EDUCATION FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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Reviewer

Dr Sitesh Saraswat

Reader, Bhagwati College of Education, Meerut

Authors

Dr Namrata Prasad: Units (1.0-1.3, 1.4, 1.6-1.10, 2.6.1) © Dr Namrata Prasad, 2016

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE
Education for Empowerment of Women

Syllabi	Mapping in Book

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Concept of Women's Empowerment
– Women's Empowerment in Today's World
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  (b) Women's Rights
  (c) Women's Movement
	Unit 1: Women's Empowerment in India
	(Pages 1-40)

UNIT II – Health Conditions, Sex Ratio, Family Planning and Welfare – Education: Literacy and Gender Bias – Work Related Issues: Existing Prejudices, Sex Related Violence, Gender Discrimination	**Unit 2:** Health Conditions and Work Related Issues of Indian Women **(Pages 71-76)**
UNIT III – Political Participation: Lack of Women's representation – Economic Conditions: Prostitution – Social Conditions: Divorce, Rape, Domestic Violence	**Unit 3:** Political, Social and Economic Conditions of Women **(Pages 77-119)**
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INTRODUCTION

Despite the rapid advancements seen in the condition of women in recent times, the status of women in India, especially rural women, continues to be abysmal. A recent report ranked India the worst G20 country in terms of its treatment of women. Even today, women in India continue to face all sorts of prejudice in the private and public sphere. In the private sphere, they are expected to conform to societal expectations to be either a 'good wife' or a 'good daughter'. In the public sphere, they continue to be discriminated against in terms of wages and promotion. Women are also forced to confront violence and sexual exploitation on almost a daily basis. It would not be an exaggeration to state that no understanding of society can be complete without looking at the issues facing women.

This book entitled *Education for Empowerment of Women* has been written in a simplified manner to gives students an idea of the status of women in modern society, especially India. It will introduce you to concepts related health and political participation of women. It will also discuss the exploitation on the basis of gender in the workplace and the evolution of the position of women in India. It will also examine the various issues related to women's education in India.

This book has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary and Key Terms further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

UNIT 1 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, women across societies were mostly confined to the home, household work and taking care of the family. They did not have the right to vote, the right to property and were systematically discriminated against in society. In response to social, political and economic injustices, the women's movement emerged in the late 19th century. At first, the women's movement focused on providing voting and property rights for women. It has since then expanded to encompass issues of sexuality, family, male privilege, equal pay, reproductive rights and so on.

Due to the work of women's movements in the 20th century, women today have been able to penetrate almost all spheres of activity and figure prominently in all walks of life, be it education, health, politics, science, social work, or law. However, many challenges remain. With women increasingly asserting themselves in the public sphere, the patriarchal hold of society has been shaken considerably. This has led to a dramatic increase in violence against women in India. The challenges that the women's movement faces in India in the 21st century is how to counter this reactionary patriarchal response. The recent protests, both by men and women, in reaction to the gruesome incidents of violence against women in our cities has shown that women's issues today are very much part of the mainstream. This is largely due to the hard work and dedication of women's activists and the influence that women's movements have had in Indian society in the previous century. You will study about these movements in detail in the unit. In addition to that, this unit will also talk about the concept of women's empowerment.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of women's empowerment
- Describe the various women's movements in India
- Examine the global gender gaps

1.2 CONCEPT OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment is the most vital system to strengthen the future of women in India. It is a systematic approach which needs to develop more seriously in India. Empowering women has been found to be the most successful in actually changing systems of bias against women, and thus will effect long-term changes. The Government of India came up in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as 'Women's Empowerment Year' to focus on a vision 'where women are equal partners like men.' India's previous president Pratibha Patil had stated that gender equality and empowerment of women are the most critical points and gender equality is not an agenda of women versus men—rather men should be partners in the empowerment of women.

Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action and control work in an autonomous way and take control of one's own destiny. It includes both control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (belief, values and attitudes) (Batliwala, 1994). Empowerment implies expansion of assets and capabilities of people to influence control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (World Bank Resource Book). Empowerment can be viewed as a means of creating a social environment in which one can take decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens one's innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge power and experience. One of the definitions of empowerment terms it a process of awareness and awakening the consciousness, of capacity development unfolding increased contribution, effectual authority to take decisions and execute the power and control leading to transformative action. This involves the ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. The connection between women and power is influenced by various factors at multiple levels; family, community, market and the State. Significantly, at the psychological level it involves women's ability to assert themselves and this is constructed by the gender roles assigned to her especially in a culture which resists change.

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives, communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Empowerment occurs within sociological, psychological, economic spheres and at various levels, such as individual, group, and community and challenges our assumptions about status quo, asymmetrical power relationship in decision-making, personal and social rights, access to resources and entitlement,

and social dynamics. Empowering women focuses the spotlight on education and employment that are essential to sustainable development.

Women empowerment generally has five components: firstly, women's sense of self-worth; secondly, their right to have the power of control their own lives, thirdly , within home; fourthly**,** outside home; and lastly, their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a just social and economic order nationally, internationally, and universally.

The doubts pertaining to women's empowerment and the state and position of women have now become crucial for human rights-based approaches to development. The Cairo conference in 1994 held by UN on Population and Development emphasized more focus towards women's empowerment as the core issue and UNDP developed Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) which were directed at the three variables that are indicators of women's role in society— political power or decision-making, literacy and health. This process has been further accelerated with some sections of women becoming increasingly self-conscious of their discrimination in several areas of family and public life. They are also in a position to mobilize themselves on issues that can affect their overall position. Empowerment would become more relevant if women are educated, better informed and can take rational decisions. A woman needs to be physically healthy so that she is able to take challenges of equality.

In 1995, the Beijing conference on women acknowledged certain quantitative and qualitative indicators of women empowerment. These are as follows:

Qualitative Indicators

1. Boost in self-esteem and self-confidence

2. Increase in communication, knowledge, and awareness on health, nutrition reproductive rights, law and literacy

3. Increase or decrease in free time and time for child care

4. Increase or decrease of workloads in new programmes

5. Change in roles and responsibility in family and community

6. Visible increase in decrease in violence on women and girls

7. Responses to changes in social customs like sati, dowry, child marriage and so on

8. Noticeable changes in women's participation in meetings

9. Increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective

10. Increase access to and ability to gather information

11. Formation of women collectives

12. Positive changes in social attitudes

13. Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household

14. Women's decision-making over her work and income

Quantitative Indicators

(i) Demographic trends
   (a) Maternal mortality rate
   (b) Fertility rate
   (c) Sex ratio
   (d) Life expectancy at birth
   (e) Average age of marriage

(ii) Number of women participating in different development programmers

(iii) Greater access and control over community resources/government schemes-crèche, credit cooperative, non-formal education

(iv) Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level

(v) Change in literacy and enrolment levels

(vi) Participation levels of women in political process.

Women Empowerment through Education

Educational attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women. Women empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at Nairobi in 1985. Education is the milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, confront their traditional role, and change their life. India can hope to be a developed country only when the women of the nation have become empowered. India currently accounts for the largest number of illiterates in the world. Literacy rate in India has risen sharply from 18.3 per cent in 1951 to 74 per cent in 2011 in which enrolment of women in education has also risen sharply from 7 per cent to 65 per cent approximately.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan, and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978) onwards there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was established by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of *panchayats* and municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level.

Women's education is extremely important since it is a human right and is required for the flourishing of many of their capacities. Education helps women to highlight their ability to contribute to all activities and enter new opportunities. These educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Investing in girls' education helps to have smaller and healthier families. Education also helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. Other than educational and economic empowerment, there is a need for changes in women's mobility and social interaction and changes in intra-household decision-making. However, most programmes for education of girls and women in India have reinforced gender roles specially motherhood in curriculum as well as impact on evaluation.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment of women is one of the most vital conditions for the upliftment of women's social status. Unless women become economically independent or make nearly equal economic contribution to the family for its sustenance, they cannot be equal to men in the decision-making process. The problem of gender-based discriminations or subordination of women is very much rooted in the economic dependence of men. Economically empowering women is critical for a nation to achieve high rates of growth. Empowering women economically increases their capabilities to change society for the better.

Nowadays, women are emerging as leaders in the fields of business, medicine, education, law, politics, and so on. In India, the women's empowerment process has already begun. More and more girls are being enrolled in school, colleges and high educational institutions. As a result of globalization and the prevalence of information technology, women have been able to forge new grounds in entrepreneurship. This is especially true for upper class households in urban areas.

The *Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative* launched by the President of Wal-Mart is setting objectives and taking practical steps to help alter the conditions of women by 2016. Some of the steps that the initiative has outlined include:

- Increase Sourcing from Women-Owned Businesses;
- Empower Nearly 1 Million Women Through Training; and
- Promote Diversity and Inclusion Representation within Our Merchandising and Professional Services Suppliers.

Political Empowerment

The participation of women in the political process is a major measure of empowering women. The Indian Constitution since its inception has been committed to introducing socio-economic and political transformation. It has been amended a number of times to legalize initiatives for the protection of women and marginalized communities. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts especially provide for an opportunity for women's entry into political spheres. These amendments give 33 per cent reservation for women in local bodies so as to involve women in the political

process right from the grassroots. In most places the amendments have been extremely successful especially Kerala, Manipur and West Bengal.

The amendments have enabled women to enter Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) as members, Sarpanch, Block and Zilla Panchayat Adhyakshas. This has led to the erosion of traditional gender, caste, class roles, and hierarchy, but there is still a long way to go. Women in these institutions have to fight for their right to be more than proxy members for their husbands. Moreover, the low self-esteem that women have within their own households makes it extremely difficult for them to emerge in leadership roles in local political institutions.

Experience over the last decade has shown that women who have gained access to the *panchayats* and municipalities have performed well. Some of them have already established excellent records of service and have even won distinguished awards for their performance. Being mostly illiterate, a large number of them have placed a high priority on acquiring literacy to be able to perform better at their jobs. Substantial numbers of teachers, lawyers, and other functionaries at the grass-root level have been able to win elections and become members of the *panchayats*.

As a result of the constitutional amendments, the percentage of political participation of women at various levels of political activity has dramatically increased from 4–5 per cent to about 25–40 per cent. The difference has not only been quantitative, but qualitative as well as these women have brought with them their experience in the governance of civic society. The most important impact of these constitutional amendments has been seen in the emergence of women power in states that were considered extremely 'backward' in its treatment of women such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and so on.

Empowerment of Poor Women

Women have been the vulnerable section of society and constitute a sizeable segment of the poverty-struck population. Women face gender-specific barriers to access education, health, empowerment, and so on. Micro-finance focusses on women underneath the poverty line. Micro-loans are given entirely to this class of women. There are numerous causes for this: Poor women are the most socially and economically disadvantage group who lack resources and access to education, both of which pre-requisites to bring people out of poverty. This problem is heightened in developing countries like India, in spite of the fact that women's labour is a vital component of the economy. This is because of the low social status and lack of access to critical sources. It has been found that if loans are given to women, the chances of the benefits being spread out are greater.

Since the empowerment of women is vital for the socio-economic development of a society, governments focus on bringing women into the mainstream of national development. In India, the Ministry of Rural Development has particular sections for women in its programmes. Funds are assigned as 'women's component' to make sure that there is sufficient resources for the same.

1.2.1 Women's Empowerment in Today's World

An NEHS survey on around 40,000 married women across the country found out that:

- Less than half the respondents were employed.
- Of them, only 64% were paid in cash, compared to 92% men.
- 11 % women were paid in kind. 25% were not paid at all.
- The number of women earning in cash is highest in Delhi (95%) and lowest in Himachal (33%).
- Less than 25% were able to decide on their own about how to spend the salary.
- 57% make this decision jointly with their husbands.
- 10% could not even take decisions about visiting family and friends.
- 25% had no say on the issues related to health.

Naina Lai Kidwai, MD, HSBC India; Lalita Gupte, COO, ICICI; Pragya Raman, Group Executive President of Aditya Birla Group; these are just a handful of women who have taken on the world. But their road to success was not lined with roses. They had had to work doubly hard to prove their worth and also be the best in their field. They also have had to battle male resistance. In that sense, it is a double victory for women.

The change is happening surely, but slowly. According to a Confederation of India Industry (CII) study of 149 companies in India, *Understanding the levels of women empowerment in the workplace,* while there is a healthy ratio (16%) of women managers in junior levels, they make up only 4% of senior managerial posts. Further, only 1% of the organizations have women CEOs. The study says that though there are more working women in south India, only 5% of the senior management posts are held by them. The north zone has the lowest ratio of women managers, while the west has the highest percentage (4%) of women CEOs (Table 1.1).

Now there is a perceptible reversal of roles. A decade ago, there were hardly two women managers in Samsung India's corporate office. Today there are women heading the marketing team and as managers of R&D, HR, etc. In the next 5 years, many more women will take up the top positions.

Today it's a reality that effective leaders need not sport the stereotype male style. Leaders of today are more expressive and do not completely rely on authority alone. In the words of the management guru Tom Peters, 'they listen, motivate, support. In other words, the Venus style of leadership is in'

Table 1.1 **Women on Board Number of Women Among Total Number of Managers Surveyed**

Junior	Middle	Senior
45 (280)	5(121)	2(47)
Women Managers Across Regions (In %)		
Junior	Middle	Senior
North: 6	North: 5	North: 1
East: 9	East: 4	East: 4
West: 7	West: 4	West: 4
South: 30	South: 4	South: 5

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Name the five components of women empowerment.
2. Define empowerment.

1.3 GLOBAL GENDER GAPS

The 2011 Census found that India had a female population of 586 million approximately, compared to 623 million men. Thus, India accounts for about 15 per cent of population of women in the world characterized by vast regional differences and a variety of cultures. However, social discrimination and economic deprivation on the basis of gender is common to all, irrespective of religion, caste, community, and state. Thus, it can be said that a huge gender gap exists in India. Briefly, gender gap is defined as the discrepancy in opportunities, status, attitudes, and so on, between men and women in a society.

In India, the empowerment of women, gender discrimination, and violence against women, which have become serious subjects of sociological research in contemporary times, was hitherto neglected. While contemporary social changes have exposed women to unprotected socio-economic, cultural and political environment, there are no corresponding protective social systems and institutions of social justice to safeguard their interests. There are many who are sceptical about women's ability to exercise equal rights with men and about their capacity to play an equal role with men. But such apprehensions are ill-founded in the context of the broader opportunities available for women following mechanization of industry and agriculture, enabling women to compete with men successfully. Innovations in science and technology have removed the disparity between men and women attributed to physical strength alone. Women are able to handle modern appliances that require intelligence and training and not merely physical strength. Thus, India has now several women working as pilots, driving locomotives, buses, tractors and machinery in workshops. Gender as a maternal factor in the area of legal rights has practically disappeared. It is not therefore fair to relegate women as a group to an inferior position in society. The Constitution does not regard gender as a permitted classification and prohibits gender as a basis of differential treatment in all areas of legal rights.

Modernity has resulted in a growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. The earlier conception that man was the provider of basic necessities for family and women the child bearer and caretaker of home is no longer valid in the changing social structure and economic compulsions.

In spite of the progress made in improving the status of women, rural women and those belonging to the Dalit, Tribal and nomadic communities remain unaffected. So is the case with Muslim women among the minorities. The latter are far from realizing their basic rights. For instance, the low level of political participation of Muslim women in India is not only a consequence of the lack of resources, but also the result of the status of Muslim women in the community. Since women in India have little place in the public arena they also express less faith in the political process. In spite of the UN Charter of Human Rights and the provisions of the Indian Constitution, women continue to be victims of exploitation. The view that the future generation of a family is carried on and preserved by boys only has degraded the position of women in society. If careful attention is not paid and major steps are not taken, the situation will become extremely critical.

Therefore, any attempt to assess the status and problem of women in a society should start from the social framework. Social structure, cultural norms, and value systems are crucial determinants of women's role and their position in society. With respect to the status there is a gap between the theoretical possibilities and their actual realization.

Gender Discrimination in India

Gender discrimination is not biological but rather socially determined. This discrimination can be reduced through the consistent efforts of social organizations, women's movements as well as the media. In fact, the media has been playing a great role in highlighting the issue of gender discrimination. There are many television programs today that are women's issue specific. Newspapers and television news channels are also rife with stories on dowry deaths, domestic violence and honour killings. These help in keeping the issue in the minds of the public. However, in spite of all this, women face all sorts of discrimination in India. They are as follows:

(a) **Foeticide:** Female foeticide is the act of destroying or aborting the growth of a female foetus. This problem has been specific to the Indian context ever since one can remember. Sex selective abortion or foetal sex discrimination by medical professionals has grown to become a booming underground industry in India. Female foeticide is another way of discriminating between the two sexes, which has led to the abortion of an estimated number of over ten million female foetuses. The process began simultaneously with the growing use and popularity of ultrasound techniques. While the ultrasound was designed to check the health of the foetus, it inadvertently became the instrument through which female foetuses were detected and aborted. Initially, the government in a desperate attempt to curb India's growing population supported this. However, in 1994, the government passed the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) which declared sex-selective abortion illegal. It was modified almost a decade later in 2003 holding medical

professionals legally responsible. It is because of the prevalence of this abhorrent practice that according the 2011Census the sex ratio in India is only 940 females per thousand males.

(b) Eve-teasing: What is known as 'eve-teasing' is the most common manifestation of sexual aggression directed at women in India. It is the making of inappropriate remarks or gestures by a man or several men to a woman or several women in a public place. It is a form of aggression that ranges in severity from sexually suggestive remarks to brushing in public places. By and large, it is a problem related to delinquency in youth, but in no way is it restricted to it. Eve-teasing, unfortunately is encountered in almost every place and is perhaps the most widespread form of sexual harassment.

(c) Sexual Harassment: Deemed as a form of minor rape, sexual harassment is very difficult to prove in the court of law. Offenders usually disguise harassment in ways that are not easy to detect or prove. However, the law sees this as a punishable offence and describes it as teasing, varying in degree and nature. Often strangers are the perpetrators of teasing and harassment. They prowl public places and remain discreet in their intentions. The criminal objective in this case is to leverage the nuanced anonymity of the crowd in order to fulfil their motives. The fact that harassment takes place in public places is the most important factor that helps offenders to escape punishment.

(d) Rape: This is the most violent form of sexual aggression directed at women. Rape is the abduction of a woman for the purpose of having sexual intercourse with her against her will. In recent years, many Indian cities have rapidly shown increases in cases of rape as compared to other nations. The law sees this as a gruesome act of violation which negates the fundamental concept of equality and right to liberty as stated in the Constitution. Several sociologists and psychologists have stressed the devastating consequences of rape.

(e) Discrimination in food: The researchers Kalyani Menon Sen and A.K. Shivakumar (2001) found that girls in India faced prejudice in many ways— lesser amount of breastfed milk, less of nurturing and play, minimal care or medical facilities in case of sickness, minimal provision of 'special' food, and minimal parental attention. Consequently, girls are much more vulnerable to ailments and infections as compared to boys, resulting in poor health and a shorter life span. It is this life-long injustice in bringing up and care that is the actual reason for death of girls—less obvious and understated, but as equally fatal as female foeticide and infanticide.

(f) Denial of education: In downtrodden families, girls are not allowed to attend school. There are two reasons underlying this. One, if they go to school, there is no one to take care of their siblings. They are the working hands of their family. The other, they do not have adequate resources to educate their girl child. Instead of spending the money on their education, they prefer accumulating it for the daughter's marriage.

(g) Child marriage: Marriage is one of the basic institutions of Indian social life. A strong normative structure has developed around the institution which

governs the various practices and behaviours associated with it. Early marriage is defined as a marriage in which the bride is below 18 years of age and the groom is below 21 years of age. Girls who bear children before their adolescent growth is complete remain physically underdeveloped throughout their lives and have greater risk of complications of pregnancy and maternal death. To reduce the incidence of child marriage, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 was passed and amended in 1979, 2006, and 2008.

A premature marriage denies a girl all her rights of freedom and individuality. The law of age of consent abolishing marriage below 12 years of age is being violated in a large number of marriages in rural society even today. Once a woman is married, her freedom seems to be confiscated and her position as a wife and daughter-in-law is one of total subordination. Dube (1955) refers to this situation and writes that according to the traditional norms of the society a husband is expected to be an authoritarian figure whose will always dominate the domestic scene. The husband is superior, the wife is his subordinate. Although the perspective in position has undergone some change, the situation continues to be problematic. The society is not providing congenial condition as yet for women's emancipation.

(h) **Dowry:** The tradition of dowry deaths is illegal in India but unfortunately is still widely practiced. According to statistics, every year, nearly 5000 women on average suffer injuries and death due to the practice of dowry. The real figure could be higher since many dowry deaths are not reported as dowry. Rates of dowry deaths are higher among the poor and the lower castes.

Gender inequality is therefore a form of inequality which is distinct from other forms of economic and social inequalities and stems from pre-existing gendered social norms and social perceptions. Gender inequity has an adverse impact on development goals as it reduces economic growth. It hampers the overall well-being because blocking women from participation in social, political and economic activities can adversely affect the entire society.

Causes of Gender Discrimination

The causes of gender discrimination in India are as follows:

- **Educational backwardness:** The author Sonalde Desai observed that parents' unwillingness to educate daughters has its origins in the status of women. Parents have numerous reasons for not investing in their daughter's education. The main reason is that parents feel that educating girls brings in no returns and has no bearing to their future roles as housewives or perhaps agricultural labourers.

- **Caste system:** Despite the fact that casteism became illegal in 1947, the caste system is widely practiced in rural and also some pockets of urban India. Dalit communities, schedule castes (15 per cent of the population) and schedule tribes (7 per cent) account for the largest lower-caste groups in India. Studies have shown that even today poverty rates amongst these groups are the highest in the country. It would be worth noting the position of women

among these communities. Dalit communities have only slightly lower Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) for girls than the national population, and there is only an insignificant gap between GERs for boys and girls, unlike other so called upper caste where the gap is wide. Women among the lower caste also have higher labour force participation rates, and are thus less likely to be involved exclusively in domestic duties, though their employment is concentrated in mostly the organized casual labour sector.

- **Religious beliefs:** There are about 80 per cent Hindus, 12 per cent Muslims around 3 per cent Christians and 2 per cent Sikhs in India. For all Indians, religion is a vital part aspect of society. Women are specifically affected by religion since they are seen as repositories of religious traditions. Many restrictions are also put on them in the name of religion. Comprehending the role of women in religious communities is critical to both understanding the causal agents of their social and economic status and to design programs and policies to address their needs. According to author Anna-Maria Lind, India's population still leads traditional lives in rural areas. Religious laws and traditions still decide the lives of many people especially women. Even if women are permitted to own land and resources, the social and religious factors in society make many women abstain from this right in order not to cause disruptions in the family. The partiality for bearing sons is prevalent in all classes and communities in India, which establishes the standards for girls and women throughout their lives.

1.3.1 Gender Gaps in Workplace

In the workplace, gender gaps refer to job opportunities and salary differences. Statistics show that men often earn more for the same work than women. The difference may be a result of the fact that men have been at the top of their professions longer.

Work participation is a critical indicator of one's status in society. Women's work participation has been affected by various social and economic factors and traditional role expectations like inequalities in employment, wage gap between women and men, the lack of childcare facilities and so on. Moreover, a considerable amount of their work has remained invisible and unrecognized.

A vital part of women's work is not just unpaid, it is also socially unrecognised. This is true of not just social reproduction, but other economic activity where women's work is rendered invisible by social perceptions. It is because of these reasons why scholars look at the rate of women's work participation as an indicator of women's status in society.

Nature, Range and Patterns of Women's Work

Many anthropologists and historians have stated that women, throughout human history, have been the major producers of food, textiles and handicrafts. Even today, women continue to provide a significant labour input where production is still in the small scale subsistence sector. Trying to determine the nature, scope and magnitude

of women's work is a challenging task since a majority of the work that females do is either invisible or does not register in the data on work participation. The type of work that women do is dependent on the position of the woman in society as well as the family's location in the social hierarchy.

The different types of work that women do encompasses:

- Household work;
- Paid and unpaid work related to home-based craft activities;
- Family enterprise or business and paid work outside home.

The essential aspects of the work done by women within a household are related to gender based division of labour. What constitutes as 'housework' depends on age, gender, income, location and size of the family.

Production and Reproduction

In the early years of economics as a field of study, theorists recognized the central confluences of the human economy: the nexus between production and reproduction. For example, theorists like Malthus discussed the relationship between agricultural growth and human population. However, as time went on, reproduction was squeezed out of economic analysis and theory. Reproductive labour means child care, marital sex and household work like cooking. The feminist scholar Nancy Folbre has argued that the lack of sexual freedoms and economic rights for women resulted in reproductive labour fading away from economic theorizing. However, the problem of ignoring reproductive labour because it is not monetized is not the only reason why there must be a renewed emphasis on reproductive labour. One must reinstate the importance of reproductive work since it is a critical aspect in moving towards gender equality in the economic domain.

Throughout human history, women have been systematically excluded from the entire realm of wealth generation, not only wage work but also property and investment. Women, thus, have been fundamentally unmonetized. It is this condition that has made women vulnerable and dependent on men and has resulted in women being forced to face the worst sort of abusive situations in their households because they do not have their independent means of earning a living. In addition, even today, many traditional societies share the belief that women are only good for 'raising families'. This has led to many families failing to invest in the education of their daughters. If a women cannot earn her way, because of social constraints and the failure to give her skills, there is nothing else for which she would be fit for except for marriage or domestic servitude.

It is clear then that the requirement that women stay in place, doing reproductive work, rather than go out, to seek access to production in all its forms, has a wide range of effects beyond merely denying women a pay-check. The insistence on constraining women to reproduction–and excluding them from production–directly feeds domestic violence and slavery, as well as many other human tragedies. This practice is the centre of a system that perpetuates gender inequality all over the world.

Household Work

Economic theory differentiates between production for the market and production for self-consumption; it is only the former that is counted as work. Women typically carry out most of the work involved in caring for the home and its residents, such work is given little or no social or economic importance, and as a result, women are perceived with little importance. Much of the unpaid work that women do in household industries and agricultural processing is not recognized as work. Moreover, poor women in rural households engage in all sorts of activities including cooking, child care, fetching wood and water, caring for livestock, and so on. Since this work is unpaid, it is not considered 'productive' work because it is meant for self-consumption. The conventional definition of 'work' does not include activities which are of use-value and do not have exchange-value. In the agricultural sector, small and marginal farmer households utilise family labour as they cannot hire labour like big landlords. In other rural sectors like handicrafts, handloom weaving, pottery, animal husbandry, poultry, food preservation and processing, and so on, a huge percentage of women work from their homes, yet she is not accorded the status of a worker. This non-valuation of women's unpaid work within her household does not recognize the importance of women's economic role. According to an article in the *Economic Times* published by Rajeev Jayaswal titled *Government to quantify household works done by women in India*, 'The government is considering quantifying values silently created by women in India and devise strategies to empower them'. According to the Minister for Women and Child Development Krishna Tirath, a large part of the male dominated patriarchical society undervalued the contribution of women's labour in the household, even though immense and very labourious work is done by women in both rural and urban areas, which helped in enhancing productivity of the men in the household too. There is a need to recognize this 'invisible' work and value it. The valuation of such unpaid and unrecognized labour which eventually contributes to economy and human capital is very essential.

Invisible Work

As you know, there is a basic difference between the work done by men and women in all parts of the world, irrespective of the levels of growth and development in different countries. These differences have been to a certain extent based on biological differences, but reinforced by sociocultural and economic factors (Cultural and traditional employment patterns, patriarchy system, child care) that have shaped gender characteristics, roles and activities. In most developing and underdeveloped countries, and to a certain extent even in developed countries, it is the men who are the breadwinners and earners of income. Women, on the other hand, have a many responsibilities—reproduction, childrearing and household welfare activities, housework or productive work and community management. In many developing countries, women's work is essentially based on women's need to perform socially and culturally defined roles.

The status of women is affected by the kind of work they do. In general, work in the economic sense refers to paid employment. Since most of the work done by women till recently, and even today, constitutes housework, it has always

been taken for granted and not given due recognition. In most cases, women spend most of their productive hours immersed in household chores, work which is neither recognized nor economically remunerated. The question of women's unpaid work at home has gained prominence over the last four or five decades, and has caught the attention of many scholars and intellectuals, who have tried to find reasons for the continuous reinforcement of this status quo. One of the explanations given for this continuation of the role of the woman as a homemaker toiling endlessly over household chores is the economic function of the woman as a breeder-feeder, i.e., as a bearer and nurturer of children. In this role, women are seen as instrumental in the reproduction and servicing of the workforce. Marxists believe that women's unpaid work subsidizes all types of economic systems, especially capitalism. According to them, housewives, with their work, actually subsidize capitalism, which could never have survived without the unpaid services of the wife as a breeder-feeder. Even if women's services at home are invisible, they are absolutely essential for the continuation of the family as well as society. It is difficult to produce credible numbers for the value of women's work in the home; one has to see how many hours women spend performing housework. The hours are considerable in both developing and industrialized economies. It is very difficult to assess and conclude as to what value should be placed on that work, and what would constitute proper or fair remuneration or wages for housework. Economists with a feminist slant have tried to find a way to give value to housework invisible work. One of the approaches found is favoured by the United Nations' International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). According to this approach, the market value of work done inside a household is based upon on the value of market goods and services that are comparable to those produced in the household. These result based assessments estimate that counting unpaid household production would add 30-60 per cent to the gross domestic product of industrialized western nations. The percentage would be far higher for developing nations.

A second approach of evaluating household invisible work examines the inputs of household production, i.e, the labour that goes into cooking, cleaning, childcare, and so on. Those employing this approach use the following methods:

- Basing their calculations on opportunity costs, that is, the wages women might have earned if they had worked a comparable number of hours outside the home.
- Basing calculations on what it would cost to employ someone to do the work, either a general labourer such as a domestic servant or a specialist such as a chef, and then allocate those wages to household labour. This method has found to be the most reasonable way of estimating unpaid invisible work within the household.

Recognizing the worth of unpaid household labour significantly changes the awareness about women's economic contribution to the society. If household production had been integrated in the system of macro-economic accounts, governments may well have instituted quite different development policies and programmes, and given due recognition and importance to the unrecognized women's work.

The undervaluing of 'so-called women's work' is a very important issue. Most certainly, there is work done in the home in the sense of expending energy for tasks such as cleaning, cooking, child rearing and more. To the extent that this burden falls on the woman worker already employed outside of the home, it is an onerous burden. However, there seems to be no escape for women from the harsh reality—that women have to do most of the housework, irrespective of whether they go out for work or not.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. Define gender gaps in the workplace.
4. What are the different types of work that women do?

1.4 WOMEN'S RIGHTS

> All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.
>
> *- Swami Vivekananda*

Women's Rights; International Perspectives

Women have been discriminated since times immemorial. Owing to patriarchal structures and other cultural factors, the women have suffered centuries of discrimination and denial of equality and continue to do so even today. This has led to their subjugation in almost all spheres of human activity resulting in their poor status and self-esteem. The consequent low social, economic and political status of women is a matter of serious concern. Though some improvements were registered in the 20th Century, many significant challenges still persist in areas relating to, among others, education, equality, health, safety and security and reproductive rights.

The Preamble to the United Nations (UN) charter reaffirms, faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. Article 1 of UN charter, which deals with the purposes of the United Nations, proclaims that one of the purposes of the UN is to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to, among other grounds, sex. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) asserts that all human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and rights. There is a further reaffirmation of gender equality in Article 2 of UDHR.

Article 2 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 guarantee the rights set forth in respective conventions i.e., civil, political as well as economic, social and cultural rights to all persons without distinction of

any kind including those based on sex. This is further reinforced by Article 3 of ICCPR and ICESCR which require States to ensure that women and men have equal right to the enjoyment of all the rights these covenants establish.

In response to demands, the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations played a role in the drafting and adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952, Convention on the Nationality of Married Women 1957, Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages 1962. It was soon realized that this narrow sectorial or fragmented approach will not do. Thus, a need for a comprehensive international convention on women's rights was keenly felt. The legal codification of women's rights led to the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1967 and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict 1974. This legal codification eventually paved the way for the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979. After ratification by a minimum number of countries, CEDAW entered into force on 3 September 1981. Today, 186 countries are party to CEDAW.

It is the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, establishing legally binding obligations to end discrimination. It states that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women. India ratified CEDAW on 9 July 1993.

Consisting of a Preamble and 30 Articles, CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. States parties have the threefold obligation to respect, protect and fulfil women's human rights. To *respect*, the State must abstain from any conduct or activity of its own that violates human rights. To *protect*, the State must prevent violations by non-State actors, including individuals, groups, institutions and corporations. And to *fulfil*, the State must take whatever measures are needed to move towards the full realization of women's human rights.

CEDAW spells out the meaning of equality and how it can be achieved. In so doing, it establishes not only an International Bill of Rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. In its preamble, the Convention explicitly acknowledges that extensive discrimination against women continues to exist, and emphasizes that such discrimination violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity.

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- To incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- To establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- To ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

Definition of Gender Discrimination

Article 1 of CEDAW defines gender discrimination as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Article 3 of the Convention gives positive affirmation to the principle of equality by requiring States Parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

The agenda for equality is specified in fourteen subsequent Articles. In its approach, the Convention covers three dimensions of the situation of women. Civil rights and the legal status of women are dealt with in great detail. In addition, and unlike other human rights treaties, the Convention is also concerned with the dimension of human reproduction as well as with the impact of cultural factors on gender relations.

The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life including the right to vote and to stand for election as well as education, health and employment. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Under Article 7 of CEDAW, women are guaranteed the rights to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions. Article 8 asserts that this includes equal rights for women to represent their countries at the international level. The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women - adopted in 1957 - is integrated under Article 9 providing for the Statehood of women, irrespective of their marital status. The Convention, thereby, draws attention to the fact that often women's legal status has been linked to marriage, making them dependent on their husband's nationality rather than individuals in their own right. Articles 10, 11 and 13, respectively, affirm women's rights to non-discrimination in education, employment and economic and social activities.

These demands are given special emphasis with regard to the situation of rural women, whose particular struggles and vital economic contributions, as noted in Article 14, warrant more attention in policy planning. Article 15 asserts the full equality of women in civil and business matters, demanding that, all instruments directed at restricting women's legal capacity shall be deemed null and void. In Article 16, the Convention returns to the issue of marriage and family relations, asserting the equal rights and obligations of women and men with regard to choice of spouse, parenthood, personal rights and command over property.

Reproductive Rights

The Preamble of CEDAW sets the tone by stating that, the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination. The link between discrimination and women's reproductive role is a matter of recurrent concern in the convention.

For example, it advocates, in Article 5, a proper understanding of maternity as a social function, demanding fully shared responsibility for child-rearing by both sexes.

Accordingly, provisions for maternity protection and child-care are proclaimed as essential rights and are incorporated into all areas of the Convention, whether dealing with employment, family law, health care or education.

Society's obligation extends to offering social services, especially child-care facilities that allow individuals to combine family responsibilities with work and participation in public life. Special measures for maternity protection are recommended and shall not be considered discriminatory.

(Article 4). The Convention also affirms women's right to reproductive choice. Notably, it is the only human rights treaty to mention family planning. States parties are obliged to include advice on family planning in the education process (Article 10.h) and to develop family codes that guarantee women's rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights (Article 16.e).

The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.

The third general thrust of the Convention aims at enlarging our understanding of the concept of human rights, as it gives formal recognition to the influence of culture and tradition on restricting women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights. These forces take shape in stereotypes, customs and norms which give rise to the multitude of legal, political and economic constraints on the advancement of women. Noting this interrelationship, the preamble of the Convention stresses that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality of men and women.

States parties are therefore obliged to work towards the modification of social and cultural patterns of individual conduct in order to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women (Article 5). And Article 10.c. mandates the revision of textbooks, school programmes and teaching methods with a view to eliminating stereotyped concepts in the field of education. Finally, cultural patterns which define the public realm as a man's world and the domestic sphere as women's domain are strongly targeted in all of the Convention's provisions that affirm the equal responsibilities of both sexes in family life and their equal rights with regard to education and employment. Altogether, the Convention provides a comprehensive framework for challenging the various forces that have created and sustained discrimination based upon sex.

Monitoring CEDAW

The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committee's mandate and the administration of the treaty are defined in the Articles 17 to 30 of the Convention. The committee is composed of 23 experts nominated by their Governments and elected by the States parties as individuals of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention.

At least every four years, the States parties are expected to submit a national report to the committee, indicating the measures they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. During its annual session, the committee members discuss these reports with the Government representatives and explore with them areas for further action by the specific country. The committee also makes general recommendations to the States parties on matters concerning the elimination of discrimination against women. As of January 2004, committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had adopted 25 general recommendations. Those adopted during the committee's first ten years were short and modest, addressing such issues as the content of reports, reservations to the convention and resources. The committee clarified the state parties obligations, among others, on issues such as violence against women, equal remuneration for work of equal value, women and AIDS, measurement and quantification of the unremunerated domestic activities of women and their recognition in the GNP, disabled women, equality in marriage and family relations and women and health.

The optional protocol to CEDAW adopted in 1999 seeks to allow individuals, or groups of individuals, who have exhausted national remedies to petition the committee directly about alleged violations of the convention by their governments. The optional protocol also permits the committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the convention in countries that are parties to the convention and to the optional protocol. These procedures are optional and are only available where the State concerned has accepted them. India has not become a party to the optional protocol to CEDAW.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5. What is the full form of CEDWA?
6. How many countries are party to CEDAW?

1.5 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

According to the American sociologist Herbert Blumer, social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They are usually formed during conditions of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and, on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living.

Social movements are something that people form to demand social change. Sociological definitions of movements stress qualities such as collective and innovative behaviour, the shifting and fluid boundaries of movement membership, and the willingness of members to disrupt order. Social movements are generally seen as a phenomena of the modern era and industrialized society, whether located in the 'First' world or not. Industrialization and urbanization, technological advancements and the deepening of democracy have allowed people to collectively push for change and question the legitimacy of the existing order.

The authors Gerlach and Hine have discussed five factors, which they believe are operationally significant and become the basis of a true social movement. These five factors are as follows:

(a) A social movement involves a group comprising of different individuals who are segmented on the basis of personal, structural or ideological ties.

(b) The group includes individuals committed to the cause, who use their pre-existing social relationships to convince others to join the movement.

(c) A social movement involves a separation from the established order. The effort of those belonging to a social movement brings forth a new set of values and induces changed patterns of behaviour in individuals.

(d) The result is the emergence of an ideology, which codifies values and goals, and provides a conceptual framework by which goals may be interpreted. The ideology also provides a basis for the unification of a segmented network of individuals.

(e) The opposition from a society at large, or from that segment of the established order within which the movement has arisen, is also an important aspect of any social movement. In fact, it is this opposition that unifies the varying segments involved in a social movement.

A social movement arises when there emerges an issue or a set of issues that affect a significant proportion of people in some way or the other. Gradually, these issues start gaining importance, and result in mass participation of people and in collective action. According to Smelser, 'Collective movements refer to collective efforts to modify norms and values, which frequently (but not always) develop over longer period of time'. There are significant differences between collective action and movements. Forms of collective action such as riots, revolts and revolution involve violent group outbursts. Some collective actions (crowds and riots) are generally unstructured and short-lived, whereas rebellion, revolution and movements are more structured. All social movements are collective actions, but all collective actions need not necessarily be social movements. A social movement may lead to, or transform itself into a revolution. A social movement may or may not be a mobilization of people against the state or system of governance, and may or may not involve violence. They generally mobilize members or participants to seek redressal of a grievance or to struggle for specific goals and objectives. They frequently involve only sections of a population, and manifest themselves only in a part of society.

Throughout the past century, the various women's movements that have emerged around the world can be said to be social movements.

Women's Movements

The term 'women's movement' does not refer to any one, single, unified movement or entity. It is made of several movements based on a wide range of issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, all of which fall under the label of feminism. One uses the term 'women's movement' for all these movements in recognition of the fact that all of them been working in some way or the other towards the emancipation of women. These movements aim at reformulation of public life, the educational sphere, the workplace and the home—in short, they aim at a total transformation of society. Women's movements thus try to deal with a set of problems and needs specific to women. These needs or problems arise due to a sociocultural system that categorically puts them at a disadvantage in comparison to men.

