

WOMEN IN INDIA THROUGH THE AGES

Author

Dr.V.MANIKANDA SETHUPATHY

Assistant Professor { T }, Department of History,
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,,Tirunelveli -
Tamil Nadu



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

Directorate Of Distance And Continuing Education Tirunelveli
Tamil Nadu -627 012.

JANUARY -2025

Sl.No	Unit	Content	Page No
1.	I	Perspectives on Women's Issues: Liberal - Radical - Socialist - Marxist - Historical Aspects: Women in Ancient India - Women in Medieval India - Women in Modern India - Role of women in India's Freedom Struggle.	1-60
2.	II	Social Reform Movements and their impact: Contributions of Brahma Samaj, Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, Pandita Rama Bai, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, and Dravidian Movement - Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy - Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar	61-153
3.	III	Constitution, Laws and the changing status of women: Women and Political Participation in India, Right to Vote, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment and Participation in Local Governance, - Constitutional and Legal Safeguards for Women - Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles and Fundamental Duties -Laws related to Inheritance - Dowry Related Laws -	154-184
4.	IV	Women's Welfare Organizations and Schemes: Women's Indian Association - National Commission for Women and State Commission for Women - Women Development Corporation - women welfare Schemes of the Government of India	184-202
5.	V	Women and Economy: Women and Economic Growth - Women in Unorganised Sector - Impact of Globalisation on Women's Employment - Women Entrepreneurs - Poverty and Developmental Issues: Self Help Groups - Women and Media: Women in Print- Visual and Social Media	203-255
6.	Annexure	References	256

Unit- I

Perspectives on Women's Issues: Liberal - Radical - Socialist - Marxist - **Historical Aspects:** Women in Ancient India - Women in Medieval India - Women in Modern India - Role of women in India's Freedom Struggle.

Objectives

- Identify the key differences between Liberal, Radical, Socialist, and Marxist perspectives on women's issues.
- Analyze the status and role of women in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India.

Perspectives on Women's Issues: Liberal - Radical - Socialist - Marxist

In this unit you will study about the concept of feminism and also the different feminist perspectives as Liberal, Marxist, Radical, Socialist

Women's Issues: Liberal

With the coming in of industrial capitalism in mid-seventeenth century in England women wondered as to why the new egalitarianism did not apply to them (Jaggar 1983: 27). Liberal feminists believe that all human beings are rational agents and subordination of women is due to certain traditional beliefs and legal impediments based on the belief of women's incapability to perform certain tasks. Whereas men are judged on the basis of their abilities, sometimes women's abilities are seen as limited because of their sex (Jaggar 1983: 176). Liberal feminists argue that men and women should have equal rights and state should bring about reforms so that women have equal opportunities as men. In the nineteenth century liberal feminists clamoured for women's rights to hold property and women suffragists in US such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for the women's right to vote which was finally granted to women in 1920. In the twentieth century they fought against laws which gave men more rights in contrast to women.

Liberal Feminists Analysis of Women's Oppression

Mary Wollstonecraft The Liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1799) wrote 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' in John Stuart Mill's 'Subjection of Women'. She addressed the concerns of women who experienced a deterioration of status because of the onslaught of industrial capitalism. She held that girls should be provided the same education as boys so that they can develop their rational capacities. Some modern philosophers (Jaggar 1983: 35) such as Hume, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel had doubted whether women were fully rational. Mary Wollstonecraft argued that women were as competent and rational as men. She held that women could not fully realize their competence because they were denied education and confined to the domestic sphere. For her economic and political independence of women is important but not ultimate to end women's subordination. She claimed that a woman should be strong in mind and body, a fully rational agent who is capable of self-determination.

National Organization for Women (NOW)

In the twentieth century other rebellious liberal feminists held that apart from the right to vote women also needed economic opportunities, sexual freedom and civil liberties. With the rise of women's liberation movement in the 1960's there has been many feminist perspectives which explain women's subordination⁸⁹ and this also strengthened feminism. In the 1960s thus National Organisation Feminist Perspective for Women (NOW) was formed that argues that gender justice can be attained only when there is equitable distribution of resources between men and women Betty Friedan who wrote the 'The Feminine Mystique' was elected NOW's first president in 1966. Betty Friedan wrote about how girls and boys are treated differently and existence of 'sex role conditioning' from the moment of birth. Friedan largely addressed the concerns of white middle class educated women of US suburbs who found the traditional routinized roles of mother and wife unsatisfying. Friedan held that integration of women in public sphere would lead to some involvement of men and children in

housework. She held that a woman can be a “full human person” if apart from being a mother and wife, she is also integrated into the workforce (Tong 2009: 31). However Friedan is criticized for not looking at the complexity that women face in trying to juggle between family and work life without bringing about structural changes in society.

Liberal feminists are for less of state intervention in the private sphere but believe that there should be state intervention in the public sphere in matters such as guarantee of property rights, voting rights and freedom of speech. On the other hand contemporary liberal feminists, particularly the welfare liberals, call for government intervention in the economy particularly in providing legal aid to families with dependents or providing low cost housing. Liberal feminists believe that androgyny is an ideal which allows human beings to develop their full human potential. An androgynous society would be one in which men and women would be physiologically male and female but they would not show the extreme masculine and feminine qualities that are traditionally

associated with men and women. As men and women will be given equal opportunities to develop their potential they will not be defined in terms of traditional psychological traits associated with men as logical, independent, aggressive, courageous, insensitive and emotionally inexpressive and women as intuitive, dependent, compassionate and emotional woman.

Radical

In the late 1960s women's problems were seen not as an indication of individual failure but as an offshoot of a system in which men as a class oppress women as a class. Unlike the liberal feminists, some of the feminists of the 1960s and 1970s did not want to reform the system but to revolutionize it and to find a place for women in the system. These feminists formed groups such as Red stockings, the Feminists and New York Radical Feminists. These revolutionary feminists believed in consciousness rising. Radical feminists believe that physiology and hetero-sexuality is at the core of women's oppression and is rooted in the family

composed of a husband and wife. They describe the heterosexual act as an act of domination and patriarchy being a very personal matter, clear in their slogan 'personal is political'. Radical feminists proclaim that all women are sisters (Tong 2009: 49) as heterosexuality is the major form of human oppression. According to radical feminism gender constructs reflect an elaborate system of male domination and should be eliminated. Among the first to promote androgynous women was Joreen Freeman. These radical feminists held that a woman may be born biologically female but it does not imply that she has to display only feminine qualities. She can possess both masculine and feminine qualities. Other radical feminists opposed this view and held that women should be strictly feminine and demonstrate the superiority of being a womanly woman. Radical feminists such as Mary Daly critique the notion of an androgynous society. She holds that both masculinity and femininity have their merits and depravities. To encourage men and women to develop one side of their personality is to presuppose the existence of gender stereotypes in society. Radical

Feminists are divided on the nature and function of sexism and the way to eliminate it into two groups. There are various expressions of radical feminism even though all radical feminists focus on sex, gender and reproduction.

Marxist Feminism

Unlike radical feminists who believe that heterosexuality is the source of women's oppression Marxist feminists believe that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression. Marxist feminists are influenced by the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other nineteenth century thinkers. They regard class based society as the source of women's oppression and believe that it is the origin of private property that shattered the egalitarian relationship between men and women in preindustrial societies. Production was in the hands of few individuals who were men (Tong 2009:4). Marxists and Socialist Feminists are concerned with the issue of whether women per se constitute a class. While Proletariat and Bourgeoisie

women belong to different classes but they can be involved in a unifying struggle such as the 1970s Wages for Housework.

Ann Foreman

Marxist feminist such as Ann Foreman held that a woman's sense of self is dependent on her families' and friends' appreciation of her. So a woman is alienated from herself. Also she is engaged in housework which is mundane, routinized and alienating as it is not viewed as productive. She holds that women as a class of workers can gain liberation only when housework is regarded as productive work. Marxists feminists seek to create a World in which women see themselves as integrated rather than fragmented beings who are alienated dependent on others appreciation.

Evelyn Reed

In the work, 'Women: Caste, Class, or Oppressed Sex?' Evelyn Reed argued that the social relations of capitalist and economic forces brought the oppression of one sex by another. Reed held that it cannot be denied that women are subordinated to

men in a capitalist patriarchal order but the fact is that bourgeoisie women also dominate over Proletariat men and women in a capitalist order. Money is power in a capitalist system. She encourages the oppressed men and women to wage a class war against their common oppressors. She holds that primary enemy of proletarian women is not patriarchy but capitalism. With the abolition of capitalism the relationship of men and women would be more egalitarian.

Marxist Feminist Perspectives on Housework

After Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917, things did not go well for Soviet women who were confined to exhausting, low valued, low waged work. Some Marxist Feminists as Margaret Benston turned their attention to house work and saw women as a class who produced simple 'use values'(Tong 2009: 108). She held that domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, childcare should be socialized so that women can be brought to the productive work force and are engaged in the same 'female work' outside their

homes over which they have control and is valued. Maria Della Costa and Selma James on the other hand argued that the alternative for women would be to stay at home and demand wages for the productive work they did in the home. They held that women should get wages from their husbands' employers for the housework that they do. However, many 93 Marxist feminists in 1970s were not sure if wages for housework could liberate Feminist Perspective women. They critiqued that women would be confined to the homes, not integrated in any work outside home but engaged in routinized repetitive work.

Socialist Feminism

Another theoretical perspective which challenged the sex gender distinction was socialist feminism which questioned the biological basis of distinction between men and women. Socialist feminists unlike Marxist feminists hold that class antagonism by itself is not the cause of women's oppression but class antagonism is to be replaced by 'an association, in which the free development of

each is the condition for the free development of all' (Tong 2009: 96). They believe that to understand women's oppression not only class but sex, race and ethnicity are important categories. For them women's sex class and economic class is the basis of women's oppression. Socialist feminists agree with the Radical feminists that patriarchy is the source of women's oppression and also with the Marxist feminists that capitalism is the source of women's oppression. To end women's oppression socialist feminists believe that the two-headed beast of capitalist patriarchy or patriarchal capitalism is to be killed. Therefore socialist feminists develop theories that seek to explain the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism.

In order to view how patriarchy and capitalism worked together to bring about women's oppression there are two sets of theories as (1) two-system explanations of women's oppression and (2) interactive-system explanations of women's oppression.

Two- System Explanation of Women's Oppression

Juliet Mitchell Instead of a Marxist mono-causal explanation which views women's status in society as determined by her role in production in a capitalist society, Juliet Mitchell in the book, 'The Woman's Estate' held that women's status in society is determined by her role in production, reproduction, sexuality and socialisation of children. While Marxists may propagate women's entry into production and abolition of the family but there is also a need for policies in the areas of reproduction, socialisation of children and sexuality which are as primary as the economic demands. Women's liberation can be achieved only when there is a change in the psyche and mindset of individuals which views women as less valuable than men.

Historical Aspects: Women in Ancient India

Women are the gift to the society. During ancient period of India, women played a significant role. The Rig Vedic Women in India enjoyed high status in society. Their condition was good. The women were provided opportunity to attain high intellectual and

spiritual standard. There were many women Rishis during this period. Though monogamy was mostly common, the richer section of the society indulged in polygamy. There was no sati system or early marriage. But from enjoying free and esteemed positions in the Rig-Vedic society, women started being discriminated against since the Later-Vedic period in education and other rights and facilities. Child marriage, widow burning, the purdah and polygamy further worsened the women's position. The epics and Puranas equated women with property. Even Buddhism did little for women. Though the Maurya kings often employed female bodyguards, spies and 'Striadhyaksha mahamatras', their status was still quite bad. Upper caste ladies had to accept the purdah. During this period men were polygamous and widow burning was an accepted norm. Arthashastra imposed more stigmas on women as Kautilya dismissed women's liberation and they were not free even to go elsewhere without husband's permission.

They became worse off in the Gupta period. The Smritishastras abused them; Manu dictated a woman would be

dependent on her father in childhood, on her husband in youth and on her son in old age. Apart from child marriage and sati, prostitution and Devadasi system became widespread. Ancient Women and Education: There are some bright exceptions in this dismal picture. The role of women in Ancient Indian Literature is immense. Ancient India had many learned ladies. There were two types of scholarly women – the Brahmavadinis, or the women who never married and cultured the Vedas throughout their lives; and the Sadyodvahas who studied the Vedas till they married. Panini mentioned of female students' studying Vedas. Katyana called female teachers Upadhyaya or Upadhyayi. Ashoka got his daughter, Sanghamitra, inducted into preaching Buddhism. From the Jain texts, we learn about the Kousambi princess, Jayanti, who remained a spinster to study religion and philosophy. Often, Buddhist nuns composed hymns. Women did write Sanskrit plays and verses, excelled in music, painting and other fine arts.

Ancient Women in Politics: Women often enjoyed prominent roles in politics. Megasthenes mentioned the Pandya

women running the administration. The Satavahana queen, “Nayanika ruled the kingdom on behalf of her minor son. So did Pravabati, daughter of Chandragupta II, on behalf of the minor Vakataka prince. A little after the Gupta period, queens used to rule in Kashmir, Odisha and Andhra. Princess Vijaybhattarika acted as the provincial ruler under the Chalukya King; Vikramaditya I. Women were provincial and village administrators in the Kannada region. Women from the aristocratic classes enjoyed education and other privileges but the common woman still suffered ignominy, deprivation and hurdles. Ancient India spans a vast period 2500 B.C-250 B.C... Archaeology, ancient texts, and artifacts are being used to reconstruct the lives of women. “The earliest materials found by archaeological excavations suggest the worship of goddesses. The earliest recorded religious texts (1500 B.C.) call on the life-giving power of goddesses to give life and to nurture and sustain it.” After the Aryan invasion and the development of Hinduism and then Buddhism, India’s extant written texts add greatly to our knowledge. Centered on the Indus

River valley, the oldest known civilization in India ranged from ca. 2500-1500 B.C. Today most of these cities of archaeological interest are now in Pakistan due to Indian independence and partition in 1947, although the ancient city-state of Lothal is in the Indian state of Gujarat. Extensive remains at Mohenjodaro, Harrapa, and Lothal show a well organized, prosperous agriculture and commercial society that traded with other civilizations in the Near East. The most famous ancient artifact is that of a young slender girl posing confidently. Numerous toys found convey a society that valued family life. While their inscribed ancient seals have not been deciphered to determine the actual meanings, extensive female images have been found that suggest goddesses played a central role. “Often called fertility goddesses, very few depict pregnant women, women giving birth or women nursing children. Several of the seals suggest a goddess associated with vegetation and fertility.” Apparently this civilization succumbed to major natural disasters that changed the course of the Indus River. Hitherto it was thought that the invading Aryans conquered these

indigenous people, but the Indus Civilization was already in a state of decline when these nomads came in from the Hindu Kush. These Aryans were light skinned compared to the natives and over time enslaved them, resulting in the caste system. Aryan's highly hierarchical society was led by the Brahmin priests, who imposed political and religious power over the rest. The Brahmins composed sacred literature, the Vedas that postulated the beliefs that continue to be revered today by the Hindus. The Rig Veda, oldest of these texts, composed mostly by priests, but a few women too; give us the first ancient Indian writing with decipherable information about their various gods and goddesses. There is a creation story, where the goddess Aditi gives birth to the earth, also personified as a goddess, Prithvi. Mother Earth's role was to be tender to the dead and Aditi was to be prayed to for release from sin. Much of the ideal role of women can be ascertained from the images of a maiden and bride in the Rig Veda. A daughter and maiden were praised for the characteristics of beauty, radiance and appealing adornment. This description suggests interest in feminine

sensuality, childbearing capacity of the young girl. At festival gatherings, young virgins met eligible men, with flirtatious coupling after initiating a relationship. They then turned to their parents for approval and marriage arrangements were made. To be a virgin bride was of paramount importance. Practical advice was given to the new bride including: she not to be angry or hostile to her husband, she was to be tender, amiable, glorious, and mother of sons. The famous statement: “May you be the mother of a hundred sons,” was conceptualized. A woman’s role as outlined in Hinduism at this time was to be a good wife so that the gods and goddesses would respond to the couple’s requests and needs. An altar tended mainly by the father/husband, was overseen by the wife/mother when he was gone from the home. Her job was to keep the sacred flame burning 24/7. It was also the woman’s responsibility to recite and sing hymns to the deities, a duty ascribed to women in most all other cultures. Divine couples like Indra and Indrani and Surya and Soma acted as models. Goddesses were generally viewed positively, although occasional glimpses of their darker side surface.

