

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 3 | Issue 5

2020

© 2020 *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.ijlmh.com/>

Under the aegis of VidhiAagaz – Inking Your Brain (<https://www.vidhiaagaz.com>)

This Article is brought to you for “free” and “open access” by the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities at VidhiAagaz. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Law Management & Humanities after due review.

In case of **any suggestion or complaint**, please contact Gyan@vidhiaagaz.com.

To submit your Manuscript for Publication at **International Journal of Law Management & Humanities**, kindly email your Manuscript at editor.ijlmh@gmail.com.

Book Review of “Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunities for Women Worldwide”

Written by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

A. AMRITTHA¹

ABSTRACT

The book “Half the Sky: Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide” by Sheryl WuDunn and Nichols Kristof is a wake-up call in this situation and is an eye-opening kind of book. This book is a bold attempt by the author where he speaks out the hands-on experiences of women facing problems across the world. This book covers the plight of millions of women that gives a vivid and passionate report regarding the diverse situations where women around the world are oppressed and struggling to survive and to maintain minimal human dignity which is an important human right. The question that bounces in the minds of every reader of this book would be, Do people like them really exist? This book in addition to addressing the problem gives the remedy for the same and aims to achieve the humanitarian goals across the globe.

I. REVIEW

The author Nicholas is a columnist for the New York Times since November 2001 and Wuduun, a Times journalist. Also, They are the first married couple to win a **Pulitzer Prize**. They are the authors of four best-selling books which include A Path appears, Thunder from the East, China walks, and Half the sky. This book “Half the Sky: Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide”. He predominantly throws light on the problems which violates the basic human rights and the activities of people that totally lacks humanity in them.

“*Half the Sky: Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide*” book is named after an ancient Chinese proverb -” **Women hold up half the sky**”. This book is a collection of individual stories, interspersed with narrating for an appropriate background. While addressing all 14 chapters, it shows the harsh reality and problems of women where this book is simultaneously shattering and deeply inspiring. The important problems addressed in this book are, sexual abuse of women, maternal mortality, lack of education, mutilations, and financial

¹ Author is a student at Government Law College, Vellore, India.

help with women's independence wherein, it deals with basic human rights issues that effect health, life and welfare of women worldwide.

“Half the Sky”, demands the world to address what the authors label our era's, most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. In such a case this is an audacious book that dares to take a stand, political correctness be deemed.

The first truth that this book reveals is about contemporary slaves., wherein women are kidnapped and are sold to a brothel. For example, One story that shattered my heart is the experience of Meena, who was beaten and raped and had two babies. Later she managed to escape from the brothel but had to leave her children there. During escaping she once went to the police station but there the corrupt policemen got her back again to the same brothel. This incident completely broke me down. Yet Meena was set free, she constantly had the thought of her children. This is one kind of story in the book that created a great impact in me. The author in this way explores problems and throws light on part of how women fight against such cruel acts. Also, The authors went through great lengths to depict the differences and gave many good examples of when and where they should be applied.

One of the exceptional contribution this book has, the personal stories of numerous women that it reports. Also, this book addresses not just the women issue but it is actually **a human issue**. With its significant personal stories and the statistical approach between nations that elevates the book to the next level and provides a clear picture of countries that legalize and illegalize women issues. The countries that devalue women include Pakistan, China, India, Liberia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia. At one point, while I was reading the book I was wondering if the author portrays men in a negative light. But towards the end, the author has plenty of stories about women's success that illustrate the support of men. His remarkable work has brought to light the horror condition in which many women and children live throughout the world and it offers a **message of hope**.

The author does not only explains the problems faced by women but also explains how women tackle atrocities and indignities from sexual trafficking to maternal mortality. Also, the book highlights the importance of gender equality against poverty. However, the summary of this book could never be proposed because the author has made a great attempt to cover all the problems faced by women where each chapter in the book gives different phases of problems faced by women.

While reading this book, the first few cases very hard to believe but as time went on I realized that it was in fact real. For me, reading in certain parts was so hard because of the devastating

nature of content. The author's constructed this book in such a way that they gave many ideas and thought on the ways one person could help. It mainly explores the different charitable work that helps those women and also writes up we can help too. Thus this book is both a question and answer to us., This book educates us on the issues and some of the necessary steps towards and in what way we could contribute where it is such a privileged opportunity for anyone waiting to involve in helping the oppressed women. Their global vision and dedication to achieve *humanitarian goals* are truly unparalleled and inspiring. Though the author has interspersed the stories and narrated it, it does not create any sort of confusion. The language used by the author is crystal clear and happened to learn a wide range of vocabulary. In my opinion, the facts, number galore and their research data play an explicit support role. To be very honest, thinking about this book makes me more aware of my surroundings and being more observant. One quote in this book that got me a great impact is "The equivalent of five jumbo jets' worth of women dies in labor each day, but the issue is almost never covered".

The author in his 14 chapters depicts various experiences of women which are very rigorous yet truth, on the other hand, it is equally inspiring. He strongly believes that education can bring about great change. As an epitome of this the author provides us with, the story of Usha Narayane, a woman who lived in an Indian slum was a Dalit (untouchable). And the slum was under the control of Yadav, a gangster. Yadav was able to terrorize the slum through rape and sexual violence. Despite all these cruel acts police looked the other way as they were paid off. One of the neighbors of Usha was attacked by Yadav. When Usha went to the police station and report it, Yadav and his men threaten Narayane at her family's house. The reason why Usha had the courage to report is, she was well-educated so was her family too. Due to this, they were all liked by all people in the slum and also believed them. When Usha fought back against such inhumane acts it inspired all the other women to fight back as well. Eventually Yadav for his protection turned himself in to police. During the pre-trial hearing, all the women showed up and stabbed him to death. Each and every women in the slum stabbed him once. Here the fact, that the author portrays is not the revenge but it is the fact that women can rise up and can bring up the change.

Some phrases in the book seem to fetishize the rapes of these women because every rape story starts with young, beautiful, slender girls. Then it feels like when an overweight, unattractive girl gets raped then authors don't bother. Rape is a rape whether the victim fits the author's idea of beauty or not. The author has given various solutions for the problems faced by women but according to my view, All their solutions cannot be accepted. For example; Micro-credit,

Capitalism. Also, one greatest flaw this book has is the original pictures of the victims. I personally felt that could have been avoided.

This book came away with the feeling that one person can make a difference. All over the world, there are so many injustices that are inflicted on women also in our own country. There are no easy answers. I feel that education is paramount, not only of the women but the boys. This book is a *must-read*, to know in what condition we live and to understand the problems of women. The book concludes with chapters titled, **“What You Can Do”**, and the answers are stunningly simple. A minute change can have a ripple outcome that goes a long, long way. To begin with a little change and to know the real world read this book and without any further delay let the change begin from our end. It would be great to energize the saying’s of Gandhiji, ***“Be the change you wish to see in the world”***.
