

Plight of Women in the World Today

// Written by Illya Lapko December 14, 2007

While the modern-day privileged woman has time to worry about her hair and which new handbag she should buy, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of women have to suffer the negative consequences of culture. These range from the omission of certain rights - such as the right to own property - to crimes of humanity, the grizzliest of which being genital mutilation.

The WHO states that "today, 50 per cent more women are living in poverty than 30 years ago. This is tragic since the well-being of children depends more on the income available to mothers than to fathers." There are many reasons as to why this is the case. The status quo on women has been for thousands of years that they are inferior to men; both physically and mentally. Most societies have traditionally neglected the human rights of women, and many minority groups the world over still do.

"Women and girls make up half of the world's population yet they do two-thirds of the world's work." This astonishing fact very strongly contradicts the view of traditional societies where men are supposed to be the main breadwinners. To add to that, "women earn one-tenth of the world's income yet own less than one hundredth of the world's property." The women are doing the work and the men get to keep the property. Women don't even get a say in local politics even though they do the work, they earn the money, they take care of the children and make the home. Where is the fairness in that? Not present.

These inequalities are relatively minuscule when compared to what occurs in some other parts of the world. In Bangladesh, women who want to be free to choose when and whom to marry or are involved in dowry disputes have had acid thrown in their face. And women in many parts of the world suffer sexual abuse at the hands of the very authorities whose duty is to protect them. The saddest part of the situation? These violations often go unreported, meaning that the situation is not improving and the problem is not getting solved.

But the most horrific problem is that of female genital mutilation, which is actually a socially acceptable form of violence in some parts of the world. The WHO estimates that 90 million girls have been subjected to genital mutilation, the tissue removal of any part of the female genitalia for cultural, religious or other non-medical reasons. This operation is usually performed without anesthetic, on girls and babies aged between seven days and fifteen years old. This is yet again a staggering truth, both in terms of the number of victims and the severity of the action.

The human rights of women are not being enforced and the only way for these acts against humanity to stop is for the world to punish the wrongdoers and stand up and end the inequality, pain, and suffering of the women that deserve so much more.