Other early goddesses were the sisters Dawn and Night. In the next segment of ancient texts, the Upanishads, ca. 800-600 B.C., writers began to reinterpret earlier Vedic literature. Now a person was able to reach the universal soul Brahman through self-knowledge not just through ritualistic knowledge performed by the Brahmin priests. There is evidence of two learned women participating in theological discussions. How different this is compared to the same time frame in the Near East where Pandora and Eve are doing evil. Women in India are doing theological inquiry. Unfortunately, current Indian scholars have commented unfavorably about these two women. The next texts that speak about women in Ancient India are the Laws of Manu. Like earlier law codes in the Ancient Near East, we can gain insights into the legal status of women, but not necessarily what was actually practiced. Law codes are nearly always prescriptive not descriptive literature. As in other ancient societies, women were under the guardianship of males: father, husband and son. When a woman married, it was regarded as her second birth, with a new name. In successful religious rituals, the

wife was to be present to utilize her fertility powers. Adultery was not punished as severely as in other ancient cultures. Divorce was possible for the woman too, but only if he was impotent or insane. As true of ancient Rome, a wife could be divorced if she drank, was rebellious or dishonest, was barren (even if she had girls), and was a spendthrift. There is some evidence of the levirate marriage practice used by the ancient Hebrews and Hittites. However, the majority of widows apparently did not remarry. Women's economic contributions were important in ancient India. As India was an agricultural country, women were needed to assist the men folk in the various seasonal activities. As today, in the past India was made up of thousands of villages. It was the family not the individual that was the basic unit. Usually three generations of the family lived together in an essentially patriarchal structure except along the Malabar Coast in the southwest, where matriarchal social organization prevailed. Poetry written by Tamil women in the south spoke of their singing while at work and with their family, and occasionally including poems on the feats of the aristocracy. This

patriarchal system prevailed in the religious rituals. The Indians practiced a form of ancestor worship, whereby the oldest male was responsible for conducting the rites on a regular basis in the home. It was the eldest son's responsibility to light his parents' funeral pyre. Women could not serve as Brahmin priests or study the sacred Vedas. Some women could be seers, though.

Women In Medieval India

In pre-colonial India, with the invasion of India by Mohammed Ghauri to the coming of the British authority in Bengal, women's status in Indian society worsened, states historian K.N. Pannikar (1958). For about 300 years until the time of the Mughals, the social situation in the Gangetic plains remained chaotic. Continuous invasions adversely affected social institutions and political structures which led to large-scale migration of people and unstable economic conditions. Such a social context also impacted women's status unfavourably. The 'Purdah' (veil) became a norm and the Buddhist nunneries that had been established for

women's learning disappeared. The 15th century did bring some respite. However, down South, women's position was comparatively better. Education was available to them and the presence of many women poets in regional languages and Sanskrit corroborates this fact. Ganga Devi, author of the epic Madhura Vijayam (14th century) wife of Vira Kampa Raya, and Tirumalamba Devi who wrote Varadambika Parinayam are two poets of that era. Women's prowess at writing can be seen from 15th century Malayalam works Chandrotsavam, Sukuntalam and other Sanskrit dramas. This practice continued even in the 18th century. Manorama Thampurathi of Calicut was known for her classical work in Sanskrit grammar. The institution of purdah led to the seclusion of women, hindered their creativity and the development of capabilities. The status of Muslim women in medieval times is mentioned in Prof. Mujeeb's book The Indian Muslims as follows:

There were no formal changes in the law regarding the rights and duties of women...Marriage was considered final and binding on the

woman. Mehr (a sum of money agreed upon at the time of marriage) while always accepted in theory could not be realized except by exerting moral pressure on the man through family. Divorce, except when enacted by the man, was unheard of and position of woman relegated to the Zannah. The purdah system was creeping in. Now purdah was observed not only with outsiders but also within the family. Some women exerted considerable influence in the field of administration. This includes Rudramaba - the Kakateya queen about whom Marco Polo speaks; Razia Begum (13th century); Chandbibbi who tried to defend the fort of Ahmadnagar from Akbar; Tarabai the Maratha heroine who spearheaded a resistance against Aurangzeb; Mangammal known for her benevolent rule in the South, and Ahalyabai Holkar whom Sir John Malcolm recognized for administrative skills (Panikkar 1958). Razia ruled briefly amidst the male-dominated court of fierce Turkish nobles. She had extraordinary skills as a ruler but the opposition of mullahs along with others brought her end. Thapar (1975) quotes a historian Siraj, according to whom: Sultana Razia

was a great monarch. She was wise, just and generous, a benefactor of her kingdom, a dispenser of justice, the protector of her subjects, and the leader of her armies. She was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex, and so in the estimation of men all these virtues were worthless. The Mughal women played an important role in those times. Jehanara and Roshanara (daughters of Shah Jahan), Zebunnisa (daughter of Aurangzeb) wrote poetry. Gulbadan Begum, the daughter of Babur, wrote Humayun Namah. Nurjahan (wife of Jehangir) and Mumtaz Mahal (wife of Shah Jahan) were well versed in Persian literature. However, it would be erroneous to judge the condition of women at large based on a few royal women. Women of the higher classes lived in seclusion, but the women belonging to the cultivating classes did not observe these customs. Polygamy existed overall except in the case of certain groups of society. The Bhakti movement ameliorated the status of women. The movement began during the medieval period condemning complex rituals and the belief that God could be worshipped only through knowledge and

not through devotion. This movement brought God closer to the people irrespective of sex or caste. Use of languages people spoke rather than Sanskrit appealed to women whose lack of knowledge of Sanskrit had isolated them from sharing religious practices and experiences of men. The Alvars and Nayanmars used the local dialect in hymns, were against elaborate rituals and propagated an individual's devotion to the god of his/her choice and also advocated women's rights in Bhakti and overall a much freer life. This is also evident in the early teachings of Lingayats, in some degree in Chaitanya's teachings in Eastern India and to a large degree in those of northern India's Bhakti saints - Kabir and Nanak, particularly. Presenting an alternative way of life to women, this movement was a source of solace for them. Some women attained sainthood. Women like Andal, Mirabai and Lalla, Muktabai, Janabai, Vishnupriya are famous women of this period). There are many facets of women's situation in medieval India and it is difficult to draw any generalization

Women in Modern India

During the colonial period, two major social movements tried to bring changes in the unequal status of women in India. These were the social reform movements of the 19th century and the nationalist movement of the 20th century. According to Desai and Krishnaraj (2004), the social reform movement was 'a key to the intellectual processes that went into the making of modern India'. The social evils that attracted the attention of social reformers were sati, the ill-treatment of widows, ban on widow remarriage, polygamy, child marriage and the denial of property rights to women (Mazumdar 1976). They wanted to make people conscious of these inhumane social customs that had become a part of women's lives. By making education accessible to women and enacting social legislation they thought the process of social change would begin. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M. G. Ranade, Mahatma Phule, Lokhitwadi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Durgaram among others voiced concern over the existence of these unjust practices. The revivalists like Dayanand Saraswati,

Swami Vivekananda and Annie Besant considered the old Vedic society as ideal for women and wanted to revive it for women. The social reform movement led to the formation of National Social Conference in 1887 which acted as a forum for social reformers across the country to meet and discuss the practices that were to be reformed (Desai and Krishnaraj 2004). These reform movements aimed to change women's position within the family and the domestic framework and did not foresee any radical change in the social structure (CSWI 1974). The national movement for independence provided a great impetus in changing the outlook towards women. It began as a middle class movement located in urban centres. Later on, Mahatma Gandhi played an important role in making it a mass movement by including the hitherto subordinated sections of outcastes, peasants, workers and women. Women's participation became an important component of this programme. Though the overall number of women was not large yet their participation had a considerable effect, states Forbes (2004). They challenged the British rule giving legitimacy to the

movement and also created space for themselves as activists. Women, young and old, married and single, belonging to rural and urban areas joined the nationalist movement. Earlier, politics was considered a concern of intelligent women only. However, this notion gradually altered. Politics changed the goals and daily activities of organized women. It also opened avenues for politics to be pursued as a vocation by women (Thapar 1975). Education, social reform and women's rights became a concern for some progressive women. A few Bengali women wrote in support of the Illbert Bill to the Viceroy. Four years after the formation of Indian National Congress, ten women came for its annual meeting. They attended these meetings as delegates or observers. In 1905, the partition of Bengal took place. Women joined the struggle against this division. They boycotted foreign goods and bought only swadeshi goods. Some women also supported revolutionary organizations. They used their traditional roles to hide political activities (Forbes 2004). Women like Ramabai Ranade, Pandita Ramabai, Bhicaji Cama, Shirin Cursetji were committed to

encouraging women into new avenues and careers. After World War I, national women's organizations were formed. These organizations that emerged between 1917 to 1927 were the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC), Women's India Association (WIA) and the National Council of Women in India (NCWI). The All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) established in January 1927 focused on education of women and social reform. Later, it realized the need to deal with all women-related issues (Baig 1958). The NCWI was set up as the national branch of International Council of Women (Forbes 2004). A modern organization of women, the WIA, was begun by Margaret Cousins in 1917 under the guidance of Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement, which was voicing people's demand for freedom. The Women's India Association (WIA) operated in South India and provided a platform to women to plan National-level action. It also sent a deputation led by Sarojini Naidu to Montagu in 1919 for political reforms. Indian women insisted on right to franchise and to be able to participate in the political life of the country. The Montagu

reform of 1919 did not meet the expectations of Indians. Women also felt disheartened since the conservative British refused to grant them franchise. In India, women and men alike supported the achievement of this right. Sarojini Naidu with a few of her male colleagues spoke to the Parliamentary Committee on Reforms in London. As a result, a compromise was reached whereby the Parliament decided to assign this matter to the newly constituted Indian Legislatures to be set up based on constitutional reforms (Baig 1958). Among the earliest acts of the provincial legislatures was to grant franchise rights to women along with the permission to enter legislatures as members. In the elections of 1926, women participated. When the legislatures began to function in 1927 after the general elections of 1927 only some women members could join since the franchise was limited only to taxpayers. It encompassed a small number of people and a few women amongst them (Baig 1958). The Pre-Independence period also signifies the introduction of legal reforms for improving women's status in society, especially during 1920-1940. Many laws were enacted to

attain this goal which includes the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856, Child Marriage Restraint Act or Sarda Act 1929 prohibiting marriage of a girl before 14 years, Hindu women's right to property which acknowledged women's right to property in joint family property (Desai and Krishnaraj 2004). The nationalist movement changed with the coming of Mahatma Gandhi who showed that nation-wide action was needed and negotiation or discussion would not lead anywhere (Baig 1958). Gandhi came to India in 1915 and met women involved in the women's social reform organizations. When World War I came to an end and demand for self-rule grew the British imposed the Rowlatt Act to prohibit public protest and remove civil liberties. Gandhi prepared a programme to involve women. However, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy happened and he had to end this campaign. By then, many women had joined the struggle. He assured them that the movement needed them and also showed faith in their capacities. The programme of the Non-cooperation movement was accepted in a special session of Congress on August 8, 1920. Gandhi outlined an active role for

women. Women formed their own independent political organization Rashtriya Stree Sangha (RSS) and asked its members to join district congress committees. In November 1921, around 1000 women demonstrated against the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. Women also picketed shops selling foreign goods and encouraged sale of khaddar. Bi Amma, mother of Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali, leaders of All-India Khilafat Committee, urged women to become congress volunteers and join the picket lines, if their husbands got arrested. In response to Gandhi's call to join the movement, women from all British India provinces came forward. He also insisted that the marginalized sections of women should boycott foreign goods, spin, and join the struggle against British unjust laws. Between the suspension of the Non-cooperation movement from 1922 to 1928 Gandhi focused on reconstruction. He implored upper-class women to learn about the conditions of rural and poor women. Gandhi returned to active politics in 1928 and launched the Civil Disobedience movement, which brought women into public life in large numbers. The participation of

women in the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32 was different in both quantitative and qualitative terms from the early 1920s. Gandhi began the Civil Disobedience movement in March 1930 with his 240-mile march from Ahmedabad and Dandi to make salt, defying British laws. In 1931, at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress a resolution proclaiming the fundamental rights of people was adopted. An important clause was “there shall be no discrimination on the ground of sex”. This marks ‘a new era’ for women. In 1935, when provinces got more responsibility they introduced political reforms. Franchise was increased. The voting rights included literate people besides taxpayers. For women, wives of voters were also given franchise, and seats were reserved for women in the State legislatures. Women at that time opposed these initiatives because they wanted equal opportunities and not special treatment of any kind. However, their statements were not paid much attention. The 1936 elections saw participation of many women in legislatures who became Ministers, Deputy Speakers etc. Women were already

active in Municipalities and local boards. In the freedom struggle, women belonging to different classes joined making a difference and that is how women became important entities of the political world. In 1942 when the Second World War reached India's soil, Gandhi realized that India could become secure only if the British left. India had no conflict with Japan and Japanese strikes were aimed against the British and not Indians. As a result, the Congress passed the 'Quit India' resolution on August 8, 1942. Gandhi raised the slogan "Do or die". Many Indian women, men and leaders were arrested to restrain the movement. Aruna Asaf Ali played an important role in the 1942 movement. Along with Lohia, she published bulletins and edited the Inquilab. She had to stay underground for four years to escape arrest (Basu 1976). This movement was the final stage of the Indian freedom struggle. When power was transferred to India in 1946 and the first Interim government set up, it included a woman. The constituent assembly met in December and there were 14 women members. These were Ammu Swaminathan, Dakshayani Velayudhan and Durgabai from

Madras; Hansa Mehta from Bombay; Malti Chowdhury from Orissa; Sucheta Kripalani, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Purnima Banerjee, Kamala Chaudhari and Begum Aizaz Rasul from U.P.; Sarojini Naidu from Bihar; Begum Jahanara Shah Nawaz from Punjab and Lila Roy and Begum Ikramullah from Bengal. In 1947, with India becoming free, the political parties also encouraged them to represent in Central and State legislatures (Baig 1958). Basu (1976) summarizes women's contribution to the freedom struggle as follows: 'women organized themselves into groups and were willing to join processions, face police firing and go to prison. They broke the salt law, picketed shops selling liquor and foreign manufactured cloth. There were women who joined terrorist groups and helped in editing and publishing banned newspapers and manufacturing In 1931, at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress a resolution proclaiming the fundamental rights of people was adopted. An important clause was "there shall be no discrimination on the ground of sex". This marks 'a new era' for women. In 1935, when provinces got more responsibility they

introduced political reforms. Franchise was increased. The voting rights included literate people besides taxpayers. For women, wives of voters were also given franchise, and seats were reserved for women in the State legislatures. Women at that time opposed these initiatives because they wanted equal opportunities and not special treatment of any kind. However, their statements were not paid much attention. The 1936 elections saw participation of many women in legislatures who became Ministers, Deputy Speakers etc. Women were already active in Municipalities and local boards. In the freedom struggle, women belonging to different classes joined making a difference and that is how women became important entities of the political world. In 1942 when the Second World War reached India's soil, Gandhi realized that India could become secure only if the British left. India had no conflict with Japan and Japanese strikes were aimed against the British and not Indians. As a result, the Congress passed the 'Quit India' resolution on August 8, 1942. Gandhi raised the slogan "Do or die". Many Indian women, men and leaders were arrested to restrain the movement.