The movement began in the western world in the late 19th century and has gone through three waves. The 'firstwave' of the women's movement was tilted towards the status of middle or upper class white women and involved voting rights, political equality and emphasized women's education. The 'second wave' of the women's movement began in the 1960s and attempted to further combat social and cultural inequalities. While the first wave feminists focused mainly on suffrage and passing legislations to promote gender equality, the second wave feminists expanded the debate to include issues such as sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, and so on. The 'third wave' of the women's movement began in the 1990s and continues to the present. It seeks to challenge the supposed 'essentialist definitions of femininity' of the second wave feminists, which often assumed a universal female identity that over-emphasized the experiences of upper class women in the western world. The third wave feminists also believe that there needs to be further changes in stereotypes of women and in the media portrayals of women as well as in the language that has been used to define women.

According to Rajendra Singh, any theoretical perspective for studying women's movements and their strategy should include the following propositions:

- In general, resistance and protests against unjust structures of power and the institutions of patriarchy and patriarchal oppression on women begin with the oppressions themselves. These oppressions are ever-present and ubiquitous (widespread).
- Conscious rejection of injustice and resistance to the practices of oppression generally pass through phases of open manifestation of resistance and latent phases (when overt resistance is not visible). These phases depend upon the historical experiences of societies.
- These forms of resistance—manifest and latent—determine the methods, strategies and techniques adopted by women to fight for their identity, dignity, self-defence and social justice. Sometimes, women's movements contain a 'zone of silent war' waged by women to gain control over men in everyday life.

- Women's movements have come up because of suppressed feelings of rejection and gender injustice in patriarchal societies. These factors have led women to oppose erosion of identity at an individual level, and can result in an organized outburst taking the form of manifest women's movements. They may remain dormant in terms of organized movements, but active at the individual level, and make a conscious use of a whole range of methods such as arts, ruses and moves against men. These methods are generally practiced by women on men for coping with the day-to-day situations of oppression.

- For any individual resistance to become an organized open movement, it has to pass through different stages of maturation. This process involves sharing of individual experiences of resistance with other individuals who are placed in similar life situations. This also includes a phase where the resistance is made obvious or becomes an exterior issue, and a collective group emerges. An ideology that rejects the negatively defined authority, leadership, mobilization and communication emerges. The progress from an unorganized and silent individual resistance to an open and organized women's movement is uneven and difficult. It is also difficult for an individual resister to become a part of an organized movement.

- For women, the act of resistance in a patriarchal world at the individual level as well as at the level of organized collective movements can coexist and work simultaneously, though they may be conflicting practices and processes between them.

1.5.1 Women's Movements in India

In India, the tradition of women's struggles and movements against patriarchal institutions of gender injustice has been weak when compared to the women's movements in the Western and European societies. Most of the women's writings of the 19th century reveal disenchantment with the prevalence of patriarchy and gender injustices rather than any kind of active resistance or revolt against them. During the 19th century, the western ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity were being imbibed by the educated elite through the study of English. Western liberalism was to extend to the women's question and translate into awareness on the status of women. However, this awareness did not get translated into an open and organized struggle. Though there were feelings of deprivation and anger against the injustices women were facing, these remained mostly latent and, at the most, sometimes mildly open. It was only during the freedom movement that women started organizing themselves, not only for national liberation but also to bring forth women's issues into public consciousness.

Just like the movements in the Western world, the women's movement in India can be seen as forming three waves. The first wave was seen during the British colonial period and the freedom movement and was initiated mostly by men to uproot social evils in Indian society. During this time there was also a mass mobilization of women in the nationalist movement. The educated elite social reformers emerged to address the wrongdoings of the patriarchal order. The movement achieved

changing some of the easily observable atrocities practiced against women like abolishing Sati, and providing widows the right to remarry, the child marriage restraint act and so on. Thereafter, for over a decade, there was a lull in political activities by women. The post-independence period saw a resurgence in the political activity of women, and can be referred to as the second wave of the feminist movement. They fought for provisions for women's upliftment through affirmative action, maternal health and child care provision, equal pay for equal work, and so on. In the late 1970s, the third wave of the women's movement in India emerged, which focused on women's empowerment by organising women to fight against domestic violence, alcoholism, the projection of women in the arts, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and so on. The 1970s also saw the emergence of women's studies which shifted the focus of women's issues from the perspective of amity, marriage, socialization or social status to treating women as autonomous human beings. The emphasis today is on women's identity, their subjectivity and the bio-psychological foundations of their personality. You will study about the 'three waves' of the women's movement in India in the next section.

Let us now look at various women's movements in India, starting with the first wave of the women's movement.

Pre-Independence Women's Movements in India (The First Wave of Women's Movement)

Readings of texts—religious, political, cultural and social—oral stories, mythology folklore, fables, songs, jokes, proverbs and sayings reveal that women's subordination has existed in different forms from time immemorial. Of course there have been acts of resistance against patriarchy at different times throughout Indian history, though these have been sporadic. There are numerous stories of how women questioned and went against the establishment, personified in the deeds of Razia Sultana, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, Ahilyabai Holkar, Muktabai and so on. Women throughout history made efforts to break free from the bonds of oppression they had to face by virtue of their birth. One important social movement in the medieval era was the Bhakti Movement. The Bhakti movement was an egalitarian movement that cut across gender and caste discriminations. Many women belonging to various castes joined the movement. The saints of the Bhakti Movement stood up for equal rights of men and women and urged women to join in Kathas and Kirtans organized by various saints of the Bhakti movement. This helped in freeing women from the drudgery and restrictions of domestic life. Some prominent women who were part of the Bhakti movement were Mirabai, Akkamahadevi and Janaki; all of them became leading poetesses and today are considered part of the poet-saints of India. These poet-saints produced a considerable amount of literature in the vernacular languages. Saints also encouraged the worship of the feminine counterparts of male Gods (Narayan-Lakshmi, Krishna-Radha and Vishnu-Lakshmi), which indirectly helped elevate the status of women during the medieval era.

Social Reform Movement and Women

In the 18th and 19th century, there were two distinct groups of progressive movements that aimed at the emancipation of Indian women. Both groups recognized the restrictive and coercive nature of the social customs and institutions. One group opposed these customs and institutions as they contradicted the democratic principles of liberty and freedom. This group was called the *Reformers*. The other group demanded the democratization of social relations and removal of harmful practices on the basis of revival of the Vedic society in modern India, which, according to them, was democratic. This group came to be known as the *Revivalists*.

The social reformers believed in the principle of individual liberty and freedom, equality of all human beings irrespective of sex, colour, race, caste or religion. They attacked a number of traditional, authoritarian hierarchical social institutions and launched social reform movements to liberate Indian women from their shackles. Though many of the Reformers were men, the reform movement aimed at reproving the status of Indian women.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the greatest social reformers of India. He was concerned about a number of evil customs plaguing Indian society. These included 'sahamarana' or Sati, female infanticide, polygyny, infant marriages, purdah system, the absence of education among women and the Devadasi system. Raja Ram Mohan Roy led a crusade against the evil and inhuman practice of Sati, in which a widow was forced to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. Sati was in practice in many parts of India and was accepted and condoned on the grounds that it would secure 'Moksha' for widows. It was also felt that a woman could be led astray if she continued to live after the death of her husband. The arguments for Sati were strongly refuted by Roy and the rest of the social reformers who called the practice of Sati a monstrous act. Due to the social reform movement and anti-Sati activities led by Lord William Bentick, Sati was outlawed through the passing of the Prohibition of Sati Act in 1829.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was another great social reformer who sought to improve the condition of widows by legalizing widow remarriages. Since he felt that his own life should set an example for others to follow, he took a pledge that he would allow his daughters to study, and married all his daughters after they were 16 years of age. He also pledged that if any of his daughters were widowed and wanted to get married, he would allow them to do so. He was also against the prevalent custom of polygyny.

Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade was instrumental in laying down the foundation of an all-Indian organization to carry on the struggle for social reform—the National Social Conference. This organization was the first national institution to carry on collectively, in an organized way, and on a national scale, the social reform movement. He actively took up the problems of widow remarriages. In fact, Shankaracharya excommunicated him for attending the first widow remarriage in 1869. Ranade and his wife also started a girl's school in 1884.

Some of the revivalists were also instrumental in bringing about changes in the status of women. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the founder of Arya Samaj.

He believed in equality of men and women and declared that women should receive education till the age of 16. Swami Vivekananda also stressed upon the education of women, which he felt would help women to deal with their problems in an effective manner. He also opposed early marriages for girls. According to him, a woman should be free from the existing antisocial traditional institutions, and should be taught the values of freedom and equality. He traced the historical cause of the deterioration of status of women in India, and stressed on the necessity of removing their social subjugation. He also emphasized upon the importance of women's education not only for their own development, but also for the progress of the whole country.

As a result of the social reform movement, a number of institutions and organizations were established. The institutions started by the reformers covered the whole country with their activities. The institutions established during this period included the Gujarat Vernacular Society whose aim was to decrease the large-scale illiteracy and superstitious beliefs that were a feature of Gujarati society, the Deccan Education Society which encouraged the education of women in Maharashtra, the Ramakrishna Mission which established homes for widows and schools for girls, the Seva Sadan which aimed at bringing together enlightened women of different communities who desired to work for the upliftment of backward women, the All India Women's Conference whose primary focuses were women's education, polygyny and the inhuman custom of 'Devadasi'.

Post-Independence Women's Movements in India (The Second Wave of Women's Movement)

There is a distinction between pre-independence and post-independence women's movements in India. The pre-independence women's movements were essentially about social reform and were mostly initiated by men. They were under the influence of Western liberal ideas, and opposed repressive social norms like child marriage widow remarriage, sati and *purdah* (seclusion, prevalent especially among Muslims). Movements to eradicate illiteracy among women and bring them out of the house were largely confined to the upper castes and classes. On the whole, neither patriarchy nor the gender-based division of labour was questioned. In comparison, the post-independence movement demanded gender equality, questioned gender-based division of labour and highlighted the oppressive nature of the existing patriarchal structure. In the euphoria of post-independence, it was believed that women's status would dramatically improve along with other marginalized groups because they were now the masters of their destiny. However, when this was not achieved, there was an upsurge of various movements which raised a number of issues around diverse subjects such as land rights, wages, security of employment, equality, and so on. The issues on which women came together were the fight against rape and other forms of sexual violence, equal treatment at work, population policies, and so on

After India gained independence from British rule in 1947, it was the Congress party that came to power and formed the government. The government made certain attempts to fulfil the promises it had made to women during the pre-independence period, and also in the initial period after independence. While framing the Constitution

of India, it included the very important aspect of equality of men and women in all spheres of life. Article 14 of the Constitution of India states that 'The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India'. Article 15 states, 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of them'. Article 15(3) states that 'Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children'. Article 16 states that 'There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State'. According to Veena Majumdar, 'The Constitution's radical departure from inherited social values represented to women of that generation its greatest intrinsic quality. For the women... with definite memories of pre-independence society and of the freedom struggle, the acceptance of gender equality in the constitution was the fulfilment of a dream—of women's entitlement to an independent identity'. A number of administrative bodies were set up for the creation of opportunities for women. A number of women were inducted into the government.

In the two decades that followed, 1950s and 1960s, there was a lull in the activities of feminists and in the women's movement in India. Women, however, started realizing that the Constitutional promise of equality did not by itself resolve the equality questions, especially in a country as diverse as India, which comprised of different religions and cultures. The challenge of addressing inequality within women remains till this day. The women's movement has not been able to 'decommunalize' the issue. Women's organizations and feminists did not know how to deal with the problems of women belonging to different religious groups. By the time the feminist movement stepped into the problems of women from the minority community in the 1970s, minority identities had begun to harden. This divisive environment affected Muslim women especially. Religious fundamentalists tried to place the onus of preserving religio-cultural identity on women. This identity syndrome, with women in the centre, diverted attention away from Muslim women's grim realities and the deviations from the actual Islamic position.

Having been a secular movement, the women's movement found itself facing a difficult challenge that it did not know how to handle. On the conceptual level, Indian feminists were in a dilemma: How to assimilate Muslim women's issues into broader feminist issues and, at the same time, safeguard their religious and cultural identity. This has been most obvious in the case of Muslim Personal Law. Placing Muslim women's issues within the confines of religion has farther marginalized them, and created hesitancy among the secular feminists in addressing their problems for fear of hurting religious sentiments.

The 1970s also witnessed the split of the Indian Left Front. This led to a number of doubts regarding their earlier analysis of revolution. New Leftist movements and ideas emerged. A few streams of feminist movements also developed, such as the Shahada Movement, which was a Bhil tribal landless labourer's movement against the exploitation of the tribal landless labourers by non-tribal landowners. It began as a folk protest, and became militant with the involvement of the new left party. It has been said that women were more active in the movement, and as their

militancy increased, they demanded direct action on issues specific to them as women, such as physical violence and abuse as a result of alcoholism. Groups of women would go from village to village, enter liquor dens and destroy liquor pots and containers. If any woman reported physical abuse by her husband, all other women would surround him, beat him up and force him to apologize to his wife in public.

The formation of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was probably the first attempt made to form a trade union attached to the Textile Labour Union in Ahmedabad. It was formed in 1972 at the initiative of Ela Bhatt, and was an organization of women who were involved in different trades, but shared a number of common features and work experiences—low earnings, extremely poor working conditions (some worked at home, and others toiled on streets as vendors or hawkers), harassment from those in authority (contractors, police and so on) and lack of recognition of their efforts as socially useful work. SEWA aimed at improving the working conditions of women through a process of training, technical aid, legal literacy, collective bargaining and to teach values of honesty, dignity and simplicity, the Gandhian goals to which SEWA subscribes.

The anti-price-rise agitations in Maharashtra were the direct result of the drought and famine conditions that affected rural Maharashtra in the early 1970s. These led to a sharp price rise in urban Maharashtra. In 1973, the United Women's Anti-Price Rise Front was formed to mobilize women against inflation. Within no time it fire-balled into a mass women's movement for consumer protection. The movement demanded the Government to fix minimum prices and distribution of essential commodities. Huge groups of women, between 10,000 and 20,000, would hold demonstrations at government offices, houses of members of parliament and merchants, and those who could not get out of their homes would express their support by beating thalis (metal plates) with lathis or belans (rolling pins). This movement spread to Gujarat, where it was called the Nay Nirman Movement. The methods of the movement included mock courts where judgements were passed on corrupt state officials and politicians; mock funeral processions and processions to greet the dawn of a new era. Women started participating in increasing numbers in the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal because it was not only a movement for the emancipation of the landless, but also encompassed the experiences the violence and patriarchal domination that women faced every day. The Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh helped women to play various roles such as peace builders, activists and politicians and helped to empower women. The Navnirman youth movement in Gujarat, which was organized to curb corruption and nepotism and the Chipko movement raised concern for safety and preservation of the environment. The Shramik Mahila Sangathan (Working Women's Organization), the Progressive Organization of Women and the Mashila Samata Sainik Dal (League of Women Soldiers for Equality) were some of the organizations that emerged during this period.

Contemporary Women's Movements in India (The Third Wave of Women's Movements)

There are different strands of thought and activism that have come together to create the contemporary women's movement in India. These movements were

initiated by the Declaration of the UN Year of Women in 1975, also called the 'International Women Year'. The year also witnessed the release of the Status of Women Committee Report. The report was a voluminous volume of compiled data on the various indices indicating the status of women in India. This report directly attacked the myth that women in post-independence India were 'progressing'. It revealed that the majority of Indian women suffered from poverty, illiteracy and ill health, as well as discrimination 'in both the domestic and public spheres'. This resulted in agitations and campaigns against the worst manifestations of sexism and patriarchy by middle-class women.

The year 1975 also saw the development of a number of feminist activities in various parts of the country, especially in Maharashtra. Inspired by the formation of the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) in Hyderabad, Maoist women formed the Puregami Stree Sangathana (Progressive Women's Organization) in Pune and the Stree Mukti Sangathana (Women's Liberation Organization) in Bombay. On 8 March 1975, the International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by both party-based and autonomous organizations in Maharashtra. In September, a conference of Devadasis was organized. In October, a United Women's Liberation Struggle conference was held in Pune. A connection was established between the anti-caste Dalit movement and feminism. The dalits were classified as untouchables because of the activities they undertook, such as curing leather or clearing excreta. The dalits had been agitating for social acceptance, and for women's rights to education, widow remarriage and against Purdah system. Women from the Dalit movement formed the Mahila Samta Sainik Dalam (League of Women Soldiers for Equality). It stressed on equality and emphasized on women's oppression, especially the oppressive character of religion and the caste system.

In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of Emergency throughout the country. This interrupted the development of the women's movement. Many political organizations were forced to go underground with many activists being persecuted and arrested. During this period, the focus of activists shifted to civil rights such as freedom of speech and association, the rights of political prisoners, the right to freedom and liberty and so on. In 1977, the Emergency was repealed. This led to the revival of some of the women's movement that had been brought to a standstill by the declaration of Emergency. Women's groups were formed in most parts of the country.

The 1980s witnessed a transformation of the women's movement. Organizations increased their focus from one or two issues to deal with holistic issues. There were three different streams of feminist orientations:

(i) The liberal stream focuses on demanding reforms in those aspects of the polity which specifically affect women.

(ii) The Leftist stream situates oppression of women within a holistic analysis of the general structure of oppression and called for a coming together of specific movements for social change in order to effect the revolutionary transformation of society.

(iii) The radical feminists concentrate on defining the development of feminity and masculinity in society as fundamental polarities, and experimented with reclaiming traditional sources of women's strength, creativity and so on.

Since the pre-independence freedom struggle and thereafter, women's organizations were linked to political parties. What have come to be known as 'autonomous' groups or organizations have emerged in the 1980s, which were not linked to political parties. The new women's groups that were formed in the late 1970s had a number of members who believed in the Leftist ideology. They declared themselves to be autonomous, even though they had affiliations with various political parties. They rapidly built networks among themselves despite ideological differences. The fact that most of the members of these groups had leftist affiliations and belonged to the urban educated middle class influenced the feminist movement of the late 1970s and the 1980s. The groups of the 1970s were loosely organized and without formal structure or funds. Many groups opted for autonomy and wanted to be separate, women-only groups without any party affiliations or links. This was because feminists felt political parties were hierarchical, competitive and wallowed in self-interest. Despite criticizing party politics, feminists did recognize their importance. They felt that parties could help in the enactment of reforms and in fulfilling feminist aims.

Even though many of the feminist movements and campaigns of the late 1970s and the early 1980s were city-based movements and dominated by urban groups, feminist consciousness was entering rural movements too. In Andhra Pradesh, the 1950s—sharecropper's movement in Telangana was renewed in the late 1970s. In Karimnagar district of Telangana, women had been very active in the movement of the landless labourers from the 1960s onwards. The Stri Shakti Sanghatana was formed in Hyderabad in the late 1970s because of a demand for an independent women's organization from the women themselves. In Bihar, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (Young Students' Struggle Organization) was formed, and women of the organization raised feminist issues. This organization was involved in an agricultural labourers' movement for land reclamation from the temple priest who owned most of the land. Women were actively involved in this movement, and it was decided that there would be a demand to register reclaimed plots of land in the names of men and women.

Movement against Dowry

The first campaign of the contemporary feminist movement was against dowry. Dowry is the sum of all the money as well as other items such as jewellery, car, furniture, house, so on, given by the bride's family to the groom and his family. It was in Hyderabad in 1975 that the Progressive Organization of Women organized formal protests against dowry. These protests were not allowed to grow into full-fledged campaigns because of the imposition of the Emergency in 1975. After Emergency was lifted in 1977, a new movement against dowry started in Delhi. This movement focused upon the violence inflicted upon women for dowry, including bride burning and abetment to suicide. Delhi has remained the place for sustained agitation against dowry and related issues. This may be because Delhi has witnessed a high number of dowry deaths and dowry harassment cases.

The Mahila Dakshata Samiti was the first women's organization in Delhi's contemporary feminist movement to take up the issue of dowry harassment and dowry deaths. In June 1979, another women's organization, Stri Sangharsh, drew public attention to the problem of dowry and dowry-related crimes by organizing a demonstration against the death of Tarvinder Kaur, who had given a dying statement blaming her parents-in-law for killing her, as her parents could not fulfil their ever-increasing demands for dowry. This demonstration gained wide publicity and resulted in a number of demonstrations against dowry deaths, including a large demonstration led by the Nari Raksha Samiti (Women's Rescue Committee). These demonstrations sparked off public debates on dowry and dowry-related crimes.

Death of women by fire (doused in kerosene and set on fire) was termed suicide, and many of these cases were not reported. Even suicides were not considered to be the result of harassment for dowry. These deaths were neither investigated nor categorized by the authorities. They were considered to be private family affairs, and authorities did not interfere in such family matters. But as a result of the demonstrations and agitations in Delhi and other parts of the country, this problem was brought to the attention of the authorities as well as the public. This made the public realize that many official female suicides were in fact deaths due to dowry harassments. There was an increase in the number of complaints with the police against dowry harassment. Feminist organizations tried to help by recording the dying declaration of women, testimonies of family members and encouraged friends and neighbours to come forward with their testimonies and evidence.

Feminist groups devised strategies to increase public awareness regarding the problem of dowry, dowry harassment and dowry deaths. This included organizing debates, public demonstrations and enacting street plays. Manushi, a Delhi-based feminist magazine, organized a number of public meetings. People, both women and men, were encouraged to make a pledge that they would neither take nor give dowry.

The government passed a law against dowry and related crimes in 1980. This law recognized the abetment to suicide because of dowry demands as a special crime. It made police investigation into the death of any woman within five years of marriage mandatory. However, though the law recognized that dowry harassment could be construed as abetment, it did not specify the kinds of evidence that could be used to prove harassment, nor did it make abetment a cognizable (liable to be judicially examined or tried) offence. In 1982, the first positive judgement of this law took place. A Delhi sessions court magistrate found two people guilty of dowry murder and sentenced them to death. In 1983, the Delhi High Court reversed this judgement. There were widespread protests and demonstrations against this judgement. In 1985, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict, but converted the verdict from death sentence to life imprisonment.

In the same year, the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act was passed. This made cruelty to a wife a cognizable, non-bailable offence, punishable by up to three years imprisonment and fine. The Act also redefined cruelty to include mental as well as physical harassment. Section 113-A of the Evidence Act was also amended to enable the court to draw an inference of abetment to suicide. Technically, this

shifted the burden of proof and, thus, lessened the burden upon the complainant. The Act also amended Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which makes a post-mortem examination of the body of a woman who dies within 7 years of marriage compulsory.

In spite of these laws being passed, it has been difficult to secure convictions for dowry deaths. Hearsay evidence is not enough to be accepted as evidence for conviction. Women themselves hesitate to bring charges against their husbands and in-laws. Moreover, post-mortem examinations need not necessarily show evidence of murder. It is difficult to prove that kerosene burns are the result of intention to murder. Moreover, there are still many loopholes in the laws regarding dowry, and most culprits manage to get away without detection. Feminists discovered that though they could muster massive public support for campaigns against certain crimes against women, it was very difficult to get the support of the legal system for their efforts.

Movement against Rape

There was a movement against rape of women by the police, government officials and landlords in rural and urban areas. This issue gained prominence because of the incident of Rameeza Bee in Hyderabad. Rameeza Bee was raped by several policemen. Her husband, a rickshaw puller was murdered when he protested against his wife's rape. As a reaction, thousands of people went to the police station, laid the man's dead body in the station veranda, set up roadblocks, stoned the building and set fire to some of the vehicles. The army was called in, and the demonstrations and protests were quietened only after the state government was dismissed and a commission of enquiry was appointed to look into the rape and murder.

There were a number of demonstrations against police and landlord/employer rapes in different parts of the country. In 1980, local policemen in Maharashtra raped a 16-year old girl named Mathura. A case was registered against the policemen, who were acquitted at the Sessions Court as well as the Supreme Court, on the basis of the argument that Mathura had a boyfriend and was a loose woman who by definition could not be raped. An open letter by four senior lawyers against this judgement by the Supreme Court led to a campaign by a feminist group. The Bombay-based feminist group Forum Against Rape (now called the Forum Against Oppression of Women) decided to campaign for the reopening of the case. Feminist groups across the country were contacted, and retrial of the case was demanded during demonstrations held on International Women's Day on 8 March. There was also a demand for the implementation of relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and changes in the rape law. Joint action committees were formed comprising of socialist and communist party members to coordinate the campaign. This was in fact the first time that feminist groups coordinated a nation-wide campaign.

In another incident in 1980, policemen arrested Maya Tyagi in Baghpat in Haryana, stripped her naked, raped her and paraded her through the streets. This resulted in widespread protests from political parties and women's organizations across the country. A judicial enquiry was ordered into the incident, and there was a parliamentary debate on the large-scale increase in incidents of rape and atrocities against women. The government introduced a bill known as The Criminal Law

(Second Amendment) Act 1983 defining the categories of custodial rape and a mandatory punishment of 10 years' imprisonment and a shift of onus of proof onto the accused. This clause of shifting burden of proof onto the accused raised a lot of controversies, since it stated that if the woman could prove forced intercourse with the accused at the time and place alleged, then the accused would be presumed to be guilty unless he could prove otherwise. However, the issue was politicized, and different political parties sought to get political leverage out of it. However, another judgement brought to light certain factors associated with rape—the social sanction accorded to it and the difficulties of acquiring medical evidence to prove that a woman had been raped. In 1988, in the case of Suman Rani, the sentence against the rapists was reduced because of the conduct of the victim—she had been having a sexual relationship with a man. This judgement led to a renewed debate on the definition of rape. Feminists stated that the technical definition of rape did not give importance to the fact that it was an act of violence against a woman's privacy.

Chipko Movement

The Chipko movement was an environmental movement that began in 1971. It was primarily led by women in the region of Uttarakhand to protect the Himalayan. However, the movement had as much to do with economics as it had to do with the environment. This is because the economic and ecological interests of Uttarakhand are linked in such a way that it is impossible to distinguish between the two. The reason why it was called the chipko movement was because women and men all over Uttarakhand protected the forests from the axes of contractors by hugging them.

Shah Bano Case

Shah Bano was a 62-year-old Muslim woman and mother of five from Indore, Madhya Pradesh. She was divorced by her husband in 1978. The Muslim personal law allows the husband to do this without his wife's agreement. She tried to get maintenance (similar to alimony) through the Indian court system, and seven years later, her case reached the Supreme Court. Maintenance is an area of the law that falls under the personal codes, and Muslim law does not entitle women to ongoing maintenance. A divorced Muslim woman is entitled to her mehr (a payment to a woman from her husband at the time of marriage) and three months of maintenance. Following that, her family and community may help to support her.

When Shah Bano's case reached the Supreme Court in 1985, the court turned to the criminal code, which applies to everyone, specifically Article 125 (an article from the British colonial Criminal Procedure Code of 1898, revised in 1973). This criminal code entitles divorced, destitute women to some maintenance. The Supreme Court used this article to grant ongoing maintenance to Shah Bano, in spite of the Muslim personal law. Moreover, the court went on to argue in their decision that 'a common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties in laws which have conflicting ideologies'. While many welcomed this ruling, the decision and the judges' talk of 'national integration' and questioning of citizens' 'loyalties' was deeply troubling for India's Muslim minority, particularly given the political context of rising anti-minority agitations and violence. The controversy over

this decision was further deepened because both the court and its critics could find grounds for their positions in the somewhat contradictory Indian Constitution, which both protects religious rights and advocates equality before the law.

The judgement in favour of Shah Bano triggered a wave of protest from Muslim groups. In response to this protest, Rajiv Gandhi's government allowed the passage of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, a law which, of course, closed off the right of Muslim women to appeal, as Shah Bano had done, to the Criminal Procedure Code for maintenance. This in turn, further hardened the position of the Hindu right who made the need for a single civil code a central plank in their election campaign.

The Uniform Civil Code Debate, contesting the inequality imposed on women by 'personal' laws, has been resurrected, diverted and restarted.

Representation, through reservation, of women in parliament and state legislatures has followed the mandated presence of women in panchayats. Population policies have become a contested terrain, with the experience of the emergency acting as a constant backdrop.

Contemporary Women's Movements

The 1990s' slogan for the women's movement was 'all issues are women's issues'. There was further internationalization of the issues of women's rights, which was strengthened by the conferences of the United Nations. The Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1992 was a significant step in recognizing women's rights as human rights. The International Conference on Women in Beijing further strengthened women's networking around the world. However, communal tensions, riots and violence left an indelible mark upon the women of India, and it was proved that the worst to suffer any form of violence are women, children and the poor in any country.

Today, the women's movements in India are linked together through networks on different issues and campaigns. Though some of the old methods of protest, agitations and demonstrations are still used, new methods of resistance and mobilization for change are also being made use of. Women's issues are being linked to the movements on sustainable development, regional peace movements and sex worker's movements. Most of these movements are joining hands and working towards a just society.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. What are social movements?
8. Who initiated the Third Wave of Women's movement?

1.6 SUMMARY

- Women empowerment is the most vital system to strengthen the future of women in India. It is a systematic approach which needs to develop more seriously in India.

- Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives, communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.

- The doubts pertaining to women's empowerment and the state and position of women have now become crucial for human rights-based approaches to development.

- Educational attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women.

- Economic empowerment of women is one of the most vital conditions for the upliftment of women's social status.

- The participation of women in the political process is a major measure of empowering women. The Indian Constitution since its inception has been committed to introducing socio-economic and political transformation.

- In India, the empowerment of women, gender discrimination, and violence against women, which have become serious subjects of sociological research in contemporary times, was hitherto neglected.

- In the workplace, gender gaps refer to job opportunities and salary differences. Statistics show that men often earn more for the same work than women.

- A vital part of women's work is not just unpaid, it is also socially unrecognised.

- The Preamble to the United Nations (UN) charter reaffirms, faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women.

- According to the American sociologist Herbert Blumer, social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life.

- The term 'women's movement' does not refer to any one, single, unified movement or entity. It is made of several movements based on a wide range of issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, all of which fall under the label of feminism.

- In India, the tradition of women's struggles and movements against patriarchal institutions of gender injustice has been weak when compared to the women's movements in the Western and European societies.

- Just like the movements in the Western world, the women's movement in India can be seen as forming three waves. The first wave was seen during the British colonial period and the freedom movement and was initiated mostly by men to uproot social evils in Indian society.

- The post-independence period saw a resurgence in the political activity of women, and can be referred to as the second wave of the feminist movement.

- In the late 1970s, the third wave of the women's movement in India emerged, which focused on women's empowerment by organising women to fight against domestic violence, alcoholism, the projection of women in the arts, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and so on.

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Gender gap**: Gender gap is defined as the discrepancy in opportunities, status, attitudes, and so on, between men and women in a society.

- **Foeticide:** Female foeticide is the act of destroying or aborting the growth of a female foetus.

- **Eve-teasing:** It is the making of inappropriate remarks or gestures by a man or several men to a woman or several women in a public place.

- **Sexual harassment**: Harassment (typically of a woman) in a workplace, or other professional or social situation, involving the making of unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks.

- **Rape:** Rape is the abduction of a woman for the purpose of having sexual intercourse with her against her will.

- **Casteism:** Casteism is known as the prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of caste.

- **Capitalism**: Capitalism is an economic system in which investment and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.

1.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Women empowerment generally has five components: firstly, women's sense of self-worth; secondly, their right to have the power of control their own lives, thirdly , within home; fourthly**,** outside home; and lastly, their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a just social and economic order nationally, internationally, and universally.

2. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action and control work in an autonomous way and take control of one's own destiny.

3. In the workplace, gender gaps refer to job opportunities and salary differences.

4. The different types of work that women do encompasses:
   - Household work;
   - Paid and unpaid work related to home-based craft activities;
   - Family enterprise or business and paid work outside home.

5. CEDWA stands for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. The number of countries party to CEDAW are 186.

7. Social movements are a type of group action. They are large, sometimes informal, groupings of individuals or organizations which focus on specific political or social issues.

8. The Third Wave of Women's movement was initiated by the Declaration of the UN Year of Women in 1975.

1.9 QUESTIONS AND EXCERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the quantitative and qualitative indicators of women empowerment?

2. What are the steps that have been taken to politically empower women in India?

3. What are the causes of gender discrimination in India?

4. How is the status of women affected by the kind of work they do?

5. How is so-called 'women's work' undervalued in society?

6. Give a brief overview of international human rights conventions which seek to protect women's rights.

7. How is CEDAW monitored?

8. What is CEDAW?

9. What are social movements? Differentiate between social movements and collective action.

10. What are the propositions that should be included for studying women's movements and their strategies?

11. What role did the freedom movement play in bringing women into the mainstream?

Long-Answer Questions

1. In spite of the progress made in improving the status of women, rural women and those belonging to the Dalit, Tribal and nomadic communities remain unaffected. Critically comment.

2. What is gender discrimination? Discuss some forms of discrimination that women in India face.

3. Throughout human history, women have been systematically excluded from the entire realm of wealth generation, not only wage work but also property and investment. Discuss.

4. Define gender discrimination. Explain salient features of CEDAW.

5. Briefly describe important features of CEDAW and explain in detail how implementation of that Convention is monitored. Critically evaluate various challenges for the protection of women's rights.

6. Discuss some social reform movements in India in the 19th century.

7. Discuss the second wave of women movements in India.

8. Discuss some of the movements that are considered to be part of the 'third wave' of women movements in India.

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UNIT 2 HEALTH CONDITIONS AND WORK RELATED ISSUES OF INDIAN WOMEN

Structure

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Health is an important aspect for the survival of human. The concepts, knowledge, skills and infrastructure related to healthcare have developed along with the evolution of human civilization in various societies. However, due to gender bias, the health priorities for men and women have been different in different traditions and societies.

India is one of the few countries in the world where women and men have nearly the same life expectancy at birth. The fact that the typical female advantage in life expectancy is not seen in India suggests that there are systematic problems with women's health. Indian women have high mortality rates, particularly during childhood and in their reproductive years.

Improvement in the standard of living and health status of the population has remained one of the important objectives of planning in India. The Five Year Plans had reflected long term vision consistent with the international aspirations of which India has also been a signatory. These long term goals have been stressed in the National Population Policy and National Health Policy. These goals have to be achieved through improving the access to and utilization of health services, family welfare and nutrition services with special focus on underserved and under privileged segments of the population.

In this unit, we will learn about women's health conditions in India, as well as the sex ratio, and the various family planning and welfare programmes. We will also learn about the work related issues that women face during their careers. This will include several sections on sex related violence, gender discrimination, gender bias, etc.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand health conditions of women in India
- Define the role of family planning and welfare programmes in the life of women
- Explain the importance of women's education
- Identify women's work related issues

2.2 HEALTH CONDITIONS

The health of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society. Research on women's status has found that the contributions Indian women make to families often are overlooked, and instead, they are viewed as economic burdens. There is a strong son preference in India, as sons are expected to care for parents as they age. This son preference, along with high dowry costs for daughters, sometimes results in the mistreatment of daughters. Further, Indian women have low levels of both education and formal labour force participation. They typically have little autonomy, living under the control of first their fathers, then their husbands, and finally their sons (Chatterjee, 1990; Desai, 1994; Horowitz and Kishwar, 1985; The World Bank, 1996). All of these factors exert a negative impact on the health status of Indian women.

Poor health has repercussions not only for women but also their families. Women in poor health are more likely to give birth to low-weight infants. They also are less likely to be able to provide food and adequate care for their children. Finally, a woman's health affects the economic well-being of the household, as a woman in poor health will be less productive in the labour force.

While women in India face many serious health concerns, this section focuses on only key issues like reproductive health, violence against women, nutritional status, unequal treatment of girls and boys, and HIV/AIDS. Due to the wide variation in cultures, religions, and levels of development among India's 29 states and 7 union territories, it is not surprising that women's health also varies greatly from state to state.

Fertility Intertwined With Women's Health

Many of the health problems of Indian women are related to or exacerbated by high levels of fertility. Overall, fertility has been declining in India; In 1992-93 the total fertility rate was 3.4 (International Institute for Population Science (IIPS), 1995). By 2014, the fertility rate had dropped to 2.3 . However, there are large differences in fertility levels by state, education, religion, caste and place of residence. Utter Pradesh, the most populous state in India, has a total fertility rate of over three children per woman. On the other hand, Kerala, which has relatively high levels of female education and autonomy, has a total fertility rate under two.

High levels of infant mortality combined with the strong son preference motivate women to bear high numbers of children in an attempt to have a son or two survive to adulthood. Research has shown that numerous pregnancies and closely spaced births erode a mother's nutritional status, which can negatively affect the pregnancy outcome (e.g., premature births, low birth-weight babies) and also increase the health risk for mothers (Jejeebhoy and Rao, 1995). Unwanted pregnancies terminated by unsafe abortions also have negative consequences for women's health. Reducing fertility is an important element in improving the overall health of Indian women.

Increasing the use of contraceptives is one way to reduce fertility. While the knowledge of family planning is nearly universal in India, only 754 per cent of married women aged 15 to 49 currently use modern contraception (IIPS, 2007). Female sterilization is the main form of contraception; over two-thirds of the married women using contraception have been sterilized.

Place of residence, education, and religion are strongly related to both fertility and contraceptive use. More than half of married women with a high school education or above use contraceptives, compared to only one-third of illiterate women. Not surprisingly, the total fertility rates for these two groups are significantly different: 4.0 children for illiterate women compared to 2.2 children for women with a high school education or above. Differentials among the religious groups also are pronounced; e.g., Muslims have the highest total fertility rate and the lowest contraceptive use (IIPS, 1995).

Despite a large increase in the number of women using contraceptives and limiting their fertility, there is still unmet need for contraceptives in India. Nearly 20 per cent of married women in India either want to delay their next birth or have no more children (IIPS, 1995). Most of the unmet need among younger women is for spacing births rather than limiting them. This implies that methods other than female sterilization, the method strongly promoted by India's family planning program, need to be considered.

Over 100,000 Indian Women Die Each Year from Pregnancy-Related Causes

Maternal mortality and morbidity are two health concerns that are related to high levels of fertility.

India has a high maternal mortality ratio— approximately 212 deaths per 100,000 births in 2007-09. This ratio is 715 times the ratio in the United States. The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimate that India's maternal mortality ratio is lower than ratios for Nepal but higher than those for Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The level of maternal mortality varies greatly by state, with Kerala having the lowest ratio and two states (Madhya Pradesh and Orissa) having ratios over. This differential maternal mortality is most likely related to differences in the socio-economic status of women and access to health care services among the states.

The high levels of maternal mortality are especially distressing because the majority of these deaths could be prevented if women had adequate health services (either proper prenatal care or referral to appropriate health care facilities) (Jejeebhoy and Rao, 1995). In fact, the leading contributor to high maternal mortality ratios in India is lack of access to health care (The World Bank, 1996).

Few Pregnant Women Receive Prenatal Care

The first National Family Health Survey (NFHS) was conducted in 1992-93; it found that in the four years preceding the survey, 37 per cent of all pregnant women in India received no prenatal care during their pregnancies (IIPS, 1995). The proportion receiving no care varied greatly by educational level and place of residence. Nearly half of illiterate women received no care compared to just 13 per cent of literate women. Women in rural areas were much less likely to receive prenatal care than women in urban areas (42 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively).

Most women who did not receive healthcare during pregnancy said they did not because they thought it was unnecessary (IIPS, 1995). Thus, there is a definite need to educate women about the importance of health care for ensuring healthy pregnancies and safe childbirths. Another reason for the low levels of prenatal care is lack of adequate health care centers. It is currently estimated that 16 per cent of the population in rural areas lives more than 10 kilometers away from any medical facility (Bhalla, 1995).

Majority of Births in India Take Place at Home

Place of birth and type of assistance during birth have an impact on maternal health and mortality. Births that take place in non-hygienic conditions or births that are not attended by trained medical personnel are more likely to have negative outcomes for both the mother and the child. The NFHS survey found that nearly three-quarters of all births took place at home and two-thirds of all births were not attended by trained medical personnel.

While healthcare is important, there are several other factors that influence maternal mortality and health. Medical research shows that early age at first birth and high numbers of total pregnancies take their toll on a woman's health. Although fertility has been declining in India, as noted earlier, many areas of the country still have high levels. In 2013, two states had total fertility rates of over three children per woman. In general, high maternal mortality ratios are related to high fertility rates.

