

## **WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

(A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICIES FOR WELFARE OF  
WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAJASTHAN)

A THESIS

Submitted for the award of Ph.D. Degree (Sociology) to

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By

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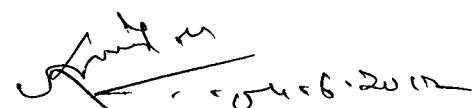
## CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the Thesis entitled "**WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT (A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICIES FOR WELFARE OF WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAJASTHAN)**" submitted by **Hemant Rajvi** is an original piece of research work carried out by the candidate under my supervision.

Literary presentation is satisfactory and the thesis is in a form suitable for publication.

Work evinces the capacity of the candidate for critical examination and independent judgement.

Candidate has put in at least 200 days of attendance every year.



Signature of Supervisor with date

## PREFACE

*It is often said that the status and position of women in society is the best way to understand a civilization, its progress and its shortcomings. In case of India, women have come a long way from women sages and scholars in the Rig Vedic period to women in the armed forces, IT sector, politics, industry and other significant areas while balancing their role as a daughter, wife and mother. This journey towards modernization has not been easy. Women have had to fight the traditional Indian male-dominated society to emerge as stronger and independent entities. While all these are positive developments, cases of rape, harassment at workplace and dowry deaths are rampant. Illiteracy and ignorance about their rights are still prevalent among a majority of women. It is in this context that the need for evolving policies for the welfare of women has been strongly felt to accelerate their socio-economic development.*

*The Constitution of India not only provides for equal rights and privileges for women and men but also for making special provision for women. A series of social legislations have been enacted from time to time for raising the status of women in the country. The five year plans have consistently placed special emphasis on providing minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition for women and children, acceleration of women's education, their increase in the labor force and welfare services for women in need. Various welfare and development schemes have been introduced to improve the living conditions of women and to increase their access to and control over material and social resources. Special steps have been taken to remove legal, social and other constraints to enable them to make use of the rights and new opportunities becoming available for them.*

*Various studies show that women are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and capabilities. However, the demographic features of female population like excessive mortality in female children resulting in persistent decline in sex ratio, low rate of literacy, and low economic status stress the need for greater attention to the economic emancipation of women. The low status of women in large segments of Indian society cannot be raised without opening up of opportunities of independent employment and income for them. But the process of change to raise the status of women under various spheres of socio-economic activities would require sustained effort over a period of time.*

*In India, women are discriminated against in many areas including education, health and nutrition, employment, law, access to credit, security as well as control over assets and in technology, such as productive jobs, civil service appointments or parliamentary representation. The discrimination against the girl child starts from the beginnings of her life with in the family.*

*The Indian constitution grants women equal rights with men, but strong patriarchal tradition persist, with women's lives shaped by customs that are centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and celebrated.*

*Looking to the present condition of women in India it is thought that a sociological study should be conducted. The study is important because on one hand in the age of globalization we talk about the equality especially on the bases of sex but it seems to be theoretical, because if we see in practice the women are still un-educated, over worked un-skilled, mistreated, less powerful or powerless and suffer from malnutrition and poor health. This compels a sensitive mind to go in the roots of the problem and draw attention of the administrators and policy makers, so that they come forward and try to solve the problem connected with the welfare of the women.*

*In this study I have tried to analyze the plans, policies and legislations meant for the upliftment of women. I have tried to find out whether these plans, policies and legislations are beneficial for women or not? On the other hand I have also examined the manner in which these plans, policies and legislations have been implemented so as to ascertain as to whether it has helped them or not.*

*An attempt has been made to see whether these plans, policies and legislation are helpful for the upliftment of women, and also to find out the causes that are responsible for this state of affair in spite of all these efforts.*

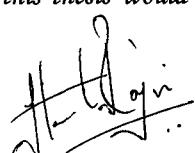
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*Words are no substitute to express the gratitude for my revered teacher and gifted guide Dr.R.K.Saxena, Head, Department of Sociology, Government Dungar College, Bikaner for providing me privilege of working under his kind supervision and guidance. For, without his personal interest, benevolent guidance and illuminating criticism as well as suggestions this task would not have been accomplished. This work would not have attained the present standard without his meticulous scrutiny of everything in depth and detail. I do feel proud of having worked under his guidance.*

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*I am extremely grateful for encouragement received from my parents, especially from my father Rajvi Shri Rajendra Singh Ji, without whose help and cooperation this thesis would not have seen the LIGHT of the DAY.*



HEMANT RAJVI

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*CHAPTER-I*

*INTRODUCTION*

## **CHAPTER-1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Equality is the Cornerstone of every democratic society which aspires to social justice and human rights. In nearly all society and spheres of activity women are subject to inequalities both in law and in fact. This is so because of the discrimination faced by women in the family, in the community and in the work place. This wide spread discrimination against women is caused by traditional, cultural and religious practices and beliefs which are detrimental to them. The real situation of women worldwide brings about the vast economic and social gaps between men and women. Women are majority of world's poor and the number of women living in rural poverty has increased by fifty percent since 1975. Women in Asia and Africa work over 13 hours a week more than men and are mostly unpaid. Women are paid 30% to 40% less than men for doing equal work. As against men, women hold between 10% to 20% jobs in management, administrative and manufacturing sectors. The work that women do at home for their families is unpaid and unnoticed and is about 25% to 30% of the whole productive output of the world.

The concept of equality means much more than treating all persons in the same way. Equal treatment of persons in unequal situations will only increase injustice and not eradicate true inequality. True equality can only be achieved if the efforts are directed towards addressing and correcting these situational imbalances. It is this broader view of equality which has become the underlying final goal in the struggle for the recognition and acceptance of human rights of women.

In 1979, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This Convention sets out, in legally binding form, internationally accepted principles on the rights of women which are applicable to all women in all fields. The basic legal norm of the Convention is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women. This norm cannot be satisfied merely by the enactment of gender – neutral laws. In addition to demanding that women be accorded equal rights

with men, convention goes further by prescribing the measures to be taken to ensure that women everywhere are able to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled.

Women have been treated as 'objects' by the male dominated society in India and elsewhere. However, there is no uniform pattern of social, cultural and economic distinction between man and women. Patriarchy is very strong in India, despite several movements for the upliftment of the women launched during the pre and post independence period.

Women are treated as dalits (inferior) in their own families by parents-in-laws and even by their husbands. The parents do not treat the girl child equally, in matters of food, dress, health and education, with the male members of the family. Her status and position in the family is below that of her male counterparts. She has to help her mother in the daily house hold work. The birth of girl child in the family is treated as a matter of sorrow and grief. Women have to face a number of restrictions in matters relating to their education and dress, their movement outside the house and their mixing up with others particularly members of the opposite sex. Women are restrained from taking up jobs by their parents and their husbands. They are totally dependent on their husbands after their marriage and their sons after the deaths of their husbands. In short we can state that women have been made dependent by men and the social milieu men have created for them.

There is yet another view regarding the status and position of the women in Indian society. According to this view women have always been respected and treated equal with man and their position and status in the society is similar to that of men. Women are considered 'Ardhangnee' and motherhood is respected. According to Hindu religious beliefs, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Kali etc. are manifestations of God and his power. Women in Indian society are thus considered to be the symbols of power, wealth and knowledge. However, the status and position of the women in the Indian society, during the various periods of history have never been stable and has seen many ups and downs. In India, gender based consciousness has its origin in the emergence of the middle class and their problem.

Four aspects can be studied in detail in the context of feminist problems, i.e. (a) Production (b) Reproduction (c) Sexuality and (d) Socialization of children.

In India's context, males generally dominate in all the four aspects, although women carry major responsibilities in these spheres. Male supremacy emanates from caste, class, patriarchy and sexuality of the male.

#### **THE STATUS OF WOMEN THROUGH THE AGES**

The position of the women in the Indian society has been a very complicated one. In fact the recent changes in the status of women in India is not a sign of progress but a recapturing of the position that they held in the early Vedic period.

In the Rig-Vedic civilization, women enjoyed equal status with men. Women like men, received education and observed brahmacharya and upanayana was also performed for them. Women studied the Vedas and composed Vedic hymns. Women like Ghosha, Apala, and Vishvara were composers of outstanding Vedic hymns<sup>1</sup>

In the age of the Upanishads, there were women Rishis like Gargi and Maitreyi. Women could own property and widows could remarry. They were also teachers. Women were not secluded from men, and they freely participated in public life. Marriage was looked upon as a religious and social duty. Unmarried persons were not eligible to participate in Vedic sacrifices. Marriage was not considered as compulsory for every girl and no limitation had been placed on the age of marriage. The Vedic women being grown up and educated had a voice in the selection of their husband. Love marriage (Gandharva Vivaha) was also in practice. Widow Remarriage was allowed. Marriage was sacred and indivisible and was not a secular contract. It was a religious bond. Child marriage was unknown. Monogamy was general rule, but there were cases of polygamy among the rich and the ruling classes. Polyandry was unknown. The wife was given a place of honor and participated with her husband in religious ceremonies. According to Shakuntala Rao Sastri, "The Rig Veda does not mention any where the

practice of the burning or burial of widows with their dead husbands.<sup>2</sup>

As regards property rights both husband and wife is joint owner of the property, According to Romesh Chandra Dutt "Hindu women held an honored place..... They inherited and possessed property".<sup>3</sup>

The position enjoyed by the women in the Rig Vedic period, deteriorated in the later Vedic Civilization period. Due to great social changes which took place after 300 BC there was degradation in the status of women in society. Sons were valued more than the daughters because the sons could participate in wars. A daughter began to be regarded as curse. However, women were granted the freedom to participate in the public life. They were denied the right of inheritance and of ownership of property. Even the earnings of the women became the property of their husband and sons. However women continued to have the upanayana, received education and worked as teachers. Intermarriage between Brahmanas and Kshatriyas was not unknown between "AD 700-1206"

With the consolidation of Aryan power in India, the Aryans married the non Aryan women who resided in India at that time. Such marriages were not prohibited but the non Aryan women were prohibited from participating in religious rituals, as they did not know Sanskrit and were not educated. Gradually all women, Aryan as well as non Aryan became ineligible for Vedic studies and religious duties. By this time upanayana for girls become a mere formality. Since girls were not educated, early marriages become common. According to Altekar "The discontinuance of upnayana, the neglect of education and the lowering of marriage age, produce disastrous consequences upon the position and status of the women." <sup>4</sup> Gradually, Niyoga and widow remarriage were prohibited. Marriage becomes an irrevocable union as far as wife was concerned. The Smriti preached that a wife should look upon her husband as a God and worship him. The kings and the nobles maintained large harems, which inevitably lead to the seclusion of women. The purdah system becomes common among the royal families.

The position of women steadily deteriorated. The political conditions of

India between “300 BC to 300 AD” had their impact on the status of women. The Greeks, the Scythians and the Partisans and then the Kushans invaded India. The constant wars and destruction resulted in the decline of prosperity and also decline in the status of women. Neera Desai states that “Ideologically women was considered a completely inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality; socially, she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right, suppressed and oppressed, she was further branded as basically lacking the ethical-fibre. The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygamy, the purdah, the property structure, early marriage, sati (self immolation of the widows) or a state of permanent widowhood, all these contributed to the smothering of the free development of women.”<sup>5</sup> Thus it can be said that neglect of education of women, child marriage and the social evils like polygamy, seclusion of women and purdah brought about a tremendous degradation in the status of women.

During the Buddhist period women were not denied learning. Women of this period took active part in public life, but did not enjoy the right of Vedic studies. The position of women really deteriorated during the Gupta age. Dowry emerged as an institution in this period. Widows could not marry again and they had to spend their lives in penance and austerity. They had no right to real property. Sati had become popular by the Seventh Century AD. Still there were some women who received higher education even in this period. Lilawati and Khana was expert in arithmetic and astronomy.

The period between 1206 and 1761 saw further deterioration in the position of women. In this period female infanticide, child marriage, purdah, jauhar, sati and slavery were the main social evils which affected the position of women. Birth of a daughter was considered as bad luck. The women were largely uneducated and remained confined to their homes. They had no freedom. Conservatism, superstition and belief in magic, sorcery and witch craft were part of women’s existence. Motherhood was respected. A woman’s devotion to her husband, children and home was universally accepted as a positive value.

### **Pre independence period**

The Social Reform Movements and the National Movement generated social consciousness among the women regarding the social and legal injustices and inequalities which the Indian women suffered. The All India Women's Conference was established in January 1927. This organization concentrated on educational and social work among women. The capitalist economic as well as legal and political regime in the country was based on the principle of the recognition of individual equality and contractual freedom of the individual. It did not believe in equality based on birth, sex distinction, caste or community.

The All India Women's Conference and other women organization created a platform for agitation for the redress of their disabilities. Child marriage, sati and female infanticide (killing of the girl child) prohibition of widow remarriage, purdah and temple prostitution were some of the main social evils of which the women were victims. Social reforms like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, agitated against the sati system and ultimately sati was banned. Female infanticide was also declared a crime. With the spread of education and liberal national ideas among the people the purdah system gradually diminished.

The institution of temple prostitution was present in India. Girl child were taken up in temple service at a very early age. They were skilled in dancing and singing and they sang and danced in praise of God. They were known as Devadasis, and were known to be prostitutes. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi and other reformers agitated against this system and an Act was passed in 1925 which made it a criminal offence.<sup>6</sup>

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started agitation for widow remarriage and were successful in getting the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act passed in 1856. The Arya Samaj gave priority to widow remarriage. Mahatma Gandhi brought women out into public life. Women joined the national movement against the British rulers. The women of the middle class families came forward to take employment in 1930's and

1940's. During the British rule a mixture of ancient Hindu law and British law applied in matters of women's inheritance, marriage and the rights of the married women. After Independence several Acts were passed regarding inheritance of property and marriage regulation. The most important Act in the post-independence period are: The Special Marriage Act of 1954, The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 and the Hindu Succession Act 1956. The government of India has taken up the problems of divorce, dowry, rape etc. with a view to find solution to ensure equality of women with men.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Inequality – In various forms**

For centuries, women in India have been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of the religion and ancient socio-cultural practices. At the time of Independence, women were prey to many abhorrent customs, traditional rigidities and vices due to which their status in society was very low.

Mahatma Gandhi was a great crusader for the rights and equality of women with men. He believed that a woman had as much right to establish her own destiny as man had to establish his. He preached against the wrong done to women in the name of dharma shastras, laws and traditions. He believed that ancient Indian scriptures do not advocate social injustice. He believed in the equality of the human-beings and the freedom for individuals. Consequently he stood up for the emancipation of women. He desired utmost freedom for the Indian women. He believed that the women have the same right to freedom and liberty as men. He was against child marriage and strongly recommended widow remarriage. He invited women to take part in social movements and public works. He also asked them to join the national movement for independence of India from the British rule. The women responded to his call in large numbers.

At the personal social plane, women at the time of the independence were victim of wide spread illiteracy, feeble health, forced marriage before marriageable age, segregation from the outside of world in the name of purdah, indeterminable widowhood, opposition to widow re-marriage, rigidity

of fidelity, curse of polygamy, putting the female child to death, commercialized marriage through dowry, the evil practice of sati, and above all the complete denial of individuality.

At the economic structural plane, the Indian women were prey to economic dependence, early tutelage of husbands and in-laws, heavy domestic workload and invisible unpaid and un-recognized work, absence of career and mobility, non-recognition of their economic contribution, poor works conditions and wages, and monotonous jobs which men denied to do.

At the socio-political plane, the Indian women suffered from denial of freedom even in their own homes, repression in some direction and unnatural indoctrination in others, unequal and inferior status everywhere, rigid caste hierarchy and untouchability. Most women were reduced to "dumb driven cattle" and led inhuman, beastly life.

In pre-in depended India, two major forces, among others, which acted as catalyst in creating awareness and hopes among women, were national movement and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Despite their miseries and misfortunes, thousands of women of different communities in all walks of life came out of their homes to join the national movement. They took active part in political campaign, protest marches and demonstrations. They faced lathes and bullets. They suffered gallantly the police repressions, tortures, incarceration in prison and other indignities at the hands of the British. Not only did the women take part in the struggle for independence, but they also launched a separate movement of their own to fight for their rights. They fought orthodoxy superstition and communal separation. They proved that the Indian women had extraordinary capacities and projected a free, strong and courageous image of Indian womanhood.

One of the goals that Gandhi ji wished to achieve through the nationalist movement was equality for women. In fact his life mission was to bring women on equal footing with men. To Gandhi ji women were the 'last person' whose tears he wanted to wipe. Gandhi ji believe that without the liberation of the women, the demand for independence was superficial.

Gandhi ji believed that women are companions of men and that both men and women have been gifted with equal mental capacities. Women have the same rights as men, such as freedoms of speech, protection of life and personal liberty. Since the majority of women lived in the rural areas, Gandhi ji wished that the Antyodaya must seek their welfare.

With the declaration of independence and the transfer of political power, the women's movement suddenly lost its vigor. The ordinary women went back to their homes and only a small section of wealthy and well-to-do women could join politics or other professions. Soon after independence the women lost the champion of their cause as Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated.

The independence by no means automatically improved the life of women. Several barriers stood in the way of improvement in the condition of women in different spheres of their lives. However, independence of India brought with it the promises of actual liberation and equality. In the years following independence, tremendous change started to take place in the status of women in Indian society. Pt. Nehru, like Gandhi ji, believed in women being given equal status with men. He ensured that equality, freedom and justice be made the fundamental principles upon which the ideals of the new Indian society be built by adopting the concept of democracy and making India a Socialist and Secular Welfare State. The Constitution of India was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1950. The Preamble of the Constitution lays down the ideals and objective that the Indian people desire to achieve through a political system of government which suits them best.

To achieve the objectives, laid down in the Preamble, the Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedoms of speech, protection of life and personal liberty. Indian women can seek relief in cases of violation of the Fundamental Right in the same manner as Indian men. Article 14 ensures "equality before law" and "equal protection of law"<sup>8</sup> and Article 15 "prohibits any discrimination".<sup>9</sup> Article 15 (3). Empowers the State to make "any special provision for women and children",<sup>10</sup> even in violation of the Fundamental Rights. Article 16 (1) guarantees "equality of

opportunities for all citizen in matters related to employment or appointment to any office under the State".<sup>11</sup> Article 16 (2) forbids discrimination "in respect of any employment of office under the State" on the grounds only of "religion, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence any one of them".<sup>12</sup>

The Directive Principle of the State Policy laid down in Part IV of the Constitution like the Preamble, reflect the high ideals of liberal democratic polity. The Directive Principles embody the major policy goals of the Welfare State. Although the violation of the Directive Principles cannot be challenged in the courts of law, never the less, they are fundamental in the governance of the country and the State is charged with a duty to apply these principles while making laws. Some Directives Principles concern "women indirectly or by necessary implication while a few are women specific."<sup>13</sup>

The Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles are the instruments to attain our national objectives i.e. equality, liberty and justice. The special attention given to the needs and problems of women to enable them to enjoy and exercise their Constitutional equality of status, along with other specific provisions related to hitherto suppressed section of society, have led scholars to characterize the Indian Constitution as one embodying the objectives of a social revolution.

The Constitution of India has abolished all discriminations regarding sex, caste, creed, color and place of birth. It has placed women at par with men in all respects. It has not only provided equal rights and privileges between men and women, but has also made provisions for special steps to be taken by the government to improve the condition of the women. Thus the Constitution has once for all settled the position of women in society. This recognition of political equality of women was a radical departure from the socio-cultural norms, prevailing at that time in traditional India and even in the most advanced countries of the world.

The Constitution stresses the need for promoting the educational and economic interest of weaker section of the society and the welfare and the development of women. Government of India under the leadership of Prime

Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was determined to put in practice the directives of the Constitution, by starting an era of economic planning. The concepts of Five Years Plans was introduced in India with the noble intention of extending the welfare services so as to reach those persons and groups who by reasons of some handicap social, economic and physical, were unable to avail of, or traditionally denied, the amenities and services provided by the community. The Five Year Plans intended that the last persons were to be looked after first. The Five Year Plans aimed that the benefits were to flow in the more backward and underprivileged sections of the community, so that all sorts of disparities were to be removed. Women were considered in such categories of people.

A close look at the performance of the Five Year Plans executed so far reveals a mixed record of achievement and failures as far as liberation of women in concerned. The executions of the Five Year Plans have had very little impact in improving the status of women in India. The condition of women in Indian society has been very complicated and contradictory. The First Five Year Plans did not integrate women into the development process. The planners and policy makers relied on "tickle down" or "oil stain" theories of development whereby it was assumed that the prosperity in one sector, in one class or growth at macro-level, spread gradually to all other sectors. Consequent upon such development ideology, women were not made participant and beneficiary directly in India's planned development. So the planning benefited women only incidentally and residually.

Over the years the planning strategies on women and children in India has evolved from "welfare" to "development" to "empowerment". The first Five Year Plans (1959-80) aimed to "Promote the welfare of women," so that they could play their legitimate role in "the family and community". It was in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) that a separate chapter to "Women and Development was provided" in the plane document. The planners recognized women as a specific critical category requiring special attention in development strategies. In the Sixth Five Year Plan there was a shift in the approach from welfare to development. It recognized women as participant of

development and not merely as objects of welfare.

In the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) two significant changes in the strategy for planning for women were made. First empowerment of women become one of the nine primary objectives, and for this purpose a "National Policy for the Empowerment of Women" was approved in 2001. Secondly the Ninth Five Year Plan directed both the Centre and State to adopt a special strategy of "Women's Component Plan" through which not less than 30% of funds /benefits should be year marked in all the women related sectors.

There is a lack of data on the indicators of the situation of women in India and whatever data is available, in the national data system, suffers from sex biases. However with the help of the statistical data available, we can try to assess the gains, disabilities and constraints of the women in India. This can be done under the following subheads:-

Socio-demographic status of women

Women and the law

Educational status of women

Economic status of women

Political status of women

Socio Cultural setting of status of women

#### **Socio-Demographic Status of Women**

The demographic situation affects, to a large extent, the life, living and role of women and indicates to a certain degree their status in Indian society. Three quarters of the world population resides in the developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. The population of India in March 1981 was 684 million out of which there 353 million males and 331 million female. Women living in rural areas constitute between "70% to 90%" of the total population of the women.

The ratio of female to male population has been low for a long time. This shows that demographic imbalance exists. It is a matter of great concern that the ratio of male and female in the population of India has been decreasing since 1911. The mortality rate is far greater among the women than among the men of all ages, but more so in certain age groups between 1-5 year and between 15-34 years. In the absence of adequate and reliable data, it is not possible to give definite causes of the decline of the sex ratio, female mortality and differential improvement in the health condition of sexes. Nevertheless, some of the causes often mentioned are (a) son preference and neglect of the female child (b) lower status of women, (c) higher mortality rate of women, (e) higher incidence of certain diseases in women, (f) effect of hard physical labor on the health of women, (g) malnourishment of pregnant women, (h) differential health and nutritional standards for male and female, (i) women given only leftover to eat (j) effects of capitalism in creating disparity between the sexes.

The life expectancy at birth is a measure of the state of health. During 1941-51 the expectation of life at birth was 32.5 years for male and 37.7 years for females. By 1985 life expectancy for males was 56.7 years and for females 56.6 years. These trends strike some encouraging note on the health front of women but we should not be complacent in view within overall improvement other disturbing demographic trends.

#### **Women and Law**

The task of social reconstruction, development and national building all call for major changes in social order. To achieve this, social legislation is one of the main instruments. In the post independent India a number of laws were enacted for the advancement of women. Law have been enacted to give women equal rights and privileges with men, eliminate discriminations against them, abolish in-equality between the sexes and to remove external barriers coming in the way of their self realization and development.

Apart from the provisions laid down in the Indian Constitution to ensure equality of women with men and also to give them freedom and justice as

mentioned in the Preamble, the Parliament in India passed a number of enactments affecting women. The Indian Parliament passed the Hindu Code bill of 1955 which prohibited Hindus from contracting bigamous marriage and polygamy was made a crime. The Special Marriage Act of 1954 (for civil marriages) and its amendment in 1976 which was passed by the Parliament, treats men and women as equal in matters pertaining to property and inheritance. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 gave women equal rights to succeed with the son and his children to all the property of their parent. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 has barred child marriages and has raised the age of marriage of girls and boys. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 and its amendment in 1984 have put restraint over dowry. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act have empowered the mother to be natural guardians of child's property. The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls (Amendment) Act, 1986 was passed to restrict prostitution and flesh trade among women. The Factories Act 1947 has given legal protection to women working in factories. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 has been passed so as to guarantee woman equal pay for equal work and the Maternity Benefit Act 1961, allows maternity relief to women.

All these laws have besought a radical change in the Hindu social system. Some of these laws are the most progressive in the world and legally the Indian women are better off than their sisters in most Western countries. Yet, in real sense, liberation of women is not merely a sum of legal enactments and constitutional sanctions. Although laws are necessary to bring about a change in the status of the women, yet it cannot be denied that it is not possible to bring about this change by legislative action alone. There is a large gap between law and social attitudes and beliefs which act as barriers in the enforcement of laws for women's emancipation. Social institutions, norms of behavior and religious prescription, come in the way of the proper implementation of the special protective legislation for women. Women's economic dependence on men and the fears of social ostracism as well the fear of losing the control their children restrain the women from divorcing their husbands. In spite of the legal provisions it is very difficult to marry against the prevailing social norms. The right of the woman to her

father's property is never exercised. Dowry has been made illegal, yet it remains a fundamental part of most marriages today. The widow remarriage has yet to be a universally acceptable social system. The provisions of The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act have defeated the very purpose for which it was enacted. Due to the protective legislation for women, employers are reluctant to hire women due to legal safeguards. Although, there is a law on the age of marriage, child marriage is a common practice. In spite of all the protection provided for women and children by the Constitution and the other laws, women in India still continue to suffer male domination. The Indian in their family life have been governed by personal and religious laws which fail to give women their due.

#### **Educational Status of Women**

Education has been identified as the major instrument for raising the status of women. Hence, with the acceptance of gender equality of access to education for women at par with men was accepted. The rapid stride in education during the last sixty years has affected women in a number of ways. It has created awareness among the women and enables them to be self reliant. Education has brought the women in contact with the philosophy of liberalism and the democratic traditions of the West. It has resulted in late marriage, postponement of the mothering responsibility, and enabled them to seek a career. It has enabled women to exercise of their choice in the selection of their partners. It has also given raise to new equation in the relationship between the husband and wife.

However, education is not available to all equally. There is wide spread illiteracy among women and there exists a disparity between male and female literacy rate. The gap in urban and rural literacy is very high. As compared to the boys more girls drop out of schools at all levels of education. Apart from this women confront a lot of difficulties in education. There is discrimination in curricula for boys and girls, and on the whole the growth of women's education is slow.

### **Economic Status of Women**

The status of women is intimately connected with their economic position which depends upon rights, roles and opportunities for their participation in economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of society's state of development. However, all developments do not result in improving women's economic activities. Patterns of women's activities are affected by prevailing social ideology and differ according to the stage of economic development. It cannot be denied that the scope of women's career has expanded since independence. Women are no longer limited only to household chores. They can seek employment in the field of teaching, health, law, film industry, public service, fine arts, lecturer, mines, plantation just to cite a few. The rural women, who constitute about the eighty percent women in India, have been working in the fields and farms. But the most spectacular increase has been in the employment for the women of the middle classes who are working in secretarial and administrative capacities or as stenographers, clerks, telephone girls, sales women and receptionists. But this is only part of the reality. The number of women employed in 1981 was 20.95 percent, while it was 28 percent in 1961 of the total labor force of the country in 1985, only 31 percent were female out of which 12 percent were in agricultural labor force. The poor women are ready to accept any form of employment however arduous and at whatever wage. The most important and the largest sector for employed women is the unorganized sector, employing ninety four percent of women workers. This sector includes landless agricultural laborers, workers in village and cottage industries, worker in domestic service in cities, day laborers, street vendors etc. The female labor force in rural areas is mostly illiterate. Women and children are more vulnerable for exploitation and also earn lower wages than men. The work of the house wife in the home is devalued and is thus rendered invisible. The Indian State refuses to treat house wives as workers.

### **The Political Status of Women**

The political status of the women can be defined as "degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of power and values

given by society to this role of women". Participation in politics has to be viewed at the levels of acquisition and exercise of power and exercise of rights of citizens. Political participation of women can be measured both as candidates and as voters in the general election. After independence of India, women have contested elections and they have been elected to the Parliament at the Centre and the Legislative Assemblies in the States. Women have successfully carried out the responsibilities of the high offices like that of the Prime Minister, President, Ministers, Governors and Chief Ministers of the States, ambassadors and the like. But looking to the population of the women it is clear that their representation in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is very little. However, the percentage of women MP's and Ministers in India is higher than other advanced countries of the world. A large number of women have successfully contested election and got elected in local bodies, municipalities, gram panchayats etc. Man and woman have been given adult franchise on equal terms. The voting figures during election show that over the years there has been a big increase in the proportion of woman exercising their franchise. But it cannot be denied that in most cases men tell women where to vote. Yet there is an increasing awareness in women, regarding their political rights, duties, responsibilities as citizens even though on a limited scale. The fact that fewer women are elected can be explained by the prejudices of male voters towards women candidates.

#### **WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICE**

Panchayat Raj Institutions – In the opinion of Shri Mani Shankar Aiyer, as reported in India Today, a news magazine, "The highest national priority must be the unleashing of women power in governance. That is the single most important source of social energy that we have kept corked for half a century".

Through the experience of Indian Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) over a million women have actively entered political life in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Acts provide that all local elected bodies reserve one third of their seats for women. These Constitutional Amendments have

spearheaded an unprecedented social experiment in more than 500000 Indian villages. The creation of quota system has enabled the poor and illiterate village women to occupy as much as 43% of the seats in the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Since the onset of reservation of seats for women in the Panchayat Raj Institutions, the percentage of women in various levels of political activity has risen from 4-5% to 25-40%.

According to Devaki Jain reservation of seats for women in PRI's has enabled women's entry into local government in large numbers, which is often more than 33.3%. A myth that women are not interested in politics and have no time to go to meetings or to undertake all the other work that is required in political party processes has been shattered. According to her "PRI reminds us of a central truth: power is not something people give away. It has to be negotiated and sometimes wrested from the powerful".

It was feared that elected women would be rubber stamp leaders, but this is not totally correct. A study based on the field work in 180 villages in U.P., Rajasthan and M.P. and coordinated by the Center for Women's Development Studies in New Delhi, has shown that two thirds of elected women leaders are actively engaged in learning the intricacies of politics and exercising power. Noeleen Heyzer, executive Director of UNIFEM believes that "this is one of the best innovations in grass-roots democracy in the world".

Women leaders in Panchayati Raj are transforming local governance by sensitizing the State to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice. Through the PRI, they are tackling issues that had gone virtually unacknowledged, including water, alcohol abuse, education, health and domestic violence.

The PRI has also brought about significant transformations in the lives of women themselves, who have become empowered, and have gained self-confidence, political awareness and affirmation of their own identity. The village panchayats have become training grounds for the illiterate women. Sudha Pallai, formerly Joint Secretary in Ministry for Rural Development says

that the "it has given something to people who were absolute nobodies and had no way of making it on their own. Power has become the source of their growth". According to Sudha Murali, Communications officer of UNICEF in Andhra Pradesh, women are seeing this power as a chance for a real change for them and their children and are using it to demand basic facilities like primary schools and health care centers.<sup>14</sup>

By asserting control over resources and officials and by challenging men, women are discovering a personal and collective power that was previously unimaginable. Women, who are themselves not panchayat leaders, are inspired by the work of their sisters. The fact that village panchayats will have a minimum number of women has resulted in mobilizing the rural women at large. Once women acquire some position and power in the PRI's they will be ready to fight for their rights. It is this critical mass of unified and empowered women who will push forward the policies that enforce gender equality in future.

#### **Socio Cultural Setting of Status of Women**

Any assessment of the status of women has to start from the social frame work. Social structure, cultural norms and value systems influence social expectation regarding the behavior of both men and women, and determine women's roles and her position in society to a great extent. The most important of this instauration are the systems of descent, family and kinship, marriage and religious tradition. They provide the ideology and moral basis for men's and women's notions about their rights and duties. The normative standards do not change at the same pace as the changes in other forms of social organization brought about by such factor as technological and educational advance, increasing population and changing costs and standards of living. This gap explains the frequent failure of law and educational policy to produce the desired impact on social attitudes. The social status of women in India is a typical example of this gap between the position and roles accorded to them by the Constitution and the laws, and those imposed on them by social tradition. What is possible for women in theory is seldom within their reach in fact.

Religion shapes and sustains certain images of women. The religious traditions have a deep bearing, on the role and status of women. Different community and Indian society profess diverse religious faiths. Consequently, various systems of personal law exist. But as India is Secular State, there is no uniform Civil Law. Religion provides moral bases for the role of women in society. Each religion has a store of myths and legends to define women's characteristics, her virtues and vices. The reform movements of nineteenth and twentieth century's among the various communities attacked the practices like child marriage, ill treatment of widows and pleaded for women's education and their rights to property. The leaders of the movement realized the difficulty of separating social reforms from religious reforms, but their aim to reform all religions together could not be realized as both the ruling power and the religious orthodoxy in all communities resisted such attempts.

The other forms of social organization that exert the greatest pressure on women's roles and status are descent and kinship systems, marriage and family organization. The mode of descent (maternal or paternal), type of family organization and the nature of institution of marriage provide the major contours of the socio cultural setting in which women are born, brought up and live their lives. These institutions have implications for the status of women in society. The majority of Indian population follows the patrilineal system of descent. The girl on marriage has to go to her husband's family. A boy is the perpetuator of the patriline and a girl is of no use in this respect. This has direct relevance to place of women in society. A girl is said to be "a bird of passage" "a guest of parent's house" "another's property" and the like. Discrimination between sexes in the sphere of nutrition, Medicare and education is linked with greater desirability of the son. Even after marriage a woman remains an inferior partner.

Families in India largely exist in the framework of patrilineal descent. Such families put great emphasis on adjustability in the socialization of girls. Many problems of major importance for women are linked with marriage. Various issues like age at marriage, procedures for contacting and executing marriage, customs of dowry and bride-wealth, divorce, separation, widowhood

and remarriage speak much about the status of women.

Women have to confront constraints due to distinction between men's sphere and women's sphere and between masculine roles and feminine roles. A woman is primarily associated with the home and man with the outside world. Women look after domestic chores at home and their contributions is not recognized. She is not paid for the work that she does at home. The domestic work that she does is invisible. Housewives and mothers are feminine roles. In the cultural understanding, child bearing and rearing cannot be distinguished from femininity. The quantum of labor put by women is devalued. This division of labor leads to the seclusion and segregation of women.

Women suffer some special problems such as prostitution which is the worst form of exploitation of women and as an institution it's speak of man's tolerance of this exploitation on an organized level in society. A woman is viewed solely as a sex object and as an outlet for men's baser instincts. Cases registered under The Immoral Traffic in Women's and Girls' Act, that make the flesh trade a crime, have been showing an increase every year.

The poor status of women in independent India is reflected from other events as well. For instance, the suicide committed by female is on the increase and roughly forty to fifty percent of all suicide committed in the country are committed by the women. This state of affairs compels us for a critical reassessment of the domestic and social life, the customs and traditions which exist in this regards and the relationship between men and women.

Women lack channels to express their opinions. They are rarely consulted while framing of policies which are women specific. Most women are scared of a police station which is the last place they would go to, if they were in trouble. They lack insurance against future hazards. The fruits of progress are not reaching the women. The religious practices, rituals scriptures and percepts are still the forces which continue to create women's existing secondary status in the society. The traditional attitude towards

women persists till now. People believe, even today, that the duty of the women is the proper management of home and looking after the family members.

#### **Gender Inequality: Some studies**

It is often said that the status and position of women in society is the best way to understand a civilization, its progress and its shortcomings. The journey of women towards modernization has not been easy. Women have had to fight for their rights against the traditional male-dominated society.

Women of today, has come a long way from the position that they enjoyed and the conditions that they faced in the earlier times. But all the developments of the modern time have not been able to eradicate the age old evils faced by them. Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance about their right is still prevalent. Women have had to face a number of problems over the centuries. One of the worst problems faced by women seeking to achieve their emancipation is their biology. Motherhood is sometimes referred to as "nature's handicap". While men are free to indulge in sex gratification, without having to bear the consequent responsibilities and worries, women have to face the natural consequences of her act. Thus as long as sex impulse and motherhood go hand in hand, complete freedom and equality of women would have presented no problems with regards to the biological function of women. However, the use of contraceptives has made it possible to separate the sexual act and its consequences i.e. child-bearing.

The family is the most important primary human group and the institution of family is fundamental to human progress. But it seems that the family is now under a dark cloud. It must be realized that the future of the institution of family depends not so much on sex gratification or the desire for children as on the adequacy or otherwise of the facilities available for community of living and thought between the husband and wife and it is this urge for mutual companionship that is playing an increasing part in bringing together men and women into families. Apart from the institution of the family and marriage another important aspect that affects the status of women is the

gender based division of labor. Thus the basic institution of marriage and family in social life and socialization of children needs to be studied in depth along with the sexual division of labor and status of gender roles in order to find ways for the emancipation of women.

Michael Haralambos, in his book entitled "Sociology -Themes and Perspectives", has written on women and society. He writes that according to the Christian religious beliefs it was women who committed the original sin by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Eve tempted Adam and has been paying for it ever since. He quotes from Genesis that the Lord said "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shall bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee".<sup>15</sup> Sociologist regards this quotation as a mythological justification for the relationship between the spouses and the status and position of women in society through the ages.

Women produce children they are mothers and wives. They do cooking, mending, sewing and washing and take care of men. Men do the work involving hard labor. They hunt, cut trees, do farming and protect the women. Women are thus subordinate to male authority and they are largely excluded from the high status occupation and positions of power enjoyed by men. This practically applies to every known human society. There are men's jobs and women's job not only in the simplest hunting societies but also in the most complex industrial societies. This gender based division labor between male and female has given rise to women's liberation movement all over the world. The reasons for a sexually based division of labor and inequality between male and female roles have been hotly debated and challenged by such liberation movement. It is clear that women are biologically different from men. For some this difference is sufficient to explain the basic division of labor based on sex or gender in all societies. Yet there are others who argue that gender roles are culturally determined and the inequality between the sex's results from socially constructed power relationships.

#### **The Role of Women – Genes and Biology**

Biologically women are different from men. Although there is disagreement about the exact nature and consequences of this difference, some sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists argue that it is sufficient to explain the basic sexual division of labor in all societies.

**The Human Biogrammer:** Anthropologists Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox do not agree with the social scientists who believed that human beings behave simply according to the culture of their society.<sup>16</sup> Tiger and Fox believe that the human beings behave according to their human "Biogrammer". According to them human Biogrammer is a genetically based programme which make human beings behave in certain ways. According to them although the biogrammees of men and women are similar in many respects, there are important differences between them.<sup>17</sup>

Tiger and Fox argue that compared to women, men are more aggressive and dominant. This is due to differences between male and female hormones. Man hunts and is responsible for the protection of his group and also for alliance or war with other groups. Thus men monopolize positions of power. In contrast to men, women are programmed by their bio-grammar to reproduce and to take care of children. Tiger and Fox argue that the basic family unit consists of mother and child to be together because "the mother is totally essential to be well-being of the child."<sup>18</sup>

In short Tiger and Fox argue that male and female bio-grammar is adapted to a sexual division of labor in a hunting society. According to them genetic change is slow as compared to cultural change. Thus the male and female bio-grammar of hunting existence continues in the modern industrial society. From this it follows that attempts to abolish gender roles and replace them by unisex roles go against nature.<sup>19</sup>

### **Biology and Practicality**

Unlike Tiger and Fox, George Peter Murdock believes that biological difference between men and women are the basis of sexual division of labor in society. He argues that men have greater physical strength and that women bear children. These biological differences lead man and women to select gender roles out of sheer practicality. Murdock believes that due to the biological differences between men and women, sexual division of labor is the most efficient way of organizing any society. Murdock found that the sexual division of labor is present in all societies.<sup>20</sup>

### **Biology and the “Expressive” Female**

Talcott Parsons states that the family retains two “basic and irreducible functions” which are common to families in all societies. Talcott Parsons says that the isolated nuclear family in modern industrial society has two basic functions: the socialization of the young and the stabilization of the adult’s personalities. For socialization to be effective, close warm and supportive group is essential. The family meets this requirement. According to Parsons the family or something very much like it, is essential for socialization. Within the family the women is primarily responsible for socializing the young. He says that the bearing and early nursing of children establishes a strong primary relation of the mother and the small child.<sup>21</sup>

According to Parsons the women’s role in the family is as he calls it “expressive” which means that the role of the women in the family is to provide warmth, security and emotional support. This is essential for effective socialization of the young. The second major contribution of the women to the family is the stabilization of the adult personalities. The male works hard to earn a living which leads to stress and anxiety. The “expressive” female relieves this tension by providing the weary bread – winner with love, consideration and understanding. Parsons believes that a family can operate efficiently as a social system, only if there is a clear cut sexual division of labour. According to Parsons, the instrumental and the expressive roles complement each other. Like a button and a buttonhole, they look together to promote family solidarity. Thus according to him the biological difference between the sexes is the foundation on which the sexual division of labor is based.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Mother – Child Bond**

John Bowlby examines the role of woman from a psychological perspective. He argues that the mother’s place is in the home, caring for her children especially during their early years. Bowlby conducted a number of studies of Juvenile delinquents and found that the most psychologically disturbed had experienced separation from their mothers at an early age. He

found that such delinquents were raised in orphanages and were deprived of maternal love. Hence they were unable to give or receive love and thus took up destructive and anti-social careers. Bowlby views that it is essential for mental health that "The infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother". Bowlby implies that there is a genetically based psychological need for a close and intimate mother - child relationship. Thus the mother role is firmly attached to the female.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Role of Women – Culture and Society**

Many sociologists believe that human behavior is largely directed and determined by culture i.e. learned recipes for behavior shared by members of society. Thus norms, values and roles are culturally determined and socially transmitted. From this perspective, gender roles are a product of culture rather than biology. Individuals learn their respective male and female roles. The sexual division of labor is supported and justified by a belief and value system which states that gender roles are normal, natural, right and proper.