Aruna Asaf Ali played an important role in the 1942 movement. Along with Lohia, she published bulletins and edited the Inquilab. She had to stay underground for four years to escape arrest (Basu 1976).

This movement was the final stage of the Indian freedom struggle. When power was transferred to India in 1946 and the first Interim government set up, it included a woman. The constituent assembly met in December and there were 14 women members. These were Ammu Swaminathan, Dakshayani Velayudhan and Durgabai from Madras; Hansa Mehta from Bombay; Malti Chowdhury from Orissa; Sucheta Kripalani, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Purnima Banerjee, Kamala Chaudhari and Begum Aizaz Rasul from U.P.; Sarojini Naidu from Bihar; Begum Jahanara Shah Nawaz from Punjab and Lila Roy and Begum Ikramullah from Bengal. In 1947, with India becoming free, the political parties also encouraged them to represent in Central and State legislatures (Baig 1958).

Basu (1976) summarizes women's contribution to the freedom struggle as follows: 'women organized themselves into groups and were willing to join processions, face police firing and go to prison. They broke the salt law, picketed shops selling liquor and foreign manufactured cloth. There were women who joined terrorist groups and helped in editing and publishing banned newspapers and manufacturing bombs. Young girls in their teens and women with children went to prisons where conditions were not at all comfortable'. The movement for emancipation of women in India went through various stages. In the early nineteenth century with Raja Ram Mohan Roy's initiative, efforts were made to ensure that instead of religious basis, humanitarian and rational aspects are applied to social customs like Sati, Child marriage, Widow remarriage. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was a lot of emphasis on women's education. The next phase was marked by the entry of women into the political sphere. This highlighted a shift. Women's empowerment no longer remained dependent on the social reformers but became a larger political struggle.

Women's involvement in political activity led them to discard many taboos that had until then overshadowed their lives. Women's struggle for their own freedom was strengthened by their participation in political struggle. In India, feminism and nationalism were related with each other, according to Basu (1976). Women in former colonial countries became much successful politicians than in industrialized countries of northwestern Europe and USA. Now, this is a reason for low involvement of women in political matters in independent India. Education In British India, there were some emissaries of women's as well as men's education. These were the missionaries, the Indian social reformers, the 'philanthropic' foreigners with concern for women, and the British government according to Chanana (1988). She contends that issues related to women's education need to be comprehended by locating these within their social context. Since these issues portray women's role in society and are a product of it they need to be understood. The history of Indian education reveals many superstitions that impeded the education of women, states Wasi

(1958). William Adam in a Report on the State of Education in Bengal (1836) observes: Of the total female population, 16,792 are between fourteen and five years of age, that is, are of the age at which the mind is capable of receiving in an increasing degree the benefit of instruction in letters. The state of instruction amongst this unfortunate class cannot be said to be low for, with very few individual exceptions, there is no instruction at all. Absolute and hopeless ignorance is in general their lot. The notion of providing the means of instruction for female never enters into the minds of parents...A superstitious feeling is alleged to exist in the majority of Hindu families, principally cherished by women and not discouraged by the men, that a girl taught to write and read will soon after marriage become a widow... and the belief is also entertained in native society that intrigue is facilitated by a knowledge of letters on the part of females. Under influence of these fears, there is nothing done in a native family to promote female instruction, but an anxiety is often evinced to discourage any inclination to acquire the most elementary knowledge (Wasi 1958).

Women were completely dependant on their father, husband or brother and they prayed and performed rituals for longevity of these men, states Forbes (2004). If learning to read could result in the death of the husband, it was equivalent to committing suicide. Therefore, female education became unacceptable. Women as subjects of patrilineal and patriarchal systems ensured subservience to the existing norms and denied education to fellow women. Many women who had learnt to read before 1870 reported that they hid this achievement from others. Wasi (1958) states that in Bombay the situation was not any better. From 1823 to 1829 no girl 17 pupils attended indigenous school. There was domestic instruction for some Muslim Women Down the Ages and high-caste Hindu families but the number of these girls was miniscule. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Father of Modern India, advocated women's education, denounced polygamy, and opposed child marriage. There was a debate regarding the most suitable kind of education for women (Forbes 2004). The first girls' schools were begun by Missionaries. However they were unable to make a significant

difference to the state of girls' education. With government support around the 1850s, they made some progress (Forbes 2004). Some British officials also undertook initiatives in their own capacity to encourage girls' education. J.E.D Bethune, Law member of the Executive Council of the GovernorGeneral and President of the Council of Education from 1848 to 1851, introduced secular schools having realized that Hindus were not in favour of sending their girls to mission schools due to the religious instruction offered there. This school, set up in 1849, was highly successful. Indians came in support of this experiment and tried to replicate it in other regions. The work of Raj Ram Mohan Roy and Bethune emphasized the importance of education for women. The Indian Education Commission of 1882-83 made the following suggestions with regard to the education of girls: Female education is still in an extremely backward condition and needs to be fostered in every legitimate way...Public funds of all kinds - local, municipal and provincial - should be chargeable in an equitable proportion for the support of girls' schools as well as boys' schools; and that the

former being in an earlier stage of development, should receive even something more... (Warsi 1958). The Commission deliberated on ways to deal with the popular prejudice against the education of girls. It emphasized the importance of women teachers in motivating girls to come to schools. There was some progress made on all these aspects. Women gradually started enrolling for higher education. In 1878, a few Indian girls were studying in Universities and a decade later was even going off to America for higher education. In 1888, an Indian woman went abroad to study medicine. One of them went for the Bachelor of Civil Law Course at Oxford in 1892. Higher education became available to women gradually since British who were putting sanctions against women in their own country did not favour such measures for women in their colonies. Indians were concerned about education of people and of women in particular (Baig 1958). Only by the third decade of the twentieth century, large sections of women became literate. There were not many night schools to extend adult literacy. In 1921 and in 1937, efforts were made to open night schools. Female literacy

along with the overall adult literacy became a component of social and educational policy. In 1951, the female literacy was 9.3 per cent. States with relatively high female literacy were Kerala (46.1 per cent), Delhi (29.9 per cent), Coorg (24.1 per cent). It was lowest in Manipur (2.3 per cent), Rajasthan (2.9 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (2.3 per cent), and Vindhya Pradesh (1.4 per cent) (Warsi 1958). After independence, women's question in relation to tradition and modernity emerged within the larger context of culture and society. Issues of widow remarriage, age of consent of marriage, sati, property rights and education were debated. Some people supported the return to tradition to rebuild Indian society. However, the definition of tradition is not so simple. Others were in favour of social reform or radical change in society (Thapar 1975).

Role of women in India's Freedom Struggle

Eminent Personalities

Queen Velu Nachiar (3 January 1730 – 25 December 1796)

Rani Velu Nachiyar was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India. She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai. She was the princess of Ramanathapuram and the only child of Raja Chellamuthu vijayaragunatha Sethupathy and Rani Sakandhimuthal of the Ramnad kingdom.

Rani Velu Nachiyar was trained in war match weapons usage, martial arts like Valari, Silambam (fighting using stick), horse riding and archery. She was a scholar in many languages and she had proficiency with languages like French, English and Urdu. She married the king of Sivagangai, with whom she had a daughter. When her husband, Muthuvaduganathaperiya Udaiyathevar, was killed by British soldiers and the son of the Nawab of Arcot, she was drawn into battle. She escaped with her daughter and lived under the protection of Palayakaarar Kopaala Naayakkar at Virupachi near Dindigul for eight years.

Frustrated by the joining of forces against him, the Nawab ordered that Velu Nachiar and Marudhu Brothers were permitted to return to Sivaganga and rule the country subject to payment of Kist to the Nawab. Abiding by this Order, Rani Velu Nachiar accompanied by Marudu brothers and Vellachi Nachiar entered Sivaganga. An agreement was reached where by Rani Velu Nachiar was permitted to govern the Sivaganga Country and Chinna Marudu, the younger was appointed her minister and the elder Vellai Marudu as the Commander-in-chief. Thus the widow Queen Velu Nachiar succeeded her husband in 1780. The Queen Velu Nachiar granted powers to Marudhu Brothers to administer the country in 1780.

Rani Velu Nachiyar was the first queen to fight for the freedom from the British in India. She granted powers to the Marudu brothers to administer the country in 1780. Velu Nachiyar died a few years later, on 25 December 1796.

In the annals of our freedom movement, countless stories of bravery, sacrifice, and political acumen by women unfold. Their courage went beyond the ordinary, as they became active revolutionaries, establishing covert groups, publishing anti-British literature, and enduring harsh imprisonment and torture. These women weren't mere followers but key players in their own right.

The 19th century saw Indian women break free from societal norms and challenge discriminatory practices. Early reformers and activists emerged, advocating for women's education, widow remarriage, an end to child marriage, and elevation of women's social status. Visionaries like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule led the charge, understanding that empowering women was fundamental for both societal progress and national growth.

Women in the Mainstream Independence Movements

As India's nationalist movement surged in strength during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women emerged as pivotal

figures in advancing the cause of independence. Their active participation in various nationalist campaigns and movements played a vital role in shaping the trajectory of the struggle.

The Swadeshi Movement and Challenging British Domination: One remarkable instance of women's involvement was the Swadeshi Movement of 1905-1908. During this time, women passionately rallied behind the promotion of indigenous goods and the boycott of British products. They became staunch advocates of independence and the consumption of domestically made items, aiming to challenge the dominance of the British economy.

Formation of Women's Organizations and Leaders:

Parallel to the early nationalist movements, women's organisations began to take shape. The All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927 stood out as a significant milestone, addressing women's concerns and advocating for social reforms. The emergence of visionary leaders like Kamala Nehru, Annie

Besant, and Sarojini Naidu added vigour to the nationalist movement. These leaders fervently championed India's cause, inspiring women across the nation to join the struggle for independence.

Participation in Protests and Civil Disobedience:

Women's involvement expanded beyond organisations and speeches to active participation in large-scale protests, demonstrations, and civil disobedience movements. Collaborating with their male counterparts, they orchestrated marches, protested outside bars, and engaged in satyagrahas (nonviolent protests). Despite facing detainment, imprisonment, and violence from colonial authorities, these women showcased remarkable courage and resilience.

Breaking Norms and Paving the Way:

During the early phases of the struggle, women's contributions were characterised by their commitment to social

reform, enthusiastic participation in nationalist movements, and their defiance against societal norms and patriarchal barriers. These initial contributions laid the foundation for their escalating involvement and leadership in subsequent stages of India's journey towards independence.

Role of Women in Non-Cooperation Movement

To better understand the important role of women, let's take a closer look at how they played a vital part in the non-cooperation movement and how this greatly influenced India's fight for freedom.

The Non-Cooperation Movement, led by Mahatma Gandhi from 1920 to 1922, aimed to peacefully challenge British rule through boycotting British institutions and goods. It fostered unity and nationalism among Indians through civil disobedience and mass participation. Women played a crucial role in the Non-Cooperation Movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920.

They actively joined the protests, demonstrations, and civil disobedience campaigns against British rule.

- **Boycott of British Goods:** Women led the way in boycotting British-made goods and promoting the use of indigenous products. They encouraged the spinning of khadi (handspun cloth) as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance to British economic exploitation.
- **Picketing Foreign Cloth Shops:** Women organised picketing of foreign cloth shops to dissuade people from purchasing British textiles. This act of civil resistance significantly impacted British trade and brought attention to the movement.
- **Establishment of Women's Organisations:** During the Non-Cooperation Movement, women established various women's organisations, such as the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) and the Women's Indian Association

(WIA), to address women's issues and advocate for their rights.

- **Promotion of Khadi:** Women took on the responsibility of promoting khadi spinning and weaving in villages. They organised spinning circles (charkha sabhas) to encourage rural women to participate in the movement and earn a livelihood.
- **Role in Public Demonstrations:** Women actively participated in public demonstrations, picketing, and marches, often risking arrest and imprisonment by the colonial authorities. They displayed remarkable courage and determination.

Support to Political Leaders: Women provided support to male political leaders and activists by engaging in activities like fundraising, distributing pamphlets, and mobilising local

communities.

- **Empowerment and Social Upliftment:** The Non-Cooperation Movement provided a platform for women to come forward, gain confidence, and assert their rights. It also led to significant social reforms, such as the abolition of purdah and child marriage in some regions.
- **Symbolic Protests:** Women engaged in symbolic acts of resistance, such as burning British cloth and making bonfires of foreign-made goods, sending a powerful message of defiance against British rule.
- **Sacrifices and Endurance:** Women endured various hardships during the Non-Cooperation Movement, including arrests, imprisonment, and police brutality. Despite these challenges, they remained steadfast in their commitment to the cause of independence.

The active participation and contributions of women in the Non-Cooperation Movement demonstrated their strong resolve to challenge colonial oppression and paved the way for their increased involvement in subsequent stages of the Indian freedom struggle.

