

Letters

# Indian women not enslaved to men

The article on the "international women's panel" (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 23), may well have highlighted the problems of women in the Third World as far as India is concerned. But the article gives a totally wrong perspective. Indian women are not enslaved to men throughout their lifetime. One needs to view the situation from an entirely different perspective.

The average Indian woman would, by choice, rather remain at home working. Call it what you will, but it works. We have an almost negligible divorce rate and as such the family is still a strong and beneficial social institution.

Dating is a concept that originated in and belongs to the West. It is miles apart from Indian culture, and as such

any Indian would naturally think twice about it. But to the vast majority of Indians, dating is more a sign of promiscuity than anything else, and is therefore not acceptable.

In fact, one practically never thinks in terms of discrimination on the basis of sex in India. Older women do not face the "chilly climate" in classrooms, universities or work sports. Women constitute 40 percent of the students in medical, engineering and agricultural colleges. We even have a woman for a prime minister.

Generalizing on the opinions of a single individual is definitely not a hallmark of good journalism. I do hope you will stay away from it in the future.

Vijay Kondamundi

# Status of Indian women 'grossly misrepresented'

The status of women in Indian society was grossly misrepresented in the article on an international women's panel (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 23).

The article said that in old age, an Indian woman is subordinate to her son. In India, a mother commands a lot more respect from her children.

It said that an Indian woman is subordinate to her husband. This is true in few Indian families. Eighty percent of Indian families live in villages. Hence, as a social necessity and economic entity, she is given equal, if not greater, primacy in the family affairs. A working woman enjoys equal rights and equal wages. As a college girl, she enjoys an equal amount of freedom.

The article said that in young age, a girl is subordinate to her parents. In what respect? Indian girls enjoy as much freedom as any other girl in any other society. Her feelings, sentiments and wishes are highly regarded. If the parents do not allow their daughters to stay out in the name of dating, I don't think someone is stealing her freedom.

Yes, we have arranged marriages. What is wrong with it? Compare the divorce rate in India to that in any other country and then decide whether arranged marriages are inferior to marriages which are the result of many years of steady dating.

To conclude, 350 million Indian women cannot be conceptualized as "subordinates" to someone at some stage or another.

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