### **The Cultural Division of Labor**

Ann Oakley, a British Sociologist and supporter of Women's Liberation Movement, believes in the cultural division of labor. According to her division of labor on the basis of sex is not universal and she finds no reason as to why it should be so. According to her human cultures are diverse and endlessly variable. They owe their creation to human inventiveness rather than invincible biological forces. She states that George Peter Murdock is wrong in assuming that sexual division of labor is universal and that biology largely determines the sexual division of labor. She believes that certain tasks are not always performed by men and others by women. She believes that biology appears to have little or no influence on women's role. She disagrees with the views of George Peter Murdock says that there are places where men and women hunt together and the role of father and the mother are not sharply differentiated and both sexes share the responsibility for the care of child. She believes that biologically based incapacity of women to carry out heavy and

demanding work is a myth as women work in mines, farms and the constructions sector which requires hard labor. In the present days society's women form an important part of many armed forces i.e. China, Russia, Cuba, and Israel. Thus there are no exclusively female roles.<sup>24</sup>

She attacks the arguments of Parsons and Bowl by pointing to the kibbutz to show that systems other than the family and the female, mother role can effectively socialize the young. Oakley gives another example of Alor, an island in Indonesia, where women are not tried to their offspring. They return to the fields within a fortnight of the birth of their child and the father or the grandfather looks after the child. This does not have any harmful effect on the children. Thus in Oakley's view Bowlby's claim that an "intimate and continuous" relationship between mother and child is essential for the well being of the child is not true.<sup>25</sup>

Oakley criticizes Parson's view of the family and the role of the "expressive" female within it. She says that the expressive housewife mother role is not necessary for the functioning of the family unit. According to her it merely exists for the convenience of men. She claims that Parsons Explanation of gender roles is simply a validating myth for the "domestic oppression of women". She says that gender roles are culturally determined and not biologically. She says that there are no tasks apart from child bearing, which are performed exclusively by females. The mother role is a cultural construction and further states that children do not required a close, intimate and continuous relationship with a female mother figure.<sup>26</sup>

### **Collective Child-Rearing**

Bruno Bettelheim a psychiatrist in child development is of the view that a close, continuous mother-child relationship is not essential for effective socialization of the child. Bettelheim studied the collective child rearing in a Kibbutz, in Israel and found that there was no evidence of jealousy, rivalry or bullying in the children. He found the children to be hard working and responsible and there was no delinquency and no high school dropout.<sup>27</sup>

According to Bettelheim, the Kibbutz experience demonstrates that

children raised by educators in group homes can and do fare a lot better than children raised by their mother's in poverty stricken homes, and also better than quite a few children raised at home by their middle class parents.<sup>28</sup>

### **Male Dominance and Sexual Division of Labors**

Ernestine Friedl is of the opinion that the arguments provided by Oakley and Bettelheim do no conation an adequate explanation for the existence of a clear cut sexual division of labor in practically all known human societies.<sup>29</sup>

According to her neither Oakley nor Bettelheim explain why male generally have power and authority over women. Friedl supports a cultural explanation for the division of labor between the sexes. She observes that in some societies activities like weaving, pottery making, and tailoring are thought to be men's task but in other societies these tasks are considered to be women's task. However in societies where such tasks are treated as male roles, they carry higher prestige then in societies where they are treated as women's task. Friedl feels that this is a reflection of male dominance which she says exist to some degree in all societies. She argues that the degree of male dominance because "men have greater rights than women to distribute goods outside the domestic group". According to her they control the exchange of valued good beyond the family group. This activity brings prestige and power. The greater their control over the exchange of valued goods outside the family, the greater their dominance.<sup>30</sup>

Friedl ideas are novel and interesting and reveal a fascinating interplay between biology and culture, although she claims that her work shows that male dominance and gender role are culturally determines she fails to completely dismiss biologically arguments, the facts that women bear children forms an important part of her explanation for the sexual division of labor and male dominance. However her argument reveals the importance of culture.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Devaluation of Women**

Sherry B. Bortner presents a somewhat different, though equally

interesting explanation for the subordinate status of women. She attempts to provide a general explanation for the "universal devaluation of Women". According to Bortner it is not biology that ascribes women to their status in society but the way in which every culture defines and evaluates female biology. According to her, if this universal evolution is changed then the basis for the female subordination would be removed.<sup>32</sup>

Bortner argues that in every society, a higher value is placed on culture than on nature. Culture is the means by which man controls and regulates nature. Thus men's idea and technology that is his culture, have power over nature and therefore seen as superior to nature.

The universal evaluation of cultures as superior to nature is the basic reason of the devaluation of women. Women are seen as closer to nature than men and therefore as inferior to them. According to Bortner women are closer to nature because their bodies and physiological function are more concerned with "the natural processes surrounding the reproduction of the species". These natural processes include pregnancy, child birth and lactation. These processes are those for which the female body "naturally" equipped. Women's social role as mothers is also seen as closer to nature. Women are primarily responsible for socialization of the young. Infants and young children are seen as one step away from nature. Women's close relationship with young children further associates them with nature. Since the mother's role is linked to the family, the family itself is regarded as closer to nature compared to activities and institutions outside the family. Thus activities such as politics, warfare and religion are seen as more removed from nature, as superior to domestic tasks and therefore as the province of men. Finally, Bortner argues that "women's psyche" her physiological make up, is defined as closer to nature. Because women are concerned with child care and primary socialization, they develop more personal, intimate and particular relationships with others, especially their children. By comparison men, by engaging in politics, warfare and religion have a wider range of contacts and less personal and particular relationships. Thus men are seen as being more objective and less emotional. Their thought processes are defined

as more abstract and general and less personal and particular. Bortner argues that culture is, in one sense "the transcendence by means of systems of thought and technology, of the natural giver's of existence." Thus men are seen as closer to cultures since their thoughts are more abstract and objective than those of women. Since culture is seen superior to nature "women's psyche is devalued and once again, men come out on top". Bortner concludes that in terms of biology, physiological processes, social roles and psychology, woman "appears as something intermediate between culture and nature."

Bortner fails to show conclusively that in all societies culture is evaluated more highly than nature. Although many societies have rituals which attempt to control nature, it is not clear that nature is necessarily devalued in comparison to culture. The existence of such rituals point to the superior power of nature.

However, Bortner's argument does have one important virtue. She provides a universal explanation for the second class status of women. If Bortner's view is correct, the subordination of women to men is not because of biology but rather to the cultural evaluation of this biological make up. A change in this evaluation will remove the basis for female subordination.<sup>33</sup>

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*CHAPTER - 2*  
*METHODS OF STUDY*  
*AND*  
*INTRODUCTION OF THE FIELD*

## **CHAPTER – 2**

### **METHODS OF STUDY AND INTRODUCTION OF THE FIELD**

Stratification in Indian society has been very powerful and inequality among men and women is found since long. Due to vested interests men exploited women. After independence many measures were initiated for the welfare of women. These measures aimed at ameliorating the lot of women by providing them social security and facilities for social, educational and economic development. The Government of India and Rajasthan has been implementing various schemes for the welfare of the women for the last six decades. Hence it would be pertinent to assess the effect of these measures on the development and upliftment of women in the state. This study concerns this problem.

#### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were undertaken on the basis of available literature on this subject.

The first hypothesis was that the welfare schemes meant for the development of women in Rajasthan, with specific study of Bikaner, have made impact on the target women to a certain extent. However, the desired results remained eluding.

Further, the full utilization of the facilities provided through these schemes was prevented by social barriers imposed by society and the impact of the welfare schemes were not uniform among the different strata of women and reflected variation. This differential impact was due to the existent value system, which was basically differential in nature, among different societies, religion and castes. The priorities of the beneficiaries varied from society to society. It also contributed to the motivation-variation. Hence it could be assumed that there was a positive correlation between the standing of a particular society in the traditional hierarchy of and its capacity and ability to avail the benefits of the different welfare schemes as well as its motivation to avail the facilities provided through these welfare schemes.

### **Introduction of the Field**

Bikaner, the field of this study, is a district of the State of Rajasthan. Before 1956, it was known as Rajputana and comprised of 21 different princely states ruled by Rajput rulers. This feudal system has existed in Rajputana for a long period of time. These states were sovereign but the rulers had accepted the suzerainty of the Muslim, Mughal or British rulers of Delhi from time to time. This feudal system had its deep impact on the social, educational, economic and cultural status of the people.

The field of this research study, Bikaner, was a princely state prior to its merger in newly amalgamated state of Rajasthan state. The population of Bikaner was 16,74,398 while the total population of Rajasthan was 56,47,3122. The population of Bikaner district comprised by 60.27% rural people inhabiting 580 villages and the total percentage of the urban population is 39.73.

The following table (2.1) shows the population positions of Bikaner district.

**Table - 2.1 - Population of Bikaner district<sup>1</sup>**

Total population		Male		Female	
Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %	Urban %	Rural %
60.27	39.73	11.95	23.06	56.80	43.20

The above population figures reflected that majority of the people (60.27%) lived in urban areas while only 39.73% lived in villages. This phenomenon appeared a bit strange but the topological condition of the area might be responsible for it as a good part of the district is desert or semi-desert and hence the villages are sparsely populated. Draught and famines also drove rural people towards urban centers in search of livelihood. Yet another remarkable feature is the negligible presence of the scheduled tribes

in Bikaner district as their number is microscopic i.e. only 0.26% of the total population and 56.8% of them were residing in urban areas. The population of the scheduled tribes, 0.26% was meager as compared to their total population in Rajasthan (12.4%).

The main occupations of the people of Bikaner district are as follows:

- (i) Cultivations
- (ii) Agricultural labor
- (iii) Livestock and animal husbandry
- (iv) Forestry
- (v) Fishing
- (vi) Hunting and plantation
- (vii) Orchards and allied activities

The literacy rate of the district was 76.20% as compared to 60.41% of the state. The literacy rates of the state vis-à-vis the literacy rate of Bikaner are presented in table 2.2.

**Table - 2.2 - Literacy rate**

	Persons	Male	Female
Rajasthan State	60.41	70.70	43.85
Bikaner District	76.20	86.45	64.67

The data presented in the table showed that the literacy rate of Bikaner district was somewhat higher than that of the state. However, these figures did not reflect the mass illiteracy rampant among the women as avenues of education were absent due to the feudal character of the traditional social structure and also due to their poor socio-economic condition. However, after independence, avenues of education have been provided for them and various welfare measures implemented for their educational upliftment. In

order to bring educational development, the central and state governments have provided scholarships, stipends, free boarding and lodging, free books and other educational materials, dresses etc. through the welfare schemes and this factor has been responsible for rise in literacy rate after independence. However, still illiteracy among women is more apparent. Poverty, lack of avenues of income and social barriers kept them away from education in the feudal era but concerted efforts of changing the scenario have shown results.

Thus, Bikaner was found to be an ideal field for study of the impact of the various welfare measures adopted by the central and state governments for the social, economic, educational and general development of women. Further, the added dimension was to find out the changes in the life-style and values of the women, as a result of these welfare measures. The implementation of the various schemes was given due emphasis and objectivity was maintained throughout the course of this study so that an impartial and socially useful result might emerge.

#### **Field of Study**

This research study choose Bikaner district of the state of Rajasthan for conducting it. Bikaner is situated in the northern part of the state and its large part is a portion of the great Thar Desert. It was a feudal princely state before amalgamation of the princely states of former Rajputana. The structure of the society was also feudal in accordance with the princely rule. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the main occupation of the people. Resources for irrigation were far and few. The condition of people in villages was miserable as the Jagirdars were the lords of the land.

After its merger with Rajasthan, Bikaner was made a district. Bikaner is a divisional headquarter and the seat of administration of the district presided by the Divisional Commissioner. There are some important offices of the state in Rajasthan which include the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Veterinary University, Agriculture University, Maharaja Ganga Singh University, State Achieves, Rajasthan Canal Board etc. The

construction of the Shri Gang Canal by erstwhile ruler, Ganga Singh, opened new avenues in the field of irrigation. After independence, the construction of the Indira Gandhi Canal helped in growth of agriculture to a great extent.

The city of Bikaner has historical importance and many historical buildings add to its grandeur. The population of the district comprised of Brahmins (Pushkarnas), Vaishyas, Rajputs and other castes. Hence, it was thought fit to have it as the field of this research study.

### **Methodology**

The condition of women all over India is same. There is no difference whether they live in urban or rural area. The status of women remains the same everywhere. Looking to the present condition the study was conducted in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan.

Bikaner is situated in the north of Rajasthan. The city is surrounded by great walls. It has Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh in its northern side whereas Churu lies in its eastern side. Nagaur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer are in its south while in the western part it has the neighboring country Pakistan. It is situated on a slightly higher place (altitude 237 meters) and has an arid climate most of the year. Due to the geographic location of the city, it was one of the most important trade centers for the traders of west-central Asia. As per the census 2001 the total population of Bikaner is 16, 74,000 and the total percentage of the urban population is 60.27.

The target population of this study comprise of the women of Bikaner district of Rajasthan is sizeable population in the district. Bikaner city is the, headquarter of the district and people of different castes contribute to the city's residential clientele. Therefore, this sample is sufficiently representative. Further, being the seat administration, there existed every possibility of proper and successful implementation of the welfare measures meant for the upliftment and development of women.

On the above basis a sample of 300 respondents was drawn for the current study as this number was considered sufficient keeping in view the

limitations and constraints of time. However, it was by no means an easy task to select the respondents as they were residing in different localities. The sample included representative respondents belonging to the different strata of these women and having different socio-economic status. It was attempted to make the sample sufficiently representative so as it could provide the real position vis-à-vis the different welfare measures adopted for their upliftment and development.

The information was collected through survey reports of the area, reports of the department of women development and other sources like the voluntary agencies, government departments etc. Data for the study was collected through documents of the government of Rajasthan, interviews and field notes. Initially all relevant literature concerning the socio-economic and cultural background of the various maladies and problems affecting the respondents was taken in consideration. The various welfare schemes were properly considered with their aims, objectives and modes of implementation.

A comprehensive interview schedule was the main tool for collecting relevant data for the purpose of study. The schedule included all relevant questions necessary for eliciting the desired information from the respondents of the study. These questions aimed at elicited information regarding their family background, educational level, income, occupation, religious belief, leisure-utilization, mutual relationships, housing etc. Further, it was also attempted through this schedule to find their awareness level as well as their views regarding these welfare measures and also their level of actual utilization of the benefits provided to them through various schemes. Further, personal interviews and observation techniques were also used for strengthening and completing the desired information. The data, thus, collected from the above means was consolidated and analyzed for reaching the stage inference - drawing and obtaining final results. As the data were predominantly qualitative, it was considered pertinent to find only simple statistical correlations. The data, on tabulation, was itself reflective of the trend. Hence, statistical correlations were not attempted. Data analysis took into use the following variables: -

Difference in communities regarding educational level of the respondents, their parents and offspring's, factors in school enrolment, stagnation and dropout at school level, their aspirations and perceptions along with objectives regarding education for them and their children. Differences of communal and religious faiths and practices and community differences in income and occupational aspirations and mobility were the other variables. Finally, in order to isolate and identify the variables and their mutual relationship, community, age, education and occupation of the respondents have been used.

The sample of this research study comprised of all the 55 wards of the Bikaner district which includes the wards near to urban as well as rural area of Bikaner city. The study was conducted in the Bikaner city which has 55 wards in all. The total population of all wards is 529690 which include both male and female. 300 units were selected as the sample for this study. The sample was selected from each ward so that the whole city will be represented. The sample was selected from each ward on the basis of random sample method. The sample will select as per the ratio of their population.

The interview schedule is used as a tool of the study. Primary data was collected through interview schedule and Secondary data was collected from census report and other data available in books, journals and Articles published in various magazines.

The sample comprises of women of families of almost all works of life-agriculturists, landless labor, government employees, artisans etc. It was done with a view to make the sample representative. The socio-economic condition of the respondents varied according to their status in society. The respondents belonging to the upper castes had better socio-economic status as compared to their counterparts of the backward and scheduled castes. The socio-economic conditions of the respondents belong to scheduled castes were poor as most of them were either uneconomic land holders or involved in doing petty jobs. Most of them had no viable means of income so as to improve their socio-economic condition. However, it was kept in view to make the sample utmost representative of the cross-section of the district.

### **Family background**

The family background of the respondents is presented in Table 2.3. It showed that 48.33% of the respondents had nuclear families while the rest 51.67% belonged to joint families.

**Table – 2.3 - Family structure of respondents**

S.No.	Type of family	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Nuclear	155	51.67
2.	Joint	145	48.33
	Total	300	100

The data regarding the structure of family further revealed that 51.67% of the respondents came from nuclear families and 48.33% respondents were from joint families

**Table – 2.4 - Age group of respondents**

S. No.	Age group(Years)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	21-30	60	20.00
2.	31-40	75	25.00
3.	41-50	75	25.00
4.	51-60	60	20.00
5.	61 and above	30	10.00
	Total	300	100

Age is one of the most important biological characteristics of the individual that no society can overlook. Analysis of the respondents according to their age group revealed that the 20 percent respondents were each in the age group of 21-30 and 51-60, 25 percent each in the age group of 31-40 and 41-50 and only 10 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 61 and above. It is significant that 90 percent respondents were between the age group of 21 to 60 years of age.

**Table – 2.5 - Religion of the respondents**

S. No.	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hindu	180	60.00
2.	Muslim	30	10.00
3.	Sikh	60	20.00
4.	Christian	15	05.00
5.	Jain	15	05.00
Total		300	100

Religion is an important independent variable which determines the social status of a person in Indian Society. The above table shows that 60 percentage respondents were Hindu, 20 percentage Sikh, 10 percentage Muslim and Christian and Jain were 5 percentage each. It is significant that most of the respondents were Hindu.

Education has great impact on the progress of a family. Hence it was essential to have a glimpse in the educational family background of the respondents of this research study. The data, regarding the educational status of the respondents' families (Table-2.6), showed that 60% respondents had educated, 25% literate and 15% had illiterate families. It revealed that among the among the respondents living near rural area wards had illiterate family background while the respondents living near urban area had either literate or educated family background. In all these cases, it is significant that the urban respondents presented a better position as compared to their rural counterparts so far as educational background of their families was concerned.

**Table – 2.6 - Educational status of respondent's families**

S. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	45	15.00
2.	Literate	75	25.00
3.	Educated	180	60.00
Total		300	100

The educational status of the respondents were asked and the responses received were presented in table 2.7

**Table – 2.7 - Educational Status of respondents**

S. No.	Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Up to Middle	15	05.00
2.	Up to Senior Secondary	30	10.00
3.	Graduate	120	40.00
4.	Post Graduate	120	40.00
5.	Others	15	05.00
Total		300	100

Education is the most important variable which influences the status of any person in society. Education can be conceptualized as the right and most important instrument of social change and development. It plays significant role in the socio-economic growth of individual as well as society.

The result of the study revealed that the percentage of graduate and post graduate respondents were 40 percentage each, 10 percent respondents were up to senior secondary, and 5 percent each were up to middle or have a degree above the level of post graduate. It is significant that the education level of the respondents is higher.

#### **Socio-Economic Status of the Sample**

The respondents of this study belong to different socio-economic conditions. The district Bikaner has almost semi urban culture and it has its own traditions. Old biases related to the study of girls still existed in the society. The women of this district had made economic development after the implementation of the various welfare measures for their social, economic and educational development but still a large number of the women were illiterate and economically poor. The provision of reservation of posts has, of course, brought better economic status for many of them; still the condition of these women in the rural areas remains economically poor.

The sample includes 90 respondents of the scheduled castes along with 30 urban respondents of the scheduled tribes. The rest 180 respondents belonged to the various other castes, Pushkarna Brahmins, Rajputs, and Vaishyas etc. The respondents were engaged in different fields of economic activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, agriculture labor, government service, trade and business etc. Thus, the sample included representatives of women of different socio-economic and caste groups of Bikaner.

**Table – 2.8 - Family income of respondents**

S. No.	Income group(Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below 5000	62	20.66
2.	5001-10000	84	28.00
3.	10001-15000	63	21.00
4.	15001-20000	56	18.67
5.	20001-25000	24	08.00
6.	25001 and above	11	03.67
Total		300	100

Results regarding family income of the respondents indicated that 28 percent respondents had their family income between Rs.5001to Rs. 10,000, 21 percent respondents had their family income between Rs. 10,001 to 15,000, 20.66 percent respondents had their family income belowRs.5,000, 18.67percent respondents had their family income between Rs.15001to Rs. 20,000, 8 percent respondents had their family income between Rs.20001to Rs. 25,000 and only 3.67 percent respondents had their family income between 25,001 and above.

**Table – 2.9 - Marital status of respondents**

S. No.	Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Unmarried	35	11.67
2.	Married	244	81.33
3.	Widow	15	05.00
4.	Divorced	06	02.00
	Total	300	100

The data revealed that 81.33 percent respondents were married, 11.67 percent respondents were unmarried, 5 percent respondents were widow and 2 percent respondents were divorced.

#### **Objectives of the study**

The major objectives of the research study are following:

1. Inequality among men and women is the result of social environment.
2. Norms, values, culture and traditions are affecting the condition of women
3. Female receive less health care than male's.
4. Working conditions and environmental pollution impairs women's health.
5. Women work longer hours and their work is more arduous than men's yet their work is unrecognized.
6. India has exceptionally high rate of child malnutrition because tradition in India requires that women eat last and least throughout their lives, even when pregnant and perpetuating.
7. Women and girl receive less education than men, due to social norms and fears of violence.
8. The working conditions of professional women are also not free from complications.
9. The prestige associated with sons rather than girl resulting social pressures to have sons.
10. To examine the policies and the process of policy formation for the development of the women,
11. To find out the extent to which the policies have been put into practice or

some of the policies have come to be dropped. If so, to examine what have been the reasons for keeping some policies in abeyance or dropping them altogether,

12. To enumerate what welfare measures have been taken and to what extent they have been implemented. Has implementation been weak? If so, why? The commitment of these implementers, methods and means used, wastage of effort, direction of efforts, perspectives of implementations will be examined,
13. To know the acceptability and response of people and to understand social and cultural constraints in shaping the responses towards the desired objectives, and
14. To examine the perspective gap among the policy makers, implementers and recipients of the change. To examine the gap in the responses among the various sections of the recipients and to understand the imbalances in the progress of development of the women.

The aim of the current study was to take into account all the measures adopted for the welfare of the women in Rajasthan with special reference to Bikaner and find out their impact on them.

The main objective is to study the implementation of the welfare schemes and also to find out about the receptivity of the target population with respect to these measures and the benefits derived by them.

It has become evident, from the perusal of literature regarding the welfare measures meant for women, that the proportion of the benefit in larger numbers has not reached to the desired population.

This study also kept under focus this vital aspect while evaluating the benefits from the welfare schemes. It was a decided policy of the Government of Rajasthan to make available the benefits of its welfare measures to all the women without any discrimination whatsoever the case might be. Hence, it became a point of serious concern as to why some women were able to derive more benefits at the cost of others because it partially defeated the purpose for which the welfare measures were meant.

The various welfare measures in Rajasthan are implemented by the Women Welfare Department of the government. Hence, the manner of implementation also needed examination and this aspect was also a part of the current study and the policies and process of policy formation for development of women also required examination.

Further, it was also an objective to find out the extent of implementation and to enumerate what welfare measure have been taken and put into actual practice along with the methods and means used direction of efforts and factors which hampered the process of proper implementation.

Yet another objective of this study was to find out the acceptability and response of the people and to comprehend the social and cultural constraints in shaping the responses towards the desired objectives. It was also aimed to examine the perspective gap among the policy makers, implementers and recipients of the changes. The gaps in the responses among the various sections of the beneficiaries were also to be taken into account so as to comprehend the imbalance in the process of development of women.

#### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

Welfare of women today, although a worldwide phenomenon, are especially acute in the third world countries where most of women's activity takes place in the non-wage economy for the purpose of household consumption. In India, women are discriminated against in many areas including education, health and nutrition, employment, law, access to credit, security as well as control over assets and in technology, such as productive jobs, civil service appointments or parliamentary representation. The discrimination against the girl child start from the beginnings of her life within the family. The perception of the woman's role in the rural economy and even in some urban areas of developing economy does not reflect the reality. It is also imperative that women welfare and related terms become part of the development programs, giving them importance of sustainable development.

The Indian constitution grants women equal rights with men, but strong patriarchal tradition persist, with women's lives shaped by customs that are

centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and celebrated.

The origin of the Indian idea of appropriate female behavior can be traced to the rules laid down by Manu in 200 B.C.: "by a young girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house". "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."

Looking to the present condition of women in India it is though that a sociological study will be conducted. The study is important because on one hand in the age of globalization we talk about the equality especially on the bases of sex but it seems all theoretical, because if we see in practice the women's are still un-educated, malnutrition, over work, un-skilled, mistreated, less powerful or powerless and have poor health. This compels a sensitive mind to go in the roots of the problem and draw attention to the administrators and policy makers. So that they must come forward and will try to solve the problem connected with women welfare.

#### **Approaches to study**

In recent years an awareness has been developing that successful learning requires an explicit focus on the nature of knowledge, on how knowledge is acquire and on the fact that there are different kind of knowledge. Within this framework it can be understood that different sociological phenomena or even sociology as a whole can best be understood as a variety of approaches; all of which collectively comprise the ways of understanding the social world. All sociological phenomenon's can be dealt with culture and a scientific frame of reference. It is also true that no sociological approach or even all of them in combination can give us 'the truth' about the world. The approach merely provides use with ways of trying to understand the sociological phenomena.

There have been mainly two approaches in the study of social

inequality -

- (i) The consensus approach, and
- (ii) The dialectical or conflict approach respectively.

Both the approaches stress the systematic nature of society. Although one approach stress the cooperative and harmonious elements in society while the other focuses in the coercive and divisive elements. Both of these approaches can be usefully labeled structuralism in so far as they both focus on the whole society, the social structure and the relationship of its parts.

#### **A. Consensus Approach**

Within sociology it is possible to identify a broad approach founded on the assumption that our actions are to a very large extent structured by our social environment. We have values and attitudes; we produce activities and relationships on the basis of the organization and the structure of the society in which we live. Such an assumption gives rise to structuralism.

Consensus approach has explicitly focused on the problem of order to a societal level that is they have tended to concentrate on the order of total societies. This approach was influenced by the two early sociologists Comte and Herbert Spencer. The static and dynamic dimensions of August Comte and society an organism by Herbert Spencer influenced this approach. Later on Emile Durkheim (The moral nature of society, functional analysis), Talcott Parsons (The social system, Equilibrium and social integration), Robert Merton (Functional analysis), Neil Smelshner (The consensus approach to social change) and Davis and Moore (The functionalistic theory of stratification) are milestones of this approach.

The functionalist theory of stratification has been proposed by Davis and Moore and by Parsons but like so many forms of analysis arising from the use of consensus approach derives from the work of Emile Durkheim. Social stratification is recognized as a common feature of all societies. It is therefore, seen as a normal characteristics of society and is assumed to be serving

some positive function or need for society.

On the basis of this approach it can be said that it is necessary for a society to provide structural arrangement to motivate its individual members to play the required roles. Thus society has to motivate members to fill certain positions in society and to motivate them to perform the duties attached to those positions. It means inequality is the resultant of all competition or of division of labor.

We can analyze the functional utility of inequality and the hierarchy on the basis of men and women in Indian society on the basis of this approach. The ideal type explanation of this approach is that if all the positions and tasks were equally easy to fill and perform, and were all equally important to the survival of the society and if all the members of a society were equal in their abilities and talents in relation to the required tasks, there would be no problem. Can we analyze Indian society and institutionalized inequality on the basis of this 'ideal type' explanation?

On the basis of this approach we can say that high rewards and prestige are important for society. It also carries some amount of powers the consequences that the wealth, prestige and power which society have provided for these positions make those who hold them into a privileged section.

In India men are the privileged but closed class in the social hierarchy, while on the other side women or unprivileged closed class is powerless but functional up to a larger extent which is an important part of the division of labor. On the basis of such queries we can analyze the stratification, their root causes and factors, and the changing trend of stratification in Indian society.

Social inequality in this sense is generated by, and is functional, for society. Not only does every society need it but social inequality can also be seen to be empirically present in all known society which includes India also. Social inequality is, therefore, both universal and necessary in society.

## **B. Dialectical Approach**

In sociology there has been a tendency for theorists to take one side or other, to see society as being better characterized and describe primarily in terms of man's clashing interests or in terms of man's shared agreements. Generally conflict theorists regard themselves as radical critics of existing society and view consensus theorists as appeasers of the existing systems.

This approach was used by Karl Marx (Analysis of nineteenth century capitalism), Max Weber (Economic determinism and Protestant ethics, power and class), Lock Wood and Gold Thorpe (Class in modern society), Ralph Dahrendorf (The nature of conflict in post capitalist society) and Frank Parkin.

In this approach we try to examine those factors which are responsible for inequality. The stratification is not functional for society because it leads to exploitation. Almost naked exploitation, of many people by a few people. It is the characteristic of capitalism as a social system.

Men within a society are shaped in both attitudes and behavior by its social institution. Marx, the proponent of this approach, believes that underlying all the various and different kinds of 'social men' which are produced by different type of society, that is primitive, ancient, feudal oriental and capitalist is a basic and essential human nature. Men is essentially rational, intelligent and sensitive, but these qualities can be warped and diverted into their positions if the social arrangements of a society are so badly designed as to allow some men to pursue their own interests to the detriment of others. Very few men can escape their historical and social circumstances and study their own society with the detachment and dispassion required of science.

In India whatever the cause of the origin of inequality, role of the men, and the exploitation of the women by men are some issues which can be examined on the basis of this approach. After seventies the conflict approach has become more important in India due to the violent form of struggle. This approach considers social inequality as a contradiction and the cause of strains and tensions in a system. This approach also requires a historical view

of a particular social phenomenon with the perspective of historical materialism with the dialectical explanation because the knowledge is always historically and culturally relative. We cannot ignore the external and inner contradictions. Economy is a decisive factor for any culture so history and its dialectical interpretation is necessary for the analysis of a social phenomena.

The recent literature on social stratification in American and Continental sociology indicates some trends towards the narrowing down of the two theoretical positions. This has followed from the increased theoretical sophistication of the stratification studies and new substantive discoveries about social stratification in industrially advanced societies. These developments suggest two things<sup>4</sup>

(i) Neither the conflict nor the consensus model is by itself sufficient to explain fully all the sociological processes of social stratification (see, J.A. Jackson, 1968; E. Allardt, 1968; E. Leach, 1967; etc.) and

(ii) the ideological bases which are used to distinguish between the two approaches e.g. that the functional theory is rationalization of the established order and that the conflict (dialectical) theory has a revolutionary plan as it not only postulates a conflict between the privileged and the non-privileged but also predicts a classless society at a certain industrially advanced capitalist countries, for instance, where labor radicalism should be high, we find labor conservatism (see S.M. Lipset, 1960; D. Lockwood, 1958 and 1960; F. Zweig, 1961; etc.). This finding, though contradicted by some empirical studies (see, M. Harrington, 1963; P. Townsend, 1965; R.M. Titmus, 1962; etc.) continues to be significant in context of other findings, viz., the capitalistic system need not lead to the growth of imageries proletariats, and the socialistic societies may not be able to abolish all class distinctions.

The controversy between the functionalists and conflict theorists (dialecticians) has, not without reason, been characterized as 'degenerate' by Edmund Leach (1967). In fact, efforts have been made recently by the proponents of both the theoretical views to move away from rigid positions by emphasizing points of similarity or convergence in the two approaches. Now

the increasing tendency is to analyze social stratification from a pluralistic conceptual frame by treating both conflict and consensus as two dimensions of the same reality.<sup>5</sup>

The basic difference between the two approaches is due to the fact that most functionalist theorists come from the America and they emphasize in role or status, occupation while the conflict theorists from the continent or from the 'Third world' and they believe in classless society.

Both the approaches, functional and dialectical or in other words consensus and conflict, have their own merits and limitations, while studying the role of state and its implementation we need an integrated approach for the study, because this study will be completed only with the help of both the approaches mentioned above.

### **C. Integrated Approach for the study**

Indian social structures present a model with integration and consensus if we look at it in its traditional form. An analysis on the basis of structural - functional model would have been ideal in this case. But with the rapid process of change induced after independence in this society there have developed various contradictions and controversies in the social, cultural economic and political system here. The structural functional model in such a situation is insufficient. The nature of contradictions in the system can better be analyzed by using the conflict approach. All the same we cannot totally do away with the consensus approach. Therefore it has been thought proper to combine the two models for the purpose of the present study.

State policies, various schemes and facilities provided by the state or by the government for the upliftment of women as functional for maintaining order and system in the society have been analyzed through structural functional approach. But contradictions/conflicts in values expressed in the process of policy formation and implementation will be examined through conflict approach.

The focus is more on dialectical or conflict approach because in our

opinion there are lacunas in the policies and schemes provided by the government and the facilities provided through these plans, policies and schemes will not reach to the women. The study analyzes an institutional arrangement of maintaining and encouraging exploitation.

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## *CHAPTER - 3*

*DEMOGRAPHY AND WOMEN*

## **CHAPTER - 3**

### **DEMOGRAPHY AND WOMEN**

The assessment of the status of the women in the society has to start from the social framework. The social structures, cultural norms and value systems influence social expectations regarding the behavior of both men and women. They also determine women's roles and her position in society to a great extent. The most important of this institution are the systems decent, family, kinship, marriage and religious traditions. These social institutions provide the ideology and moral bases, for men's and women's notions about their rights and duties. In spite of the influences of technological and educational advance, urbanization increasing population, and the changing costs and standards of living, the change in the above mentioned social institutions is very slow or negligible as compared to other social organization. It is due to this aspect that at times law and education policies fail to produce the desired impact on social attitudes.

The social status of women in India is a typical example of this gap between the position and roles according to them by the Constitution and the laws, and those imposed on them by social traditions. What is possible for women in theory is seldom within their reach in fact.

#### **Religious traditions**

The religious traditions have a deep bearing on the role and status of women. The role and status of women in different religions is given below:

#### **Hinduism**

The women, like the Shudras were not permitted to study the Vedas as perform any sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> She is viewed solely as the mother and the wife these roles are idealized. The ideal wife is faithful and uncomplaining, and virtue lies in the services she renders to her husband. The practice of giving away of girls in marriage and the importance attached the sons for maintaining continuity of the line have strengthened the patrilineal social

structure of Hinduism. The impurity associated with menstruation and childbirth, which restricts women from joining religious ceremonies, strengthens the view that they are naturally inferior to men. Since marriage and motherhood are considered essential, a Hindu woman is expected to perform special 'Vratas' (rituals) to obtain long life and special protection for her husband and sons. A widow, on the other hand, is associated with misfortune and is regarded as inauspicious. She cannot participate in socio-religious activities as she may bring misfortune to others. Remarriage is not permitted for high caste widows by the Great Tradition, which continues its influence to this day, in spite of the legal sanctions for remarriage provided since 1856. Castes in which remarriage has been traditionally allowed, imposed other disabilities on widows, and secondary marriages are most performed with the same pomp and ceremonial. The Hindu male is no subject to such restrictions or conditions. He does not wear any diacritical marks to indicate his married state. He does not observe fast for his wife and suffers from no restriction on remarriage. A widower is not considered to be inauspicious.

Protest movements within the Hindu fold, like Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism contributed to some improvement in the status of women, particularly in religious and spiritual activities. But they also continue to regard women primarily as mothers and wives, and inferior to men in society. The Buddhist monk is given higher status than the nun in Buddhism. In Jainism, women are severely condemned even though they are given legislative position in congregational life. Veerashaivism permits divorce and remarriage. The Bhakti movement permitted women to seek spiritual solace independently of intermediaries, and throwing open religious pursuits to the languages of the people, enabled many women to become saints and religious leaders. These movements however failed to rectify in any significant manner the subordinate position attributed to women by both the Great and Little Traditions in Indian society. Later religions like Islam, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, which brought with them their distinct images of women, adapted themselves to the Indian context often drawing on the prevalent customs and practices.

### **Islam**

The Koran regards both men and women as equal and does not regard women as an impediment in the path of religion. Although the Koran provided women with a much higher status than was prevalent at the time, but due to the effects of the cultural norms of those periods, gradually over the centuries various interpretations of the Koranic injunctions, accorded an inferior position to women in many respects. A woman cannot be a priest nor can she lead the prayers. Women have no place in religious organization and legal affairs of the community. She cannot become a Kazi. Islam emphasizes the maintenance of modesty, decorum and chastity amongst the women, which resulted in the seclusions and veiling. The Seclusion of women and the use of burqua was common characteristic for the upper and middle classes of society particularly in the urban areas. This practice amongst the urban woman has declined, but has now become a practice among the lower middle class women, who consider it as status symbol. Seclusion has imposed many restrictions on women's behavior and has deprived them of the right to participate in communal prayers.

The marriage, in Islam, is a contract which gives unequal rights to men and women<sup>2</sup>. Islam permits polygamy and unilateral right to divorce to the husband. The bride's consent to marriage is a mere formality. The husband is the head of the family and demands obedience and service from the wife. Widow Remarriage and divorce are permitted for women but are generally frowned upon among the middle classes. There is a provision of mehr (dower) to secure women against the possibilities of divorce, but very few women are able to assert this claim. Islam recognizes women's right to inherit property but in practices these rights are not upheld due to ignorance and inability of the women to assert them.

### **Christianity**

Christianity considers woman as tempter and seducer and this has given the husband right to control the wife and her property. However it believes in mutually dutiful and respectful relationship between the husband

and wife. This has helped to weaken the authority of the husband and has given relatively higher status to the women in society. Unlike the Hindu joint family, Christianity believes in the nuclear organization of the family. Even in communities which retain the joint family, the daughter-in-law is free to move with her husband and it is recognized that her primary relationship is with her husband.

Christianity believes in monogamy and this belief has raised the status of women. Among the Catholics there is no place for divorce. The Catholics believe in the concept of permanency of marriage. The Christian women enjoy greater security of home and the company of their children, although they are subject to husband authority because they have no legal right and do not have independent existence. Christian women can participate in all religious ceremonies. Christianity does not believe in marriage as a women's sole destiny. It believes that a woman has an independent moral entity and responsibility. It is due to their tradition the Christian women were the first to enter in the field of education and employment as nurses, doctors or teachers. Christianity believes certain qualities of women such as capacity to work, caring for her family, kindness and charity for the needy outside the home, and wisdom. Though, the taboos on women are less in Christianity, they are basically inferior to men.

### **Zoroastrianism**

This religion is practiced by the Parsees in India. It gives women a position of honor in the family and the society. They are entitled to property and education that is both religious as well as secular. Traditionally, Zoroastrianism imposed taboos demanding segregation and non participation of women in religious activities. They are permitted to divorce and remarry. Polygamy and child marriage were removed by the Parsee Panchayat in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Marriage of Parsee men to non Parsee women does not involve in disgrace and his children are accepted as Parsees. In case a Parsee woman marries outside the faith, the same right is not given to her as men. She is even prohibited from entering the fire temple.

