

WHAT ARE YOUR FEMINIST RESOLUTIONS THIS YEAR?



And just like that we ushered in 2016! A new year brings new beginnings, renewed hopes and expectations for a better future. Indulging like a true hedonist in the last few days of the past year, we make lofty pledges to lose weight, make better career choices – the list goes on.

This eternal optimism surrounding New Year is contagious, and we women tend to delve into it with tremendous enthusiasm! While you aspire to benefit immensely from the hot new gym membership you paid a fortune for, and look forward to the much-awaited Euro trip hubby has been planning for ages but never really happened, take a moment to ponder: what is on your feminist agenda this year?

A lot of people argue that feminism is a dated concept in today's world, where women have come a long way and are progressing every day. However, feminism is incredibly relevant in today's world; what's more, it is absolutely essential for women to have feminist ideals in order to build a better society. It influences all lives, whether male or female. A 21st century feminist not only believes in

equality of women, but also promotes and upholds fairness for both sexes. She intends to make the world a better place for both men and women by taking on issues both small and large, at home and out in the world. Men who seek fairness and equality in every sphere of society for women are also feminists in their own right.

Feminism is a broad concept that encompasses all issues, from personal to political. Small steps can inspire one to make big changes. To begin with, educating less or under-privileged women around us can be instrumental to make a positive change. Resolve to help educate at least one girl or woman around you who does not have access to schooling. It could be your maid, her daughter or anyone from your household or vicinity. When we educate a woman we



empower her, and her family benefits from her. It could be something as simple as teaching them how to read and write, or paying for their schooling. Naina,* a student from a private university shares her intention to promote female education by buying books, supplies and paying fees for a girl working at their cafeteria who wants to take the HSC exam next year. "She's



very smart and aspires to get into university, but her family is dependent on her salary so she could neither buy books nor pay the fees for the exam last year. I helped her out and now she is studying hard in between shifts to prepare herself. It's a very rewarding to see her motivation to educate herself," she says.

Raising awareness for equality for women in the workplace is another way to empower them. Offices, mostly government ones, are fiercely patriarchal and women often feel vulnerable to male criticism voicing their professional opinions. Also, seemingly harmless sexist jokes, remarks and jibes can be emotionally damaging. A lot of times when working in group projects women don't get enough credit as their male counterparts. Rabeeb,* a human resources specialist working in an MNC, is a self-proclaimed feminist who resolves to create a more favourable environment for women to work in. "My team has a higher ratio of male workers who are always instructed to be respectful towards their female colleagues. In my professional opinion, women have a keen sense of judgment and intuition when it comes to recognising talent. By making workplace female-friendly I have noticed an increase in my team's productivity and there is a greater sense of camaraderie among the members. I hope to continue this trend with

my future teams, and encourage others to follow suit," he enthusiastically shares.

Men too can be feminists, it goes without saying, and it facilitates the process of inclusion for women to a greater degree.

It is 2016 and we have come a long way since the time when women were expected to embrace stereotypical gender roles assigned to them. The little girl next door should not have to settle for something less just because she's female. Try redefining gender stereotypes by educating people around you and let it be your resolution this year. Spreading awareness is the best way to change people's mind-set. Maria,* a young woman training to be a pilot shares how her uncles were livid when she enrolled in flying school. "Their reaction was a mix of shock and disbelief; they vehemently opposed the idea, stressing hard on the fact that it's not a woman's job and warned my father that he is wasting his money. But he put his foot down and told me to make him proud. So I did!" she fondly recalls. Many feminists argue that modern women have become complacent and tend to take things for granted. This could not be farther from the truth. Feminism has become more nuanced, more meticulous than ever. By recognizing them and resolving to address them we can all make our society a better place for posterity.

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