

A Comparative Study of United Nation’s CEDAW with Reference to the Buddhist Teachings

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During many decades’ women and girl children are made to face tremendously challenging situations. In this eras have made available to the world such development in economics, scientific and technological fields that no period in the history has ever seen. But in the achievement of this material prosperity, human dignity and values are left at stake distancing them from people. In the course of this transition we have lost the traditional safety, respect we had for women and children. CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women is established by the United Nation in 1979 to protect the women from around the world. CEDAW is committed to reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, committing to the dignity and worth of the human person, Recognizing and accepting the equal rights of men and women, spells out the meaning of equality and how equality can be achieved and set out an agenda for action for countries to guarantee rights of women. Presently there are more than 104 members in this committee and working against for women all forms of discriminations. Even though this was realized by the Europeans after 1948, 2500 years ago the Buddha established the women freedom in respectable level. Buddhist teachings of human rights are full of eternal values. The concept of human rights is universal. The teachings which the Enlightened One had advanced in this regard were practically confirmed and proved meaningful through the action of society which comprises according to Buddhist thought the four groups *Bhikkhu*, *Bhikkunī*, *upāsaka* and *upāsikā*. The Buddha established women freedom in India by opening gate to become *Bhikkunīs*. Buddha always tried to establish the women’s rights in the contemporary society. But there were some occasions Buddha also criticized women’s weaknesses. However always Buddha tried to give the proper place that women should be given. There is a great example in the *Dhītu sutta*, S.N. In this *sutta* the Buddha advice to the king Kosala as some women would in their perfected feminine role, even excel men. Offering highest places in *Bhikkunī* order as well as *Bhikku* order is a good example for the gender equality. There are many *suttas* in *sutta Piṭaka* which the Buddha has discuss about the women. Buddha never condemns or let down women and if there are weaknesses of them those weaknesses were shown. Therefore, *Teravāda* Buddhism can be considered as a religion which never provides a low state to the women and according to the world history this is the first religion which establishes women freedom in the society.

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