### **Tribal Religion**

Women have a role to play in the religious activities of the family and the group but have no place in the special worship of tribal deities. Only in matrilineal tribes the women can worship ancestral deities. Their contribution to economic activates results considerable freedom in social behavior. However they have no role in the enforcement of community discipline and public morality, which is the function of the Panchayats or Tribal Councils. Menstruation is associated with impurity and leads to exclusion of women from positions of ritual importance.

Thus it can be stated that there is hardly any difference in the position given to the women by any of the religions. The reform movements like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj Prarthana Samaj among the Hindus and similar movements in other communities were against child marriage, ill treatment of widows and were in favor of women's education and in their rights to property. The leaders of the movement realized the difficulty of separating social from religious reforms, but they could not reform all religious together as the ruling power and the religious orthodoxy in all communities resisted such attempts. This resulted in restricting the scope of these movements in two ways. Firstly the movements developed within the fold of each religion and not as a unified movement for transforming the whole society. Secondly the aim was to change the position of women within the family and to ensure for them a position of dignity and respect there in. These movements have influenced mostly the urban middle class. The reformers did not challenge the universal suppression of all women, perpetuated by their subordinate position in the society, and as such they did not consider the need and problems of women's participation in the wider social process. It was Mahatma Gandhi and the Freedom Movement which made women's emancipation a part of the larger movement for the removal of inequalities that oppressed all the weaker sections.

### **DESCENT SYSTEMS**

There are two main descent systems in India, matrilineal and patrilineal.

#### **Matrilineal: 4**

Matrilineal communities are concentrated in the South Western and North Eastern regions of India. It is prevalent among the Khasis and Garos of Meghalaya and Assam and among the Nairs, Thiyars and Moplahs of Kerala. Even after the acceptance of Islam and Christianity, by a large part of the population in these regions, there are no substantial change in the patterns of kinship and marriage. In the recent past, the development of market economy, education and occupational mobility have influenced patterns of marital residence, rules of inheritance and other related matters.

In matrilineal system, the lineage is counted through the women but the power rests with the men in the women's family. Matrilinea is associated with an economic system in which women are not dependent on men. Constraints on women are found in those areas where there is greater concern with maintenance of group boundaries and retention of family and caste status. The Nairs impose many restrictions on women, but the Garos and Khasi women enjoy great freedom of movement because of the contribution they make to the economy. Matrilineal systems display some inherent conflicts. Authority rests with men, while group placement is determined through women. A husband is not incorporated in the wife's Kin group, and has minimum rights over his wife and children. The property is controlled by the wife's brother, father or uncles. Occupational mobility, resulting from modernization, increases a men's control over his wife and children, if they move with him, but disrupts the matrilineal system.

#### **Patrilineal: 5**

The majority of Indian population follows the patrilineal mode of descent. In this system the daughter goes after marriage to her husband's house and is transferred to another patriline. This affects the position of women in society. The male is the perpetuator of the line and of the family name. Only the son can perform certain religious duties for the family. The socio-cultural compulsion of marriage of a daughter has led her to be regarded as a burden. Discrimination between the sexes in nutrition, medical

care and education is directly related to this attitude. In tribal and rural areas the girls' rights to property are extremely limited. Men possess land and its resources. A widow has right of use of her husband's land if she does not remarry. In case of divorce or separation, the children may accompany the mother, but they have to return to the father when they grow up. The cultural notion that a women's role is only supportive has to be traced to patrilineal decent and paralegal residence.

#### FAMILY ORGANIZATION

The most common family organization is the joint family. It is composed of a group of patrilineally related males. All members of the joint family have equal rights to property; they share a common budget, residence and health. The joint family pattern of living has been affected by socio-economic changes, modernization and urbanization. The type of joint family depends upon such factors as the caste, community, or age of marriage. Joint family type of living is common to land owning and trading classes and in the upper castes. Nuclear family is culturally approved form of domestic group among the tribe's.

A woman is expected to adjust to her father-in-law's house hold to which she goes after her marriage. She is directly subordinate to her mother-in-law and has little or no say in decision making. Her status in the family depends greatly on her husband's contribution to the family economy and the amount of dowry brought by her. Mothers of long standing enjoy respect and authority in the family and have a say in decision making. The mother's authority declines with old age widowhood, and daughter-in-law's coming into importance as a mother and wife of the principal provider.

The observance of purdah before the husband's kin is in practice. It was found that, the highest percentage of purdah before the father-in-law was found in Haryana, (72.61%), Rajasthan, (62.18 %) and Delhi – (60.78%). Purdah was never prevalent in the Southern States. Women settled away from the paralegal villages, and in urban areas have greater freedom of association and movement, if they also contribute to the family economy. The

women's role is less restricted in a simple family where she is not subordinate to any other women and is the mistress of the house.

### **Marriage**

In Patrilineal society's marriage signifies a transfer of a woman from her natal group to that of her husband. Arranged marriages at a young age are considered most desirable for girls, as these notions are related to the importance of virginity and restrictions placed on marriage within the same gotra or clan lineage. The Muslims prefer marriage between close relatives as it helps to keep the property within the family. In south, cross- cousin marriages among Hindus are the accepted mode. Education and liberalization of ideas in urban areas have led to certain changes in the pattern of selection of the marriage partner.

The arranged marriages highlight the unequal status of women. She has to present her-self before the boys and their relations for acceptance. The ceremony of kanyadan, where the virgin daughter is given to the bride groom by her father, indicates inequality of status between the bride-givers and bride-taker's. In the North the son-in-law, and his parents are entitled receive gifts from the girl's parents, but the latter are not suppose to accept any food at the son-in-laws house.

A marriage between men of higher caste and women of low caste (hypergamy), is extremely detrimental to the status of women. It is prevalent among the Rajputs and Jats of North India. Female infanticides among these communities were partly a consequence of hypergamy. Female infanticide was very common for it was difficult to find a suitable match for girls of high caste. In hypogamous marriages the dowry is very high.

### **Polygamy: 5**

Both variants of Polygamy viz Polygyny (plurality of wives) and Polyandry (plurality of husbands) are found in India. Polyandry is confined to certain Scheduled Tribes today's like the Todas in the Nilgiris, Khasas in Jaunsar Bawar districts of Uttar Pradesh and the people of Lahaul, Kinnaur

and Spite in Himachal Pradesh.

Polygyny was prevalent in most parts of India. The reforms movements of 19th century advocated the acceptance of monogamy and treated the practices of polygyny as an indignity offensive to the status of women. While the acceptance of monogamy became widely prevalent among the educated classes, reformers differed on the action necessary for the eradication of polygamy. Some wanted to ban polygyny others believed that it would die out with spread of education. Due to the social reaction and also due to declining material prosperity, the prevalence of polygyny has declined considerably during the past 100 years. Under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and women's organizations, laws banning polygyny were passed before independence of India. After independence the Hindu Marriage Act of 1954 was passed. This Act prohibited all Hindus from marriage with more than one wife.

Under the existing laws polygyny is permitted only among Muslims but is not widely practiced. In Some tribal communities polygyny is still prevalent but is practiced by the chiefs and head men. Barrenness of women economic advantage and gain in prestige are the usual justification for plurality of women among the tribes. Among the non tribal the justification for plurality of wives, is Barrenness or sickness of wife, absence of son and communication gap between an illiterate uneducated wife and an educated husband. The women often do not seek a divorce because of their economic and social dependence on their married status. Economic gain is an important motivation for polygyny among communities where women contribute substantially to the family economy. Some groups in both the Hindus and the Muslims find it cheaper to have a number of wives as extra hands than hiring labor. The incidence of polygyny among the Muslim is not as high as commonly believed and there is resentment among the Muslim women against the legal sanction of this practice. The continuation of this practice among the Hindus now is mainly due to custom, women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights and the social acceptance of the situation.

### **Bride Price and Dowry**

There are two major types of transfer of material wealth accompanying marriage are bride price and dowry. Bride price is payment in cash and kind to the bride's father in exchange of the authority over the women. It is prevalent among patrilineal tribes and among the middle lower castes of non tribal population. Among those who follow this practice, a daughter is not regarded as burden because her marriage brings wealth to the family. The marriage of the girl brings wealth to the family both before and as a result of her marriage. There is also a custom that permits a wife to leave a husband who ill treats her, by paying some compensation. This is welcome as it gives her a chance of freedom from an unwanted partnership. However, this practice is sometimes abused and a woman may transfer from one man to another, even against her wishes, in return of some monetary compensation. There is considerable resentment among the women against this custom known as Reet in Himachal Pradesh and Natra in Madhya Pradesh. The custom of bride price has been responsible for indebtedness among some of the communities. This results in a state of servitude to the money-lenders who are generally landowners. There are reports that, among some Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Uttar Pradesh, wives have been sent for prostitution to clear the debts incurred by the husbands at the time of marriage. Thus, this evil custom of paying bride price needs to be eradicated.

Dowry is an attempt to improve the social status of a family or group, because dowry is associated with higher social group. In such groups and families a girl is considered a liability in her father family. This is because of withdrawal of women from productive activities and the loss of their productive skills. Dowry may be seen as (a) the gift given to the bride during marriage. (b) The gift given to the bride groom before and at the time of the marriage or (c) a present to the in-laws of the girl.

The custom of dowry is prevalent among the higher social groups. Practice of dowry is sanctioned by social cultural practices among the Hindus and Muslims. It is given to obtain a suitable match for the girl. The increase of social and economic inequality has been one of the most important

inducements for dowry and operates at all levels of society. Behind each transaction of dowry is the desire for social status for the daughter and indirectly for her parent's family. The wealth involved in dowry may be big or small according to the economic position of the family. Dowry has resulted in indebtedness of the family, unhappiness and mental break down and even death of the bride. The Anti Dowry Act needs to be enforced to curb the practice of dowry. Men and women should be educated against taking or giving dowry. The display of dowry gifts and ostentatious expenditure in marriage should be banned.

#### **Widow-hood**

The cultural traditions in India prohibit widow remarriage. According to census of 1971 there were 23 million widows in India as against 22 million reported in census of 1951. The percentage of widows decreased from 15.5% in 1961 to 12.5% in 1971. The ratio of widows per thousand widowers was 2,772. The facts that the widows outnumber the widowers in all ages indicate that the deterrents to the remarriage of widows are still fairly high. The fear of losing children prevents women from seeking remarriage.

Social attitudes towards widow are different at the different socio-economic levels. But at all socio economic levels there is a change in the life style of women after widow-hood. Majority of the population irrespective of their religion approve change in the mode of dress of widows. Among the upper caste Hindus, widows can participate in auspicious ceremonies but this is not so among the Scheduled and other lower castes. In spite of marginal change in attitudes of the people, the condition of poor widows continues to be bad in society. They are abandoned by their families and they have to beg for their daily existence. For widows with property, however, the legal reforms of securing their rights to a share in their husband property have improved their conditions considerably. The government provides family pension to widows of government servants. This has guaranteed a degree of security for such widows.

### **Age of Marriage**

In the rural areas of India the marriage of very young girls is still prevalent, though there is a distinct rise in the age of marriage for women in India. Rules of endogamy, other norms of restrictions and preferences for marriages between certain groups, and the strong emphasis on the purity and chastity of women encourage early marriages. Most tribal communities do have child marriages. People in India believe that 14 to 15 was the desirable age for marriage of girl. Early marriage is essential for Schedule Caste women to protect them from the lust of men of upper classes who have economic power over them. Early marriage and lack of education result in growth of population and adversely affect the health of the mother and the child. It also affects the status and education of the girls. In Urban areas, education and need for employment of boys has raised the marriage of girls also. Among the Urban middle and upper classes the age for marriage of girls is 16 to 24.

### **Customary Marriage**

Marriage among the dominant higher caste is performed by ritual ceremonies. There have been various forms of customary marriage practiced by other castes. They are normally conterminous with easy form of divorce and secondary marriages. The secondary marriage of a widow or separated or divorced women is accompanied by a nominal ceremony varying from region to region. Most tribe prefers marriage by negotiation but marriage also take place by elopement and the choice of the girl is generally respected.

## **WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE CHANGING SOCIETY**

### **Role differentiation**

In India the equality of rights between men and women is recognized, though the society implicitly accepts a sharp distinction in their roles and spheres of activity. True equality between men and women can be achieved only if the implication of Constitutional equality is accepted in the minds of the people. A woman is primarily associated with the home and she is expected

to look after the domestic chores. The role of the women is those of a house wife and mother. In the cultural understanding of the people, the work of child bearing and child rearing as well as home making is identified with feminist. Irrespective of the work that women do in the farms, mines, factories, at construction sites, or in the offices, all of them are expected to be home makers in the same manner as women who confine themselves to home and home making activities. The role of the women in the outside world has not yet been accepted in the same manner as the role of men.

Decision making for the community and the exercise of political power is still regarded as an exclusive male preserve. Men may engage in manual work outside the home but such work inside the home is considered derogatory and is expected to be done by women.

Regional differences in the type and quantum of work expected of women expose the hollowness of the myth attached to these sex linked roles. Weaving is done by women in the North East region whereas men do this job elsewhere in India. Embroidery work is male activity in Kashmir but a female activity in the rest of India. In the Northern hill region women carry heavy logs, slice the timber and help in wood chopping, whereas this is men's job in other parts of India. The work assigned to men is considered more prestigious in most committees and regions. Women are generally the unpaid family workers.

In the middle class there is clear distinction between work done for one's household and that done for others. Women are supposed to work for their house only. Where the women assist the family business like tailoring, grocery, knitwear, food processing etc. by preparing things at home, their contribution is not to be acknowledged, with the result that they are not recorded in the census as workers. It is unfortunate for women of these classes, who have no other qualification and skills to engage in these jobs as a means of earning livelihood because the prestige of the family suffers when the women have to work for others.

This tradition is changing with girls taking up white collar jobs. Parental

inhibitions are breaking down in low middle class families where girls have to earn to support the family or to provide for her marriage expenses. There are cases where parents do not want their daughter to marry out of a fear that this would deprive them of their earnings. Domestic help assist the well-to-do women in the house work but they are expected to run the home and bring up children. These distinctions of roles within and outside the family, in decision making, in management expenditure and income are equally shared by very few men and women. These norms of behavior influence the bringing up of boys and girls. While some enlightened families take pride in not discriminating between boys and girls in educational opportunities, the emphasis on female task and feminine abilities remains and there is distinct difference in the degree of protection considered necessary for the boys and girls. Boys are not asked to do domestic work except marketing and escorting their mothers and sisters. Boys doing cooking or tailoring are ridiculed and discouraged. Boys must study and prepare for carrier but this is not thought of for the girls. Marriage remains as the goal for girls and their education is only a security against unforeseen eventualities. Excellence in studies or any other field does not provide a justification for girls lack of interest in household work. This distinction in expectations inevitably affects the allocation of family resources for the education of the boys and girls, irrespective of their aptitudes and abilities.

The emphasis on feminine role has an inevitable effect in girl's personality and identity. They learn early in life the need for flexibility, adjustment and submissiveness among the poor sections where the girls contribute to the running of the house as well as to the family economy, their education is often sacrificed while the boys are encouraged to study. It is feared that education of girls may alienate them from their conventional roles of house making, child bearing and child rearing. The education of girls may also make them less submissive to the family.

#### **Home and Work**

The relationship between the earning capacity of the women and her status and autonomy within the family depends, to a great extent on the status

of her earning activity. Since manual labor has a low status in our society, the women employed as unskilled wages laborers and menial workers do not enjoy a better status. Women in high prestige jobs or white colored jobs enjoy a better status.

Women of poor sections have to work hard to earn a living and also work at home. Such women are extremely over worked and cannot give proper attention to the bringing up of children. The position of middle class women, who have to work outside and also have to look after the work at home, is no better. For the women living in the urban areas there are a number of aids that make house work easier. They do not have to fetch water and fuel from a distance like the women of the rural areas. However the urban house wife is expected to give greater care and attention to the children and their studies. She is expected to keep the home in a better and more attractive manner. Due to their overwork the working women desire a better and leisured life for their daughters. The women are required to be efficient in their employment as well as in running a modern home. This creates considerable stress which makes their life very difficult. Very few women have the income as well as understanding and sympathy from the family which can ensure some rest and leisure for their self improvement, or enable them to adjust to the demands of both their home and jobs.

The change in attitudes to women working outside the home or participating in public life has been slow and uneven. This is because there is deep rooted prejudice about women's inherent aptitudes and capacities, her proper sphere of work and men women relationship. The teaching profession or medicine is considered more respectable for women because it does not conflict with the traditional norms of feminine role. Nursing, on the other hand, though not in conflict with feminine roles, involves contacts with impure objects, male patients and doctors, and odd hours of work. Thus nursing has not attained the same degree of acceptability among the middle classes, as the teaching and medicine profession. Traditional prejudices against the performing arts are breaking down rapidly because of high income associated with them. The pace of change in the attitudes is even slower in small towns,

where it is more difficult for women to take up unconventional work because of the social attitudes. Men of small town still do not relish working under a women boss.

Society's ambivalence regarding the gainful employment and independence of women is demonstrated in many ways. Her income is appreciated because it raises the standard of living and lessens the financial burdens, but the freedom of association and movement needed for outdoor work is not approved. Men may come late from work, and may take time off from family responsibility in the interest of their carrier but not so women. A belief that working women are bad mothers and inefficient house wives is wide spread. When the financial condition of the family improves, the women have to leave the jobs. Most working women tend to pamper their children to make up for the lack of proper attention on their part.

The problem of role conflict manifests itself in various ways. Husbands who have a lower status jobs than their wives find adjustment difficult. But where the husband is the principal bread winner he enjoys superior authority in the family. It is considered demeaning of wives of men in high status jobs to take up low paid and relatively lowers status jobs.

The problems of adjustments will remain unless the distinction between men's and women's work within and outside the family is removed through the process of socialization in the home and in the school. It is necessary to provide supportive institutions like crèches, easy transport, labor saving devices, and changes in life style to make home making an easier and less time consuming process. If household work and the rearing of the children are recognized as socially and economically productive, then sharing such responsibilities need not disgrace a man. If they equally share in such responsibilities they do not become obstacles a women's right to play the multiple roles required by a modern society. If the house wives work is recognized for the purpose of nation accounting and as a contribution to national savings and stability of economy, it would enhance women's status in the society. It shall also acknowledge societies debt to them rather than its present attitude where she has to shoulder the drudgery and the sacrifice

without any recognition.

### **Special Problems**

There is a big gap between women's needs and the opportunist available to them which leave them open to exploitation. This exploitation cannot be stopped only by laws or by development programmer. To stop this exploitation it is essential to understand the magnitude and intricacies of the problems of the women as well as providing institutional support to them. The society is changing fast and the process of adjustment in social institution and values to the changing needs give rise to certain problems and deviant behaviour problems such as prostitution, problems of women prisoners, suicides, unmarried mother, and aged and destitute women. These problems can be solved by bringing about structural changes in the socio-economic system.

#### **Prostitution**

Although prostitution is an old profession its commercialization is a recent phenomenon. Child marriage, denial of widow remarriage, dowry, and inadequate employment opportunities for women, and above all poverty, has always been the major factors contributing to the spread of this evil. Industrialization and urbanization have made trafficking in women into highly profitable industry. It has also changed the character of this evil from traditional institutions sanctioned by social and religious customs, into a wide speed industry in vice. It has been found that many new entrants to this profession are victims of social operation and poverty. Poverty and lack of adequate employment opportunities compel the families of poor and middle class to allow prostitution of their women. The women of agricultural laborers take up this occupation to free their families from indebtedness. In certain areas girls are encouraged to practice this profession to earn their dowry. Some time women from middle class family take this profession because of their economic necessity and by their desire to keep up an appearance of affluence. At times the educated women enter this profession because they find it difficult to obtain other types of employment.

Prostitution represents the exploitation of poor by the rich and the exploitation of women by men. If women are to become equals of men in society, the society must ensure economic, social and psychological security for them so as to protect them from this evil and worst form of exploitation and inequality. The increase in the incidence of this evil in metropolitan cities and urban areas indicate that the growing demand is directly linked to the increase in poverty among the poor. The high profits of this trade have encouraged the exploitation and seduction of women from tribal communities and other poor sections of the population where this profession was never practiced. There are a number of intermediaries in this profession who reap rich profits from this evil.

The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1951 aims to suppress the commercialization of this profession and doesn't penalize individual prostitutes or prostitution itself. A prostitute can be punished only when she carries-on her trade near public places or places of religious worship. This lacuna and the necessity of having women witness during a raid have severely restricted the powers of this Act to suppress immoral traffic in women and girls. More over the punishment imposed under the Act is not adequate. Apart from making the Act more severe there is an urgent need to take up measures to eradicate this social evil. The removal of poverty will go a long way in suppressing this evil. Better preventive and rehabilitation measures like opening of homes for abandoned and illegitimate children, economic rehabilitation of women rescued from this trade, as well as special counseling of women to make them aware of the moral and social dangers of this profession.

#### **Women in prison**

The condition of women prisoners deserves the special attention of the society. The women prisoners are the most highly exploited and ill treated. At times their life is worse than that of animals. A large majority of women prisoners are mother, whose crime was mainly caused by extreme poverty or helplessness in certain social matters. Most of the women prisoners are beginners in crime and for them the prison life is extremely unhealthy. At

times in some prison, lunatics both criminal and non criminal, are housed with women prisoners. This dangerous practice prevents both reform and rehabilitation of the convicts and the treatment of the insane. The Law Commission has recommended that convicts on short term sentences should not be sent to prison.

Most women prisoners are sent away from their place of residence because there is no place for them in the prison near home. Their isolation from the family is increasing difficulties of their rehabilitation and readjustment to family life after their release. The problems of women prisoners are particularly regarding their rehabilitation, education and care of their children. Women's voluntary organizations should be involved in arranging useful educational and recreational work programmes for women in prison.

### **Suicides**

Suicides is a "reaction to problems that apparently cannot be solved in any other way, a final response which a human being makes to inner and emotional distress" Cultural patterns, socio-economic conditions and group activities act as inhibiting or encouraging factors for suicides. In India the earliest form of suicide for women was sati which arose out of a social system that degraded widows. Sati was legally banned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Women committed more suicides than men. The highest incidences of suicides among women have been found in the age group of 15 to 34. The causes of suicides have generally been found to be despair over dreadful diseases, quarrels with parents-in-law and husband. In Gujarat an enquiry committee found that the incidence of female suicides in the State was larger than men when the causes of suicides were physical, mental, social and domestic. Men committed more suicide than women for economic reasons. It was also found that the majority of women who committed suicide was illiterate and was married. The committee found that child marriage, lack of freedom in choice of partners and joint family relationship as the major causes of female suicides. Poverty, economic insecurity as well as inadequate opportunities for employment are the reasons behind women

committing suicides along with their children.

#### **Unmarried mothers**

One of the causes of high suicide rate is illegitimate pregnancies. In the past unmarried mothers risked their lives through criminal abortions or become prostitutes, so the Medical Termination of Pregnancies Act 1971 was passed. Illegitimate pregnancies are caused due to unhappy or maladjusted family life, broken homes, rape and sexual ignorance. In cases of unmarried mothers it has been found that the family does not accept or assist them in any manner.

The problem of unmarried mothers is increasing with urbanization and the spread of Western culture as well as the disintegration of traditional social norms. This problem requires much greater attention than it has received so far from official agencies as well as voluntary social welfare organization. It is important to provide counseling and assistance to the unmarried mothers and to rehabilitate them in their families and society.

#### **Aged Women**

In traditional Indian society the care of aged persons was ensured through the joint family. The disintegration of the joint family organization and the values has left a large number of aged women economically helpless. Such aged women have to go to the destitute homes because no homes are available to them. Such women are seldom visited by the family.

The State government has schemes for old age pensions but the amount of pension is very meager and reaches very few persons. The aged women are mostly illiterate and helpless hence the people who help them obtain the pension often exploit them. Greater care and attention needs to be paid to this problem by the State government and voluntary agencies.

#### **Destitute Women**

The number of destitute women has been increasing in the recent years because of poverty, loss of employment and break down of the family.

A majority of them are destitute widows and deserted wives, who in order to support themselves and their children are either beggars or exploited by middle men in immoral traffic. Institutionalized services for the destitute women are highly inadequate, both in numbers and types of services provided for rehabilitating them.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is amply clear from the study of the socio-cultural trends that the society has failed to frame new norms and to open institutions to enable women to fulfill the multiple roles expected of them in India today. A majority of the Indian women do not enjoy the rights and opportunist guaranteed by the Constitution. Increase in the demand for dowry and other phenomena have not only lowered women's status, but also indicate a regression from the norms developed during the freedom moment. The concern for women and their problems has suffered a decline in the past three decades. The new social laws have remained unknown to the large mass of the women.

Social attitudes and institutions cannot be changed rapidly. The process of change can be accelerated by deliberate and planned efforts. The State, the community as well as the people who believe in the equality of women must combine their efforts. In order to achieve rapid change in social attitudes and institutions, the public opinion should be mobilized and the social efforts should be strengthen against institutions like polygamy, dowry, child marriage, unnecessary expenditure on weddings. A campaign to increase women's awareness of their legal rights should be started by the help of the mass media. Films and advertising agencies should refrain from degrading the image of women by using them as sex symbols as it contributes to the increase in crimes and deviant behavior that threatens a women's status in the society.

## *CHAPTER-4*

### *WOMEN AND EDUCATION*

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### **WOMEN AND EDUCATION**

Education plays a vital role in handing down tradition cultural skill from one generation to another. Historically, education had passed through different phases. The ancient and the medieval society had both formal and informal systems of education. Informal education has an important function of communicating the traditions and skills to the tribes and the family. Formal education was then influenced by religion. Institutions of formal education were patronized by religious institutions like temple, mosque and also by the king.

The famous sociologist Emile Durkheim has defined education as the influence exercised by the adult generation upon those who are not yet ready for adult life. According to him the object of education to awaken and develop in the child physical intellectual and moral condition which are required of him both by his socially and his immediate social environment.<sup>1</sup> Thus the process of education take place in every society. Through education the society achieves two goals i.e. to socialize and develop the individual according to the social needs such as social control and to fulfill society's need concerning human resources, such as training for the specialized skills in industry and technology of modern economy.

Education has been regarded both as an end in itself and as a means of realizing other desirable ends. Education develops the personality and rationality of individuals. It qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their social, economic status. It has been recognized as a major instrument which these societies can use to direct the process of change and development toward desired goals. It helps to equalize status between individuals coming from different social strata. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights regards it as one of its basic rights of every human being.<sup>2</sup>

The movement for improvement of women's status all over the world

has always emphasized education as the most significant instrument for changing women's position in society. The social reformers of India of nineteenth century also accepted this view. However, their aim was to use education to make women more capable of fulfilling the traditional roles as wives and mother and not to make them more efficient and active units in the process of socio-economic and political development. The East India Company and the British Rulers of India supported this limited view of women's education. The expansion of education and health services in the twentieth century created a need for women teacher and doctor. This resulted in the incorporation of this two vocations in the programmes for the women education.

To understand the place of women's education in India fully it would be proper to understand the struggle of the women for the right to education. If the position of the women's education during the Vedic period is taken as exception, it would be amply clear that during the pre British period of Indian history the women were not given education.<sup>3</sup> It was felt that the women should be assigned only domestic duties and they were not provided with education. During the British rule the old social system was replaced by the emergence of a new society and the growth of new outlook among the people of India. The old concepts were replaced by the belief that all individual should have equal right and freedom, irrespective of sex, caste, race or creed.

The British rules made it possible for the Indian people to realize the liberal western principles in politics, education and the social sphere. Equal right of women to education and culture was recognized almost universally. Education speared rapidly both among men and women. The conservative fear of educating girls began to disappear. There was a time when the education of the girls had no supporters but only open enemies in India. This situation changed during the British rule, Female education passed through the stages of apathy, ridicule, criticism and acceptance. In the present times it can be said that the need for education of girls as much as boys is recognized as a cardinal need.

The pioneering work of women education was done by religious reform

bodies like Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj, the Ram Krishna Mission and the Christian Missionaries.<sup>4</sup> Girls primary schools were opened in the country. In Indian women university started by professor Karve in 1916 was one of the outstanding institutions imparting education to women. Sir Saiyad Ahamed Khan and other Muslim leaders advocated women's education among the Muslims.

Wide spread poverty spread poverty of the majority of India population, the lack of resources and the vastness of the country and a huge population hampered the rapid growth of women education. The fruits of education have not reached those people who are unable to pay for it.

The British introduced modern education in India. They brought to the Indian people not only the western liberal ideas but also made them aware of the extensive and profound scientific and technological achievements of the West. The progressive Indians, the British government and the foreign Christian missionaries were mainly responsible for the spread of modern education in India.

After the attainment of independence India adopted its Constitution on Twenty Sixth January 1950 which guarantees, Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.<sup>5</sup> Thus the women were called to play/multiple roles in the polity, the economy and the society, along with men. International agencies like U.N.O. also emphasized the role of education as an instrument that equips the women to build a new social order. Education had been identified as a major instrument for raising the status of women in the society. With the acceptance of the gender equality, the access to education for women at par with men was also accepted. This resulted in spread of literacy and education at a very fast pace.

Women's education has created awareness of their rights and duties and enables them to be self reliant. Education has also brought the women in contact with the liberal western ideas. Education has deferred the age of marriage and there by postponed their mothering responsibilities. Education has enabled the women to come out of their homes and to seek a career or

job of their choice. It has also enabled women to exercise their choice in the selection of their partners. It has given rise to new equation in the relationship between the husband and wife.

In spite of all, this, attitudes to women education in India has to seek a balance between the traditional limited view and the broad new concept of education. It is this balancing of tradition and the new concept of education which has influenced academic planning, allocation of resources and development of values in society, both for men and women.

**Table – 4.1 - Educational status of respondent's families**

S. No.	Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	21	07.00
2.	Literate	71	23.67
3.	Educated	208	69.33
Total		300	100

The respondents who had educated family background were 69.33 percentage, 23.67 percent respondents were from literate families while only 7 percentage respondents were from illiterate family background. The result reveals that most of the respondents were from either literate or educated family background (Table – 4.1).

#### **NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION**

The Parliament of India approved the National Policy on Education in 1986.<sup>6</sup> The new policy aimed for equal access to education for all. It laid down that educational transformation, reduction of disparities, universalisation of elementary education, adult education and scientific and technological research were national responsibilities for which adequate financial resources were to be provided. The new concept aimed to give access to education of a comparable quality for all, irrespective for caste sex or location. It envisages a common education structures of 10+2+3 for all parts of country. The breakup of first 10 years comprises of 5 years of primary education 3 years of upper primary and 2 years of high school education. The elementary education

according to the National Policy proposes to ensure that all children who attain the age of 11 will have had five years of schooling through the non formal stream. It also aims to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto 14 years of age and aims at eradicating illiteracy, by a vast programme of adult and continuing education. This was to be implemented through various channels.<sup>7</sup>

#### **PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION: - QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS**

The progress attained in women education can be examined by quantitative indicators like enrolment, outturn, educational facilities, literacy rates and the total stock of educated women, in the light of the stated national objective of integration of women as equals of men in all aspects of national development.

##### **Enrolment**

The Constitutional directive to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 has remained unfilled till now. This is due to the slow progress of education among the girls, SC and ST. As compared to the pre independence period the progress of women education after independence has been phenomenal. The enrolment of girls in primary, middle and secondary levels in 1947 was respectively 83%, 9% and 7% of all the girls in education system. The enrolment in the Universities at that time was less than half percent. Over the years the enrolments at all the levels of education have increased considerably. According to the latest statistics available the number of girls per hundred boys at different level of education in 1947 was 36 at primary level 22 at middle level, 14 at secondary level and 19 at University level. By 1973-74 the enrolment of girls at different stage of education as well as their proportion to boys increased tremendously. In spite of this unprecedented advancement in enrolment of girls in education institution, yet much need to be done as yet in this regard. This so because the drop-out rate is very high both at the primary and middle stage. In classes I to V one out of three girls dropped out, and only 30% of the girls in class one reached class V. At the middle school level the proportion of the girls enrolled

and those who drop out is 5:1. Secondary school level the proportion of girls enrolled who drops out is 12% which is less as compared to the percentage of the drop out at primary and middle class levels. This is probably because secondary education is largely confined to the upper and middle class. This means that only one girl out eight is in school. Due to poverty and backwardness the drop out level at girls all education is more in the rural areas as compared to that of the urban areas. The higher education of women is even more confined to urban, upper and middle class.

The National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) had recommended special programmes and efforts so as to close the gap in education of boys and girls needs to be stepped up. As a result of the efforts enrolment of girls rose in 1960 but by 1966 the efforts slackened and the enrolment of the girls declined. This decline is a matter of great concern.

#### **Outturn**

In the outturn of student from school and university system the most significant features are the slower rate of increase in the number of girls per thousands boys who pass the matriculation and higher secondary examination and the much faster rate of increase at the university stage, particularly at the degree level. The gap between qualified man and women is declining more rapidly in higher education than at school level. Since higher education in India is still confined to a small minority, the impact of this trend on the educational development of women as a whole is marginal. During 1947-48 to 1965-66 the number of girls per thousand boys passing the matriculation examination increased from 12 to 31. At the first degree level, the increase has been from 18 to 43, at the second degree 14 to 37 and for doctorates from 4 to 19. For professional degrees the increase was from 9 in 1950-51 to 16 in 1965-66. In professional education, the only courses open to women before independence were medicine, education, nursing and law. After independence it was possible for women to take admission in engineering, technology and research courses also. The success of women in these courses has been significant but their representation in other professional fields is still very low. The progress of women at research level

has been satisfactory. The success of women in various examinations and courses prove that their aptitude and intelligence in higher studies like mathematics and science is no way less than boys.

#### **Growth of Institutions**

The National committee on Women's Education had advocated the provision of separate education institution for girls to break down the prejudice against their education. In the period after 1960-61 educational institutions exclusively for girls multiplied rapidly and increased from 10.3% in 1947-48 to 29% by 1967-68. While welcoming the growth of educational institution and facilities for spread of education among women, some adverse features of this rapid growth be pointed out. The single teacher's primary schools, which are in large numbers, suffer from frequent closures because of absence of teachers. This discourages the parents from sending girls to schools. At middle and secondary level most of the schools for girls suffer from inadequate teaching facilities and low standards, particularly in science and mathematics. This limits the student choice of subjects. The rapid increase in women's college has very low enrolment making the college financially non-viable and provide very low standard of teaching. Such spread of sub-standard or limited education can not help the women in achieving equality with man in this field and it may also damage the cause of women's education. The maintenance of proper and high standards of teaching in all the educational institutions, especially those that are exclusively for women, is essential if the educational development of the women is to be achieved.

#### **Women Teachers**

It is necessary to increase the number of women teachers to ensure the development of women's education. In 1947 out of the totals number of schools teacher 14.4% were women by 1973-74 the proportion of women teachers increased to 26% in primary schools 37% in middle school and 30% in secondary schools. At the University and college level proportion of women teacher increased from 8.5% in 1950-51 to 35% in 2008-2009. The low proportion of women among primary schools teacher is mainly due to

difficulties that women have to face in serving in rural areas. These difficulties that the women have to face are because of the resistance of their families, the fear of in security in villages and the lack of physical amenities such as accommodation, schooling, transport and medical facilities. It is necessary to solve these problems on a priority basis if the present imbalance in the development of women's education between urban and rural area is to be reduced as well as prevent increasing unemployment among the trained and qualified teachers. Inadequacy of women inspectors creates a number of difficulties for women teachers, particularly in single teacher's schools. This needs to be looked into in order to avoid misbehavior, blackmail or exploitation of the women teachers by male inspectors.

### **Literacy**

In spite of all the expansion that has taken place in formal educational system the vast majorities of Indian women have remained outside its reach and are illiterate. Education is not available to all equally. There is wide spread illiteracy among the women and there exists great disparity between male and female literacy rates. The female literacy rate had increased from 0.69% in 1901 to 18.4% in 1971 and the number of literate females from 68 to 435 per thousand males. According to the census of 2001 the number of literates in the total population in India was 76.17% out of which 85.74% was male and 42.88% were female. While women constitute 48% of India population less than 25% of them is literate as against 47% male who constitute 52% of the country's population. Thus, the literacy ratio between male and female reveals that glaring disparity exists in the literacy rates between the male and the female. There has been only 26% increased in literacy by 2001 and in fact the literacy growth shrank over the last two decades from 102.3% in 1991 to 75.6% in 2001 to 63.73% in 1981.

Thus, the total number of literate females has been increasing steadily from 161.9 million in 1950-51 to 185.2 million in 1961 to 215.3 million in 1971 to 641.16 million in 2001. With the progress of education, the sex ratio among illiterates changed to 1055 women for every thousand male in 1911 to 1138 in 1951 to 1250 in 1961 to 1248 in 1971 to 1322 in 2001. Of the small portion of

literate women in the age group of 15 to 24 and 25 and above the large majority have only primary and middle level education.

The gap in rural – urban literacy is also very high. As per 2001 census 39.65 of the rural population and 77.4% of urban population was literate. In 2001, the female literacy in rural areas was 27.96% were as it was 87.82% in urban areas. During the period of 1991-2001 more girls were in school at all levels of education in 2001 than in 1991. However looking to the enrolment figures, it seems that there exist a big gulf between enrolment of boys and girls. Over 45% girls at primary level, more than 55% at middle level and more than 65% at secondary level are out of schools.

The challenge of this widening illiteracy gap will have to be kept in mind while determining the priorities in education development in the years to come. The formal education system can cater to the needs of only a minority and mainly the younger generation. Steps will also have to be taken to look to the educational needs of adult women who constitute the workers and the mothers of the society. Women confront a lot of difficulties in education. The growth of women's education is slow. All this needs to be looked in to.

#### **Attitudes to Women's Education**

A social attitude to girl's education varies from absolute indifference to acceptance. According to a survey, conducted some time back, only 16.8% people who were contracted during the survey felt that girl should not be given any education. About 64.5% observed that girl should not go in for higher education even if they are very intelligent. About 77.5% person supported compulsory education for girls up to VIII Class.

The urban middle class people were more in favor of girl's education. A small group of ancient families still oppose women's education for traditional reasons but most of these families regard education for girls as an accomplishment and a symbol of modernization. The lower middle class approves the education for girls because of economic need, but a large part of this lower middle class is unable to educate their girl child due to economic and other social difficulties. A very large majority of people living below

subsistence level cannot educate their girls due to poverty. A large majority of girls have to undertake domestic chores, by the time they reach at the age of 8 years. A very large number of teenagers is also engaged in earning for the family or working with their parents in farms or industries in the unorganized sector. It should be noted that girls constitute a higher proportion of unpaid family workers throughout the country and that is a major reason for their exclusion from schools. Apart from this early marriages or betrothal of girls also places social restriction on them from pursuing their studies. Other reason which stand in the way of girl education are inadequacy of facilities, particularly distance of schools from home, irrelevance of the content of education, and the fear of alienation of girls from the environment as a result of education.

The strongest social support for girl's education comes from its increasing demand in the marriage market. A majority of the people believe that education helps to improve the girl's prospects for marriage. This relationship between marriage prospects and education however operates in different ways. It is necessary to find bride-grooms with still higher education and in this way education of girl's leads to an increase of dowry. This increased expenditure acts as a deterrent to girl's education and many parents withdraw their girls from school for this reason, after the primary stage.

It is a common psychology that the girl child was either not enrolled in school or was enrolled late in schools, hence it was asked to the respondents that what their age when they join school was and responses received were presented in Table 4.2 below:

**Table – 4.2 - Age of joining school**

S. No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1.	5 years	114	38.00
2.	6 years	101	33.67
3.	7 Years or above	85	28.33
	Total	300	100

The data reveal that respondents who joined school at the age of 5 years and 6 years were 38 percent and 33.67 percent respectively while 28.33 percent respondents had joined the school at the age of 7 years or above.