Prominent Women Leaders

Before and during the revolt of 1857

- **Bhima Bai Holkar** - The participation of women in the struggle began as early as 1817 when Bhima Bai Holkar fought against British Colonel Malcolm and defeated him in guerilla warfare.
- **Rani Laxmibai** - The queen of the princely state of Jhansi, Rani Laxmibai is known for her role in the First War of India's Independence in 1857. She was the second wife of the ruler of Jhansi Raja Gangadhar Rao who protested against the 'Doctrine of Lapse'. She refused to surrender to Jhansi and fought bravely as a male during the Revolt of 1857

and died on the battlefield fighting the British forces.

- **Hazrat Mahal Begum** - She was the wife of the deposed ruler of Lucknow who actively took part in the revolt of 1857.

After the revolt of 1857

1. **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay:** Prominent social reformer, freedom fighter, and advocate for women's rights, she worked to uplift rural artisans, promote indigenous industries, and empower women in pre-independence India.
2. **Kasturba Gandhi:** Wife of Mahatma Gandhi, she actively participated in civil disobedience movements, advocated for women's education and empowerment, and supported his efforts for India's independence.
3. **Hansa Mehta:** An educator, diplomat, and freedom fighter, she was part of international forums advocating for India's

independence and women's rights, playing a significant role in shaping post-independence policies.

4. **Pritilata Wodeyar:** A brave revolutionary, she led an attack on a British club, highlighting the spirit of resistance. Her sacrifice and determination inspire the fight against colonial oppression.
5. **Sarojini Naidu:** Known as the "Nightingale of India," she was a poet, freedom fighter, and prominent member of the Indian National Congress. Her eloquence and leadership greatly contributed to the struggle for independence.
6. **Vijay Lakshmi Pandit:** A diplomat and politician, she was the first woman to become President of the United Nations General Assembly. An active freedom fighter, she played a key role in internationalising India's independence movement.
7. **Usha Mehta:** A broadcaster and Gandhian activist, she led the underground Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement, using airwaves to inspire and inform the masses.

8. **Durgabai Deshmukh:** A social worker, lawyer, and politician, she worked for women's rights, labour rights, and upliftment of the marginalised. Her efforts paved the way for inclusive social change post-independence.
9. **Sarojini Naidu,** holds pride of place among women freedom fighters of India. She was responsible for awakening the women of India. She was the first Indian woman President of the Indian National Congress in 1925 at the Kanpur Session.
10. **Aruna Asaf Ali,** played a leading role during the Quit India Movement. She unfurled the National Flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan in Bombay to signify the commencement of the Quit India Movement.
11. **Rani Gaidinliu,** was a prominent Naga nationalist woman leader from Manipur who took over the movement of Naga nationalists against the British.
12. **Kalpana Dutta,** was another prominent woman revolutionary leader who was influenced by the revolutionary idea of Surya Sen.

13. **Madam Bhikaji Cama**, was influenced by Dadabhai Naoroji and served as an inspiration to Indian youth in the United Kingdom. She raised the first National Flag at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1907, founded the Free India Society, and launched the periodical 'Bande Mataram' to propagate her revolutionary ideas.

14. **Sucheta Kriplani**, was an ardent nationalist with a socialistic orientation. She was a close associate of Jai Prakash Narayany who actively participated in the Quit India Movement.

15. **Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur**, was a close follower of Gandhiji from 1919 onwards. She actively participated in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement. She became the first Health Minister in post-independent India.

16. **Annie Besant**, who was born in Ireland, was a fervent supporter of India's freedom struggle. In 1916, she launched the Madras Home Rule League. In addition, she formed the

Theosophical Society of India. She served as the first woman president of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1917.

Self Assessment Questions

- ❖ Analyze the different perspectives on women's issues, including Liberal, Radical, Socialist, and Marxist viewpoints.
- ❖ Examine the status and role of women in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India.
- ❖ Discuss the contributions of women in India's Freedom Struggle and their impact on the independence movement.

UNIT II

Social Reform Movements and their impact:
Contributions of Brahma Samaj, Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, Pandita Rama Bai, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, and Dravidian Movement - Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy - Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar.

Objectives

- ❖ Examine the contributions of key social reformers like Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, and Savitribai Phule in shaping social reform movements in India.
- ❖ Analyze the impact of the Dravidian Movement and the efforts of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy in advocating for social justice and gender equality.

Social Reform Movements and their impact: Contributions of Brahma Samaj

Brahmo Samaj is a social component of Brahmoism. It began as a monotheistic reformist Hindu religious movement during the Bengal Renaissance. Hinduism's Brahmo Samaj was a monotheistic group. Through gatherings of Bengalis in Calcutta in 1828, the movement had its start. Brahmo Samaj was founded by

Ram Mohun Roy. In 1831, Roy journeyed to England in the capacity of a reformist ambassador and passed away there in 1833. He was interred in Bristol, and Lant Carpenter, a Unitarian minister, officiated his funeral sermon. Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, played a pivotal role in the Brahmo Sabha. In 1843, he played a key role in establishing the Brahmo Samaj. Keshub Chunder Sen, a follower of Tagore, joined the Samaj in 1857 but later separated in a formal division in 1866, known as the Brahmo Samaj of India.

Brahmo Samaj is one of the most important topics for the UPSC IAS exam. It covers a significant part of the International Organisations subject in the UPSC GS Paper 1 Syllabus 2023 and current events of international importance in UPSC prelims.

This article will provide you with all the necessary information on the Brahmo Samaj, such as Overview, Meaning, Aim and Objectives and Significance of Brahmo Samaj. You can

also study other significant topics of Modern History for UPSC Exams with the Testbook!

About Brahmo Samaj

Brahmo means “one who worships Brahman,” while Samaj means a group of men. “Brahmo Samaj” refers to a group of males who worship Brahman, the supreme reality, in Sanskrit. It is a diverse group of individuals from all walks of life who have gathered in public. To show their undying devotion to "the (nameless) unsearchable Eternal, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe."

History And Origin of Brahmo Samaj

- The Brahmo Samaj was founded on August 20, 1828, in Calcutta by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Debendranath Tagore as a reform of the dominant Brahmanism of the time.

- It kicked off the Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century, which was the forerunner of all the Hindu community's religious, social, and educational advancements.
- A Trust Deed was created in 1830 to establish it formally, and the first house of worship, today known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj, was officially and publicly dedicated in January 1830.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Debendranath Tagore founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 as a reform movement in Calcutta.
- It quickly became one of the most important religious reform organizations in India and considerably impacted the development of contemporary India.
- Pandit Nobin Chandra Roy created the first Brahmo Samaj in Lahore in 1861. It ushered in the Bengal Renaissance, which emphasized religious, educational, and social reform while criticizing the prevalent Brahmanism.

Principles of Brahmo Samaj

Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahmo Samaj in 1828, and its core values are:

- God: It believes in an 'Infinite Singularity.' The 'Infinite Singularity' is considered infinite, indivisible, imperceptible, and undefinable. It rejects Avatars, reincarnation, and rebirths. It also condemns idolatry and polytheism.
- Love: It promotes reverence for all living things while cautioning its members against idolizing anything since only the Singularity, or "Brahman," is worthy of worship.
- Scripture: Brahmo Samajists are adherents of Brahmo Samaj who do not believe in books, prophets, or intermediaries between Brahman and the human soul. They do not believe in Karma teachings.
- Brahmo Samajists, on the other hand, might believe in Karma and reincarnation, depending on their beliefs.

- Liberation: Although the Brahmo Samaj supports the idea that the soul is immortal and is ready to merge with Brahman, it does not support the idea of salvation or “Mukthi.”
- Additionally, it rejects the ideas of hell and heaven.
Knowledge - The adherents uphold truth, free will, and knowledge.
- They also believe that righteousness is the only possible way to live. The Samaj supports secular values but opposes sectarianism and forces one’s religion on others.
- Superstition: The Brahmo Samaj opposes superstition and dogma. In reality, superstitious behaviours such as ‘Sati’ were one of the fundamental motivations for the formation of the Brahmo Samaj.
- It also justifies the alleged insignificance of nonscientific rituals, priests, and places of devotion such as temples, churches, and mosques.

- Totalitarianism: All totalitarian ideologies are condemned by the Brahmo Samaj.
- Additionally, it condemns unjustified and bigoted differences based on race, caste, religion, and other factors.
- These disparities were seen negatively because they frequently catalyzed interpersonal conflict.

Aim and objectives of the Brahmo Samaj

- The Renaissance and Reformation movements defended the ancient Hindu principles, including Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj.
- Universalism, secularism, and humanistic ideas were the movements' defining characteristics.
- Rammohan Roy advocated eliminating formality and ritualism to restore the splendor of Ancient Indian culture.
- Brahmo Samaj laid God as its primary goal and opposed sacrifices, ceremonies, and priesthood.

- It held that all faiths were interconnected and emphasised scripture study, meditation, and prayer.
- Brahmo Samaj focused on contemporary India's first intellectual reform movement, which resulted in the rise of rationality and enlightenment in India.
- The progressive ideals of Rammohan Roy were greeted with significant hostility by traditional groups like Raja Radhakant Deb, who founded the Dharma Sabha to fight Brahmo Samaj propaganda.
- The primary goal of the Brahmo Samaj was to worship the everlasting God. It centered on prayers, meditation, and scripture reading. It was opposed to the priesthood, ceremonies, and sacrifices.
- Raja Rammohan Roy believed that intolerance causes all religious divisions and wars.

Division of Brahmo Samaj

Over time, it was divided into ‘Adi Brahmo Samaj’ and ‘Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.’

Adi Brahmo Samaj

The Adi Brahmo Samaj was the first manifestation of “Brahmoism” and the first organised organisation in British India. Adi Brahmo Samaj was an organisation that fought against social and religious problems in the 18th and 19th centuries and was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Prasanna Coomar Tagore, and Debendranath Tagore. It denounced racial and ethnic divisions and established the framework for a modern, secular India.

Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

Schisms in the Brahmo Samaj resulted in the development of the ‘Sadharan Brahmo Samaj,’ a Brahmoism faction. Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was founded in a public assembly held on May 15, 1878, at Calcutta’s Town Hall. Umesh Chandra Dutta, Sib Nath

Shastri, and Ananda Mohan Bose led the religious movement when it was founded. Even though Ananda Mohan Bose was just 31 years old at the time of the Samaj's establishment, he was appointed its leader.

Separate views and split of Samaj

In 1857, Keshub Chandra Sen joined. On other missions, he occasionally served as Debendranath's right hand man. Keshub was promoted to the position of Acharya by Debendranath Tagore. However, there were other things they disagreed on. Debendranath was a traditionalist, while Keshub was a vibrant reformer. So, the separation took place.

Brahmo Samaj of India

When the unique relationship to Hinduism was removed, Samaj became more general. Much more extreme, with a stronger focus on female education and caste divisions. This resulted in the

founding of the Indian Reform Association in 1870 and the Indian Marriage Act in 1872, which legalised intercaste marriage.

It was now a part of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and other religions. The Doctrine of God in Conscience of Keshub eliminated the contradiction between profession and practice.

Rajaram Mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded Modern India's Renaissance. He was a relentless social reformer. Raja Ram Mohan Roy launched India's Enlightenment period and liberal reformist modernisation. He made a vital contribution when he founded the Brahmo Samaj as a reformist society in Calcutta in 1828.

Intending to reform the Indian community and make the true teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads, and other Hindu scriptures available to the common man, it was India's first reform movement.

Many well-known individuals were active Samaj members in the 1840s, including Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen. The movement made a vital contribution to modernising Indian society by criticising the oppressive caste system, the dowry system and by pushing for educational reforms to educate the masses.

One of India's most progressive reformist organisations, Brahma Samaj, advocated for women's independence by opposing Sati polygamy, child marriage, and the treatment of widows. While advocating monotheism, the Samaj also criticized Hindu polytheism and idolatry. Other faiths also influenced them and forbade criticizing their beliefs.

Know more about Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Modern History
NCERT Notes For UPSC.

Socio-Religious reforms by Brahmo Samaj

- The Brahmo Samaj is the sociological component of the Brahmo religion. It is now mostly followed as Adi Dharm in Bengal following the withdrawal of the Tattwabodini Sabha from its ranks in 1859.
- The Brahmo Samaj embodied Bengal Renaissance principles in all areas of social change, including eradicating the caste and dowry systems, women emancipating, and improving the educational system.
- Brahmoism was a key issue in Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's famous 1914 Bengali language novella, *Parineeta*, as a method of critiquing the dowry system.

Sati and Child Marriage

- Many educated individuals in Bengal and elsewhere supported Samaj's appealing agenda its appeal.
- It campaigned against the persistence of bad customs that exposed women to suffering, degrading treatment, and

inferiority. It battled against societal ills that caused misery for women for the sake of religious holiness, such as child marriage, sati, selling female infants, and other such practices. Brahmos passed legislation outlawing the practice of sati in 1829 despite organised resistance from the Dharma Sabha.

- They were grateful to God and the British Government, whose benevolent arm had saved our weaker sex from terrible murder committed in the name of religion.

Widow Marriage Despite

- Despite Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's work, which resulted in the legalisation of widow remarriage in India in 1856, Hindu society had numerous misgivings about the topic.
- The Brahmos fought against such prejudices. To demonstrate their dedication, many young men in the Brahmo movement made a point of marrying widows.

Saving of Upper Caste Unmarried Women

- The caste system did not just harm those in lower castes. The girls from the upper caste households suffered despite their caste rank due to their position.
- Their options were restricted since it was against the law for such a girl to marry a man from a lower caste if a suitable husband could not be found for her within their caste.
- These women frequently ended up being married off to very old men who had previously been married many times.
- These girls were occasionally poisoned to death. Once more, the Brahmos fought such unfair practices and helped many such females escape death.

Women's Education and Status

- Education had hitherto been largely reserved for males. However, Brahmos' perspective began to shift in the 1860s and 1870s.

- The Brahmo women were encouraged to pursue education. Allowing women to pray in the prayer halls alongside men emphasized their equality in society at the same time.
- The Brahmo Samaj appointed the first female Brahmo preacher in Barishal (Bengal) 1881.

Importance of Brahmo Sama

- It is the Brahmo religion's social branch. One of the most significant religious movements helped shape contemporary India.
- The earliest contemporary Hindu reform movement was the Brahmo Samaj.
- The Bengali young had a negative attitude toward their religion, which was Hindu. It began as an intellectual uprising movement against the prevalent superstitious customs.
- There was a conscious uprising against orthodoxy and ritualistic customs. A tiny but powerful group of Indians with Westernised lifestyles led it.

- In this environment, the Brahmo Samaj was born. It aimed to establish a cleansed version of Hinduism.
- A Hindu religion devoid of any puranic components such as temple rites and image worship.
 - This Movement shaped Hindu responses to Western and Christian influences, paving the stage for the Indian Renaissance in the late 1800s. Bengali intelligentsia spearheaded it.
- Brahmo Samaj attempted to transition from sectarianism to universal Samaj. It promoted both religious and social transformation.
- Brahmo Samaj's major declaration or slogan was 'Sarva Dharma Sambhava', which means that all faiths are equal and should be honoured equally. Raja Ram Mohan Roy created the Brahmo Samaj.
- Hindu ceremonialism was removed from Brahmo worship and replaced with Christian or Islamic prayer customs. With

time, the Brahma Samaj became a significant force for social change in Bengal, particularly in women's education.

