

A Dangerous World for Women

News:

The Thomson Reuters Foundation released its results Tuesday of a survey of 550 experts on women's issues, finding India to be the most dangerous nation for sexual violence against women, as well as human trafficking for domestic work, forced labor, forced marriage and sexual slavery, among other reasons.

It was also the most dangerous country in the world for cultural traditions that impact women, the survey found, citing acid attacks, female genital mutilation, child marriage and physical abuse. India was the fourth most dangerous country for women in the same survey seven years ago.

Nine of the 10 countries on the list were from Asia, the Middle East or Africa. At number 10 was the United States, the only Western country to be included. The foundation said this was directly related to the #MeToo movement.

Comment:

Today women across the globe suffer as a result of cultural practices, religious practices and from the dominant secular capitalist ideology. The strength of surveys can be debated but it is clear that the situation for women is dire in many places.

Women, like all citizens, need security, the right to education and health and so on. These are all basic rights. With the USA featuring in the top ten due to the impact of #MeToo, it is also a clear sign that following the Western model of women's empowerment and progress is wrong. India implements democracy and asserts itself as a leader in the subcontinent in terms of its economy. Despite this, India has a terrible record when it comes to the treatment of women.

The foundation stated, "World leaders vowed three years ago to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls by 2030, allowing them to live freely and safely to participate equally in political, economic and public life. But despite this pledge it is estimated that one in three women globally experience physical or sexual violence during their lifetime." The world needs to wake up and realize that the situation for women is not going to improve unless there is a complete removal of the current secular system. Pledges of leaders are meaningless when public opinion and practices are not changed, when practices are wrong, collective ideas and laws are needed to make change.

In the countries that made the top ten which include Muslim countries, there are a particular set of circumstances that have led to the way women are mistreated. This can be the general view of women, a film industry that objectifies women (Bollywood and Hollywood), war situations that use rape as a weapon, cultural practices that have no Islamic basis but are held to be such and so on. It can seem almost impossible to make enough of a change as to affect so many at one time.

We see year after year celebrations of women's rights under Capitalism but we also see huge numbers when looking at exploitation and abuse. On the one hand laws are made for equal pay, right to vote etc... but at the same time globally, women are still treated in a demeaning manner and have to live life with constant pressures and practices that prevent them from having fulfilling lives. This is true of both in the East, with many backward practices and ideas and even in the so-called progressive West, with objectification and harassment in the workplace. A few laws are not enough but a radical re-think of how we live and what ideas prevail are needed.

Islam in the past came as a force that stopped practices such as female infanticide, marital relationships where women were exploited and societal pressures that discriminated against women. Initially these practices were questioned and ridiculed in the Quran, forming a negative opinion about them.

During the lifetime of RasulAllah (saw), he showed in his own Sunnah how to remove the barriers women faced, e.g. he married the wife of his adopted son which was unthinkable before. Also, Islamic laws came to assist women in matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, defamation of character and many more after the establishment of the Islamic state in Madinah, ensuring legal protection for women.

The overall concept of the women being an honor was practically applied in the time of the Khilafah with the famous example of Khalifah Mutasim sending an army as a result of the call of a woman who had been dishonored. Furthermore, the Islamic society has a view that the women are a part of society and cannot be exploited but have a responsibility to engage in all practical aspects of life as stated by the Shara, e.g., she can account the ruler, she can vote, she can be a judge, she can invest her own money etc.

Today it is the secular form of government that makes the world dangerous for women. This separation of Allah's laws in life, even in Muslim countries, is the danger we need to remove and replace with the just model of governance that ensures sanctity of life, honor and property for both women and men. Only when accountability before a Creator is a basis for our system and laws, we will find that exploitation and abuse are eradicated and dealt with by fixed laws that cannot be twisted and changed.

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