#### **Other Imbalances in Education Development**

Education is a double-edged instrument which can eliminate the effects of socio-economic inequalities, but can also introduce a new kind of inequality between those who have it and those who do not have. Apart from the sharp increase in the number of illiterate women and the disparity in educational development between rural and urban areas, there are several imbalances in educational development between advanced and backward classes and between regions. Imbalances in women's education and literacy are the consequences of these regional disparities which reflect variations in regional attitudes towards women. A study of state-wise progress of women education at different level reveals that while all the States had made rapid progress, the progress Bihar and Rajasthan was found to be the lowest. The progress has been uneven between the different States and at different levels of school education. In a survey to ascertain the literacy rate among Muslim women, it was found that the Muslim women with no formal education exist even in State like Kerala which has a high literacy rate. Similarly women of SC and ST continue to lag behind other women and men in their communities in both literacy and education. Female literacy rate in different districts of the same State vary. If plans for education development do not take these social and regional imbalances in account, it will intensify inequalities between different sections of the population. It is necessary to identify factors responsible for them and seek their removal with the aid of special programmes.

The next point of investigation related to performance of the respondents in school and the data (Table – 4.3) revealed that 50 percent respondents were average, 38 percent respondents were above average and 12 percent respondents were below average.

**Table – 4.3 - Performance at school**

S. No.	Performance	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below average	36	12.00
2.	Average	150	50.00
3.	Above average	114	38.00
Total		300	100

The data in respect of respondents who performed below average showed that most of the respondents who had below performance in school belong to weaker castes and most of them belong to the ward which was near to the rural areas.

It is apparent from the above analysis of the recorded data that the respondents of upper caste belonging to the urban areas had better performance in school as compared to their rural counterparts. It reflected lack of proper educational facilities in rural areas, poverty and treatment of a child as an economic unit might have been responsible for this difference in performance. Hence, the reasons for the poor performance of respondents during schooling were investigated and the data revealed that poverty, family work and lack of motivation and facilities were the main reasons for their poor performance.

**Table – 4.4 - Reason for poor performance**

S. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poverty	40	21.50
2.	Family works	110	58.51
3.	Any other	36	19.99
Total		186	100

It is known fact that poverty was widely rampant in the rural area and it was more acute in the case of the weaker sections of the society as they had meager means of livelihood. As per data (Table – 4.4), 21.50 percent respondents quoted poverty as the reason for their poor performance, 58.51

advanced family works as the reason while the rest 19.99 percent gave reason such as negative attitude of the parents towards education, lack of schooling facility and social discrimination.

### **Co-Education**

Co-education represents a long standing controversy in Indian education. Arguments in defense of co-education are, that it results in fuller utilization of resources and economy. This view is generally objected to by the defenders of women's education out of an apprehension that social prejudices against women education can be removed more easily if girls are taught in separate institutions. Communities which observe purdah, naturally demand separate schools for the girls. During a survey in this regard it was found that there was no demand for separate girl's schools in Kashmir.

It was found that the resistance to co-education was more of an urban middle class phenomenon. They feel that it is due to co-education that indiscipline and rowdy's in institutions for secondary and higher education is increasing. The under graduate classes, both in urban and rural areas, do not have such objectives to co-education. Arguments in favor of co-education have come even from educationally and socially backward State like Bihar. They say that co-education provides better teaching standards and show better performance of students.

It cannot be denied that the consideration of efficiency, economy and equal opportunities to both the sexes require the acceptance of coeducation as a long term policy.

### **Curricula**

The traditional view regarding women education has resulted in an emphasis on different curricula for girls, with subjects considered especially suitable for them such as domestic science, needle-work, music, fine arts etc. The approach to women's education resulted in failure to provide subjects such as science and mathematics in most girls' institution.

To set the matter right the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1964) recommended a common course at all level of education to counter the traditional attitudes which regards certain task manly and others as womanly. The Education Commission (1966) endorsed these recommendations. Although a common course at all level of education has been welcomed nationwide, yet there are some States that continue to describe different curricula for boys and girls.

#### **Pre Primary School**

Good preschool education helps children to overcome their environmental disadvantage and to develop certain egalitarian values as they are not aware of differences of caste, class, creed or sex at this age. The achievements of rural Balwadis are impressive in this respect. These pre-primary schools also help to relieve mothers of small children and increase the chances of schooling for older girls. A provision of three years pre-school education for all children and the increase in the number of Balwadis in rural areas and urban slums areas will advance the cause of women's education. These Balwadis should be located as near as possible to the primary and middle schools of the locality.

#### **Primary and Middle Level Education**

It is recommended that if the women's education is to be improved, there should be provisions of primary schools within walking distance from the home of every child. Ashrams or residential schools should be established to serve clusters of the villages. There should be provisions for mobile schools for children of nomadic tribes, migrant labor, and construction workers. The Government officers as well as non officials should ensure to bring every girl in to school by means of sustained propaganda to this effect. The provision of incentives including mid – day meals, free uniforms and books, scholarships and stipends and awards or recognition by society to students and teachers, should be made in order to prevent dropouts. Provisions of space in every school for care of younger siblings who are in charge of school going girls. There should be provision of at least two teachers in every school and the

proportion of women primary school teachers should be raised to 50% or more. Multi entry system and a system of part time education for girls who cannot attend school on a full time basis should be adopted. There should be a provision for sex education from the middle stage in schools.

Over and above all this, it is recommended that in order to improve there should be free education for all girls up to the end of the secondary stage. Teaching facility should be improved in subjects such as science, mathematics and commerce. Job oriented work experience relating it to needs resources and employment potential of the regions should be introduced. Greater provision of need – cum – merit scholarships and hostel facilities should be provided for girls. Adequate arrangements for co-curricular activities should be made.

#### **Higher Education**

The progress of women in this sector has been more satisfactory than at the school stage. The view, that higher education for girls is a waste because many of them do not use their knowledge for any special purpose, is not correct. The society should provide greater opportunities for such educated women to enable them to utilize their talents for social and national development. To make this possible, more employment opportunities particularly of a part time nature should be ensured. For all women entering higher education, employment information and guidance services should be provided.

#### **Non Formal Education**

The greatest problem of women's education in India today is the provision of some basic education to the overwhelming majority who have remained outside the reach of the formal system because of their age, poverty or social disabilities.

In order to integrate the women in the process of nation development it is imperative to provide some education to the vast mass of illiterate and semiliterate women in the age group of 15 to 25 years. The government's

efforts in the field of adult literacy and education have not been effective so far. Even the non formal training programmes such as functional literacy for women and non student youth show surprising biases by drawing distinction in education content for man and emphasizing family life, health, nutrition and child care for the women. These distinctions have now become meaningless since a proper management of family life requires joint efforts of men and women. The need of women for vocational and occupational skills have become even greater than those of man but the greatest handicap of these non-formal educational programs is their ad-hoc approach and the lack of co-ordination between different agencies that take up such programs.

The need of the time is design a non formal system of education using all available educational resources, in the community (e.g. teachers, health service, personnel, agricultural extension worker, farmers, welfare workers and others). The system should be continuous and should emphasize learning useful things in spare time. The object of all this should be provides women with easy information and to enable them to use such information for better participation in social life. Functional literacy should certainly form the core of the package. The non-formal education programme for women should be entrusted to women's panchayats for organization and management. The government should only provide technical guidance and advice and permit local government officials to participate in these programmes. The government should give supportive assistance to these programmes by providing literature and reading material and should develop basic literaries in villages and slums areas. In short the government efforts should be concentrated on providing the basic infrastructure for non formal education.

#### **Equality of Sexes as a Major Value to be inculcated through the Educational Process**

The educational system is the only institution that can remove the deep foundations of inequality of sexes that is built in the minds of men and women through the socialization process. The educational system should make a deliberate planned and sustained effort to replace the traditional value system, based on inequality, by the new value system which believes in equality of the

sexes. It is rather unfortunate that the educational system, as it exists today, has not been able to fight the traditional value system based on inequality. It has rather helped to perpetuate such traditional prejudice through its curricula, classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on the pupils.

**Table – 4.5 - Awareness about educational facilities**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	270	90.00
2.	No	18	06.00
3.	No response	12	04.00
	Total	300	100

The next area of investigation related to the awareness among the respondents regarding the various benefits provided by the government for the educational development of their girls. It is heartening to know that an overwhelming majority of the respondents 90% affirmed that they were aware of these benefits while strangely enough 6% of them were not aware of the same and rest of the 4% respondents did not respond (Table – 4.5).

The awareness level regarding the various benefits meant for the educational development of the children was high mostly due to the publicity of these measures by the different agencies of the government as well as by the various voluntary agencies involved in this work. Further, it was found that the awareness level was higher in the respondents residing near the wards which were in urban areas.

**Table – 4.6 - Extent of utilizing educational facilities**

S. No.	Extent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Full use	246	91.11
2.	Partial use	15	05.56
3.	No response	09	03.33
	Total	270	100

After assessing the awareness level it was attempted to know the extent of utilization these benefits by the respondents and the data (Table – 4.6) in this respect revealed that 91.11 percent of the total respondents had made full use of these benefits meant for educational development. On the other hand 5.56 percent of them had been able to make partial use of these benefits rest of the 3.33 percent respondent did not respond. Among the respondents making partial use of these benefits were 86 percent rural and 14 percent urban respondents.

**Table – 4.7 - Satisfaction level of respondents**

S. No.	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Fully satisfy	180	66.67
2.	Partially satisfy	84	31.11
3.	Not satisfied	06	02.22
Total		270	100

The large extent of utilization of the benefits for educational benefits by the respondents entailed the issue of their level of satisfaction in this regard and the data (Table – 4.7) showing their satisfaction level showed that two third of them (66.67%) were fully satisfied while the rest were either partially satisfied (31.33%) or not satisfied (2.22%).

It is evident from the details examined hitherto that awareness about education was spreading among the women as the various measures meant for their educational development encouraged and enabled them to seek education. In this context it appeared logical to know about the change in the attitude of the society towards them and the data recorded revealed that 55.8 percentage respondents expressed that the attitude of the society had become more respectful towards them after seeking education. While 38.3 percent of them reported that there was no change in the attitude of the society, the rest of 5.8 percent revealed that they had mixed feeling in this regard.

**Table – 4.8 - Occupational background of respondents Family**

S. No.	Occupation of parents	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	30	10.00
2.	Service	195	65.00
3.	Own business	60	20.00
4.	Others	15	05.00
Total		300	100

As per recorded data (Table – 4.8) 65 percent of them had service as their main occupation, 20 percent were have their own business, 10 percent were have agriculture as their occupation while rest of 5 percent followed other petty works.

It was evident from the above that more than half of the respondents had a family background of service as their occupation.

**Table – 4.9 - Level of satisfaction from income**

S. No.	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Satisfied	146	48.67
2.	Partially satisfied	91	30.33
3.	Not satisfied	63	21.00
Total		300	100

The respondents were asked to state their extent of satisfaction regarding their income and the data (Table – 4.9) in this respect revealed that 48.67 percent of the total respondents were satisfied with their income, 30.33 percent of them were partially satisfied while 21 percent of them were not satisfied.

The above analysis of data regarding satisfaction level of respondents revealed that more than one fifth respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their income. The reason advanced by the dissatisfied respondents included non-fulfillment of their needs with this income, growing costs of essential

commodities, rising price level of house rent and disparity in income

**Table – 4.10 - Awareness of Constitutional provisions**

S. No.	Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	235	78.33
2.	No	45	15.00
3.	No response	20	06.67
Total		300	100

A number of constitutional provisions were made by the maker of the constitution looking to the poor condition of women in India. Hence it was thought proper to know the views of the respondents regarding awareness of the constitutional provisions. The data (Table – 4.10) revealed that 78.33 percent respondents were aware of the provisions while 15 percent of the respondents were not aware of the provisions, rest of the respondents i.e. 6.67 percent of them did not respond.

It is clear from the above data that more than two third of the respondents were aware about the constitutional provision provided in the constitution of India for the betterment of women.

The next step was to ascertain the level of awareness among the respondents about the various benefits and facilities provided by the government for the educational development of them. In response to inquiry regarding awareness about the benefits, 32 percent respondents informed that they were fully aware of the benefits provided to their girl child for educational development. On the contrary 35 percent respondents expressed that they were not fully aware of these facilities while rest of the respondents did not respond (Table – 4.11). Awareness was essential for proper and full utilization of the facilities and benefits provided for the educational development of women and it can be inferred that their awareness level was sufficiently satisfactory.

**Table – 4.11 - Awareness about educational facilities**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Fully aware	96	32.00
2.	Not fully aware	105	35.00
3.	No response	99	33.00
Total		300	100

Education of girl child depends mainly on the attitude of their parents towards educational development besides other factors. As has already been stated that poverty, sharing of family work, doing family chores etc. hindered the enrolment of child in schools and it was more apparent in the case of the rural populations of the society. Negative attitude of the parents towards education barred the enrolment of the child in school while positive attitude always led to the educational development of the child. Hence, the respondents were asked information about the interest of their parents in their enrolment in school.

The data (Table – 4.12) in respect of parents' interest in the enrolment of the respondents in school revealed that out of the total respondents positive interest of the parents was expressed by 57 percent. On the other hand negative interest of their parents towards their education was quoted by 21 percent respondents.

**Table – 4.12 - Interest of parents of respondents**

S. No.	Interest	Frequency	Percentage
1.	positive	171	57.00
2.	Negative	63	21.00
3.	Indifferent	66	22.00
Total		300	100

It became apparent from the above that a large number of respondents did not have a positive attitude about the education of their child. Parents having positive attitude got their child enrolled in school though they had

many other problems and thus, the educational development of their child was assured. As a matter of fact, as per data, many parents had indifferent attitude too towards the enrolment of their child in school for their educational development. This indifference of their parents towards their studies was expressed by 15 percent respondents. Negative and indifferent attitude of the parents led to failure or dropping out of the school by the child.

The educational development of the women was initiated by the government through providing educational facilities and benefits to the girl child and now the parents started their girl child's enrolment in schools. In this context the respondents were asked to provide information about their school going children. The data (Table – 4.13) in this regard showed that 30 percent of the total respondents had only one child in school. The percentage of respondents having two children in school was 43 while respondents having three or more children in school included 27 percent.

**Table – 4.13 - No. of respondent's school going children**

S. No.	No. of children	Frequency	Percentage
1.	One	90	30.00
2.	Two	129	43.00
3.	Three	81	27.00
Total		300	100

The next information concerned the classes in which these children were studying. Data (Table – 4.14) revealed that the respondents have 40 percent children in the primary category 32 percent children in the secondary classes were and so far as the college or university level was concerned, 28 percent respondents had their children in college or the university.

**Table – 4.14 - Class in which respondent's children study**

S. No.	Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Primary	120	40.00
2.	Secondary	96	32.00
3.	College or University	84	28.00
Total		300	100

After enrolment in educational institutions, students dropped out of school due to one reason or the other and in the state of Rajasthan, the drop-out rate was the maximum at the primary level. Hence it was thought prudent to find out the position in this respect and the data in this regard revealed (Table – 4.15) that out of the children of the total respondents, 15 percent dropped out at the primary level 8.33 dropped out at the secondary stage. Further 76.67 percent children did not drop-out at any stage. It was observed that the drop-out rate higher among the scheduled castes children of rural areas.

**Table – 4.15 - Number of drop-out children**

S. No.	Level of drop-out	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Primary	45	15.00
2.	Secondary	25	08.33
3.	Did not drop out	230	76.67
Total		300	100

Then the causes of dropping out of studies were investigated and the data (Table – 4.16) revealed that poverty accounted for 33.33percent respondents children. Yet another reason of performing family chores for dropping out was given by 41.67 percent respondents and rest of the respondents did not respond.

**Table – 4.16 - Reason for dropping out of school**

S. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poverty	20	33.33
2.	Family responsibility	25	41.67
3.	No response	15	25.00
	Total	60	100

The respondents were then asked about the aim of educating their children and the data in this regard (Table – 4.17) showed that 53 percent of them had employment of their children in service as their aim for doing so, 10.67 percent of them wished to raise their status and ensure prosperous life for them while the rest 36.33percent expressed earning money as the aim for educating their children. Thus, for more than half of the respondents the main aim of educating their children was to ensure employment opportunities for them while only about one tenth of them expressed it in terms of raising their status. Significantly more than one third of them quoted that education of their children was aimed at earning money.

**Table – 4.17 - Aim of educating children**

S. No.	Aim	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Employment in service	159	53.00
2.	Raising of status and prosperous life	32	10.67
3.	To earn money	109	36.33
	Total	300	100

The next area of investigation related to the awareness among respondents regarding the various benefits provided by the government for the educational development of their girl child (Table – 4.18). It was heartening to know that an overwhelming majority of the respondent, 82.09 percent, affirmed that they were aware of these benefits while strangely enough 17.91 percent of them were not aware of the same.

**Table – 4.18 - Awareness about educational facilities**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	165	82.09
2.	No	36	17.91
Total		201	100

The awareness level regarding the various benefits meant for the educational development was high mostly due to the publicity of these measures by the different agencies of the government as well as by the various voluntary agencies involved in this work.

After assessing the awareness level it was attempted to know the extent of utilization of these benefits by the respondents and the data in this respect (Table – 4.19) revealed that 84.58 percent of the total respondents had made full use of these benefits meant for the educational development of their children. On the other hand 15.42 percent of them had been able to make only partial use of the same. Thus, again the number of making partial use of the educational benefits was higher in case of rural respondents than their urban counterparts.

**Table – 4.19 - Extent of utilizing educational facilities**

S. No.	Extent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Full use	170	84.58
2.	Partial use	31	15.42
Total		201	100

The large extent of utilization of the benefits for educational benefits entailed the issue of their level of satisfaction in this regard and the data showing their satisfaction level (Table – 4.20) showed that nearly two third of them (72.64percent) were fully satisfied 17.91 percent of them were partially satisfied while the rest (9.45percent) were not satisfied. It is evident from the recorded data that among the respondents expressing full satisfaction were 20% rural and 40% urban On the other hand respondents having partial

satisfaction included 42.5% rural and 40% urban. Thus, the satisfaction level was lower in case of the rural respondents as compared to their urban counterparts.

**Table – 4.20 - Satisfaction level**

S. No.	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Fully satisfied	146	72.64
2.	Partially satisfied	36	17.91
3.	Not satisfied	19	09.45
Total		201	100

### **CONCLUSION**

We can conclude that education is a major instrument for raising the status of women. With the acceptance of gender equality in the constitution, the principle of equality of access to education for men and women was accepted. It is matter of consolation that there is relatively faster rate of progress recorded in the education of women during all these years. But the sharp increase in the number of illiterate women despite rapid expansion of education of women at various levels, points to severe imbalance in the distribution of educational effort among different sections of the population. Education plays the double role. It can eliminate the effects of socio-economic inequalities, but it can also introduce a new kind of inequality between those who have it and those who do not. The disparity between the rural and urban areas is marked and significant. There is wide disparity of educational development between the advanced and the backward classes and regions. The progress made by women within the formal system of education indicates its severe limitations. The system now covers only ten percent of the total female population. Social attitude to education of girls vary from acceptance of need to one of absolute indifference. There is a marked difference in the enrolment of boys and girls. Still, there are several serious problems, such as illiteracy, widening gap in access to elementary education, problems of non-enrolment, wastage and drop-out, imbalances in educational development and ideological imbalances among educational planners and administration

regarding the objectives of women's education.

However a review of the overall progress of women's education can be briefly stated be quiet impressive. Being a signatory on the Delhi Declaration and a Framework For Action, which calls for education development, the Government of India has pledged to spend 6% of the G.N.P on education. Parliament has approved legislation for compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

Literacy rates have improved considerably over the years; from 18% in 1951, the literacy rate has increased to 75% for males and 55% for females. Despite this discrepancy the female literacy rate of growth in the last decade is about 15% as against 12% for males. It is estimated that 80% of the children in the age groups of 6 to 14 years attend schools now and their dropout rates have also been falling. A total Literacy Campaign is operational in many areas of the country. However the breakthrough in education can be briefly summed up as under. About five million teachers are teaching the alphabets to about 50 million people in the 9 to 45 years age group. It is estimated that million people will become functionally literate. The elementary education system in India is the second largest in the world with 149.4 million students enrolled and 2.9 teachers. In spite of all this much remains to be done in this regard.

## *CHAPTER - 5*

*WOMEN HEALTH, NUTRITION*

*AND*

*FAMILY WELFARE*

## CHAPTER – 5

### **WOMEN HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FAMILY WELFARE**

The whole concept of health, nutrition family welfare in particular and the women's development in general can be summed up in three parts. The first part deals with the human rights and the various problems faced by the women of the world and the role of history. It also deals with what is "family" its purpose and tries to analyze the future of the institution of family. The second part deals with those welfare policies in India which ensure their welfare, development and emancipation of women, through the implementation of Five Year Plans of economic development. The third part deals with the whole concept of empowerment of women as well as the governmental efforts in this regard.

Equality is the Cornerstone of every democratic society which aspires to social justice and human rights. In nearly all society and spheres of activity women are subject to inequalities both in law and in fact. This is so because of the discrimination faced by women in the family, in the community and in the work place. This wide spread discrimination against women is caused by traditional, cultural and religious practices and beliefs which are detrimental to them. The real situation of women worldwide brings about the vast economic and social gaps between men and women. Women are majority of world's poor and the number of women living in rural poverty has increased by fifty percent since 1975. Women in Asia and Africa work over 13 hours a week more than men and are mostly unpaid. Women are paid 30% to 40% less than men for doing equal work. As against men, women hold between 10% to 20% jobs in management, administrative and manufacturing sectors. The work that women do at home for their families is unpaid and unnoticed and is about 25% to 30% of the whole productive output of the world.

The concept of equality means much more then treating all persons in the same way. Equal treatment of persons in unequal situations will only increase injustice and not eradicate true inequality. True equality can only be achieved if the effects are directed towards addressing and correcting these situational imbalances. It is this broader view of equality which has become

the underlying final goal in the struggle for the recognition and acceptance of human rights of women.

In 1979, the United Nation General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This Convention sets out, in legally binding form, internationally accepted principles on the rights of women which are applicable to all women in all fields. The basic legal norms of the Convention are the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women. This norm cannot be satisfied merely by the enactment of gender – neutral laws. In addition to demanding that women be accorded equal rights with men, convention goes further by prescribing the measures to be taken to ensure that women everywhere are able to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled.

#### **UNITED NATIONS AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

Equality of rights of women is the basic principle of the United Nations. The Preamble to the Character of the United Nation sets a basic goal “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and the worth of the human person, in equal rights of men and women”. Furthermore Article 1 of the Charter proclaims that one of the purposes of United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people “without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”.

The international Bill of Human Rights strengthens and extends this emphasis on the equal rights of women. The International Bill of Human Rights lays down a comprehensive set of right to which all persons, including women, are entitled. In order to effectively protect the human right of women, looking to the fact that their ‘humanity’ has not been found sufficient to protect their rights, it was found necessary to have a separate legal instrument for this purpose. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is that separate legal instrument, apart from the Bill of Human Rights that has come into force to ensure that discrimination against women does not continue to exist in every society.

The Convention identifies many specific areas like political right, marriage and the family, education, health and employment where discrimination against women takes place. To combat gender-based discrimination, the Convention requires State parties to recognize the important economic and social contribution of women to the family and the society as a whole. The Convention rightly believes that discrimination against women will hamper economic growth and prosperity. It recognizes the need for a change in attitude through education of both the men and women to accept equality of rights and responsibilities and to overcome prejudices and practices based on stereotyped roles. The achievement of both actual and legal equality and the need for the temporary and special measures to achieve this is an important feature of the Convention.

According to the Art. (2) Of the Convention the State parties must condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, and in general are obliged to "pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women." It reaffirms the quality of human rights for men and women in the society and in the family. According to its State parties have to take action against the social causes of women's inequality. The Convention called upon the State parties to eliminate laws, stereotypes, practices and prejudices that impair women's well-being.

#### **HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Traditional cultural practices reflect value and beliefs held by members of a community for a very long time. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while other is harmful to a specific group, such as women. These harmful traditional practices includes female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; early marriage; the various taboos or practices which prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos and traditional birth practices; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price. In spite of the harmful nature of such traditional practices and their violation of

international human right laws, such practices persist to exist because they are not questioned and the communities that practices them believes them to be moral.

The equality between the sexes and an equitable society cannot be attained if the fundamental human rights of women, who constitute nearly half of the human society, continue to be denied and violated. It has been found that these harmful traditional practices affecting the health of the women and children have been performed for the benefit of men. The economic and political subordination of women, as well as female sexual control by men, result in the inferior status of women and inhibit structural and attitudinal changes necessary to elements gender inequality.

United Nations specialized agencies and human rights bodies had started to consider the question of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women, in particular female genital mutilation, since 1950's. But action to bring about any substantial change has been slow or rather superficial. In the past, neither the government's concern nor did the International Community's challenge such harmful traditional practices affecting the help of women. This is one of the reasons for the persistence of such harmful practices that are detrimental to the health and status of women. The international community considered the female genital mutilation as a sensitive cultural issue falling within the spheres of women and family. Both the government and international community did not, for a long time, express sympathy and understanding for women who, due to ignorance and unawareness of their rights, endured pain, suffering and even death.

In spite of the apparent slowness of the action to challenge and eliminate such harmful traditional practice, the activities of the human rights bodies in this field have resulted in noticeable progress. The harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women have been recognized as issues concerning the status and human rights of women and female children. The slogan "Women's Rights are Human Rights" was adopted at the world conference on human rights in Vienna in 1993. The General Assembly adopted, in the same year, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence

against Women. These issues were also considered in detail 1988 in the special Reporters on the harmful traditional practices and in the draft Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference of Women, held in 1995. The Commission of Human Rights in 1994 appointed Ms. Radhika C. as the special Reporter on violence against women, its causes and consequences. She had also examined all forms of traditional practices referred to in the Fact Sheet, as well as other practices including virginity tests, foot binding, female infanticide and dowry deaths, all of which violate female dignity. Special Reporters pointed out that blind adherence to these practices and state inaction with regards to these customs and traditions have made possible large scale violence against women. As regards the harmful traditional practices identified in the Fact Sheet it can be said that they are all consequences of the value placed on women and the girl child by the society. They persist in an environment where women and the girl child have unequal access to education, wealth, health and employment. The Fact Sheet highlights the drawbacks in the implementation of the practical steps identified by the UN, NGOs and women's organizations.

#### **WOMEN AND ROLE OF HISTORY**

To fully understand the concept of women and family welfare it is necessary to understand the various problems faced by women through the ages. From the Shakti of Shiva, His Eternal Half to the modern liberated women the journey of women over the years has been full of difficulties. Women's role in history, their struggle for liberty, their fight for equality with men, their role in the family, their isolation and seclusion, their subjection and subordination, the division of labor on the basis of sex and the whole gamut of women related problems has to be studied in depth in order to understand and to do justice and to the concept of family welfare and women.

In the great majority of uncivilized people of the ancient times the position of women was inferior to that of men. Men had proprietary rights of own ship, enjoyment and disposal over women. Religion sometimes acted to modify the despicability of her subordination; but more often, religious faiths, superstition and the force of social custom acted still further to choke off

women's personality. Ibsen's thesis is that women are captives. His exposure of the dependent child wife in Nora Heller is something revolutionary. A fundamental truth, vital to the health of human civilization has long been forgotten that without the complete "humanization" of women no society can be truly creative. A study of women's position in society since the primitive age, reveals that all the world over it has been, in some form or other,

"The father gives the command;

The mother joins and approves:

Then children all attentive stand,

And each, obedient moves.

Though traces of mother – right can still be discerned, the matriarchal family has been mostly pre-historic. The patriarchal family organization has been almost the universal basis of all civilized races.

The laws and conventions of the Heroic Age of the Vedas in ancient India, and those of other civilization, all bring out one fact that "where civilization is beginning, the family in some form or other is already organized under the rule of the father". The Indian family itself was based on a typical patriarchal system. The husband was the supreme lord of the household and obedience to men's will and surrender to men's whims was women's privilege.

It is interesting to note that religions invariably gives an honored place to women hood and ordains reverence to mother. Hinduism enshrines woman as the Shakti of Shiva, 'His Eternal Half'. Islam identifies women with Mystery of Being; Christianity worships Virgin Mary symbolizing all women hood. For very long, religious practices, engulfed in prejudice, ignorance and superstition worked in the reverse way and promoted reaction. The influence of the Church, made consent of the concerned parties the only necessary condition for a valid marriage in modern Europe. But during the earlier times the concept of the European Marriage system was quite different and the change in the primitive as well as feudal traditions by the Church was gradual

and painful. The Canon Law did not permit divorce the subjection of women persisted in its crudest forms. In Europe till the later middle ages a woman was considered to be a slave, a mere chattel to be bandied about without any volition on her part. At best her status was still as "man's liege subject". Then came the Protestant Reformers who defied the view of the 'Roman Church' that marriage was sacrosanct. They sought to break up the Canonical view of marriage. Divorce-right was upheld by the Reformers. The Christian view towards sex and women is colored by spurious Puritanism. Christian ethics generally deplored the sexual instinct. Both the Protestants and Catholic were shocked at adultery or fornication on the part of women. Any lapse from sexual chastity was condemned by the "moralists" as sin. This continuous insistence on virtue was instrumental in degrading women's place in society because virtue becomes the excuse for her segregation and subjugation on the pretence of protecting her from sin.

The position of women did not really improve till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was in 1870 that the women were given right to personal property in England by the passing of the Married Women Property Act. The long subjection, subjugation and segregation of women resulted in the rise of women's liberation movement in Great Britain. The recent trends are towards guaranteeing equality of civil and social status, full legal protection, rights to property and its free dispensation. Marriages have now become more a contract and less of a sacrament. There is no differentiation between men and women in matters of divorce. Both men and women have an independent legal personality and the idea of proprietary ownership has become replaced by realization of individual dignity and mutual love. These developments taking place are not as yet complete.

#### **RECOGNITION OF COMMON HUMANITY**

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new attitude of recognizing common humanity, rather than the biological accident of sexual difference between men and women, has been developed. The philosophers of the French Revolution advocated equality of women in the field of education and citizenship. The other social scientist of that period also advocated the urgent

removal of civil inequalities and social injustices among the women of the European Society.

In the movement for the emancipation of a women there was a women named Mary Wollstonecraft, who wrote a great book entitled 'Vindication of the Rights of Women', in (1792). Mary was an impetuous free thinker who proclaimed that the shackles yoking down women and all the chains should be snapped. She wrote that the first object of land able ambition is to obtain a character as a human being regardless of the distinction of sex. She was thus the high priestess of common humanity and humanity is inconceivable without women's freedom. John Stuart Mill was another writer, who wrote a book named 'Subjection of Women' (1869) in which he wrote denouncing the humiliations heaped on womanhood. Mill like other thinker of his time believed in 'humanization of woman'. They also believed in women's suffrage and fought for extending Parliamentary franchise to women. For the first time, in Nov. 1918, a law was passed making women eligible for election to the Parliament. But it was only in 1928 that the complete recognition of political equality, in law, of women with men came in to being. In U.S.A. the Constitution was amended in August 1920 making the women eligible to vote. The women's movement began in 1847 in America.

The condition of women industrial workers was very bad. They were treated inhumanly and made to do hard labor in mills, factories and mines in very unhygienic conditions. The women workers fought for their rights after the Industrial Revolution and finally obtained full access to educational and other facilities and also secured the political franchise and the complementary attributes of citizenship. It was in Great Britain in 1850 when Engel's published his slashing indictment Condition of the English Working Class, the condition of work in mines and factories was inhuman. After many years of agitations great changes in the rights of the female industrial workers took place, resulting in to better working condition, fixed working hours and better wages for them.

## **BRINGING THE HOME IN TO THE OUTER WORLD**

It is often asked if women are "let loose" on the world - i.e., if they are given votes; if they hold conferences, write newspaper articles and embroil themselves in the problems of the outer world; if they apply themselves to study of all arts and sciences; if they work in industries and other employments; if they begin to administer schools and other institutions; if they get elected to representative and responsible places; if they enter different professions;- will it not effect motherhood? In fact all developments that emancipate woman raise motherhood to a rational and therefore, to a nobler plane because then alone can home really participate in the life of the nation and the human community itself. The home is then brought into the human community itself. The home is then brought into the actual cross current of life. Segregation is, at best, escapist: active and full participation in the eddies of the outer world really stabilizes family life and promotes harmony.

Home is the empire, the throne of women. "Here she reigns in the legitimate power of all the united charms". But this argument is a justification for keeping women away from all non-home life. Women are denied from taking interest in problems and activities beyond the ambit of the home. This argument is thus nothing but an errant nonsense. The biological function of reproduction, child birth and the nursing of infants and small children restrict the activities of women to their homes. The Russian writer Nemilov wrote about the idea of just relationships between the sexes in his book The Biological Tragedy of Women. He believes that childbirth involves much pain and risk to woman and a "whim of nature" has allotted the whole of it to woman. He believes that the society must seek patterns of life which might, elevate the tragedy of sex. Great social and political thinkers could not visualize freedom and equality for women. Rousseau, a French philosopher and political thinker was of the view that, girls should be early subjected to restraint. He believed that this was necessary because of the biological difference. He was of the view that if woman was born in chains she should perpetually be in chains. True, woman should be held in due esteem for her

maternity: she should be equal, if not more, respected more for common humanity. Exclusive stress on maternity and denial of other purposes in life for woman renders in family the place of husband and the children primary and positive and that of woman dependent and wholly ancillary. Motherhood has been and will continue to be the main channel for the creative energy of womankind. But cannot woman attain superior heights in other creative directions – in arts, science, philosophy and literature? There have been women who have achieved great heights in the various fields. But such women have been few because for ages, the requisite education, training and freedom necessary to cultivate and develops the innate capacity of women have been denied to them. Their creative intellectual work has been stunted and world is poorer for that.

In primitive societies, with the ascendancy patria protests, the subjection of women stemmed from men's desire to secure women's virtue. Men feared that the purity and genuineness of family descent might be compromised if women were not rigidly confined to the home. The confinement of women to home precluded them from taking up mental avocations outside of the family and the biological function becomes the soul end of women's existence. It is only with the lessening of patria protests that the real function of the family, the cultivation of mutual love for the promotion of individual personalities, comes to be intensified.

#### **WOMEN ARE GROWING CONSCIOUS OF NEW VALUES IN LIFE**

The intimate, mutual relationship between husband and wife, parents and children has been a strong social bond in the evolution of human civilization. Thus the family has proved to be the nucleus of social growth. Some loss of independence of each individual member within the family is the requisite for the family cult. Patria – protests, was the bases of ancient Chinese, Greek, Roman, Indian etc. family life. Male superiority and female subjection are not necessary for the perpetuation of the family institution. On the contrary, they create handicaps in the performance of the true functions of the family and hobble the healthy development of human society. It is wrong to believe that the freedom of women wills break up the family. Human social

institutions are continuously undergoing the process of change. The freedom of women shall make the family all the stronger. Marriage is considered to be successful now a day, only if the spouses mutually benefit and are happy. The transformation of economic life from the simple pastoral pursuits to mercantile and later into complex industrial and commercial system has resulted in the people migrating to urban areas where the living is highly individualistic. The impact of social, economic and political changes taking place in the world outside, on the family as a unit and on each member of the family is more real and intense. The women also have been reacting to all the developments around them. Modern inventions like electricity, radio, TV, the automobile and the movie we played important roles in bringing about a fundamental change in the outlook of the young generations.

In this quick changing pattern of social life all conventions, traditional beliefs and even ideals change in their relative importance and some are discarded as no longer valid. The 'wisdom' of the past is not accepted unless it is found suitable to the changed contemporary social frame work. Tradition no long restricts the women from working outside their homes and seeking their own careers. Reason has thus played a vital part in breaking down women's subjection. Women's education has been instrumental in further breaking down their subjection. Social institutions must be continuously pruned, reformed and readapted in the light of the changes of human values, needs and perspective. And if this is not done the reformers will throw out the social institution.

The State organizations have been assuming and increasingly important and extensive share of responsibilities that have developed so long on individuals and families. The active participation of the State is increasing in economic and social sector. State has been playing a leading role in matters relating to maternity and child welfare work, medical and health services, provisions of educational facilities and employment opportunities. The increasing interface of the State has lessened the economic functions of the father. The domestic work of the house wife has been made less burdensome and more pleasant and quicker to do. Women have not only

better opportunities but also more time at their disposal to do work outside their home. This has made women economically independent and has also added to the resources of the family. To conclude it may be stated that the freedom of women, like that of men, is good for the family and the society if men and women are not intoxicated with the new found freedom. In order that the new found freedom do not prove dangerous for both men and women, it is necessary that the rights should be tampered by duties and that freedom be yoked to social restraint.

## FAMILY

The family is an institution as well as an association which is fundamental to human progress. It is the backbone of our social structure. As a primary group, the family is the first and the most universal of all forms of associations. A family is a group of persons united by the ties of marriage constituting a single house hold. The family in a sense may be defined as a woman with a child and a man to look after them. The family not only acts a primary group for the reproduction of legitimate offspring, but also acts to protect the offspring, socialization of these offspring and furnishing of love, affection and emotional security to family members. In short broadly speaking it may be stated that the institution of the family is governed by three forces - the satisfaction of sexual urge, the procreation of children, companionship and understanding between the spouses.

In the male dominated society the demand for equality and right for women as well as their emancipation and empowerment seems to be as yet a cry. It is questioned whether such demand by the women will not challenge the very basic institutions of marriage and the family in social life? Marriage and family are important part of civilized social structure. The family is the most important primary human group. It is an institution fundamental to human progress in society. Many sociologists have attempted to define the functions of family and to assess their relative importance. Dr. Bernard is of the opinion that the functions of the family are reproduction of legitimate offspring protection and socialization of the children, providing emotional security and affection to the family members. Dr. Barnard believes that the family is

charged with regulating the relationship between the sexes, between parents and the children and among the children and other members of the family. Grover believes that protection and the care of the young, regulation of sex, conservation of culture and provision of intimate contacts, are the functions of the family. Thus it can broadly be stated that the institution of family is governed by three forces – the satisfaction of the sexual urge, procreation of children, companionship and understanding between the spouses.

It must be realized that the futures of the institution of family depends not so much on sex gratification, or on the desire for the children, as on the facilities available for community of living and thought between the husband and wife. It is this urge for mutual companionship that is playing an increasing role in bringing together men and women in families. It is only when men and women 'tune' into each other that there is happiness in the family. The most important explanation for divorce lies in the lack of companionship, interest and understanding between the husband and wife and between the parents and children. The absence of mutual understanding between the husband and the wife is a source of friction and unhappiness in the family.

#### **WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS**

With the declaration of independence the promises of actual liberation and equality of women with men has become possible. The Preamble to the Constitution of India lays down very clearly the ideals that the people of India want to achieve. The Constitution contains certain Fundamental Rights as well as Directive Principles which are instruments for attaining the national objectives i.e. Equality, Liberty and Justice. Apart from these a number of legislative measures have been taken to bring about the desired improvement in status of women in political economic and social spheres.

The Constitution of India deals with the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles which are the instruments to attain our national objectives, i.e. equality, liberty and justice, as laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution. The Constitution of India has not only made provisions for equal rights and privileges for men and women, the Article 15(3) of the Constitution

empowers the State to make special provisions for women and children, even in violation of the fundamental obligation of non discrimination among the citizens, inter alias, of sex. Thus special attention has been given to the needs and problems of women and other hitherto suppressed sections of the society, in order to enable them to enjoy and exercise their constitutional equality of status. Thus the Constitution of India has, once for all, settled the position of women in society. This recognition of the political equality of women is a radical departure from the prevailing socio-economic norms in traditional India. Apart from the constitutional provisions a number of social legislation too have been enacted, from time to time, to enhance the status and position of women in the country.

Since the Constitution of India stresses the need for promoting the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, the welfare and development of women received particular attention from the very beginning. Thus in-order to translate the ideals and objectives into social reality and to build an egalitarian, secular, democratic society, an era of economic planning commenced in India.

The Five Year Plans have consistently placed special emphasis on providing minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition of women and children, acceleration of women's education, their increase in the labor force and welfare services for the women in need. Various welfare and development schemes have been introduced to improve the living conditions of women and to increase their access to and control over material and social resources. Special steps have been taken to enable them to make use of a rights and new opportunities becoming available for them.

Underneath the planning and an implication of the Five Year Plans and other programmes, the intention has always been that the last person's are to be looked after first. The welfare services were to reach those persons and groups, who by reasons of some handicap – social, economic and physical – are unable to avail of, or traditionally denied, the amenities and services provided by the community. The benefits of these plans and programmes were to flow in the more backward and underprivileged sections of the

community so that all source of social disparities were removed. Women are considered in such categories of people. It is claimed, that the basic values of society based on egalitarian ideals and betterment of the common man and the weaker section of the society have never been allowed to slip in all these years.