You can also study Sangam Literature.

Keshab Chandra Sen And Brahmo Samaj

In 1858, Keshab Chandra Sen became a member of the Brahmo Samaj, aligning with Debendranath Tagore. His association with the Brahmo Samaj injected new vitality, expanding beyond Bengal into places like Bombay, Punjab, Madras, and the United Provinces, where it became known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj.

As a result, the community disapproved of the marriage of a 13-year-old girl to a young Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar. This opposition ultimately led to the separation of the couple in the late 1870s. Additionally, Keshab Chandra Sen faced allegations of authoritarianism. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj later replaced the Adi Brahmo Samaj in 1878, founded by Umeshchandra Dutta, Sib

Chandra Deb, and Ananda Mohan Bose. In 1910, the Dayal Singh Trust established the Dayal Singh College in Lahore to impart education on Brahmo scriptures.

The Decline of Brahmo Samaj

The Brahmo Samaj of India separated when this act of underage marriage sparked controversy, and His pro-British comments and inclination toward Christian customs sparked much more. In 1878, the Sadharan (ordinary) Brahmo Samaj was created. It progressively resorted to Upanishad teachings while continuing the mission of social change.

The movement, which was never widely supported by the public and was always an exclusive group, disappeared in the 20th century. Trustees Dwarkanath Tagore and Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish effectively managed the Brahmo Sabha's operations when Rammohun departed for England in 1830, with Dwarkanath providing management guidance to his diwan.

Around Bristol (UK), where Rammohun died in 1833, the Telugu Brahmins revived idolatry, and fewer people attended the Sabha. The zamindars' hectic schedules and lack of time for Sabha business effectively ended the body's spark.

Keshub Chandra Sen founded the more extreme “Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj” with Christian undertones in 1866. He advocated for women’s education and opposed child marriage. Nevertheless, he set up the union of his minor daughter Suniti with the prince of Coochbehar.

Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar

Early Life and Education Born as Ishwar Chandra Bandyopadhyay on 26 September, 1820 in West Bengal, he was bestowed the title of Vidyasagar in 1839 for his mastery over Sanskrit and philosophy. The word ‘Vidyasagar’ means ‘Ocean of Knowledge’ in hindi. th th 1/4 In 1839, he successfully cleared his law examination. He passed out of Sanskrit College in Kolkata in 1841 qualifying in Sanskrit grammar, literature, dialectics, Vedanta, Smruti and Astronomy. At the age of twenty one, Ishwar Chandra

joined the Fort William College as the head of the Sanskrit department. He helped revered Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta to relocate from France to England and study for the bar. He also felicitated his return to India and inspired him to write poetry in Bengali creating some of the most legendary literary works in the language. Michael Madhusudan is understood to have given him the epithet 'Dayasagar' or 'Ocean of Generosity' for his selfless altruism. He passed away on 29 July, 1891 at the age of 70 years.

An Educationist

In 1846, Vidyasagar joined the Sanskrit College as 'Assistant Secretary'. Within a year, he brought number of changes to the existing education system. During his tenure as the Principal of Sanskrit College from 1851 to 1858, Vidyasagar initiated unprecedented changes in both administration and education. At the time when there was no concept of universal education, Vidyasagar strongly believed that everyone irrespective of caste or gender, had the right to education. He even opened up the premises of the Sanskrit college for people from lower castes. He

also encouraged scholars to study ancient sacred texts and interpret them for contemporary usage. He established 20 model schools in Hooghly, Midnapore, Burdwan and Nadia. He supervised the schools, recruited teachers and formulated their syllabus. He revised the exam pattern by introducing monthly exams instead of annual ones. He also introduced the study of English, Western Sciences and Mathematics. He initiated the acceptance of admission fees and tuition fees. He also introduced 'Sunday' as the weekly holiday and summer vacation in the months of May and June. He brought about a revolution in the Bengali education system by changing the way Bengali language was written and taught. "Education is the priceless treasure of life. Just its arrival not only ascertains welfare at individual level but paves the way for large scale development of the society."

The Linguist

He is credited with reconstructing the Bengali Alphabet. He simplified Bengali typography into an alphabet of 12 vowels and 40 consonants eliminating the sanskrit phonemes. His book 'Borno

Porichoy' meaning 'introduction to the letter' is still used as the introductory text to learn Bengali alphabet. He was also a key figure in Bengal Renaissance - a cultural, social, intellectual and artistic movement in Bengal from the 19 century to the early 20th century. The renaissance period saw a magnificent outburst of Bengali literature with Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar being the pioneer. Vidyasagar wrote nearly ten books on Bengal's history and literature, all of them being considered classics in today's times.

A Social Reformer

He was the nineteenth century polymath reformer whose contribution towards changing the status of women in India is remarkable. His study of ancient texts convinced him that the status of hindu women of his time was not sanctioned by the scriptures and was because of the existing power relations in the society. It was the result of his untiring struggle that the then Government of India passed the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856. With the purpose of gathering people's support for the implementation of the provision of remarriage of widows, he encouraged his own son Narayan

Chandra Bandyopadhyaya to marry a widow. Unlike other reformers who sought to set up alternative societies or systems, Vidyasagar sought to transform society from within. Due to his courageous entrepreneurship, widow remarriage was ushered in the conservative hindu brahmin society of Bengal. He fought for women education and vigorously challenged the barbaric practice of Child Marriage. He founded 35 schools for girls throughout Bengal. The Metropolitan School of Calcutta was one of the institutions. The sole purpose of these schools was to make women self sufficient and empowered.

He also fought a determined battle against the then prevailing social custom of Kulin Brahmin polygamy. Such was the nature of this horrible practice that some men ended up marrying as many as eighty women. This practice ensured that aged persons married teenage girls and even children. The unfortunate girl who would be widowed by the death of her elderly husband was condemned to a life misery. From discrimination to deprivation, these widows were subjected to severe restrictions and had to dress in plain white

cotton sarees and remain with their shaved off heads. Some widows would even be thrown out of their houses ending up as prostitutes, rape victims and unsupported mothers. Standing tall against the conservative power centers of the hindu society, Vidyasagar was the man who was way ahead of his times. His work for the upliftment of women, their self-sufficiency, prosperity and empowerment along with his untiring efforts for ‘nari shiksha’ remains unique.

Significant Works

He wrote biographical notes on numerous noteworthy personalities in the history of the world so that the young generation can get inspired by reading the great examples of endurance, hard work, honesty, patience, perseverance, courage, determination and philosophy of life. Some of his works are : Betaal Panchavinsati (1847), Banglar Itihaas (1848), Jivancharita (1849), Shakuntala (1854), Mahabharata (1860), Seetar Vanavas (1860), Bhrantivilaas (1869), Oti Alpa Hoilo (1873), Aabaar Oti Alpa Hoilo (1873), Brajavilaas (1884), Ratnopariksha (1886). Vidyasagar’s work on social reforms include ‘Bidhobabivah’ on widow’s right to remarry

(1855), 'Bahubivah' on banning of polygamy (1871) and Balyabivah on the flaws of child marriage.

Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule,

Jyotiba Phule Introduction In the social and educational history of India, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule stand out as an exceptional couple. They were engaged in a passionate struggle to build a movement for equality between men and women and for social justice. Recognising that knowledge is power and that the progress of women and lower castes was impossible without it, they dedicated their entire life for spreading education. In this module we first discuss the contributions of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to the development of education in modern India. We will try to understand Phule's thoughts and ideas on education as an answer to the present challenges of education in India. His wife Savitri Bai Phule had the pride of being the first woman teacher. We will also look at the contributions of Savitri Bai Phule to the field of education **Jyotirao Phule: An Educational Philosopher** Among many thinkers and

theorists one come across in the field of education, Jyotiba Phule was the first who devoted his life for the cause of mass education, the education of backward communities and women (Bala and Marwaha, 2011). His thoughts and ideas were revolutionary. His single most concern was universalisation of primary education. He concentrated on such aspects as the need for primary education, the essential qualities to be possessed by primary school teachers and the curriculum of primary education. He gave importance to the upliftment of lower castes and women through education and took necessary steps for achieving this end. During Phule's time education for women and those born into castes considered untouchable was like a distant dream. In such a situation he launched a momentous struggle for the education of women and lower castes, inspite of threats to his life. For him education was not just literacy but a tool of social change in the real sense of the term. He was the forerunner of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar as far as education of the down trodden is concerned. For this reason Dr. Ambedkar considered Mahatma Phule his "Guru". To Mahatma Phule

education is the only panacea for eradicating social evils. It was his firm conviction that if social reforms are to be effective and lasting, persons at all levels should be educated. For this purpose he considered the spread of education as his life's mission. Without doubt we can say that Phule was the pioneer of revolutionary thinking. He was rightly called the 'Father of Indian Social Revolution' in the modern age.

Early Life Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (April 11, 1827 -November 28, 1890), also known as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was an activist, thinker, teacher, educationist and social revolutionary from Poona.

He lived and worked in Maharashtra. His father Govindrao used to supply flowers to the Peshwa families and others in Poona. Since Jyotiba's father and two uncles served as florists under the last Peshwas, they came to be known as Phules. Jyotiba's mother died when he was hardly one year old. He was brought up by a close relative Sagunabai. The Phule family belonged to one of the backward communities called Mali (Gardner), which was forbidden from seeking education and other rights that were enjoyed by upper

castes. The Malis belonged to Shudra Varna and were placed immediately below the peasant caste of Maratha-Kunbis of Maharashtra. The orthodox Brahmins used to preach that shudras and women are not allowed to receive education and if they did so it would be considered an act of sin. In this background in a city like Poona which was the centre of brahminical orthodoxy, Jyotirao was not given admission in an Indian school. So his father sent him to a missionary school where children from all communities were admitted. But due to threats from some Brahmins Jyotiba's father discontinued his education and he was assigned gardening work on the farm. Jyotiba was unhappy with the gardening work and he was extremely eager to continue his studies. Impressed by Jyotiba's intelligence and his love for knowledge, two of his neighbours, one a Muslim teacher and the other, a Christian gentleman, persuaded his father Govindrao to allow him to study in a secondary school. In 1841 Jyotiba got admission in the Scottish Mission High School, Pune. After completing secondary education in 1847, he decided not to accept a job under the government. In 1848 Phule began his

work as a social reformer. Interested in education of boys and girls of lower castes, he started a school for them. Since no female teacher was available, Phule asked his wife Savitribai to teach in the school. He opened two more schools for girls in 1851. He was honoured by the Board of education for the work he did for girls' education in 1852. Phule established a school for untouchables and a night school in 1852. By 1858, he gradually retired from the management of these schools and entered the broader field of social reform. He supported the movement for widow remarriage in 1860 and in 1863 established a Home for the prevention of infanticide. In a memorial addressed to the Education Commission popularly known as the Hunter Commission in 1882, he described his activities in the field of education (full article can be accessed at <http://ghalibana.blogspot.com/.../memorial-by-mahatma-phule-to-hunter.html>). The government appointed him a member of the Poona Municipality in 1876. He continued as a member till 1882 and fought for the cause of oppressed.

Phule's Writings

Phule was not only a leader and organiser of the movement for the emancipation of lower castes, but he was also an original thinker who had revolutionary ideas which he expressed through his books. Some of his major works were *Tritiya Ratna* (1855), *Brahmananche Kasab* (1869), *Gulamgiri* (1873), *Shetkaryacha Aasud* (1883), *Satsar Vol I* (1885), *Satsar Vol II* (1885), *Ishara* (October 1, 1885) and *Saravajanik Satyadharma Pustak*. In all he worked for achieving his motive i.e., universal education, education for women and uplift of people who were ostracised by the caste system. In *Brahmananche Kasab* (1869) Phule exposed the exploitation being meted out by Brahmin priests. In *Gulamgiri* (1873) he gave a historical account of the slavery of lower castes. In 1883 he published a collection of his speeches under the title *Shetkaryarcha Aasud* (The cultivator's whipcord) in which he analysed how peasants were being exploited in those days. We find a text of his philosophical statement in *Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak* (A book of True Religion for All) published in 1891, a year

after his death. From his writings we come to know that his thinking on social and political issues was influenced by Christianity and the ideas of Thomas Paine (1737-1809) who was known for his religious radicalism in England. Phule himself has recorded that he was influenced by the ideas of Paine. As a recognition of his great work for the upliftment of the oppressed, Phule was conferred the title of 'Mahatma' in 1888. Phule wrote in Marathi language that was familiar to the masses Views of Jyotiba Phule on Primary Education and Primary School Teachers The submission by Jyotirao Phule to Hunter Commission is a document of immense importance in the history of educational reforms in India. The document contains ideas such as free and compulsory education to all now enshrined in the Constitution of India. It is probably the first document of its kind that speaks of creating a taste for education among the masses and making it accessible to all. Jyotiba Phule had expressed his views on primary education and primary school teachers in a statement forwarded to the Hunter Commission. In his view, it was necessary to bestow prime

importance to primary rather than higher education as it was the urgent need of the masses. The British Government which was gaining revenue from taxes paid by commoners did not in return providing any resources for giving primary education. Phule's argument was that amounts received from the masses should be invested on their education in proportion to what the government was gaining and that education was to get priority in government expenditure. The need of the public was to receive an education that helped them perform their jobs and also carry on their day-to-day activities.

Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jyotiba related education with access to justice, equity and growth for lower castes and women and asserted that only through education growth could be possible. Phule's thoughts on education can be summarised as follows- 'Lack of education leads to lack of wisdom, which in turn leads to lack of justice. This leads to lack of progress, which leads to lack of money and results in oppression of the lower castes' (See Natarajan and Ninan, 2011). Mahatma Phule was fully

conscious about the importance of education as a tool of social justice and equality. In fact he saw education as the harbinger of a social revolution. The essence of the educational philosophy of Mahatma Phule was that 'education is a human right'. He was indeed the protagonist of the ideas of universalisation of educational opportunities. Universalisation of education basically means accepting and extending facilities of education to all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex and physical or moral disability. Article 45 of Indian Constitution is the symbol of victory for the philosophy of equality of educational opportunity propounded by Mahatma Phule. He also worked for education of women and virtually laid the foundation for opening up opportunities for women to seek formal education. This was especially true of women from the marginalised sections. For achieving his aims, he opened a girl's school in 1848 at Budhwar Peth in the residential building 6 of Tatya Sahib Bhide. He opened two more schools in 1851 among which one school was for girls of backward class. He had revolutionary ideas about different aspects of education.