One in Five Maternal Deaths Related to Easily Treated Problem

Anemia, which can be treated relatively simply and inexpensively with iron tablets, is another factor related to maternal health and mortality. Studies have found that between 50 and 90 per cent of all pregnant women in India suffer from anemia. Severe anemia accounts for 20 per cent of all maternal deaths in India (The World Bank, 1996). Severe anemia also increases the chance of dying from a hemorrhage during labour.

Every five Minutes, a Violent Crime against a Woman Is Reported

Research by Heise (1994) has shown that violence against women is a health problem that is often ignored by authorities who view such behaviour as beyond their purview. Likewise, many donor agencies do not want to work on this problem as they consider it culturally sensitive. In certain societies, violence, such as wife beating, is perceived as 'normal' or as a husband's right. However, as Heise concludes, violence against women is detrimental to economic development because it deprives women of the ability to participate fully in the economy by depleting both their emotional and physical strength. Violence against women also can have negative consequences for the children of the victims.

While violence is a serious health issue for Indian women, it is difficult to say how widespread it is because data are limited. The data that are available show an increase in the reported level of violent crime against women. However, such statistics do not reflect the actual levels of these crimes because many incidents, particularly domestic violence, go unreported (Kelkar, 1992).

The data that are available show that much of the violence to which women are subjected occurs in the home and/or is carried out by relatives. For instance, the majority of reported rapes are committed by family members. Many of the victims are young women; 30 per cent of all reported rapes happened to girls who were age 16 or younger (National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 1995). In recent times, there has been an increase in the reported incidence of torture — cruelty by the husband and the husband's relatives. The reported number of incidents of torture increased 93 per cent between 1990 and 1994. The crime rate for torture was 5.9 cases per 100,000 females in 1994. Often women are tortured by other women such as a mother-in-law.

More Than Half of Indian Children Are Malnourished

Numerous studies indicate that malnutrition is another serious health concern that Indian women face (Chatterjee, 1990; Desai, 1994; The World Bank, 1996). It threatens their survival as well as that of their children. The negative effects of malnutrition among women are compounded by heavy work demands, by poverty, by childbearing and rearing, and by special nutritional needs of women, resulting in increased susceptibility to illness and consequent higher mortality.

While malnutrition in India is prevalent among all segments of the population, poor nutrition among women begins in infancy and continues throughout their lifetimes (Chatterjee, 1990; Desai, 1994). Women and girls are typically the last to eat in a family; thus, if there is not enough food they are the ones to suffer most (Horowitz and Kishwar, 1985). According to the NFHS, Indian children have among the highest proportions of malnourishment in the world. More than half (53 per cent) of all girls and boys under four years of age were malnourished, and a similar proportion (52 per cent) were stunted (i.e., too short for their age). Other studies show that many women never achieve full physical development (The World Bank, 1996). This incomplete physical development poses a considerable risk for women by increasing the danger of obstructed deliveries.

Mother's Education Strongly Related to Children's Malnutrition

Mother's education, according to the NFHS, is highly correlated with the level of malnutrition among children. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to be undernourished or stunted as children whose mothers have completed at least high school. The differentials are even larger when severely undernourished children are considered. Children of illiterate mothers are three times as likely to be severely undernourished as children of mothers with at least a high school education.

Nutritional status of children also differs by state. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have the highest proportion of undernourished children and Kerala has the lowest, consistent with the different levels of socio-economic development in these states.

Excess Female Deaths

Several studies have found that one of the reasons for the poor health of Indian women is the discriminatory treatment girls and women receive compared to boys and men (Das Gupta, 1994; Desai, 1994). The most chilling evidence of this is the large number of 'missing women' (i.e., girls and women who have apparently died as a result of past and present discrimination). Estimates by the economist Amertya Sen place this number at approximately 60 million. In other words, there is a deficit of 60 million girls/women who should be part of the population but are not. This deficit of females is due to higher female than male mortality rates for every age group up to age 30 (IRG, 1996a).

Differential treatment of girls and boys in terms of feeding practices and access to healthcare is among the factors responsible for higher female mortality. As a consequence of their lower status overall, women experience discrimination in the allocation of household re-sources including food and access to health services. Boys are breast-fed longer than girls; 25.3 months versus 23.6 months on average (IIPS, 1995). Boys who are ill are more likely to be taken for medical treatment than are girls (Bhalla, 1995; Jejeebhoy and Rao, 1995). Causes of death for children aged 1 to 4 show girls dying at a higher rate than boys from accidents and injuries, fever, and digestive disorders— all causes that are related to living conditions and negligence (Government of India, 1995).

As with other indicators of health status, differential treatment of boys and girls varies by state. The infant mortality rate by sex can be used as a proxy for differential treatment. In the vast majority of countries worldwide, males have higher mortality in infancy than do females. Higher female rates are therefore considered likely to signal discrimination against girls. Only 7 of the 15 major states in India have higher male infant mortality. In the remaining states, equal or higher female rates suggest that girls suffer greater neglect.

One of the most extreme manifestations of son preference is sex-selective abortion. The use of medical technology to determine the sex of a fetus is on the rise in India, and over 90 per cent of fetuses that are aborted are female (The World

Bank, 1996). In all countries, more boys are born than girls, with a sex ratio at birth around 105 boys per 100 girls. Data on hospital births from various parts of India show that sex-selective abortion has increased the sex ratio at birth to 112 boys per 100 girls (Das Gupta, 1994).

HIV/AIDS in India Is a Little-Understood Epidemic

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in India is spreading rapidly and increasingly will affect women's health in coming years. A recent study estimated that around 2.1 million Indians are currently infected with HIV. The highest rates of infection are found in population groups with certain high-risk behaviours (i.e., sex workers, intravenous drug users, and sexually transmitted disease patients). However, infection also is increasing in the general population. For example, HIV seroprevalence among pregnant women in the state of Tamil Nadu quadrupled between 1989 and 1991 from 0.2 to 0.8 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995). The epidemic is fueled by both married and unmarried men visiting sex workers who have high rates of infection. Migrant workers and truck drivers are important components of the spread of HIV. Surveys in some areas show 5 to 10 percent of truck drivers in the country are HIV infected (AIDS Analysis, 1996).

Despite the alarming growth of the epidemic, most women in India have very little knowledge of AIDS. The NFHS found that a large majority of Indian women had never heard of AIDS. Even among those who had heard of the disease, there were many misconceptions about modes of transmission. Indian women could benefit from a strengthened national HIV/AIDS education program and intervention programs targeting groups most susceptible to HIV infection.

Women used to command acute power and importance in our ancient culture. The proof of this fact can be found in all the scriptures and even our mythological stories. We worship Goddess Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and many others. That shows how Indian civilization had revered females. However, things have not remained the same in the recent past. The social fabric has acquired completely new dimensions. The women are considered less powerful and important than men, yet situation is not entirely bleak. Thanks to the efforts of government, NGOs, social welfare organizations and many such institutions, there has been a drastic improvement. Many private corporate bodies have also taken a keen interest in improving the economic status of women and the results are extremely encouraging.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. List one of the reasons for the poor health of Indian women.
2. What does NFHS stand for?

2.3 SEX RATIO

One of the clear counters of measuring gender equality is sex ratio. It may be described as the number of females per 1000 males. Historically, sex ratio in India was not alarming until Independence. Post 1947, the number of females per 1000 males has shown a declining trend. In some states it is especially alarming as the number of women compared to men has gone down very significantly.

After showing a disturbing trend for decades, the female to male sex ratio has shown signs of improvement according to Census of India 2011, which suggested a significant improvement over the last decade or so. Rising from 933 in 2011 to 943 in 2011, sex ratio has shown a marginal increase, yet, there is a long way to go before a desirable level of gender equality is achieved. The states of the south lead the change with the highest improvement compared to the states of Haryana and Punjab which have sex ratios way lower than the national average.

Table 2.1 Comparison of Change in Sex Ratio Over a Decade

	Indian States by Sex Ratio			
	State / Union Territory (U.T.)	Sex Ratio 2011	Sex Ratio 2001	Change 2001 - 2011
1	Kerala	1,084	1,058	+26
2	Puducherry	1,038	1,001	+37
3	Tamil Nadu	995	986	+9
4	Andhra Pradesh	992	978	+14
5	Chhattisgarh	991	990	+1
6	Manipur	987	978	+9
7	Meghalaya	986	975	+11
8	Odisha	978	972	+6
9	Mizoram	975	938	+37
10	Himachal Pradesh	974	970	+4
11	Karnataka	968	964	+4
12	Goa	968	960	+8
13	Uttarakhand	963	964	-1
14	Tripura	961	950	+11
15	Assam	954	932	+22
16	Jharkhand	947	941	+6
17	West Bengal	947	934	+13
18	Lakshadweep	946	947	-1
19	Nagaland	931	909	+22
20	Madhya Pradesh	930	920	+10
21	Rajasthan	926	922	+4
22	Maharashtra	925	922	+3
23	Arunachal Pradesh	920	901	+19
24	Gujarat	918	921	-3
25	Bihar	916	921	-5
26	Uttar Pradesh	908	898	+10
27	Punjab	893	874	+19
28	Sikkim	889	875	+14
29	Jammu and Kashmir	883	900	-17
30	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	878	846	+32
31	Haryana	877	861	+16
32	Delhi	866	821	+45
33	Chandigarh	818	773	+45
34	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	775	811	-36
35	Daman and Diu	618	709	-91
	Total average	943	933	+10

Improvement of sex ratio shows a healthy growth rate among female to male population in India. The state of Kerala and union territory of Puducherry are only two places in India where sex ratio is above 1000 or exceeds female to male ratio. Another three states which have shown a major signs of improvement in their sex ratio are Mizoram, Assam and Nagaland. Densely populated states of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim have also shown improvement in female to male ratio. Delhi and Chandigarh have also registered a sharp growth in sex ratio between 2001 to 2011 census. On the other hand, the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana have also shown positive signs of overall improvement in their sex ratio. In fact, these two states have registered a positive increase in their sex ratio in the last few years. According to recent estimates of Haryana Government, the state's child sex ratio (0-6 age group) crossed 900 mark for the first time in December, 2015. This is the first time in the last 15 years that Haryana's child sex ratio crossed the 900 mark. Overall, sex ratio in various states of India has started to witness a descent growth in the last 4-5 years beginning from Indian Census in 2011.

Some interesting facts and figures about sex ratio in India:

1. Kerala with 1084 females for every 1000 males has the highest sex ratio according to the Census of India.
2. The union territory of Chandigarh has only 818 females for every 1000 males.
3. Punjab has witnessed a growth rate of plus 48 from 798 (2001) to 846 (2011) in its child sex ratio.
4. In Union Territories of India, Daman and Diu has the lowest female sex ratio while Pondicherry has the highest female sex ratio in India.
5. There is some extent of gender bias in India which is responsible for this decline in female ratio, however, it has started to show some improvement in the last 10 years.
6. Lack of education and poverty in rural areas leads to gender bias.
7. A common belief in Indian society is dominated by preference for a male child, thus leading to a decline in sex ratio in various states across the nation.
8. According to Census of India, the child sex ratio (0-6 years) in India is one of the poorest, last recorded at 918 girls for every 1000 boys in 2011.
9. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save girl child, educate girl child) is a scheme launched by the Government of India to improve efficiency of welfare services meant for girl child in India.
10. The state of Haryana registered a child sex ratio (0-6 age group) of over 900 in 2015 for the first time in the last 15 years

Prior to 2001, there was a marked decline in female to male sex ratio in India. According to the following data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the 2001 census data for India revealed a sharp decline in the sex ratio for the population age 0-6, from 945 females in 1991 to 927 females per 1,000 males. The trend in the sex ratio of the under-seven population based on National Family Health

Survey data for the period 1992-93 to 2005-06 also provides evidence of continued decline, and shows that in 2005-06 the under-seven sex ratio had fallen further to 918 females per 1,000 males.

Causes of decreased sex ratio in India

The basic indicator of gender inequality in India and one of the most powerful indicators is the preference of a son over a daughter. This manifested in the limited birth and survival of girls in India.

Selective terminations of pregnancy and female infanticide are the leading cause of a low sex ratio in India

The Government of India provides provisions for the legal termination of pregnancy only under specific circumstances as laid down by the MTP Act (Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act). These include:

- The condition when a woman whose physical and/or mental health was endangered by her pregnancy.
- The condition when a woman is pregnant with a potentially handicapped or malformed child.
- The condition when a woman gets pregnant as a result of rape.
- When an unmarried girl under 18 years of age gets pregnant, her pregnancies can be terminated with the consent of her parents.
- Pregnancies in 'lunatics' can be terminated with the consent of a guardian.
- Risk to the health of the pregnant woman by the reason of her actual or reasonably foreseeable environment.

Thus, we see that though the government allows abortions only under specific circumstances as mentioned above, it does not allow prenatal sex determination. However, finding a doctor or a sonographer who would determine the sex of the foetus is rather easy. This can be an expensive procedure depending on how poor one is, so a lot of people would rather wait for the girl child to be born so as to kill her afterwards.

There are several other facts that have led to a lower sex ratio. They are as follows:

- **Illiteracy:** Education plays a vital role in influencing the sex ratio. Child marriage or underage marriage is still prevalent in some societies in India. This keeps girls away from education as they are compelled to take up household responsibilities at an early age. Due to illiteracy, they are unaware of their own powers and role in today's day and age.
- **Widespread poverty:** Studies suggest that states with lower poverty levels have a higher sex ratio. On the other hand, states with greater poverty levels have more incidences of undernourishment of children, especially girls.
- **Poor social status of women:** A significant part of Indian society still considers women inferior to men. Parents are often confronted with the daunting task of arranging for dowry when a girl child is born. Hence, due to their beliefs

coupled with poor financial conditions parents prefer a male child over a female child.

- **Lack of women's empowerment:** This especially in rural areas has aggravated the problem. Women do not enjoy the same powers as men do, nor are they as educated as men are and as a result, they are unable to take on more responsible positions in society.

- **Male domination:** The Indian society is largely patriarchal in nature where males are considered superior to females. Even to this day, males are supposed to be the breadwinners for their families. Thus, to have more males in the family methods like pre-natal sex determination and female foeticide are adopted. This is especially responsible for a decline in sex ratio in northern Indian states.

- **Infant mortality**: Infant mortality is also a leading cause of death of the girl child leading to an eschewed sex ratio. Infant mortality is described as the number of deaths of children under the age of one year. Due to a preference for male children, sex ratio in this age group is also low. Maternal mortality is also a big contributor to declining sex ratio. Due to a lack of proper healthcare available to women, a large number of women die during the process of childbirth or after.

The underlying reasons that a girl is seen as a liability is as follows:

  a. She will get married and leave the house, therefore, cannot be counted for support in your old age.

  b. You have to pay a huge dowry (although this is illegal in India, the practice isn't uncommon).

  c. Needs to be protected much more - so makes it difficult for both parents to work (i.e., somebody needs to be at home with the girl to make sure she is safe).

  d. Much higher chance of bringing 'disgrace' to the family if something goes wrong.

Point 'c' above is mostly associated with poor people. Points 'a' and 'b' above are endemic across economic and geographic boundaries.

Government programs to increase sex ratio

The Government of India has pushed for several measures for checking a declining sex ratio. Some of these measures are briefly discussed hereunder:

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**: This is one of the important campaign introduced by the government led by Narendra Modi to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of the welfare services meant for women. The initiative was launched by Prime Minister Modi on 22 January 2015 in Haryana.

- **Sukanya Samriddhi Account**: This scheme has been notified by the Ministry of Finance on 2 December, 2014. The initiative aims at opening a new account for the girl child. The account can be operated by her after the age of 10. The account can be opened in a post office or a public sector bank.

- **The Girl Child Protection Scheme**: The scheme is aimed at preventing the gender discrimination by protecting the rights of the girl child. It also tries to eliminate the negative attitudes and practices against the girl child.

- **Aapki Beti, Humari Beti**: Haryana has the lowest sex ratio in India. To cope up with this issue, the Haryana Government launched this scheme. A sum of Rs 21000 would be deposited by the state government in the account of every new born girl. The scheme would be implemented in both rural and urban areas. It would target the girl child of scheduled caste and below poverty line (BPL) families.

- **PCPNDT Act**: The Indian government has passed Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) (PCPNDT) Act in 2004 to ban and punish prenatal sex screening and female foeticide. It is currently illegal in India to determine or disclose sex of the foetus to anyone. However, there are concerns that PCPNDT Act has been poorly enforced by authorities.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. Define sex ratio.
4. What is the main objective of the scheme 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'?
5. List two factors that have led to a lower sex ratio in India.

2.4 FAMILY PLANNING AND WELFARE

With a population of over 1.2 billion people and rising and standing only second to China, the need for effective measures for family planning and welfare is undoubtedly one of the most important issues currently posing the country today. Family planning and welfare lays stress on health and child care, protection against child diseases, care for pregnant women, making provisions for nutritious food and education besides the main agenda – that of birth control. What is important for India is a large number of family planning programmes enlightening people on the benefits of having smaller families, to change their attitudes towards adopting family planning methods along with stressing the importance of improving the quality of lives of the population at large which is only possible through population control.

Family Planning

To the common man, family planning typically means planned parenthood. A former President of the World Bank, Mr Robert McNamara said, 'Family planning is not designed to destroy families; on the contrary it is designed to save them.' India's National Family Planning Programme in 1952 defined family planning as 'reducing birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirement of the national economy'. In India, family planning is a social movement which lays emphasis on the holistic development of the family. The movement aims at advising couples to limit the size of their family by adopting birth

control methods and having children by choice not by chance. Over the years the family planning slogan – 'Chhota Pariwar, Sukhi Pariwar' (Small Family, Happy Family) has become quite popular. In India, family planning has been converted into family welfare programme which aims at providing material and child health care and contraceptive services. We should not forget what the 1951 Census Report stated, 'If we are not allowing ourselves to die naturally, we should not allow birth naturally.'

The Family Planning Need in India

Since independence in 1947, India's population has been consistently burgeoning and now stands at over 1.2 billion; we are the second most populous nation in the world after China. With a land area of only 2.5 per cent, India is home to over 1/6th of humanity. With such an ever increasing burden on limited resources of this country where population density stands at a high 383 people per square kilometre the need to seriously check the rate of population growth is paramount.

An exponentially growing population poses hindrances in the development of the country. A high rate of growth of population tends to stunt all social and economic development as it alters the age structure of the population as it drains heavily on resources put in for growth in education, employment, health services, food and other natural resources, etc. Besides these, a high population growth rate also hinders raising the quality of life of the people. Hence, checking population growth by means of adopting family planning measures is essential for an overall and sustained growth of the country's economy.

The people of India must realize that having smaller families not only reduces the burden on the country's resources, but also the number of dependents in families. Reduced number of dependents would mean that children are better looked after, fed and educated. It is a known fact that fewer the members in a family better the standard of living becomes. Thus, family planning is required for longevity and health of a mother and her child and for the overall wellbeing of the family. Thus, when the standard of living of a family improves as a result of family planning, and every family in the society does that, the quality of life of the entire society improves. A rapid economic development of the country can also be aided by family planning. As population growth reduces, the per capita income also increases. Furthermore, growth in labour force will also be reduced in absolute numbers and hence per capita income will also rise. This will have a positive effect on the employment situation in the country. Smaller families with fewer children can afford a better life, food, healthcare and education for the children and also bring out a healthy labour force. This in turn raises productivity and income levels for families and the country at large. Higher income means greater savings, greater capital formation and investment which culminate in greater economic growth for the country.

Thus, the need for family planning and welfare could not be emphasized any lesser. On the one hand family planning raises the standard of living and quality of life of people and aiding the country's economic development. On the other hand, economic growth improves employment opportunities and raises incomes, and family welfare improves the quality of life.

In short, the need for family planning and welfare in India arises for the following purposes as mentioned below:

- For the nation's sustained and rapid economic development.
- For raising the standard of living of the citizen of India.
- For attaining and maintaining the optimum size of the population in keeping with our resources.
- For a holistic maintenance of the health of mother and child.
- For making the population aware of available facilities relating to reproductive and child care programme and of small family norm.

Family Planning: Strategies and Outcomes

Over the last several decades, the country has strategized and formulated family planning and welfare measures such as neutrality, experimentation, population control, maternal and child health care, etc. These strategies and their respective outcomes will be discussed in the ensuing paragraphs:

1947-1951: The period post-independence starting 1947 to 1951 was that of neutrality, when technology for diagnosis and management of diseases was limited; most of the Indian healthcare services were in the hands of private entities and general practitioners who provided comprehensive, integrated and quality healthcare services. In those days, healthcare services were expensive and out of reach of poor and mostly based in urban areas. Most poor residing in rural areas did not have access to the healthcare facilities as most of the government hospitals were based in urban areas only. As a result, the mortality rate among women and children was extremely high.

1951-1961: The decade starting 1951 to 1961, was the period of experimentation. During this time the first National Family Planning Programme was started in 1952. The programme's objective was 'reducing birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilise the population at a level consistent with the requirement of the national economy.' There was no impact on fertility or mortality rate due to poor outreach of family planning programmes and services in India. The population during the decade grew at the rate of 21.5 per cent.

1961-1970: This was the extension approach phase of the family planning programme which emphasized the adoption of an educational approach to family planning. The focus was majorly on rural areas wherein the Panchayat Samitis and Village Development Committees endeavoured to bring about attitudinal changes towards family planning. The government adopted the camp approach and the cafeteria approach with the target to reduce birth rate to 25 per 1000 persons by the year 1973. In the year 1966, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning set up a Family Welfare department to work effectively on the family welfare program. However, a lack of infrastructure and trained manpower proved these efforts to be ineffective in achieving desired results.

1970-1979: The government undertook several new initiatives in the Fourth Plan which focused on:

- Social acceptance of smaller families
- Enlightening both rural and urban population about methods of family planning
- Making various devices and equipment for family planning to couples

An selective approach was adopted for the effectiveness of this program. Couples in the reproductive age group of 25 – 25 were persuaded to consider sterilisation as a method of birth control. Also the MTP Act of 1972 enabled women to terminate unwanted pregnancies.

During the Fifth Plan, the National Family Planning Programme was introduced to curb population growth. Compulsory sterilisation of as many as 82.6 lakh persons was done in 1976 during the Emergency period.

Post Emergency, the Family Planning Programme was renamed as Family Welfare Programme and efforts were made to increase integration of family planning services with those of child and maternal health and nutrition services. The emphasis on voluntary sterilisation slowed down the Family Planning Programme. As a result, the number of sterilisations fell from 82.6 lakh in 1976-77 to 9 lakh in 1977-78.

1980-91: During this period, the government's impetus was on intensifying family planning and Maternity and Child Health (MCH) programmes. In order to provide comprehensive framework for planning, implementation and monitoring of MCH services the National Health Policy was formulated in 1983. The government also started the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) in 1986 aimed at covering all districts by the end of 1990.

1992-2002: During the Eighth Plan, with the intent to improve greater access to MCH programs, initiatives like the Child Survival, Safe Motherhood Programme and the Social Safety Net Programme were started. With focus on improving quality of life and reducing infant and maternal mortality and morbidity rates along with assuring reproductive health choices to couples, the government in 1997 started the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme. The aim was to inform people about Fertility Regulation, Safe Motherhood, Child Survival, Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI), etc., through secondary and tertiary health care centres in the country. In 2001, a National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) was started with granted Rs 500 as financial assistance to BPL women for their first two live births.

2002-2007:The Tenth Five-year Plan called for the integration of numerous vertical programmes for family planning and maternal and child health into integrated programme of healthcare for women and children; a shift from demographic targets to enabling couples to achieve their reproductive goals; and meeting all unmet needs of contraception to reduce unwanted pregnancies. The target regime of planned

family planning efforts also staged a comeback in terms of centrally defined targets to community needs assessment. The National Rural Health Mission was launched during the plan and the Department of Family Welfare was merged with the Department of Health.

2007-2012: The Eleventh Five-Year Plan reiterated the goals and objectives of the National Rural Health Mission which also included reduction in total fertility rate to the replacement level.

However, at the policy level, the focus explicitly shifted towards universal access to healthcare rather than universal access to family planning. Planned family planning efforts were conceptualised within the framework of healthcare and were limited to voluntary fertility regulation only.

2012-2017: The approach paper for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan has recognised that the total fertility rate continues to be above the replacement level that was supposed to be achieved by the end of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and that the couple protection rate has stagnated. The papers stresses that the need for population stabilisation is urgent as widely differing rates of population growth in a democratic set-up could potentially generate regional conflicts. The approach paper recommends dedicated funding for family planning services in high fertility states, bundled with reproductive and child healthcare services under the National Rural Health Mission. It is also recommended that convergence should also be established with programmes that address the underlying factors of high fertility like child mortality, women's empowerment, early age of marriage, etc. The approach paper however lacks a comprehensive approach towards population stabilisation. For example, the approach paper is silent about the challenge of population momentum in those state and union territories of the country which have either achieved or close to achieve the replacement fertility.

Key Achievements of these Programmes

Over the years, the family planning and welfare programmes initiated by the Government of India have yielded several positive results. Since targets have been laid down by the Planning Commission and the Department of Family Welfare for family planning, health and welfare activities there have been progressive achievements over the years. The major ones are enumerated below:

- From just 0.4 in 1971, so far over 250 million births averted in 2000.
- By the year 2000, acceptors of family planning methods reached 59.4 million people.
- There has been significant reduction in the crude birth rate from 40.8 in 1951 to 25.0 in 2001.
- There has been sign significant reduction in crude death rate from 25.1 in 1951 to 8.0 in 1998.

- The total fertility rate has gone down from 6 in 1951 to 2.5 in 2012.
- The infant mortality rate has gone down from 146 in 1951 to 739 in 2001.
- There has been a significant increase in the couple protection rate from 10.4 per cent in 1971 to 46.2 per cent in 2001.
- Life expectancy has gone up markedly from just 37 years in 1951 to 66.21 years in 2012.
- The population growth rate has also seen a marked decline over the decades. The average annual growth rate of population in 1971 was 2.22 per cent which went down to 2.14 per cent in 1991 and further to 1.93 per cent in the 2001 as per the various Censuses'.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

6. Why is family planning required?
7. What was the main aim of the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme?

2.5 EDUCATION: LITERACY AND GENDER BIAS

Education is considered as a fundamental tool for women's empowerment. Education transforms their outlook of the world, increases their chances of employability, enables their active involvement in public life, and also impacts their fertility. Research has clearly specify that educated women prefer less children and they ensure their appropriate socialization

However, significant advancement has been made in terms of literacy and education, the complete picture still is in not in favour of women. At the commencement of the 20th century, the country as a single unit was principally uneducated with only 5.3 per cent of the total population as educated. Just 0.60 per cent of the total women population were then educated. The first census was recorded in 1951, the result was not much better. The literacy rate of females was recorded 7.93 per cent in comparison to 24.95 per cent for males. The Census of 2001 recommends a figure of 65.38 per cent as a literacy rate of entire country, with 54.16 per cent as literacy rate of female part of the population, and 75.85 per cent as literacy rate of male part of the population. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate for males was 82%, while for women it was 65.4%. Literacy is not uniformly distributed all over India. The female literacy rate of twelve states and union territories are less than the national average for literacy of female.

The states like Bihar and Rajasthan have reported the lowest rate for female literacy as 53.33 per cent and 52.66 per cent respectively. These figures recommend that still almost 35 per cent of female population of India is illiterate, which is a big number. Sufficient steps are required to attain literacy for the millions of illiterate females. This has to be taken into consideration that majority of these females are located in rural areas and tribal parts of India. We cannot even neglect a fact that females which fall into category of literate have not attained education above the primary level. This literacy rate further diminishes, once we progress to higher levels of education, although females are actively participating in all professions including engineering and medical career. This can be further supported by per cent of females against number of years in spent in schooling.
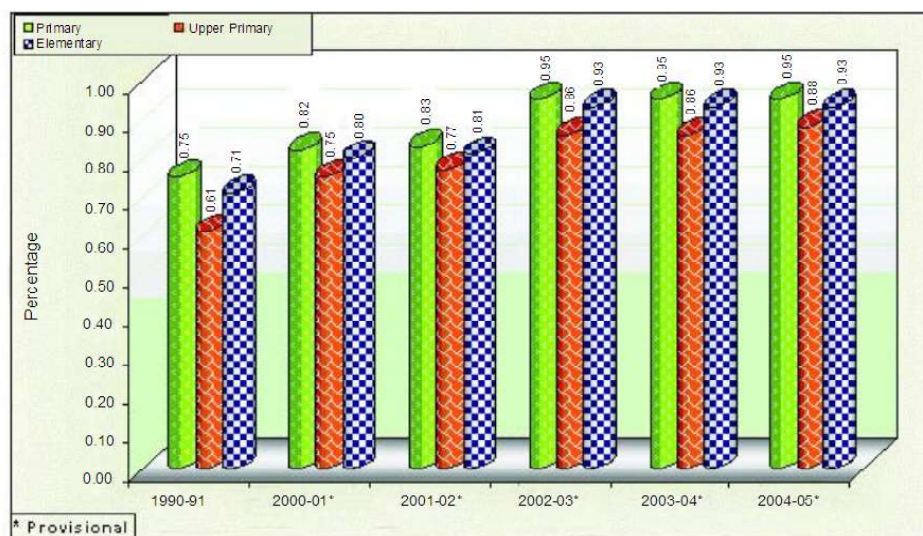
Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi

Fig 2.1 *Gender Parity Indices at Primary, Upper Primary and Elementary Levels*

The figure above suggests a gradual increase in the Gender Parity Index in primary and upper primary stages of school education. The Gender Parity Index measures progress towards gender equity in education. Figure 2.1 suggests that the index has improved from 0.75 in 1990-91 to about 0.95 in 2004-2005 at primary stage, from 0.61 to 0.88 at upper primary and from 0.71 to 0.93 at the elementary stage during 1990-91 to 2004-2005. This shows that although female enrolment in schools in India has increased dramatically in recent times, it is still below males. Thus, there is still scope of accelerating the universalization process of imparting education among females.

At the same time, we require to take adequate measures to decrease the dropout rate, which is considerably higher especially in case of rural girls. The government of India also recognized the significance of imparting education for

basic upliftment in the women's stature. Earlier the focus of government policy was on welfare which further changed to development in the 1980s, and is now, the focus has been shifted to empowerment. Education is instrumental in facilitating process of empowerment.

Low Female Literacy Rate and Its Impact on Our Society

Region-based and state-based disparity: Various regions in India has reported vivid difference in literacy rate of female. In India, the literacy rate of females is relatively higher in urban areas as compared to that in rural areas. Majority of female population in rural areas of Rajasthan are not literate. As per 2011 Census of India, Kerala has recorded the highest literacy rate (92 per cent) of females, whereas Rajasthan has recorded lowest literacy rate (52.7 per cent) of females in India. Even most populated states of India like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have shown low levels in female literacy rate as 59.3 per cent and 53.3 per cent respectively. This is directly proportional to the status of health and infant mortality. States like UP and Bihar have displayed a high mortality rate while Kerala has shown lowest infant mortality rate.

If female literacy rate is low, it implies an overall slow-moving progress of nation as it influences every domain of the development. India is trying hard to attain stability in its population growth through implementation of various family planning programs. However, the females' illiteracy is a stumbling block in the path of such initiatives.

When a girl or a woman is illiterate, its impact is not only restricted to her, but the entire family has to tolerate the results of her illiteracy. It has been witnessed that uneducated women have to bear more hardships in life than educated women. Illiterate women have displayed higher levels of all health related issues. One of the studies has validated that mortality rate of infant is inversely proportional to the literacy level of mother. The females (mother) who herself has not realized the significance of education in life, does not give emphasis on the education of their children. This obstructs the growth of the family as well as the progress of nation in totality.

Lack of education implies, lack of awareness. Uneducated women are not aware of their fundamental rights. They simply have no clue regarding different initiatives undertaken by the government for their welfare. Illiterate women have to face hardships of life, family and even of their husbands.

Reasons for low Female Literacy

The unfavorable attitude of parents towards the girl child and towards providing her education is primarily responsible for low literacy rate of females in India. Most of the families give preference to boys' education as compared to education of a girl child. There is a common perception which is prevalent among parents that girls are

not the earning members of their family as after their wedding they will leave their parents' home. Based on this perception, providing them education is regarded as sheer wastage of time and money. This is the main reason why parents give priority to boys' education as compared to girls' education.

Poverty is a main cause of various problems in India and also a cause of low literacy rate of females. More than 1/3rd of the total population in India lives below the poverty line. However, the government is putting a lot of efforts to the primary education, but there are still several issues that are stopping parents to send their girl child to school. In the rural parts absence of easy accessibility to school is a prime cause of low literacy rate of females. Parents do not want to send their girl child to school if it is situated at far distance from their home or village. Another hurdle in path of female literacy is absence of proper school facilities. Some of the schools do not possess even the basic amenities. As per the research findings, 54 per cent of the schools located in UP lack water facility, and 80 per cent do not possess washroom facilities. Some of the schools do not have sufficient rooms to accommodate all the students.

Another stumbling block in the path of female literacy is inadequate female teachers. India being a gender segregated society gets substantially affected by this factor. However above all, women should realize and appreciate that the education can actually save them from the cycle of poverty, so that they can lead a life in a dignified manner. In case of any untoward incidents, if nothing but their education would enable them to confront the situation bravely. The government should work positively towards the quality and distance of schools. We should boost the girl child's education for creating a balanced and an educated society.

The following programmes undertaken by the government deserve special mention:

- **Mahila Samakhya**: Mahila Samakhya was started in the year 1989 that uses education as a vital instrument for the empowerment of women. This scheme covered around eight thousand villages in 53 districts in the states of UP, Bihar, M.P, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Kerala.
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**: For imparting universal primary education, a campaign was carried out as a part of the international programme of Education for All (EFA). It is inspired by UNESCO's regional programme called APPEAL – Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All. Additionally programmes like Navodaya Vidyalaya, Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, and Vocational Education. National Literacy Mission and Non-Formal Education, have been run by Ministry of HRD for promoting women's education. A creative and new programme known as Lok Jumbish was launched in Rajasthan which has very low rate of female literacy among rural and tribal population, with financial aid from SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) in 1992. Though the project shut down in the year 2004, they aim to facilitate access to primary education by all children of 5 to 14 years age.

Sahajani Shiksha Kendra: Literacy and Education for Women's Empowerment

Country Profile: India

Population	1,210,193,422 (2011 census)
Poverty (population living on less than US$1.25 per day)	42% (2005)
Official languages	Hindi and English
Total expenditure on education as % of GNP	4.1
Primary school net enrolment / attendance ratio (2005–2010)	95%
Primary school completion rate	90%
Total youth literacy rate (15 – 24 years, 2005 – 2010)	• Female: 74% • Male: 88% • Total: 81%
Adult literacy rate (15 years and over, 2005 – 2010)	• Female: 51% • Male: 75% • Total: 63%
Statistical sources	• UNESCO: EFA Global Monitoring • UNICEF • World Bank: World Development Indicators database • Nation Master

Programme Overview

Programme Title	Sahajani Shiksha Kendra: Literacy and Education for Women's Empowerment
Implementing Organization	Nirantar (a national NGO)
Language of Instruction	Hindi and Bundeli (local languages)
Funding	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, DVV (German Adult Education Association)
Date of Inception	May 2002 (ongoing)

- **Sahajani Shiksha Kendra:** A programme of literacy and education for women's empowerment.

The Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) initiated by Nirantar in 2002 largely focuses on women's empowerment by the way of literacy and education. Through various initiatives the programme reaches out to over 2000 SC and ST females.

Sahajani Shiksha Kendra is a programme whose plans and programmes are women-centric and it focuses on adult education and women's literacy. This programme works in adult education of SC and ST women whose education levels are laggard at a low 20 per cent. It also works in areas which lack the best practices for adult literacy.

A few important achievements of this initiative lie in an innovative ethnographic research on literacy-numeracy practices, developing and testing various packages and modules of thematic literacy and Continuing Education (CE), and connecting issues of right to work, health, violence, caste, gender, etc., with the educational work.

The USP, however remains its concentration on women's empowerment and the integration of women's empowerment initiatives with social transformation drives and education. By connecting literacy and empowerment, Sahajani Shiksha Kendra has emerged a successful initiative by Nirantar.

Sahajani Shiksha Kendra's strategy is simple. It emphasizes the following:

- Village-level literacy centres, which are located in the community or hamlet and run over a period of 18 months
- Village-level (six-day) literacy camps
- Residential (ten-day) literacy camps
- Regular literacy follow-up and problem-based interactions with women learners

The right to work and employment is connected with the educational initiatives with local issues. Women's literacy and awareness on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), is the primary purpose of Sahajani Shiksha Kendra, along with allowing access to grow confidence in women to demand, and get their rightful entitlements vis-à-vis NREGA. The NREGA literacy initiative was started in 2007 now covers about 80 villages of Lalitpur district, reaching out to over 500 SC and ST women. Some examples of workshops from the NREGA-literacy camps are given below:

३०५७
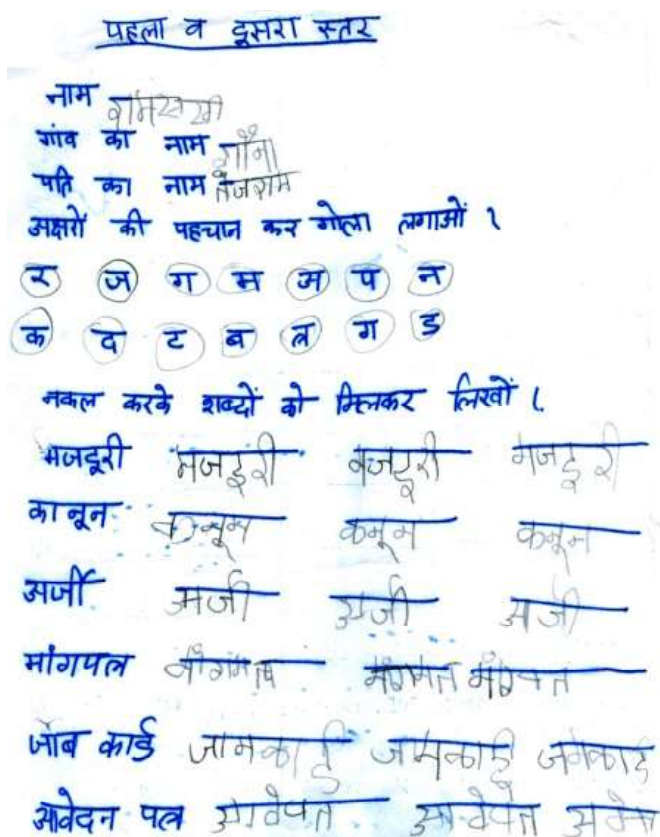
राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारण्टी योजनान्तर्गत पंजीकरण हेतु

आवेदन पत्र

1. आवेदक का नाम .... मीना
2. पिता का नाम ...... राम भरोसी
3. आयु ३२
4. लिंग (स्त्री / पुरुष) .... स्त्री
5. गांव का नाम ...... वयराई
6. ग्राम पंचायत का नाम ...... नगरा
7. तहसील .... महरोनी
8. जाति (अनु0जाति / जनजाति / सामान्य) .... अहिरवार
9. इन्दिरा आवास योजना / एल0आई0 लागायी है या नहीं .... नहीं

परिवार के वयस्क सदस्य का फोटो (एक से अधिक हो सकते हैं)	परिवार के वयस्क सदस्य का फोटो (एक से अधिक हो सकते हैं)
नाम .... आयु .... लिंग	नाम .... आयु .... लिंग ....

मैं प्रमाणित करता हूँ कि उपर्युक्त अंकित समस्त जानकारियाँ पूर्णतः सत्य हैं।

नमूने के हस्ताक्षर   मीना
निशानी अंगूठा
(परिवार के अन्य वयस्क सदस्यों के)

नमूने के हस्ताक्षर
निशानी अंगूठा
(परिवार के मुखिया के)

Residential School for School Dropouts (Eight-month Bridge Course): The SSK programme provides a residential schooling initiative for dropouts so as to bridge the gap and pursue further education conventionally. This is an eight month residential course teaching language, maths, etc., by the way of a specially designed curriculum by Nirantar. Upon completion of this programme girls/women are provided special coaching to prepare for examinations to enter formal school system.

