Blyinvitation

Women’s quest for justice and equality – a short history

Singapore women have done well in achieving parity with men but in other parts of the world, the struggle continues

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For The Straits Times

Women’s rights are human rights. The struggle by women for justice and equality is one of the longest in the history of human rights.

Although much progress has been made, the struggle is not over in some parts of the world. Singaporeans are well aware of this. Authorities have its up and down. The causes are many, with history, religion and culture all playing a part.

In the ancient world, women were treated as chattel. They could be bought or sold. Women had to marry the men chosen for them. They had no legal personality. They had no freedom of movement. Men’s oppression of women is therefore an evil that has ancient roots.

Religion has generally reinforced gender inequality with precepts and doctrines that subordinate women to men.

Some Christian denominations bar women from the presbyteria or leadership positions. In Iran, women face restrictions on clothing to the point where some will go to jail for not wearing black tudung. Women who dress in black and white, even if they have their hair hidden, are considered un-Islamic. 

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