than men. Again it is just the society's manipulation against women. We have made our women like that so much that now women also have started believing this society's believes that women bring up children better than men. Women now themselves do not trust men for children's nurturing. So they also give up their career or jobs willingly for the same reason. Marriage is a mutually understandable undeclared devoted agreement between husband and wife to share everything in life and spend the whole life with each other, which means they are equally responsible in a same manner for everything. So they

should take responsibility of children equally. Women's career comes to an end also when in some way husband has to go in some other state or country to make money or to take promotion in current jobs. Even if both are working in reputable companies, it is the wife who has to forfeit her job, if she wants to stick to her husband. She has only two alternatives: either to quit and find new job in the same place where husband is shifting or taking transfer along with husband. In both the cases, it is her career only which has to be sacrificed. Is there any other way out to this problem? If the society is being questioned for this, then the answer will come 'no', because it is the duty of the woman to sacrifice everything on husband's or family's name. But if any woman will be questioned, then the answer will most probably be unreciprocated, because women have accepted these societies's believes of sacrificing every time, either in the form of destiny or in the form of religious rituals or culture.

"I had come to worry about those women who were full-time mothers and homemakers by choice. Did other, more career-minded women have the right to devalue them . . . ? Maybe it was time to slow down and look at the role restrictions imposed not only on women but the men around them, to search for the balance that could promote self-sufficiency . . ." - Lin Pardey, the author of *Bull Canyon: A Boatbuilder, a Writer and Other Wildlife*)

In a conclusion, Womanism does not come in character by birth. Society makes it. Society and family play the biggest role to make the Woman 'Woman' and the Man 'Man'. Woman is not different from man except biologically. The Character, the nature as well as the behavior develop by the Family and Society. It depends upon the upbringing of the child. We, as a society should stop this gender discrimination from our families itself first. Woman is a daughter, a wife, a mother, but not a toy of a man and society. Woman has also a right to live as she wishes like a man. She can live on her own terms and conditions. Democracy is not only for men. Stop making rules and regulations to live in society! God gave birth to both man and woman in an equal and same manner, so both have equal and same rights also. Whatever is applicable on one should be applicable on the other also. The difference which comes biologically cannot be changed, but one can bring the changes in the way of living, in the rules and regulations made by humans. At last change is for good.

"It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious self is present in all beings. You always criticize the women, but say what have you done for their uplift? Writing down Smritis etc., and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines! If you do not raise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise." – Swami Vivekananda

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