The women are the principle providers of "care" and "support" to infants and children. Women and children represent more than two-third of India's population. Thus, the need to bring women in the mainstream of development is the prime concern of the country today. Therefore investments towards women's capacity building and their empowerment to enable them to exercise their choice are not only valuable in it, but are also the surest way to contribute to the economic growth and overall development of the society.

Since independence dramatic changes have taken place in the legal, political, educational and the socio-economic status of women. Women have occupied the center stage in the developmental planning since the commencement of the First Five Year Plan, but it was only in 1980's that the women were recognized as a separate target group and given their rightful place in developmental planning. In order to improve the wellbeing of the women and children in society, the Government has made a significant shift in the approach of Five Year Plans. A separate chapter viz. "Women and Development" was included in the Sixth Five Year Plan. This marked a final break away from welfare approach to women's problems, and since then all efforts of the government have been directed towards bringing women in to main stream of the national developmental process. The approach to the Five Year Plan shifted from "welfare" during the 1950's, to "development" during the 1970's to "empowerment" during the 1990's. A major thrust with respect to women, in the 1990's was to make them economically independent and self reliant. For children, it was to ensure their survival, protection and development, with a special focus on the girl child and the adolescent girl. Hence many programmes and schemes have been launched by the government of India to develop women "human resource". The various State governments also have made efforts to raise the socio-economic, political and

legal status of women.

Various studies show that women are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights, their duties and their capabilities. However, the demographic features of female population like excessive mortality in female children in resulting in persistent decline in sex ratio, low rate of literacy and low economic status stress the need for greater attention to the economic emancipation of women. The low status of women, in large segments of Indian society, cannot be raised without opening up opportunities of independent employment and income for them. But the process of change, to raise the status of women, under various spheres of socio-economic activities specially in field of education, employment and health, requires not only continuous and sustained efforts but also periodic review of the plans and programmes, over a period of time. Thus the empowerment of women remains, till date, a distant dream. It is an uphill task which has to be achieved by policies and programmes for their welfare, development and advancement.

#### **Review**

Under the different Five Year Plans, that have been completed so far, general as well as special programmes for the welfare of women were taken up. Under these programmes, in the sphere of health, a wide network of maternity and child health centers and family welfare centers were established with the aim to eradicate nutritional anemia amongst mothers, immunization of pregnant women against tetanus, immunization of children against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and polio, and to eradicate night blindness in children due to Vitamin A deficiency. Special nutritional programmes were started for providing nutritional supplements to nursing mothers and children. In the education sector emphasis was laid on increasing the enrolment of girls in school by providing various incentives. But in spite of all the efforts, of all the non-enrolled children in the age group of 6-14, two-thirds were girls in 1978-79. In the age groups of 11-14, the number of girls in school was half that of boys during this period. In literacy the number of women literates is less than half of the males. The rural literacy rate for women was 13.2% in 1971 while the urban literacy rate during this period for

women was 42.3%.

Social welfare programmes that cater to the needs of women need to be increased so that women, who by reasons of some handicap-social, economic, physical or mental, are unable to avail or are traditionally denied amenities and services provided by the community, can benefit from them.

Despite all the developmental measures and the Constitutional and legal guarantees, women have lagged behind men in all sectors. There has been a steady decline in the sex ratio. For 1000 men there were 972 women in 1901, which became 946 in 1951 and 930 in 1971, while the position is opposite in the developed countries. Sex ratio for all ages in 1971 was 951 for rural and 857 for urban areas. The interstate variations of the sex ratio between men and women are considerable similarly the expectancy of life at birth, which is a good indicator for development, was 44.7 for female and 46.4 for male in 1971. The infant mortality rate (IMR) in 1972 was 132 for male and 148 for female and in 1978 it was 120 for male and 131 for female. Thus more female infants died as compared to male infants after birth. Moreover despite preventive legislation, the age of marriage for girls in rural areas and in the lower strata of the society has remained low. Early marriages result in frequent pregnancies, poor health and lack of opportunities for proper personality development. Repeated pregnancies account for high incidence of anemia and maternal malnutrition, ultimately leading to high maternal mortality rate. Women labour force participation rate remained generally unchanged for the last three decades around 28% while in men it was fairly stable around 57%. In the organized sector the women's share increased from 11% in 1971 to 12.4% in 1979.

A few women, in all walks of life, reached top position but on the whole women continue to be concentrated in the low-scale, low-wage and drudgery involved works. Over 90% of women are employed in the unorganized sector. This is also linked with their low rate of participation in the training programmes in industrial training institutes, polytechnics, engineering colleges, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, technical and industrial schools, although special measures have been taken to expand their training opportunities for

women in non-traditional occupations.

### **Policy, Plan and Strategy**

By the end of the year 2001, India became a land of over 1 billion and 27 million people, out of whom 495 million are women and 526 million are children below the age of 18 years and 158 million of them are in their early childhood of 6-7 years. India has the largest number of children as also the largest number of "children plus women" in the world. The 726 million children plus women is so huge that it is more than the combined population of the USA, UK, Japan, Russia, Germany and Canada. Therefore it very obvious that concern for women and children is very high on the priority list of the countries developmental agenda.

Women and children of India have traveled a long way through the process of developmental experience of the country. Women were the worst and the most silent sufferers in the days of the British colonial rule when disease and malnutrition, epidemics and famine took a toll of their lives in hundreds and thousands. A rigid and highly stratified male dominated society left little scope for independence and the autonomy of women who were subjected to many discriminations, oppressions and exploitation. The spread of liberal education and values on the one hand, and movement for national freedom on the other, unleashed forces for social reform and created increasing awareness about the need for increased participation of women in educational, social, economic and political life of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi was in forefront and was a champion in the cause of women and about their right to equality along with men in every sphere of nation's life. Similarly concern for children, as a future architects of nation, found expression in the writings of our national leaders particularly Pandit Nehru. All these concern for women and the children greatly influenced the framers of the Constitution and as a result it was made the most powerful pillar not only for safe guarding the rights and privileges of the women and children but also to ensure their welfare, development and empowerment.

The main drawbacks in women's development has been mainly their

preoccupation with repeated pregnancies without respite in physical workload, lack of formal and non-formal education and a preponderance of social prejudice along with lack of economic independence as well as lack of economic generation activity and independent assets. The strategy for the development of women, thus, has to be threefold. All the policies for the welfare of women and their planned development need to focus on their education, employment and health. These three spheres are interdependent and dependent on the total development process. In addition to these three spheres it is also essential that the voluntary adoption of small family norm be promoted among all couples.

In the plan, the basic approach is of the family as a unit of development, with special attention to the most vulnerable member of the family i.e. the woman and children. Hence the economic emancipation of the family with specific attention to women, education of children and family planning should constitute of the three major operation aspects of family centered poverty elevation strategy. In order to understand and analyze the backwardness of women, a disaggregated view of the problem, according to groups, committees and areas is necessary because the aggregate picture is sometimes misleading. In order to generate substantial employment opportunities it is important to create a general awareness and understanding of the problems of women's employment in all top policy and decision makers as well as executive personnel. The problem for preference of the male child for social and cultural reasons can be solved by educating children, orienting the teachers, examining and rewriting our textbooks and teaching aids so that they become aware of and understand this problem and grow up with new thinking. Men and women can be made aware of this problem through non-formal education. Sex wise collection of data of physical achievement is necessary in order to enable the executers of the programmes to take up timely corrective majors after periodic review of the implementation of the programmes. Voluntary action has a key role to play in mobilizing public support against social prejudices. Hence its strengthening at the grass root level is necessary.

Economic independence shall accelerate the improvement of the status of women. So the government should endeavor to give joint titles to husband and wife in all development activities involving transfer of assets like distribution of land and house – sites and beneficiary oriented economic units. For promoting adequate developmental efforts for women at different levels and creating needed channels for women to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives, grass root level organizations should be promoted. 'Mahila Mandals and other voluntary agencies should be encouraged to take up socio-economic programmes for providing wages and self-employment in rural areas. They should be linked with co-operatives and federations for marketing of products. Adequate attention should be paid to offer technical and managerial assistance to these agencies to enable them to prepare viable economic projects for attracting institutional finance and marketing their products. The marketing of the products is crucial to the programme, so the marketing arrangements should be reviewed from time to time. The developmental activities of all the governmental agencies and that of the NGO's should be integrated so as to optimize the benefits from all programmes intended for women and children. Advisory committees should be setup at different levels for reviewing the adequacy of the implementing machinery and the progress of social legislation i.e. Anti dowry Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act etc. Special cells for increasing women's participation through wage and self employment should be setup at district levels. These cells should be setup as part of the proposed machinery for district manpower planning and employment generation. Research and studies to improve the database regarding women should be supported. Co-ordination, evaluation and monitoring of programmes needs to be improved. Since and technology to reduce drudgery of household work should be supported.

#### **Education**

The programmes for universalisation of elementary education are specially directed towards higher enrollment and retention of girls in schools. This requires Balwadi-cum-creches attached to the schools to enables the girls to attend schools since otherwise they would have to stay at home to

look after the younger brothers and sisters in the absence of mothers at work. It would also require income-generation work for girls, outside the school hours, to supplement the family's income. Other incentives like uniforms, free books and stationary etc., already in force, need to be effectively expanded. Women teachers, where necessary, should be appointed in rural areas to encourage girls' education. Residential quarters for women's teachers have to be constructed. Science teaching in girl's school/colleges should be strengthened to achieve greater participation of women in science and technology. Admission policies have to be streamlined to promote greater enrolment of women in engineering, electronics, agricultural, veterinary, fishery and forestry courses. In education and training, women have to be brought to the mainstream along with men to share the facilities fully.

The functional literacy programme needs to be expanded specially in areas having low female literacy rates. Special non-formal education programmes should be introduced for girls in the age group 15-20 years who could not complete formal schooling earlier. Every effort should be made to ensure that atleast 1/3 of trainees under the TRYSEM programme are girls. Special Krishi Udyog and Van Vigyan Kendras need to be established for women.

For boosting the programmes for education of women belonging to backward classes, the number of girl's hostels has to be increased. The rates of post-metric scholarships for different courses are higher for girls as compared to boys. This scheme should be further expended to provide larger opportunities for girls. Instead of increasing separate women's polytechnics, which were developed as multipurpose institutions for imparting training in arts, crafts, etc., co-educational institutions should be encouraged as far as possible.

### **Health**

In health, provision should be made for continuing and expanding the maternal and child health schemes including antenatal, natal and post natal services, training of popular 'DAIS' who are already practicing in every village

so as to reduce the maternal and neo-natal deaths and complications. Training capacity for ANMs has to be further augmented to meet the requirement of sub-centers. Experience reveals that ANMs posted in rural areas are not able to adjust to the local conditions due to lack of familiarity with the socio-cultural situation, accommodation and security. To overcome these field problems, efforts have to be made to select girls from local areas, relax minimum educational qualifications, raise upper-age limit and give preference to widows or deserted women. In almost all the hospitals, the nursing personnel are mainly female. The training facilities for them should be expanded. Family welfare programmes must receive high priority. Sustained effort shall have to make to create consciousness, acceptance and demand for this programme. Co-operation of the voluntary organizations should be sought for disseminating relevant health and family planning information and for launching a national movement for population stabilization.

Efforts have to be made to expand the minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition. The nutritional status of a child at birth is influenced by the nutritional status of his mother. It is especially belonging to the low socio-economic group, live on diets which are inadequate. The high incidence of pre-maturity, low birth weight of babies and neo-natal mortality can be attributed to poor nutritional condition among the mothers. In view of this, importance has to be given to improving the maternal nutrition status. With an increase in women's employment, the income of the household shall go up thereby resulting not only in raising the nutrition and child-care in the family but also bringing down the birth rate and infant mortality rate.

The long-term approach to solving the problem of malnutrition in women should be to generate employment among them as it will provide purchasing power to women which will have an impact on her as well as her family's nutritional status. Along with this, basic services like health, crèche-cum-balwadis, etc. shall have to be provided to enable their employment retention. Till the long-term programme effectively builds up, nutrition intervention to most vulnerable groups of women, namely, pregnant and

nursing mothers from the weakest sections of the society should continue to get nutrition supplement under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme. Education should also be imparted on the production and consumption of nutrition foods and on the adoption of simple horticultural remedies involving kitchen gardening for the major nutritional maladies of each block.

### **Employment**

One of the most important means of achieving improvement in the status of women is to secure for them a fair share of employment opportunities. Areas and sectors where women's employment is either low or on the decline can be identified and corrective measures initiated to promote additional avenues for employment. Efforts should be made to offer larger employment for them in then schemes for public distribution system, rural go downs, Operation Food , diary development, social forestry and in armed forces. Modernization of traditional occupations of women such as spinning and weaving, match-making, coir, cashew, rural marketing, agriculture, animal husbandry and fishery, etc., should be selective and should include simultaneous development of skills for alternative employment for them. Mechanization should be encouraged in such areas where the processing or manufacturing involves extremely strenuous and debilitating hard work which is injurious to health. The impact of new projects on women's employment must be monitored.

## **WOMEN AND THE FIVE YEAR PLANS**

### **The Welfare Phase**

Over the years planning strategies of on women and children in the country has evolved from 'welfare' to 'development' to 'empowerment'. Dramatic changes have taken place in the legal, political, educational and social status of women since independence. In order to improve the well being of women and children in society, the government has made a significant shift in the approach from "welfare" during the 50's to "development" during the 70's and to "empowerment" during the 90's. During 90's the major thrust with respect to women was to ensure their survival,

protection and development with special focus on the girl child and adolescent girl.

The approach in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) was to provide adequate services to 'promote the welfare of women' so that they can play their 'legitimate role in the family and the community'. It was noted, "the position and functions of women differ to a great extent in different communities, and therefore, community welfare agencies should work out their programmes and activities according to the specific requirements in which they work". The Plan document further noted that special organizations on the part of the Central or State Governments for promoting the welfare of women had not yet been developed and therefore stressed that 'the major burden of organizing activities for the benefit of vast female population has to be borne by the private agencies'. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was setup in 1953 to promote voluntary organizations at various levels, especially at the grassroots, to take up welfare related activities for women.

Considering that opportunities of early childhood development determine the present and future human resource development of the nation, child development became a focused activity from the very First Five Year Plan. In successive Plans conscious efforts were made in evolving and crystallizing new perspectives and paradigm to initiate multilane interventions required fulfilling the needs of the deprived and under privileged children.

The Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Plans, including the four years of Plan holiday that preceded the Fourth Plan continued the same approach for the welfare of women. The concept of women's development was mainly 'welfare' oriented and was clubbed with other categories of welfare such as the old and disabled. The schemes of Condensed Course of Education and Women and Socio-Economic Programme were introduced during the Second Plan (1969-74).

For the children; the Forth Plan focused on accelerating the Basic Minimum Services, culminating finally in the adoption of the National Policy for Children in 1974. The Fifth Plan saw a shift in focus from child welfare to child

development and an emphasis on integration and coordination of services, which finally took place by the launching of Integrated Child Development Scheme in 1975.

The end of the Fourth Plan had seen the release of the monumental report of Committee on Status of Women in India entitled 'Towards Equality' which revealed that the dynamics of development had adversely affected a large section of women and created new imbalances and women as critical inputs for national development rather than as targets for welfare policies. A Women's Welfare and Development Bureau was setup in 1976 under the Ministry of Social Welfare Groups on Employment of Women, Adult Education Programmes for Women, Women in Agriculture and Rural Development were setup to chalk out strategies for action in all these areas.

#### **The Development Phase**

These led to a definite shift in the approach from 'welfare' to 'development' in the Sixth Plan (1980-85), which recognized women as participants of development and not merely as objects of welfare. The Plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core programmes for women under different sectors of agriculture and its allied activities of dairying, poultry, small animal husbandry, handlooms, handicrafts, small scale industries etc. Women's Employment Programme was introduced in 1982 with assistance from Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD). In the children's front, the Sixth Five Year Plan reiterated the approach and strategy outlined in the Fifth Plan, and promoted consolidation and expansion of the programmes started earlier.

The Seventh Plan (1985-90) continued the stress on generation of both skilled and unskilled employment of women through proper education and vocational training. Two new schemes of support to training and employment (STEP) and Awareness Generation Programme for rural and poor women (AGP) were introduced. Three landmark reports, namely Shram Shakti, the report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in Informal Sector, National Perspective Plan on Women (1988-2000) and

SAARC guide book on women in development were prepared during this period. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up in 1985 to serve as the nodal point for women and children within the national machinery.

Along with women, major initiatives were taken to focus on girls child for breaking the viscous continuum, of girl child and women, so the girls can get, the much required space for physical and mental development before being asked to take up the responsibilities of wife and mother. Spatial expansion and enrichment of child development services took place through programmes in different sector much emphasis was also given on human development through adequacy, mobilization and community empowerment.

Recognizing the role and contribution of women in development; the Eight Plan (1990-95), adopted the strategy to ensure that 'benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programmes are implemented to compliment the general development programmes. To new schemes, which were introduced during this period, were Mahila Samriti Yojana and Indira Mahila Yojana. The other major developments during this Plan period were setting up of National Commission for Women and National Credit Fund for Women known as Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, and the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments during one-third of seats of rural and urban self governing institutions were reserved for women. The government declared its commitment to the development of 'every child', which was manifest in the two national plan of action adopted in 1992, one for the children and the other exclusively for girl child.

#### **Empowerment Phase**

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy for planning for women. First, "Empowerment of Women" became one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan. With the approach of the plan was to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. For this purpose a 'National Policy for Empowerment of

Women' was approved in 2001. Secondly, the Ninth Plan attempted convergence of existing services, resources, infrastructure and manpower available in both women-specific and women-related sector. To this effect, the plan directed both the Central and State to adopt a special strategy of 'Women's Component Plan' through which, not less than 30% of funds/benefits should be earmarked in the entire women-related sector. It also suggested that a special vigil should be kept on the flow of earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women.

#### **Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)**

The year 2001-02 witnessed hectic activities for the preparation of the Tenth Plan (2002-07) Planning Commission constituted three Working Groups under the chairmanship of the Secretary Social Welfare Department, namely

- a. Working Group on Empowerment of Women
- b. Working Group of on Child Development
- c. Working Group on Improving Nutritional Status of Population with Special Focus on Vulnerable Groups.

Joint Secretaries in-charge of W.O, CD and CW Bureaus were the conveners of the Groups, which had experts, professionals, activists, and representatives of all concern Ministries/Departments and some State Governments as Members. Each Group developed its own methodology for concentration and preparation of reports. The reports of the first two Working Groups were presented before the Steering Committee of the Planning Commission on Women and Children. The third report was presented to the Steering Committee on Nutrition. Both the Steering Committees were chaired by Shri K. Venkata Subramaniam Member, Planning Commission.

A Base Paper was developed for the Working Group on Empowerment of Women, which was discussed in the first meeting of the Group. Subsequently two sub-groups were constituted, one focusing of Social

empowerment of women and other on Economic empowerment of women. The reports of the sub-groups were discussed in the plenary again and thereafter the final report was prepared. The following are some of the main recommendations of the Working Group on the approach of the Tenth Plan.

The global setting of the Tenth Five Year Plan characterized by 'market driven forces' on the one side, expectations of women on the other, calls for an approach based on recognition of 'people's entitlements' and the responsibilities of the State to provide conditions for achieving these entitlements.

'Access' to benefits of development has been conditioned by the prevailing social discrimination against women. The challenge is to design strategic investments whose outcome will enhance social gains in terms of good health, education and capabilities, in effect holistically bringing about empowerment of women.

The trend of decline in expenditure on social sectors is a cause for serious worry. It is critical to sharpen the approach in the Tenth Plan to substantially step-up investment in this sector and also to focus on strategies to optimize the scarce public resources to increase gains for larger numbers of women and men.

The processes of liberalization as exacerbated existing regional disparities creating pockets of prosperity amidst poverty and deprivation, since investments have tended to flow in regions, which have taken are lead infrastructure development. This has further slowed down the process of their social development. It is urgent to evolve a new set of sustainable strategies to eliminate the regional imbalances in social and economic development.

The planning process for the development of women has evolved to 'welfare' to 'development' to 'participation'. Despite the dynamism of the approach, the constitutional and legal provisions for affirmative action, the institutional buildup and attendant step up in investments, gender discrimination continuous to be daunting challenge.

Significant gains have, however, been made in the live expectancy of women, literacy and representation in the local self-governing institutions. An active and grassroots level leadership is emerging form among women. If properly harnessed this can be a very effective and catalytic agent for transforming the social conditions of women in the country.

The National Policy for Empowerment of Women, announced by the Government in April 2001, has laid down a number of policy prescriptions for the national, state and local governments. The approach to the Tenth Five Year Plan for the development of women should be based on the prescription of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women.

The Tenth Plan on women should essentially be in the nature of an Action Plan for the implementation of the National Policy. The plan should set certain measurable goals in different social sectors in consonance with the National Policies in the related fields.

#### **National Policy for Empowerment of Women**

One of the landmark achievements of the year 2001 was the approval of the first ever National Policy for the Empowerment of Women. The main objective of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their active participation in all spheres of life and activities.

The policy prescribes affirmative action in areas such as legal system, decision making structure, mainstreaming of gender perspective in development process, economic empowerment through increased access to resources like micro credit, better resource allocation through Women's Component Plan, Gender Budget exercise and development of Gender Development Indices and social empowerment of women through, inter-alia, universalization of education, adoption of holistic approach to women's health etc. The policy commits to making compulsory the registration of marriages and to eliminate child marriage by 2010. The policy takes into account the new developments initiated by the process of economic reforms and the

impact of globalization and liberalization on women, particularly in the informal sector. The policy further prescribes that the provision of various legislation including personal laws, which are discriminatory against women shall be reviewed and amended with the supports and initiatives of concerned communities. Review of women oriented legislation will be completed by 2003.

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of such policy which is meant for their advancement, development and empowerment, the responses received are presented in table 5.1 below:

**Table – 5.1 Awareness of policy**

S. No.	Aware of policies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	150	50.00
2.	No	100	33.33
3.	No response	50	16.67
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that only 50 percent respondents were aware about such policy while 33.33 percent respondents were not aware of such policy and 16.67 percent respondents did not respond.

The policy envisages setting up of a Council at the National level to oversee the implementation of the policy. The National Council will be headed by the Prime Minister. Similar Councils will also be set up at the State levels to be headed by the concerned Chief Ministers. All Central and State Ministers/Departments would be required to draw up action plans with measurable goals to be achieved in a time frame of next 10 years.

#### **Women's Component Plan**

The Department of Women and Child Development which was designated as the nodal machinery for the development and empowerment of women, is playing a crucial role in the formulation and monitoring of women's component plan which was devised as a operational strategy in the Ninth Plan

to ensure that not less than 30% of funds/benefits are earmarked for women in all the women-related sectors.

The Department has advised all the concerned ministry/departments for inclusion of an identifiable Women Component Plan in the Programmes right from the planning process and implementation and monitoring of the programmes to ensure that benefits reach the women. The department has further requested all the ministries/department to set up Advisory Committees for women in each sector to help in the preparation, monitoring and implementation of women's component plan set up a women's cell and to include a chapter on women's component plan in their annual reports.

On the instructions of PMO the department has also been monitoring 27 beneficiary oriented schemes for women implemented by Central Government. It has been decided to extend the scope of the monitoring to include the gamut of the women's component plan.

#### **Special component plan (SSP) for SC and Tribal sub-plan (TSP)**

Programmes for women and children implemented by the department are primarily directed towards the most disadvantaged groups of population like schedule caste and schedule tribes and other economically backward classes living in backward rural and tribal areas and urban slums. The nature and design of implementation of the programmes is such that it is rather impossible horizontally either too have schemes exclusively for SC and ST or earmark funds for SCP TSP. However, the basic consideration in all the schemes is to ensure that the benefits of the scheme flow to the disadvantaged section of the population, the SCS and STS women and children.

The department has been implementing one of the largest area based scheme of the integrated child development services (ICDS) which consumes more than two-third of the Department's annual budget. The Annual Plan outlay for the Department for the year 2000-2001 was Rs. 1650 crores (BE) out of which Rs. 935 crores was earmarked for ICDS. The ICDS envisages provision of vital services to most vulnerable groups in disadvantaged arrears

with a focus on the (a) Areas inhabited predominantly by SCs and (b) Areas inhabited by tribe's particularly backward tribes. Of 4350 ICDS projects operationalised in the country, 750 are tribal projects located in areas predominantly inhabited by tribes. Even in respect of projects in other blocks, the focus is on coverage of most vulnerable groups including SCs/STs and other backward castes.

Under the scheme of Hostels for Working Women implemented by the Department, there are stipulation that 15% of the seats in hostel will be reserved for SCs and 7.5% for STs. The schemes of Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) are aimed at improving nutritional status of people in general and of the vulnerable sections of the population including SCs and STs in particular. The major thrust of the programmes of the Board is on the rural, tribal and urban areas.

Most of the programmes of the Department on women are implemented through voluntary organization. Efforts are made to encourage more and more voluntary organizations to come forth with proposals in tribal and backward rural areas by extending special concessions and relaxations under grant-in-aid. The Central Social Welfare Board has relaxed the condition regarding the minimum experience of three years for voluntary organizations in tribal areas to be eligible for grant-in-aid. Similarly, under the scheme of Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women, the Board makes efforts to enroll scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women for the course. In the case of SC and ST candidates, condition regarding educational qualification for admission to the courses is relaxed wherever necessary. Records are kept of the SCs and STs admitted to these courses.

#### **Child Welfare**

Child welfare has to be accorded high priority within the overall frame of social welfare. The scheme "Integrated Child Development Services" is a major scheme and should be expanded so as to cover additional 400 blocks raising the total to 600 blocks by the end of plan period. Measures have to be taken to linkage with health, nutrition and other service and socio economic

programmes for women. Emphasis should be laid on the development of monitoring system at the State and project levels. Special efforts have to be made to evolve the local communities and other agencies in all aspects of programme improvement. The existing programmes of crèche-day care centers and balwadis should be integrated for providing a package of services and linked with areas of economic activity for women under various sectors of employment. The programmes of balwadis and welfare extension projects should be merged with ICDS projects wherever they coincide. The programme of service of children in need of care and protection should be suitably modified to develop cheaper models with better standards of services. The scheme has to be linked with training institutions and socio-economic programmes so that the children can be rehabilitated in the society.

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of such schemes through which crèche day care centres and balwadis should be integrated for providing package of services and linked with area of economic activity for women, the responses received are presented in table 5.2 below:

**Table – 5.2 Awareness about child welfare**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	100	33.33
2.	No	175	58.33
3.	No response	25	8.33
Total		300	99.99

It is clear from the above table that 58.33 percent respondents were not aware about such policy while 33.33 percent respondents were aware of such policy and 8.33 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **Women Welfare**

The scheme of condensed course and vocational training has proved its utility in offering opportunities to the young girls to continue their education. It has to be expanded further to prepare girl student for lateral entry to classes V and VIII also. Voluntary organization should be given incentive to organize

these courses among the most backward tribal and rural areas in order to enable the girls to take up locally available opportunities under various developmental schemes. Effort should be made to keep proper liaison with the training institutions for Anganwadi workers, ANMs etc., so that women completing the condensed course can readily be absorbed into various occupations. The scope of vocational training should be enlarged to cover a large number of trades so that the trainees are able to find ready employment. Areas having low female literacy rates should be identified and selected for organizing condensed courses and vocational training.

The respondents were then asked whether they are aware of scheme of condensed course and vocational trainings which has proved its utility in offering opportunities to the young girls to continue their education, the responses received are presented in table 5.3 below:

**Table – 5.3 Vocational training and respondents**

S. No.	Awareness about vocational training	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	75	25.00
2.	No	175	58.33
3.	No response	50	16.67
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 58.33 percent respondents were not aware about such training programmes while 25 percent respondents were aware of such training programmes and 16.67 percent respondents did not respond.

The existing socio-economic programmes should be reoriented so as to make the scheme economically viable and self-sustaining. Emphasis must be placed on the provision of financial assistance in the shape of seed money only, rather than giving one time grants as in the past. The projects should be prepared keeping in view the economic viability and involvement of financial institutions so that the projects can be replicated considerably and larger number of women can be helped to secure employment.

### **Thrust on Employment and Training for Women**

In line with the Eight Plan strategy, the nodal Department of Women and Child Development has reset its priorities to accord special emphasis on employment and income generation activities for women. The ultimate objective in all these efforts is to make women economically independent and self-reliant. Some of the important programmes initiated by the Department in this direction are:

#### **Support to Training Employment Project (STEP)**

The programme of STEP, launched in 1987, aims to upgrade the skills of poor women, mobilize, concretize and provide employment on a sustainable basis to women in traditional sectors such as – agriculture, dairying, fisheries, sericulture, handlooms and handicrafts. In addition to training and employment support, the three special features which the programme includes are – gender sensitization, women in development (WID) inputs and provision for “support services”.

#### **Training-cum-employment-cum-production centre (NORAD)**

The second major programme of ‘Training-cum-employment-cum-protection centers’ which is commonly known as “NORAD assisted Training Programmes for Women” extends financial assistance to public sector undertakings/ corporations /autonomous bodies /voluntary organization to train women in non-traditional trades and provide employment on a sustainable basis. Priority is given on training in areas like electronics, electrical watch assembly and manufacturing, computer programming, printing and binding, handlooms, garment making, weaving and spinning, hotel management, fashion technology and tourism. Since the inception of the programme in 1983, more than 50,000 women and girls have benefited from training as well as employment opportunities provided under this scheme.

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of training cum employment cum production centres through which training for nontraditional trades were provided through voluntary organizations and the responses

received are presented in table 5.4 below:

**Table – 5.4 Awareness of training cum employment cum production centres**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	15	05.00
2.	No	231	77.00
3.	No response	54	18.00
	Total	300	100

The responses reveals that 77 percent respondents were not aware about such centers while 5 percent respondents were aware of such policy and 18 percent respondents did not responded.

It is clear that such centres are not popular in masses.

#### **Socio-Economic Programme**

The third major programme of employment and training for women is the socio-economic programme (SEP) implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB). SEP provides 'work and wage' to needy women such as destitute, widows, economically backward and the handicapped. Since the inception of the programme, 1, 54,000 literate and illiterate women have been given 'wage and work' in the traditional as well as agro-based and non-traditional industries.

#### **Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training for Adult Women (CCE&VT)**

The scheme of Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training for Adult Women started in 1958 and was recast and redefine by the CSWB 1975. This scheme aims to provide new vistas of employment through continuing education and vocational training for women and girls who are school drop-outs. Since the inception of this programme, about 8, 00,000 adult women and young girls have undergone vocational training.

The scheme of providing condensed courses of education and vocational training for adult women is popular or not was asked from the respondents and the responses received are presented in table 5.5 below:

**Table – 5.5 Awareness about condensed courses**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	87	29.00
2.	No	159	53.00
3.	No response	54	18.00
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 53 percent respondents were not aware about such courses while 29 percent respondents were aware of such policy and 18 percent respondents did not respond.

### **SPECIAL INITIATIVES**

#### **National Commission for Women**

In January 1992, the National Commission for Women was set up by the Government with the mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the Constitutional and safeguards provided for women, for reviewing existing legislation and suggesting amendments where necessary and for looking into complaints involving deprivation of the rights of women. Since its inception, many issues and incidents have been taken up by the Commission. Similar Commission are also being setup at the State level.

The National commission for Women was set to monitor all matters related to women and it was thought proper to know the responses of the respondents., the responses received are presented in table 5.6 (see next page):

**Table – 5.6 Awareness related to National commission for Women**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	240	80.00
2.	No	30	10.00
3.	No response	30	10.00
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 80 percent respondents were aware that The National commission for Women Was set by the government for their welfare about while 10 percent respondents were not aware of such commission and 10 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh**

Setting up of a Rashtriya Mahila Kosh – a National Credit Fund for Women in 1993 – is yet another innovation. The fund aims to reach the poorest of the poor women are in need of credit but cannot reach the formal banking or credit system. This credit fund has helped in the development of a national network of credit service for women in the informal sector. This fund lends to NGOs working in the field, who in turn lend to poor women.

It was asked from the respondents that whether they are aware of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh set for the welfare of the women and it was thought proper to know the responses of the respondents, the responses received are presented in table 5.7 below:

**Table – 5.7 Awareness related to Rahhtriya Mahila Kosh**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	96	32.00
2.	No	159	53.00
3.	No response	45	15.00
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 53 percent respondents were not aware about Rahtriya Mahila Kosh set by the government for them while 32 percent respondents were aware of such kosh and 15 percent respondents did not responded.

#### **Legal Literacy Manuals**

A Legal Literacy Manual was brought out in 1992 with the aim of educating women about the laws concerning their basic rights. These manual have been written in a simple and illustrated format and covers a wide range of subjects, namely, laws relating to working women, child labor, contract labor, adoption maintenance, Hindu, Muslim and Christian marriage laws and rights to property.

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of Legal Literacy Manuals to educate women about the laws concerning their basic rights. such, the responses received are presented in table 5.8 below:

**Table – 5.8 Awareness about Legal Literacy Manuals**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	126	42.00
2.	No	156	52.00
3.	No response	18	6.00
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 52 percent respondents were not aware about such manuals while 42 percent respondents were aware of such manual and 6 percent respondents did not responded.

#### **The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child**

The National Plan of Action for Children (1992) and the National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000) are both integrated and multi-sectoral in their approach to ensure 'survival', 'protection' and 'development' of children. While the girl child, being an integral part of the total target group of

children, is expected to derive full benefits from the National Plan of Action for Children, her gender-specific needs will be taken care of by the plan of action for the girl child with a focus on adolescent girls.

The information regarding National Plan of Action for the girl child was collected from the respondents that whether they are aware of such plan or not, the responses received from the respondents are presented in table 5.9 below:

**Table – 5.9 Awareness about National Plan of Action for the girl child**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	90	30.00
2.	No	180	60.00
3.	No response	30	10.00
Total		300	100

It is clear from the above table that 60 percent respondents were not aware about such plan while 30 percent respondents were aware of such policy and 10 percent respondents did not respond.

It is very strange to note that the respondents were not aware of such plans which ensure survival, protection and development of girl child.

#### **National Resource Centre for Women**

The Government has finalized a proposal to set up the National Resource Centre for Women which will act as an apex body for promoting and incorporating gender perspectives in policies and programmes of the government. A pilot project to test the concepts and methodologies underlying the National Resource Centre has been successfully implemented recently.

#### **Mahila Samridhi Yojana**

Another initiative to empower women by raising their economic status is the scheme of Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) launched in October 1993. The MSY scheme aims to promote the habit of saving among rural women with the objective of improving their financial assets. The government offers

an incentive of 25 per cent on a deposit of Rs. 300 kept for a lock-in period of one year.

#### **PROGRAMMES OF ACTION**

The Indian Government has initiated several measures to ensure that the problems of deprivation and discrimination faced by the poor women and children in India are overcome. These programmes of action aim at dealing with issues like health, education, rural development and better working condition.

##### **Health and Nutrition**

In the field of health, nutrition and family welfare, child survival, safe motherhood and nutritional anaemia have been receiving the highest priority. Apart from the extensive network of primary health care infrastructure, India has also the world's largest Integrate Child Development Services (ICDS) programme which offers a package of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health care, growth monitoring, pre-school education and health nutrition education. Along with special initiatives like the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) these interventions have helped India substantially reduce the infant mortality rate and also bring malnourishment under control.

A point of investigation during research was that whether the respondents were aware of such schemes through which health and nutrition facilities were provided, the responses received are presented in table 5.10 below:

**Table – 5.10 Health and Nutrition programme and awareness of respondents**

S. No.	Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	180	60.00
2.	No	105	35.00
3.	No response	15	05.00
Total		300	100

The data from the table that clears that 60 percent respondents were aware about such programmes while 35 percent respondents were not aware of such programme and 5 percent respondents did not respond.

It is interesting to note that the respondents were aware of such programmes which offer a package of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health care, growth monitoring, pre-school education and health nutrition education.

#### **Education for all**

The Indian Constitution states that free and compulsory education for all children would be provided until they complete the age of fourteen years. While it has not been possible to achieve this goal as yet, the achievements in the realm of literacy and basic education have been significant. Recognizing the fact that it is the girl child who is compelled to leave school at an early age, special efforts are being made to increase enrollment and retention of these children in school. Combining a programme of non-formal education for the working children and supported with a massive adult literacy effort, India aims to meet the target of education for all by the end of the current decade. But this has not been achieved.

#### **Rural development**

Keeping in view the vulnerable status of women and children in rural society particularly owing to their economic dependence on others, special provisions have been made to ensure that forty per cent of all allocation for the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and other mass employment programmes has been reserved for women. In order to help poor women working in the informal sector, a National Credit Fund has been started so that loans may be obtained by them at reasonable rates without the formal procedures of usual institutionalized banking. In addition, under programmes like Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) efforts are being made to give rural women technical and management skills to build their own co-operative enterprises.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) plays an important role in the field of development for rural masses and forty percent of all allocation has been reserved for women. The respondents were asked whether they are aware of such programmes or not and the responses received are presented in table 5.11 below:

**Table – 5.11 Awareness about Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	100	33.33
2.	No	175	58.33
3.	No response	25	8.33
Total		300	99.99

It is clear from the above table that 58.33 percent respondents were not aware about such programmes while 33.33 percent respondents were aware of such programmes and 8.33 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **Special initiatives**

A significant feature of the women's movement has been the network of associations and groups that have been formed, largely through the efforts of NGOs in India. These groups and associations have successfully organized women working in the informal sector and battled for improvement in their working conditions and for a fairer deal from their employers. Similarly, in the development of co-operatives, particularly in dairying, the contribution towards women's development has been significant.

#### **Welfare and support services**

The government has spread a wide network of support service of women and children belonging to lower economic strata through voluntary organizations. These support services represent an important plank for empowerment of women as they reduce the burden of child care and employment related problems.

### **Hostels for Working Women**

In order to promote greater mobility for women in the employment market, the government launched a scheme of hostels for working women in 1973 to provide safe and inexpensive accommodation to single working women who come to the cities for finding employment. Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to the extent of 50 percent of the cost of land and 75 percent of the cost of construction of the building to the extended towards purchase of buildings. Voluntary organizations, public trusts, local bodies, women Development Corporation, universities, schools/colleges of social work are eligible for financial assistance under the scheme.

As the women are engaged in different works and they are doing their job in different cities, it was thought proper to ask the respondents that whether they are aware of the hostel facility provided for them to live safe in various cities. The responses received are presented in table 5.12 below:

**Table – 5.12 Awareness about hostel facilities**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	215	71.67
2.	No	60	20.00
3.	No response	25	8.33
Total		300	100

It is clear that 71.67 percent respondents were aware about such hostels while 20 percent respondents were not aware of such hostels and 8.33 percent respondents did not respond.

### **Crèches for children**

The Central Scheme of Crèches for working / ailing mother's children is under implementation since 1975-76. The scheme is implemented through voluntary organizations. This envisages day-care services for children of the age group 0 – 5 years. Services include health care, supplementary nutrition, sleeping facilities, immunization and play and recreation for children. This

scheme is being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) through voluntary social welfare organizations and by the Indian Council for Child Welfare and Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, all over the country.

### **Scheme for Adolescent Girls**

For the first time in India, a special intervention has been devised for adolescent girls. This scheme focuses on school drop-out girls in the age-group of 11-18 years and attempts to meet the special needs of nutrition, health, education, literacy, recreational and skill development of young girls. A service of State, district and block level workshops were organized to ensure better operationalization.

The respondents were asked question related to such scheme and the responses received are presented in table 5.13 below:

**Table – 5.13 Awareness about the scheme for adolescent girls**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	66	22.00
2.	No	175	58.33
3.	No response	59	19.67
	Total	300	100

It is clear that 58.33 percent respondents were not aware about such schemes while 22 percent respondents were aware of such schemes and 19.67 percent respondents did not respond.

### **GENDER SENSITIZATION AND AWARENESS GENERATION**

The government of India attaches great importance to those effects which trigger changes in social attitude towards women. An integrated media campaign projecting a positive image of both women and the girl child through electronic, print and film media is the most important component of the government's communication strategy. A large number of TV spots, documentary film and radio programmes have been produced by the

Department of Women and Child Welfare to propagate messages to bring about attitudinal change. To sensitize planners, policy makers and the enforcement machinery, a country-wide gender sensitization programme was launched in 1991. So far a number of states have been covered.

### **ENABLING FRAMEWORK**

Since independence, the Government of India has enacted a Constitutional and legal framework and has developed institutional mechanisms to enable improvement in the living conditions of women and children in India.

