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Women and human rights.

Author: Tomasevski K

Source: London, England, Zed Books, 1993. xiv, 162 p. (Women and World Development Series)

Abstract: This book addresses the lack of attention paid to the human rights of women at all levels of political organization. It begins with a summarization of the "unfinished" history of women's human rights, including the fact that, rather than diminishing inequalities between the sexes, the passage of time and/or economic growth may, in fact, exacerbate them. The next section relates how the domination of women's social status by motherhood leads to a confusion between protection of motherhood and equality. The third chapter considers education as a tool for empowerment. Chapter 4 details challenges to unequal rights in terms of marriage customs, property laws, and the actions of women in the human rights movement. Discrimination is singled out as the key to the repression of women in Chapter 5, and efforts to address existing inequities are detailed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 considers ways to protect the most vulnerable women, those who are in prisons, who are refugees, and who are disabled. Righting the wrongs embodied in traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, and in customary violence against women is the topic of Chapter 8, which also presents the involvement of government in these issues. The ninth chapter considers the role of the UN, how its human rights system works, human rights on women's agendas, and violations of women's rights on the human rights agenda. The final chapter provides guidance for action by describing efforts to attain equity for girls, grassroots activities, human rights literacy, and the global mobilization for women's rights. The most important message this book seeks to convey is that neither human rights in general nor women's human rights in particular can be attained once and for all.

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