Preface

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population over the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women still persists. Therefore, they remain largely marginalised, poor and socially excluded.

We are convinced that women's rights are human rights. Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well being and that of their families as well as the consolidation of democracy.

Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and share in power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

The present study deals with a topic which is the concern of almost every Indian today. Because of the wide scope of the subject and constraints of time and space, we confess that it has not been possible to include all the instances and examples which illustrate the legal and political status of women in Indian society. Still, we have tried our best to put across our arguments with the support of evidence available with us.

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