

WELLNESS

WHETHER OR NOT 'LADIES-FIRST' IS A FORM OF
DISCRIMINATION

- Manimekhalai Sethuraman Iyer

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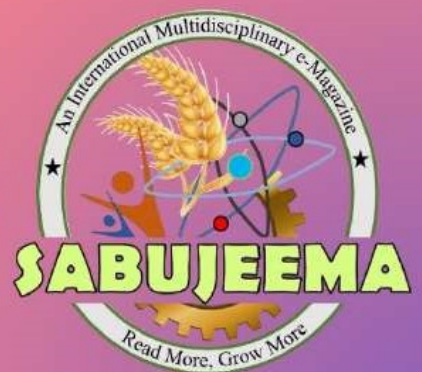
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WHETHER OR NOT 'LADIES-FIRST' IS A FORM OF DISCRIMINATION

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INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitization is the process of changing the stereotypical mindset of human civilization, the mindset that believes that men and women are not equal in every aspect of the word. They say that women have a lower position in society, their economic gains are not that significant, their intellect is shrouded by emotions and of course physical strength is questionable. But as with every hypothesis, there are women everywhere trying to prove this wrong and even though this is a small percentage, it is an impactful one.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

In our society, Gender discrimination is an enormous problem. One way to tackle this is by implementing curricula on gender sensitization that may help education to get culturally conscious, the question however is; did they only stop at ladies first? Will that be

enough? Or is this not a discrimination in itself?

From the historical perspective in Indian society; men and women are born equal and lived together from the stone-age and until the peak of civilization. This dynamic only changed when we were invaded by foreigners. Wherein men started eyeing women as a thing to possess and exploit, so women were then kept hidden behind veils. Now in the present scenario, people have acknowledged that society was previously matriarchal and women were respected, so what stops them from doing so now?

In fact earlier patriarchal society itself, while trying to protect women, had regarded women as a vulnerable group. The idea of ladies-first gives a connotation of a weaker sex and itself is a form of discrimination. Drawing a similarity, these days physically or mentally challenged individuals are called "special" and not invalid or abnormal, this removes any prejudice or negative light from them thus giving them a guise of equality.

The concept of ladies first rests on the principle that women are weak and emphasizes the difference between men and women. The only way to counter this is by denying the gender differences by stating complete equality. But in the current society,



“ladies first” is a shield used to mask the chauvinism and the stereotypical mindset.

It is thrown generously to seem benevolent, whereas it is not the same as helping pregnant, disabled or children. It needs to be seen from the perspective of ancient times, which is ‘with respect’ as we respect our parents, grandparents, teachers. Through education and intelligence, we should do the same to women.

One key method for this is by normalizing vulnerability in both men and women, letting men express themselves while not insulting women for doing the same by calling men who do this as “being like women” as demeaning. Another way is to genuinely care for the well being of women as a whole, while also respecting and honouring their role in society. While feminism argues that bus seats and toilet doors should not be reserved for women to honour equality. This argument is like making an abyss in the already bridged gap.

Already women are swimming pacific oceans to touch equality. While weak, sick, pregnant and children are treated with respect and care without discrimination, why would a seat reserved for women will label them as weak? These days the reserved seats are called ‘love seats’.

CONCLUSION

Hence giving them priorities of ladies-first, is care and respect. This is a virtue of giving and fairness. Women are far more superior even when they are home-makers, professionals. They multitask, they are resilient, they overcome and they forgive. These virtues together are hardly found in any man. Hence we are no ladies-first but always first. I hope anti-discrimination doesnt turn to giving welfare. There are countless labels; women toilet, ladies-first, etc all women need is respect and care not welfare.