Developing a Cadre of Local Rural Women as Trainers/Facilitators: The success of the SSK programme is due to the involvement of an inspired bunch of women who belong to the most marginalized Dalit and other backword communities of the area.

Building Women's Leadership through Collectives: The newly literate Dalit women are organised into 'Samitis' with the vision to further strengthen their literacy skills through continual education and to come together to form a pressure group in the local area to demand for their entitlements. These samitis organise demonstrations, awareness programmes and rallies, etc., to engage and negotiate local self-governing bodies. This strategy ensures sustainability and greater participation and ownership of the local communities in the Sahajani Shiksha Kendra programme.

Creation of Teaching-Learning Materials and Curricula: Development of material for the Sahajani programme is a crucial aspect of Sahajani Shiksha Kendra. Sahajani Shiksha Kendra has employed various techniques to develop reading/writing/ teaching material. Though the initial blueprint is created by the Delhi-based Nirantar team, Sahajani Shiksha Kendra customises the material as per local requirements. Women and girls involved in the process have brought out 'Jani Patrika' — a Bundeli language broadsheet.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8. What is the primary reason for the low literacy rate of females in India?
9. When was the Mahila Samakhya programme started?

2.6 WORK RELATED ISSUES: EXISTING PREJUDICES, SEX RELATED VIOLENCE, GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Since gaining independence from the British rule in 1947, India has made massive progress in all walks of life – be it science and technology, business and economics, research and development, etc. Indians have carved a niche for themselves on a global platform and are looked at as highly enterprising and industrious people. Despite our efforts and global success, our women in India are still faced with gender based discrimination in almost all walks of life. The patriarchal mind-set of the society still sees women as inferior to men and does not quite give them their credible due. This mind-set has caused women to face innumerable prejudices not just in their personal lives but also in their professional lives too.

Today, women form a very significant chunk of the workforce in both urban and as well as in rural areas. Despite this we witness inequality in various aspects of life including income distribution, religion and race discrimination, discrimination in educational system, in sports, etc. However, the most serious issue is the gender discrimination which has constantly degraded the values of society to which we belong. Among all the different kinds of discrimination, the most serious is the gender discrimination, which we as a society have failed to deal with since ages. In common parlance, discrimination refers to inequality. In this light, gender discrimination may be described as inequality between people of the opposite sex.

Existing prejudices against Women

Prejudices against women are multifaceted. These inequalities are manifested in the following ways:

1. Economic Inequalities
   a. Labour Participation and Wages: Over 50 per cent of India's labour is involved in agriculture. Women constitute a major chunk of this labour

force and toil equally hard with men. Yet, women draw lower wages compared to men.

b. Access to credit: The government has provisioned for laws supporting women with lending and microfinance programs, yet women lack the collateral for processing of bank loans owing to lower property rights compared to men. As such they get lower credit compared to men.

2. Occupational Inequalities

a. Armed forces: Despite being equally qualified women are not allowed to have active combat roles. The Indian army does not grant permanent commission to women as they have not been trained to command not have they been given a chance to do so.

3. Property Rights

Though laws granting equal status to women with men in property matters do exist, yet, in actuality major disparity exists till today. The fact that almost 70 per cent of land in rural India is still owned by men suggests that women are not treated equally with men. Laws pertaining to succession and property are not enforced strictly.

4. Educational Inequalities

a. Schooling: Girls continue to be less educated than boys. Even today preference is given to boys going to school and girls staying home to help with household work.

b. Literacy: As a result of discrimination in schooling, girls are obviously less literate compared to boys. As per the Census of 2011, literacy rate among women is only 65.46 per cent compared to 82.14 per cent in men.

5. Inequalities pertaining to health and survival

a. Abortion of female foetuses: Even though law against pre-natal sex determination exists, it is flouted across the country as the country is steeped in age old customs of preferring boys over girls. The girl child is often abandoned or killed in many cases.

b. Poor Health: According to one survey by National Family Health Survey in 2005, girls were undernourished compared to boys and only 441.7 per cent girls under two years old were immunised as against 45.3 per cent boys.

6. Gender based violence

Women endure all kinds of violence against them. These include, domestic violence, dowry related violence/death, honour killing, rape, etc.

7. Political Inequalities

Even after nearly seven decades after independence political inequalities and political representation of women still remains inadequate compared to the rest of the world. Though the status of women has improved, yet, a lot needs to be done to empower them. The 33 per cent reservation bill for women has remained a far dream as decision on it has remained pending over half a decade now since it was first introduced.

Gender Discrimination at Workplace

Gender discrimination has been on an all-time high in Indian workplaces. The media is abuzz with news reports of discrimination and harassment of women at their workplace. Such discriminations at the workplace can take various forms such as unusual or unequal treatment of women compared to men.

a. A notion prevails that men are more hardworking than women and as a result women are paid lesser wages compared to men. This is especially true in case of women labourers who toil equally with men and are yet paid less than men. This is known as sex based discrimination.

b. Very often women are taken advantage of when they step out to eke a living to supplement the household income after being on years of sabbatical for child rearing. They often end up getting paid less which isn't commensurate with their level of education or experience which they may have had prior to going on sabbatical. Women are thus, forced to take up jobs with lower salaries.

c. Women are often asked for sexual favours by their bosses/co-workers in lieu of recommendations/promotions, etc.

d. At the workplace, females are often considered objects of gratification as they're chosen to entertain clients over men who may be better equipped and knowledgeable to discuss business matters. This is sheer objectification of women.

e. Bullying at the workplace is also a growing cause of worry.

f. Men are offered often accorded greater salaries and incentives compared to women who may be equally hard-working and may deserve better positions in their workplace.

g. Promotions are mostly given to men especially at top level positions. The notion prevails that women are incapable of handling the pressure of leadership and are often considered inferior to men when it comes to risk-taking and decision-making.

h. There is also the discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace.

2.6.1 Sexual Harassment And Its Different Forms

Sexual harassment has traditionally been divided into two well-known forms:

(i) Quid pro quo and

(ii) Hostile work environment

(i) '**Quid Pro Quo**' literally translated means 'this for that.' Applying this to sexual harassment, it means seeking sexual favours or advances in exchange for work benefits such as promises of promotion, higher pay, academic advancements, etc. 'He seemed to imply that if I went along with his advances, I would get better opportunities to report stories.' This type of sexual harassment holds the women to ransom as her refusal to comply with a 'request' can be met with retaliatory action such as dismissal, demotion, memos, tarnished work record and difficult work conditions. 'Not long after I refused

to sleep with my supervisor, negative remarks began to appear on an otherwise exceptional work record.'

(ii) '**Hostile work environment**' is a less clear yet more pervasive form of sexual harassment. It commonly involves conditions of work or behaviour towards a woman worker which make it unbearable for her to be there. While the women worker is never promised or denied anything in this context, unwelcome sexual harassment occurs simply because she is a woman.

The new sexual harassment guidelines attempt to capture both these forms of sexual harassment through an exhaustive definition, which includes;

Unwelcome:

(i) Physical contact and advances

(ii) Demand or request for sexual favours

(iii) Sexually coloured remarks

(iv) Showing pornography

(v) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature

So if someone's words or actions:

- are unwelcome or offensive to you

- make you feel uncomfortable or threatened

- affect your job performance—it is probably sexual harassment

Impact and consequences of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment at the workplace can have cumulative effects on the whole organization; its impact on individual women are multiple and all add up to losses for the organization as a whole.

Where sexual harassment has become so unpleasant as to make a workers' life miserable, she will most often seek alternative employment. The employer will on its part incur significant costs in recruiting and replacing such workers. Generally, therefore it is in the interest of employers that the working environment ensures that workers are treated with dignity. For society as a whole sexual harassment impedes the achievement of equality; it condones sexual violence and hinders both productivity and development.

What should you do if you have been sexually harassed?

Below are some suggestions which while not appropriate in many work contexts may provide some direction in terms of what a person affected by sexual harassment might do.

Tell the harasser to stop. Given our social context and conditioning, some men as well as women may not recognize that certain kinds of behaviour are harassing at the same time many women are unable to inform a harasser that his attentions are unwanted. Keeping this in mind it is surprising how effective such a statement can be to end harassment before it escalates. It requires an affected women to

make clear that she finds the behaviour offensive. If the behaviour persists, a memo may serve the purpose.

Keep a record or talk to someone. Even if you are unable to say anything to harasser, and if it's practical, try to keep a 'diary' of everything he has said and done- messages, cartoons, off- colour comments, inappropriate comments about your appearance, etc. Keep a record of dated and as meticulous a record of everything that was said and keep this with you at home. If you are not in a position to keep your record in writing or work in an informal sector, try and relate it to someone in charge in your union. If the harasser is your superior, try to talk to his superior or a trustworthy co-worker. Where NGO groups are assessable and equipped to know about sexual harassment, consult one for advice. It is important for any potential inquiry to be clear about the exact nature of the harassment and when it occurred.

Keep your evaluations. If periodic evaluations of your work have been done, make sure you have copies of them. If your personal file shows that your performance was good before the harassment began, and that it subsequently deteriorated, keeping such documentation will be of help.

Get a medical check-up. If you have been raped or physically assaulted take a friend along and go for a medical check-up. Obtain a medical report. This is important should you decide to pursue a legal case. Once your organization has a policy according to the Supreme Court's guidelines, your employers would have to take on the responsibility for arranging this.

Informally raise the issue at work. Talk to other women in the office, and find out if any of them have had similar experiences at the workplace. It is not uncommon to find others who may have experienced the same but chose to keep silent, fearing the social as well as economic repercussions. Encourage them to talk and support the issue. The new guidelines prohibit victimization of a complainant.

File a complaint. If there is a complaints mechanism in place then follow the procedure and file a complaint. If one does not exist then encourage your colleagues and others at the workplace to lobby for one with details about the complaint mechanism and members of the complaints committee.

Remember, the guidelines require the process to be confidential. Raising the issue or complaining about sexually offensive behaviour that an employee knows of is one step towards creating a largely healthy and safe work environment for all.

Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Sexual harassment at work is a sex discrimination issue since a person is targeted for harassment because of his or her sex. It is unwanted sexual conduct in a workplace, the forms of which are diverse and numerous.

It is discrimination against women, for it denies them the right to work in a healthy and rewarding atmosphere.

By requiring a person to exchange sexual favours for economic survival, sexual harassment denigrates the victim, most frequently women, and relegates employment opportunities and promotions that are available to others without sexual

considerations. Sexual harassment emphasizes the sexuality of victims over their role as workers and thereby imposes less favourable working conditions upon them.

The Supreme Court of India issued guidelines on August 13, 1997, which recognize the long existent but mostly unspoken harassment that women face at the workplace. Sexual harassment at workplace is real and pervasive. Jokes with sexual undertones, obscene behaviour with sexual overtures, direct sexual harassment— all of them combine to make the atmosphere in the workplace unhealthy and discriminatory for women. It also seriously affects women's psychological and physical well-being. Sexual harassment at work is not a 'personal' problem. It is rather a form of gender specific violence which discriminates against women on the basis of their sex. It is a violation of women's human rights, for it violates their freedom and personal dignity.

Sexual harassment is extremely widespread: It touches the lives of 40–60 per cent of working women and a similar proportion of students in colleges and universities. Yet, sexual harassment remains unnoticed, unquestioned and unchallenged.

According to NCRB 'Crime in India, 2002'

- 44,098 incidents of sexual harassment were reported
- 121 women were sexually harassed everyday
- One woman was sexually harassed every 12 minutes
- An increase of 20.6 per cent was seen in incidents of sexual harassment between 1997–2002

Guidelines to combat sexual harassment at the workplace

The guidelines have just begun to receive visibility at the workplace especially in light of a subsequent decision of the Supreme Court of India which reaffirms sexual harassment as human rights violation. Strategies in different work contexts are only beginning to emerge but are not as yet sufficiently broad based to allow for general examples. Whatever the context therefore, strategies should include examining social messages that do not fit today's work environment. To do so, it is important that organizations\employers undertake the following critical steps:

- An effective policy which defines as well as illustrates the meaning of sexual harassment at work
- Effective and creative preventive mechanisms
- Education/training programmes for all levels\members of an organization
- Establishing a sexual harassment complaints committee

Global advances in addressing gender-based violence

Recent international conferences and campaigns have resulted to a large extent in increasing awareness and breaking the wall of silence that surrounded gender-based violence. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (The Women's Convention) has several provisions which are applicable to

GBV; however, to date thirty countries have not signed the convention. A third of these countries have signed with reservations while twenty-four others have specifically opposed Article 16, a key provision that guarantees equality between men and women in marriage and family life (UNFPA, 1998).

Nevertheless, globally, women's groups and feminist movements have lobbied and put pressure on governments to enact legislation and policies that punish, prevent or protect women against GBV. In response concerned non-governmental organizations have also established programmes and services to either support, care, or inform women who have been abused. Programmes that target changing community attitudes towards GBV have proved most beneficial (Neft and Levine, 1997).

Specialist services like residential shelters and refuges, special courts, women's police stations, and special desks set up at local police stations have also proved beneficial to women who have survived abuse from their partners. Countries that have specialist shelters and refuges for battered women include the following:

- Argentina, France, Netherlands, Thailand
- Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Trinidad & Tobago
- Austria, Honduras, Pakistan, Turkey
- Bangladesh, Ireland, Peru, United Kingdom
- Bolivia, Israel, Philippines, United States
- Canada, Italy, South Korea
- Costa Rica, Japan, Sri Lanka
- Ecuador, Malaysia, Sweden

Source: Neft and Levine, 1997: Where Women Stand: An International Report on the Status of Women in 140 Countries.

Laws against sexual harassment at the workplace

The Government of India has made provisions to safeguard the rights of women and to prevent discrimination against them especially at the workplace. On April 23, 2013, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (Sexual Harassment Act) was published in the Gazette of India.

The primary objectives of the Sexual Harassment Act are to provide:
  a. Protection against sexual harassment at the workplace
  b. Prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment

Based on this act, sexual harassment is now considered as infringement upon and violation of the fundamental right to equality of women. This is guaranteed by the Indian Constitution in Article 14 and Article 15 guaranteeing fundamental rights and Article 21 which guarantees a woman every right to life and to live with dignity. Sexual harassment, now, is also considered as a violation of a right to practice or to carry out any occupation, trade or business as provisioned under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, which includes a right to a safe environment free from harassment.

The Sexual Harassment Act describes sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) such as physical contact and advances, demand or request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, or any other unwelcome physical verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Furthermore, the Sexual Harassment Act stipulates that a woman shall not be subjected to sexual harassment at any workplace. As per the statute, presence or occurrence of circumstances of implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment; threat of detrimental treatment in employment; threat about present or future employment; interference with work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment; or humiliating treatment likely to affect the lady employee's health or safety may amount to sexual harassment.

Features of the Sexual Harassment Act

The following are the salient features of the Sexual Harassment Act:

a. The act very clearly defines a workplace and gives itself a very wide meaning covering all possible places visited by employees or modes of transportation or stay/residence, etc., as workplace.

b. It also defines the meaning of the word 'employee' which includes regular, temporary, ad hoc employees, individuals engaged on daily wage basis, either directly or through an agent, contract labour, co-workers, probationers, trainees, and apprentices, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer, whether for remuneration or not, working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the terms of employment are express or implied.

c. The act requires employers to set up an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) for every organisation with more than 10 employees. The Sexual Harassment Act also sets out the constitution of the committees, process to be followed for making a complaint and inquiring into the complaint in a time bound manner.

d. This act also makes provisions for interim relief to the aggrieved women in the form of transfer to any other workplace and leave of up to three months along with regular statutory/contractual leave entitlement.

e. The process of complaint and enquiry can be easily understood from the flowchart shown in Figure 2.2.

f. The Act also has provisions for action and punishment against frivolous, false, and malicious complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace.

NOTES

India: Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

Procedure to be followed
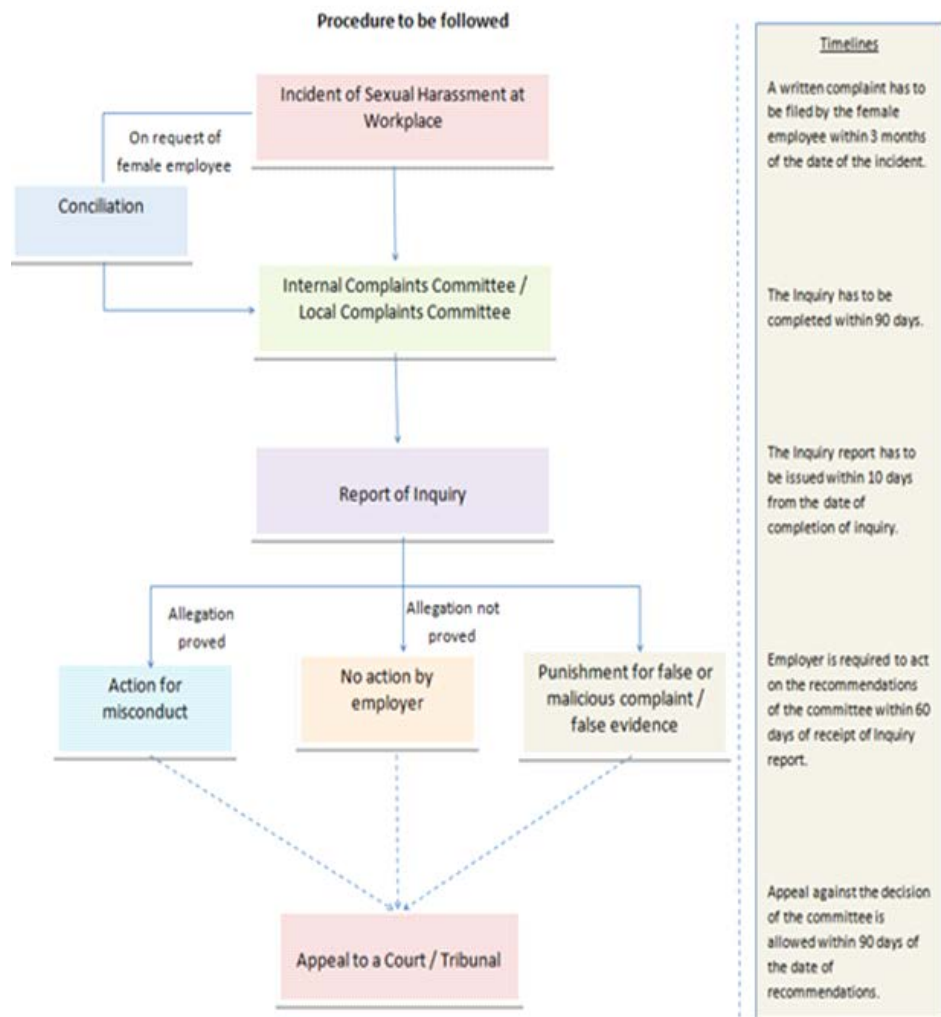
*Fig 2.2 Process of Compleint and Enquiry*

For provisions of law to take effect, women must come forth with complaints of any kind, for action to be taken against perpetrators of injustice and harassment.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10. Provide two examples of sexual harassment.
11. Name the two forms of sexual harassment.
12. What are the primary objectives of the Sexual Harassment Act?

2.7 SUMMARY

- The health of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society.
- Indian women have low levels of both education and formal labour force participation.
- Many of the health problems of Indian women are related to or exacerbated by high levels of fertility.
- High levels of infant mortality combined with the strong son preference motivate women to bear high numbers of children in an attempt to have a son or two survive to adulthood.
- Maternal mortality and morbidity are two health concerns that are related to high levels of fertility.
- Place of birth and type of assistance during birth have an impact on maternal health and mortality.
- Anemia, which can be treated relatively simply and inexpensively with iron tablets, is another factor related to maternal health and mortality.
- Numerous studies indicate that malnutrition is another serious health concern that Indian women face (Chatterjee, 1990; Desai, 1994; The World Bank, 1996).
- Mother's education, according to the NFHS, is highly correlated with the level of malnutrition among children.
- The HIV/AIDS epidemic in India is spreading rapidly and increasingly will affect women's health in coming years.
- One of the clear counters of measuring gender equality is sex ratio. It may be described as the number of females per 1000 males.
- Improvement of sex ratio shows a healthy growth rate among female to male population in India.
- The basic indicator of gender inequality in India and one of the most powerful indicators is the preference of a son over a daughter.
- The government of India has pushed for several measures for checking a declining sex ratio.
- With a population of over 1.2 billion people and rising and standing only second to China, the need for effective measures for family planning and welfare is undoubtedly one of the most important issues currently posing the country today.
- The people of India must realize that having smaller families not only reduces the burden on the country's resources, but also, the number of dependents in families.
- Over the years, the family planning and welfare programmes initiated by the Government of India have yielded several positive results.

- Education is considered as a fundamental tool for women's empowerment.
- The unfavorable attitude of parents towards the girl child and towards providing her education is primarily responsible for low literacy rate of females in India.
- Despite our efforts and global success, our women in India are still faced with gender based discrimination in almost all walks of life.
- At the workplace, females are often considered objects of gratification as they're chosen to entertain clients over men who may be better equipped and knowledgeable to discuss business matters.
- Sexual harassment at the workplace can have cumulative effects on the whole organization; its impact on individual women are multiple and all add up to losses for the organization as a whole.
- The government of India has made provisions to safeguard the rights of women and to prevent discrimination against them especially at the workplace

2.8 KEY TERMS

- **Prenatal sex determination:** Prenatal sex discernment is the prenatal testing for discerning the sex of a fetus before birth.
- **Honour killing**: An honour killing is the homicide of a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief the victim has brought dishonour upon the family or community.
- **Quid Pro Quo:** Quid pro quo is a favour expected in return for something.
- **Maternal mortality**: Maternal death is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.
- **Malnutrition:** Malnutrition is the lack of proper nutrition, caused by not having enough to eat, not eating enough of the right things, or being unable to use the food that one does eat.
- **Literacy rate**: Literacy rate is the total percentage of the population of an area at a particular time aged seven years or above who can read and write with understanding.

2.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. One of the reasons for the poor health of Indian women is the discriminatory treatment girls and women receive compared to boys and men.
2. NFHS stands for National Family Health Survey.
3. Sex ratio is one of the clear counters of measuring gender equality is sex ratio. It may be described as the number of females per 1000 males.

4. The main objective of the scheme 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' is to improve efficiency of welfare services meant for girl child in India.

5. Two fact or that have led to a lower sex ratio in India are illiteracy and widespread poverty.

6. Family planning is required for longevity and health of a mother and her child and for the overall wellbeing of the family.

7. The main aim of the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme was to inform people about Fertility Regulation, Safe Motherhood, Child Survival, Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI), etc., through secondary and tertiary health care centres in the country.

8. The unfavorable attitude of parents towards the girl child and towards providing her education is primarily responsible for low literacy rate of females in India.

9. Mahila Samakhya was started in the year 1989. It uses education as a vital instrument for the empowerment of women.

10. Physical contact and advances and demand or request for sexual favours are two types of sexual harassment.

11. The two forms of sexual harassment are 'quid pro quo' and 'hostile work environment'.

12. The primary objectives of the Sexual Harassment Act are to provide:
    a. Protection against sexual harassment at the workplace
    b. Prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment

2.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the two broad categories according to which sexual harassment was classified traditionally?

2. List some reasons for the poor health of Indian women.

3. Write a short note on domestic violence as a serious health issue for Indian women.

4. Examine the various causes of decreased sex ratio in India.

5. Define family planning.

6. What are the reasons that cause the need for family planning and welfare in India?

7. Write a brief note about the Sahajani Shiksha Kendra programme.

8. Outline the various factors of gender discrimination in Indian workplaces.

9. What are the impact and consequences of sexual harassment in India?

10. What do you understand by sexual harassment at the workplace?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the term sexual harassment and its different forms.

2. Discuss the health status of Indian women.

3. Explain how mother's education is strongly related to children's malnutrition.

4. Describe some of the government programs to improve the sex ratio in India.

5. Discuss the various strategies for family planning and their respective outcomes.

6. State the various programmes undertaken by the Government of India to increase the female literacy rate.

7. List and discuss about the existing prejudices against women.

8. Identify the various guidelines to combat sexual harassment at the workplace.

2.11 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

Structure

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In Pandit Nehru's words, 'You can tell the status of a nation by looking at the status of its women.'

The status of women in India has undergone many ups and downs. The 20th century has brought about many changes in the economic, social, and political arena. We have made remarkable progress in all aspects of living of which the most exemplary one would be in the social sphere. Women have been endowed with equal opportunities to compete with men and one another. In the previous century and in the early 20th century, women were mostly confined to the home, household work and taking care of the family. The 20th century witnessed a great deal of independence and autonomy for many countries. Women become equal fighters for freedom. They demanded and received equality in education and there lies the secret of their success. Education and the awareness that comes with it have enabled this gender to fight for their cause. They have taken positions along with men in becoming supplementary breadwinners. This has led to more work actually—for now they are 'Managers' of their home and family as well as part of the workforce. They have penetrated almost all spheres of activity and figure prominently in all walks of life, be it education, health, politics, science, social work, or law.

The status of women in India is contradictory and complex. The ancient Indian texts of the Rig Veda and Upanishads tell stories of venerable women sages and seers like Gargi and Maitrei, etc. We have had some great women such as Rani Laxmi Bai, Meerabai, Mumtaz Mahal, Indira Gandhi, etc., who have been acknowledged as leaders and thinkers of our society. In spite of these great women, larger parts of the female species were not accorded their basic rights. It was only the pioneering effects of Mahatma Gandhi that led to the emancipation of Indian women. Modern history of India speaks of powerful women such as Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Nehru Pandit, the first woman to preside over the United Nations General Assembly (1953) and Shrimati Indira Gandhi, who became the first female Prime Minister of India in 1966.

Throughout history, women have generally been restricted to the role of a home-maker, that of a mother and wife. Despite major changes that have occurred in the status of women in some parts of the world in recent decades, norms that restrict women to their homes are still powerful in India, defining activities that are deemed appropriate for women. They are, by and large, excluded from political life, which by its very nature takes place in a public forum.

In spite of India's reputation for respecting women, including treating them like Goddesses, history tells us that women were also ill-treated. There was no equality between men and women. This is true of ancient, medieval and early modern times barring some revolutionary movements such as that of Basaweshwara, the 12th century philosopher in Karnataka, who advocated equality, casteless society, status for women, and betterment of the downtrodden. Reform movements in the 19th and 20th centuries led by great social reformers provided boost to women's legal status in India.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the historical perspective of women's position in India
- Explain women's position in India in the contemporary scenario
- Discuss the legal status of women in India
- Recognize the importance of empowerment of women
- Discuss the changing status and role of women in India
- Know the history of prostitution in India
- Discuss the social conditions of women

3.2 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: LACK OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Political participation has been a pertinent subject of interest for both political scientists and sociologists alike, quintessentially so, since the subject deals with the act of

democratic citizenship – the right to vote and elect. Before delving deeper into the topic of political participation and the lack of representation in it by womenfolk in India, it is important to define, understand the term, and its connotations.

Even though there may not be a unanimously accepted definition of political participation, it is often is referred to as 'political engagement' or 'public involvement in political decision making'. It has been pointed out by Riley, that, political participation is 'a set of rights and duties that involve formally organized civic and political activities (e.g., voting or joining a political party).' Diemer refers to political participation as an 'engagement with traditional mechanisms in the political system, such as voting in elections and joining political organizations.'

Munroe defines political participation in terms of the degree to which citizens are exercising their right to engage in political activities (e.g., to protest, to speak freely, to vote, to influence or to get more energetically involved). Such definitions capitalize on the lawful nature of political praxis, in other words, they clearly establish a frame of reference with the available repertoire of political praxis within the conventional political norms, although these norms are not necessarily uniform across countries or across time.

Alternatively some researchers do not focus on the praxis but only on the telos, primarily by defining political participation as a set of activities aiming to influence political authority. For example, Huntington and Nelson defined political participation, as an 'activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making', whereas Verba characterized it as an "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies.' The praxis does not seem to be important enough in the context of these definitions in as much as they are mainly teleological in nature.

In the context of the political participation of women in India, there are four pertinent arguments that may be cited. The first argument looks at 'empowering women' as political categories in the context of political participation. The second argues that suffrage or the voting rights shall remain as symbolism or 'political tokenism' instead of actualising participation in traditional societies such as ours. The third argument looks at voting rights as a necessary ingredient towards creation of an egalitarian society. The fourth and last argument debates that social emancipation of women, in the existence of biases like gender inequality and lack of property rights, political participation cannot be achieved through reservation or 'quota' rights.

Various viewpoints and discourses have sprung from arguments on women's participation. One such is called the incrementalist perspective which tends to believe that gender equality is a phasal phenomenon. This discourse believes that state intervention may assist moving gender equality higher over a considerable period of time. Women's rights groups have, however, protested against this as they believe it goes against the spirit of achieving gender equality in a short span of time, as it is believed that the incrementalist perspective could take hundreds of years to achieve gender equality in politics in a country like India. Truth be told, in India, it is the incrementalist discourse that is dominating the political discourse and given the fact

that gender bias still exists in India and right to property is still a dream for womenfolk at large, a question is increasingly being asked as to whether our politics can ever become like that of the Nordic countries, a 'laboratory for gender equality'? Nonetheless, the fact remains that India has had a long and vibrant history of women's participation since precolonial times.

It is a globally known fact that compared to men, the involvement of women in politics still remains low across developed and developing countries. Though, today the percentage of women as voters has increased significantly, not too long ago they had had to wage long battels to get their right to vote. As women's political participation is not equal to that of men, women are therefore unable to have much of a say in the political decision making process.

Gender equality is necessary for the progress of any society and women who constitute almost half the population of the world need to be adequate by represented in decision making bodies. The inadequate representation of women from positions of power affects their ability to challenge the relegation of womankind as a whole. More and more women have to be in politics and in positions of power in order to change the very nature of power which today tends to excludes them.

Broadly speaking, the process through which an individual gets to play a role in the political life of society wherein he/she has the opportunity to take part in deciding what the common goals of that society are and how at best they can be achieved, is known as political participation. It can also be defined as the actual participation in these voluntary activities by which members of the society share in the selection of rules and directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy.

Political participation entails participating in political activities and participating in the electoral process. However, it is not just about casting of one's vote, political participation goes beyond just that, as it also involves participation in political party membership drives, campaigning, attending meets and protest marches, communication with leadership, holding party positions, contesting elections and influencing decision making.

With this understanding as a backdrop, let us examine the participation of women in politics across a spectrum of countries. Evidently, their involvement is rather small compared to men. The larger lot of womankind has kept aloof barring a small section of the urban elite who are able to acquire some level of decision making powers. Women in several countries have had to fight an arduous war for equality with men however; no serious attempts are being made to accommodate women in politics.

The most common political action for the citizen of any country is their right to vote. Both men and women enjoy this right equally, however, very interestingly women did not have a right to vote until the 20th century. Led by the Americans, women in most of the liberal democracies in the West won their right to vote through a long and arduous fight for their rights.

The following table (from Samvedi, published by DEEDS, Mangalore) shows as to when women won their right to vote:

Table 3.1 *Women Right to Vote*

Country	Year
Australia	1902
Finland	1906
Norway	1913
Denmark	1915
Soviet Russia	1917
America	1918
England	1928
France	1944
Italy	1945
Switzerland	1971
Syria	1971

The issue of universal adult franchise was raised early in 1917 when women sough to win their right to vote. The British government granted this right based on a woman's level of education, wifehood and ownership of property. It was much later in 1935, when the Government of India Act provided the right to vote to all those women over the age of 21 who fulfilled the conditions of property and education. However, the Constitution of India which came into force in the year 1950 gave the universal right to vote to all citizens.

In most countries women's representation in legislative bodies is pretty low. Barring a few European nations like Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, most countries have failed to give women their due space in representation in their political system. In the mentioned countries, women have made substantial headway into male dominated areas of politics and now hold critical decision making positions. Ironically, in some of the very advanced nations of Western Europe, North America, etc., women's representation in their legislatures is still rather small.

3.2.1 Current Global Status of Leadership and Political Participation of Women in Parliaments

There are some important statistical facts (as of August 2015) about participation of women politicians at a global level:

- Between 1995 and 2015 the participation of women in parliaments across the globe has nearly doubled.

- Since 1995, women's representation in parliaments has risen by only 11.3 per cent and their current number makes up for only 22 per cent of all parliamentarians.

- As per the survey, globally there were only 10 women who were serving as heads of government and there were only 11 women who served as heads of state.

- Women in Rwanda won 63.8 per cent seats in their lower house and led the world with the highest number of women parliamentarians.
- There are 37 states worldwide where women make up less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians.
- There are six chambers in the world with no women representatives.

Across regions

- As of August 2015, the representation of women found to be unevenly spread across single, lower and upper houses in all regions.
    o Women in Nordic countries led at 41.1 per cent
    o In second place were Americas at 25.5 per cent
    o The rest of Europe excluding Nordic countries accounted for 24.4 per cent
    o Women in Sub-Saharan Africa followed closely at 23.0 per cent
    o Women in Asia stood at 18.4 per cent
    o Women in Middle East and North Africa made up about 17.1 per cent
    o The bottom of the pack were women in The Pacific region at 15.7 per cent

Other domains of government

- As of January 2015, women overseeing social sectors like family welfare and education made up for only 17 per cent of government ministers.
- A research on panchayats in India has revealed that the success in the number of drinking water projects with female-led councils was 62 per cent higher than in those projects which were led by men.

Expanding participation

- Globally, a representation of 30 per cent is a commonly accepted benchmark for women's representation. As per the survey, there were 41 single or lower houses which comprised over 30 per cent women. These included as many as 11 African nations, and 9 Latin American nations.
- There were 34 out of the 41 countries had some sort of a defined quota for women's political participation. There were 17 countries which specifically used legislative candidate quotas. There were six countries which used reserve seats for women and there were countries where parties had adopted voluntary quotas for women's representation.
- As much as 25.2 per cent seats were held by women in countries with proportional electoral systems which was higher than those using the plurality-majority electoral system which stool at only 19.6 per cent and 22.7 per cent which used a mixed system.
- Greater women's participation does not necessarily ensure democratic and transparent political system co-related with lower levels of corruption.

Democracy and transparency provide a favourable environment for more women to participate in the political processes.

In the year 1995, during the Fourth World Conference on women held at Beijing, women's empowerment became the hot topic of global debate. During the conference it was declared that 'women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision making is a demand for simple justice and necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account.' This conference laid stress on the importance of women's participation in assuming positions of power and influence not only because they were talented enough to do so and hold valid viewpoints, but also because it was a matter of equality human rights.

3.2.2 Political Participation of Indian Women

According to the Census of 2011, the total population of India was a little over 121 crore (1,21,01,93,22) comprised of 62,37,24,2448 males and 58,64,69,174 females. According to the Census of 1901, the sex ratio of females per 1000 males was 979 and that according to the census of 2011 was 940. There has been a steady decline in number of females due to the apathy towards the birth of a girl child. Even till date, millions of Indians think the birth of a girl child is inauspicious. Not surprisingly the sex ratio in 1991 had dipped to 927 females per 1000 males.

The table below shows the decennial sex ratio in India.

Year	Females/1000 males
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933
2011	940 Source: Census of India

According to the Census of 2011, the total literacy rate in India stands at 74.044 per cent. Women's literacy stands at 65.46 per cent which is still significantly less than that of men at 82.14 per cent.

According to the Census of 2001, women's contribution was 25.68 per cent towards the total work participation in India. This was constituted by both rural and urban women at 13.45 per cent and 11.55 per cent respectively. Of these, the primary sector drew 71.8 per cent of the women as employees whereas the tertiary sector

notched up 21.7 per cent of women. The remaining per cent of women were engaged in the manufacturing sector. These stats show that literacy rate and work participation rate of women have definitely gone up, but, at a very slow rate.

Hence, in recent years, the main agenda of most governmental and non-governmental organisations has been social, political, economic empowerment of women. Political empowerment makes it necessary that women participate equally in decision making bodies and the political processes. India is not the only country where women are under-represented. A historical analysis of the status of women throughout India's history needs to be done so as to understand the status of women in India.

Women's Status in Ancient Indian Society

Gender has been one of the key differentiators for all societies across the world. Men and women were assigned different roles and status in their respective societies. Predominantly, men were the bread-winners and protectors and women were the home-makers and child-bearers. Historical records have depicted the status of women changing through the ages. A historical analysis reveals that their status has shown a declining trend over the ages.

A historical analysis of women's position in ancient India shows that women did not share an equal position with men. Women's position was largely subservient to men as they were recognized only as wives and mothers. Efforts were made to improve the status of women religions such as Vaishnavaism, Veerashaivism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Despite this and the darkest period for women was the 18th century when their status was subservient to that of men in all fields.

History of Political Participation of Women in India

The social reforms movements which started in the 19th century were the precursor to the intellectual changes that lead to a noticeable increase in women participation in the political processes. The thought process was that social change can be brought about through educating women and by bringing about progressive legislation only, and also that social evils can be done away with by raising social consciousness, and by empowering women and by tackling injustice done to them.

Subjugation of women, the practice of Sati, widow re-marriage, polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide, etc., were some of the primary issues against which many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Behramji Malabari, Govinda Ranade, etc., raised their voices. Some of their reformative moves were met with staunch Hindu orthodoxy who demanded that reforms, if any, should be implemented within the framework of Hinduism.

Rajaram Mohan Roy campaigned for the ban on Sati. This resulted in the governmental resolution of 1829, banning the practice of Sati. Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar started a movement for widow remarriage in 1850's resulting in the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. However, this act denied widows the right to their husband's and his family's property. This Act was met with strong opposition from the Bengali orthodoxy and as such nothing significant could be achieved through these legislations. Polygamy was taken up by Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar. He

along with Pandit Ramabai, Manorama Majumdar and Sarala Devi Goshal started 'Bharat Shree Mahamandal' aimed towards educating women. Sakthi Samiti, an organisation for widows was started in 1886 by Swarna Kumari Devi. Behranje Malabari started a campaign against child marriage and nationwide debate over Age of Consent Bill. However, orthodox Hindus opposed this staunchly. The attack was led by Lokmanya Tilak, who condemned this law as he felt it was intended to reform the Hindu religion.

Religious organisations like Anne Besant's Madras Hindu Association (1904), Dayanand Saraswati's Arya Samaj (1875) and Vivekananda's Ramkrishna Mission (1897) were the embodiment of the new revivalism of Hinduism, in that they favoured some reforms in Hindu society such as raising the age of marriage, remarriage of child widows, and educating women well within the framework of Hinduism. The influential middle-class of the era had the drive to decisively reform Hinduism which the British believed were barbaric acts of the Hindu religion. However, British intervention did face opposition for interfering with Indian culture from the revivalists themselves.

The reformers of the 19th century were keen to imbibe the democratic and progressive ways of the western society and were also bent upon restoring India's lost glory. The desire to imbibe change and yet to root this change in one's indigenous culture was natural to a society that had experienced the trauma of colonialism. Ironically, the movements were not passionately concerned about issues like gender equality per say, rather they were limited by the value system and didn't focus seriously on the cause of women's emancipation. Barring a few minor changes these endeavours did not result in any drastic changes in the status of women in India. However, the movement is said to have laid the foundation stones of a much great and far reaching women's liberation movement that ensued in the years to come.

Women in India's Freedom Struggle

The freedom struggle and the opening up of membership for women by the Indian National Congress marked the commencement of political awakening among Indian women. The Swadeshi Movement of 1905 is credited with initiating women into India's freedom struggle, it was Anne Besant who in 1914 entered active politics and accelerated the participation of women in India's struggle for freedom. She was also elected the first woman president of the INC. It was around the same time when Sarojini Naidu also became active on the political scene. Since M. K. Gandhi's arrival on the Indian political scene in 1917, and his call for action for freedom, the participation of women in the freedom struggle became a nationwide phenomenon.