### **THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW**

The basic provisions of the Indian Constitution that guarantee justice, liberty and equality to all citizens and the specific Articles and amendments that have been enacted, to ensure that women and children enjoy the Constitutional rights that assure their participation in society as equal partners, provide the framework for women and child development in India.

#### **Institutional mechanisms**

A separate Department of Women and Child Development has been established by the government to give due emphasis to this area and to ensure convergence of services and formulation of policies. There are other bodies like the Central Social Welfare Board and the Indian Council of Child Welfare which are apex bodies concerned with the development of women and children. Supported by the efforts of NGOs and international organizations like the UNICEF these form the core programme and initiatives in this field.

#### **National Commission for Women**

The National Commission for Women was set up by the government in 1992 with the mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the Constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, reviewing existing legislation and suggesting amendments where necessary and looking into complaints involving deprivation of the rights of women. Since its inception, many issues and incidents have been taken up by the Commission.

### **Local Self Government**

With the enactment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of India, the third tier of the government in the federal structure of government becomes enforceable. The provision of a 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) has been made to ensure the participation of women in the self-governance of districts in larger numbers.

### **Policies Advocating Women's Concerns**

In addition to women-specific and women-related policies enunciated in various plan documents, the government has also been creating an enabling policy environment in which women's concerns can be reflected, articulated and redressed by the government, the voluntary agencies and the corporate sector. As part of this effort, many policy instruments have been brought forth, over the years, leading to action plans and programmes in several spheres.

### **National Plans of Action for Women (NPA)**

The National plan of Action for Women (NPA) adopted in 1976 became a guiding document for the development of women till 1988 when a National Perspective Plan for Women was formulated.

### **National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP)**

The National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP) (1988-2000) drafted by a core-group of experts is more or less a long term policy document advocating a holistic approach for the development of women.

### **Shram Shakti**

The report of the National Commission on self Employed Women and women in the Informal Sector (1988) examines the entire gamut of issues facing women in unorganized sector and makes a number of recommendations relating to employment, occupational hard, legislative protection, training and skill development, marketing and credit for women in the informal sector.

### **National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners**

The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1986) examined the conditions of women prisoners in the criminal correctional justice system and made a series of recommendations relating to necessary legislative reforms prison reforms and other custodial institutions and rehabilitation of prisoners so far as women prisoners are concerned.

### **National Nutritional Policy**

The National Nutritional Policy (NNP) 1993 articulates nutritional consideration in all important policy instruments of government and identifies short-term and long-term measures necessary to improve the nutritional status of women, children and country as a whole.

### **National Plan of Action for the Girl Child**

The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (NPA) 1991-2000 is an integrated multi-sectoral decadal plan of action for ensuring survival, protection and development of children with a special gender sensitivity built for the girl child and adolescent girls.

In addition to these, there are many other women-related policies like the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1966, National Health Policy Commission for Women's Act (NCW) 1990, which have been influencing the welfare and development of women and children in the country.

### **Policies and Programmes for Children**

Development programmes aimed at reducing poverty do not necessarily reach children, or improve the environment in which they live and grow. It is acknowledged that while national development efforts for poverty alleviation would continue, the needs for children must be met today. Out of the 300 million children in India a lot live in an economic and social environment which could impede the child's physical and mental development.

The national policy for children, 1974 is founded on the conviction that child development programmes are necessary to ensure equality of opportunity to these children. It provides the framework for assigning priorities to different needs of children and for responding to them in an integrated manner. Other policies, programmes and schemes for child development have been formulated, keeping in mind the objectives of this National Policy.

#### **Rights of the Child**

In India, the post-independence era has experienced an unequivocal expression of the commitment of the government to the cause of children through constitutional provisions, policies, programmes and legislation. The Constitution of India Article 39 of the Directive Principles of State Policy pledges that "the State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing... that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused, and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength, that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a health, manners and in conditions of freedom and dignity, and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment."

As a follow-up of this commitment and being a party to the UN declaration on the Rights of the Child 1959, India adopted the National Policy on Children in 1974. The policy reaffirmed the Constitutional provisions and stated that "it shall be the policy of the state to provide adequate services to children, both before and after birth and through the period of growth to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. The State shall progressively increase the scope of such services so that within a reasonable time all children in the country enjoy optimum conditions for their balanced growth."

As the responsibility of children's nurture and proper growth is bestowed on the Government, children's programmes have occupied a prominent place in the national plans for human resource development. Successive Five Year Plans have provided the wherewithal to deal with these

issues. In the last decade of this century, dramatic technological developments particularly in the areas of health, nutrition, education and related spheres have opened up new vistas of opportunities for the cause of children.

#### **INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

The Constitution of India, the National Policy for Children, many other policies and legislation accord priority to children's needs. The government of India ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1992. Accordingly, the government is taking action to review the National and State legislation and bring it in line with the provisions of the Convention. It has also developed appropriate monitoring procedure to assess progress in implementing the Convention, involved all relevant government/ ministries/ departments, International Agencies, non-governmental organizations and the legal profession in the implementation and reporting process, publicized the Convention, and sought public inputs for frank and transparent reporting.

India is also signatory to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. In pursuance of the commitment made at the World Summit, the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development has formulated a National Plan of Action for Children. Most of the recommendations of the World Summit Action Plan are reflected in India's National Plan of Action.

The National Plan of Action has been formulated keeping in mind the needs, rights and aspirations of 300 million children in the country and sets out quantifiable time limits for India's Charter of Action for Children by 2000 AD. The priority areas in the plan are health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and environment. The plan gives special consideration to children in difficult circumstances and aims at providing a framework, for actualization of the objectives of the Convention in the Indian context. The National Plan of Action also lists out activities to achieve these goals. To make the aims and activities of the Plan more need-based and area specific, the Central

Government has urged the state governments to prepare a plan of action for children for their States, taking into account the regional disparities that may exist.

### **THE GIRL CHILD**

The slogan of the Indian government for the girl child campaign was "A Happy Girl is the future of our country." Traditions, customs and social practices that place greater value on sons than on daughters, who are often viewed as an economic burden, still stand in the way of the girl child being able to achieve her full potential. A sustained educational campaign by the government and the NGOs has been started to ensure that baseless discrimination against the child is eliminated.

The Government of India has taken measures to protect and promote girl child. It has announced its "Education for all" campaign which is to reach 19-24 million children in the age group 6-14, of whom 60 percent girls. A National Plan of Action for the Girl Child for 1991-2000 was also announced. This plan seeks to prevent female feticide and infanticide, eliminate gender discrimination, provide safe drinking water and fodder near homes, rehabilitate and protect girls from exploitation, assault and abuse. The government's national policy of education and the Action Research Project on "The Girl Child and the Family" are also aimed at formulation of programmes to improve the status of the girl child.

### **STREET CHILDREN**

It is estimated that there are 314,700 street children in Mumbai, Kolkata, Madras, Kanpur, Bangalore and Hyderabad combined and about 100,000 in Delhi. Factors which have given rise to the increase in number of street children in India include poverty, family break-ups, armed conflicts, natural and man-made disasters, lack of employment opportunities and the attraction of cities.

Street children have received much attention in the media, both national and international in the recent years. The awareness and

sensitization efforts have led to several initiatives involving numerous groups working with street children, launching of specific schemes and programmes at the local, state and national level and initiation of numerous studies on street children.

Non-governmental organizations or NGOs in India are doing laudable work in this area and are dealing with issue related to shelter, health, education and training of these children. A Central Scheme for the welfare of street children has recently been initiated by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. This scheme gives grant-in-aid to NGOs working on issues of street children.

India has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force in 1990. This ratification implies that India will ensure wide awareness about child issues among the government agencies, implementing agencies, the media, the judiciary, the public at large and the children themselves. The government's endeavor is to create a conducive, climate for acceptance of the goals of the convention and to amend all legislation, policies and schemes to meet the standards set in the treaty framework.

#### **CHILDREN AND WORK**

India has all along followed a proactive policy in the matter of tackling the problem of child labor. India has always stood for Constitutional, statutory and developmental measures that are required to eliminate child labor. The framers of the Indian Constitution consciously incorporated relevant provisions in the Constitution to secure compulsory universal elementary education as well as labor protection for children. Labor Commission and Committees have gone into the problems of child labor and made extensive recommendations.

India's policy on child labor has evolved over the years against this backdrop. The present regimes of laws relating to child labor have a pragmatic foundation and are consistent with the International Labor Conference Resolution of 1979.

The policy of the government is to ban employment of children below the age of fourteen years in factories, mines and hazardous employment and so regulate the working conditions of children in other employment. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 seeks to achieve this basic objective. Through a notification dated May 26, 1993, the working conditions of children have been regulated in all employment which is not prohibited under the Child Labour (Prohibition Regulation) Act. Following up on a preliminary notification issued on October 5, 1993, the government has also prohibited employment of children in occupation like abattoirs/slaughter houses, printing, cashew nut decaling and processing and soldering.

#### **INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS)**

ICDS is India's response to the challenge of meeting the holistic needs of the child, launched initially in 33 blocks, on October 2, 1975. Today, the ICDS is one of the world's largest and most unique programmes for early childhood care and development. It symbolizes India's commitment to its children.

It is widely acknowledged that the young child is most vulnerable to malnutrition, morbidity, resultant disability and mortality. The early years are the most crucial period in life, when the foundation for cognitive, social, emotional, language, physical development and lifelong learning are laid. Recognizing that early childhood development constitutes the foundation of human development ICDS is designed to promote holistic development of children under six years, through the strengthened capacity of communities and improved access to basic services at the community level. The programme is specifically designed to reach disadvantaged and low income groups, for effective disparity reduction.

The programmes provides an integrated approach for converging basic services for improved childcare, early stimulation and learning, health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation-targeting young children, expectant and nursing mothers and women groups. These target groups are reached through nearly 300,000 trained community-based Anganwadi

workers and an equal number of helpers, supportive community structures/women groups-through the Anganwadi centre, the health and the community.

ICDS provides increased opportunities for promoting early development, associated with improved enrolment and retention in the early primary stage and by releasing girls from the burden of sibling care, to enable them to participate in primary education. Poised for universal coverage by the turn of the century, ICDS today reaches out to 3.8 million expectant and nursing mothers and 17.8 million children (under six years of age) from disadvantaged groups. Of these, 10.2 million children (three to six years of age) participate in centre based pre-school activities. The network canisters of 3907 projects, covering nearly 70 percent of the country's community development blocks and 260 urban slum pockets.

#### **OBJECTIVE OF INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS)**

1. Improve the nutritional and health status of children below the age of six years.
2. Lay the foundation for the proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.
3. Reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts.
4. Achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation among various departments to promote child development.
5. Enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child, through proper health and nutrition education.

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

1. Immunization
2. Health check-up
3. Referral services
4. Nutrition
5. Supplementary feeding
6. Growth monitoring and promotion

7. Nutrition and health education (NHED)
8. Treatment of minor illnesses
9. Early Childhood Care and Pre-School Education to children in the age of three to six years
10. Convergence Of other support services, such as safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, women's empowerment programmes, non-formal education and adult literacy.

### **NATIONAL PLAN ACTION ON CHILDREN**

The National Plan of Action on Children represents India's response to the unprecedented opportunities which the present decade has ushered in both through technological developments as well as a global ambience for redeeming India's age-old pledges. This Plan of Action identifies quantifiable targets in terms of major as well as supporting sectoral goals representing the needs and aspirations of 300 million children of India in the spheres of health, nutrition, education and related aspects of social support.

The goals of the National Plan of Action of Children include bringing about improvements in child health, in the health of expectant mothers, reduction in malnutrition, provision of and access to safe drinking water, universal enrolment of children in schools, ensuring a minimum level of learning, reduction of disparities and universalisation of effective access to schooling, conservation and protection of the environment, so that it is conducive to the health and well-being of children.

Activities under the plan include strengthening of the existing primary health care infrastructure, consolidation and maintenance of levels of immunization coverage, stepping up immunization where coverage is low, polio eradication through immunization, ensuring essential supplies and drug, training of doctors and para-medical health workers, educating women and girls on safe motherhood, providing primary education facilities in unserved areas, providing child care services and community mobilization and involvement.

## **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

The greatest tragedy facing humanity today is the persistence of chronic hunger which results in the loss of lives of 24000 people every day. For one-fifth of humanity, life is a daily struggle to survive in the conditions of relentless poverty. Day after day, the lives of one billion individuals are cut short or are terribly diminished by chronic, persistent hunger. Day after day, one billion people are deemed the opportunities they need to lead healthy and productive lives.

People living with chronic hunger exist in conditions of severe poverty. What they lack is the chance of change their situation, to develop their own self – sufficiency. The most potent confirmation of this fact can be seen in the lives of women. They, along with their children, are the main victims of hunger they also lack the opportunities to end their hunger and that of their families.

The persistence of hunger in India and elsewhere in the world is still an overriding social issue. Hunger, to great extent, is mainly due to the subjugation, marginalization and disempowerment of women. Furthermore, the suppression of women is deeply rooted in fabric of Indian society, in traditions, in religious doctrines and practices, within the educational and legal systems and within the family. Ironically, much of the essential work of ending hunger rests in the hands of women.

Traditionally, women bear the primary responsibility for the well being of their families. Yet they are systematically deemed access to resources that they need to fulfill their responsibilities, which include education, health care services, job training and access to and freedom to use family planning services.

In short, it is sufficient to state that women suffer from hunger and poverty in greater numbers and to a greater degree than men. At the same time, it is women who bear the primary responsibility for actions needed to end hunger: education, nutrition, health and family income.

Looking through the lenses of hunger and poverty, it can be seen that

there are seven major areas of discrimination against women in India: malnutrition, poor health, lack of education, over work, lack of skill, mistreatment and powerlessness.

In an article entitled, the Asian Enigma that was published by UNICEF in the 1996 progress of Nations, Vulimiri Ramalingaswami has very aptly established the inextricable link between the seven major issue or areas of discrimination against women and the persistence of hunger in India. He writes "However much a mother may love her children, it is all but impossible for her to provide high quality child care if she herself is poor and oppressed, illiterate and uninformed, anemic and unhealthy, ahs five or six other children, lives in a slum or shanty, has neither clean water nor safe sanitation, and if she is without the necessary support either from health services, or from her society, or from the father of her children.

Thus the improvement of the status of women depends, not merely on the removal of gender inequality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against them, but upon their empowerment.

## **INDIA: AN OVERVIEW**

India, with a population of 989 million, is the world's second most populous country. Out of this 120 million are women who live in poverty.

India has 16% of world's population, but only 2.4% of its land resulting in greater pressure on its natural resources.

Over 70% of Indians population currently derives their livelihood from land resources, which includes 84% of economically active women.

India is one of the few countries where males significantly outnumber females, and this imbalance has increased over time India's maternal mortality rates in rural areas is among the world's highest. From a global perspective India accounts for 19% of all live births and 27% of all maternal deaths.

Higher female mortality between ages one and five and high maternal

mortality rates result in deficit of female in population. Chatterjee, (1990) estimates that deaths of young girls in India exceed those of boys by over 300000 each year and every sixty infant death is specifically due to gender discriminations. Of the 15 million baby girls born in India each year, nearly 25% do not live to see their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Although India started family planning program in 1952, its population grew from 361 million in 1951 to 844 million in 1991 to 1000 million in 2001. Indians total fertility rate of 3.8 births per women is moderate by world standards, but the sheer magnitude of population increase has made containment of population growth to be listed as one of the six most important objectives in the Five Year Plans.

Since 1970, the use of modern contraceptive methods for family planning has risen from 10% to 40%. However there is a great variation between the use of modern contraceptive methods between northern and southern states. In India sterilization accounts for more than 85% of total use of modern contraceptive use. Out of this female sterilization accounts for 90% of all sterilizations.

Women and children represent more than two thirds of the countries' populations. Therefore the need to bring women into the mainstream of the development is prime concern of the country. Women are principal providers of "care" and "support" to infants and children. Thus, investment towards women's capacity building and empowering them to exercise their choice is not only valuable in it, but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development of the society.

Although the Indian Constitution grants women equal rights with men yet strong patriarchal traditions persist, lives of women are shaped by customs that are centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and their birth is celebrated. May you be the mother of a hundred sons is a common Hindu wedding blessing.

The origin of the Indian male mind set towards women can be traced to

rules laid down by Manu in 200 B.C. Manu believed that nothing must be done independently even in her own house by irrespective of her age. He was of the view that "in childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent".

Dramatic changes have taken place in legal, political, educational and social status of women since independence. This was not unexpected, since the question of the improvement of the position of women had been at the heart of social reform movements from the first quarter of 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Raja Ram Mohan Roy started his questioning of social orthodoxy. Besides, the freedom struggle since 1870's and especially since 1930's, had partaken amply of the creative energies of Indian women. Gandhi Ji's statement in the mid 1930's to Mridula Sarabhai – a valiant fighter in the context of women and freedom – "I have brought the Indian women out of the kitchen. It is up to you (the women activists) to see that they don't go back", was no empty boast and no thoughtless exhortation.

In order to improve the well being of women and children in society, the government has made a significant shift in the approach from "welfare" during the 1970's to "empowerment" during the 1990's. During the 1990's, the major thrust with respect to women was to make them economically independent and self reliant. For children, it was to ensure their survival, protection and development, with special focus on the girl child and the adolescent girl.

Many programmes and schemes have been launched by the central government to develop women "human resources" state governments have also made efforts to raise the social, economic and political status of women. Still, the empowerment of women is an uphill task to be achieved.

To understand the whole gamut of women's empowerment fully, it is necessary to understand with conceptual clarity the meaning of the term "empowerment." It is also essential to analyze the governmental efforts in the direction of women's empowerment. Apart from this there is a need to focus our attention on recent socio-economic and political changes in the status of

women in India. For this purpose, the status of women in the state of Uttar Pradesh has been dealt with in detail on the basis of data largely collected from secondary sources. It would not be out of place to mention here that the former Prime Minister of India. There Atal Bihari Vajpayee, while discussing on the National Policy for empowerment of the women of India is Indian's empowerment.

'Empowerment' is the new buzzword in development dialogue today. At the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, empowerment featured prominently as an objective. The focus shifted from "welfare" to "development" and from "development" to "empowerment". The Draft Declaration of the Third Preparatory Committee in New York, adopted by the heads of states and governments are those which that, "the most productive policies and by the heads of states and governments, asserted that, "the most productive policies and investments are those which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources, and opportunities". The same document in Point 23.0 emphasized that the main objective of development is to empower people to maximize their capacities. While initially "emancipation" was the main objective, today the goal of national and international policies, development programmes and non-governmental organizations (NGO) activity seems to have shifted to achieving "empowerment". [Deshmukh and Ronadie: 2003] Different scholars conceptualize empowerment in different ways. It has been defined as economic independence, social transformation, a process, a means and an end. [Abidi: 2003].

Empowerment is derived from the word 'power', which is 'the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the actions'. [Weber: 1978] It can be defined as "shifting of power from powerful to the powerless" to bring social equality is not just a redistribution of power from powerful to the powerless" to bring social equality. Equality is not just a redistribution of power; it is also a question of change in values. [Beteille: 1999] Hence, a change in values and attitudes is needed, along with redistribution of power,

to achieve gender empowerment.

The ultimate goal of empowerment is to ensure that women fully participate in the political and social decision-making process at the local, regional and national level, with a view to achieving political empowerment and gain over household resources. But it is not as simple as it sounds. Empowerment is not something that can be transferred from one segment to another segment of society. It is to be acquired and, once acquired, it needs to be preserved, exercised and sustained. [Grover and Grover: 2002; Pillai: 1995] It is the women themselves who have to realize their capacity and capabilities to get empowered at all social-economic and political levels. Laws, policies and technologies can only provide an environment to facilitate their empowerment.

'Woman' in Indian mythology is believed represent 'power' in her various religious manifestation of goddess (as Durga, Kali, Chandi, etc.), which evoke both fear and reverence. [Dube: 1990] In contrast, there have been the 'deprived majority' of women, who struggle hard for empowerment, even today. For years, women in India have been suffering silently behind the evil of silence in the name of cultural norms and values. It was after the 1920s that the ruling elite started talking about the welfare of women and people's movement through participation in the freedom struggle.

Women's development is primarily socio-economic, while women's empowerment is essentially political. [S.L. Sharma: 1999] clearly, a women's empowerment perspective is different from a women's development perspective in some very important ways. Empowerment mainly emphasizes gender equality. Harvard framework for women empowerment, which is based on Sara Longwe's formulation, entails five levels of gender equality:

Sharma considers conscientisation as the element to women's empowerment. Conscientisation implies acquisition of critical awareness about the structure of discrimination; exploitation and oppression in which one is placed. It has three aspects:

- i. awareness generation about gender gap among women;

- ii. debunking of the belief that these gender gaps are God-given; and,
- iii. organization and mobilization of women to meet the end of gender equality.

Thus it is awareness about discriminations that needs to be generated first, and then the organization and mobilization of women to fight against this discrimination, to get equality in all walks of life and hence empowerment. According to Usha Sharma [2003], there are seven major areas of discrimination against women in India.

- i. Malnutrition,
- ii. Poor health,
- iii. Lack of education,
- iv. Over work,
- v. Lack of skills,
- vi. Mistreatment,
- vii. Powerlessness,

#### **1. WOMEN ARE MALNOURISHED**

The exceptional high rate of malnutrition in South Asia is rooted deeply in the soil of inequality between the sexes. The poor care taken of the girls and women by the elders and their husbands is the first major reason for child malnutrition in South Asia where it is higher than anywhere else in the world.

Gender disparities in nutrition are evident from infancy to adulthood. The discrimination between the boy and the girl in the family in the intake of nutrition is the most significant determinant of malnutrition among the female children. Malnutrition is direct or underlying cause of death among girls below the age of five.

Nutritional deprivation has two major consequences for women. First is that the women never reach their full growth potential and second that they suffer from anemia. Both are risk factors in pregnancy. This condition complicates child bearing and results in maternal and infant deaths and low birth weight infants. Anemia also increases women's susceptibility to diseases such as

tuberculosis. Anemia reduces the energy women need for daily activities such as household chores, child care and agricultural labour.

## **2. WOMEN ARE IN POOR HEALTH**

Surviving through a normal life cycle is resource poor women's greatest challenge. The practice of breast feeding female children for shorter periods of time reflects the strong desire for sons. Women in India are particularly anxious to have a male child so they deliberately become pregnant again as soon as possible after a birth of a female child. But women consciously seek to avoid another pregnancy after the birth of a male child in order to give maximum attention to the newborn male child.

A primary way that parents discriminate against their girls children is through neglect during illness. When sick little girls are not taken to the doctor as frequently as their brothers. As adults, women get less health care than men. Studies on attendance at rural primary health centers reveal that more males than females are treated in almost all parts of the country. The study also shows that more males are than women are treated in the hospitals of the states in Northern India as against those treated in the Southern states. This shows the regional differences in the value placed on women in these states. Usually women tolerate suffering they are less likely to admit that they are sick and they will wait until their sickness has progressed before they seek medical aid or medical aid is sought for them. Moreover women are reluctant to be examined by male personnel which act as an additional constraint in their getting adequate health care.

### **Maternal Mortality**

India as maternal mortality rates in rural areas is among the highest in the world.

A factor that contributes to Indians high maternal mortality rate is the reluctance to seek medical care for pregnancy. Pregnancy is viewed as a temporary condition that will disappear. It is estimated that only 40-50% of women receive any antenatal care. Even a woman who has had difficulties

with previous pregnancies is usually treated with home remedies only for three reasons. Firstly the decision that a pregnant woman seeks life medical help rests with the mother-in-law and husband. Secondly the cost of medical treatment is a constraint for poor pregnant women seeking medical help. Lastly the fear that the treatment may be more harmful than the malady.

It is estimated that pregnancy related deaths account for one quarter of all fatalities among women aged 15 to 29, when two thirds of such fatalities are considered preventable. For every maternal death in India, an estimated 20 more women suffer from impaired health. In a village level study of rural women in Maharashtra, determined on the basis of physical examination, it was found that about 92% women, who were medically examined, suffered from one or more gynecological children.

#### **Contraceptive Use**

Women's health is harmed by lack of access to and the poor quality of reproductive services available.

About 24.6 million couple, representing roughly 18% of all married women, wants no more children, but do not make use of contraceptive to prevent pregnancy (Operation Research Group 1990).

It is estimated that about 5 million abortion are performed annually in India out of which a large majority being illegal. As a result, abortion related mortality is high.

#### **Job Impact On Maternal Health**

It has been seen that tasks performed by women are usually those that adversely affect their reproductive health. A study in a rice growing belt of coastal Maharashtra found that 40% of all infant deaths occurred in the months of July to October, mainly due to the squatting position of women farm workers during rice plantation and removal of weeds etc. It was found by the study that the working condition of the women resulted in premature and still births.

Women's health is further harmed by air and water pollution and lack of sanitation. The high incidence of malnutrition present in women and their other health problems affect their capacity to deal with environmental pollution. The lack of hygienic sanitary system in rural Indian houses along with the population explosion has resulted increase in diseases like hook worm caused by waste disposal. It has been proved that hookworm is directly responsible for the high percentage of anemia among rural women. Anemia in turn makes a person more susceptible to carbon monoxide toxicity, which is one of the main pollutants in the biomass smoke.

The smoke breathed in by women in a time span of three hours of cooking daily on stoves using wood, cow dung and crop residue, is equivalent to smoking 20 packets of cigarettes. One study quoted by WHO in 1991 found that pregnant women cooking over open biomass stoves had at least 50% higher chance of still birth, apart from the effect of the smoke causing eye problems, respiratory problems, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer.

### **3. WOMEN ARE UNEDUCATED**

Women and girls receive far less education than men, due to social norms and fear of violence. India has the largest population of non school going working girls.

The Indian Constitution guarantees free primary school education for both boys and girls up to the age of 14. But primary education in India is not universal. Overall literacy rate for women is 39 percent as against 64 percent for men. The literacy rate for women in UP, Bihar, MP and Rajasthan was 25% in 1991 which is lower than the national average. Attendance rates from the 2001 census suggest that no more than one third of all girls aged 5-14 are, attending school. The proportion of rural girls is yet lower.

In 1947, when India became independent, less than 8% of female were literate. The progress in educational sector has not been rapid enough to keep pace with population growth.

Soualde Desai has written in Gender Inequalities and Demographic

Behavior that "parent reluctance to educate daughters has its roots in the situation of women". According to her parents do not educate their daughters because it brings no returns to them. Moreover parents believe that the future role of daughters is mainly reproductive and perhaps also agricultural labour which does not require any formal education. As more and more boys are engaged in education, the girls are replacing them in the farms. Over and above this they assist their mothers in doing the daily house work. According to Soualde Desai "a large proportion of the roughly 40 million "non working" girls who are not in school are kept at home because of responsibilities in housework".

Soualde Desai says that the parent's roles believe that there is to deliver a chaste daughter to her husband's family. In order to protect the virginity of their daughter's parents do not send them for education to distant coeducation schools having male teachers.

#### **4. WOMEN ARE OVERWORKED**

Women work for longer hours and their work is more arduous than that of men. Still, men believe that women, like children, eat and do nothing.

Hours Worked: Women work roughly twice as many hours as men. Women's contribution to agriculture, when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. Work done by men on farms is mainly those that entail the use of machinery and draught animals, where as women almost always have to do manual labour using their own energy. Rice transplantation and weeding which is the most arduous and labour intensive task in rice cultivation, is done by the women without the help of any tools. The work done by women is considered unskilled and hence less productive. It is for this reason that women paid lower wages although they work harder and work longer than men.

##### **The Invisibility of Women's Work**

The work done by women is invisible. It is rarely recognized. The economic dependence of women on men results in their importance and

status in the family. If women increase their participation in income earning activities, not only will these be more income for the family but it shall also help to reduce gender inequality. In India a number of studies show that the level of female participation in labour force is very low. This is so because it is felt that the work of women is not productive.

Usually the work of women goes unreported and it is wrongly believed that there are no women in any unorganized sector.

If activities like maintenance of kitchen garden and poultry, grinding food grains, collecting water and fire wood etc are taken into account then 88% of rural and 66% of urban housewives can be considered as economically productive.

Women's employment in family farms or business is rarely recognized as economically productive and any income generated by this work is generally collected by men.

#### **Impact of Technology on Women**

The shift from subsistence to a market economy has a dramatic negative impact on women. The introduction of technology in areas where women work, women labourers are often replaced by men. In the agricultural sector the focus on increasing yields of rice and wheat etc there is a clear shift in the input from human to technical. The role of women has thus shifted from being "primary producers to subsidiary workers". The machines, doing the work previously done by women in the farms, are operated by men and women have lost an important source of income. Earlier, most of the farm produce was brought home and stored and the women exchanged it for other commodities. Such a system rested more control with women but commercialization and the consequent focus on cash crops has led to a situation where food is lifted straight from the farm to the market. The income accrued is controlled by men.

## **5. WOMEN ARE UNSKILLED**

Women have unequal access to resources. A World Bank study in 1991 reveals "the male dominated extension system tends to overlook women's role in agriculture and proves ineffective in providing technical information to women farmers". This perpetuates the existing division of labour in the agricultural sector and women continue to perform in skilled tasks. Moreover the process of mechanization of agricultural activities has increased the gender discrimination. The work usually done by women has been replaced by machines operated by men resulting in loss of work for women. In the food processing industries there is major shift from subsistence farming method of rice, millet corn and wheat to cash crop production of fruits, mushrooms, flowers and vegetables. This shift has led to lose jobs.

There are number of reasons for women to unskilled. The women usual do not leave their homes and villages for being trained in economic activities. This unequal access to education restricts women's abilities to learn skills that require even functional levels of literacy. Lack of mobility low literacy levels and the prejudiced attitudes towards women restrict their ability to develop skills. This results in the women remaining unskilled.

## **6. WOMEN ARE MISTREATED**

Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation in the world today.

Male violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. Although not every woman has experienced violence, yet fear of violence is an important factor in the lives of most women. Fear of violence is a cause of women's lack of participation in activities beyond the home, as well as inside it. Within the home, women and girls may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse as punishment or as culturally justified results. These acts of violence or the fear of violence shape their attitude towards life and their expectations of themselves.

The insecurity outside the household is today the greatest obstacle in the path of women. The fear of violence atrocities and insecurity outside the house, compel women to endure the violence and atrocities within the house. This makes women accept their inferiority in the family as well as in the society.

In the recent years, there has been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India. A woman is molested every 26 minutes. A rape takes place every 34 minutes. Every 42 minutes a sexual harassment incidence occurs against women. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped. A woman is murdered every 93 for dowry. One-fourth of the reported rapes involve girls under 16. A vast majority of cases of violence, sexual abuse and atrocities against women are never reported. The law of the land provides severe penalty for such acts against women but convictions are rare.

### **Selective Abortions**

The most extreme expression of the preference for sons is female infanticide and sex selective abortions.

A study in Bombay hospital found that 96% of female fetuses were aborted as compared to a small percentage of male fetuses. The disproportionate abortion of female fetuses is suspected to be the major underlying cause of the decline in the nation's sex ratio. In 1971 there were 930 female for every 1000 male. In 1981 there were 934 female for every 1000 male. But in 1991 the ratio dropped to 927 which is lower than the 1971 figure. This sex ratio one of the lowest in the world.

Soualde Desai writes that there are posters in Bombay advertising sex determination tests stating that it is better to pay Rs. 500/- for the test now than paying Rs. 50000 (in dowry) later.

The government has passed legislation to curb the misuse of amniocentesis for sex selection and abortion of female fetuses. Women activists criticize this act because it provides for punishing the women who seek these tests and sex selective abortions. They believe that women may

be under pressure to bear a male child.

## **7. WOMEN ARE POWERLESS**

In the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions the legal protection of women's rights have little effect although they are guaranteed equality with men under the Indian Constitution.

**Marriage:** Women are subordinate to men in most marriages. Women lack power to decide who they will marry. They are often marked off in their childhood. Women lack exposure to and interaction with the outside world. This determines and reduces the possibilities available to women to select their husbands. This situation is also affected by the degree of their capacity to take decisions both within and outside their household.

In Northern India the position of women is very low. In the rural areas of the North, the traditional Hindu society is dominated by men as is evident from marriage customs. The "wife givers" are socially and ritually inferior to "wife takers", thus necessitating the provision of a dowry. After marriage the wife moves in with her husband's family. Such a bride is "a stranger in a strange place". The newly married bride is controlled by the older females in the household. Because the emotional ties between the spouses are considered a potential threat to the solidarity of the patrilineal group, the family tries to segregate the sexes and limit the communication between the spouses. The young bride is made to believe that her own wishes and interests are subordinate to those of her husband and family. The primary duty and her only means to improve her position in her husband household is to bear sons.

In the south a daughter traditionally marries her mother's brother or her mother's brother's son (her first cousin) such an arrangement has a dramatic impact on women. Women are married into family households near their natal houses and are more likely to retain close relationship with their natal kin.

However, over the past several decades, marriage patterns have changed considerably. Social, economic and demographic developments

were made marriage between close relative less common and what was known as "bride price" has given way to "dowry" like that in the Northern parts of India.

### **Child Marriages**

Child marriages keep women subjugated in spite of the provision of Child Marriage Restraint Act child marriage are still very common in many rural communities. Early marriages result in early pregnancy. This evident from the fact that roughly 10-15% of all births take place when the girl is in her teenage. In rural areas nearly half the girls between the age of 10 to 14 or even younger are married.

Child marriage contributes to virtually every social evil in India. The soaring birth rates, grinding poverty and malnutrition, high illiteracy, infant mortality and low life expectancy are some of the problems of child marriage.

In an article in the New York Times in May 1998 it has been reported on the basis of a survey of more than 5000 women in Rajasthan in 1993, that 56% of the women surveyed had married before they were 15 years old. It was reported that 18% of them were literate and only 3% used any form of birth control other than sterilization. It was also found in the survey that 63% of the children of these women under the age of 4 years were severely undernourished.

### **Dowries**

Women are kept subordinate by the practice of dowry. Women are even murdered for dowry. Over 6000 women are murdered for dowry in India each year. Under the Dowry Prohibition Act giving and accepting dowry is punishable. Thus in spite of this Act no one is willing to complain. It is only after a "dowry death" that the complaints become public. High cost of weddings and dowry is one of the major causes of indebtedness among the poor in India. In a study by the Institute of Development and Communication revealed that 80% of dowry deaths and 80% dowry harassment occurs in the middle and lower strata of the society.

Despite every stigma, dowry continues to be the signature of marriage. About dowry Renuka Dagar says, "It is taken as a normative custom and dowry harassment as a part of family life".

#### **Divorce**

Divorce is not a viable option. It is rare and is considered a shameful admission of a women failure as a wife and a daughter-in-law. In 1990 the number of divorced women was 0.08% of the total female population in India. In case of divorce the maintenance rights of a woman are weak. In spite of Hindu and Muslim personal law maintenance is rarely set at a sufficient amount and is frequently violated. A divorced woman has no rights to their home or to other property accumulated during marriage. At times the contribution of women to the maintenance of the family and accumulation of family assets go unrecognized and unrewarded.

#### **Inheritance**

Women's right to inheritance is limited and frequently violated. In the mid 1950's polygamy was banned and Hindu women were given rights to inheritance, adoption and divorce. Muslim personal law differs considerably from that of the Hindus and permits polygamy. Despite various laws protecting women's rights, traditional patriarchal attitudes still prevail and are strengthened and perpetuated in the home.

Under the Hindu Law, sons have an independent share in the ancestral property. However the share of the daughter is based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father can effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in the ancestral property in his own right. In addition to this the married daughters have no residential rights in their ancestral home.

The laws protecting women in this field are weak and are not adequately enforced. As a result women continue to have little access to land and property which is a major source of income and long term economic security. Under the pretext of preventing fragmentation of agricultural

holdings, several states have successfully excluded widows and daughters from inheriting agricultural land.

#### **Lack of Women Power In Governance**

The political status of women can be defined as a degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping, and sharing of power and in the value given by society to this role of women. The reorganization of women's political equality in the Indian Constitution is a radical departure from the inherited norms of traditional Indian society.

There are three main indicators of the political status of women viz (a) participation in political process as voters and candidates in elections; (b) political attitudes such as awareness, commitment and involvement in politics and autonomy in political action and behavior, and (c) their impact on the political process.

The examination of the political status of women in India, according to the above mentioned indicators, reveals the powerlessness of women. However the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment Act provide that all local elected bodies reserve one-third of their seats for women. This has made it possible for over a million women enter political life in India through the Panchayat Raj Institutions. These provisions in the Indian Constitution have spearheaded an unprecedented social experiment in more than 500000 Indian villages. But the fate of the women's representation in the Indian Parliament and the State Legislature is yet to be passed. The heat and controversy generated by this bill in the Lok Sabha has exposed the mindset of the traditional male dominated Indian society.

So, to abolish discrimination some of the indicators of empowerment of women could be:

- i. Enhanced political participation,
- ii. Enhanced social participation,
- iii. Enhanced economic participation,
- iv. Enhanced concern about hygienic living,

- v. Enhanced cooperative attitude of male
- vi. Eradicate all forms of violence against women, and
- vii. Raising self confidence,

On the basis of the above, governmental efforts to achieve the goals of women's empowerment can be analyzed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance".

This recognition is currently missing in India. Transforming the prevailing social discrimination against women must become the top priority of the government in India. Along with this the government must take greater action to rapidly improve the socio-economic status of women. In this way a synergy of progress can be achieved.

As women receive greater education and training, they will earn more money. As women earn more money they will spend it for the education and health of their children.

As women rise in economic status, they will gain greater social standing and greater voice in their houses and village but also affairs.

As women gain influence and become conscious of their rights, they will make greater claims to their entitlements. This will result in women gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes. They will also command more attention of the administrative and police officials as well as the courts when attacked.

As women's economic power grows, it will be easier for women to overcome the traditional of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry.

As the son preference declines and the acceptance of violence against women declines, families will take greater interest to educate their daughters. This will result in raising the age of marriage of girls.

It has been proved in a number of studies that for every year beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> class that the girls go to schools, family size shrinks 20%, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20%.

As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive, and will give birth to healthier babies.

Only through action to eradicate discrimination against women can the vision of Indians independence, an India where all people have a chance to live healthy and productive lives, be achieved.

#### **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS**

The principles of gender equality and justice, and protection of women's rights, have been prime concerns in India thinking from the day of Independence. Accordingly, the country's concern in safeguarding the rights and privilege of women's found its best expression in the Constitution of India. While Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities both to men and women equally in the political economic and social spheres, Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc., and Article 15(3) empowers the state to make any special provision in favor of women and children. Article 16 provides equal opportunities in the matter of public appointments for all citizens, and Article 39 mentions that the State shall direct, its policy towards providing to men and women equally the rights to means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Article 42 directs the State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Certain legislation, related to safeguarding the interests of women and girls, has also come about in recent time. For example: The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 (as amended in 1986); The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (as amended and retitled in 1986); Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and

Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, 1986. The landmark achievements of both the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments in 1992 have also empowered women through participation in the grassroots democracy as represented by the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's) and local bodies.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the Indian Constitution relating to Panchayti Raj, which ensures that women shall constitute at least one-third of the total number of Panchas, is a step in the right direction. These women Panchas can act as intermediaries between the government and the public and can serve as the vanguard of the movement opposing crimes against women. They can also work for the proper implementation of existing laws in the rural areas where they operate; play a great role in enlightening women on the existing laws protecting women's interest, as well as on their rights under the Constitution; and, work to bring about self confidence.

Gender equity and women's development were being given newer dimensions on the international stage after the Beijing conference in 1995. Being a signatory to the Non-Aligned Summit, India had to commit to these issue, and some programmes were specially framed for women. It was realized that there are five different modes for upliftment of women:

- i. Welfare mode,
- ii. Equity mode
- iii. Antipoverty mode
- iv. Efficiency mode and
- v. Empowerment mode:

Realizing the goals of uplifting of women, 2001 was observed as Women Empowerment Year by the government of India, and a National Policy for Empowerment of Women was announced on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001. Women's Empowerment Year was celebrated with the following objective:

- i. To create and raise large-scale awareness of women's issues, with active participation and involvement of all women and men.
- ii. To initiate and accelerate action to improve access to, and control of,

resources by women.

- iii. To create an enabling environment to enhance self-confidence and autonomy of women.