Salient Features of the Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Phule

- Since all human beings are equal, access to education must be uniform. Monopolistic controls over education must be curtailed. Universalisation of opportunities and compulsory education must be ensured.
- While educating individuals, religion, race, caste and sex should not be considered. Education should develop humanistic values.
- The education of women and other deprived groups must be given top priority for establishment of social justice. Education must serve as a binding force in society.
- A primary school teacher must be a trained person and sufficient salary should be paid to him/her. Curriculum must be utilitarian and practical so as to cover the needs of the society.
- Preliminary knowledge about agriculture and health should be included in the curriculum. There should be a

differentiation between the curriculum of rural and urban schools.

- Values that stand the test of time such as freedom, equality, fraternity, kindness, self-respect, devotion to one's nation and internationalism should be developed through education.
- Professional ability and efficiency should be developed so that knowledge may be properly linked. The downward filtration theory advocated by Lord Macaulay is not philosophically sound as it ignores the common masses.
- Practical knowledge is superior to bookish knowledge. Hence primary knowledge in Modi (a special Marathi script) accounts, history, grammar, agriculture ethics and health should be imparted. Though quantitative growth in primary schools is important, it should not be at the cost of qualitative growth.

Phule's bold efforts to educate women, Shudras and the untouchables had a deep effect on the values, beliefs and

ideologies relating to the movement for social justice through education. His efforts unleashed the forces of awakening among the common masses. Education made women more knowledgeable. They became conscious of the differences between the right and the wrong and could analyse these differences with a scientific approach. They began to question the age-old customs which degraded them. Similarly, Shudras started claiming equality with upper castes in all areas of life. In short, Jyotiba Phule launched a movement for liberating women and Shudras from the control of vested interests and laid the foundation for a Backward Class Movement in India.

Relevance of Jyotiba's Educational Philosophy Today

In today's educational scenario Phule's thoughts on education are very relevant. As we know, today education has been mostly reduced to information transmission. There is always a fear of examination because of bookish education. But for Phule knowledge was not just information. It involves

questioning, understanding critiquing and interpreting knowledge. As early as in the 19th century Phule had given alternative education models. For him, 'Education is the power to think clearly, the power to act well in the world's work, and the power to appreciate life'. For Phule knowledge matters because it can question, change and transform the individual and society. Education can empower and make society more democratic. It can help in reconstructing, rethinking and in interpreting tradition. This thought of Phule is extremely relevant in the paradoxical context of caste in contemporary India- where despite constitutional provisions, caste discrimination is widespread. **Concluding**

Jyotiba Phule was the first Indian educationist whose pragmatic views on education were honoured by the British rulers in India. He was a practical man with a profound philosophical background. The Indian educationists of his period and after were deeply impressed by the richness and originality of Phule's thoughts. His educational ideas and

principles especially in the field of women's education and universal, free and compulsory primary education are most relevant in modern Indian society as elsewhere. It is not an exaggeration to say that the history of women's education in India would be incomplete without making a reference to the contribution of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He is rightly called Mahatma.

Savitribai Phule and her Contribution to Education

Introduction Savitribai Phule, wife of Jyotibha Phule, was one of the pioneers of modern Indian education. Her role in opening up educational opportunities for women, in spite of stiff opposition from upper castes and reactionary forces stands out as a classic example of courage and conviction. Savitribai is truly a role model. She was the first Indian to spark a revolution in Indian education by opening it up for girls and children of lower castes. She was the first

Indian to place the notions of universal, child sensitive, intellectually critical, and socially reforming education at the very core of the agenda for the welfare of all children in India (Wolf and Andrade, 2008). According to Manas (2007), Savitribai Phule is modern India's first woman teacher. She was a radical advocate of education for women and untouchables, a champion of women's rights, a milestone of trailblazing poetry, a courageous mass leader who stood strongly against the forces of caste and patriarchy. Savitribai certainly had her independent identity.

Profile in Brief:

✚ 1831 - Born in Naigaon, Satara district in a poor peasant family.

✚ 1840 - Married to Jyotiba Phule.

✚ 1841 - Jyotiba began to educate her.

✚ 1848 - Became the first female teacher in the first school for girls in Pune.

- + 1848 -Started a school for adult learners in Usman Shaikh's wada. 1849 -18 more schools started for girls, Shudras and Ati-shudras. 1852 -Awarded the Ideal Teacher Award by the School Inspection Committee.
- + 1853 - Started a Foundling home for children of widows.
- + 1854 -Published first collection of poems Kavyaphule, making her the first modern poetess of Marathi language.
- + 1855 -Began teaching in a school for peasants and workers.
- + 1868 -Opened their well for untouchables.
- + 1877 -Provided famine relief through fifty-two food centres.
- + 1890 - Death of Jyotiba Phule.
- + 1897 -Nursed patients during the plague epidemic.
1897 -Savitribai died of plague.

Savitribai Phule's Thoughts on Education Savitribai was an educational philosopher well ahead of her times. She incorporated innovative methods for spreading education. She gave stipends to prevent children dropping out of school. She conducted parent-teacher meetings to involve the parents in the educational process so that they would understand the importance of education and support their children. Savitribai's message was 'work hard, study well and do good'. She constantly underscored the importance of education and physical work for knowledge and prosperity. She felt that women must receive education as they were in no way inferior to men; they were not slaves of men (Mani and Sardar 1988).

Universally Available

Savitribai was completely convinced that learning was for every child and that every child is equal and gave herself totally for this cause. She was a believer in the principle of universal right to education. Savitribai stood with Phule when he made

mass education the focal point of his movement, and gave the highest priority to the education of women and children from lower castes, in particular Child Sensitive Along with her husband Jyotiba, Savitribai concentrated on the needs of primary education, disapproving the government's education policies which, neglected primary education and accorded lower status to primary school teachers as compared to teachers of secondary or higher education. In order to change this system, Phule argued that quality primary school teachers should be paid higher salaries than those who were not efficient. Phule placed a greater weight on practical knowledge rather than bookish knowledge, arguing that education should be utilitarian and practical so as to address society's needs. For example, he believed that the primary school curriculum should be appropriate to the students' contexts, arguing for a clear delineation between rural and urban curriculum, as well as the inclusion of useful and relevant topics such as health and agriculture (Wolf 2008). Savitribai echoed these thoughts in her educational approach.

Intellectually Critical

Phule also sought an education system that would educate the masses to think critically and to exercise their own independent reasoning rather than mechanically accepting assertions by persons in positions of authority. To Phule, the chief evil in Brahmanical domination over the masses was the promotion of unquestioning faith in religious texts and authorities that were imposed as divinely imposed. He strongly critiqued unthinking belief, superstitions and rituals, and sought to lay these open to empirical and logical rational inquiry. Phule argued that the first step to the liberation of the lower castes was to bring them out of the ideologies of Brahminism (Wolf 2008). For that, access to knowledge was the essential prerequisite. He termed his understanding of knowledge as *tritiya ratna*, the 'third eye', which he saw as knowledge that went beyond merely alphabetical competence to the power to see through hegemonic ideology, to understand the system of oppression in order to be able to dismantle it. Savitribai's views on education were closely

in consonance with the thoughts expounded by Mahatma Phule. Socially Reforming Savitribai and the 'Truth Seekers Community' believed that education had the key to bringing about fundamental changes in social attitudes. The goal in promoting education for the masses was not simply to temporarily raise the temporary standard of living for a few individuals, but to reshape the entire future of the nation. Savitribai included all children which included boys and girls and her special concern was for those ostracised by oppressive caste practices. She was a woman who challenged gender stereotypes, caste hierarchies and stands as a stellar role model to all those who want to usher in a new social order. Concluding Note The support, cooperation and companionship that Savitribai gave Jyotiba throughout his life are extraordinary and are beyond comparison. The standards that they set for following values such as equality between men and women and peaceful companionship go well beyond their times. The work that they did in the fields of education, social justice, eradication of caste

and exposing the exploitative behaviour of the priestly class illuminated not only the past, but continues to illuminate the present.

E.V. Ramasamy, and Dravidian Movement Periyar

Erode Venkatanacker Ramasamy (1879-1973), better known as Periyar (The Great Man) has a complex legacy. He began as a nationalist, worked as a follower of Gandhi, but turned into a firebrand leader of the anti-Brahminism movement in Madras Presidency. He saw the salvation of the country in the destruction of the Congress, the Hindu religion, and Brahmin domination. He declared the goal of the Dravida Kazhagham, the new avatar of the Justice Party in 1944 to be a 'sovereign, independent Dravidian Republic' and called upon his followers to observe Independence Day as a day of mourning representing the enslavement of the southerners'. Meanwhile, he saw himself as a social reformer and then as a Communist and again as a social reformer. Even in his call for social justice, we find a juxtaposition of race, varna, caste, class, gender, language, urban-rural divide and Tamil nationalism.

On the one side of the divide of inequity, he places the Brahmins, the descendants of northern Aryans and, on the other, the Dravidian shudras. However, underlying his untiring campaigns spanning from 1917 to 1973 is a passionate advocacy of human dignity and in this lies his lasting contribution

Even in more concrete terms, Periyar's accomplishments are phenomenal. His movement indeed led to the end of Brahmin hegemony in Tamil politics and social life. His mission helped in spreading the message of egalitarianism and scientific temper. Elimination of caste-based social segregation and discriminations, improvement in the condition of women, right of temple entry and management to non-Brahmins, prevention of supremacy of Hindi over Tamil and obtaining Tamil as official language thereby enhancing its status and contributing to its growth, reservations for backward castes in government jobs, which entailed the first amendment in the Indian Constitution, and the emergence of a new leadership in Tamil Nadu from backward castes are solid

instances of his revolutionary legacy which are too visible to be ignored.

Situating Periyar

Understanding Periyar must begin with understanding the person. He was born in a rich business family of the backward caste of Naickars in Erode, a town in the former Madras Presidency (Now Tamil Nadu). He studied only up to the fourth standard and as a young man left home to tour the nation. He even lived the life of an ascetic in Benares. It was here that he learnt the deceptions spread in the name of religion. Back home, he reflected his proficiency in business and became active in public activities. He was the Chairman of the Erode Municipality and an honorary magistrate. He held numerous positions of social importance. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1919 and became a staunch Gandhian. He held the positions of the Secretary and President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. In each of his positions, he always strove for social justice, and 'service' was his sole motto. In 1924, he led the famous Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala. The

Ezhavas were not allowed to enter the streets around the Vaikom temple because of their 'low birth'. He faced imprisonment but he ultimately succeeded in his satyagraha and was declared the hero of Vaikom. Though he worked in the Congress in an important capacity, he faced caste prejudices within the organisation. He tasted the prejudices in the party first-hand when he was elected the first non-Brahmin President of the Tamil Nadu Congress party. No sooner was the result declared, than a no-confidence motion was brought in on absurd grounds. It was nonetheless defeated. In 1925, when his resolution for the 'communal representation' at the Kancheepuram Congress, which he had been trying to get the party to accept for six years, was disallowed in the open session, he left the Congress once and for all, declaring it as the fortress of Brahmin imperialism.

Thereafter, he associated himself with the Justice Party which he headed in 1938. Six years later, he converted it into the non-political social outfit Dravidar Kazhagam. The original formation has now been sidelined and its offshoots—the DMK, AIADMK,

and MDMK—dominate the politics of Tamil Nadu today. Meanwhile, he launched the Self-Respect Movement committed to social reform and social upliftment. The first Self-Respect Movement was held at Chengalpattu in February 1929. In 1932, Periyar travelled extensively within the Soviet Union and was very much impressed by the rationalistic anti-religious egalitarian social order and scientific, technological, and economic advancements therein. After his return from his prolonged exposure to Communism, he started the Self-Respect Communist Party as a political offshoot of the movement. He was imprisoned and the party was later banned. He was warned that if he did not stop working for the Communist Party, all his activities would be banned. He gave up his communist activities to be able to continue with the Self Respect Movement but his ideas carried their influence.

Periyar cannot be understood without referring to the colonial context. The colonization of India exposed her to the renascent spirit of Europe. For a civilization, ancient but

moribund, the encounter was overwhelming. The vigour of their overseas rulers and their modern ways were eyeopeners for the enlightened Indians of the early colonial phase. The Indians who regarded themselves as proud descendants of an ancient civilization were not to submit to the cultural supremacy of the West. Instead, they raised serious concerns about the state of their own culture and civilization. Many rose to the occasion to redeem what they considered as the lost glory of their ancient civilization. The great project endeavoured to entwine the essence of modernity with what they considered good in Indian traditions. In fact traditions were tested on the bases of rationalism and humanism— the twin interdependent fundamentals of modernity. Their endeavours and the accomplishments are known as the Indian Renaissance. The next stage was the propagation of Indian nationhood. The phenomenon of nation, like modernity and related to it, emerged in Europe. It was essentially an ethno-militaristic phenomenon which substituted religion to a great extent in the new rationalist world view of Europe. The phenomenon seeped into colonies too

through the empires. In India, the concept of nationhood was also combined with the civilizational mission of self-redemption and with the passage of time a new nation was born but with an ancient spirit.

Renaissance and nation in the beginning were upper caste elitist projects. Nationalism which germinated in the course of the reformist spell of colonial India later subsumed the reform process and also spread to the emerging and expanding middle and lower middle classes. But its appeal was not universal. Civilizational redemption carried hardly any meaning to the vast majority of the population of this land. Imperial exploitation, oppression, humiliation and national pride mattered little to those, who led even otherwise, lives of gross degradation and deprivation. Nonetheless, the philosophical foundations of these projects, i.e., rationalism and humanism raised concerns which though not addressed by these projects did awaken people of even those sections who had suffered a dehumanised existence for centuries. The essence of this awakening was the worth and dignity of human

beings as such. For many the struggle for dignity and liberty became, and very legitimately so, more important as a social struggle than the anti-imperial struggle.

Periyar was certainly one of the greatest champions who raised the issue of this fundamental freedom. The problem of colonial subjugation was secondary for most Indians who were at the lower rung of the hierarchical caste order of India. The exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the ancient social regimen was immediate and an excruciatingly painful experience. Large numbers faced a scriptural or religious sort of apartheid. Periyar himself faced such caste prejudices despite being an influential Congress leader of the South. Despite the fact that he belonged to a wealthy family, he established himself as a great social and religious reformer and was a very important Congress leader. Yet, he could not avoid being treated as one whose presence or contact was considered polluting or defiling. And he found every move for the empowerment of the depressed castes blocked by a very active and powerful lobby of Brahmins.

In this mission, he did not appeal in the name of God, as has been the practice among most of the great leaders of the world, rather he dismissed the concept of God in the most forthright manner. Neither did he exhort the people in the name of some other lofty ideals. He relied mostly on the faculty of reason possessed by everyone and for this he indulged himself till his last in arguments with people, provoking them to come out of their stupor not only by his words but also with his deeds. He is rightfully addressed as the Socrates of East, as his ways bear a striking resemblance to Socrates.