Gandhi realized through his experiments with Satyagraha, that women could be an equal party to men in the struggle for India's freedom from the British. Gandhi's brand of Ahimsa, non-violent agitation, and civil disobedience empowered and mobilized a large number of women to participate in the freedom struggle with equal fervour. Thus, bringing down the barriers of caste and class lines, Gandhi was able to bring women to play a vital role in freedom struggle. He was of the belief that though men and women were not identical they were definitely equal mentally,

intellectually and spiritually making women capable to partaking in any activity. He was able to metamorphose the traditionally home bound Indian women into a powerful instrument of action. His contribution to the cause of women lies in his absolute and unambiguous insistence on the dignity and autonomy of women not just within their homes but also in the society. His argument was that a woman's capability to sacrifice her own personal interest for the sake of her family could be extended to her community and the nation itself, thus, inspiring women from across the country to join hands in his Non-cooperation Movement. The freedom struggle brought Indian women from all backgrounds and all walks of life to the center stage and legitimised the Indian National Movement's quest to drive the British out of India. There were a large number of women who actively participated in the Non-cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Satyagraha Movement and the Dandi March, etc. Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Renuka Ray, Basanti Devi, Urmila Devi and Kasthurba Gandhi played an important role in the movement boycotting foreign goods. The Barsad Satyagraha of 1922- 24, Bardoli Sathyagraha of 1928 and Salt Sathyagraha in 1930 women came out in great numbers to participate in the freedom struggle. Mridula Sarabai, Sarojini Naidu, Muthuben Patel, Khurseedben, Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya and Avanthikabai, Gokhale were some of the prominent women associated with the Salt Sathyagraha. During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1940, women participated and courted arrest in large numbers. Suchetha Krapalani was the first one to do so, who had been in charge of the Women's Department of the All India Congress Committee, since 1939.

Even more number of women took part in the Quit Indian Movement of 1942 many of whom emerged as leaders in holding meetings, organising strikes, etc. The Assamese girl Kanakalatha Barua was killed in police firing while leading a procession of 500. Usha Mehta of Bombay ran an underground radio station relaying communication to people far and wide. Aruna Asaf Ali was one of the most significant woman leaders of the Quit India Movement who remained underground for a long time to avoid arrest by the British for being the editor of *Inqulab*. There were also a set of women who did not follow the path of Ahinsa and adopted a revolutionary path. Kalpana Joshi and Preeti Waddadar were key associates in the Chittagong armoury raid. In Delhi, Roopvati Jain at the age of 17 was in charge of a bomb factory under Chandrashekhar Azad.

Even though women were active in both the moderate and extremist factions, the number of women occupying pivotal and decision making positions were still far less when compared to men. Women contested the elections of 1937 across the country and some even won their seats and became ministers. In all eight women were elected from general constituencies and 42 from reserved constituencies. Some key names were Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Ansuyabai Kale and J.T. Sipahimalchi, Hansa Meht and Begum Shah Nawoy took up prominent ministerial positions across various states in India.

The freedom movement was strengthened by the participation of women in the struggle. However, gender equality was nowhere on the agenda of the Indian National Movement even though women proved their mettle in strengthening the political movement.

Women's Participation Post Independence

The participation of women in the freedom struggle had laid the foundation of what was to come after the freedom fighters wrested power from the British in 1947. Independence was a seen as an opportunity by women to participate in the democratic processes. The newly formed government had taken up a large number of reformative measures especially in the legal, social and economic spheres in India. Women too had become more aware of their rights as political consciousness drove home the fact that their welfare lay in their own hands as they had learned from their participation in state and national politics.

Constitutional Provisions

The following provisions in the Indian Constitution ensure quality between men and women:

(i) **Article 14**

This article of the Indian Constitution guarantees zero discrimination towards citizen of the country either by law or by the administrators of law. It also guarantees equality for all citizens before the law.

(ii) **Article 15**

According to this article no discrimination can be made among citizen of India based on religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth. In a way, Article 15 guarantees protection against any form of discrimination.

(iii) **Article 15 (3)**

As per this article, nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children

(iv) **Article 16**

This article guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. This especially guarantees that women must be treated at par with me in matters of employment or office under the state.

(v) **Article 39**

This article guarantees the right to an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens irrespective of their gender. It further guarantees equal payment for same amount of work done by men and women. This article also guarantees protection against abuse of health and strength of men, women and children. It also ensures that citizens are not to work and exploited out of economic necessities.

(vi) **Article 42**

In accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 42 guarantees just and humane working conditions along with maternity relief to women.

Provisions for Reservation in Panchayati Raj

The Constitution of India provides reservation to women in the Panchayati Raj System as a result of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

(a) **Article 243-(D) (2)**

Under this women belonging to the SC or/and ST categories should be given not less than 1/3rd the number of seats reserved under clause (I).

(b) Article 243-(D) (3)

Under this article, every panchayat shall allot reserved seats not less than 1/3rd the total number of seats, filled by election, for women candidates. These seats must be allotted in rotation to different constituencies within the panchayat.

(c) **Article 243-(D) (4)**

According to this article, reservation for women from SC and ST communities is a must in the offices of chairmen of every panchayat. This must be done in accordance to the state legislature.

Despite so many provisions in the Constitution of India aimed at equality and empowering women, their numbers in office over the years has consistently gone down. The rights only seemed like a mirage and as a result there was a shift in the aims of the Constitution as the gap started widening in all political spheres.

In the light of the above statement, Articles 325 and 326 guarantee political participation equality rights and the right to vote, respectively. While the right to equal political participation for both men and women remains a distant dream, the latter has been enjoyed by both men and women for decades now. However, figures are telling of the fact that the lack of space for women's participation in politics has resulted in a poor show in sheer number of women at decision making positions.

After India's independence women have taken up roles at the forefronts of seemingly less conventional activities such as anti-alcohol agitation, environmental and peace movements along with some revolutionary activities which equally the effect power relationships as they have the capacity to influence the state. Despite this politics has been a difficult terrain for women to tread on as their representation still remains miniscule. Table 3.3 shows a comparison between the numbers of women members in both houses of the parliament.

Table 3.3 Women in Parliament

Year	Members in Lok Sabha			Members in Rajya Sabha		
	Total members	Female	%	Total members	Female	%
1952	499	22	4.41	219	16	7.31
1957	500	27	5.40	237	18	7.59
1962	503	34	6.76	238	18	7.56
1967	523	31	5.93	240	20	8.33
1971	521	22	4.22	243	17	7.00
1977	544	19	3.49	244	25	10.25
1980	544	28	5.15	244	24	9.84
1984	544	44	8.09	244	28	11.48
1989	517	27	5.22	245	24	9.80
1991	554	39	7.17	245	38	15.51
1996	543	39	7.18	223	19	8.52
1998	543	43	7.92	245	15	6.12
1999	543	49	9.0	245	19	7.8
2004	539	44	8.2	245	28	11.4
2008	543	59	10.8	-	-	-

Source: CSDC Data Unit. http://www.Indiastat.com/2005

Table 3.3 shows the pitiable state of women's representation in the Lok Sabha. The fact that women's representation had not exceeded even 11 per cent by the year 2008 speaks volumes about the actual state of women's empowerment and participation. In the Rajya Sabha, women seem to be doing better, perhaps due to the indirect election and nominations of women members.

Women Ministers in various cabinets

Table 3.4 *Women Cabinet Ministers*

Year	No of women Ministers
1952	3
1957	3
1962	5
1967	5
1971	3
1977	2
1980	8
1984	5
1989	1
1991	5
1996	5
1998	4
1999	9
2004	10
2009	9

Source: www.parlimentofindia.nic.in

Again the above Table 3.4 shows the pitiable state of women's representation in the cabinets of the government of India in various years. These women were given less important portfolios.

Women as Lok Sabha Contestants

The Table 3.5 below shows the per cent of women who contested the Lok Shabha elections in various years:

Table 3.5 *Women Lok Sabha Candidates*

Year	Males	Females	Total	Females (%)	Males winning (%)	Females winning (%)
1952	1831	43	1874	2.30%	26.08	51.16
1957	1473	45	1518	3%	31.7	60
1962	1915	70	1985	3.50%	24	50
1967	2302	67	2369	2.80%	21.3	44.8
1971	2698	86	2784	3	18.5	24.4
1977	2369	70	2439	2.8	22.1	27.1
1980	4478	142	4620	3	11.5	19.7
1984	5406	164	5574	2.9	9.2	25.6
1989	5962	198	6160	3.2	8.5	13.6
1991	8374	325	8699	3.7	5.9	12
1996	13353	599	13952	4.2	3.8	6.7
1998	4476	274	4750	5.7	11.2	15.7
1999	3976	278	4254	5.8	12.3	17.3
2004	5050	355	5405	6.5	9.8	12.6

Source: Parliamentary Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

Once again the Table 3.5 above shows the dismal state of women's representation in the Indian political scene. It is often seen that women are denied tickets by political parties under the presumption that they are not capable of winning. However, these figures above clearly show that in pure percentage terms, the number of women winning elections is greater than men.

There are several facts that have led to the dismal state of women's political participation in India. During the freedom struggle women took active part in the freedom movement. Post-independence the participation of women has steadily

gone down as the Nehru-Gandhi ideals have totally disappeared. Age old roles assigned as per one's gender seem to have gotten the better of women and are major hindrances on their path to attaining greater success in politics. What has kept women away from gaining prowess in politics is the traditional division of labour, illiteracy, economic inequality, an apparent lack of training and our very own electoral system. Besides these, contesting elections is a costly affair and raising funds and support has proven rather difficult for women. Furthermore, corruption across levels has also dissuaded women from stepping into the oft-called 'dirty' politics and as such political parties seem to have a general lack of intent to field for women aspirants giving rise to the issue of gender bias. Women today have made major inroads into areas which were traditionally male dominions – such as business, law, engineering, art and medicine, etc., yet, women have found it difficult to gain in the political arena.

33 Per Cent Reservation Bill

All the aforementioned factors have necessitated the special consideration of a 33 per cent reservation quota for women in the legislature. Statistics have already proven that there has been a miniscule increase in the number of women contesting elections and winning.

In the year 1974, the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) came forth with their findings that despite the fact that an increasing number of women in India and exercising their franchise, this at a rate faster than that of men, but, the trends in participation of women as contestants in elections is quite the opposite. The committee observed that 'the rights guaranteed by the Constitution have helped to build an allusion of equality and power which is frequently used as an argument to resist protective and accelerating measures to enable women to achieve their just and equal position in society'.

The decisions of the 73rd and the 74th Amendment Act 1992 arise from the recommendations of the National Perspective Plan for Women which in 1988 recommended a reservation of 30 per cent for women in local governments and other decision making bodies to encourage women to participate in politics at the grass roots level. This legislation boosted the participation of over two million women in policy making bodies many in local governments at the levels of members, vice presidents and presidents. The 73rd Amendments Act ensured the constitutional representation of women on 1/3rd the number of seats in Gram Panchayats.

The dissatisfactory representation by women in parliament and state assemblies has been a major cause of concern for various women's groups. The irony of this democratic country is that despite constituting nearly 50 per cent of the population, women have to abide by the rules and regulations made by men. Political parties have had a lackadaisical attitude towards granting women greater opportunity for political representation. The need to empower women politically has been felt

through the years and therefore a demand for 33 per cent reservation in national and state legislatures became the foremost demand of various women's organisations.

Over the years several Amendments have been put forth by various ruling governments for the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill. However, the opposition parties have cited several issues time and time again. One such was their demand for a sub-quota for representation of women from the backward classes. As of today Women's Reservation Bill or the Constitution's 108th Amendment Bill is pending which proposes to reserve 33 per cent of all seats in the Lok Sabha and in all state legislative assemblies for women. The Rajya Sabha has passed the bill on 9th March 2010. However, as of February 2014, Lok Sabha has yet to debate and vote on the bill. Should the Lok Sabha approve the bill and the President signs upon the decision sealing it, it will give women's empowerment and their right to political representation the much needed impetus.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. How many chambers are there in the world with no women representatives?
2. Where was the Fourth World Conference on women held?
3. What is the main agenda of most governmental and non-governmental organisations in recent years?
4. Who started a movement for widow remarriage in the 1850s?
5. Who was elected the first woman president of the INC?

3.3 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is said to be the oldest profession in the world. In India, a prostitute has been called by different names such as a *tawaif* or a devadasi at different times during the historical evolution of the country. Globally, the world's oldest profession is a $100 billion industry whose legality varies from country to country. It is an industry which is ubiquitous globally with its presence across all countries in various manifestations; the history of this trade can be traced back 4000 years to ancient Babylon. Despite its global presence, one must not mistake that women are driven to it for their love of physical pleasure. Truth is that its drivers are socio-economic and psychological pains that push women into the trade of prostitution.

As far as laws are concerned, prostitution in India is not illegal per se. However, activities relating to the trade such as engaging in solicitation or pimping or running a

brothels, etc., are illegal. As per one estimate by the Human Rights Watch, there may be over two crore prostitutes of various ages in India and as many as 33.5 per cent of them are estimated to be under the age of 18 years.

3.3.1 Prostitution: It's History in India

For many centuries, the world's oldest profession was the theme of Indian literature. Our mythological texts abound with references to high-class prostitution in the form of celestial demigods acting as prostitutes. Our literature abounds with references to them as Menaka, Rambha, Urvashi, and Thilothamma. These women have been attributed with having unsurpassed physical beauty and femininity. It is said that the trade of prostitution in our country is as old as in some of the other countries in the world today.

According to one scholar: 'The origin of this institution is shrouded in mystery, yet some of the authorities on the problems associate it with religious practices, which in the beginning were of a customary nature. The cause of shame prevented it for a time from degenerating into license, but the string tide of circumstance forced it into a mercenary affair.'

The rulers of this land have always been inclined towards stemming the growth of this trade. Even in the past several attempts were made through state legislation or by public opinion and as such, areas were designated for listed prostitution in towns and villages in the past. To this effect even Kautilya had defined rules for keeping a check on prostitutes. The reference to prostitution can also be found in Mahabharata and the Jatakas and even Hindu Shastrakaras like Gautam, Manu and Brihaspati had suggested controlling prostitution. There are also references to the tradition of *Nagarvadhu* or 'brides of town'. Famous examples include Amrapali, state courtesan and Buddhist disciple, described in *Vaishali Ki Nagarvadhu* by Acharya Chatursen and *Vasantasena*, a character in the classic Sanskrit story of *Mricchakatika*, written in the 2nd century BC by Sudraka. The Devadasis from temple were known as 'temple prostitutes'. Kanhopatra is venerated as a saint in the Varkari sect of Hinduism, despite spending most of her life as a courtesan. Binodini Dasi started her career as a courtesan, and later became a Bengali theatre actress. In Goa, a Portuguese colony in India, during the late 16th and 17th centuries, there was a community of Japanese slaves, who were usually young Japanese women and girls brought or captured as sexual slaves by Portuguese traders and their South Asian lascar crewmembers from Japan. Even during the medieval period and rule of Mughals they were treated very royally – Sanskrit plays have been written on this, even now, they form a central theme for many movies. Some of these movies have been able to provide an insight to the plight of the prostitutes in our country. However, the true face still lies hidden. Ever since the downfall of Mughal Empire, the conditions have deteriorated to deplorable levels. Exploring through the causes of prostitution, the first and the foremost factor is poverty. Muslim

rulers in India had harems. Furthermore, industrialization during the British rule also aggravated this social evil, even though measures were taken to curb it.

In ancient India, prostitutes have been referred as to devdasis. Originally, devadasi were celibate dancing girls used in temple ceremonies and they entertained members of the ruling class. However, sometime around the 6th Century, the practice of 'dedicating' girls to Hindu gods became prevalent in a practice that developed into ritualized prostitution. Devadasi literally means god's (Dev) female servant (Dasi), where according to the ancient Indian practice, young pre-pubertal girls are 'married off', 'given away' in matrimony to god or local religious deity of the temple. The marriage usually occurs before the girl reaches puberty and requires the girl to become a prostitute for upper-caste community members. Such girls are known as jogini.

They are forbidden to enter into a real marriage. The system of devadasi started only after the fall of Buddhism and records about them start appearing around 1000 AD (Bharatiya Sanskruti Kosh, IV, 448). It is viewed that the devadasi's are the Buddhist nuns who were degraded to the level of prostitutes after their temples were taken over by Brahmins during the times of their resurgence after the fall of Buddhism. According to the 1934 Devadasi Security Act, this practice is banned in India.

This ban was reinforced again in 1980s, but the law is broken every day. Poverty and untouchability contribute to the persistence of this terrible practice. Reference to dancing girls in temples is found in Kalidasa's *Meghadhoot*. The popularity of devadasis seems to have reached its pinnacle around 10th and 11th century CE. The rise and fall in the status of devadasis can be seen to be running parallel to the rise and fall of Hindu temples. The devdasi system was mostly prevalent in southern India and it reached its height during the Chola Empire.

Though the government has taken adequate steps in order to combat with the problem of devdasi, even the Devdasi Prohibition Act was not fully successful in solving the problem in India. The most important reason still is poverty, ignorance and hunger which are forcing them to this kind of exploitation. Now, this was the old story or the beginning of prostitution, apart from these there is also references of prostitution in *Kama Sutra* written by Vatsyayana sometime between the second and fourth centuries CE.

Today, India harbours Asia's largest red-light area – Mumbai's Kamathipura was an exclusive brothel for the British occupiers during colonial rule, but, later became accessible to the public post-independence.

Some infamous red light districts of India include GB Road in Delhi, Sonagachi in Kolkata, Kamathipura in Mumbai, Budhwar Peth in Pune and Reshampura in Gwalior. The number of prostitutes is constantly rising in India. As per the last estimate there were about 2.8 million of them. A majority of the women have been brought in from Nepal and Bangladesh.

3.3.2 Causes of Prostitution

Let us now look at the causes of prostitution in society.

1. **Economic causes:** There are several causative factors leading to prostitution and economic conditions are definitely at the forefront, even though they are not the exclusively responsible for it. Not all women getting into prostitution are from poor families. There is still a significant number of women involved in this trade who actually hail from very well to do families. On the flip side, there are others (an overwhelming majority) who are pushed into this trade in order to fend for themselves and their families.

   The various economic factors are:

   (i) **Poverty**: As mentioned earlier, poverty is the main causative factors for prostitution in India. Usually, women who are unable to find employments due to several reasons including illiteracy are often pushed into prostitution to eke out a living. Very often they have to sexually gratify their prospective employers and often parents themselves push their children out of haplessness. Maid servants are often subjected to sexual exploitation by their employers and this too leads them into the jaws of this monstrous social evil. The concept of poverty however is relative. Women may also get involved into this trade in order to maintain a high level of lifestyle. Examples can be cited from the film and glamour industry where women have gotten into flesh trade when their professional career declined.

   (ii) **Under-age employment:** Very often girls find employment at a young impressionable age in places like hotels, factories, offices and shops, etc., where they are easily misled into prostitution.

   (iii) **Unhealthy working conditions:** In India many women are able to get employment through intermediaries. These intermediaries and agents recruit women and keep them at their mercy whenever opportunity offers itself they exploit it fully and often succeed in receiving sexual bribe. Once a woman falls prey to their lust they in no time make a professional out of her.

   (iv) **Pollution and corruption in industrial centres:** In most industrial centres of India, the living conditions for the poor are rather barbarous and accommodation is scarce and expensive even in slums. This especially makes life for women difficult and they often fall prey to brothel pimps who entice and lure them under the guise of offering a better life. However, the sad reality is that girls often end up at one of the brothels which are flourishing in these industrial towns. Also, since women are lower paid than men, labour contractors at various industries and construction sites tend to employ more women than men as labour

force. These women are vulnerable and fall easy prey to these individuals who often sexually exploit them. Also, youngsters are exposed to sexual activities of adults within their living quarters owing to lack of privacy in their cramped accommodations. The precocious development of sex often drives women of prostitution.

(v) **Immoral traffic in girls:** There are hundreds and thousands of young female children who are kidnapped from their homes every year. Very often these kids end up at brothels and are pushed into prostitution at a rather young age.

2. **Social causes:** Besides economic factors, social factors are also major contributors to the growth of this social evil. The social factors include the following:

(i) **Family factors:** According to a study conducted in the UK, children of troubled or broken families who have not received much love, care and attention as children, often grow up and choose this path of degradation. They tend to fall for anyone who shows them the slightest of affection towards them. Also, a mother's promiscuity also has a bearing on the behaviour of children, especially daughters. Furthermore, children of people with a criminal background also have a tendency to get into prostitution.

(ii) **Marital factors:** There are many superstitions prevalent in India. Some of these actually force women into prostitution. Widow re-marriage is still frowned upon and a widow thus unable to re-marry may fulfil her physical desires by self-abuse and by having clandestine affairs. As these are but poor substitutes to sex, they often turn prostitutes. Secondly, in India it is still commonplace to marry persons very young. If these girls become widows they often do so when they are very young. In India homes particularly in villagers and poor regions, the illicit communications are common. Even brothers (in law) and other relatives stoop so low as to have sex connections with their sisters (in law). As a matter of fact there is no relationship so sacred that it does not get sometimes consumed by the fire of passions.

(iii) **Bad neighbourhood:** Children living in and around red-light areas are often influenced negatively by their surroundings as they get used to seeing immoral acts on a regular basis. Brothel owners usually frequent these areas in search for new girls.

(iv) **Illegitimate motherhood:** Sometimes, it is seen that women who get pregnant from illicit relationships and cannot get an abortion for one reason or the other, often get drawn into the vicious circle of prostitution.

3. **Psychological causes:** Besides the above cited reasons, there are psychological reasons also that impel women to embrace the lifestyle of prostitution. Research has found that frigidity has pushed women to take desperate steps and move from one man to another in quest for sexual pleasure

and become a prostitute by trial and error. There is a psychological abnormality knows as troilism which may drive women into this social evil. There are many psychological causes and it may not be possible to discuss them all in this section.

4. **Biological factors:** People born with chromosomal anomalies or hyperactive endocrine glands may feel compelled to seek sexual gratification from numerous sexual partners.

5. **Religious and cultural factors:** The devadasi custom in southern India stemmed from religious and cultural beliefs wherein a daughter from the family was dedicated to serve gods with complete submission. In actuality though, this practice lead to the spread of prostitution under the garb of religion.

Effect of Prostitution

It is without a doubt that prostitution is a primary cause of personal, familial and societal denigration. Women entering this trade often have to lead a double life and tend to lose their position and status in society. They are ostracized by not just friends and family but by the society as well and they often find themselves lonely. As a result, they often find themselves living in isolation amongst the likes of themselves. Also being at the lower rung of the social ladder, these women are often subjected to all kinds of social stigmas and economic exploitation. They often suffer from various illnesses and STDs and may even pass these on to their offspring. People soliciting their services often run the risk of contracting venereal diseases. The illegitimate and adulterous sexual union, if known to the wives, brings tension in the family and ultimately to desertion and divorce.

There are clinical and psychoanalytic evidence to show that many young men who had premarital sex – union with prostitutes suffer from 'psychic – impotency' in married life. The reasons for this may be many and various depending upon the individual. One of the reason for the 'psychic-impotency' is the hatred owned towards the prostitute's sex developed before, during or after the sex-union and fear of the contamination of venereal diseases from the prostitute at the time or after he had sexual relation with her. A prostitute performs two functions in the society-viz., the commercial functions and health function. The brothels and disorderly hotels where prostitution is permitted become accessible places for the public to have free sex satisfaction. This brings money to those who conduct it, but, at the same time, it spreads venereal diseases. The managers of hotels, pimps, panderers and prostitutes perpetrate criminality in society by inducing and kidnapping girls. They resort to various foul methods of procuring young innocent girls and women to make their trades very prosperous and profitable. By this, they wreck the personality, communicate diseases, scatter marriage and ruin the family of many girls and people in society.

3.3.3 Countering Prostitution

There are a number of provisions and measures laid down by to counter this menace. These are briefly discussed below:

1. **Pre-independent efforts:** During the British rule, the East India Company had formulated rules to deal with sexual offences. Later on provisions were made in the IPC to counter such offences directed towards countering crimes outraging the modesty of a woman and forceful or non-consensual intercourse.

   The Code provides punishments, an imprisonment up to one year of fine or both for insulting the modesty of any women by word, sound, gesture or exhibition of any object, or introducing on her privacy.

2. Indian Penal Code and Prostitution

   (i) **Section 354:** The offence of assault or the use of criminal force against a woman with the intention to outrage her modesty invites a penalty of two years or a fine or both.

   (ii) **Section 366:** Imprisonment up to 10 years or a fine or both may be awarded to a person who kidnaps or abducts a woman so as to force her to have illicit intercourse by criminal intimidation or by abuse of authority by any person or under any other compulsion inducing a girl who is under the age of 18 years.

   (iii) **Section 372:** Under this section any act of letting or hire or otherwise disposing of or obtaining possession of any girl under 18 years of age for any unlawful or immoral purpose was made a punishable offence.

   (iv) **Section 375:** This section provides for up to 10 years of jail term for having sexual intercourse with women under the age of 16 years. Such an act is treated as rape not withstanding that she may have consented to it.

   (v) **Section 497**: This section lays down that the act of, consensual or otherwise, sexual intercourse by a person with the wife of another man without the consent or connivance of that man constitutes the act of adultery, making the act punishable with imprisonment up to 5 years or fine or both.

   (vi) **Section 498A:** This section pertains to the husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty. Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be pun-ished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also is liable to fine. For the purpose of this section, 'cruelty' has 2 connotations:

   (a) Any wilful conduct which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or health (whether mental or physical) of the woman.

   (b) Harassment of the woman where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand.

Failure of measures to curb prostitution: Such measures taken by the Government of India against prostitution make the efforts salutary. It was the Bombay bench of Maharashtra which was credited for putting an effective check on prostitution in Bombay, with the passing of The Bombay Prevention of Prostitution Act in 1923. Furthermore, other states also passing acts against this menace were the U.P. Naik Girls Protection Act 1929, the Bombay Devadasi Protection Act 1934 and Madras Devadasi (Prevention of Dedication) Act 1947. Sadly, despite these measures in place, the menace of prostitution has not been dealt with completely and the problem still persists.

Some of the reasons for unchecked growth of prostitution are listed below:

 (i) Since prostitution as such was not deemed to be a crime the acts only that dealt with activities connected with its practice were criminalised.

 (ii) The existence of laws does not ensure that the practice of prostitution has been taken care of. The very fact that it is difficult to ensnare the pimps, the procurers and the property owners who let their premises for this purpose aids to further spread of prostitution.

 (iii) Often improper policing, corruption and a lack of judicial courts dedicated to the cause have led to unchecked growth of prostitution.

 (iv) The immoral trafficking act for the suppression of prostitution has been variedly enacted across different states and there were many deficiencies in the law itself. For instance, there was no restriction on brothels away from educational institutions, religious places or any other public place. In some states there were no such special acts and no actions could be taken only through the Indian Penal Code which was insufficient for suppression of immoral traffic.

 (v) Sometimes it is also asserted that prostitution is an ancient profession as old as the world itself and it has been impossible to stop it. Further, it was thought that prostitution acts as a safety valve absorbing the violent passions of the dissolute and save society from ugly overture.

Programmes to curb Prostitution post-Independence

Post-independence, the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene has intensified its campaign to check prostitution. With branches in 128 districts across over 18 states it strives to provide the following functions:

 (i) Rehabilitation of prostitutes

 (ii) Liberating the prostitutes from the profession

 (iii) Control of sexually transmitted diseases

 (iv) Survey and research in the areas

 (v) Creating a public opinion against the exploitation of women taking place in prostitution

Further, the association has opened two rescue homes in Mumbai and Hyderabad. It also opened four hospitals for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases at Delhi, Meerut and Nagpur.

Advisory committee on social and moral hygiene: The Central Social Welfare Board in pursuance of the international convention signed at Geneva in May 1950, for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and girls. All India Conferences of Moral and Social Hygiene appointed an advisory committee on social and moral hygienic in December 1954 with Ms Dhanwanthi Rama Rao as a Chairman to investigate the problem in all its aspects throughout India. This committee recommended that for the proper enforcement of laws:

(i) There should be a comprehensive legislation on an all India basis to check prostitution. It would be impossible to introduce other measures in the absence of such legislation.

(ii) There should be an Inter-State Police Organization in order to link up or coordinate activities all over the country.

(iii) Only good institutions and organizations should be allowed to work in the areas of rehabilitation of prostitutes.

(iv) There should be a special police squad for the enforcement of this act. It should comprise only of women.

(v) Women produced before courts should be remanded to approved places or remand homes, where they can be contacted by social workers and probation officers.

(vi) Special courts should be constituted, consisting of a few trained women to look after the social and human aspects of the problem and not solely from the print of view of guilt determination.

(vii) One who uses the lodge or public places for the purpose of prostitution should be punished.

There have been numerous attempts to draw the attention of the public towards the social evil of prostitution through conferences, workshops and seminars on flesh trade and regular All-India Conferences were being organized prior to 1951. The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene organized numerous conference on the issue in Delhi, Agra, Chennai. After 1961, the association also organized training programmes for social workers. In 1978, the Association for Moral social hygiene conducted programme and thoroughly discussed the problems of prostitution. These conferences were of the opinion that the existing laws in various sate for the suppression of immoral traffic were not enabled enough to bring any noticeable changes. The Third All-India conference held in the year 1953 recommended that both individual as well as commercial prostitution should be abolished.

Suppression of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act of 1956: As India is a welfare state, all efforts are underway to control and eradicate the curse of prostitution. Several laws have been enacted to safeguard the interest of women. In 1956, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act was put into force under which it was declared that running brothels and enticing females for the purpose of prostitution was made a legal offence.

Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act: The Parliament passed the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act in 1956. The main provisions of this act are as follows:

(i) Under Section 3 of the act any person who keeps or manages, or acts or assists in keeping or in the management of a brothels is to be vigorously dealt with, i.e., a rigorous imprisonment for one to three years and fine up to Rs 2000 be imposed.

(ii) Under Sections 4 and 5 any person over eighteen who knowingly lives, wholly or in part, on the earnings through prostitution, or procures or attempts to procure a woman or a girl for the purpose of prostitution is severely dealt with imprisonment of two years or fine or both.

(iii) Under Section 7 any woman or girl who carries on prostitution and the person with whom such prostitution is carried on, in any premises, which are within a distance of two hundred yards of any public place are to be punished.

(iv) Under Section 8 soliciting in a public place is prohibited.

(v) Under Section 13, special police officers are to be appointed for dealing with offences under this act.

(vi) Under Section 19, prostitutes have been given right to seek protections in a protective home.

(vii) Under Section 20, magistrates have been authorized to remove any girl or woman carrying on prostitution at any place from there to any other place which they consider proper.

(viii) This act provides some special powers on the administration to deal with various aspects of prostitution. These are, appointment of special police officers; power to search promises without warrant; power to issue directions for the rescue of girls; ordering the closure of brothels and eviction from certain promises; power to order removal of prostitutes from any place; and establishment of protective homes, etc. In spite of this act, it is disheartening to note the prostitution and immoral trafficing of women is still prevalent in India. Prostitution by itself is no crime and the acts deal only with particular activities connected with its practice. The visitor of the prostitute is not punished even if he visits her in a brothel. The prostitute herself is punished only for soliciting or for carrying on prostitution in a prohibited locality or premises.

3.3.4 Preventive Measures to Tackle the Problem of Prostitution

Various efforts have been made to shut down the brothels and the places which encourage prostitution. The legislations have been enacted. However, some necessary measures that are necessary are given below:

- **Sex education:** Both women and men should be educated about the negative impacts of sexually transmitted diseases and the sources of such diseases. There are several steps to educate people. At an early age, the value of self-control should be taught. In school and colleges there should be a proper

provision for sex education. To spread the awareness of sex education, the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene is also working in this direction.

- **Employment opportunities for women:** Because of extreme poverty women are forced to take up this profession. Therefore, proper education and training should be provided to them. These training skills will increase the value of employability of women in job market. Hence, through economic empowerment women can be prevented from entering this degraded profession.

- **Abolition of certain social customs:** The system of dowry which prohibited many girls from getting married should not be encouraged. Widow remarriage should be taken in practice. There is an urgent requirement to change the perspective of society towards the dowry, widow marriage and devadasi.

- **Double Standards of morality have to be discouraged:** The notation of double standards of morality should be stopped. As Smt. Ranganayaki observes, 'It is in reality impossible to have double standard morally in matters of sex for without male chastity, female chastity is impossible. As a result of a double standard of morality which demands ds woman to be chaste, and expects man to be irregular and there developed tolerated vice.'

- **Publicity and propaganda:** If any kind of nuisances in the surroundings is found, then immediate actions should be taken such as one should come forward to report such events. Parents should be cautious about the Internet habits of their children as the present generation has all kinds of access.

- **Role of voluntary agencies in rehabilitating prostitutes:** Numerous voluntary organizations have also come forward to provide shelter for such women. Many important agencies are actively working to reform and rehabilitate prostitutes and find them useful work. Some of the examples are They Women Home, Chennai; Shardhanand Anath Ashram, Mumbai; The good shepherd Home, Chennai; Chris pins Home, Poona; The Salvation Army Home, Bengal; Khusalbagh Mission orphanage, Gorkhpur; Mahila Anthalaya And Varanasi.

To conclude, it may be said that the practice of prostitutions must be dealt with several levels and from several ways. The society requires a radical change. It is necessary to impose various laws in the favour of prostitutes. Proper education and system and economic empowerment can alleviate such issues from the society. This calls for reorganization of the entire problem of child care, widow remarriage, dowry system and child upbringing.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

6. List the causative factors leading to prostitution.

7. When did the Parliament pass the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act?

3.4 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Besides political and economic conditions, social conditions are also present in the lack of women's representation. Social causes such as rape, divorce and domestic violence are closely related to the status of women in the society. All these causes are explained in the following sections.

3.4.1 Divorce

The term 'divorce' comes from the Latin word 'divortium', which means 'to turn aside', 'to separate'. Divorce is the legal cessation of a matrimonial bond. Thus, the term divorce or the dissolution of marriage can be defined as the act of termination of a marital union involving the cancellation of legally recognised duties and responsibilities of marriage, and thus, resulting in the dissolution of ties of matrimony between two adults who were married as per the laws of that state or country. The laws pertaining to divorce vary very widely across the world. In most countries couples seeking a divorce seek the approval and sanction of the court of law or any other competent legal authority and may involve discussion of issues arising out of divorce such as – alimony, child support, child custody and division of the ex-husband's property, etc. In a majority of countries a monogamous marriage is a legal requirement for law to be able to allow each former partner to remarry. In countries where polygyny and not polyandry is allowed, a legally divorced woman becomes entitled to marry another man.

Divorce is an age-old and a global phenomenon. However, quite interestingly there are some countries such as the Philippines and Vatican City which still do not have the provisions for divorce. There are a few countries in Europe and Latin America that have recently granted legality to divorce. The table below shows the countries and the year in which divorce was legalised.

***Table 3.6** Divorce Legalisation in Different Countries*

Country	Year
Italy	1970
Portugal	1975
Brazil	1977
Spain	1981
Argentina	1987
Paraguay	1991
Colombia	1991
Andorra	1995
Ireland	1996
Chile	2004
Malta	2011

Divorce in India

This section is aimed at providing a very brief yet crystallised backdrop to divorce laws in India with specific references to the people of various faiths who are married/ divorced under these laws.

The Special Marriage Act was passed in 1954 on an all India basis as an inter-religious marriage law which permitted the citizen of India who may come from different religious backgrounds and faiths to marry and divorce without discrimination and sanctions. In the year 1955, The Hindu Marriage Act was passed which grants legal permission to Hindus and others who had chosen to initially get married in accordance to the tenets laid down under this act. The law that relates to divorce of Christians in India is The Indian Divorce Act of 1869. According to the law of the country, divorce can be granted to a husband or wife on the grounds of adultery, cruelty and desertion for two years, religious conversion, mental abnormality, venereal disease, and leprosy. Divorce can also be granted on the basis of mutual consent of husband and wife after they have lived separately for a minimum period of one year. In case of divorce with mutual consent, the law mandates that the estranged couple live separately for a minimum period of six months for divorce to be granted. A divorce case is said to be a contested divorce when one of the estranged partners is unwilling to divorce the other. Under such condition divorce is granted only upon meeting certain criteria according to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955. While a Muslim husband can unilaterally bring an end to the marriage by pronouncing 'Talaq' thrice consecutively. Muslim women must go to court, claiming any of the grounds provided under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act.

As India is a multi-religious and a multi-cultural nation, there various communities are governed by marriage legislations specific to their faith which are clearly distinct to Hindu Marriage Act, and as a result have their own distinct laws for divorce. These include the following:

1. The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936
2. The Dissolution of Muslim Marriage act, 1939
3. The Foreign Marriage Act, 1969
4. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986

An enactment of a new law is being mulled over in India. This is an amendment that pertains to the grant of divorce based on the 'irretrievable breakdown of marriage' as alleged by one of the spouses. Nearly six years ago in June 2010, the Union Cabinet had approved the (amended) Marriage Laws Bill 2010. This if cleared by both houses of the parliament would establish irretrievable marriage as a new ground for granting divorce. This amendment to the act would entail the courts consideration and establishment of merit of evidence produced by both parties that they have been living separately for a minimum period of three years prior to presentation of the petition in court.

Increasing cases of divorce in India

Instances of divorce in India are on the rise. Though official data is yet not available on the issue but, it is estimated that one in every one hundred marriages ends in

divorce every year. The Indian society perhaps is undergoing a sociological change and has seemingly become more accepting towards divorce, which, in earlier years was considered a social stigma. It has been observed that married couples irrespective of their social class and caste are walking away from their marriages for various reasons. Just a few decades ago there were very few reported cases of divorce due to adultery or domestic violence. In a majority of the cases women continued their daily struggle in broken marriages for the sake of their children, or for fear of social or for the sake of financial dependency on the estranged spouse. However, nowadays, given that women have gained more independence in every field, they are increasingly calling off their marriages. This rising trend is found not only in multi-cultural metropolises but also in semi-urban towns as well as in rural areas. In this light, it is imperative to examine the various causes that lead to women seeking divorce so frequently.

Grounds of divorce

As per the judicial system of India, estranged married couples can file for divorce under the following conditions:

1. **Adultery**: When one or both the partners are involved in extramarital sexual affairs.

2. **Cruelty**: When one or both the partners are subjected to one sided or mutual physical or mental torture.

3. **Desertion**: One may file for divorce if one of the partners abandons the other and does not cohabit for a minimum period of two years.

4. **Conversion**: When one of the partners is forced to convert to the other's religion.

5. **Mental disorder**/**venereal disease**: Divorce can be sought if one of the partners is afflicted with mental disorders/insanity or any communicable venereal diseases.

6. **Leprosy**: Divorce can be sought if one of the partners suffers from incurable form of leprosy

7. **Renunciation**: Divorce can be sought if one of the partners renounces all worldly affairs.

8. **Conjugal rights**: Divorce can be sought if one of the partners failure to observing conjugal rights for two years or more.

Recent trends in divorces in modern societies

- In the modern world, divorce is not looked down upon in the society today. In the past families would brush under the carpet such cases and avoid discussing the matter in public. Nowadays there is greater acceptance of divorcees.

- Families gladly accept their divorced daughters with open arms and support them in every possible way.

- With changing times and broadening outlook, the sanctity of the institution of marriage has diminished so much so that peoples' attitude has changed towards it.
- With an increasing number of Double Income No Kids or DINK families, couples do not hesitate to get divorced as they do not have financial dependence on one another nor the liability of raising a child together.
- Professional rivalry or incompatibility and difference in financial capacities are also driving couples to divorce.
- As couples are spending more time apart from one another due to professional needs there is greater incidence of extramarital affairs. This also results in them filing for divorce.
- Of late sexual incompatibility and an inactive sex-life is also driving couples to seek divorce.

Women empowerment: A major cause

As sexist as it may sound, but, the fact remains that based on the above stated points one may conclude that one of the leading causes for increase in divorce cases is women's empowerment. With women enjoying greater economic independence and financial prosperity, there are often ego clashes with their partners along with issues with each other's parents and professional competitiveness that's added to the number of divorce cases these days. The value of the very institution of marriage has diminished to such an extent that couples sometimes seek divorce for petty reasons. Recent trends have shown that women are more forthcoming in this matter.

Those days are history when women were homebound in the confines of the four walls and tolerated all kinds of injustice and torture at the hands of the spouse or in-laws. Women are now empowered to speak up and break their erstwhile silence as they are now more independent and consider themselves equal to men. Women are capable of sustaining themselves financially and this too has given them independence to lead life on their own terms.