[As quoted in Pandey: 2002]

An integrated programme for women's empowerment named "Swayamsidha" was launched in September 2001. The long term objective of the programme was the all round empowerment of women—especially social and economic—by ensuring their direct access and control over resources through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all ongoing sectoral programmes. To provide economic support and to develop entrepreneurship capabilities among women, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was launched in 1993, which extends credit facilities to women through Intermediate Micro Credit Organizations who also lend money to Self Help Groups (SHG) of women. Swadhar was a programme started to address to the needs of women in difficult circumstances, who are not covered by other schemes (e.g.; widows, destitute women, women prisoners, migrants)

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*CHAPTER - 6*

*WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN:*

*CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS*

*AND*

*LEGISLATIVE MEASURES*

## CHAPTER – 6

### **WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN: CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES**

#### **Constitutional Provisions**

The political status of women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and in the values given by society to this role of women. The recognition of women's political equality in Indian Constitution was a radical departure from the political norms of most advanced countries at that time. The two major forces which were responsible for the achievement of political equality of women were the national movement and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century reform movements could only improve position of women within the traditional family structure. By the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century a small minority of women started to take part in social welfare activities outside their homes. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the birth of women's organization and the women now started to demand political rights. In 1917 a deputation of Indian women lead by Sarojini Naidu presented to the British Parliament a demand for adult franchise for women on the basis of equality with men. The reforms act of 1921 extended the franchises only to wives who had property and education. The Britishers did not believe that Indian society would ever regard women as equal partners with men. They did not regard women as separate political force.

In sharp contrast to the attitude of the Britishers, Mahatma Gandhi was uncompromising in the matter of women's right. He believes that women had a positive role to play in the reconstruction of society, and that the recognition of their equality was an essential step to bring about social justice. He demanded that women be given the adult franchise on a basis of equality with men, but his demand was rejected by the British Government in 1930. The Indian National Congress accepted the demand in 1931 and committed itself to women's political equality, regardless of their status and qualification.

Independence of India brought with it a promise of actual liberty and

equality to the people of India. After independence and the years that followed, it was felt that changes were necessary to improve the position and the status of women in Indian society. Gandhi ji was the champion for women cause. He believed in upliftment of the position of women. He had made them equal partners in the national movement. Gandhi ji wanted to bring women on equal footing with men. He believed that women had as much right to establish her own destiny as men has to establish his. Gandhi Ji was a lighter for the equality of human beings and freedom for individuals. He desired utmost freedom for the women. He asserted that women have the same right of freedom and liberty as men. He wanted to do away with the evils of society that made the life of the women miserable, immoral and inhuman. He wanted to bring about social change in the political, economic legal and educational status of women. He called upon the women to think independently and to decide what is best suitable for them and not to depend on men or blindly followed the social customs.

The tasks of social reconstruction, development and nation-building all call for major changes in social order. This is possible by social legislation. In the post independent India a number of laws were enacted to give women equal rights and privileges with men. Such law aimed to eliminate discrimination against women, abolish inequality between the sexes, and remove external barriers coming in the way of the self – realization of women in order to ensure their development and advancement.

It was perhaps due to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru that the women in India were given an equal status in the Constitution of India. Soon after Independence, India adopted its Constitution on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950. The Preamble of the Constitution is a great declaration of ideals and objectives that the Indian people desire to achieve.

The Preamble lies down that the people of India resolve to secure to all its citizens Justice, Liberty, Equality and promote among all people Fraternity. The preamble is the soul of Indian Constitution and lays down the pattern of political society which it states is Sovereign Democratic Republic. The Constitution of India establishes a "Welfare State" in India. To do so the

Preamble clearly declares that social, economic and political justice will be established. It states that liberty of thought, expression, belief, Faith and worship will be granted to the people of India. The Preamble also clearly lays down that Equality of Status that it will strive to promote fraternity among all citizens assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation. It is for the purpose of achieving the aims laid down in the Preamble that the concept of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles has been incorporated in the Constitution of India.<sup>1</sup>

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the provisions of constitution meant for them and the data in this respect is shown in table 6.1 below:

**Table 6.1 Awareness of Constitutional provisions**

S. No.	Awareness of Constitutional provisions	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	216	72.00
2.	No	47	15.67
3.	No response	37	12.33
Total		300	100

The data in this regard reveals that 72 percent respondents were aware of these provisions, 15.67 percent were not aware of them while 12.33 percent respondents did not respond.

It is clear from above table that most of the respondents were aware of the constitutional provisions meant for them, hence it was thought proper to know that the respondents were faced problems and they avail the benefits of these provisions or not

Rights, According to Laski "are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek to be himself at his best." The Fundamental Rights are legally enforceable rights governing the relations between the State and the individual. The Fundamental Rights have been rightly regarded as the soul of the Constitution. The Constitution of India was ahead of its time, not

only by the standards of the developing nations but also that of many developed countries, in removing every discrimination against women in the legal and Public domain of the Republic. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women for neutralizing the socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages that they could be facing. The Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law, equal protection of law, prohibit discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and grant equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment<sup>2</sup>.

Article 14 confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc. Article 15 (3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women and children. Similarly Article 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens. Above all, the constitutions impose a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 15(A) (e) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women and children<sup>3</sup>.

The respondents were then asked whether they face discrimination in society being a woman and their responses have been recorded in table 6.2 below:

**Table – 6.2 Discrimination faced by respondents**

S. No.	Discrimination faced	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	216	72.00
2.	No	39	13.00
3.	No response	45	15.00
	Total	300	100

It is clear from the above table that 72 percent respondents were faced discrimination, 13 percent respondents were not faced any discrimination

and 15 percent respondents did not responded.

Further the respondents were asked about the frequency of discrimination faced by them. The responses received are shown in table 6.3

**Table – 6.3 Frequency of discrimination**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Always	82	37.97
2.	As and when	86	39.81
3.	Certain occasion	48	22.22
Total		216	100

The table above is revealed that 39.81percent respondents faces discrimination as and when, 37.97 percent always faces discrimination and 22.22 percent respondents reported that they faces discrimination on certain occasion.

From the responses received shows that most of the respondents faces discrimination in society even when we have certain constitutional provisions for them.

Realizing that the children have neither a voice nor a political constituency, the constitution of India also laid down certain special safeguards to ensure their welfare, protection and development. While Article 15(3) empowered the state to make any special provision in favor of children, Article (24) prohibited employment of children below 14 years of age any factory or mine for other hazardous occupations Article 13(e) and (f) laid down the state shall direct its policy in such a manner that the tender age of children is not abused and Children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and childhood is protected against exploitation and moral and material abandonment. Article 45 further directs the State to provide for free and compulsory up to the age of 14 years. This directive has been enshrined as a Fundamental Right of the Children through the Ninety Third Amendment to the Constitution of India which was passed by the Indian Parliament sometimes back.<sup>4</sup>

The Ninety Third Amendment to the Constitution<sup>5</sup> of India provided for free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 14 years. It was asked to the respondents whether they are aware of this provision or not and the responses received are presented in table 6.4 below:

**Table 6.4 Awareness of the Ninety Third amendment to the Constitution of India**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	188	87.04
2.	No	20	09.26
3.	No response	8	03.70
Total		216	100

From the table above it can be said that 87.04 percent respondents were aware of this amendment, 9.26 percent respondents were not aware of this amendment while 3.70 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **Constitutional guarantees to India's women and children**

Article 14: "The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India"<sup>6</sup>

Article 15(1): "The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them"<sup>7</sup>

Article 15(3): "Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children."<sup>8</sup>

Article 16(2): "No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be eligible for or discriminated against in the respect of, any employment or office under the State."<sup>9</sup>

Article 21: "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law."<sup>10</sup>

Article 23: "Traffic in human beings and began and other forms of forced labor are prohibited and any contravention of this provision, shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law."<sup>11</sup>

Article 24: "No child belongs the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment."<sup>12</sup>

The constitution guarantees various protections<sup>13</sup> through various articles to the women and children of India below the age of 14 years and it was thought proper to know whether the respondents of this study were aware of these protection or not and the responses received are shown in table 6.5 below:

**Table 6.5 Awareness of various protections**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	178	82.41
2.	No	20	09.26
3.	No response	18	08.33
	Total	216	100

From the table above it can be said that 82.41 percent respondents were aware of these protection, 9.26 percent respondents were not aware of these protection while 8.33 percent respondents did not responded.

#### **Directive Principles of State Policy<sup>14</sup>**

The Directive Principles of the State Policy, laid down the part IV of the Constitution, like the Preamble reflect high ideals of liberal democratic polity. They embody the major policy goals of the Welfare State. The Directive Principles are declared non – justice able i.e. they cannot be enforced in a court of law. Never the less they are fundamental in the governance of the country. The State (India) is charged with "a duty ..... to apply these Principles in making laws". (Article 37)

Some of the Directive Principle concern "women indirectly or by necessary implication, while a few are women specific". The directive Principle that concern women indirectly or by necessary implication include:

Article 38: Directs the State to secure a just, social, political and economic order, geared to the welfare of the people.<sup>15</sup>

Article 39 (B), (C) & (F): Relates to the distribution of ownership and control of material resources of the community for the common good, prevention of concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment, and protection of childhood and youth against exploitation and moral and material abandonment.<sup>16</sup>

Article 40: Concerns the organization of Village Panchayats to promote self government<sup>17</sup>

Article 41: Appertains to right to work, education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement and other types of underserved wants.<sup>18</sup>

Article 43: Contains provision of work, a living wage, condition of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure, of social and cultural opportunities and the promotion of cottage industries.<sup>19</sup>

Article 44: Calls for Uniforms Civil Code.<sup>20</sup>

Article 45: Ensures free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14.<sup>21</sup>

Article 47: Relates to raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of the people and improving of the public health.<sup>22</sup>

The Directive Principle which concern women directly and have a special bearing on their status includes:

Article 39 (a): Ideals with right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally.<sup>23</sup>

Article 39 (d): Relates to equal pay for equal work for both men and women.<sup>24</sup>

Article 39 (e): Deals with protection of health and strength of workers – men, women and children from abuse, and entry into avocations unsuited to their age and strength.<sup>25</sup>

Article 42: Deals with just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.<sup>26</sup>

The Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principle are the instruments to attain our national objectives – Equality, Liberty and Justice. The special attention given to the needs and the problems of women to enable them to enjoy and exercise their constitutional equality of status, along with other specific provisions relating to hitherto suppressed section of society, have laid scholars to characterize the Indian Constitution embodying the objectives of social revolution.<sup>27</sup>

True to these objectives, the Constitution abolishes all discriminations flowing from sex, caste, creed, color and place of birth. Women have been placed at par with men in all respects. Women's sacrifice of pre-independence days were rewarded the Constitutional Fundamental Rights of equality between the sexes. The Constitution has not only provided equal rights and privileges between men and women, but has gone a step further to make provisions for special measures to be taken by the Government to improve the condition of women by enacting laws and establishing separate institutions. Thus the Constitution has once for all settle the position of women in society. This recognition of political equality of women is a radical departure from the socio – cultural norms prevailing in the traditional India and even from most advanced countries of the world.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Legislative Measures<sup>29</sup>**

India has always been relentless champion of the cause of women at all international and national flora. The policy makers realized that real development cannot take root if it bypasses women, who represent the very

kernel around which social change must take place. The past few years have seen unprecedented changes in the political, diplomatic, economic and ideological spheres, but certain quiet, but perhaps more far reaching developments have also taken roots. From growth to growth with equity, from routine delivery of services to people's participation, from economic development to human development and from services endowment to empowerment, the paradigms of development have certainly come a long way.

As the year 2001 came to a close, India became a land of 1 billion and 27 million people, of which 495 million are women and 526 million are children below the age of 18 years. 158 million of them are in their early childhood of 0-6 years. India has the largest number of children and also the largest number of 'Children plus women' in the world-huge 726 million, which is more than the combined population of the United States of America, United Kingdom, Japan, Russia, Germany and Canada. Therefore it is very obvious that concern for women and children would be very high on the priority list of the country's developmental agenda.

The development of women in India has occupied the centre stage in all development planning since independence. However, it was in 1980's that women were recognized as a separate target group and given their rightful place in the developmental planning. In the sixth Five Year Plan (1980 – 85) a separate chapter viz, "Women and Development" was included. This marked the final breakaway from a welfare approach to women's problems in the earlier years. Since then all efforts of the Government have been directed towards bringing women into the main stream of the National Development Process by raising their overall status social, economic, political and legal at par with that of men.

Women and children of India have traveled a long way through the process of development experience of the country. They were the worst and the most silent sufferers in the colonial days when disease and malnutrition, epidemics and famine took a toll of their lives in hundreds and thousands. A rigid and highly stratified male dominated society left little scope for

independence and autonomy of women, who were subjected to many discrimination, oppression and exploitation. The spread of liberal education and values on the one hand and movement for national freedom on the other, unleashed forces for social reforms and created increasing awareness about the need for increased participation of women in the education, social economic and political life of the nation.

Mahatma Gandhi was in the forefront in championing the cause of women and about their right to equality along with men in every sphere of nation's life. Similarly concern for children, as the future architects of the nation, found expression in the writings of our national leaders particularly Pandit Nehru. All these concern for women and children greatly influenced the debates in the Constituent Assembly and the drafting of India's Constitution, which is the most powerful pillar for safeguarding the right and interests of women and children of India.

The tasks of social reconstruction, development and nation building all call for major changes in the social order, to achieve which social legislation is one of the main instruments. It can act directly, as a norm setter, or indirectly providing institutions which accelerate social change by making it more acceptable. In the post-independent era special legislation has been enacted to ensure equality of women in all spheres. The State has enacted these women specific and women related laws for their advancement and to protect women against social discrimination, violence, and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriage, dowry, rape and practice of sati. These laws have brought forth a perceptible improvement in the status of women and children in the country. These laws have eliminated discrimination in against women and abolished inequality between sexes and removed external barriers coming in the way of their self realization and development. Yet it can be said that there is still a wide gap between de jure provisions and the de facto realities.

Awareness of the legislative provisions is more important because if someone is not aware of the provisions he will not be able to take benefits of them. Hence it was thought proper to ask the respondents regarding their

awareness about various legislative provisions provided for the upliftment of their status in society. The data in this regard is presented in the table below:

**Table – 6.6 Awareness of legislative measures**

S. No.	Awareness of legislative measures	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	250	83.33
2.	No	26	08.67
3.	No response	24	08.00
	Total	300	100

The data in this regard reveals that 83.33 percent respondents were aware of these measures, 8.67 percent were not aware of them while 8 percent respondents did not respond.

Various labor laws have been enacted which lay down specific provisions for social security for women workers. The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Condition of Employment Act, 1966) provides for provision of crèche for the benefit of women workers. The Plantation Labor Act 1951 lay down that women workers be provided time for feeding children and that fully equipped crèche be setup wherever 50 or more women are employed or where women with children below 6 years of age exceeds 20.<sup>30</sup>

The Contract Labor (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 directs that women cannot be employed to work beyond 9 hours between 6 Am and 7 Pm with the exception of midwives and nurses. The Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Condition of Service) Act, 1979 lay down that provisions of separate toilet and washing facilities be made for women. Under the Mines Act, 1952 employment of women in mines below ground and during night has been prohibited. The Act also provides for health facilities for women along with separate latrines and urinals. Mines Crèches Rule, 1966 has provided for crèche facilities to be maintained by a trained person and according to stipulated size of room, equipment and facilities. It also provide for medical examination of children once a month and nursing mothers once in two months. The Factories Act of 1948 (Amended in 1976) provides for

establishment of crèche where 30 or more women are employed (including casual and contract laborers) Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 has granted maternity leave with full pay for 135 days to women who have completed 80 days working and prohibits discharges or dismissal of a woman during the leave period. This Act extends to factories, mines and plantations and has further been extended to shops and establishments where 10 and more persons are employed. The concept of paternity leave has been introduced in 1998 for Central Government employees as an important beginning towards creating effective national laws in the spare of family responsibility. The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work.<sup>31</sup>

In order to address the phenomenon of domestic violence, which is widely prevalent but has remained largely invisible in the public domain, the Government has been planning to bring forth a Bill in the Parliament to empower Magistrates to grant protection orders to victims of domestic violence and provide other relief. The Bill had received the approval of the Cabinet and was scheduled to be introduced in Parliament during the budget session 2002.

The Supreme Court of India, through its activist role, has infused dynamism in to the constitutional and legal provisions and has issued directives to the State from time to time to further safe guard and strengthen the rights of women. Over the years a strong tradition of public interest litigation (PIL) has taken deep roots whereby in the event of the violation of rights of any person and such persons being unable to approach the Court (by reason of poverty, disability, social or economic disadvantage), any member of the public can maintain an application for an appropriate directions, order or writ. This has further contributed to the cause of gender justice. Certain land mark pronouncements of the Supreme Court on such matters as the need for a Uniform Civil Code for all women irrespective of religion, the need for equal property rights for woman particularly in case of inheritance, pronouncements on child labor, child prostitution, need for in-camera trial of rape cases etc. are evidence of such an activist role of the court. In a land mark judgment in the

'Vishakha Case' in 1997 the Supreme Court laid down guidelines on sexual harassment at the work place by holding that actual molestation or even physical contact is not required for it to be construed as sexual harassment, if the background of the entire case establishes the genuineness of the complaint.

A number of legislations have also been enacted to safe guard and protect the right of the children. These are the Guardian and Wards Act, 1890; Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956; Probation of Offenders Act, 1958; Orphanage and other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control Act, 1960); Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation Act) 1986; Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (regulation of production, supply and Distribution) Act 1992; Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1996 Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 etc.<sup>32</sup>

Some of the special laws that have been enacted to ensure equality for women with men in all spheres are women – specific such women related laws have been enacted to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriage, dowry, rape and the practice of sati. Some of these laws are:-

#### **The Factories Act, 1948<sup>33</sup>**

The Act has been enacted primarily with the object of protecting workers employed in factories against industrial and occupational hazards.

For that purpose, it seeks to impose upon the owner or the occupier certain obligations to protect the workers and to secure for them employment in conditions conducive to their health and safety.

#### **The Employee State Insurance Act, 1948<sup>34</sup>**

ESI Scheme for India is an integrated social security scheme tailored to provide Social Production to workers and their dependents, in the organised sector, in contingencies, such as Sickness, Maternity and Death or

Disablement due to an employment injury or Occupational hazard

**Plantation Labor Act, 1951<sup>35</sup>**

It applies to the following plantations, that it to say,-

- (a)To any land used or intended to be used for growing tea, coffee, rubber [, cinchona or cardamom] which admeasures [5] hectares or more and in which [fifteen] or more persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months,-
- (b)To any land used or intended to be used for growing any other plant, which admeasures [5] hectares or more and in which [fifteen] or more persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months, if after obtaining the approval of the Central Government, the State Government by notification in the Official Gazette, so directs

**Mines Act, 1952<sup>36</sup>**

The Act contains provisions for measures relating to the health, safety and welfare of workers in the coal, metalliferous and oil mines. According to the Act, the term 'mine' means "any excavation where any operation for the purpose of searching for or obtaining minerals has been or is being carried on and includes all borings, bore holes, oil wells and accessory crude conditioning plants, shafts, opencast workings, conveyors or aerial ropeways, planes, machinery works, railways, tramways , slidings, workshops, power stations, etc. or any premises connected with mining operations and near or in the mining area".

The Act prescribes the duties of the owner to manage mines and mining operation and the health and safety in mines. It also prescribes the number of working hours in mines, the minimum wage rates, and other related matters.

**Hindu Marriage Act. 1955<sup>37</sup>**

This Act applies –

- a) To any person who is Hindu by religion in any of its forms of development, including a *Virashaiva*, a *Lingayat* or a follower of the *Brahmo*, *Prarthana* or *Arya Samaj*;
- b) To any person who is a Buddhist, Jaina or Sikh by religion; and
- c) To any other person domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends, who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion, unless it is proved that any such person would not have been governed by the Hindu law or by any custom or usage as part of that law in respect of any of the matters dealt with herein if this Act had not been passed.
- d) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), nothing contained in this Act shall apply to the members of any Schedule Tribes within the meaning of clause (25) of Article 366 of the Constitution, *unless* the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, otherwise directs.
- e) The expression "Hindu" in any portion of this Act shall be construed as if it included a person who, though not a Hindu by religion is, nevertheless, a person to whom this Act applies by virtue of the provisions contained in this section.

**Table – 6.7 Awareness of Hindu Marriage Act. 1955**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	225	90.00
2.	No	15	06.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
Total		250	100

The table above clearly indicates that 90 percent respondents were not faced any problems as their parents have not paid dowry in their marriage while 6 percent respondents were facing problems as their parents have not paid dowry in their marriage and rest of the 4 percent respondents did not respond.

### **The Special Marriage Act, 1954<sup>38</sup>**

- If a Hindu marries a non-Hindu under the Special Marriage Act, he shall be severed from the undivided family. However if two persons who are Hindus get married under the Special Marriage Act no such severance takes place.
- If a Hindu marries a non-Hindu under the Special Marriage Act succession to the property of such person whose marriage is solemnized under this Act and to the property of the issue of such marriage shall be regulated by the provisions of the Indian Succession Act. However if two persons who are Hindus get married under the Special Marriage Act the above provision does not apply and they are governed by the Hindu Succession Act.

**Table – 6.8 Awareness of Special Marriage Act, 1954**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	220	88.00
2.	No	20	08.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
Total		250	100

The table above clearly indicates that 88 percent respondents were aware of Special Hindu Marriage Act, 8 percent respondents were not aware of the Act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

### **Hindu Succession Act, 1956<sup>39</sup>**

This Act applies-

- (a) To any person, who is a Hindu by religion in any of its forms or developments including a Virashaiva, a Lingayat or follower of the Brahmo, Prarthana or Arya Samaj;
- (b) To any person who is Buddhist, Jaina or Sikh by religion; and

- (c) To any other person who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion unless it is proved that any such person would not have been governed by the Hindu Law or by any custom or usage as part of that law in respect of any of the matters dealt with herein if this Act had not been passed.

The Hindu Succession Act 1956 recognizes the right of the woman to inherit the property of the father and an amendment of the Act to confer such property rights in joint families is under contemplation. As it is an important Act which protects the right of woman to inherit the property of father it was thought that the respondents may be asked about the awareness of this Act, the responses received are presented in table 6.9 below:

**Table – 6.9 Awareness about the provisions of Hindu Succession Act, 1956**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	195	78.00
2.	No	45	18.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
Total		250	100

The above table reveals that 78 percent respondents were aware of this act, 18 percent were not aware of this act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

As a large number of respondents were aware of the provisions of the act it was thought proper to know whether the respondents have taken their share in their father's property. Answer to this question was not given by most of the respondents while only 16 percent respondents informed that they have taken their share from the property of their father and that too because of the will executed by their father before their death.

The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 was amended in 1976 to provide the right to a girl to repudiate a marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not. The amendment brought in 1984 to

the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence and a further amendment of 1986 made the husband or in-laws punishable in case of women committing suicide within 7 years of her marriage due to acts of cruelty

#### **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956<sup>40</sup>**

The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act were enacted in India in 1956 as part of the Hindu Code Bills. The other legislations enacted during this time include the Hindu Marriage Act (1955), the Hindu Succession Act (1956), and the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956). All of these acts were put forth under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, and were meant to codify and standardise the current Hindu legal tradition. The Adoptions and Maintenance Act of 1956 dealt specifically with the legal process of adopting children by a Hindu adult, as well as the legal obligations of a Hindu to provide "maintenance" to various family members including, but not limited to, their wife or wives, parents, and in-laws.

This Act applies to Hindus and all those considered under the umbrella term of Hindus, which includes:

- a Hindu by religion in any of its forms or development;
- a Buddhist, Jain or Sikh;
- a child legitimate or illegitimate whose parents are Hindus, Buddhists, Jains or Sikhs;
- a child legitimate or illegitimate one of whose parents are Hindus, Buddhists, Jains or Sikhs and has been so brought up;
- an abandoned child, legitimate or illegitimate of unknown parentage brought up as a Hindu, Buddhist, etc.; and
- a convert to the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain or Sikh religion.

The Act does not also apply to adoptions that took place prior to the date of enactment. However, it does apply to any marriage that has taken place before or after the Act had come into force. Moreover, if the wife is not a Hindu then the husband is not bound to provide maintenance for her under this Act under modern Hindu Law.

Under this Act only Hindus may adopt subject to their fulfilment of certain criteria. The first of these asserts that the adopter has the legal right to (under this Act that would mean they are a Hindu). Next, they have to have the capacity to be able to provide for the adopted child. Thirdly the child must be capable of being adopted. Lastly, compliance with all other specifications (as outlined below) must be met to make the adoption valid.

Men can adopt if they have the consent(s) of their wife or of all of their wives. The only way of getting around obtaining the permission of the wife or of the wives is if she or if they are unsound, if they have died, if they have completely and finally renounced the world, and if they have ceased to be a Hindu. Men who are unmarried can adopt as well as long as they are not a minor. However, if a man were to adopt a daughter, the man must be twenty four years of age or older.

Women can adopt if they have the consent of their husband. Again, the only way of getting around obtaining the permission of the husband is if he is unsound, has died, has completely and finally renounced the world, and has ceased to be a Hindu. Women who are unmarried can adopt as well as long as they are not a minor. However, if a woman were to adopt a son, the woman must be twenty four years of age or older.<sup>[4]</sup> If the child is adopted and there are more than one wife living in the household, then the senior wife is classified as the legal mother of the adopted child.

The adopted child can be either male or female. The adopted child must be fall under the Hindu category. The adoptee needs also to be unmarried; however, if the particular custom or usage is applicable to the involved parties then the adoptee can be married. The child cannot be the age of sixteen or older, unless again it is custom or the usage is applicable to the

involved parties. An adoption can only occur if there is not a child of the same sex of the adopted child still residing in the home. In particular, if a son were to be adopted then the adoptive father or mother must not have a legitimate or adopted son still live in the house.

From the date of the adoption, the child is under the legal guardianship of the new adopted parent(s) and thus should enjoy all the benefits from those family ties. This also means that this child, therefore, is cut off from all legal benefits (property, inheritance, etc.) from the family who had given him or her up for adoption

A Hindu wife is entitled to be provided for by her husband throughout the duration of her lifetime. Regardless of whether the marriage was formed before this Act was instated or after, the Act is still applicable. The only way the wife can null her maintenance is if she renounces being a Hindu and converts to a different religion, or if she commits adultery.

The wife is allowed to live separately from her husband and still be provided for by him. This separation can be justified through a number of different reasons, including if he has another wife living, if he has converted to a different religion other than Hinduism, if he has treated her cruelly, or even has a violent case of leprosy.

If the wife is widowed by her late husband, then it is the duty of the father-in-law to provide for her. This legal obligation only comes into effect if the widowed wife has no other means of providing for herself. If she has land of her own, or means of an income and can maintain herself then the father-in-law is free from obligation to her. Additionally, if the widow remarries then her late husband's father-in-law does is not legally bound by this Act anymore as well.

Under this Act, a child is guaranteed maintenance from his or her parents until the child ceases to be a minor. This is in effect for both legitimate and illegitimate children who are claimed by the parent or parents. Parents or infirmed daughters, on the other hand, must be maintained so long as they are unable to maintain for themselves.

The amount of maintenance awarded, if any, is dependent on the discretion of the courts. Particular factors included in the decision process include the position or status of the parties, the number of persons entitled to maintenance, the reasonable wants of the claimants, if the claimant is living separately and if the claimant is justified in doing so, and the value of the claimant's estate and income. If any debts are owed by the deceased, then those are to be paid before the amount of maintenance is awarded or even considered.

**Table – 6.10 Awareness of Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	195	78.00
2.	No	45	18.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
	Total	250	100

The above table reveals that 78 percent respondents were aware of this act, 18 percent were not aware of this act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961.<sup>41</sup>**

- Applicability to every factory or establishment in which 10 or more persons are or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months.
- Eligibility for Maternity Benefit: Has to work for 80 days in the preceding 12 months immediately preceding the date of her expected delivery.
- Eligible for 12 weeks maternity benefit of which not more than six weeks shall precede the date of her expected delivery.
- Maternity benefit is paid at the rate of the average daily wage for the period of her actual absence. The average daily wage means the average of the woman's wages payable to her for the days on which she

has worked during the period of three calendar months immediately preceding the date from which she absents herself.

- Wages includes all remuneration including cash allowances, D.A., HRA, Incentive bonus and the money value of any concessional value of food grains supplied but does not include any bonus other than incentive bonus, OT, gratuity, PF etc.
- NO employer shall knowingly employ a woman in any establishment during the six weeks immediately following the day of the delivery miscarriage or medical termination of pregnancy(MTP): No woman shall work in any establishment during the six weeks immediately following delivery, miscarriage or MTP

**Other provisions in the Act:** <sup>42</sup>

- Where the woman dies during the period, maternity benefit shall be payable only for the days up to and including the day of her death
- Where a woman has delivered a child and dies during her delivery or during the period immediately following the date of her delivery for which she is entitled for the maternity benefit, leaving behind in either case the child, the employer shall be liable for the maternity benefit for that entire period but if the child also dies during the said period, then for the days upto and including the date of the death of the Child.
- Medical bonus of Rs. 250 if no prenatal confinement and post natal care is provided by employer free of charge.
- 6 weeks leave with wages for tubectomy and two weeks immediately following the day of an tubectomy.
- One month's leave with wages at the rate of maternity benefit for one month for miscarriage, MTP or tubectomy operation.
- Nursing breaks – Two times in the course of daily work till the child attains 15 months.

- Prohibition from dismissal for absence during pregnancy. However, for Misconducts, forfeiting of Maternity Benefit and Medical bonus permissible.

**The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961<sup>43</sup>**

This Act may be called the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint.

In this act, 'dowry' means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly-

- (a) By one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage; or
- (b) By the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person;

at or before or any time after the marriage in connection with the marriage of said parties but does not include dower or mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) apply.

**Penalty for giving or taking dowry**

(1) If any person, after the commencement of this Act, gives or takes or abets the giving or taking of dowry, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years, and with the fine which shall not be less than fifteen thousand rupees or the amount of the value of such dowry, whichever is more:

Provided that the Court may, for adequate and special reasons to be recorded in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than five years.

(2) Nothing in sub-section (1) shall apply to or, in relation to -presents which are given at the time of a marriage to the bride (without any demand

having been made in that behalf. Provided that such presents are entered in list maintained in accordance with rule made under this Act;

Provided further that where such presents are made by or on behalf of the bride or any person related to the bride, such presents are of a customary nature and the value thereof is not excessive having regard to the financial status of the person by whom, or on whose behalf, such presents are given.

#### **Penalty for demanding dowry**

If any person demands directly or indirectly, from the parents or other relatives or guardian of a bride or bridegroom as the case may be, any dowry, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to two years and with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees:

Provided that the Court may, for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than six months.

A new criminal offence of 'Dowry Death' was incorporated in the Indian Penal Code. A further amendment in 1983 provide for a punishment by imprisonment of 7 years in ordinary cases of rape and 10 years for custodial rape case. The maximum punishment may go up to life imprisonment. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956 as amended and renamed in 1986 has made the sexual exploitation of female a cognizable offence. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 has made indecent presentation of women in advertisements etc. an offence. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique Act (PNDT) has come into force in 1994 to prevent induced abortion of female fetus.

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the provisions of this Act and the responses received are placed in table 6.11

**Table – 6.11 The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	225	90.00
2.	No	20	08.00
3.	No response	05	02.00
Total		250	100

The above table shows that 90 percent of the respondents were aware of the Act, 8 percent respondents were not aware of the Act while 2 percent respondents did not respond

**Table – 6.12 Dowry paid in marriage**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	125	50.00
2.	No	115	46.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
Total		250	100

The above table reveals that among the case of 50 percent respondents dowry was paid by their parents, among the case of 46 percent respondents dowry was not paid by their parents while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

As in the case of 50 percent respondents the dowry was not paid by their parents, hence it was thought proper to know that these respondents were faced any problems by not paying dowry and the responses received are presented in table 6.12:

**Table – 6.13 Facing any problems for not paying dowry**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	105	84.00
2.	No	10	08.00
3.	No response	10	08.00
	Total	125	100

The table above clearly indicates that 84 percent respondents were not faced any problems as their parents have not paid dowry in their marriage while 8 percent respondents were facing problems as their parents have not paid dowry in their marriage and rest of the 8 percent respondents did not respond.

It was tried to know the problems the respondents were facing as their parents have not paid dowry in their marriage but they did not respond to such questions, probably they were afraid that if their responses leaked they may be in trouble.

#### **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 <sup>44</sup>**

This Act may be called the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

- (a) "Guardian" means a person having the care of the person of a minor or a lunatic;
- (b) "Lunatic" has the meaning assigned to it in Sec.3 of the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912 (4 of 1912)
- (c) "Minor" means a person who, under the provisions of the Indian Majority Act, 1875 (9 of 1875), is to be deemed not to have attained his majority,

(d) "Registered medical practitioner" means a medical practitioner who possesses any recognized medical qualification as defined in Cl.(h) of Sec. 2 of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 (102 of 1956), whose name has been entered in a State Medical Register and who has such

Experience or training in gynecology and obstetrics as may be prescribed by rules made under this Act.

**Table – 6.14 Awareness of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	205	82.00
2.	No	35	14.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
Total		250	100

The above table reveals that 82 percent respondents were aware of this act, 14 percent were not aware of this act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 1976 <sup>45</sup>**

"The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, was enacted with a view to prevent child marriages, namely, a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is under a specified age. Originally, the age limit for a male was eighteen years and for a female fourteen years. The age limit was subsequently raised in the case of females from fourteen to fifteen by the Amending Act 41 of 1949. Violation of the provisions of the Act is made punishable.

2. The question of increasing the minimum age of marriage for males and females has been considered in the present context when there is an urgent need to check the growth of population in the country. Such increase of the minimum age of marriage will result in the lowering the total fertility rate on account of latter span of married life. It will also result in more responsible parenthood and in better health of the mother and child. A Bill introduced for

this purpose in the Lok Sabha on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1976, lapsed with dissolution of the Lok Sabha on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1977. The matter has been examined in all its aspects again.

3. The Bill seeks to amend the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, to increase the minimum age of marriage from fifteen to sixteen for females and from eighteen to twenty one for males and to make consequential amendments in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and the Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872. It is also being provided that offences under the Child Marriage Restraint Act may be investigated upon by a police officer under the Code of Criminal Procedure as if it were a cognizable offence. The police officer shall, however, not have the power to arrest, without a warrant or an order of a Magistrate".

This Act may be called the Child Marriage Restraint Act, [1929] It extends to the whole of India [except the State of Jammu and Kashmir] and it applies also to all citizens of India without and beyond India [Provided that nothing contained in this Act shall apply to the Renoncants of the Union territory of Pondicherry.] It shall come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 1930.

In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject of context,-

(a) "Child" means a person who, if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age;

(b) "Child marriage" means a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is a child;

(c) "Contracting party" to a marriage means either of the parties whose marriage is [or is about to be] thereby solemnized; and

(d)"minor" means a person of either sex who is under eighteen years of age.

**Punishment for male adult below twenty-one years of age marrying a child.-** Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age and

below twenty-one, contracts a child marriage [shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to fifteen days, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.]

**4. Punishment for male adult above twenty-one years of age marrying a child.**- Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age contracts a child marriage [shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine.]

**Punishment for solemnizing a child marriage.**- Whoever performs, conducts or directs any child marriage shall be punishable with [simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine,] unless he proves that he had reason to believe that the marriage was not a child marriage.

**Punishment for parent or guardian concerned in a child marriage.**-  
(1) Where a minor contracts a child marriage, any person having charge f the minor, Whether as parent or guardian or in any other capacity, lawful or unlawful, who does any act to promote the marriage or permits it to be solemnized, shall be punishable with [simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine]:

Provided that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment (2) For the purposes of this section, it shall be presumed, unless and until the contrary is proved, that where a minor has contracted a child marriage, the person having charge of such minor has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnized.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 has raised the age for marriage of girl from 15 to 18 years and that of a boy to 21 years and made offences under this Act cognizable.

**Table – 6.15 Awareness about the Child Marriage Restraint Act**

S. No.	Aware	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	235	94.00
2.	No	5	2.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
	Total	250	100

The above table reveals that 94 percent respondents were aware of this act, 2 percent were not aware of this act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1976 <sup>46</sup>**

The law relating to the regulation of labor employed in factories in India was embodied in The Factories Act, 1934. It was amended several times but its general framework remained unchanged. Application of this Act revealed a number of defects and weaknesses which hampered effective administration. In the meanwhile industrial activities in the country grew to a very large extent and it became essential to overhaul the Factories law. To achieve this objective the Factories Bill was introduced in the Legislature.

The existing law relating to the regulation of labor employed in factories in India is embodied in the Factories Act, 1934. Experience of the working of the Act has revealed a number of defects and weaknesses which hamper effective administration. Although the act has been amended in certain respects in a piecemeal fashion whenever some particular aspect of labor safety or welfare assumed urgent importance, the general framework has remained unchanged. The provisions for the safety, health and welfare of workers are generally found to be inadequate and unsatisfactory and even such protection as is provided does not extend to the large mass of workers employed in work places not covered by the Act. In view of the large and growing industrial activities in the country, a radical overhauling of the Factories law is essentially called for and cannot be delayed.

The proposed legislation differs materially from the existing law in

several respects. Some of the important features are herein mentioned. Under the definition of "Factory" in the Act of 1934, several undertakings are excluded from its scope but it is essential that important basic provisions relating to health, working hours, holidays lighting and ventilation, should be extended to all workplaces in view of the unsatisfactory state of affairs now prevailing in unregulated factories. Further, the present distinction between seasonal and perennial factories which has little justification has been done away with. The minimum age of employment for children has been raised from 12 to 13 and their working hours reduced from 5 to 4 ½ with powers to Provincial Governments to prescribe even a higher minimum age for employment in hazardous undertakings.

The present Act is very general in character and leaves too much to the rule-making powers of the Provincial Governments. While some of them do have rules of varying stringency, the position on the whole is not quite satisfactory. This defect is sought to be remedied by laying down clearly in the Bill itself the minimum requirements regarding health (cleanliness, ventilation and temperature, dangerous dusts and fumes, lighting and control of glare, etc.) safety (eye protection, control of explosive and inflammable dusts, etc.), and general welfare of workers (washing facilities, first-aid, canteens, shelter rooms, crèches, etc.) amplified where necessary, by rules and regulations to be prescribed by Provincial Governments.

Further, the present Act leaves important and complex points to the discretion of Inspectors placing heavy responsibility on them. In view of the specialized and hazardous nature of the processes employed in the factories it is too much to expect Inspectors to possess an expert knowledge of all these matters. The detailed provisions contained in the Bill will go a long way in lightening their burden.

Some difficulties experienced in the administration of the Act, especially relating to hours of employment, holidays with pay, etc. have been met by making the provisions more definite and clearer. The penalty clauses have also been simplified. An important provision has also been made in the Bill empowering Provincial Governments to require every factory should

be registered and should take a license for working to be renewed at periodical intervals. Provincial Governments are further being empowered to require that before a new factory is constructed or any extensions are made to an existing one, the plans designs and specifications of the proposed construction should receive their prior approval.

#### **The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976<sup>47</sup>**

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, --

- (a) "appropriate Government" means –
  - i. in relation to any employment carried on by or under the authority of the Central Government or a railway administration, or in relation to a banking company, a mine, oilfield or major port or any corporation established by or under a Central Act, the Central Government, and
  - ii. in relation to any other employment, the State Government;
- (b) "Commencement of this Act" means, in relation to an establishment or employment, the date on which this Act comes into force in respect of that establishment or employment;
- (c) "Employer" has the meaning assigned to it in clause (f) of Section 2 of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 (39 of 1972);
- (d) "Man" and "woman" mean male and female human beings, respectively, of any age;
- (e) "Notification" means a notification published in the Official Gazette;
- (f) "Prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (g) "remuneration" means the basic wage or salary, and any additional emoluments whatsoever payable, either in cash or in kind, to a person employed in respect of employment or work done in such employment, if the terms of the contract of employment, express or implied, were fulfilled;
- (h) "same work or work of a similar nature" means work in respect of which

the skill, effort and responsibility required are the same, when performed under similar working conditions, by a man or a woman and the differences, if any, between the skill, effort and responsibility required of a man and those required of a woman are not of practical importance in relation to the terms and conditions of employment;

- (i) "Worker" means a worker in any establishment or employment in respect of which this Act has come into force;
- (j) Words and expressions used in this Act and not defined but defined in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (14 of 1947), shall have the meaning respectively assigned to them in that Act.

The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law or in the terms of any award, agreement or contract of service, whether made before or after the commencement of this Act, or in any instrument having effect under any law for the time being in force.