He was also very impressed by the achievements of the West. He keenly observed that their advances in science and technology had made them the masters of the world and freed them of many of the miseries inflicted by nature. He found their rational orientation, instilled in them by their schooling system, the reason behind their advancement. The western philosophical traditions starting with Socrates and passing through Ingersoll, Broadlaw and Herbert Spencer had strengthened his conviction

and even Indian rationalist traditions propagated by such greats like Gautama Buddha and Thiruvalluvar had inspired him and he took on the mantle of completing their unfinished task. His contemporary, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was also an unwavering rationalist, also won his admiration.

Another very powerful phenomenon of his times, Communism, also affected his thinking profoundly. He was very impressed by the rationalistic and anti-religious approach of the movement and the economic development with egalitarianism achieved in the Soviet Union

Periyar's Theorization

Periyar was a rationalist with all his being and objectivity was his avowed means of analysis. Though his tools were scientific and universalistic, his concerns related to his milieu. He was deeply anguished by an imposed and historically institutionalised order of Brahminic hegemony in the name of religion, caste and spirituality which dehumanised the overwhelming majority of Dravidian peoples in the South. He took upon himself the mantle of undoing

injustices and laying the foundation of a fair and egalitarian society. But it was a complicated mission. The fight was against something which was internalised and accepted by the suffering people as natural. The battle lines he drew and the wars he fought were more within the minds of the individuals and their collective consciousness. He was perturbed by the miserable existence of the Dravidians in southern India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. He fought for their emancipation but his ideas indeed have wider applications as well implications.

Rationalism, the very basis of Periyar's principles, was however not impersonal. His appeal for social justice was based on concrete rationalism but as it had to be a missionary campaign in order to defeat deep-rooted injustices perpetrated by a deeply entrenched caste which derived sanctity from a fossilised religion, his approach to the issue was very personal. The war he waged was not abstract. It was direct and very personal. He proclaimed:

E.V. Ramasamy, have taken upon myself the mission of making the Dravidian society acquire awareness and become a society of dignity like the societies elsewhere in the world.

I consider myself qualified enough to carry on the mission insofar as I am attached to nothing else, perceive concepts and devise schemes on the basis of rationalism. I consider that by itself it is enough for anyone who takes up a social mission.

He also personified the ideas he professed. For instance, he propagated atheism to be a great personal virtue. 'If one professes that there is no God, he should then have godly attributes about himself. ... he should be aware of the causes behind the phenomenal realities of the world? ..., to whom is there no God? There is no God to the truly enlightened. He should have the end of all philosophy. No one would be prejudiced against such an enlightened man. He would also not hate anyone. Anyone who hates him is an idiot.' And he demanded that a true atheist should not be hated; he is to be appreciated and followed.

Generally, normative theorizations seek an axiomatic proposition to be developed into a system of thought in a geometrical fashion. This fundamental proposition is either deductive or inductive. Related to this is another aspect of such theorization that is related to the position of the theorist. There are armchair theoreticians who construct societies in their imagination only, which have little to do with real societies and real peoples. Periyar was not an armchair theorist, who conjectured new worlds in his/ her (logical) imagination. He derived his ideas from practice. What he believed in he practiced and what he practiced he believed. He reached his rationalist worldview without taking any recourse to books or research. He derived his principles from observing life. At the other end, there are practitioner-theoreticians who are so obsessive about their immediate surroundings that their visions do not go beyond the immediate. Periyar's ideas were indeed derived from experiences - experiences of a very active and effective political leader and social reformer. But his derivations

were based on objectivity. He surmounted the follies of both science and activism with considerable success.

Many positivists were also prophets of utopia. Periyar was free from this predilection of scholarship too. He did not provide any visions of utopia. His message was hard-hitting and realistic. He did believe in Communism. But his notion of Communism was rooted solidly in the ground and deeply imbedded in the specificities of the Tamil land. What he wanted from people was very simple—redemption of their humanity. The idea was crystal clear. There was no intimidating philosophy, confusing mystical discourse, jargonised theory building or a goal of an unattainable utopia. The clarity of Periyar's objective made it sound very simple but its actualisation was a process of colossal magnitude. The mission had to confront millennia of misgivings, prejudices and practices. Nonetheless the magnitude of the mission was well matched by his untiring vigour, immense courage and unwavering conviction.

There are rare combinations of activism and scholarship which go beyond the ephemeral and the immediate. Periyar belonged to that genre of activist-philosophers. Besides, clarity of thought, commitment to objective and making rationality an article of faith and basis of his messianic appeal make him stand out even in that rare genre of activist-philosophers.

Abolition of Caste

The fundamental problem confronting Periyar was thus the denial of basic dignity to the large majority of humanity around him. And basic to his philosophy was the view that all men and women should live with dignity and have equal opportunities to develop their physical, mental and moral faculties. In order to achieve this, he wanted to put an end to all kinds of unjust discriminations and promote social justice and a rational outlook. The problem was not related to outright physical subjugation but to an order of oppression garbed in spirituality and religiosity. The order he sought to encounter was Brahminism. This holistic order entailed a hierarchical social system, in which economic vocation,

social relations and a number of privileges and restrictions were associated with castes located in that hierarchy. The worst aspect of this order was the practice of pollution and purity which were so extreme that even the sight and shadows of the outcastes, the lowest in the social order, were considered polluting. In this order, the Brahmins occupied the highest position, were considered the purest, and commanded a supreme position not only ritually but in every respect. Ironically all castes were graded superior or inferior in relation to each other except the Brahmin sitting at the top of the heap. And this order as such was sanctified as a divine creation.

Periyar himself, though a wealthy man, a man of influence as he worked for the Congress as a leader, suffered humiliation because of his caste even within the set up of that national organisation, the greatest platform of the national movement. He was treated as a being that defiled his surrounding by his presence and the articles he used. Casteism flourished not only in traditional social set-ups and upcoming political organisations but also in factories and trade unions. Even the progressive Marxists were not

able to address this deeper malaise of Indian social relations. He fought these discriminations by exposing the conceptual hollowness and deception behind them and by making the fight his personal mission. He asked, 'A sizable population today remains as untouchables, and another sizable population exists in the name of shudras and the serfs, coolies and menials. Who wants an independence that cannot help change these things? Who wants religion, scriptures and god, which cannot bring about a change in this sphere?'

The fundamental problem had its ramifications — the moral and material backwardness, social schisms, and mutual hatred among people, which made society weak and caused untold miseries. He theorised that the main reason behind social malaises was casteism, which was imposed on the people of the South by the Aryans for their own benefit. The people were naïve, did not realise the deception of the Aryans and became victims of their divisive designs and domination. The system was sanctified by the basic Aryan scriptures—the Vedas. The principle was the Varnashrama

Dharma. According to this the society was divided into four Varnas, viz. Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra and were assigned specific social functions. Brahmins, the offspring of the Aryans, became the self appointed legislators of Indian society. They wrote the Vedas, in fact, for their own benefit and declared them to be the words of God. This was a ploy to avoid comprehension of the truth based on reason, reality, experiences and experiments. They forbade inquiry, and spread the canard of sin and hell to frighten people into subjugation. The Brahmins assigned a superior position to themselves in this order; the other Varnas were extended a hierarchical division among themselves. There emerged castes within Varnas with the distinctions of superiority and inferiority. In this arrangement the society got irresolutely divided. The root of this division was Brahmin supremacy and Periyar decided to eliminate this supremacy.

Periyar made it sufficiently clear that he was against Brahminism and not the Brahmins. To him, Brahminism was the basis of the caste system which justified social inequality,

untouchability and many other problems. His prime goal was the elimination of the caste system which he found against the principles of human civilization and self respect. It did all these things on the basis of divine ordination. He raised the fundamental issues of human dignity in a rational manner to counter these social evils. His exhortations were straight and hard-hitting.

A bunch of rascals have enslaved us. They have imposed upon us a certain system that brands us their slaves.

Your very birth is ignoble of course. The reason for that is ignoble about you is that you have accepted the status of the shudra. At least hereafter, you should feel ashamed of it. It is not harmful to die for the sake of undoing the name of shudras instead of procreating in the name of the shudras.

How long hence are we going to remain shudras in this world? How long are we going to allow our children to be called the shudras? Aren't we supposed to do something to eradicate the dishonour and become human at least during this age of freedom and scientific temper?.

When stained with the excreta of a man or an animal we wash our hands with water. However, they insist upon taking a bath if they came into contact with the body of a person or even if the dress of a man brushes against them. Is there anything human about such human beings?.

They lead the cow; take dung and the urine of cows to sanctify the temple. But if a man enters the same temple, they consider the temple to have been defiled and arrange for sanctification. Are they reasonable men?.

We should eradicate casteism in the name of the Brahmin and the pariah getting rid of God, getting rid of all the scriptures.

He also attacked the caste distinctions among non-Brahmins using only logic to prove his point. 'Though each caste ascribes superiority to itself on solid bases, all their arguments only serve to show that all of them together are inferior to the Brahmins. Otherwise, all the evidences they cite do not serve any intended purpose. This is the picture of reality as such.' This, according to him, meant that people of castes other than the Brahmins belonged

to inferior castes, and were untouchables. This deprived them of certain civil rights on par with the Brahmins and made them slaves to the Brahmins. According to Periyar, this discrimination meant that the birth of persons of other castes lacked honour since it may be the result of prostitution or cross-caste union. And he gave the clarion call to do or die.

The untouchable should not go within the sight of the Brahmins. He should not walk about the streets. He should not take water from the pond. What social justice is there in such restrictions? If God does not bring destruction on such a society, how could he be merciful? For how long do you desire such oppressed, suppressed society to be patient, non-violent and passive? It is better to die fighting such social evils rather than live in a society that is the scene of such inhuman acts and attitudes.

His approach was to tackle the root of the social problems. For untouchability, the worst form of human degradation, he analysed the evil and traced its origin. Untouchability, he found, was

based on religion and religion found its base in scriptures which again claimed to be the words of God. Attacking the very root of human degradation, he rejected the trio of God, scriptures and religion in totality. Periyar did not stand for cosmetic changes. For instance he did not advocate equality of castes in jobs or in social positions as the only solution to caste discrimination. He sought a complete normative and physical transformation to root out caste based discrimination.

Women's Liberation

Caste was not his sole concern. Among the many issues he touched upon, gender was a major one. For the subjugation of women, he said, they themselves were responsible as they did not feel that they deserved total freedom. And they did not suffer alone from their own bondage. Men lost their honesty and freedom too, since they had families dependent on them. They had to assume unnecessary responsibility and suffer needless anxieties. But men didn't see reason. They had enslaved women, devised concepts like chastity and categorised women who were 'unchaste' as prostitutes

but they themselves did not observe such norms with respect to conjugal conduct. Whatever and wherever women were, they were monitored by men. Only when a woman was able to attend to the business of her life independent of a husband or a son could they attain the position they deserved.

In fact his approach towards women's issues was quite gendered as he viewed the problem as a separate one. His depiction of the state of women made it clear that women's liberation was independent of the larger plans of liberation.

The way man treats women is much worse than the way landlords treat servants and the high-caste treat the low-caste ... Women in India experience worse suffering, humiliation and slavery in all spheres than even the Untouchables ... A woman is for the male, a cook for himself; a maid for his house; a breeding farm for his family and beautifully decorated doll to satisfy his aesthetic sense. Do enquire whether they have been used for any other purpose. The slavery of women is only because of men. The belief of men

that God created man with superior powers and woman to be slave for him, and woman's traditional acceptance of it as truth are alone responsible for the growth of women's slavery.

Women were denied education so that they did not have the ability and intelligence to question their slavery. However, the most important factor for women's subjugation, Periyar held, was that they lacked the right to property. In fact men treated women as their property. It was for this purpose that they devised the principle of chastity exclusively for women.

Qualities like freedom and courage were claimed as 'masculine' thus characterising male superiority as a natural phenomenon. Women would never be free unless they put an end to male domination and they could not depend on men for the same. 'The pretence of men that they respect women and that they strive for their freedom is only a ruse to deceive women. Have you ever seen anywhere a jackal freeing the hen and the lamb or the cat freeing the rats, or capitalists freeing the workers?.'

Women must get rid of their slavish mentality and they should realise that being civilised was not about dressing fashionably or looking good but living on equal terms with men. He sought rigorous education in rational thinking for women, changes in the custom of marriage and birth control for the sake of women's liberation. He considered the terms, 'husband' and 'wife' inappropriate and called them companions and partners. He also rejected the words, 'wedding' or 'marriage' and termed it as a 'contract for companionship in life.

Rural-Urban Divide

Periyar's propagation of social justice touched another inequity plaguing India—the urban-rural divide, or what is often today referred to as the divide between India and Bharat. The fact is that economic relations between town and country dwellers are based on unequal exchanges and while villagers do back-breaking labour and survive on the bare minimum, the city dwellers exploit their produce. Periyar equated the status of villagers to that of the Panchamas (untouchables) in the Varnasharama (caste) system,

wherein the high castes flourished by exploiting the toiling low caste people. The notion that shudras (backward Dravidians) and the Panchamas were created to serve the high caste Brahmins was applicable to villagers too as it was believed that villages existed to serve towns. He in fact advocated that villages should be eliminated and even the word 'village' deleted from dictionaries. Villages, bereft of bare amenities like hospitals, school and parks where ninety per cent of people resided, were hardly places worth living. All the schemes for village development were mere hogwash.

The way out was complete urbanization. He sought newer methods in industry and reorganization of agriculture and total mechanization of all feasible agricultural activities. He wanted the farmers to be brought under co-operative bodies so that the produce could be shared equally by all of them. Villages must be linked together and developed as towns with schools, hospitals, parks, cinema theatres, drama halls, recreation centres, libraries etc. and there should be a magistrate and market for securing all

commodities. He also stated that agriculture should be supplanted by small scale industries located in the vicinity of such clusters.

Rationalism

The root cause of this human bondage and suffering, he found, was the lack of a rational outlook among the people. ‘The reason for the present chaos and deterioration in our country is that we have been hindered from enquiry and repressed from the use of rationality.’ The Tamilian outlook was largely based on their perceived ancient wisdom. They assumed that they should be what they were two thousand years before. They rationalised their actions on incomprehensible bases. They justified their acts in the name of Gods, writings in scriptures and sayings of sages. This was unlike the West where people were marching ahead, exploring new frontiers of knowledge, inventing new technologies. Their progress was based on their future-oriented rationalist approach. He differentiated scientific approach from the traditional belief systems. His one such illustration made his point clear. He said that Gods, religions, preachers and scriptures all for instance told people that

an act of kindness to the poor guaranteed a place in heaven, whereas modern science would work for finding the causes of poverty and try to eliminate it. Here he found, that in the name of scholarship the same old ideas were reiterated. The mode of education was such that it forbade new thinking and forced the learner to accept the old uncritically. In the end this kind of education blunted the faculty of reasoning among people here.