The solution

Does it mean that women should stay at home, give up their jobs and get busy in only household work? The answer is a big NO. There is even greater need to further empower women as empowered women are revolutionising our society. However, empowering women must not be construed with competing with men. Empowering means guaranteeing the right to freedom of speech and expression, right to make decision in the family and if need be having the right to earn and provide for the family as well. Men should not feel overwhelmed if women earn more than them as they are doing so to provide for their family itself and none other's. This shouldn't lead to any ego clashes.

Women's empowerment has somehow played a role in increasing divorce rates but it cannot be the sole cause and the entire blame should not go to the women alone. The actual solution lies in valuing a relationship, co-operating with each other in good and bad times, and living together as good companions. Give your relationship some time instead of resorting to divorce immediately

3.4.2 Rape

The meaning of crime against women alludes to any form of direct or indirect physical or mental cruelty towards women. We come across various forms of crimes against women on a day-to-day basis. These include molestation, eve-teasing, bigamy, polygamy, fraudulent marriages, adultery, enticement, kidnapping, dowry, physical assault, child and elderly women abuse, wife beating, dowry death and rape amongst many others. In today's times, a vast majority of urban and rural women have witnessed and/or experienced first-hand some sort of abuse at the hands of men. The rate at which such crimes are executed against women is nothing short of alarming and the authorities have largely been unable to nip it in the bud. As we talk of making India a civilized, progressive and empowered society, crimes against women are on the increase every day.

Sexual crimes against women

Today's age, which is often referred to as rather empowering for women, and with such vehement expression as women's liberation, women's body image and women's sexuality, the widespread occurrence of sexual violence and sexual coercion against the supposedly empowered women of India is but a sobering reminder of this country's staunch patriarchal set-up. The occurrence of rape is so common that we see/hear/read about it every day in the media. Statistics suggest that in the world's largest democracy, a woman is raped every 20 minutes! According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there were a reported 24,923 rape cases in 2012 and 33,707 reported cases in 2013, a start rise from the previous years. The orthodox and strict views about sex and family privacy contribute to rendering the laws against rape in India ineffective. Strangely, victims are often subjected to a great deal of mental trauma during examination by the defence counsel in courtrooms as they're asked lewd questions asking details about the rape incident. Furthermore, families of rape victims are often ostracized socially and such crimes are kept under wraps and go unreported. The problem in disbursing justice to the victim is further exacerbated by the fact that our country's laws and definitions are archaic, inadequate, obscure, narrow and so ambiguous that prosecution is rendered difficult.

Meaning and types of rape

After 2 April 2013, the definition was revised through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, which also raised the legal age of minor to eighteen. Rape is now defined for the purposes of Indian Penal Code as:

Article 375: A man is said to commit 'rape' if he:

a) Penetrates his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

b) Inserts, to any extent, any object or a part of the body, not being the penis, into the vagina, the urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

c) Manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra, anus or any part of body of such woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

d) Applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person, under the circumstances falling under any of the following seven descriptions:

Firstly :   Against her will.

Secondly: Without her consent.

Thirdly: With her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt.

Fourthly: With her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married.

Fifthly: With her consent when, at the time of giving such consent, by reason of unsoundness of mind or intoxication or the administration by him personally or through another of any stupefying or unwholesome. Substance, she is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she gives consent.

Sixthly: With or without her consent, when she is under eighteen years of age.

Seventhly: When she is unable to communicate consent.

Explanation 1

For the purposes of this section, 'vagina' shall also include labia majora.

Explanation 2

Consent means an unequivocal voluntary agreement when the woman by words, gestures or any form of verbal or non-verbal communication, communicates willingness to participate in the specific sexual act.

Provided that a woman who does not physically resist to the act of penetration shall not by the reason only of that fact, be regarded as consenting to the sexual activity.

Exception:

1. A medical procedure or intervention shall not constitute rape;

2. Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.

Even after the 2013 reform, marital rape when the wife and husband live together, continued not to be a crime in India. Article 376B of the 2013 law made forced sexual intercourse by a man with his wife – if she is living separately – a crime, whether under a decree of separation or otherwise, punishable with at least a two

years prison term. Forced sex by a man on his wife may also be considered a prosecutable domestic violence under other sections of Indian penal code, such as Section 498(A) as well as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. The crime of sexual assault on a child, that is anyone below the age of 18, is further outlined and mandatory punishments described in The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012.

All sexual acts between the members of the same sex, consensual or forced, remains a crime under Section 377 of Indian Penal Code, after the 2013 Criminal Law Reform, with punishment same as that of rape.

Given the enormity of the crime, rape should be considered only second to murder, but, unfortunately it does not get the due attention it deserves by all factions including social scientists, law makers and the justice dispensers. Unless, our patriarchal society which is steeped in male chauvinism changes, womenfolk may not summon enough courage to report every criminal act meted out to them.

Forms of Rape

There are several types of rape recognized by law in India. Some of them are explained hereunder:

1. **Custodial rape:** This refers to the act of rape which occurs while in 'custody of' the   perpetrator(s) who are agents of power that is keeping the victim in custody. When rape takes place in prison, it is called 'prison rape'. In such cases, rape happens due to negligence of prison authorities and may said to be custodial rape.

   Custodial rape or prison rape, as alleged by many NGOs is a very common occurrence. The higher incidence of sexual abuse appears credible, given other evidence of the abusive behaviour of police and the likelihood that many rapes go unreported due to the victims' fear of retribution and shame. However, various legal limitations imposed on the police in matters of arrest, search and custody of women have seemingly reduced the incidence of custodial rape.

2. **Gang rape:** When a group of at least two or more men participate in the act of rape of a woman, it is termed as gang rape. There are little statistical data to show the extent of this problem, though gang rapes are reported as being perpetrated the world over. A study suggests that such victims are usually unemployed younger females who experienced greater violence compared to victims of an individual's sexual assault. Gang rape victims are more likely to seek therapy, contemplate suicide and/or seek crisis and police services than victims of individual assault. Studies also suggest that the perpetrators were often found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

3. **Incest:** Incest refers to sexual activity between two blood relatives or family or close relatives of the same blood line. Sexual relations between individuals

who are related by affinity, or marriage, or adoption, or step relatives, or members of the same lineage are said to be incestuous.

4. **Digital rape:** When objects like sticks, bottles, pens or fingers are used to stimulate the clitoris, vagina, vulva or anus of a female, it constitutes digital rape. This form of rape has been included in the new definition of rape as per the newly amended law.

5. **Marital rape:** A spousal rape or rape within marriage is called marital rape. It essentially means non-consensual sexual intercourse with one's spouse (victim). This act is thus tantamount to rape.

   Marital rape was largely unrecognized as a crime until recent times. However, it is being increasingly criminalized by societies around the world. Since the second half of the 20th century, the global society has widely begun to recognize sexual crimes and domestic violence against women. Despite this in many orthodox societies marital rape is still not criminalized and many still tolerate forced sexual intercourse by the husband on religious grounds as the man's right.

Factors aggravating rape

There are several factors aggravating rape. Some key ones are described below:

1. **Low conviction rate:** A prominent reason for increasing rape cases in India is the low conviction rate in such cases. This is perhaps due to the apathy towards such crimes. This is substantiated by a recent police data according to which there were convictions in only 19 per cent of such cases. Further, it also noted that there was an increase of over 120 per cent in rape cases between 2011 and 2013. This is due to shoddy investigative and botched up approach in such cases. Further, the phallocentric society believes that venturing out after dark and wearing western attire instigate men to commit sexual crimes against women.

2. **Police apathy:** Women are often subjected to molestation on crowded public transportation particularly so in northern India. Women either do not report such cases or the police often do not extend their prompt support. In some cases the policemen themselves have been found guilty of such crimes. Often, rape victims themselves are afraid to speak out fearing they may themselves be blamed for the crime against them.

3. **Abuse of power and authority:** Sexual violence is often used in Indian society as a tool of power and authority. This is often driven by political motives and rape is used as a tool of repression. It is a potent weapon to intimidate whole sections of society by perpetrating acts of sexual crime and violence against women. The use of sexual violence against women as a political tool has not received the same attention from women's organisations

as by civil liberties groups. The ruling elites have often used sexual coercion for systematic repression to meet their political ends.

4. **Unreported instances of rape:** Due to a largely conservative society where females are held responsible for the sexual crimes against them, a majority of such incidents in India go unreported. Statistical data suggests that only 6 per cent of rape cases are perpetrated by strangers while in a majority of cases the accused is known to his victims and as much as 60 per cent cases go unreported. According to an NCRB report, the incidence of rape has gone up by 1255.3 per cent over the last three decades with reported cases rising from 2487 in 1971 to 33707 in 2013, making rape India's fastest growing crime.

5. **Convoluted sense of justice:** Very often the judgements passed by our courts often send out mixed signals to the public. There have been cases where rape convict was sentenced to a certain number of rigorous imprisonments; however, their duration of imprisonment was cut short under a compensation formula provided they paid a paltry sum of money to the victim. There have been cases when culprits have been let off when they promised to marry their victims.

6. **Wrong signals embolden rapists:** India is a country full of ironies, one in which even the judges of the Supreme Court pass surprising judgements. The case in point is the judgement passed by ex-chief justice K. G. Balakrishnan who was of the view that the state and society must respect the decision of a rape victim if she desires to marry and live her own rapist. One can only imagine the trauma that a woman would go through living with the man who perpetrated a crime as heinous as rape against her. It is like a lifelong sentence of undergoing everyday trauma and physical cruelty. Such statements only further encourage people to believe that marriage is the be all and end all for women for marrying is the primary objective of all women even if it is with her own rapist.

7. **Social ostracism of rape victims:** Victims of rape are very often socially ostracised. This social detestation for rape victims needs to be done away with from the society. In its place a culture of friendliness and warmth needs to be cultivated for the victims' rehabilitation.

Identifying rapists

Given the gravity of the crime and its endemic nature, it is important to examine who is it that commits these crimes? Studies suggest that in as high as 73 per cent of the cases, the victim was known to the perpetrator. Of this in about 38 per cent cases rapists were friends or acquaintances, 28 per cent were close friends and 7 per cent relatives.

Despite several measures taken by government machinery both at the Center and state levels, the epidemic of rape is on the rise. A woman is raped in India every

20 minutes. As high as 80 per cent of the victims are in the age group of 14 to 30 years of age.

3.4.3 Domestic Violence against Women

The term 'domestic violence' comprises act of violence by an intimate partner and other members of the family, wherever such acts of violence take place and in whatever form. Domestic violence is a grave issue which is being faced by several Indian women. Indian women are known to endure it in silence because they intend to safeguard their family honour and tolerate it for their children's sake.

Following conventions address this consensus of dealing with domestic violence in an international arena:

a. The Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

b. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

c. The platform for action adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

However, the pace of the progress has been considerably slow as attitudes are intensely ingrained and, to some extent, because effective strategies are still being defined to address an issue of domestic violence. Thus, we witness suffering of women worldwide with estimates ranging from 20 per cent to 50 per cent from country to country

Forms of domestic violence

1. **Physical abuse:** It has been validated in the various research studies that women are subjected to physical violence worldwide including the estimate ranging from 20 per cent to 50 per cent depending on the country. If we study or compare the data coming from industrialized nations and developing countries as well as from transitional countries we can get a broad overview of this worldwide problem. The figures only reflect physical assault. However, there are few cases of relative statistics on mental violence, sexual exploitation, and homicide of women by an intimate partners and family members. As a matter of fact, physical abuse is often accompanied by mental abuse and in several cases by sexual abuse.

2. **Sexual abuse and rape in intimate relationships:** As per the law in most of the countries, sexual assault and rape by an intimated partner is not regarded as an act of crime, and also, women in many societies do not term forced sex as rape in case they are married to, or living together with, the culprit. The notion is that once a woman arrives into an institution of marriage, the husband has all right to unlimited sexual access to his partner or wife.

Some countries have begun to legislate against marital rape. These include Australia, Austria, Barbados, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, the Dominican

Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, and the United States of America. Although provision of such laws represents considerable progress, it is often difficult for a woman to press charges because of the evidential rules concerning the crime.

3. **Psychological and emotional abuse:** As mental violence is quite difficult to be quantified, a full portrayal of the deeper and more deceptive levels of violent act resists it quantification. Victims who have survived mental and emotional abuse, have reported that continuing mental abuse, emotional suffering and living under fear is relatively more painful and intolerable for the victim than the physical act of cruelty, with mental agony and suffering leading to high frequency of act of suicide and attempts to suicide. In countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Peru, Papua New Guinea, US, the studies have proved that there is strong connection between domestic violence and suicide. Suicidal tendency is twelve time higher in a woman who has been subjected to domestic violence than a woman who has not. Even in a country like the US nearly 35 to 40 per cent of maltreated women attempt to suicide. A shocking study shows that in Sri Lanka the number of deaths of young girls and women is between the age group of 15-24 owing to suicides is 55 times higher than the number of deaths caused due to pregnancy and childbirth.

4. **Femicide** or **feminicide:** It is a sex-based hate crime term, broadly defined as the killing of women but definitions vary depending on the cultural context. Feminist author Diana E. H. Russell is one of the early pioneers of the term, and she currently defines the word as 'the killing of females by males because they are females.' Other feminists place emphasis on the intention or purpose of the act being directed at females specifically because they are female; others include the killing of females by females.

Russell's broader definition of Femicide is stated as this:

'Femicide is on the extreme end of a continuum of ant female terror that includes a wide variety of verbal and physical abuse, such as rape, torture, sexual slavery (particularly in prostitution), incestuous and extra familial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional battery, sexual harassment (on the phone, in the streets, at the office, and in the classroom), genital mutilation (clitoridectomies, excision, infibulations), unnecessary gynecological operations (gratuitous hysterectomies), forced heterosexuality, forced sterilization, forced motherhood (by criminalizing contraception and abortion), psychosurgery, denial of food to women in some cultures, cosmetic surgery, and other mutilations in the name of beautification. Whenever these forms of terrorism result in death, they become Femicides.'

It should be regarded as a separate category when recording domestic violence. Studies have been conducted in several countries like Australia,

Bangladesh, etc. have reported the occurrence of Femicide within the domestic sphere.

5. **Sexual assault of children and adolescents:** Incest or the sexual abuse of children and adolescents within the family, regarded as the taboo in most countries, is one of the most imperceptible forms of violence. Since the crime is committed usually by a father, brother, grandfather, stepfather, uncle, or any other male relative who holds a position of faith and trust in victim's life, the fundamental rights of the child are often surrendered to safeguard the name and honour of the family and that of the adult offender. It has been validated from the studies that 40 to 60 per cent of sexual abuse within the family are subjected to girls of age 15 years or younger irrespective of any region or culture. Also, girls are more likely to be sufferers of incest as compared to boys.

Forced prostitution or other acts of commercial abuse by male companions or parents is other form of violence, to which women and children are subjected to, worldwide. Poor families, incompetent of supporting their children, usually sell their children or hire out, who may subsequently be forced into act of prostitution. Usually, small girls are sent to various cities as domestic help, in which she may be subjected to physical and sexual assault by their employers

Causes of domestic violence in India

There is not one single factor which can be attributed for violence executed against women. Gradually, studies has concentrated on the inter relatedness of several factors that should enhance our comprehension of the issue within different contexts of culture. Several social and cultural factors kept women particularly susceptible to the violence directed at them. Analysing this one can easily find them to be indicators of traditional inequality between men and women.

Factors which can be attributed to this gender biases are: socio-economic forces, the family where power relations has been established, a sense of fear and exercising control over female sexuality, a conviction that males are superior than females inherently, and also regulations and cultural endorsements which deprive women and children of their independent lawful and social position. Women being financially weak, make them vulnerable to violence.

Main Factors that Propagate Domestic Violence

Cultural

- Act of socialization specific to gender
- Cultural manifestations of suitable gender roles
- Anticipation of parts to play within relationships
- Conviction about innate dominance of males

- Beliefs that provide males proprietary rights over women and girls
- Conception of the institution of family as the private domain and under dominance of male.
- Rituals of matrimony (bride price / dowry)
- Belief that violence is a means to resolve conflict

Economic

- Restricted admittance to cash and credit
- Biased laws regarding inheritance, property rights
- Use of communal lands and maintenance after divorce or widowhood
- Restricted access to occupation in formal and informal sectors
- Restricted access to education and training for females

Political

- Less participation of females in politics, power, the legal, the media and in the medical career
- Act of domestic violence not considered as a matter of concern
- Thinking of family being hert of the private sphere and outside the purview of the state
- Threat of challenge to status quo / religious laws
- Few organizations of females as a political force
- Participation of women in organized political system is limited

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8. List some of the forms of rape.
9. Name some forms of domestic violence.

3.5 SUMMARY

- The status of women in India has undergone many ups and downs. The 20th century has brought about many changes in the economic, social, and political arena.
- Political participation has been a pertinent subject of interest for both political scientists and sociologists alike, quintessentially so, since the subject deals with the act of democratic citizenship – the right to vote and elect.
- Munroe defines political participation in terms of the degree to which citizens are exercising their right to engage in political activities (e.g., to protest, to speak freely, to vote, to influence or to get more energetically involved).

- Various viewpoints and discourses have sprung from arguments on women's participation. One such is called the incrementalist perspective which tends to believe that gender equality is a phasal phenomenon.

- Gender equality is necessary for the progress of any society and women who constitute almost half the population of the world need to be adequately represented in decision making bodies.

- According to the Census of 2001, women's contribution was 25.68 per cent towards the total work participation in India.

- A historical analysis of women's position in ancient India shows that women did not share an equal position with men.

- The social reforms movements which started in the 19th century were the precursor to the intellectual changes that lead to a noticeable increase in women participation in the political processes.

- Prostitution is said to be the oldest profession in the world.

- As far as laws are concerned, prostitution in India is not illegal per se. However, activities relating to the trade such as engaging in solicitation or pimping or running a brothels, etc., are illegal.

- There have been numerous attempts to draw the attention of the public towards the social evil of prostitution through conferences, workshops and seminars on flesh trade and regular All-India Conferences were being organized prior to 1951.

- Besides political and economic conditions, social conditions are also present in the lack of women's representation. Social causes such as rape, divorce and domestic violence are closely related to the status of women in the society.

3.6 KEY TERMS

- **Divorce:** The term divorce or the dissolution of marriage can be defined as the act of termination of a marital union involving the cancellation of legally recognised duties and responsibilities of marriage, and thus, resulting in the dissolution of ties of matrimony between two adults who were married as per the laws of that state or country.

- **Eve-teasing:** The making of unwanted sexual remarks or advances by a man to a woman in a public place.

- **Incest:** Incest refers to sexual activity between two blood relatives or family or close relatives of the same blood line.

- **Marital rape:** A spousal rape or rape within marriage is called marital rape.

- **Domestic violence:** The term 'domestic violence' comprises act of violence by an intimate partner and other members of the family, wherever such acts of violence take place and in whatever form.

3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. There are six chambers in the world with no women representatives.

2. The Fourth World Conference on women was held at Beijing.

3. In recent years, the main agenda of most governmental and non-governmental organisations has been social, political, economic empowerment of women.

4. Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar started a movement for widow remarriage in 1850's resulting in the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856.

5. Anne Besant was elected the first woman president of the INC.

6. The causative factors leading to prostitution are as follows:
   - Economic causes
   - Social causes
   - Psychological causes
   - Biological factors
   - Religious and cultural factors

7. The Parliament passed the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act in 1956.

8. Some of the forms of rape are as follows:
   - Custodial rape
   - Gang rape
   - Incest
   - Digital rape
   - Marital rape

9. Some forms of domestic violence are as follows:
   - Physical abuse
   - Sexual abuse and rape in intimate relationships
   - Psychological and emotional abuse
   - Femicide or feminicide
   - Sexual assault of children and adolescents

3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the situation of domestic violence in India?

2. Summarize the status of women in ancient Indian society.

3. List the various social causes leading to prostitution.

4. Mention some measures that are necessary to tackle the problem of prostitution.

5. Define rape according to the Indian Penal Code of India.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the empowerment of women in India.

2. Elucidate the changing status and role of women in India.

3. Cite four pertinent arguments in the context of the political participation of women in India.

4. Explain the various economic factors leading to prostitution.

5. Discuss the provisions and measures that are laid down to counter the prostitution.

6. Do you think women empowerment is a major cause for the increasing rate of divorce? Comment.

7. Discuss the various forms of rape.

3.9 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Structure

4.0 Introduction
4.1 Unit Objectives
4.2 Importance of Women's Education
    4.2.1 Approaches to Women's Education
4.3 Equality of Opportunities and Equity
    4.3.1 Education for Achieving Quality Life
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a direct as well as an indirect cost of sending children to school. This plays a big role on gender equal access to education, particularly where poverty is a major factor that needs to be contended with. Invariably, the female child is deprived of the right to education. One way of addressing gender inequalities in education is by providing access to free education.

Direct costs of schooling are not the only strategy that needs to be focused on. The social factors that influence the decision to send children to school are quite complex and more so in the case of the girl child. Even in the advanced economies of today, gender segregation in universities and schools is quite widespread.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards gender often leave the girl at a disadvantage. Bullying is another aspect that affects both genders in different ways. Academic performance is invariably outweighed by future career expectations preventing a girl from achieving career success.

The recommendations put forward to empower women and girls include:

- Training and support to all educational and support staff to bring about awareness on:
  - o The effect of gender roles and typecasts
  - o Self-confidence and personal identities of students
  - o Subject choice influenced by gender norms and stereotypes
- Investigation of gender norms and ideas adopted by higher education institutions and how they impact women's academic career options.

- Designing policies for increasing educational access for girls by meso-level (middle-level) educational institutions such as education departments or ministries that should take into account the larger influence of social and economic customs and habits which affect girls.

The recommendations for institutions as well as national governments include:

- Any policies that are designed for the improvement of the economic projections of various regions should encompass programs to enhance the numbers of women and girls in academics.
- Any policies that are designed to enhance such numbers in the education of women and girls should address the question of how women in education can be empowered through the three domains of:
  o Social customs and morals on gender
  o Institutions
  o Equal spreading of educational sources

Each and every aspect as discussed above is mentioned in detail in this unit.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of women's education
- Explain the various approaches to women's education
- Describe the concept of equality of opportunities and equity
- Define quality in education

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Women's education has a great socio-economic impact on development. Higher levels of development, particularly economic development, can be achieved with an increase in the amount of female education in regions. It is a fact that there is an increase in the income of women through women's education which leads to an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and also to social development. Benefits such as women's empowerment and a number of other social benefits are a direct outcome of educating girls.

It has been established that A strong link exists between women's education and international development. A positive trend has been seen in the development rates of social and economic factors where education has been a major player in the upliftment of women. As stated by Lawrence Summers, a notable economist, 'Investment in the education of girls may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world.' Through its 'U.N. Millennium Developmental Goals', the UN is initiating the removal of gender disparity.

Effects on economic development

Benefit from women's education is achieved at both the individual level as well as by the countries that put a stress on it. Over the course of an individual's lifetime, a net monetary gain is derived from an investment in education. It has been estimated that for women a 1.2 per cent higher return on the resources they invest in education is expected over men. Wages of women can increase by 10-20 per cent, just by providing one extra year of education, which is 5 per cent more than the corresponding returns on providing a boy with an extra year of schooling.

This individual monetary gain is compounded when the economic productivity of a country is calculated. Today, we can say that there is a gross under-representation in schooling of girls. Thus, bigger dividends can be produced by any investments that are specifically aimed at educating women. There are findings that show that for countries it is not an economic choice to not invest in women, which means their education. Under-investment in women directly leads to slower growth with a missed GDP growth ranging between 1.2 per cent and 1.5 per cent. The impact of gender gap in education accounts for 0.4-0.9 per cent of the difference in GDP growth. This is more pronounced in countries that have just moved out of extreme poverty.

That is all very well where total economic growth is concerned. Besides this, the equitability of the distribution of wealth in a society is enhanced through women's education. The importance of women's education cannot be ignored as the main target of its benefits is the impoverished woman, a particularly disadvantaged group. It has also been established, that for a developing country, the lower the gender disparity in educational attainment, the lower the overall income disparity within society.

Effects on social development

Social development is another aspect where significant gains are visualized with increase in women's education. A number of the most noteworthy social benefits include reduction fertility rates, drop in infant mortality rates and a decrease in maternal mortality rates. Closing the gender gap in education has a direct and positive impact on gender equality. This is a highly desirous outcome both for the upliftment of women and because, regardless of gender, it guarantees equal rights and opportunities for people. Education enhances the cognitive ability that is another benefit for women as it has a direct correlation to their quality of life. This has been confirmed by an educated women's ability to take well thought-out decisions related to health, both for themselves and their families. Political participation among women is also an outcome of the increase in their cognitive abilities. There is evidence that educated women are more likely to engage in civic participation and attend political meetings. There have also been many instances of educated women in the developing world using such forums to secure benefits for themselves through political movements. In countries with well-educated women, there is an increased likelihood of proper democratic governance.

Over and above the social status indicators like employment status, women realize benefits in their household roles as well in the form of less domestic violence. Their importance in the family is greater due to their increasing involvement in the domestic decision-making process over a period of time, impacting the economic growth of the family. A more active role in the family also brings about social benefits for family members. The likelihood of children, particularly girls, to attend school is very much higher in a household where the mother is educated. Uneducated mothers can be targeted through adult literacy programs which will reinforce the value of education and thus encourage them to send their children to school. Higher survival rates and better nutrition are only two of the many benefits for children associated with having an educated mother.

4.2.1 Approaches to Women's Education

The approach to women's education development is based on the following four mutually supporting strategic priorities, often referred to as four Es:

- **Expansion:** This strategy is focused on making educational facilities and learning opportunities available for and accessible to all children, women, young people and adults. Expansion involves establishing educational facilities in under-served or un-served locations in order to ensure that all children, women, young people and adults, especially those children and women in rural and remote areas, have access to education as well as to relevant vocational education and training programmes.

- **Equity and inclusion:** The focus of equity/inclusion is on bridging the gender and social category gaps in participation in education. It recognises the right of every individual to education without discrimination on any grounds and according priority to education of the excluded, vulnerable, under-served and other disadvantaged groups. The main thrust is to ensure that educational opportunities are available for and accessible to all segments of the society. The approaches include special initiatives for enhancing access to quality education for disadvantaged and weaker sections of the community such as the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, women belonging to Muslim community and differently-abled children. The focus on equity and inclusion also envisages approaches that would help meet the learning needs of diverse groups of pupils and provide opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning experiences.

- **Excellence:** Achieving excellence by improving the quality and relevance of education and enabling all children and women to achieve expected/specified learning outcomes remains a key goal of education sector development programmes in India. The core elements of the strategy for achieving excellence include: (i) strengthening the quality of teaching–learning processes through comprehensive concerted large scale efforts with simultaneous attention to how these processes translate into better outcomes; (ii) enhancing the motivation, capacity and accountability of teachers for improving learning

outcomes at all levels; (iii) improving governance of educational institutions through institutional focus on quality, based on principles of autonomy, accountability and performance, along with measures for re-defining the recruitment criteria, eligibility of teachers and merit-based processes of recruitment in these institutions; (iv) encouraging innovations and diversity of approaches in matters of curricula, pedagogies and community engagements in order to respond to the diversity of learner groups, and (v) strengthening the monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

- **Employability:** High priority is accorded to the task of enhancing employability of the products of the education system. Specific measures for enhancing employability include renewed focus on vocational education and making secondary education more job-relevant through skills training within the schools, equipping secondary schools with teachers/trainers who have technical skills and with facilities that are required to impart technical and vocational skills. Vocational education at the secondary stage is redesigned to promote diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, and reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower.

Principles Guiding Current Programme Initiates

Global citizenship education: The global education first initiative has the objective to foster global citizenship by developing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners. Securing a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world is the target towards which this initiative is working. All development post 2015 places immense importance on global citizenship education and the goals and agenda are all geared to achieving this.

Over the next two decades, India is projected as becoming the world's youngest country, considering that it already has 65 per cent of its population under 35 years of age. In India, the importance of global citizenship education is close to if not equal to access to education and quality of education. This is because it has the capacity to inculcate understanding, skills and values in people to enable them to transform their lives through cooperation and resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century. The enablers for global citizenship education are as follows:

- It must map to the objectives of the RTE Act. Policy makers, educationists and practitioners should carry RTE targets to accelerate efforts to implement RTE.
- Increase enrolment of children in schools to negate the trend of out of school children, particularly children from backward communities. The system to recognize dropouts should be improved and these children need to be brought back into the mainstream of education by identifying age appropriate classes.
- Enhance the skills of children in terms of reading, writing, speaking and numerical skills. Early grade reading and math approaches can be introduced for effective and expanding quality early childhood education.

- Addressing the needs of children with disabilities, may call for an adaptation of curriculum and special training to teachers on inclusive education. This will go a long way to ensure quality education.
- A robust teacher management policy will ensure employment of qualified staff, ensure quality teacher training and provide opportunities for on-the-job support.
- To improve teaching learning outcomes, a strong system needs to be put in place for learning assessment.
- Child-friendly principles should be adopted by state education planning. This will move schools to arrange for proper infrastructure and equipment to support age appropriate teaching learning materials.
- Expand access and improve quality of learning and teaching by encouraging the use of information and communications technology.
- Basic infrastructure such as easy access to separate toilet facilities for adolescent girls needs to be enhanced targeting gender parity.
- Critically thinking and engagement with local and global communities to bring about transformative teaching

Government interventions: Despite its commitments and efforts to provide education for all, India's female literacy rates are still one of the lowest in Asia. According to statistics compiled in 1991, more than 60 per cent women aged 7 and over, of the 330 million were illiterate. That adds up to over 200 million illiterate women in India. By 2011, the female literacy rate had jumped to 65%. However, this meant that 35% of the female population is still illiterate. The resulting negative impact is felt, across several areas including on the women's lives, on their families' lives and on the country's economic development. Conclusions drawn from various studies suggest that illiterate women tend to have poor nutritional status, high level of fertility and mortality, little autonomy within the household, and low earning potential. The health and wellbeing of children is compromised in families where the woman lacks education. The studies have found an inverse relationship between a mother's educational level and her infant's mortality. The country's economic development is also impeded, in addition to all the other issues.

The Constitution of India defines the government's commitment to education and includes an article that promises 'free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14'. This commitment was reinforced with the National Policy on Education, updated in 1992, and the Programme of Action defined in 1992. Both these policy statements brought about focus to providing special attention to children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and also to girls, thus reaffirming India's commitment to improving literacy levels.

Improving literacy levels over time: Over the last several decades educational attainment in India, for both sexes, has progressively improved, despite the low literacy levels. Looking at the statistics compiled by the Register General and Census Commissioner (RGCC), there were only 22 per cent of women in contrast to 46 per cent of men who could be considered to be literate, as of 1971. In 2011, these had increased to 65 per cent of literate women and 82 per cent of literate men. This

indicates that during the specified 40-year period the proportion of literate women has increased considerably. As you can see, the large gap between the number/per cent of literate men and literate women continues to exist. Although, overall it can be said that since 1981 the gender gap in literacy has been falling, there are regions (states) where the literacy disparity has been growing between the sexes.

Place of residence has a dramatic influence on the literacy rates, particularly in a country like India. The rates in rural areas lag far behind the rates in their urban counterparts. Look at the female literacy rates as compiled by RGCC for the year 1991. The urban female literacy rate, at 64 per cent, stood at more than double that of the rural rate, with 31 per cent. In spite of the enormous efforts that have resulted in substantial increases in literacy rates across the spectrum of urban and rural areas, there has been no appreciable improvement in the gap between the urban and rural sectors.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Name the four approaches to women's education.
2. What does the 'expansion' approach to women's education entail?

4.3 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUITY

The Constitution of India also deals with the provision of educational opportunities to all people of the country. Since education is one of the most important means for development, it is through education that one can aspire to achieve higher position and status. Therefore, every individual should have similar opportunities for getting education.

Usually, equality of opportunity is known as to give equal chance to every individual for the development of his capacity. The concept of equality of opportunity can be interpreted in two ways such as vertical equality and horizontal equality. The horizontal equality treats all constituents in equal manner whereas the vertical equality requires special consideration to bring about equality of opportunity.

There is a great need for emphasizing the equality of opportunity in education due to the following reasons:

1. For the establishment of an egalitarian society.
2. Because it is through the education to all people in a democracy that the success of democratic institution is assured.
3. The equality of educational opportunities will guarantee a rapid advancement of a nation. When the people have opportunities to get education, they will have a chance to develop their talent and thus enrich the society.
4. It will help to develop a close link between the manpower needs of a society and the availability of skilled personnel.

Problems of equality of educational opportunities

In India, there are some reasons which create inequality of educational opportunities. The reason are as follows:

- Discrimination arising out of poverty, economic status, gender and education.
- Gender inequalities through education policy and institutions
- Discrimination due to social norms, values and practices
- The labour market

Discrimination arising out of poverty, economic status, gender and education
Poverty or low economic statuses are directly linked to the educational outcomes for males and females. Poverty has a profound bearing on education gender gap with factors such as household wealth and geographic location as influencers. Girls and boys with very poor backgrounds face greater disparities where access to education is concerned, whereas children from richer backgrounds are less discriminated against. There is also considerable difference in the approach between rural and urban areas.

Direct (school fees, uniforms or books) and indirect (labour taken away from household production (e.g., farming or trading) or lost care work) costs of education affect girls disproportionately in developing countries. Families place greater priority to sons rather than daughters for making expenses where income is a constraint. Earlier school leaving age for girls is an outcome of their employability in core household functions.

Costs incurred for education and who will get access to education are related factors that generate discrimination. Girls are more likely than boys to be withdrawn from school based on the costs of education arising from the perception that women are more associated with unpaid labour, whereas boys are categorized under paid labour.

In cases where consideration for absolute poverty rates does not exist, typically where the population has a higher income, gender equality in education may get influenced by low economic status. As a matter of fact educational achievement is negatively impacted by factors such as relative socio-economic disadvantage and is more pronounced in the case of girls. Other factors that are an increasing disadvantage in terms of education include:

- Children whose mothers lack qualifications.
- Children who live in poor quality housing.
- Families where childrearing began at a young age.

These factors have greater weightage on gender discrimination than the level of family resources.

Gender inequalities through education policy and institutions: Forms of discrimination are reproduced by the impact of institutional arrangements and education-institution cultures. Macro-level education policy involves programs that aim to increase enrolment in different levels of school. Meso-level educational

management and culture targets gender mainstreaming or gender beliefs that are dominant in schools and universities. Both these policies have their flaws and are unable to address the problems associated with gender inequalities.

Legislation on compulsory school education for girls is compromised by cultural beliefs about gender giving rise to discrimination within educational institutions. Gender stereotyping begins at the adolescence stage and students are segregated in academic streams based on gender profiling. The age at which segregation is done has a profound impact on the likelihood of girls' choosing an academic path.

Girls receive less encouragement, experience and opportunities in the areas linked to science, technology and engineering. Women are considered to having a lack of skills, understanding or aptitude in these areas by teachers and school managers. In addition, women are provided with less opportunity in careers related to technology or engineering and are encouraged to take employment in some of the public sector caring professions. This can only be countered by accommodating gender differences in approaches and beliefs by adjusting current teaching methods and intervention strategies.

Gender segregation is also evident in the choices of types of schools that girls and boys attend. Girls tend to opt for schools that specialize in traditionally 'female' oriented vocational subjects such as the domestic sciences. On the other hand, boys typically go for schools that specialize in subjects that are considered to be traditionally 'male' oriented such as technical schools.

Gender mainstreaming can be incorporated at either the national or institutional levels to help improve equality in education through a process where policies systematically build-in gender considerations. The important thing is to define the focus. The focus can be on technical outputs like improving test scores. It can also be on addressing the wider social structures of gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming can be limited to a superficial technical fix where women are appointed to certain specific posts in an organization. It may also take on a broader role where an entire organization formulates policies to place gender equality concerns at the core of its business and review plans and takes appropriate steps to support and sustain this. It is obvious that the second style will generate better outcomes and lead to lasting and profound results.

Both teachers and students are the cause of gender stereotypes through their attitudes, atmosphere in the classrooms and approaches to learning. The role of the mother and the father is seen as significant to generating gender stereotypes on the home front. In most cases, the father is visualized as a source of authority with the mother taking on the role of the source of emotional support. This easily gets replicated in the classroom where female teachers follow the 'supportive sympathetic' archetype and the male teachers play the 'authoritative' role. These roles turn out to be limiting factors for the aspirations of both boys and girls. Girls are at a disadvantage where attention of the teacher is concerned. Male teachers' pay less attention to younger girls but pay more attention to boys and older girls. On the other hand, female teachers tend to pay more attention to boys than to girls whatever their age.

It has been found that along with ethnicity and race, gender and the amount of time and attention teachers give to girls, also has an effect on their engagement with their work that ultimately shapes the different outcomes.

The teachers' education system, where teachers learn their profession, also follows a gendered nature and is one of the sources for reproduction of gender roles. Teacher-training institutions adopt vertical and horizontal segregation providing secure and senior positions to men within the institution's hierarchy. Further, you will find that different roles are preferred by male and female teacher educators, with male teachers more likely to be responsible for secondary student teachers and subjects such as science. Female teachers are more likely to be given the responsibility to teach student teachers or those who are intended for younger children and be given 'care' or arts subjects. It is natural that, in most cases, this trend flows with the teachers to the students that they will be teaching.

Many institutions pursue gender equality, but internally there exist covert gender biases. One outcome of this is that female academics experience difficulties with the pressure of working long hours in combination with her personal responsibilities of raising a family. Female academics also face discrimination in the expectations in the way they dress and present themselves.

Discrimination due to social norms, values and practices: Gender inequalities that are prevalent in the wider society are reproduced within educational institutions in the form of education policies and institutional processes. This can be compounded with norms and actions aimed at undermining women's security and support. On the one hand, these implicit or perhaps unconscious actions may be the beliefs by which the institution understands gender. Though, such norms can encourage sexual harassment or hide gender-based violence, on the other hand.

Attitudes and views of young girls towards motherhood play a major role in their educational attainment. It is amply evident that girls who ignore traditional gender roles are more successful in their academic pursuits than girls who prefer traditional views on gender. The educational attainment of boys was not similarly affected by either gender role attitudes or aspiration towards parenthood. It is universally accepted that a conflict exists between career, education, motherhood and family. It is also recognized that this phenomenon impacts only girls and not boys.

Families play a central role that is recognized by the wider public. Today, you will find that single, working mothers are subject to a considerable amount of scrutiny during admission of their children and criticism about the academic performance of their children.

Public discourses on the role of mothers in the educational success of their children are of great significance. Women are always at the receiving end where they need to make a choice between work and looking after their children. Whatever choice they make it is perceived as contradictory or 'hypocritical'. This kind of blame-game is initiated by both the media and academic research. The focus has now moved from state and organizational cultures within schools to the impact of mothers in the family and the status of their occupation.

Very often, investment in children is different based on birth order and gender. The first son born to a family traditionally receives the full attention of the parents and their investment capacities. They are normally provided with the best education as compared to the rest of his siblings, whether brothers or sisters. Among the remaining children, the boys are given preference over the girls. The birth order does not apply to girls. That is, if the first born is a girl, she does not receive any preferential treatment and is treated similar to all other daughters.

The different forms of bullying are described below:

- Verbal aggression complaints came from 59 per cent of respondents
- Social/relational aggression was reported by 50 per cent respondents
- Physical aggression was reported as a concern by 39 per cent respondents
- Sexist remarks were an area of concern with 20 per cent of respondents

Unfortunately, the staff also lacked knowledge or skills to be able to address bullying and needed professional development workshops to enhance their capabilities. Staff definitely needed professional help to be able to handle bullying related to gender issues, sexual orientation and disability. 'Sexting' is the sending or receiving of messages or pictures that are explicit in nature and school staff are at great discomfort in dealing with such issues. 'Sexting' affects girls differently than boys, where the 'victimization' may be voluntary or coerced. Girls, invariably, experience it as harassment, usually from peer groups consisting of boys.

Victims as well as perpetrators consist of boys and girls. Usually, boys fall victim to physical aggression and verbal insults among other types of bullying. Girls are very seldom abused physically or verbally. Indirect form of bullying are normally targeted at girls by making negative comments about them.