Duty of employer to pay equal remuneration to men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature. –

No employer shall pay to any worker, employed by him in an establishment or employment, remuneration, whether payable in cash or in kind, at rates less favorable than those at which remuneration is paid by him to the workers of the opposite sex in such establishment or employment for performing the same work or work of a similar nature.

No employer shall, for the purpose of complying with the provisions of sub-section, reduce the rate of remuneration of any worker. Where, in an establishment or employment, the rates of remuneration payable before the commencement of this Act for men and women workers for the same work or work of a similar nature are different only on the ground of sex, then the higher (in cases where there are only two rates), or, as the case may be, the highest (in cases where there are only two rates), of such rates shall be the rate at which remuneration shall be payable, on

and from such commencement, to such men and women workers: Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall be deemed to entitle a worker to the revision of the rate of remuneration payable to him or her with reference to the service rendered by him or her before the commencement of this Act.

No discrimination to be made while recruiting men and women workers. -- On and from the commencement of this Act, no employer shall, while making recruitment for the same work or work of a similar nature, [or in any condition of service subsequent to recruitment such as promotions, training or transfer], make any discrimination against women except where the employment of women in such work is prohibited or restricted by or under any law for the time being in force: Provided that the provisions of this section shall not affect any priority or reservation for scheduled castes or scheduled tribes, ex-servicemen, retrenched employees of any other class or category of persons in the matter of recruitment to the posts in an establishment or employment.

#### **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986<sup>48</sup>**

In 1950 the Government of India ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others. In 1956 India passed the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 (SITA). The act was further amended and changed in 1986, resulting in the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act also known as PITA. PITA only discusses trafficking in relation to prostitution and not in relation to other purposes of trafficking such as domestic work, child labor, organ harvesting, etc. The following is an outline of the provisions in this law that pertains to children below the age of 18.

The act defines child as any person who has completed eighteen years of age. The first section of the act has provisions that outline the illegality of prostitution and the punishment for owning a brothel or a similar establishment, or for living of earnings of prostitution as is in the case of a pimp. Section five of the act states that if a person procures, induces or takes

a child for the purpose of prostitution then the prison sentence is a minimum of seven years but can be extended to life. To ensure that the people in the chain of trafficking are also held responsible the act has a provision that states that any person involved in the recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving of persons for the purpose of prostitution if guilty of trafficking. In addition any person attempting to commit trafficking or found in the brothel or visiting the brothel is punishable under this law.

If a person is found with a child it is assumed that he has detained that child there for the purpose of sexual intercourse and hence shall be punishable to seven year in prison up to life imprisonment, or a term which may extend to ten year and also a maximum fine of one lakh rupees. If a child is found in a brothel and after medical examination has been found to have been sexually abused, it is assumed that the child has been detained for the purpose of prostitution.

Any person committing prostitution in public with a child shall be punishable to seven year in prison up to life imprisonment, or a term which may extend to ten year and also a maximum fine of one lakh rupees. If prostitution of a child is being committed with knowledge of an establishment owner such as a hotel the license of the hotel is likely to be cancelled along with the given prison sentence and/or fines.

Any child found in a brothel or being abused for the purpose of prostitution can be placed in an institution for their safety by a magistrate. Landlords, leasers, owner, agent of the owner who unknowingly previously rented their property to a person found guilty of prostituting a child, must get approval from a magistrate before re-leasing their property for three years after the order is passed.

In 2006, the Ministry of Women and Child Development proposed an amendment bill that has yet to be passed. The amendment does not really concern any of the provisions related to the child but has many important consequences for the right of women sex workers.

**Table – 6.16 Awareness of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986**

S. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	215	86.00
2.	No	25	10.00
3.	No response	10	04.00
	Total	250	100

The above table reveals that 86 percent respondents were aware of this act, 10 percent were not aware of this act while 4 percent respondents did not respond.

#### **Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986 <sup>49</sup>**

This Act may be called the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986. It extends to the whole of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

1. "advertisement" includes any notice, circular, label, wrapper or other document and also includes any visible representation made by means of any light, sound, smoke or gas;
2. "distribution" includes distribution by way of samples whether free or otherwise;
3. "indecent representation of women" means the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman; her form or body or any part thereof in such way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals;
4. "label" means any written, marked, stamped, printed or graphic matter, affixed to, or appearing upon, any package;

5. "package" includes a box, a carton, tin or other container;
6. "Prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

No person shall publish, or cause to be published, or arrange or take part in the publication or exhibition of, any advertisement which contains indecent representation of women in any form.

No person shall produce or cause to be produced, sell, let to hire, distribute, circulate or send by post any book, pamphlet, paper, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph, representation or figure which contains indecent representation of women in any form, provided that noting in this section shall apply to any book, pamphlet, paper, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph, representation or figure --

- (i) the publication of which is proved to be justified as being for the public good on the ground that such book, pamphlet, paper, slide , film, writing, drawing, painting, photography, representation or figure is in the interest of science, literature, art, or learning , art, or learning or other objects of general concern; or
- (ii) Which is kept or used bona fide for religious purpose; any representation sculptured, engraved, painted or otherwise represented on or in –
- (iii) Any ancient monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (24 of 1958); or
- (iv) Any temple, or on any car used or the conveyance of idols, or kept or used for any religious purpose; any film in respect of which the provisions of Part II of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 (37 of 1952), will be applicable.

#### **Penalty**

Any person who contravenes the provisions of Sec 3 or Sec 4 shall be punishable on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, and with fine which may extend to two

thousand rupees, and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for term of not less than six months but which may extend to five years and also with a fine not less than ten thousand rupees but which may extend to one lakh rupees.

**Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Rules, 1987<sup>50</sup>**

These rules may be called the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Rules, 1987. They shall come into force on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1987.

In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,-

- (a)'Act' means the Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 (60 of 1986) ;
- (b) 'article' means any book, pamphlet, paper, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph, representation of figure;
- (c) 'authorized officer' means any Gazetted Officer authorized by the State Government for the purpose of section 5 of the Act.
- (d) 'section' means a section of the Act.

**The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987<sup>51</sup>**

This Act may be called the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.

It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It shall come into force in a State on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint, and different dates may be appointed for different States.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires.- "Code" means the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974); "glorification" in relation to *sati*, whether such *sati*, was committed before or after the commencement of this Act, includes, among other things.-

the observance of any ceremony or the taking out of a procession in connection with the commission of *sati*; or the supporting, justifying or propagating the practice of *sati* in any manner; or the arranging of any function to eulogise the person who has committed *sati*; or the creation of a trust, or the collection of funds, or the construction of temple or other structure or the carrying on of any form of worship or the performance of any ceremony thereat, with a view to perpetuate the honour of, or to preserve the memory of, a person who has committed *sati*;

"*sati*" means the burning or burying alive of any widow along with the body of her deceased husband or any other relative or with any article, object or thing associated with the husband or such relative; or any woman along with the body of any of her relatives, irrespective of whether such burning or burying is claimed to be voluntary on the part of the widow or the women or other-wise;

"Temple" includes any building or other structure, whether roofed or not, constructed or made to preserve the memory or a person in respect of whom *sati* has been committed or used or intended to be used for the carrying on of any form of worship or for the observance of any ceremony in connection with such commission. Words and expressions used but not defined in this Act and defined in the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) or in the Code shall have the same meanings as are respectively assigned to them in the Indian Panel Code or the Code.

#### **Punishment for Offences Relating To *Sati***

##### **Attempt to commit *sati***

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), whoever attempts to commit *sati* and does any act towards such commission shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or with both:

Provided that the Special Court trying an offence under this section shall, before convicting any person, take into consideration the circumstances

leading to the commission of the offence, the act committed, the state of mind of the person charge of the offence at the time of the commission of the act and all other relevant factors.

**Abetment of sati**

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), if any person commits *sati*, whoever abets the commission of such *sati*, either directly or indirectly, shall be punishable with death or imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

(2) If any person attempts to commit *sati*, whoever abets such attempt, either directly or indirectly, shall be punishable with imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

For the purposes of this section, any of the following acts or the like shall also be deemed to be an abetment, namely:

- (a) any inducement to a widow or woman to get her burnt or buried alive along with the body of her deceased husband or with any other relative or with any article, object or thing associated with the husband or such relative, irrespective of whether she is in a fit state of mind or is labouring under a state of intoxication or stupefaction or other cause impeding the exercise of her free will;
- (b) making a widow or woman believe that the commission of *sati* would result in some spiritual benefit to her or her deceased husband or relative or the general well being of the family;
- (c) encouraging a widow or woman to remain fixed in her resolve to commit *sati* and thus instigating her to commit *sati*;
- (d) participating in any procession in connection with the commission of *sati* or aiding the widow or woman in her decision to commit *sati* by taking her along with the body of her deceased husband or relative to the cremation or burial ground;

- (e) being present at the place where *sati* is committed as an active participant to such commission or to any ceremony connected with it;
- (f) preventing or obstructing the widow or woman from saving herself from being burnt or buried alive;
- (g) Obstructing, or interfering with, the police in the discharge of its duties of taking any steps to prevent the commission of *sati*.

#### **Punishment for Glorification of Sati**

Whoever does any act for the glorification of sati shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to seven years and with fine which shall not be less than five thousand rupees but which may extend to thirty thousand rupees.

Apart from these laws the Parliament of India has ensured the setting up of Family Courts and also amended the Criminal Law in order to provide quick, efficient and just relief to the people. The legislative measures taken up to give practical shape to the constitutional directives, for the development of women and children in the country, have brought about a perceptible change in their status. However, there is still a wide gap between the *de jure* provisions and *de facto* realities. On the face of it, the legal status of women seems to have improved due to the framing of laws for matters relation to marriage, divorce, abortion, guardianship of children, maintenance and inheritance, matrimonial, prosperity and criminal laws for the protection of women. But, in reality, every legal measure designed to translate the constitutional norms of equality and of special protection into actual practice has had to face tremendous resistance from the legislative and other elites. Even after the promulgation of these laws, the protection enjoyed laid the large masses of women from exploitation and injustice is negligible. The desired transformations in women's status through legislative action confront persistent issues which had constrained that role. There are lacunae and differences in the various systems of personal law in the absence of a uniform civil code. Certain outdated provisions in criminal law exist which bear little relationship either to the constitutional directives or the emerging, social

reality. There is absence of a adequate enforcement mechanism which has made many laws ineffective. Inadequate efforts to educate women regarding their legal rights, particularly to those who are illiterate and poor have made these laws redundant.

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## *CHAPTER - 7*

*CONCLUSION*

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### **CONCLUSION**

It is often said that the status and position of women in society is the best way to understand a civilization, its progress and its shortcomings. In case of India, women have come a long way from women sages and scholars in the Rig Vedic period to women in the armed forces, IT sector, politics, industry and other significant areas while balancing their role as a daughter, wife and mother. This journey towards modernization has not been easy. Women have had to fight the traditional Indian male-dominated society to emerge as stronger and independent entities. While all these are positive developments, cases of rape, harassment at workplace and dowry deaths are rampant. Illiteracy and ignorance about their rights are still prevalent among a majority of women. It is in this context that the need for evolving policies for the welfare of women has been strongly felt to accelerate their socio-economic development.

Pt. Nehru was very well aware that the nation should have policy of equal right and he says that you can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women. The Constitution of India not only provides for equal rights and privileges for women and men but also for making special provision for women. A series of social legislations have been enacted from time to time for raising the status of women in the country. The five year plans have consistently placed special emphasis on providing minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition for women and children, acceleration of women's education, their increase in the labour force and welfare services for women in need. Various welfare and development schemes have been introduced to improve the living conditions of women and to increase their access to and control over material and social resources. Special steps have been taken to remove legal, social and other constraints to enable them to make use of the rights and new opportunities becoming available for them.

Various studies show that women are becoming increasingly conscious

of their rights and capabilities. However, the demographic features of female population like excessive mortality in female children resulting in persistent decline in sex ratio, low rate of literacy, and low economic status stress the need for greater attention to the economic emancipation of women. The low status of women in large segments of Indian society cannot be raised without opening up of opportunities of independent employment and income for them. But the process of change to raise the status of women under various spheres of socio-economic activities would require sustained effort over a period of time.

Welfare of women today, although a worldwide phenomenon, are especially acute in the third world countries where most of women's activity takes place in the non-wage economy for the purpose of household consumption. In India, women are discriminated against in many areas including education, health and nutrition, employment, law, access to credit, security as well as control over assets and in technology, such as productive jobs, civil service appointments or parliamentary representation. The discrimination against the girl child starts from the beginnings of her life within the family. The perception of the woman's role in the rural economy and even in some urban areas of developing economy does not reflect the reality. It is also imperative that women welfare and related terms become part of the development programs, giving them importance of sustainable development.

The Indian Constitution grants women equal rights with men, but strong patriarchal tradition persist, with women's lives shaped by customs that are centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and celebrated.

The origin of the Indian idea of appropriate female behavior can be traced to the rules laid down by Manu in 200 B.C.: "by a young girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house". "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."

Looking to the present condition of women in India it is thought that a sociological study should be conducted. The study is important because on one hand in the age of globalization we talk about the equality especially on the bases of sex but it seems all theoretical, because in practice the women are still un-educated, malnutrition, over work, un-skilled, mistreated, less powerful or powerless and have poor health. This compels a sensitive mind to go in the roots of the problem and draw attention of the administrators and policy makers, so that they can come forward and try to solve the problem connected with women welfare.

This research aims to find out the causes of inequality among men and women. Although factors responsible for the development of men and women are the same, yet there are a lot of hurdles which stop the progress of women. Therefore we have to find out the causes which are mainly responsible for the sorry state of women as compared to men.

It is assumed that after 61 years of independence should have bridged the inequality between men and women. Our constitution guarantees equality on the basis of sex but the reality appears to be different. If we look at the census 2001 data we find that there is a decrease in the number of female as compared to previous census. This state of affair is also alerts a sensitive mind to look at the real status of women in contemporary India.

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

1. Inequality among men and women is the result of social environment.
2. Norms, values, culture and traditions affect the condition of women
3. Female receives less health care than male.
4. Working conditions and environmental pollution impairs women's health.
5. Women work longer hours and their work is more arduous than that of men yet their work is unrecognized.
6. India has exceptionally high rate of child malnutrition because tradition in

India requires that women eat last and least throughout their lives, even when pregnant and perpetuating.

7. Women and girl receive less education than men, due to social norms and fears of violence.
8. The working conditions of professional women are also not free from complications.
9. The prestige associated with sons result in social pressure to have sons.

Looking to the condition the study was conducted in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan. Bikaner is situated in the north of Rajasthan. The old city is surrounded by great walls. In the western part of Bikaner district lies the neighboring country Pakistan. It is situated on a slightly higher (altitude i.e. 237 meters) and has an arid climate most of the year. Due to its geographic location in the past the city, was one of the most important trade centers for the traders of West-Central Asia. As per the census 2001 the total population of Bikaner is 16, 74,000 and the total percentage of the urban population is 35.52%

The study was conducted in the Bikaner city which has 55 wards in all. The total population of all wards is 5,29,690 including both male and female. 300 female units were selected as the sample for this study. The sample was selected from each ward on the basis of random sample method. The sample was selected as per the ratio of their population.

The interview schedule was used as a tool of the study. Primary data was collected through interview schedule and secondary data was collected from census report and other data available in books, journals and articles published in various magazines.

It was found that women were denied all the facilities and privileges available to them and they were denied political, socio-economic, religious status and were always in a state of abject poverty and ignorance. They had no access to gainful employment and education. This state of affair kept them

outside the range of social, economic, political and religious benefits, resulting in their demoralization, degradation and backwardness.

After the advent independence, the leaders of free India realized the gravity of injustice towards women and hence they made special provisions for them in the Constitution of India, which guaranteed equal rights to all people of India. Specific provisions were provided in the Constitution of India for the amelioration of the lot of women in the Indian society. A new era began for them which opened new vistas and avenues of employment, education and participation in the process of national development. Many provisions of the Constitution of India provided for the mitigation of the hitherto existing injustice meted out to them.

The maker of our Constitution were conscious about the prevailing miserable and appalling living conditions of a women, who have remained far behind and segregated from our national and social live and have Continued to be socially suppressed and economically exploited for centuries due to various types of social disabilities created by socio-religious taboos. This is apparent from the special provisions and safeguards provided in the Constitution for the development of women.

The sex based division of society is more apparent in the former feudal states of Rajputana as revealed by this research study concerning women in Bikaner, one of such former feudal states. Women were practically isolated and were denied social and economic freedom. They were also deprived from availing educational and employment facilities, thereby forcing them to live in a state of utter ignorance and deprivation. The feudal structure further aggravated the plight of the women and they often fell victims to the whims of the men. This oppression and suppression led to their demoralization which further added to their misery.

After the formation of the State of Rajasthan as a result of the merger of these feudal states, the government of Rajasthan adopted several measures for the amelioration of the lot of the women in light of the Constitutional provisions enacted by the central government.

The Constitutional provisions which include reservation, scholarships, mid-day meal; economic supports etc. were adopted as measures for the empowerment and equality to women.

The Government of Rajasthan constituted appropriate machinery to monitor the implementation of the measures for the uplift of the women and the establishment of the Women Development Department was the first step in this direction. The Women Development Department also looked after the implementation of other measures relating to the economic, social and educational betterment in respect of women.

The problem of the upliftment of women is of gigantic proportions and it requires immense efforts and strong will to implement these welfare measures. However, changes cannot be brought about overnight due to the centuries old strong bias against them. Yet the earnest efforts have resulted in bringing about very little but slow change in their condition.

During the six decades, efforts have been made for the social upliftment and educational and economic development of women. A number of useful schemes to achieve that end have also been introduced through various plans which have benefited them to some extent. But these benefits have not percolated to the desired extent among the women.

When we look at the balance-sheet of our socio-economic achievements, particularly relating to women, it is observed that the benefits of the socio-economic progress have not fully reached them and that there is still a lot of ground to be covered.

The condition of the women, in spite of more than six decades of developmental planning, has not improved. Rather, it has deteriorated. This does not mean that development has not occurred, but what it really means is that only a little of the fruits of development have gone to them.

The policy for the development of women was based on certain assumptions. These assumptions were examined and it was found that many of them did not come true. The assumptions were -

### **1. Commitment of the Policy Makers, Planners and Implementing Agencies**

It was found that this commitment of the agencies in charge was missing. It was assumed that the policy makers, planners and implementing agencies would do their utmost to make these programmes of upliftment of the women a complete success. However, the data revealed that, in spite of awareness about the benefits provided for the upliftment of the women, a majority of them have failed to derive full benefit of these facilities.

### **2. Knowledge about people's needs and problems**

It was assumed that the planners when framing policies have a complete knowledge of problems and needs of the people. The loopholes in the policy framed the implementation of programmes, weak and misconceived or misused programmes reveal a gap between the understanding of planners and the requirement of the people. Specific steps were needed to assess the needs and problems of women. The programmes were chalked out; the policies were hurriedly made in a general way and continued. Needs keep changing with the changing overall scenario of women and revision of policies after short intervals are needed.

The policy makers probably assumed that the needs of women are uniformly the same and continue to be the same. It is partially true as their needs and problems varied in case of rural and urban settings. That is why the results of these welfare measures exhibited a major schism between the rural and the urban cases.

### **3. Participation of beneficiaries in further development**

It was assumed that the beneficiaries of these welfare measures would participate in the process of development as peoples' representatives. It was revealed in this regard that it did not happen as per expectations. It was found that while some women were able to get the profits of these schemes in a big way, a big chunk of women either remained passive or they only benefited partially. Those women who had risen in status and economic position rather

preferred to remain aloof. They were rather trying to show or achieve closeness to higher classes and professional groups. They rather enjoyed exclusive status in their society and did not encourage other fellow women to come up as equal.

#### **4. The role of Non-Government Organizations**

It was thought that NGOs would play a significant role in increasing peoples' participation. But during the study it was revealed that the NGOs did not contribute in this direction. The women were expected to derive full benefits of the welfare measures meant for them as their social upliftment and improvement in social status formed the priorities of these programmes. However, the study revealed that their main priority was confined to economic benefits and they strived for these benefits in a big way at the cost of other measures of social upliftment.

Thus, the above mentioned assumptions in respect of the various welfare measures for upliftment of women did not come true in the full measure. It was perhaps due to lack of total commitment on the part of the agents of change, i.e. the policy makers, planners and implementing agencies and partly due to operation of vested interest groups at various levels.

The study was conducted to evaluate the position of women in society. Main objectives of the study were to examine:

- (1) Policy, policy formation and implementation;
- (2) Implementation and operation of policies;
- (3) Extent of welfare measures and their policy frame;
- (4) Response and acceptability of programmes.
- (5) Perspective gap between the agents of change and the recipients of the change.

The analysis of the recorded data on the basis of the above mentioned objectives of the study revealed the following situation.

It was found that the policy makers had chalked out welfare measures for the upliftment of women in accordance with the various provisions of the Constitution of India. However, specific attention was not given to the problems and needs of the women which resulted in an imbalance in the distribution of benefits. Some women of backward areas lagged behind in availing benefits of the various welfare measures while others obtained much benefit for themselves as was corroborated by the recorded responses.

The data revealed that benefits like reservation of posts in government services and education received priority. But, while planning for the upliftment of women, the schemes and efforts were not keeping pace with the overall development, be it technological, cultural or otherwise. There was hardly any revision of the plans and policies in view of the social, economic and cultural growth. While putting these welfare measures into practice which resulted in lack of proper utilization of the same by the women belongs to rural areas.

The implementation of the various welfare measures for the upliftment of the women left much to be desired due to which the growth was more in terms of families. The economic measures scored over the measures meant for socio-cultural upliftment of women.

The responses of women and their acceptability of the program/schemes revealed the above situation and much effort were needed to change the traditional approach. The administration was satisfied with the numbers, not bothering for overall development. Social equality appeared to be given a lower place in the list of priorities of the implementing agencies and consequently economic upliftment superseded social upliftment.

Due to the above factors a perspective gap was clearly evident among the policy makers, implementers and recipients of the change. There was lack of synchronization at all levels which resulted in uneven distribution of the welfare benefits among the rural and urban groups and also creation of an imbalance in the process of development of women.

The analysis of the recorded responses of the respondents of the study revealed, in light of the objectives of the study, that while the various

measures initiated for the amelioration of the lot of women had been successful to a satisfactory extent in growth of economic and educational standards of these people, much remained to be done so far as their social and cultural upliftment was concerned.

The analysis of the implementation of the above welfare measures revealed that while an initial impact became visible and attitudes of the people in general registered changes for the better, yet, keeping in view the century's old bias towards women much remained to be done. It was found that there was growing awareness among the women regarding the Constitutional measures and they had started availing themselves of this benefit from the same, but still they were far from making full use of the same. Their socio-economic background was a major barrier in the path of deriving benefits of these measures; particularly their poor economic condition and illiteracy prevented them from doing so. The poor literacy rate of women and lack of higher educational achievement limited their access to full use of these measures. However, with growing awareness about these benefits, they have started availing themselves of these benefits in good numbers. They were availing themselves of the various educational facilities and the number of beneficiaries had grown over the years. It was revealed from this study that scholarships and stipends and other educational benefits were the major factors in sustaining their interest in educational growth.

The study revealed that the number of beneficiaries of educational scholarships and stipends, hostel facilities, free books and stationary etc. was progressive which was an indication of their growing awareness regarding these measures and their increasing to avail benefits of these measures meant for their educational development.

It was found that the measures, initiated for the economic growth and provision of social equality to women, had also caught their imagination and they were deriving benefit of the same. However, it was found that financial assistance for them was fluctuating and thus sufficient financial support for the schemes was lacking. It is worth mentioning that the Department of Women Welfare was providing financial assistance to women, living below poverty

line, and had proved its usefulness as it was successful in achieving all targets it had set for itself.

#### **The other schemes**

The study revealed that other schemes of welfare of these castes, such as the Harijan Colony Development Scheme, Scheme for Rehabilitation of Scavengers, Scheme for grant for purchase of raw materials to Nomads, Schemes for self-reliance through education had been useful in furthering the uplift of the people belonging to these deprived castes. Thus, it became evident from the study of the progress of these various measures of welfare, that with growing awareness, more and more people of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were, availing themselves of their benefits.

#### **Development of Education**

One interesting fact emerged from the study is the progress of the educational measures, that girl child were enrolled in schools at the age of 7 years as compared to boy's enrollment age being 5 years It was so because the girl child had to share family chores which ultimately also led to their dropping out of school in good numbers. Further, it was also revealed that the girls of urban areas performances better in school as compared to their rural counterparts. It was reported to be due to lack of educational facilities in rural areas, poverty and treatment of a child as an economic unit. Further, there was lack of motivation too. This was also a cause for negative attitude of parents of rural areas towards enrollment of their girls in schools.

In the above context, other factors which hampered the progress of education among the girls also came to the fore in course of this research study. These included the indifferent or even negative attitude of the parents towards enrollment of girls in schools, lack of facilities for study at home, responsibility of carrying out family duties etc. As family background played a significant role in the growth of a child, lack of education among the parents and their poor educational status also adversely affected the educational growth of the girls. It was also revealed that due to these reasons, the dropout rate of girls was much higher in comparison to that of the boys. Regarding the

aim of educating their girls, a majority of the respondents pointed out employment for income as the main aim, followed by rising of their status while many considered education as a source of earning money.

Perception of the women, covered under this study, regarding the level of satisfaction with the implementation of these measures revealed varying reactions. More than half of them expressed that after availing themselves of educational facilities, they had become more respected in the eyes of their society while a good number of them reported no change. However, it was significant that there was considerable change in the positive direction, as a consequence of acquiring education, among the girls child.

In the above context, it is worth mentioning that a partial sense of satisfaction was found among the respondents regarding the educational facilities. However, it was admitted by them that educational development had taken place and it was helpful in gaining respect and raising their status in the society.

Yet another significant revelation during the study was the schism that still existed in different wards regarding the position in society vis-à-vis the impact of the various educational and economic measures initiated for the uplift and welfare of women. It was found that the impact of the educational measures, such as enrollment in school, dropping out of school, educational facilities etc., was unequal in the cases women of the wards near to urban area and rural area respectively. The women residing in the wards near to rural areas lacked the same consciousness and vigor towards utilization of these benefits while their urban counterparts were better placed in this respect as compared to them. It was due to the socio-economic atmosphere which still widely differed in the two areas. The rural inhabitants lacked exposure to new emerging influences while the urban residents had more interaction and contacts with the same.

The above situation was the result of adopting uniform approach towards the rural and urban people ignoring the differences in approach, acceptability and response of programmes by rural and urban people. The

needs and problems of the two sets of people varied and hence needed different approaches in implementation of the welfare measures in the rural and urban areas. It is widely known that generally there was near total lack of awareness and information regarding new developments, programmes and happenings in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas. Hence, there was need for adopting a different approach and strategy in the rural areas so far as the implementation of the welfare measures was concerned.

In addition to the above, it was also revealed that the rural people were slow in accepting changes in their traditional scenario and need careful and persistent approach in convincing them about the need for desired changes in their living attitudes and then implementing the measures. It was revealed during this study that the respondents residing near rural area were aware about the facilities and benefits provided in the welfare measures regarding education of their children but they did not appear enthusiastic about deriving benefit of the same. On the other hand, the respondents residing near urban area were prompt in doing so.

The above situation was clearly reflected in regard of implementation of other welfare measures as well. It was evident from the relevant data that the respondents residing near rural area were slow in reacting to the different welfare measures as compared to their urban counterparts. The traditional backwardness of the people of the rural areas, lack of awareness and closed and conservative attitude towards accepting any change were responsible for this apathy. It was, therefore, the duty of the planners and implementers of the welfare measures to have kept in mind this factor in view before implementing these measures. This did not happen and a uniform approach was adopted for implementation of programmes for the rural and urban people. It led to the vast variation in the numbers of rural and urban beneficiaries of the welfare measures.

It was rather obligatory on the part of the policy makers also to have emphatically considered the different backgrounds of the rural and urban groups of people and laid down different approaches and strategies for implementation of the welfare measures. As a matter of fact, there was more

need for care in this regard so far as the rural people were concerned. However, even now the mistake can be corrected by amending the existing approach and strategy so that the vast numbers of the rural population may be equal beneficiaries of these welfare measures.

It is gratifying to note that a new consciousness and awareness was making its dents in the psyche of the people of rural area which is driving them towards making use of the various measures for their daughters, initiated under the Constitutional provisions, for their educational, economic and social development. Now, they have started realizing the benefit of education for their growth and economic well-being and this realization is reflected in the growing numbers of girls in the educational institutions. They are striving hard to break the old barriers and marching ahead in the path of development. Now, there is a new awareness among them regarding their rights and they are more alert than earlier towards the same. This trend was reflected in the response obtained for this study. Still, certain inhibitions do persist among them due to the past socio-economic influences and these tend to make their progress comparatively slow. But they are in a process of overcoming those inhibitions.

The poor socio-economic condition of the women attracted the attention of the founding fathers of the Constitution of India and it led to provision of reservation of posts for them in government services. The aim of reservation of post in government service was to raise their economic and social status, which was at the lowest in the existing social order. Reservation of seats in jobs ensured new avenues of economic growth for them through employment, which was hitherto eluding them. Initially, the benefit of these provisions was limited as education, a necessary pre-requisite for employment in government services, was very low among the women. With the spread of education, their opportunities for employment in jobs of higher status also began to grow. Gradually, more and more women began to avail themselves of the benefits of the constitutional provisions of reservation of jobs in services.

It was revealed from the study of the above aspect of Constitutional

provisions of reservations of jobs for them in government services and their utilization by them, that after slow beginning, the process of their employment is now in full swing and the women, thus employed, have progressed economically and socially. Through employment women have gained status in the society and their economic status has also improved.

The various measures, initiated by the government under the Constitutional provisions, have made available to them new pastures for better livelihood. The women have availed government educational development by utilizing the educational development measures, and reservation of posts for them in government jobs has helped them to accelerate their occupational mobility so as to ensure better income for themselves and their families. Thus, they have succeeded in gaining better employment along with better economic security.

In addition to the above, yet another interesting aspect concerning their childhood hopes and expectations of gainful employment has become known. It became clear from the study that they aspired for government jobs as they wish to gain economic security which they needed so badly. However, the achievement level of their childhood expectations varied in case of respondents residing near rural and urban areas due to the fact that the respondents residing near urban areas were more favorably placed as compared to their rural counterparts. Occupational mobility among the women received boost due to availability of better educational facilities, better avenues of gainful employment due to the Constitutional provision of reservation of jobs for them as well as motivation to gain better socio-economic status. A government job was considered by them as the prime factor for achieving such status in comparison to wealth and education. Significantly many of them succeeded in gaining technical and professional jobs. Technical training was considered helpful in the employment process and this thought motivated and inspired them to gain technical education and training. The study revealed this trend significantly as many respondents of this study affirmed their conviction regarding technical training and employment.

In spite of the above mentioned trends in the development of women, the scars of social stratification, leading to hierarchies with vested interests, still continues to haunt them as revealed by this research study. Stratification in society was responsible for generating social, economic and religious inequalities between man and woman in particular and society in general. While social hierarchies further consolidated hegemony of man over woman and this fact has been amply demonstrated during the course of this study by the poor socio-economic status and miserable condition of the women in the society.

The exposure of the women to the new scenario of educational expansion and emerging social trends, growing economic status, has led to expansion of their horizon of thinking and field of interaction. Now they go to cinema shows, cultural programmers and other social functions without fear of humiliation and contempt. This trend signifies advancement towards equality and lessening of rigid social inequality on the basis of sex.

The women are now free to avail most of the privileges and facilities hitherto enjoyed only by man. Women are now economically better off and are now able to afford subscription for newspapers, magazines etc. for themselves. They are also in a position to raise their standard of living by equipping their kitchens with utensils of different metals and by other kitchen accessories. They are also now economically capable of affording medical treatment in case of illness. It showed that now they were in a better position than before in respect of receiving suitable medical treatment of their own choice. This indicated their improved economic condition.

The various welfare measures adopted for the upliftment of the women have shown positive results so far as improvement in their economic status is concerned. Reservation of posts in government service has opened new avenues of employment which were absent before the implementation of the welfare measures. Employment has resulted in growth of financial status and also in raising their economic viability. However, this change is not without its darker aspect and it may be termed as the misdirected change.

The better economic condition has given rise to certain problems which threaten the social harmony hitherto prevailing in society. Previously, traditional values and norms were followed by all and thus, their behavior was disciplined and controlled. Now in the changing scenario, growing materialism has given a jolt to the traditional values and norms and a state of social anarchy has developed in the society. Breakdown of traditional values and norms are not conducive for the healthy development of society and it should be a major cause of concern for all persons who are involved in the process of their development.

It should also be appreciated that certain other positive changes have also appeared as a result of the economic improvement in their status, the vast schism between the rural and urban people is disappearing as there is greater mobility of the rural people towards urban centers. Further, economic betterment in their status has led them to participate in different trade and business activities which were previously inaccessible to them. Now they are actively engaged in gainful trade and business and are thus capable of further improving their economic status.

Growth in education and economy has produced a new awareness among the women and it is related to political rights. Now this political awareness has led them to actively participate in the political activities. They are active in politics and electing their own representatives for the different political forums and legislatures. It has added to their social status as well as to their political clout.

Changes in economic and financial status, coupled with spread of education, has also made a positive impact on the status of women folk. The status of women has also improved to some extent and girls are now seeking education for the betterment of their lot. They are now actively participating in different social and political activities.

The form of family is also undergoing changes as a result of the new developments and the old traditional type of family is assuming new shape. Joint family system is there, but nuclear families are also making their

presence felt.

The standard of living of the family has also improved with growing economic viability. The old traditional way of living is being replaced by new one and modern utensils and other materials are making entry into their homes. Their modes of enjoyment and entertainment are also no more confined to the traditional ones but they are now enjoying the new means of entertainment.

Growing awareness, due to education, regarding family planning, was growing among the educated women and they were developing positive attitude in this direction. A majority of the respondents of this research study affirmed this fact. However, in the case of the respondents nearing to rural areas awareness and importance of family planning was not realized as by their urban counterparts.

Thus, the new emerging scenario was a definite indicator of the vital changes in the attitudes of the society towards the traditional and centuries' old rigidities in the socio-economic, cultural and religious areas, created by social stratification. After independence of India, the constitutional guarantees of equality to all citizens of the country irrespective of caste, religion and sex has ushered the Indian society in a new era in which old rigid values were yielding to new liberal ones. Social stratification has started shedding its old structure and the society is taking a new shape. The various constitutional measures for the amelioration of the lot of women have started showing positive results and the people of they are now marching forward towards progress by availing themselves of the new opportunities of educational, social and economic development.

It is evident from the inferences of this research study that the implementation of the various measures for the welfare of the women has beyond doubt created a climate of their uplift and progress thereby cementing the wide schism that existed before. The lessening of inequalities in the social, economic and religious fields is a healthy sign and it can be attributed to the implementation of the various welfare measures in respect of the

women. Education and economic viability combined with growth of liberal thinking have played a major role in bringing about vital changes in the scenario of the old. Thus, it is a fact that the women have been beneficiaries of the welfare measures implemented for improvement in their social, economic and cultural status and this research study has found ample evidence of the salutary effects of these measures. However, the task is not over and efforts in this direction needed to be continued so as to bring about total equality, in all fields. There is still much scope for improvement in the lot of a large section of women of the society.

In the above context it appears prudent to consider changes the existing strategies regarding reservation and economic support for women. It is generally accepted that the benefits of reservation have not reached the women of lower strata and only some already better off sections of women were able to garner all benefits for themselves. Hence, there is an immediate need to reconsider the existing policy of reservation. In addition to the above, women at the lowest strata should also be involved in the developmental work by ensuring their active participation in all developmental activities.

*INTERVIEW SCHEDULE*

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

(A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICIES FOR WELFARE OF WOMEN IN  
INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAJASTHAN)

1. Name .....
2. Religion .....
3. Caste .....
4. Age .....
5. Marital status
  - (i) Unmarried
  - (ii) Married
  - (iii) Widowed
  - (iv) Divorced
6. Type of your family
  - (i) Nuclear
  - (ii) Joint
7. Family members:

S.No.	Name	Relation to the informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Dependent and income
1.						
2.						
3.						

8. What was the Educational status of your family?
  - (i) Illiterate
  - (ii) Literate
  - (iii) Educated
9. Up to which class has you studied?
  - (i) Up to middle
  - (ii) Up to senior secondary
  - (iii) Graduate
  - (iv) Post graduate
  - (v).Others

10. At what age did you join School?	(i) 5 years (ii) 6 years (iii) 7 years and above
11. How was your performance at School?	(i) Above average (ii) Average (iii) Below Average
12. If performance was poor what was the reason for that?	(i) Poverty (ii) Family works (iii) Any other
13. Did you get any financial assistance during you studies?	Yes/No
14. Do you know about the educational facilities provided by the government?	Yes/No/No response
15. To what extent are you making use of educational facilities offered by the Government?	(i) Full use (ii) Partial use (iii) No use
16. Are you satisfied with these benefits?	(i) Fully satisfied (ii) Partially satisfied (iii) Not satisfied
17. Do you feel any change in attitude of members of society after seeking education?	Yes/No
18. What is your occupation?	(i) Agriculture (ii) Service (iii) Own business (iv) Others
19. Are you satisfied with the income of your occupation?	(i) Satisfied (ii) Partially satisfied (iii) Not satisfied

20. What is your monthly family income?
- (i) Below 5000
  - (ii) 5001 - 10000
  - (iii) 10001 - 15000
  - (iv) 15001 - 20000
  - (v) 20001 - 25000
  - (vi) 25001 and above
21. Are you aware of the constitutional provisions made in the constitution for better position of women in society?
- (i) Yes
  - (ii) No
  - (iii) No Response
22. Are you aware of educational facilities provided for girl child?
- (i) Fully aware
  - (ii) Not fully aware
  - (iii) No Response
23. Were your parents interested to enroll you in school?
- (i) Positive
  - (ii) Negative
  - (iii) Indifferent
24. How many of your children going to school?
- (i) One
  - (ii) Two
  - (iii) Three
25. In which class are they studying?
- (i) Primary
  - (ii) Secondary
  - (iii) College or university
26. Is any of children stop studies prematurely?
- (i) Yes
  - (ii) No
27. Mention the class in which they were studying at the time of dropout
- (i) Primary
  - (ii) Secondary
  - (iii) Did not dropout
28. What is the reason for their stopping studies?
- (i) Poverty
  - (ii) Family responsibility
  - (iii) No response

29. What is you aim to educating you children? (i) Employment in service  
(ii) Raising of status and Prosperous life  
(iii) To earn money
30. Are you aware of educational facilities provided by govt. for girl child? (i) Yes  
(ii) No
31. To what extent you are making use of these facilities? (i) Full use  
(ii) Partial use
32. Are you satisfied with these benefits? (i) Fully satisfied  
(ii) Partially satisfied  
(iii) Not satisfied
33. Are you aware of National Policy for Empowerment of women? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
34. Are you aware of child welfare schemes? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
35. Are you aware of vocational training scheme for women (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
36. Are you aware of training cum employment cum production Center scheme of government of government? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
37. Are you aware of condensed courses of government? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
38. Are you aware of National Commission of women? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response

39. Are you aware of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
40. Are you aware of Legal literacy manuals? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
41. Are you aware of National Plan of action for girl child? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
42. Are you aware of health and nutrition programme of government for women? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
43. Are you aware of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) of government? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
44. Are you aware of hostel facilities provided by govt. for working women? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
45. Are you aware of scheme of adolescent girls? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
46. Are you aware of various constitutional provisions made for women? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
47. Have you ever faced discrimination? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
48. What was the frequency of discrimination? (i) Always  
 (ii) As and when  
 (iii) Certain occasion

49. Are you aware of 93<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the constitution providing compulsory education to children up to the age of 14 years? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
50. Awareness of various protection provided in constitution to women and children below 14 years? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
51. Are you aware of various legislative measures provided for women? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
52. Are you aware of provisions of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
53. Are you aware of Special Marriage Act, 1954? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
54. Are you aware of provisions of Hindu Succession Act, 1956? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
55. Have you received share in your father's property? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
56. Are you aware of Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
57. Are you aware of Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response
58. Is dowry paid in your marriage by your parents? (i) Yes  
 (ii) No  
 (iii) No response

59. Did you face any problems as your parents not paid dowry? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
60. If yes, what problems you have faced?
61. Are you aware of Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
62. Are you aware about the Child Marriage restraint Act? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response
63. Are you aware of Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986? (i) Yes  
(ii) No  
(iii) No response

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