

SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR. RAMI RANGER MBE ON
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Chairman Mr Hardyal Luther
Srinivas Gotru Director Nehru Centre
Lord Sheikh
Dr Sukhbir Kapoor OBE
Prof Laura Mark OBE

Distinguished guests, ladies & Gentlemen.

It is my privilege to welcome you to an important seminar, ' the place of women in our world'.

It is the place of women which determines the place of men in our society.

The founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev Ji realised this fact some 550 years ago and uttered his famous words,

"why consider someone inferior who bears prophets and kings".

He was disturbed to see women being burnt alive along with their dead husbands according to a tradition called. 'Satti'.

He saw many Kings and the rich married several wives at a time and treated them as chattels.

Many will know my life story. My father was assassinated for opposing the breakup of India on the basis of religion.

My mother became a widow at the young age of just 35 years with 7 children and was expecting me, her 8th child.

Having lost her country, ancestral home and love of her life, my father, she started her life in India in a refugee camp.

I shudder to think what would have been our future had she not been treated as an equal and not allowed to become educated.

She worked as a primary school teacher and brought us up through immense difficulties.

She made sure every member of the family got a good education and career.

I, incidentally, broke a British business record with an unprecedented 5 consecutive Queens Awards for Enterprise by connecting Britain with 130 countries through trade.

I now sustain thousands of British jobs through our export activities.

We could easily have become liabilities or ended up in orphanages.

This ladies and gentlemen is the power of a woman.

Those who do not treat women as equals score an own goal as their children are looked after by a woman who is unable to impart experiences to them which she has not experienced herself.

They also help create a parallel society.

For example, Britain is a two income economy where husband and wife go out to work in order to give a better life to their children.

Anyone keeping their wife at home will have one income and more children as women staying at home can bear more children.

One income more children means the family will not be able to offer a head start to their children.

The family will claim more benefit from the State and pay just one set of income tax with higher demand on Social Services.

God forbid if the husband dies prematurely.

He will leave a woman unable to cope with the complexity of modern life and a mother unable to look after his children.

Children may end up with Social Services or, dare I say, radicalised.

In this modern world when the world has shrunk and we are now living side by side with people of different faiths, we must ensure that our out dated cultural practices do not hinder us from progressing like the rest.

Besides, we must adopt British values like tolerance, rule of law and respect for other faiths which made this country great.

Finally, in the words of Charles Darwin, the species which will survive in the future will not be the most intelligent or the strongest but the one which can adapt to change.

Thank you.