Whatever the form of bullying experienced by victims, there is a profound impact on educational outcomes. Female victims of bullying give a lower rating on their academic abilities than girls who are not affected by bullying. Indirect bullying on boys does have an impact on their academic outcomes.

Bullying has always been raised as a genuine problem perpetrated by a 'certain group of boys'. Pupils, particularly girls were regularly exposed to violence and aggression and often exposed to sexual harassment and aggression.

Coping with bullying is not something that happens easily. Some go into a 'normalized' mode where they feel unable to address the aggression. They find themselves unable to discuss among themselves or even with adults. Others, particularly girls, fear that in a bid to cope with the aggression, they will be thought of as unfeminine.

Gender relations based on domination and subordination often get replicated creating gender inequalities that greatly disadvantage girls. The outcomes turn out to be quite traumatic for victims as they are built on control of female sexuality, sexual abuse and exploitation and misogyny. What is required to tackle such destructive gender relations and at the same time promote gender equality both in school and in the society at large is to implement gender sensitive sexuality education.

The labour market: Education systems should be customized depending on the gap in the gender inequalities in society. Unfortunately, even with an education system that is gender neutral, the ugly head of gender inequalities reappears in the transition from formal education to the labour market. It is more beneficial to ensure better outcomes for women in the labour market as prosperity is expected not only in the families but also in the wider economy with every increase in women's earnings.

Employment rate differences arising out of gender inequalities are coming down. With more women entering the labour market, the existing gaps are expected to vanish. Despite all these studies and projections, the reality is that there is still a pronounced differential in the earning power of women as compared to men. The roots for this lie in the high degree of occupational segregation, which probably originated in the education system itself.

Even in the 'so called' advanced economies, occupations are highly gender segregated with gender integration occurring more in professional and managerial jobs and not in clerical and blue-collar occupations. Gender integration refers to the similarity of wages and activities between women and men. All said and done, you will most likely see male graduates holding upper management roles and roles that are considered as high prestige professions. However, you will find a dominance of women graduates in professions such as nursing or teaching.

India is not the only country with a 'gender wage gap'. This has been found to be a global phenomenon with the gap ranging from 10 per cent to 40 per cent, depending on the country.

Some features related to female careers:
1. They tend to be discontinuous.
2. Most prefer part-time type of work.
3. They are considered to be secondary wage earners within the family.
4. After some years of labour market participation, their careers tend to slow down.
5. Once they have children their careers tend to slow down.
6. These several breaks put them at a disadvantage where future promotion is concerned.

Field of study is a significant aspect in the gender wage gap. Where women and men chose the same field of study, the gender wage gap was reduced by about 7 per cent. Besides educational factors including field of study, other supporting factors involve collective bargaining power and availability of affordable child care that will have an impact on wages.

Traditionally, women are seen to perform unskilled jobs, which results in substantially lower earnings in employment. This creates a vicious circle where women earnings are low, preventing them from gaining the skills for better paid jobs, which in turn impacts the decision to invest in the schooling of girls.

Gender and ethnicity-based social inequalities get created by official careers advice networks as also by the girls' own social networks where the tendency is to encourage these girls to take up professions and choices that are traditionally

dominated by women from these ethnic minorities. This generates a sense of labour market discrimination and segregation.

Educational superiority of women may not gain them any advantage in the labour market. Such women may still face discrimination in the form of higher expectations and less wages.

A prime example of gender discrimination can be seen in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) centers and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). VET and ITI fields reserved for girls revolve around gender-specific professions such as sewing, hair dressing, nursing etc., whereas for boys it includes, electrical, mechanical, civil type of skills.

4.3.1 Education for Achieving Quality Life

There has also been impressive progress towards bridging gender gap in enrolment and retention in elementary education. Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, the enrolment of girls as percentage of total enrolment in primary education has increased from 43.8 per cent to 48.2 per cent, while the enrolment of girls as percentage of total enrolment in upper primary education increased from 40.9 per cent to 48.6 per cent. The enrolment of girls as percentage of total enrolment in Classes IX-XII (secondary and higher secondary education) increased from 38.8 per cent in 2000-01 to 47.1 per cent in 2013-14. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for GER in primary education improved from 0.82 in 2000-01 to 1.03 in 2013-14, while the GPI for GER in upper primary education improved from 0.75 to 1.08 during this period. The GPI for GER in secondary education improved from 0.79 in 2004-05 to 1.0 in 2013-14 while the GPI for GER in higher secondary education improved from 0.80 to 0.98 during this period. The GPI for adult literacy rate improved from 0.65 in 2001 to 0.75 in 2011 while the GPI for youth literacy rate improved from 0.81 to 0.91 during this period.

Defining Quality in Education

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993).

Quality education includes:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;

- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;

- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;

- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;

• Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. This definition allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context. This paper will examine research related to these dimensions. It is important to keep in mind education's systemic nature, however; these dimensions are interdependent, influencing each other in ways that are sometimes unforeseeable.

This definition also takes into account the global and international influences that propel the discussion of educational quality (Motala, 2000; Pipho, 2000), while ensuring that national and local educational contexts contribute to definitions of quality in varying countries (Adams, 1993). Establishing a contextualized understanding of quality means including relevant stakeholders. Key stakeholders often hold different views and meanings of educational quality (Motala, 2000; Benoliel, O'Gara & Miske, 1999). Indeed, each of us judges the school system in terms of the final goals we set for our children our community, our country and ourselves (Beeby, 1966).

Definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. New research — ranging from multinational research to action research at the classroom level contributes to this redefinition.

Systems that embrace change through data generation, use and self-assessment are more likely to offer quality education to students (Glasser, 1990). Continuous assessment and improvement can focus on any or all dimensions of system quality: learners, learning environments, content, process and outcomes. Each of these will be discussed below:

1. Quality learners

School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be.

Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support.

Good health and nutrition: Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999). Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development in the early years, and early detection and intervention for disabilities can give children the best chances for healthy development. Prevention of infection, disease and injury prior to school enrolment are also critical to the early development of a quality learner.

Early childhood psychosocial development experiences: Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. A large study in 12 Latin American countries found that attendance at day care coupled

with higher levels of parental involvement that includes parents reading to young children is associated with higher test scores and lower rates of grade repetition in primary school (Willms, 2000). Evidence from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Turkey, has shown that children who participate in early intervention programmes do better in primary school than those who do not benefit from formal early child programmes, and studies from India, Morocco and Latin America demonstrate that disadvantaged children benefit the most from such programmes (UNICEF, 1998). In addition to cognitive effects, the benefits of good early childhood programmes include better psychosocial development. Effective and appropriate stimulation in a child's early years influences the brain development necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioural management. A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psychosocial development later in life (McCain & Mustard, 1999). A high level of quality in early childhood development programmes can be achieved when health and nutrition components are combined with structured psychosocial development in the pre-school years.

Regular attendance for learning: When they reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child's exposure to curriculum — his or her 'opportunity to learn' — significantly influences achievement, and exposure to curriculum comes from being in school (Fuller et al., 1999). A study of village-based schools in Malawi found that students with higher rates of attendance had greater learning gains and lower rates of repetition, a finding consistent with many other studies (Miske, Dowd et al., 1998).

Family support for learning: Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000). Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field — help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron & Chau, 1996). Parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in the school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related activities.

The effects of schools in poor areas can often outweigh the impact of family background and practices (Fuller, et al., 1999). Further, although many constraints exist, schools can play a role in helping parents to enhance the 'home curriculum' and improve the quality of parental involvement in their children's education. Strategies include, for example, partnering with organizations that can affect parenting in the pre-school years such as public health providers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); asking parents to participate in assessment of their child's progress, offering clear, regular, non-threatening

communication; and including parents in decision-making groups at the school (Redding, 2000). Successful attempts to increase parental involvement have taken place around the world. One example is the creation of student newspapers in China. Such newspapers 'exist at different levels of the education system and in urban as well as rural zones. The result is that, much more than in other countries, pupils and parents have the possibility to read, which is of benefit in particular to the otherwise disadvantaged rural families' (Carron & Chau, 1996). Other forms of family literacy programmes have focused on particular aspects of parental involvement. In Sri Lanka, for example, an eight-week programme that sought to improve the literacy skills of low-income, undereducated mothers found that the mothers' capacities to help develop their children's language competencies increased, especially in the areas of listening and speaking (Dharmadasa, 1996). The home curriculum seems to play a vital role in preparing quality learners for school.

Healthy children with positive early learning experiences and supportive, involved parents are thus most likely to succeed in school. Quality teachers need similar support for their tasks in schools. Another essential ingredient for a successful educational system is a quality learning environment.

2. Quality learning environments

Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

(a) Physical elements

Quality of school facilities: Physical learning environments or the places in which formal learning occurs, range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that is hard to measure. A study in India, sampled 59 schools and found that of these only 49 had buildings and of these, 25 had a toilet, 20 had electricity, 10 had a school library and four had a television (Carron & Chau, 1996). In this case, the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with pupils' achievement in Hindi and mathematics (Carron & Chau, 1996). In Latin America, a study that included 50,000 students in grades three and four found that children whose schools lacked classroom materials and had an inadequate library were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped (Willms, D., 2000). Other studies, carried out in Botswana, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea, concur with these latter findings (Pennycuick, 1993).

Interaction between school infrastructure and other quality dimensions: The quality of school buildings may be related to other school quality issues, such as the presence of adequate instructional materials and textbooks, working conditions for students and teachers, and the ability of teachers to undertake certain instructional approaches. Such factors as on-site availability of lavatories and a clean water supply, classroom maintenance, space and furniture availability all have an impact

on the critical learning factor of time on task. When pupils have to leave school and walk significant distances for clean drinking water, for example, they may not always return to class (Miske & Dowd, 1998). Even when schools do have adequate infrastructure, parents may be reluctant to allow children — especially girls — to attend if they are located too far away from children's homes. In general, parents often consider the location and condition of learning environments when assessing school quality, and this can influence school participation.

Class size: Many countries significantly expanded access to primary education during the 1990s, but the building of new schools has often not kept pace with the increase in the student population. In these cases, schools have often had to expand class sizes, as well as the ratio of students to teachers, to accommodate large numbers of new students. A UNICEF/UNESCO survey conducted in 1995 in 14 least developed countries found that class sizes ranged from fewer than 30 students in rural and urban Bhutan, Madagascar, and the Maldives, to 73 in rural Nepal and 118 in Equatorial Guinea (Postlewaithe, 1998). Do larger class sizes hurt the quality of education? Educators and researchers from diverse philosophical perspectives have debated the relationship between class size and student learning at length. Although, many studies have found a relationship (e.g., Willms, 2000), class size has not consistently been linked to student achievement (Rutter, 1979, cited in Pennycuick, 1993). This may be due to the fact that many schools and classrooms have not yet adopted the more demanding but higher quality student-centred learning practices. Moreover, quantitative relationships between class sizes and academic achievement rarely take other key quality factors into account, such as teachers' perceptions of working conditions and their sense of efficacy.

Psychosocial elements

Peaceful, safe environments, especially for girls: Within schools and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory climate is critical to creating a quality learning environment. In many countries, attitudes discouraging girls' participation in education have been significant barriers to providing quality education to all students. The Republic of Guinea provides an example of how this barrier can begin to be overcome. Between 1989 and 1997, Guinea was able to increase the percentage of school-age girl's enrolment from 17 per cent to 37 per cent. This was done through the establishment of a high-profile Equity Committee, research to better understand various communities' needs and attitudes, policy reforms related to pregnancy of school-age mothers, the building of toilets for girls in schools, institutional reform that brought more women into teaching and administrative positions, and a sensitisation campaign to raise community awareness about the value of girls' education. Although curricular reform and other issues remain to be acted upon, and girls' persistence and achievement have not yet reached the level of boys', this case shows that efforts to improve the learning environment for girls and all students can lead to real results (Sutton, 1999).

Once girls gain access to schools, however, they may experience both direct physical threats and more subtle assaults on their confidence, self-esteem and identity (Pigozzi, 9 2000). The journey to school may be unsafe, since many girls experience

harassment and physical attacks either on public transportation in cities or remote paths in rural areas. At school, teachers often require girls to do maintenance work while boys study or play, and allow boys to bully girls. Girls must often sit at the back of the classroom, where teachers may call on them infrequently. In some cases, extreme physical assault, including rape, may be perpetuated against girls at school. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, bullying and undervaluing girls harm them in profound and long- lasting ways.

Teachers' behaviours that affect safety: Relative to both girls and boys, parents, educators and researchers express important concerns about teachers who create an unsafe environment for students. In some schools in Malawi, for example, male teachers sexually harassed girls even with outside observers present (Miske, Dowd, et al., 1998). When parents in Burkina Faso, Mali and Tanzania were asked about reasons they might withdraw their children from schools, they most often cited a lack of discipline, violence of teachers towards pupils (corporal punishment), and the risk of pregnancy due to the male teachers' behaviour (Bergmann, 1996). A study in Ethiopia found that nearly 50 per cent of teachers interviewed reported using corporal punishment at least once a week, with 11 per cent saying they use it every day. Just over one third said they never use corporal punishment (Verwimp, 1999). These teacher behaviours affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and self-protection are threatened.

Effective school discipline policies: Well-managed schools and classrooms contribute to educational quality. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon school and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable. Order, constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behaviour communicate a seriousness of purpose to students (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998). It is important not to mistake small group cooperative learning for disorder, however; although noise levels may increase, task-orientation and focus on learning signal effective practices. Policies are also needed on bullying, harassment, drug and tobacco use, and anti-discrimination with regard to disabilities, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy.

Inclusive environments: Reducing other forms of discrimination is also critical to quality improvement in learning environments. Most countries, in all parts of the world, struggle with effective inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities. An examination of special education policies and practices in China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand and VietNam found that although most educational policies include some philosophy of inclusion, significant gaps between policies and actual practices in schools and classrooms exist (Mitchell, 1995). Children of ethnic and language minorities, politically or geographically disfavoured groups, and groups at low socio-economic levels may also suffer from discriminatory policies and practices that hinder the advancement of quality education for all children. This can occur by excluding such children from school 10 or by excluding their participation in school once they are attending. In general, continued

restructuring of most learning environments needs to occur to improve learning opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

Non-violence: War and other forms of interpersonal and group conflict clearly have an impact on children's mental health and their ability to learn. Many young victims of violence suffer lasting physical, psychological, social-emotional and behavioural effects. Although it is difficult for schools to provide safe havens from some forms of violence, other forms can be effectively prevented through interventions (World Health Organization, 1998).

(c) Service delivery

Provision of health services: The school service environment can also contribute to learning in important ways. Provision of health services and education can contribute to learning first by reducing absenteeism and inattention. Sick children cannot attend school, and evidence from China, Guinea, India and Mexico shows that children's illness is a primary cause for absenteeism (Carron & Chau, 1996). Today, the potential of school-based health interventions in improving academic performance is becoming increasingly clear as problems of protein- energy malnutrition, micronutrient deficiency disorders, helminthic infection and temporary hunger among children continue to plague developing countries (Levinger, 1992). School-based deworming programmes in Guinea, for example, led to increased achievement outcomes — failing scores fell from 32 per cent to 23 per cent over three years while passing grades improved markedly (Williams & Leherr, 1998). Maximum benefit-cost ratios have been achieved when deworming is combined with sanitation, a clean water supply and health education (Lockheed & Vespoor, 1991). School-based programmes that address other major health and nutrition problems that can decrease cognitive functioning including deficiencies of iron, iodine and Vitamin A have also been shown to be effective (Dolan, Drake, Maier, Brooker & Jukes, 2000). Guidance and counselling services, the provision of extra-curricular activities and the provision of school snacks are other examples of service provision that contribute to quality school environments.

High quality physical, psychosocial and service environments in schools set the stage for learning to occur. This learning begins with quality content.

3. Quality content

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives, should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum. To eliminate the portrayal of men and women in gender stereotyped roles, the Indian government initiated the re-writing of textbooks way back in 1965. In the 1980s, a study of Indian textbooks revealed that the main characters were men in the majority of lessons. They were portrayed as superior with being strong, adventurous, and intelligent, whereas women were portrayed as being weak and helpless, and of being victimized, abused and beaten up. These depictions had a

strong psychological impact on the position of women in society was viewed by the population.

Student-centred, non-discriminatory, standards-based curriculum structures: Research on educational practices and projections about future needs in society contribute to current understanding of the structure of school curriculum. In general, curriculum should emphasize deep rather than broad coverage of important areas of knowledge, authentic and contextualized problems of study, and problem-solving that stresses skills development as well as knowledge acquisition. Curriculum should also provide for individual differences, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject matter, and focus on results or standards and targets for student learning (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2000).

Curriculum structure should be gender-sensitive and inclusive of children with diverse abilities and backgrounds, and responsive to emerging issues such as HIV/ AIDS and conflict resolution. In all content areas, curriculum should be based on clearly defined learning outcomes and these outcomes should be grade-level appropriate and properly sequenced (see, for example, Kraft, 1995).

Uniqueness of local and national content: The specific content of school curriculum, however, depends on local and national values. In the main subject areas of primary education, which include language, math, science and social studies, little variation is found among different regions in the developing world. Nation states, however, 'tend to have a high degree of consistency in curriculum emphasis over time, but differ sharply from each other, reflecting unique historical patterns' (Benavot & Karmens, 1989, cited in UNICEF, 2000). Local level interests may also have an impact on and contribute to the quality of educational content. Based on community priorities, the Mali Community Schools project, for example, successfully incorporated local knowledge into traditional subject areas (Muskin, 1999). In all countries, however, quality content should include several pivotal areas. These include literacy, numeracy, life skills and peace education — as well as science and social studies.

Literacy: Literacy, or the ability to read and write, is often considered one of the primary goals of formal education. Policies and practices in education for literacy vary significantly among countries. A recent UNICEF study on curriculum showed that in some cases, literacy skills are taught as a separate subject, in a language course, where the instruction tends to focus on teaching the language as an end in itself. Such an approach tends to be linear — first teaching aural skills, then speaking, reading and writing skills. Alternatively, literacy skills may be developed through other subjects such as social studies or science. The UNICEF study found that in these cases, there is a greater focus on language as a tool for social development; situations from daily life are incorporated into activities that foster the acquisition of reading and writing skills (UNICEF, 2000). Attention to the way literacy is developed is critical since research has shown that language learning cannot be separated from content. The learning context and agendas people have for learning to read and write have an important impact on the development of literacy skills (Furniss & Green, 1993).

Numeracy: As quantitative data become increasingly prevalent in many societies, _Women's Education in India_ the concept of numeracy seems to be evolving. Also known as 'quantitative literacy', numeracy encompasses a range of skills from basic arithmetic and logical reasoning to advanced mathematics and interpretative communication skills (Steen, 1999). Numeracy differs from mathematics; while mathematical skills support numeracy, the latter represents the ability to use a range of skills in a variety of contexts. Since mastery of many curricular areas requires numeracy — from geography and social studies to science and vocational training— many mathematics educators advocate teaching numeracy skills in an integrated way rather than as an isolated subject in a mathematics course (House & Coxford, 1995). Numeracy skills not only give people more control in their daily lives through, for example, more informed management of household or small enterprises, but also allow for more effective participation in communities and nations, since understanding many collective issues requires an ability to make sense of financial and other quantitative information.

Life skills: The term 'life skills' can be broadly interpreted, and is often assumed to include such topics as health, hygiene, etiquette, and vocational skills. In UNICEF, however, life skills are defined as 'psycho-social and interpersonal skills used in every day interactions...not specific to getting a job or earning an income.' The definition also explains that 'a wide range of examples exist under the UNICEF working definition of life skills, such as assertion and refusal skills, goal setting, decision making and coping skills' (UNICEF, 2000). Life skills curriculum focuses on attitudes, values and behavioural change, rather than seeking to provide young people with a body of knowledge about a set of topics. As with literacy, age-appropriate life skills can be incorporated into other areas of study. For example, educators in Rwanda teach life skills as part of courses on conflict resolution, self-awareness, cooperation and communication. In Zimbabwe, aspects of life skills come through HIV/AIDS courses (UNICEF, 2000). Other countries may address some aspects of life skills through community-based learning. Still others approach life skills topics in courses such as health education, education for development, global education and peace education.

Peace education: Peace education seeks to help students gain the ability to prevent conflict, and to resolve conflict peacefully when it does arise, whether on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. Peace education addresses cognitive, affective and behavioural learning and can occur both within schools, through curriculum development and teacher education, and outside of schools, through camps, sports and recreation programmes, youth groups and clubs, and training for community leaders, parents, librarians and the media (Fountain, 1999). Although few research or evaluation studies have examined peace education, some evidence exists that anti-violence programmes can be effective. For example, when an evaluation of a school-based, trauma- healing and peaceful problem-solving programme was carried out in Croatia (UNICEF Croatia, 1997, cited in Fountain, 1999), evaluators noted a positive effect on decreased post-traumatic stress and improved self-esteem in female students. The programme appeared to promote a good psychosocial climate in the classrooms involved. A Norwegian programme to reduce bullying found that participating children reduced their expressions of

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aggression and antisocial behaviour by 50 per cent over two years. The effects were more significant in the second year than the first (World Health Organization, 1998).

Challenges in reaching large numbers of children with quality content: Educators who seek to maintain and expand programmes that successfully address important curricular content such as life skills and peace education may face challenges. Some evidence suggests that expansion beyond pilot programmes often falters even when pilot programmes are successful and educational agencies provide adequate resources for the development and implementation of curriculum that responds to emerging issues. Several reasons for this exist (Obanya, 1995), including:

- Teachers often find curricular integration and interdisciplinarity difficult, especially when the teacher does not have a role in curriculum design;
- Subjects that do not appear on important examinations are not always taken seriously;
- Social attitudes towards the subject may not be favourable, and cultural patterns are difficult to change;
- Ideas conceived in other regions of the world may not be adequately adapted to the local context;
- Political and economic instability can lead to discontinuity in policies and programmes, as well as teacher and administrator turnover.

These obstacles pose serious but not insurmountable challenges to educational programming. The value of quality content, however, makes finding solutions to such challenges critical. To be most effective, quality content must be situated in a context of quality processes.

5. Quality Processes

Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centred on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes — how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality school processes.

Teachers

Professional learning for teachers: The highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The preparation that teachers receive before beginning their work in the classroom, however varies significantly around the world and even within the least developed countries. In Cape Verde, Togo and Uganda, for example, 35 per cent to 50 per cent of students have teachers who had no teacher training. Yet in Benin, Bhutan, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Nepal, over 90 per cent of students do have teachers with some form of teacher training. In these latter countries, most teachers have, at least, lower secondary education; this contrasts sharply with Cape Verde and Tanzania where over 60 per

cent of students have teachers with only a primary education (Postlewaithe, 1998). Perhaps as a consequence of too little preparation before entering the profession, a number of teachers in China, Guinea, India and Mexico were observed to master neither the subject matter they taught nor the pedagogical skills required for good presentation of the material

(Carron & Chau, 1996). This affects educational quality since student achievement, especially beyond basic skills, depends largely on teachers' command of subject matter

(Mullens, Murnance & Willett, 1996) and their ability to use that knowledge to help students learn. A recent evaluation of the East African Madrasa (Pre-school) Programme noted the importance of mentoring by trainers in the form of continuous support and reinforcement of teacher learning by on-site visits to classrooms following a two week orientation training and alongside weekly trainings in Madrasa Resource Centres. (Brown, Brown & Sumra, 1999).

Teacher competence and school efficiency: Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning. Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point. Many teachers face transportation and housing obstacles that hinder them from getting to school on time and staying until school hours are over. Many teachers must hold second jobs, which may detract from the time and energy they expend in the classroom. Teachers may miss school altogether. A study in China, Guinea, India and Mexico found that nearly half the teachers interviewed reported being absent at some point during the previous month (Carron & Chau, 1996), requiring other teachers to compensate for them or leaving students without instruction for the day.

Next, when teachers are present, learning occurs when teachers engage students in instructional activities, rather than attending to administrative or other non-instructional processes (Fuller, et al., 1999). As mentioned above, the opportunity to learn and the time on task have been shown in many international studies to be critical for educational quality. Finally, some schools that have been able to organize their schedules according to children's work and family obligations have seen greater success in student persistence and achievement. In Ethiopia, for example, schools that began and ended the day earlier than usual and that scheduled breaks during harvest times found that educational quality improved. 'The quality of a school and the quality of teaching of the individual teacher is [sic] higher in schools that are able (and willing) to make more efficient use of the available time of its teachers and its pupils.' (Verwimp, 1999).

Ongoing professional development: Professional development can help overcome shortcomings that may have been part of teachers' pre-service education and keep teachers abreast of new knowledge and practices in the field. This ongoing training for teachers can have a direct impact on student achievement. Case studies from Bangladesh, Botswana, Guatemala, Namibia and Pakistan have provided evidence that ongoing professional development, especially in the early years after initial preparation and then continuing throughout a career, contribute significantly to student

learning and retention (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998). Effective professional development may take many forms; it should not be limited to formal off-site kinds of programmes. Dialogue and reflections with colleagues, peer and supervisor observations and keeping journals are all effective ways for teachers to advance their knowledge (UNICEF, 2000). A programme in Kenya, the Mombassa School Improvement Project, built on this approach to professional development and showed that teachers supported with in-service as well as external workshop training improved significantly in their abilities to use child-centred teaching and learning behaviours (Anderson, 2000). In India, an effective programme used interactive video technology to reach a large number of teachers who sought professional development. This programme found that training using interactive video technology led to improved conceptual understanding of pedagogical issues for a large number of geographically dispersed teachers (Maheshwari & Raina, 1998).

Continuing support for student-centred learning: Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, should help teachers develop teaching methods and skills that take new understandings of how children learn into account. Just as curriculum should be child-centred and relevant, so should instructional methods. The limited view of teaching as presentation of knowledge no longer fits with current understandings of how and what students learn. Instead, instruction should help students build on prior knowledge to develop attitudes, beliefs and cognitive skills; as well as expand their knowledge base. Teaching styles in many places, however, remain traditional, teacher-centred and fairly rigid or even authoritarian (Carron & Chau, 1996). When Ethiopian teachers were interviewed about the degree to which their teaching practices were learner-centred and relevant to student's lives, about half said they link lessons to the daily life of pupils at least once a week. Almost two-thirds, however, said they never or rarely ask pupils what their interests are, or what they would like to learn (Verwimp, 1999). Greater understanding of student-centred learning can be encouraged through programmes such as the Bangladeshi project on Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning. Begun in 1994, the project helps improve teachers' skills by integrating brain research and multiple intelligences theory as the foundation for understanding children's needs (Ellison & Rothenberger, 1999). Teaching methods that facilitate active student learning rather than promote passivity and rote memorization represent a new and difficult paradigm for many teachers, but one that needs to be understood and put into practice if learner outcomes are to improve. Life skills is a term which UNICEF uses in two main ways, (i) to refer to a broad group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills, and (ii) to refer to the process of teaching and learning about these skills. As such, it is important to discuss life skills in terms of essential content and processes related to life skill-based education. Teaching and learning about life skills requires interactive, student-centred methods. Since skills are by definition active, competency is unlikely to be developed without active practice.

Teacher beliefs that all students can learn: The way time is used is related to school priorities and expectations. Quality education puts students at the centre of the process; student achievement must be the school's first priority. Since schools exist because of students, this would seem self-evident. Perhaps because of the

complexity of educational systems, however, teachers may not always believe in the school's ability to help all students. For example, teachers interviewed in Guinea and Mexico had little awareness of the school's role in pupil failure and dropout. Instead, they tended to blame the pupils and their family environment (Carron & Chau, 1996). Research around the world has shown that low expectations for student achievement permeate educational systems. Rather than setting high standards and believing that students can meet them, teachers and administrators in many developing countries expect that up to half the students will drop out or fail, especially in primary grades. Schools committed to student learning communicate expectations clearly, give frequent and challenging assignments, monitor performance regularly, and give students the chance to participate in and take responsibility for diverse school activities (Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis, 1998).

Teachers' working conditions: Teachers' working conditions affect their ability to provide quality education. Many aspects of school life and educational policy go into teachers' perceptions of their employment. As mentioned above, the condition of infrastructure, availability of textbooks and learning materials and class sizes all influence the teacher's experience as an educator. Teachers' remuneration also matters. In many countries, teacher salaries have declined in recent years, and teachers are not always paid on time. In Bangladesh, Nepal and Uganda, for example, the teachers of 27 per cent, 35 per cent and 60 per cent of all students, respectively, were paid a month or later (Postlewaithe, 1998). Low and late remuneration may lead teachers to take on another job, which hurts student learning. A study in 12 Latin American countries found that children in schools where many teachers work in other jobs in addition to teaching are 1.2 times more likely to have lower test scores and/or higher grade repetition (Willms, 2000). Effective teachers are highly committed and care about their students (Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis, 1998); they need supportive working conditions to maintain these positive attitudes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. What does equality of opportunities mean?
4. What is the difference between horizontal equality and vertical equality?

4.4 SUMMARY

- Women's education has a great socio-economic impact on development.
- Benefit from women's education is achieved at both the individual level as well as by the countries that put a stress on it.
- This individual monetary gain is compounded when the economic productivity of a country is calculated.

- Social development is another aspect where significant gains are visualized with increase in women's education.

- The approach to women's education development is based on the following four mutually supporting strategic priorities, often referred to as four Es.

- The four approaches to women's education are as follows:
  - o Expansion
  - o Equity and inclusion
  - o Excellence
  - o Employability

- The global education first initiative has the objective to foster global citizenship by developing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners.

- The constitution of India defines the government's commitment to education and includes an article that promises 'free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14'.

- The Constitution of India also deals with the provision of educational opportunities to all people of the country.

- Poverty or low economic statuses are directly linked to the educational outcomes for males and females.

- Forms of discrimination are reproduced by the impact of institutional arrangements and education-institution cultures.

- Gender mainstreaming can be incorporated at either the national or institutional levels to help improve equality in education through a process where policies systematically build-in gender considerations.

- Gender inequalities that are prevalent in the wider society are reproduced within educational institutions in the form of education policies and institutional processes.

- Public discourses on the role of mothers in the educational success of their children are of great significance.

- Education systems should be customized depending on the gap in the gender inequalities in society.

- India is not the only country with a 'gender wage gap'. This has been found to be a global phenomenon with the gap ranging from 10 per cent to 40 per cent, depending on the country.

- The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be.

- Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner.

- Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments.

- War and other forms of interpersonal and group conflict clearly have an impact on children's mental health and their ability to learn.

- Literacy, or the ability to read and write, is often considered one of the primary goals of formal education.

- Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning.

4.5 KEY TERMS

- **Quality content**: Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools.

- **Literacy**: The ability to read and write.

- **Quantitative literacy:** Quantitative literacy can be defined as the level of mathematical knowledge and skills required of all citizens.

- **Women's empowerment**: Women's empowerment is a way through which more and more women can be sensitized to issues concerning their lives and the choices they make. The objective of empowering women is so that they can make informed decisions about their life.

4.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The four approaches to women's education are as follows:
   - Expansion
   - Equity and inclusion
   - Excellence
   - Employability

2. Expansion involves establishing educational facilities in under-served or un-served locations in order to ensure that all children, women, young people and adults, especially those children and women in rural and remote areas, have access to education as well as to relevant vocational education and training programmes.

3. Equality of opportunity is known as to give equal chance to every individual for the development of his capacity.

4. Horizontal equality treats all constituents in equal manner whereas the vertical equality requires special consideration to bring about equality of opportunity.

4.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. List the key findings of the impact of social and cultural norms and expectations of gender.

2. What does quality mean in the context of education?

3. Write a short note on global citizenship education.
4. How education helps in achieving quality life?
5. What does quality education include?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the actions that government and institutions can implement for achieving women's education.
2. Discuss the benefits that can be achieved from women's education.
3. Describe some reasons which create inequality of educational opportunities.
4. Explain the strategic approaches to women's education.

4.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Underdevelopment is not the sole cause of the high degree of gender inequality in developing countries, be it in education, personal autonomy and any other space. Cultural views are also a major contributor that leads to gender inequality. Today, we are seeing a new trend, where countries grow, the gender gaps narrow. Norms such as patrilocality and concern for women's 'purity' help explain the male-skewed sex ratio in India and China and low female employment in India, the Middle East, and North Africa, for example.

Poor countries have a larger gender gap that favours males. It is a fact that gender inequality correlates with the level of economic development. You take India, for example, there is a preference for a male child among the poor. The problem of the male-skewed ratio at birth has, in many cases, intensified with economic development. Ultimately, gender bias results in inefficiencies that result from constricted opportunities for women and girls.

In this unit, you will learn about the status of women in developing countries with special reference to India. This unit will also talk about the role and contribution of women in national development and decision making.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the status of women in developing countries
- Identify the contribution of women in national development
- Describe the role of women in decision making

5.2 WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Gender inequality is not the prerogative of a poor country. In nearly all societies, it is seen that men earn more than women. Though, countries with low GDP per capita have greater disparities in health, education, and bargaining power within marriage.

Many studies have looked at education and health indicators of women in developing countries. These studies indicate that countries with an increasing GDP see a fall in the male bias in the college-going population. A similar relationship between the schooling gender gap and GDP is also seen for primary and secondary school enrollment. The male to female ratio of college enrollment declines steadily as the economy of a country grows.

The life expectancy of women has been seen to be longer than men, although in poor countries, the difference is somewhat smaller. There is no set pattern that can be attributed to this phenomenon.

Regrettably, when we look at employment, the ratio of the male and female labour force participation is dismal. India stands out for the underrepresentation of women in the labour force with men being three times as likely as women to be working. The statistics are not very encouraging in richer countries. However, these countries have a more progressive attitude about women in the labour force.

Gender-based violence is another aspect that cannot stand alone without looking at the attitude towards gender-based violence. In addition to the high rate of gender-based violence in poorer countries, the average tolerance for gender-based violence varies considerably across countries, from less than 1 per cent to over 85 per cent, but tends to be higher in poor countries.

The decision-making power within the household is another indicator of gender inequality. A woman's say in household decisions is one aspect of her well-being and thus an end in itself, but the keen interest in female empowerment is in large part because it is believed to be a means of improving children's outcomes. Women are less likely to influence spending decisions in the family in poorer countries and this pattern is extended to decision-making in other spheres related to the family such as whether to visit family and friends. Women in developed countries, generally have more decision-making power and less tolerance for gender-based violence than those in developing countries.

Women's welfare can be measured from the freedom of choice and life satisfaction of women. Women in developing countries report having relatively less control over their lives than those in developed countries. India in particular, scores very low on this factor with women having little freedom of choice and in conjunction is the very low female labour force participation.

The standing of women relative to men is much worse in developing countries as compared to women in developed countries on a variety of measures ranging from college enrollment to control over one's life. A country's economic development

or underdevelopment is a major contributor to gender equality, besides the cultural and societal issues that abound in most developing countries. In all countries, there is a shift from the traditional agriculture and manufacturing sectors towards services. Both, the agriculture and manufacturing sector, require great physical strength from its workforce, where women fared pretty badly. The service sector, on the other hand, is more amenable to a woman workforce, as physical strength is not a critical requirement.

According to Galor and Weil, there are physically-intensive tasks and mentally-intensive tasks and women having a comparative advantage in mentally-intensive tasks. Patterns of female labour force participation or of earnings are not only an outcome of lower labour productivity, but gender gaps in other outcomes are also influenced by earnings potential. Women are at a disadvantage where the main payoff of becoming educated is that one earns a higher wage in the labour market. This is marked by a trend to invest more in boys' education. It is critical to grow the brain-based sectors that can lead to women receiving more education. Pitt observes that, if the returns to education are higher in brain-based than brawn-based occupations, girls' schooling could overtake boys'.

These are some periodical studies that show that men want expanded legal rights for their daughters but restricted rights for their wives. This is not unnatural as a key benefit to a man if his daughter acquires more rights vis-à-vis his son-in-law is that his grandchildren will be given more education as it is generally accepted that women care more than men about children's well-being.

Legal rights for women are greatly endorsed when the returns to education increase and economic development induces greater support for women's rights. It is also argued that the driving forces for equal care about children are rising income and falling fertility. According to Qian, the effects of gender differences in labour productivity also come from variation within agriculture. For example, women have a comparative advantage in picking tea leaves, which are delicate and grow on short bushes as compared to picking fruit from trees where a person's height and strength was an advantage. The impact of the economic reforms in tea-growing regions, where female labour productivity has risen lead to families having fewer sex-selective abortions of female fetuses or engaging in less neglect and infanticide of girls. A women's share of household income increased, they gained bargaining power in their families, and generally there was weaker son preference in families. In addition, women's gender preference prevailed in household decision-making.

In India, the relative demand for female labour in agriculture was linked to the variation in soil type and its suitability for deep tillage. In areas where the soil required deep tillage, there was lower female labour force participation and a more male-skewed sex ratio, consistent with the female-bargaining-power effect.

Commonly, it is seen that women have weaker rights with respect to property. People with less social and political power in the community—notably women—face more risk that their land will be expropriated. This is not only an outcome of gender differences in the earnings potential from working, but the decision whether to work also depends on non-pecuniary factors.

In India, it is seen that the willingness to work is usually lower in women, which can be changed with rising income. At low levels of development, the home and workplace are closely integrated and women do unpaid work on family farms and in family businesses. With development, production migrates to factories and firms, and women withdraw from the labour force, especially from manual labour jobs, because of the perceived social stigma of having their women work in such jobs. Higher wages mean that the household can afford to forgo the woman's earnings. With even higher levels of development, the female wage grows because of the shift toward services and increased female education, which causes women to re-enter the workforce. Job growth in occupations deemed 'respectable' for women such as clerical work also helps in the resurgence of female labour force participation.

If you look at the situation in India today, the arrival of new types of jobs such as business process outsourcing or BPO, (e.g., call centers), which has boomed in several cities has been found to be appropriate for women. BPO recruitment drives and job placement services show that women who would otherwise not have worked take up BPO jobs. This intervention raised the career aspirations of young women and led them to enroll in computer and English training courses resulting in delayed marriage and childbearing. The prospect of these jobs for the younger generation led to a sizable increase in school enrollment. The economic liberalization in India since the 1990s has created white-collar jobs. These are often relatively well-paid ones and have drawn women into the labour market. Another contributor to this new shift is the woman's lack of a strong job network compared to men and have thus not channeled into traditional occupations. This provided them the advantage of taking up these new job opportunities.

One important outcome of economic development is the introduction of better physical infrastructure, more advanced technology, and higher household income. This development impacts the home with more efficient and less labour-intensive home production. Innovations have reduced home labour and because women perform the lion's share of household chores, advance in home production mainly free up women's time. For example, electrification—it takes less time to turn on an electric furnace than to gather wood for a wood-burning stove. It is true that without technological progress in home production, women's time would still remain tied up at home. Invention and diffusion of technologies reduced the time spent to fetch water, lugging coal for home heating, and other such chores. Notable technology advances were central heating, electricity including the electric consumer durables invented thereafter and running water that resulted in time spent on home production among prime-age women to fall sharply in developed countries such as the US. The ratio of women's time spent on home production, as well as the absolute amount of time women spend, declines with GDP per capita.

It has been established in certain countries that electrification has increased female labour force participation resulting from reduced time spent on home production. The findings in developed countries show that greater ownership of household appliances is associated with higher female labour force participation. For example, in many developing countries, fetching water is considred to be a job

of women, so availability of easy water will disproportionately free up women to work outside the home more or enjoy more leisure.

Low fertility and economic growth go hand-in-hand and develop simultaneously each depending on the other. A demographic transition that begins with lower mortality and proceeds to lower fertility with economic development. Smaller gender gaps in education, health and labour market are direct outcomes of a lower fertility rate in rich countries. High fertility is partly due to high desired fertility but also due to limited access to contraceptive methods to control fertility. Access to contraception delayed when women began childbearing, which, in turn, led to some increases in how much education they attained, as well as their employment rate. In the US, access to oral contraceptives transformed the career opportunities of women, making careers that require many years of upfront investment such as law and medicine more feasible and attractive.

Childbearing is more common and also more dangerous in developing countries. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, 99 per cent of the world's maternal mortality, i.e., deaths during or shortly after pregnancy from causes related to the pregnancy or birth, occurs in developing countries. It has been established that medical progress and improvements in the public health system brought about a rapid decline in maternal mortality in Sri Lanka. The reduction in maternal mortality risk led to meaningful gains in female life expectancy. The reduction in maternal mortality risk caused girls' schooling to increase and accounted for a major percentage of the narrowing of the gender gap in education that occurred over the period.

Maternal morbidity is also impacted by medical progress which lead to in a reduction in complications from childbearing, which resulted from drugs, blood banks, standardized obstetric care and other medical progress. This improved the ability of women to work postpartum in developed countries.

We have just seen that gender inequality is more pronounced among the poor than in the rich. However, there are other context-specific features, such as the cultural differences between the rich and the poor that contribute to gender inequality. Lack of development still remains a common factor even when cultural factors are at play. Poverty often exacerbates the cultural forces that lead to women being relegated to second citizenship status.

Patrilocality is a concept whereby a married couple lives near or with the husband's parents. After marriage, a woman ceases to be a member of her birth family and becomes a member of her husband's family. Thus, investment in females is restricted as a daughter will physically and financially leave the household upon marriage. In Asian countries such as India, co-residence of adult sons and elderly parents is much more common. Particularly in the northern region of India there exists a much stronger patrilocal system which is one explanation for a more pronounced gender inequality in the north. In the south, the sex ratio is less male-skewed. The male-to-female sex ratio is positively correlated with the rate of co-residence between adult sons and their parents both across and within countries.

Daughters' returns to nutrition, health care, and schooling, if fully internalized can cause a reduction in gender gaps despite the influence of patrilocality. In practice, though, the longer duration that parents will co-reside and pool financial resources with their sons seems to cause them to invest disproportionately in sons. For example, parents are more likely to seek medical care for a sick son than sick daughter. Similarly, parents are more likely to seek medical support from sons than from daughters.

The tendency to invest more in sons than daughters is rooted in poverty. The tendency to seek medical care only for their son is linked to financial constraints. With more available resources, families would seek equal care for both their son and daughter.

Traditionally, it has been seen that sons provide old-age support for their parents in societies such as India. In countries such as China where government instituted pension programs were instituted, it resulted in a less skewed sex ratio. Although, the cultural norm that sons not daughters support parents did not change, but its implications for the desire to have a son and the skewed sex ratio did change. When a formal institution for retirement savings arose, the informal method of relying on sons became less important, and therefore this force driving son preference became less relevant.

The dowry system has been a major drawback for women. The concept is that a bride's parents make a payment to the couple at the time of marriage. It has emerged mainly in societies where women played a lesser role in agriculture. Although, the dowry system has disappeared in many societies, it is still prevalent in South Asian countries like India. In fact, over the past several decades, not only has the prevalence of dowry increased, but the real value of dowry payments has risen considerably in India. It is an unfortunate fact that though the dowry system was intended to improve the financial well-being of females, today, the groom typically controls the money making the dowry the price of a groom. Dowry is thus an additional financial cost to parents for having daughters.

The dowry system has resulted in a pro-male bias and the prospect of paying dowry is often cited as a key factor in parents' desire to have sons rather than daughters, with the financial burden of dowry seeming to loom large in prospective parents' minds.

Dowry should not be a cause to reduce investments in daughters, which, unfortunately, is what happens in reality. Families may restrict investment in their daughters, but care more about the quality of their daughters-in-law than their sons-in-law because daughters-in-law will live with them under patrilocality. Besides reducing human capital investments, the dowry system also results in newly married women sometimes being the victim of violence or sometimes turns into what is termed as 'dowry deaths' as punishment for the dowry amount being deemed inadequate by the groom.

The patrilineal system is where names and property pass to the next generation through male descendants, thereby putting sons on a higher footing than daughters.

The specific feature of land inheritance especially had a large impact on the gender gap. Although, the current laws in India provide for equal rights to property to all heirs including the widow, traditionally, widows did not inherit their husbands' ancestral property. The son was their only means for maintaining their standard of living in widowhood. Subsequent to the changes in the law, the proportion of women who inherited land increased resulting in a rise in a women's age of marriage being consistent with their having more bargaining power within the family and financial independence. The reforms also increased girls' schooling, presumably because their mothers were more empowered in the household or because education and asset ownership complemented each other. Some negative consequences of the legal reforms for women were in the form of rise in suicides resulting from an increase in female bargaining power sparked marital conflict.

Religions and beliefs are also contributing factors to the second-rate status of women in countries like India. In Hinduism, a son has a special role in the family as it encourages the patrilineal and patrilocal system. Take for example rituals, most of the rituals and ancestor worship involves the son playing a major and essential role. The ancient Hindu text such as the Vedas, son preference is mentioned. In Hindu societies, it is the son who lights a deceased person's funeral pyre so that he or she attains salvation. Surprisingly, a more skewed sex ratio is seen in upper castes than lower castes.

Funeral-pyre underpinning, wanting someone to carry on the family name and widows wanting to retain family land are reasons for the desire for one son. Once a son is born to a family, a balanced gender ratio is more or less preferred.

In many developing countries, women's and girls' safety and 'purity' is cited as reasons for constraining their physical mobility. However, in reality, other than a genuine concern for women's welfare, aimed at protecting them from harassment and sexual violence, it is another way to stifle female autonomy. Restrictions on female mobility are often aimed at keeping unmarried women chaste and married women faithful. This results in reduced female schooling and career opportunities. A popular reason for not educating daughters is the distance to school and this is phenomenon witnessed in the so-called developed countries as well. It has been established from various schemes that better infrastructure, which comes with economic development, could offset some of the effects that social constraints on girls' mobility have on their education.

Another form of restriction is parents want their daughters segregated from male peers or male teachers. The simple act of constructing sex-segregated school latrines boosted adolescent girls' enrollment in India.

Same gender teachers have largely benefitted societies where genders are socially segregated. This has also impacted the test scores for both boys and girls in India. Regrettably, because there are fewer female teachers at higher grades, girls lose out on the same-gender benefit as they progress.

Early school dropout has also been an outcome of the pressure to marry off daughters early in societies where female chastity is prized by men.

In societies such as India, there is a potential risk to family honour associated with female mobility that is both objective and socially constructed. This is a major factor for the very low female labour force participation in India. One of the tenets of the Hindu caste system is that women should be protected from 'pollution', which includes men outside their families. Disallowing women from working outside the home is one way of maintaining their purity. These restrictions are more pronounced in the upper caste category than in the lower castes, which often provide the lower caste women with more professional flexibility and autonomy.

In Islam, the purdah system is an important tenet relegating Muslim women to similar status as Hindu women in low female labour force participation and low self-reported freedom of choice. However, the importance of the son in the Muslim family is not a critical factor. Hence, the sex ratio at birth and child survival exhibit less pro-male bias among Muslims than Hindus in India.

Gender gaps go beyond the current economic environment and are deeply rooted in the culture of the society. This has been repeatedly proved in the persistence of gender gaps even when the economic environment changes for the better. People who have migrated to wealthier countries from developing countries like India, may have dropped cultural practices such as dowry and non-employment of women. However, there is still a strong preference for a son suggesting that gender-related practices are embodied in preferences or beliefs that might have a long half-life.

It has been found that a woman's fertility is predicted by the average fertility in her country of origin. It is also suggested that a similar pattern holds for her labour force participation. Gender gaps in behavior at least partly reflect gender norms that are passed along from parents to children. For example, if a mother works, her son's wife is more likely to work. These findings also indicate that gender-related behaviors depend on cultural background and not just the economic environment one faces.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. How can women's welfare be measured?
2. What is the patrilineal system?

5.3 WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender issues have emerged at the centre stage of development planning in several countries including India as a result of growing gender inequalities and the consequential adverse impacts on the wellbeing of society. Reliable and timely statistics on various aspects of gender inequalities all contribute to the formulation of specific policies and programmes to address such issues effectively.

During 2004-05, the total workforce in the country was estimated to be 45.57 crore. Of this an estimated 14.69 crore were women workers which amounted to a 32.2 per cent of the total workers. 72.8 per cent of these women workers were

employed in agriculture. In the non-agricultural sector women workers constituted just 27.2 per cent of total women workers. Within the non-agricultural sector, manufacturing industries employed 11.5 per cent of the total women workers. The trade sectors employed 3.3 per cent and education sectors employed 3.2 per cent of women workers. Overall, the four industry groups consisting of agriculture, manufacturing, trade and education-accounted for 90.8 per cent of women workers. The remaining per cent of women workers were absorbed in private households, construction, community, social and personal services, hotels and restaurants, and public administration and defence.

Low capital investment, low productivity, and low earnings are the common attributes of the informal sector. Added to this is the low quality of work that manifests itself in the form of job security, income security, social security and conditions of work. However, 91.2 per cent of the women workers were in the informal sector as compared to 83.9 per cent men. From this we see that a significantly high percentage of women were engaged in the informal sector involved in low quality work. However, the percentage shares of informal sector workers among men and women in different industry groups vary considerably.

In the agriculture sector itself, statistics show that 98.0 per cent of women agricultural workers work in the informal sector. In manufacturing industries, though the share of informal sector in the aggregate employment is only 71 per cent and among women workers it is 82.6 per cent. In trade also, 96.2 per cent of women workers are in the informal sector out of 95.6 per cent of total workers. 29.1 per cent among women workers take a share of informal sector workers in education. Generally speaking, employment in extra-territorial organizations is negligible. Hence, all the women workers in private households and extra-territorial organizations come under the informal sector category. The share of informal sector women workers in the hotels and restaurants industry as well is much higher than that of men workers. In several industries as shown below, we find the share of informal sector among women workers is lower than that of men:

- Construction has strength of 62.8 per cent women and 77.0 per cent men
- Health services employs 33.7 per cent women and 54.0 per cent men
- Other community, social, and personal services employs 84.5 per cent women as compared to 85.4 per cent men
- Public administration and defence has 0.7 per cent women and 1.0 per cent men

Since the estimation of GDP in the country is by compilation categories, the distribution of women workers by compilation categories as well as formal and informal sectors is an important input in the estimation of their economic contribution. Though there are seven compilation categories in which the share of women in the total workforce is greater than 40 per cent, there is only one compilation category, viz., education, in which their share in the informal sector is less than 50 per cent. Even among the compilation categories in which the share of women workers ranged between 30 to 40 per cent, it was only in the case of health services that the share of the informal sector was less than 50 per cent. There were eight compilation categories where share of women workers was between 20 to 30 per cent and 16

compilation categories where the share of women workers was 20 per cent and below.

An interesting fact is that the overall rate of growth of women workers between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 was found to be higher than that of males. The aggregate growth rate of the total workforce stood at 2.76 per cent per year. While the growth rate was estimated at 3.74 per cent in the case of women workers, the growth rate for men stood at 2.26 per cent. The categories which recorded substantial growth rates in female workers were:

- Wearing apparel with 33.0 per cent
- Computer and related activities with 25.4 per cent
- Private households having 24.3 per cent
- Dressing and dyeing of fur with 6.8 per cent
- Hair dressing and beauty treatment standing at 16.0 per cent
- Coaching centres with 14.6 per cent
- Telecommunications with 12.1 per cent
- Research and development with 12.1 per cent

Agriculture recorded the highest growth rate of women amounting to 3.0 per cent as compared to men with a 0.7 per cent. This is with a total of 72.8 per cent of women workers employed.

Certain categories recorded a negative growth rate in women workers which included:

- Funeral and other service activities recorded - 25.8 per cent
- Washing and dry cleaning recorded - 4.9 per cent.
- Sewage and refuse disposal recorded - 4.5 per cent
- Grain mill products and s tarches recor ded - 3.1 per cent
- Public administration and defence recorded - 1.7 per cent

From the figures thrown up by the compilation categories, it can be seen that women workers have started expanding both in traditional and modern industries.

Estimates of GDP also provide a picture of what is happening today. The estimated value of GDP during 2004-05 was Rs 2,855,934 crore. The break-up is like this:

- The informal sector contributed to Rs 1,426,218 crore
- The formal sector contribution was at Rs 1,429,716 crore

In the same year Rs 564,920 crore was the contribution of the women workforce to the GDP, with Rs 333,834 crore in the informal sector and Rs 231,086 crore in the formal sector. Looking at the aggregate, the share of the informal sector in the GDP was a little less than 50 per cent. However, its share in the GDP contribution of women was considerably higher at 59.1 per cent.

The following some figures based on the year 2004-05, showing the estimates of GDP by industry group:

- Agriculture sector: A total of 72.8 per cent of women workers were employed. The share of the sector in the GDP contribution of women was just 39.2 per cent.
- Manufacturing sector: Manufacturing industries had the second largest share at 14.7 per cent though the share of the sector in the employment of women was only 11.5 per cent.
- Other industry groups that shared a sizeable percentage of GDP contribution of women were:
  - o Trade with a 7.8 per cent
  - o Education with a 5.3 per cent
  - o Real estate, renting and business services providing 4.3 per cent
  - o Banking and financial intermediation 16.8 per cent
  - o Construction with 4.1 per cent
  - o Public administration and defence contributing 3.7 per cent
  - o Health services contributing 3.6 per cent

Private households had the second lowest share of GDP contribution of women although it employed the fifth largest percentage of women. In other words, the average gross value added per worker in the case of private households was one of the lowest.

Let us look at the GDP estimates by industry group. Referring to the statistics of the year 2004-05, we find that 32.2 per cent of the women workers contributed an aggregate of 19.8 per cent of the GDP. The contribution from the informal sector stood at 11.7 per cent, whereas an 8.1 per cent contribution came from the formal sector. Although, the formal sector generated a little over 50 per cent of the GDP, the contribution from women stood at a low of 8.1 per cent. Male dominance in the formal sector and employment of a large percentage of women in comparatively low productive industries were the major reasons for this sizeable disparity. Private households were the only industry group in which the share of women exceeded that of men in GDP. Some other industries where women generated a good percentage of the GDP are as follows:

- Agriculture with 41.3 per cent
- Education with 41.2 per cent
- Healthcare with 38.1 per cent
- Health services with 25.1 per cent

Agriculture with a 41.3 per cent share of contribution to GDP by women accounted for 39.2 per cent of total GDP contribution of women and of that over 95 per cent of the value addition was in the informal sector. The second largest contribution of women to GDP was in education with a percentage share of 7.3 per cent. The other major compilation categories which accounted for a significantly large percentage of GDP contribution of women were retail trade with 5.9 per cent contribution, banking and financial intermediation with 4.3 per cent contribution, and construction with 4.1 per cent contribution. Public administration and defence with

3.7 per cent contribution, chemical and chemical products with 3.7 per cent contribution, health services with 3.6 per cent contribution, computer and related activities with 2.9 per cent contribution, and wholesale trade with 2.4 per cent contribution.

The overall annual growth rate in GDP between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 was about 5.99 per cent of which the contribution of women, the growth rate was lower at 5.61 per cent and in the case of men it was 6.1 per cent. In the formal sector the growth rate of GDP was about 7.6 per cent. Likewise, in the informal sector it was only 4.5 per cent. The GDP contribution of females in the formal sector, however, recorded a higher growth rate of 9.2 per cent. The sectors which recorded comparatively high growth rates in the contribution of women to GDP were as follows:

- Real estate, renting and business services contributing 19.3 per cent
- Health services contributing 11.4 per cent
- Hotels and restaurants contributing 8.6 per cent
- Trade contributing 8.4 per cent
- Manufacturing contributing 7.9 per cent
- Education contributing 7.9 per cent
- Banking and financial services contributing 7.9 per cent
- Electricity, gas and water supply contributing 7.8 per cent

There was a significant decline in the contribution of the informal sector in the category of electricity, gas and water supply, and the growth in this industry group can be attributed to the formal sector.

The average gross value added per worker was the lowest in the case of wood and wood products, followed by private households, tobacco products and agriculture. These were the industries in which a significant percentage of women were employed. In fact, these traditional industries taken together accounted for 78.5 per cent of the women workers in the country. Further, a large percentage of women in all these industry groups were employed in the informal sector with significantly low productivity. The industries with high productivity are as follows:

- Banking and financial intermediation
- Air transport
- Computer and related activities
- Real estate activities

The percentage of women employed in these industries was just 0.41 per cent. The total employment of women in air transport activities and real estate activities taken together was merely about 60,000 in the year 2004-05.

It is seen that the share of women in the total workforce of the country was 32.2 per cent and their contribution to GDP was just about 19.8 per cent in the year

2004-05. It is, however, argued that the participation of women in the workforce is not accurately measured in view of certain inherent problems in the definitions and survey methodologies followed in labour force surveys.

According to the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA), production of any good for own consumption is included in the definition of economic activity and hence those engaged in such activities are considered as workers. Thus, processing of primary products like de-husking of paddy, grinding of food grains, preparation of gur and preservation of meat, fish, etc., for household consumption are treated as economic activities as per the UNSNA. Similarly, making of baskets and mats, preparation of cow dung cake, sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc., for household use are also included in the definition of economic activity. These activities are, however, not regarded as economic activities in the definitions followed in India. There are certain other activities like maintenance of kitchen gardens, orchards, etc.; work in household poultry, dairy, etc.; free collection of fish, small games, wild fruits, vegetables, etc., for household consumption; and free collection of firewood, cow dung, cattle feed, etc., for household consumption which form part of economic activity as per the UNSNA definition but often do not get recorded as usual principal activities in survey interviews, particularly in the case of women, though some of them may be reported as subsidiary activities. This non-recording is primarily because the usual activity status of each person is recorded by the investigator as reported by the informants and such responses are generally conditioned by the traditional roles being played by each member in the household hierarchy. These activities are generally conceived as part of household chores and not as economic activities. In addition, there are activities like tutoring one's own or others' children free of charge and bringing water from outside household premises which form part of the extended UNSNA, but are generally not regarded as economic activities in most countries including India.

The data sets available from the follow up questions for those classified into one of the following categories under usual principal status can be profitably used to get estimates of persons engaged in economic activities but not classified as workers:

- attended domestic duties only, and
- attended domestic duties and was also engaged in free collection of goods (vegetables, roots, fire wood, cattle feed, etc.), sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc., for household use.

While there were 20.28 crore persons in the above two categories, 3.45 crore of them were classified as subsidiary status workers. Of the remaining 16.83 crore, 6.01 crore were reported to have been engaged in one or more of the activities relating to production of primary goods like maintenance of kitchen gardens, etc., which are essentially economic activities. Of these 6.01 crore, 5.93 crore were women and 0.09 crore were men. There were four economic activities where estimates of men and women were catalogued:

- Maintenance of kitchen gardens, orchards, etc.
- Household poultry, dairy, etc.
- Free collection of fish, small games, wild fruits, vegetables, etc., for household consumption.
- Free collection of firewood, cow dung, cattle feed, etc.

The women were engaged in one or more of these four economic activities, though they were reported to be out of the labour force. On average each woman was engaged in 1.7 activities (the total person activities were 10.06 crore). The most common activity was free collection of firewood, cow dung, cattle feed, etc., for household use as 3.93 crore women out of 5.93 crore were engaged in this activity. Work in household poultry, dairy, etc., was the next common activity and 2.83 crore women were engaged in it. These activities were primarily a rural phenomenon as 5.33 crore women out of 5.93 crore belonged to rural areas.

The total workforce in 2004-05 would have become 51.69 crore including 20.61 crore women, if the persons engaged in the above activities were included in the workforce. The share of women in the total workforce would have then become 39.9 per cent instead of 32.2 per cent.

There were 8.52 crore persons, including 8.45 crore women, engaged in activities classified as economic activities as per UNSNA but not treated as economic activities in India. The most common activity of women in this group was preparation of cow dung cake for use as fuel in the household. About 4.50 crore women were engaged in this activity during 2004-05. The next common activity was sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc., for household use and 4.35 crore women were engaged in this activity. Grinding of food grains and de-husking of paddy, both for household consumption, were the next two common activities and 2.01 crore and 1.65 crore women respectively were engaged in these activities. The other three activities (preparation of gur for household consumption, preservation of meat and fish for household consumption, and making of baskets and mats) taken together engaged 2.30 crore women. On an average, each woman was engaged in 1.75 activities.

Nearly 25 per cent of the women engaged in the above activities belonged to urban areas. The single activity in which urban women were mostly engaged was sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc., for household use and 1.53 crore urban women were involved in this activity. Grinding of food grains for household use was the second major activity of urban women and 0.48 crore of them were engaged in it.

About 6.75 crore persons were engaged in activities like tutoring of own children and bringing water from outside the household premises. Among them, 6.67 crore were women and about 28.0 per cent of them were in urban areas. Bringing water from outside the household premises was the most common activity and 5.52 crore women were engaged in it.

Considering all UNSNA activities, 9.93 crore out of 16.83 crore persons with usual primary status activity and not included in subsidiary status workers were

engaged in one or more activities. While 23.77 per cent of them were engaged only in one activity, 12.73 per cent were engaged in two activities. There were about 0.02 crore persons engaged in all the activities. The average number of activities per person was 2.54. In the case of women, 9.81 crore out of 16.63 crore were engaged in one or more activities. The average number of activities per woman was 2.53.

The distribution of persons with usual principal status activity and engaged in various UNSNA activities but not included in the category of subsidiary status. If these persons were included in the workforce, the total workforce in the country would have become 55.50 crore and the share of women would have become 24.50 crore or 44.2 per cent.

The economic value of activities can only be estimated by using income method. The issue, however, is the choice of an appropriate per activity or per capita value of income which has to be based on intensity of activity, quality of the product and appropriate wage rates. Intensities of such activities are generally available only through time use surveys. Since wage rates have to be area specific and activity specific, estimates of quantity and intensity of each of the activities would also be required at such disaggregate levels. As a crude approximation, value added per worker in the informal sector in the corresponding compilation categories has been used to estimate the economic value of the activities covered in this exercise. It is justified in view of the fact that the quality of employment in the informal sector is closer to that of the activities under consideration. It is, however, necessary to convert the person activities into persons to apply the value added per worker. It is done by apportioning the total number of persons in the proportion of person activities. The estimated GDP on the basis of this exercise is Rs 216,106 crore including Rs 2,459 crore by men and Rs 213,647 crore by women. The total GDP would thus become Rs 3,072,041 crore and the share of women would become Rs 778,567 crore or 25.3 per cent.

There is considerable disparity between men and women in their relative shares of employment and GDP contribution. Firstly, the share of women in the total workforce was only 32.2 per cent in the year 2004-05. A large percentage of these women were employed in the informal sector which is characterized by low productivity. Further, about 78.5 per cent of the women were employed in traditional industries with significantly low productivity though participation of women in some of the modern industries with high productivity did register significant growth over 1999-2000. Their number was, however, too low to improve their share in GDP. The economic empowerment of women and reduction of gender inequalities in the industrial activity of the country would, therefore, involve introduction of policies and programmes aimed at accelerating the growth of the share of women in modern high value industries and activities.

It is also noted that women are engaged in several activities which are not taken into account in the workforce as well as GDP estimates. It is necessary that

these activities of women be recognized and provided the necessary support mechanisms to improve their working conditions and productivity.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. What are the common attributes of the informal sector?
4. List some industries where women generated a good percentage of the GDP.

5.4 WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

To quote Dr Vibhuti Patel (Women in Decision Making): 'Poverty, lack of access to basic resources, lack of access to political party lists, low salaries, and discrimination in the workplace are considered as root causes of women's under-representation in economic and political decision-making.'

If the concentration of women is on their survival, they will have very little time remaining for taking on the role of holding economic power and leadership. Actually, recognizing the unpaid work that is done by women and recognizing that there is need to share with her the responsibilities of household and family, and providing her non-traditional skills' training does not exist. All of this combines to depict the reasons for majority of the women all across the world lack actual decision-making power in the economy, community and households.

Role Played by Self-help Groups and Voluntary Organizations

The participation of women in the area of preventive diplomacy and in negotiations at the peace table have been looked upon as being vital for development, for peace and to divert expenditures being made for military purposed towards peaceful objectives. Suggestion has been made that the process of decision making where men and women are involved could aid in the creation of an approach which would be more peaceful.

As Dr Vibhuti Patel 'The importance of creating national machineries, inter-ministerial bodies, national committees and women's bureaus to ensure women's equal participation in all aspects of decision-making, with adequate levels of staffing and funding, and located at the center of political power, was cited as critical. …the mainstreaming of gender issues in institutions …as another means to promote the advancement of women in decision-making.'

To be able to ensure that women stay in power, there is a need for creating more harmony and balance between responsibilities within the family and professional

work, for men as well as for women. There needs to be a higher level of sharing of both household and parental responsibilities between men and women. Recognizing the unpaid work done by women, providing them flexible working hours the sharing of responsibilities associated with the family with the men, and the need for women taking part in the household related decision making have been seen to be some important issues.

Women who are educated will gain more control over their lives and this displays the need for women's education and training to enable the same. Further, it has been seen that if women candidates are trained in how to conduct electoral campaigns and raise funds it has a positive effect on the election of women to public office. When women manage to attain office, they generally need to be provided training regarding budgetary matters and parliamentary procedures. Also, at every level, it is important to impart to them leadership training.

Change in the attitudes of society is another key issue, more so at the earliest stages of life when girls and boys are as yet not set in their beliefs of sex stereotypes. There is a key role to be played by the media when it comes to perpetuating sex stereotypes, to put forth a positive view of women and to depict girls in non-traditional or stereotypical roles. If television and films continue to stereotype women as 'sex objects', the movement for equality for women will be adversely affected.

Even though the number of professional women in the media is only on the rise, even now it is found that various issues, for example editorial content related decisions and production issues, even now in the men's domain and control. The need for women to participate more with men for building alliance and coalitions which will advocate women's political representation and empowerment is at present of prime importance. 'Women leaders and older women and men represent a valuable resource for mentoring young women as future leaders.' (Dr Vibhuti Patel (Women in Decision Making)

It has often been suggested that the regional as well as the national women's parliamentary caucuses will benefit by the inclusion of women from both the private sector and the civil service. Together, non-governmental and governmental organizations, international organizations, etc., need to support the development of women leaders via appropriate training and nurturing to enable their admittance into politics. Creating an enabling environment for the full participation of women and their equal representation in power as well as in the field of decision making is an important aspect.

There is also a great need for the reviewing of legislation for women's entitlements, protection of property rights and social security.

It was in the year 1994, that under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the 74th Constitutional Amendment, that women representatives numbering 10 lakh women held elected posts with bodies of local self-government. This became possible

because of the seat reservation for women in village councils, tehsil councils, and district councils and even in corporations and municipal councils.

Now that over 11 years have passed with women being in governance, they have gained confidence in handling public economics, area development agenda and gender audit of budgets. It is considered that quotas and targets in jobs, legislatures, and political parties are essential for speeding up equal representation of women in the areas of governance they are associated with. Quotas are a controversial issue and must be looked upon as being a solution that is only temporary. Those in opposition of affirmative action by the state in favour of women appear to be of the belief that women should enter the power-structures only based on competition, laissez faire in the labour, factor and product markets.

For presenting women's economic agenda, their leaders must possess some power of agenda setting. Electoral reform, especially for adopting proportional representation over plurality systems, could be a way to raise the percentage of women representatives in parliaments. The introduction of the bill pertaining to 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in the parliament is already made and over the past two decades, this has remained a controversial issue. Supporters of the bill opine that there must not be lower than 30 per cent to 40 per cent and higher than 60 per cent to 70 per cent of either sex in positions of decision-making. The Government of India's Women Empowerment Policy, 2001 will only be effective if the programmes and principles associated with become an action plan. To implement the plan, effective resource management is required by elected representatives and motivated civil servants, sincere financial commitments for women's schemes and programmes and consistent monitoring by women's bodies within the state apparatus and civil society.

5.4.1 Schemes Pertaining to Safety-net for Women

In the Tenth Five Year Plan, it is specified that all state and union ministries have to channelise 30 per cent of funds/benefits from the development sector to women. Any policy geared towards the employment of women must include strategies which will challenge the sexual division of labour and gender ideology both in and outside the workplace. Policies for access comprise policies pertaining to, for example, credit, training, education and employment, such as:

- Policies for better quality of employment, including the position of women within the household.
- Policies for preserving of employment and protecting the material and human assets and resources.

Appropriate Implementation of Schemes and Laws

For the appropriate implementation of schemes and laws the following points need to be taken care of. They are as follows:

1. The labour legislation that currently exists (Industrial Disputes Act, the Factories Act, the E.S.I.S. Act and Minimum Wages Act) needs to be strengthened rather than withdrawn so that it also covers all workers.

2. There is a need to have a mechanism in place for evaluating the value of work under ERA.

3. Strict implementation of minimum wages must be done along with ward level committees of workers.

4. Under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, the union and state governments need to make sure that macro policies are in place for absorbing of workers in the occupations and units that are labour intensive. The Employment Guarantee Scheme needs to be expanded and improved for urban workers. Schemes of this nature could focus on infrastructure development, housing and slum betterment. Expansion could be made in the National Renewal Fund for covering the unorganized sector. Greater part should be channelized for worker training.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention and Redressal) Bill, 2004.

The Bill addresses prevention and redressal of sexual harassment of women at workplaces, or arising during and out of the course of their employment and matters connected thereto, in keeping with the principles of equality, freedom, life, and liberty as enshrined in the Constitution of India and as upheld by the Supreme Court in Vishakha vs. State of Rajashthan.

In a workshop held by The Times Foundation, pertaining to SHW, for the corporate world, it became clear that SHW also exists in such companies where the victims are highly educated and have considerable economic leverage. This revelation has also been made by various business journals such as Business Today (1-9-2002).

The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention) Act should be enacted by the nation states to provide remedy within the criminal justice system for prevention of sexual harassment of women and women employees which is work related.

Stress on Education and Development of Skills

It is essential to lay emphasis on education, type of education for the poor and women. There is a very limited access for women to have employment. The one reason for it is a lack of education and work skills. While the states and centre provide free education for girls, the dropout rate is not being curbed and no follow up is generally done. It is generally at the high school level that girls drop out. There is a need for incentives and special attention to girls and their parents so that the dropout rate can be reduced.

Training and Capacity Building

Training institutions should be linked with job placement organisations and industries more fund allocation needed for this. Job oriented training must also encompass building of other life-skills for critical awareness pertaining to women's status, better skills of negotiation , and programs which will help to building and maintaining assets of women, such as savings.

Self Help Group Movement

Self Help Groups are women's organisations with members from society's downtrodden section. The self-help groups empower the women and guide them towards self-reliance via through confidence and capacity building and through providing them means of obtaining micro-credit. With SHG movement, women have learned the value of saving and the strength that comes from working as a group.

The SHG movement faces several problems, like:

- Formation of weak groups
- Delay in gradation of groups by banks
- Degradation of the programme by subsidy seekers
- Programme implementation by fresh, inexperienced NGOs who lack appropriate training
- Bankers' insensitivity
- Delays in release of money by district rural development authorities
- No active participation in group activities
- Every group members not interested in economic activities

Property and Land Rights

The gender bias against women in the laws pertaining to property is extremely evident. While on paper, it is shown to be equal, in reality, it is not. Some ways in which this can be corrected are given below:

There should be restriction in the testamentary powers which deny daughters property rights. Daughters should be allowed full right to reside in the parental dwelling houses. Women need to have 'the right to residence' and this will put private household property in the joint names of partners. When women own property, men must not be allowed to appropriate under the pretext of its being in joint name.

A woman's reliance is restricted as far as her parents' households is concerned when she faces potentially dangerous marital relations. In this respect, there is the Bill on Matrimonial Property which has been drafted and is waiting to be passed. With this matrimonial property bill the following could be done.

Budget Auditing and Planning

The state can make use of the budget to conduct affirmative actions to make the gender relations better via decreasing the gender gap in the process of development. Reduction could be made in the area of economic inequalities, between men and women as well as between the rich and the poor. Participatory approaches must be encouraged and highlighted, for pro-poor budgeting, green budgeting, local and global implications of pro-poor and pro-women budgeting, alternative macro scenarios emerging out of alternative budgets and inter-linkages between gender-sensitive budgeting and women's empowerment. There must be much more transparency in the local processes of empowerment.

There is the Women's Component Plan which will make sure that a minimum of 30 per cent of benefits and funds coming from every development sector goes to

women. There must be an additional mandate approach of services' convergence on every level of governance via inter-sectoral committees of all departments/ ministries at the level of both the states and the centre, along with specific responsibility given to the bodies of the local self-government and municipalities for their grass root administration.

If there has to be affirmative action for social security by the state, SHGs and employers must take into consideration the points given below:

- It is possible to empower women through making available economic rights at workplace with the help of the SHG movement, and by providing property rights and land reforms for giving land rights to women.
- For women to empower themselves on their own, they should gain familiarity with banking operations such as account opening and managing. Women must have bills issued in their names.
- Women whose income is lower than the taxable limit must be exempted from paying stamp duties. Women who are the sole earners of a household must be provided tax benefits and this will show implementation of affirmative action towards them.
- No economic life are gender neutral. Therefore, it is a must for all ministries, both at the state and centre level, to have a women's division which is involved in all of the decision-making processes, such as planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring.

5.4.2 Power of Decision-Making at Household Levels, Class and Community Level

Women's self organisation is appropriate as far as power of decision-making at the household, class and community level is concerned. In the 1970s and 80s, the women's movement emphatically brought out women marginalisation from the economy. Women activists guided their efforts to propaganda and agitation for the rights of women, street fighting against escalating violence against assertive women and team building to counter sexual harassment at the work place. During the 1990s, the movement pushed to attain its place in the mainstream along with its specific agenda for empowerment of women with partnership with men.

The movement has made allies across all sections of society. Its vertical and horizontal networking has made the atmosphere conducive for implementing the development agenda through effective use of information technology, communication channels, modern managerial practices and efficient law and order machinery. The difficult issues to tackle are making educational opportunities available for poverty groups, low-cost housing, environmental and occupational safety and human rights concerns. There is a need for safety nets for development thinkers and workers so that they can operate independent of pressures from vested interests and local bullies. When individual women activists sense threats/pressure in advance, they end up changing their job and or accommodation. The state, the political parties, and those who are beneficiaries of women's groups also have the responsibility of ensuring that the atmosphere is democratic and multicultural in which the women activists

operate. This is important so that it is possible for them to make decisions which are judicious and gender-just as far as the allocation of developmental funding and resources are concerned for building of schools, community centres, sports-clubs, libraries and reading rooms, low cost hospitals and low cost housing for the poverty groups living settled lives.

Role of Kinship in Allocation of Domestic and Social Resources

A predominant role is played by kinship networks for determining age, gender, location-based division of rights and responsibilities, autonomy and control, restrictions and liberties allocated to women. Therefore, when the mindset of the community is changed, it will lead to the enhancement in the decision-making power of women via investments in social infrastructures, like education, skill development, public health and sanitation, environmental and occupational safety.

In the current age, across the world, women have reached high-level decision making positions.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there was recognition of the right of all individual to participate in the governing of their country. As essential precondition for democracy's proper functioning, it was recognized that there should be equal access of men and women to power, decision-making and leadership at all levels.

Below is some data concerning India derived from 2014, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on the participation of women in decision making at administrative levels across three specific sectors:

1. **Women in All India Central Services**: Of the All-India and Central Group A Services, 30per cent women belong to Indian economic service and only 12 per cent in Indian trade service. Indian forest service has 28 per cent women, Indian audit and accounts service has 24 per cent, Indian postal service has 21 per cent and Indian information service too has 21 per cent.

2. **Women in Politics**: Participation of women in elections has risen from 56 per cent in the 15th general elections to 66 per cent in the 16th general election of 2014. In the states, women share is only 8 per cent in assemblies.

3. **Women judges in high courts**: The Supreme Court has 30 judges and 3 are women. Of 609 judges across different High Courts, 58 are women. Delhi has the highest percentage of women judges, along with Mumbai, Chennai and Chandigarh. Six High Courts in India do not have a woman judge. State assembles which have the highest percentage of women MLAs are Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Haryana.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5. What is a SHG?
6. Give any two problems that the SHG movement faces.

5.5 SUMMARY

- An increase in women's participation in the labour force results in increases in human capital investment in girls and women's personal autonomy.

- The three key elements of the development process include growth of the services sector, technological advances in home production, and reduced risk and frequency of childbearing.

- In many poor countries, cultural practices and norms encourage the desire for sons and constricted opportunities for women.

- Societies' concern for women's 'purity' has resulted in very low female employment and freedom of choice for women in many countries like India.

- Cultural practices such as patrilocality, patrilineality and religious rituals performed by sons have created a strong desire to have at least one son generating the extremely male-skewed sex ratio at birth in India.

- Economic development has aggravated the skewed sex ratio at birth due to the advent of prenatal sex-diagnostic technologies and declining desired fertility.

- Gender issues have emerged at the centre stage of development planning in several countries including India as a result of growing gender inequalities and the consequential adverse impacts on the wellbeing of society.

- Reliable and timely statistics on various aspects of gender inequalities all contribute to the formulation of specific policies and programmes to address such issues effectively.

- During 2004-05, the total workforce in the country was estimated to be 45.57 crore. Of this an estimated 14.69 crore were women workers which amounted to a 32.2 per cent of the total workers. 72.8 per cent of these women workers were employed in agriculture.

- In the non-agricultural sector, women workers constituted just 27.2 per cent of total women workers. Within the non-agricultural sector, manufacturing industries employed 11.5 per cent of the total women workers.

- The trade sectors employed 3.3 per cent and education sectors employed 3.2 per cent of women workers. Overall, the four industry groups consisting of agriculture, manufacturing, trade and education-accounted for 90.8 per cent of women workers.

- The remaining per cent of women workers were absorbed in private households, construction, community, social and personal services, hotels and restaurants, and public administration and defence.

- To be able to ensure that women stay in power, there is a need for creating more harmony and balance between responsibilities within the family and professional work, for men as well as for women.

- Change in the attitudes of society is another key issue, more so at the earliest

stages of life when girls and boys are as yet not set in their beliefs of sex stereotypes.

- For presenting women's economic agenda, their leaders must possess some power of agenda setting.

- In the Tenth Five Year Plan it is specified that all state and union ministries have to channelise 30 per cent of funds/benefits from the development sector to women.

- It is essential to lay emphasis on education, type of education for the poor and women. There is a very limited access for women to have employment.

- The self-help groups empower women and guide them towards self-reliance via confidence and capacity building and through providing them means of obtaining micro-credit.

- There should be restriction in the testamentary powers which deny daughters property rights.

- A predominant role is played by kinship networks for determining age, gender, location-based division of rights and responsibilities, autonomy and control, restrictions and liberties allocated to women.

5.6 KEY TERMS

- **Patrilocality**: Patrilocality is a concept whereby a married couple lives near or with the husband's parents.

- **Maternal morbidity**: Maternal morbidity is defined as any health condition attributed to and/or aggravated by pregnancy and childbirth that has a negative impact on the woman's wellbeing.

- **Purdah system**: Purdah is a religious and social practice of female seclusion prevalent among some Muslim communities in South Asia.

- **Patrilineality**: Patrilineality is a system in which one belongs to one's father's lineage; it generally involves the inheritance of property, names or titles through the male line as well.

5.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Women's welfare can be measured from the freedom of choice and life satisfaction of women.

2. The patrilineal system is where names and property pass to the next generation through male descendants, thereby putting sons on a higher footing than daughters.

3. Low capital investment, low productivity, and low earnings are the common attributes of the informal sector.

4. Some industries where women generated a good percentage of the GDP are as follows:
   - Agriculture with 41.3 per cent
   - Education with 41.2 per cent
   - Healthcare with 38.1 per cent
   - Health services with 25.1 per cent

5. A self-help group (SHG) is made of about 10–20 people, usually women, belonging to a similar class and region, and come together to form a saving and credit organisation.

6. The two problems that the SHG movement faces are as follows:
   - Formation of weak groups
   - Delay in gradation of groups by banks

5.8 QUESTIONS AND EXCERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Briefly discuss the patrilineal system.
2. List some of the attributes of the informal sector.
3. How is the standing of women relative to men much worse in developing countries as compared to women in developed countries?
4. For the appropriate implementation of schemes and laws, what are the points that need to be taken care of?
5. What is the role of the Women's Component Plan?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain patrilocality.
2. Discuss the overall rate of growth of women workers between 1999-2000 and 2004-05.
3. Elaborate on how SHGs have benefitted women.
4. Explain the contribution of women in national development.
5. How does the power of decision making help in women's empowerment? Discuss.

5.9 FURTHER READING

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