Periyar asked people not to accept anything without ratiocination. One should not accept anything only because it is old, customary, habitual, generally accepted, based on hearsay, appeared mysterious, magical or divine, spoken by some saint, or claimed to be said by God. The distinctive aspect of a human being was reason and she/he must apply his/her this faculty in order to lead a life which could be called proper. In this process, he made rejection of God the fundamental application of rationalism. He said, 'I have examined thoughts fibre by fibre, maintaining the attitude of a dispassionate enquirer into Truth. I could not achieve any perspective of God.' He found that the concept of God drained

energy out of Indians. He was very particular about not accepting anything on hearsay without applying one's own reason, which, he maintained, resulted in disappointment and misery. He said, 'God has never revealed himself to anyone. God is only taught and projected to the uninitiated by those who claim enlightenment.' He conjectured that worship in the old human societies as well as the modern ones had its origin from fear and dread of the unknown natural phenomena. He believed that a rational approach was the key for social emancipation and crucial for development. He surmised that economic development was possible only through rationalistic thinking.

Periyar started the Self-Respect Movement with the objective of guiding people to redeem their deserved place in society. Periyar stated, 'The aim of a genuine Self-Respect Movement is to change whatever appears to be adverse to man's feelings of self-respect. That which enslaves you to customs of the world, to orthodoxy, to the rigours of religion, contrary to your rationality and awareness of truths of experience, is what I shall describe as antagonistic to self-

respect. This all-important awareness of self respect based on feelings of dignity and indignity, may be deemed man's birth right, as the word 'man' is itself a word based on dignity. Therefore, he who is called 'man' embodies dignity in himself, and only through his right to this dignity, reveals his human qualities. That is why self-esteem is his birth-right. Man must cast aside his feelings of inferiority, the feeling that he is less important than other beings, and attain self-confidence and self-respect, it will automatically set right politics, nationalism and also theology.' The Self-Respect Movement was aimed at eradication of caste based discrimination. The objectives of the movement were the establishment of a casteless society based on complete equality of the masses, eradication of all social evils and freeing society from the shackles of superstition and blind faith in God and religion, promotion of educational and employment opportunities for women, popularization of self-respect marriages conducted without any Brahmin priest and propagation of rationalism. Conceptually self-respect was the basis for ensuring equality in society. He wished

every non-Brahmin to realise that they had their own self-respect to maintain in all their dealings with their fellow-beings. If a man realised that he was equal to all other men and that he had the right of equality with all other men, then he became a self-respecting person. He also wished women to have this self-respect.

Revolution and Communism

Another aspect of Periyar's thought was his belief in Communism. He exhorted people to be unafraid of revolution and ready themselves for the next change. He said that revolutionary changes in the affairs of men had been a continuous process since time immemorial. He cited numerous contemporary changes. He cited the abolition of a large number of kingships, which were treated as divine institutions earlier and people feared speaking ill of kings. Similarly in India some people were regarded as agents of God on earth and certain others not fit to be seen or even touched. The disappearance of untouchability indeed brought about a revolutionary change in society. Holy books also ordained girls to be married before puberty banning child marriage legally was also a

social revolution. This was also a religious revolution in that the gods of the puranas (mythologies) had become the laughing stock of the people and so did the religion propagating them. He moved to exhort people for the final stage of change.

‘Because of these revolutions in man’s ideas and attitudes, we have come to question about the need for kings, priests, castes, religions and Gods as well. The present century has taken on a more revolutionary cry. People are now questioning the very existence of rich people, capitalists and tilted barons. Why should these people exist? We are trying to see how far these parasites are responsible for the misery of the proletariat - the poor of our land.

He, however, adapted the ideology to his own vision and mission. He merged the Self-Respect Movement with Communism and founded the Self Respect Communist Party. The action plan of the Party included the nationalization of all industries, railway, banks, waterways, all agricultural lands, forests, botanical wealth, community farming, writing off all debts of peasants, limiting the working hours to eight hours, enhancing the wages and improving

working conditions, and providing amenities like access to libraries. He later disbanded the party in favour of the Self-Respect Movement but his ideas remained influenced by Communism. He iterated that God, religion and law support the prevalence of the distinction between the rich and the poor, the existence of caste hierarchy and the cruelty of supremacy and servility. Periyar vowed to destroy the government, justice, morality and customs that permitted them. Periyar explained the Dravidar Kazhagam was an institution of the workers. Every Dravidian to him was a worker because they worked for the others and had been through the ages, servants as per the scriptures of Manu. All men, whether a cart man, scavenger, street cleaner, washer man, barber, potter, tiller, carpenter, cobbler, weaver or anyone who lived by the dint of manual labour were workers for him. The Brahmins and caste Hindus were not labourers as they did not do any manual labour. Only the shudras did and they were the Dravidians. The movement of the Dravidians was therefore the movement of the workers.

He offered an economic explanation for women's subjugation. It was with the advent of private property that the concept of marriage came into existence. Private property created the problem of its inheritance. Men would have thought of bequeathing his property to his own progeny alone which necessitated marriage.

Periyar believed that only if women, workers and agricultural labourers all joined in the revolution could there be communist government in India. He however sought the revolution by revolutionising the thinking habits of people. He said that the end of right to property would be the end of God. There would be no place for God, religion, or scriptures in a nation of socialism where property rights did not exist. Intellectual ability assumed the position of prominence in such a nation. There was neither superior nor inferior and no professional hierarchy. All individuals were equal and paid the same wages. The nature of work done alone was different and whoever assumed a higher office assumed greater responsibilities.

He believed that Communism would hold the whole world in its grip ensuring international peace and prosperity. To him, Communism's objective was making a family, a fraternity of all people of all nations in the world. The wealth of the whole world would be the common property of all in the family. Every member of the family would be equal partner in the larger family.

Periyar also championed a socialist agenda. The resolution adopted in the Eighteenth State Conference of the Dravidar Kazhagam in December 1948 at Thuthukkuti called for the nationalization of all service industries like the generation of electricity, mines, transport, airways and waterways which were essential to the welfare of the common man; fixing ceilings on property holding in the form of lands, houses and cash as the first step in the process of promoting a socialist state and reducing the wages of the higher income group at the same time increasing the minimum wages to the workers in India.

The World of the Future

Periyar did have a vision for the future. He said that a rationalist deduced from the past, examined the present and constructed the future on a scientific basis. Nature had provisioned for people in plenty and in modern times mass production had resulted in a glut in markets and yet millions of people did not have the means to meet their basic needs. Periyar ruled that though many extraordinary men had claimed to have realised God and were even associated with godhood, none of them could find any solution for the miseries of the people. It was only because people were unable to dissociate themselves from God and religion and see the affairs of the world independently. With rationalist thought and science, the future world would be reshaped. The future was a socialist world in which there would be no private property. In the future plutocrats would not be there to dominated the people; technology would free people from the drudgeries of hard labour and demeaning jobs (like scavenging), slavery would be unknown, one would not live on the mercy of another and women would not

want special protection, safeguards and support. With only an hour or two of work, it would be possible for the people to produce the goods they need. The rest of the time would be available for leisure to indulge in fine arts or simple pleasures. Communal life would have reached such heights that the pains and trials of some citizens would be the pains and trials of the whole community. Co-operative effort and unitary feeling would have wiped out all differences and discriminations. Wars and armies would be unknown in the cooperative world state of the future.

Humanism

The common thread which joined Periyar's Self-Respect Movement, his advocacy of rationality and his championing of Communism was his essential humanism. To him humanity alone was the supreme value. He said, 'Forget God; think of man.' And the most human act to him was not to cause any suffering to anyone and help fellow beings. It was the very basis of community living. When man chose to live in communities giving up his barbaric way

of living, he ought to have sought mutual support, through which each other's life could be bettered. He further thought that inequalities must be removed in order to ensure a humane society. The only means for achieving equality of all was to form a rational society where there was no place for any superstitions.

He opposed any sort of violence in human relations. He reasoned that it was in the nature of the tiger to growl and kill other animals. But violence was not natural to man. On the contrary to be human was to be aware of it. It is to the extent one lived without causing suffering to the other that one became a rationalist creature. He advocated that one had to protect oneself from personal suffering but at the same time desist from causing suffering. 'If I were to encourage violent struggle, only the Dravidian would spring upon each other's throat. None of the Aryans who instigate violence would be touched in the least.' He was in favour of results achieved through peaceful rational and loving means even if they were delayed because of the very process. He firmly believed that

only such revolutions without any violence involved would ensure real and permanent welfare to the people.

According to Periyar, humanism consisted of respecting the sentiments of the other. There were bound to be divergent opinions and it was not necessary to accept all but no one could be deprived of the right of the expression. He attached great importance to good human behaviour and conduct. He reiterated that one should behave or conduct himself in the same manner in which he expected others to conduct or behave themselves towards him.

Lastly Periyar's respect for all individuals and their reason was reflected in his statement, 'I have told you whatever I could perceive. I request you to accept whatever appears to be right to you and act accordingly. If there is anything wrong in whatever I have said. I request you to pity my ignorance.' Though he worked for the Dravidians, his concerns were universal. He clarified that he held no attachment towards any particular country, people or

language and that all his activities were guided by his love of humanity and the need to serve it.

Periyar's Legacy: A Critique

Periyar aspired and worked for a new society where rationalism would rule the roost. Rationalism to him was freedom. He was very enthusiastic about science and technology which he felt made people's life easier. He talked of what fundamentally could be construed as self-empowerment. For this matter he was very particular about the prevailing notions and terminology. He never intended to treat a social malaise symptomatically but worked for rooting out the problem and all other systems supporting that evil.

Despite his insistence on rationality and humanism, Periyar presented all the values he championed in his own life. He, in fact, personified rationality, atheism and the cause of justice. He tried but failed to separate his persona with his ideas and his towering persona indeed subsumed the values he imparted. This was perhaps necessary for the wider appeal of his ideas. However its implication in the long term was counterproductive. He was now

viewed as a prophet. A prophet as an analogy reflected the personality cult and reduced rationalism to revelation. One author presented him as an avatar, 'The old saying is that whenever impropriety came to reign supreme, God will manifest himself in human form and restore propriety in the world. It is in a way thus that Periyar was born to defeat the impropriety of vested interests and to endow the illiterate and irrational common man with reason and self respect so that he can walk with a head held high.' The message was subtle and unintended but it had its repercussion. In this rationality was not an approach to be cultivated by each and every individual but a gospel to be told and believed. The Movement's fall from grace to become part of the personality cult of Tamil Nadu was perhaps the logical culmination of this approach.

At the second level, even for a rationalist movement, if the social bases of change and mobilization were a parochial or pre-modern collective identity, the mission itself stood negated. Though he proclaimed to attack brahminical practices alone, in reality it

seemed to be against Brahmins as individuals. It was testified by the flight of a large number of Brahmins from the state. The caste system he sought to eliminate was in fact reinforced. Like the 'new class' of the Communist world, Tamil Nadu also saw the rise of the 'new caste' or 'neo-Brahmins' negating freedom in newer fashions. The personification of ideas and primordialism in social mobilization went against the modern makeover of Tamil society and politics.

Social relations according to Marxism were based on the mode of production. Periyar's analysis of caste-oppression as an Aryan import does not fit the bill. Moreover tracing an ancient and unconfirmed causation and racial social base of an unjust order was not justified. The fact that displacing Brahmins from positions of power in Tamil Nadu simply did not result in a just society has proven the fallacy in Periyar's approach.

Godhood is a very high level of abstraction, and it is functional. It is not apparently comprehensible. It is the fulcrum of religiosity which has been a major tool of social organisation so far.

For instance Mahatma Gandhi defined God as truth. It is such a high level of abstraction that it sounds almost superstitious and indeed for a layman it remains a superstition, because s/he believes in the concept without knowing its import and his/her conduct in this respect does not conform to the real meaning of Godhood. The fact remains that if Godhood has been used as a justification of statusquo so it has been employed as an inspiration for revolutions.

Nonetheless, Periyar raised issues which are equally relevant today. The problem of dignity is one such vital issue. The point to ponder, which Periyar raised so forcefully, is that the oppression is often self-inflicted. It is the result of ignorance, fear, greed and inaction. One is in fact down because of one's own vices. Domination and oppression is the product of the belief system rather than of actual social relations. Slavery which is the highest state of domination and oppression is more metaphysical than physical. His great contribution lies in fighting against oppression and for the sovereignty of individual human beings. He attacked the metaphysics of oppression with aplomb but he left his job half-

done. He failed to provide a credible philosophy of freedom—a philosophy ensuring and sustaining freedom.

Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy (1886–1968) was a pioneering social reformer, doctor, and legislator from Tamil Nadu. She was the first woman in India to be admitted to a men's college and the first female legislator in British India.

Contributions and Achievements:

1. Medical Career:

- First woman in India to enroll in a medical college (Madras Medical College).
- Specialized in gynecology and worked to improve women's healthcare.

2. Social Reforms:

- Fought against the Devadasi system and worked for the rehabilitation of Devadasis.

- Advocated for women's education, widow remarriage, and equal rights for women.

3. **Political Career:**

- First woman legislator in British India (Madras Legislative Council, 1927).
- Introduced reforms for women's welfare, including the abolition of the Devadasi system.

4. **Avvai Home and Orphanage:**

- Founded **Avvai Home** in Chennai to support widows, destitute women, and orphaned children.

5. **Support for Cancer Treatment:**

- Played a key role in the establishment of the **Adyar Cancer Institute** in Chennai in 1954.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was a trailblazer in women's empowerment and social justice. Her contributions continue to inspire generations in Tamil Nadu and across India.

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar (1883-1962) - Life

History

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar was a Tamil social reformer, freedom fighter, and writer who played a crucial role in the abolition of the **Devadasi system** and the promotion of **women's education** in Tamil Nadu.

Early Life:

- Born in 1883 in **Moovalur**, a village in Mayiladuthurai district, Tamil Nadu.
- Initially, she supported the **Justice Party** but later joined the **Indian National Congress** due to her nationalist ideals.

Role in Social Reforms:

- She was actively involved in the **Self-Respect Movement** led by **Periyar E.V. Ramasamy**.
- Fought against the **Devadasi system**, which forced young girls into temple service and exploitation.

- Introduced social welfare measures for the upliftment of women from oppressed backgrounds.

Contribution to Women's Education:

- Advocated for **women's education and empowerment** as a means to achieve social equality.
- Her efforts led to the Tamil Nadu government launching the **"Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme"**, which provides financial aid to girls pursuing higher education.

Literary Contribution:

- Authored the famous novel **"Thyaga Dasi"** in 1936, highlighting the struggles of Devadasis and calling for their liberation.

Freedom Struggle and Political Involvement:

- Actively participated in the **Indian independence movement** and worked alongside leaders like **Rajaji and Periyar**.
- Encouraged women to join the nationalist struggle against British rule.

Legacy:

- Her relentless activism led to the abolition of the **Devadasi system** in Tamil Nadu in **1947**.
- The Tamil Nadu government honored her legacy with social welfare schemes in her name.

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar remains a symbol of **women's empowerment, social justice, and Tamil Nadu's reformist movements**.

Self Assessment Questions

- Evaluate the contributions of Brahma Samaj, Rammohan Roy, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar to social reform movements in India.
- Discuss the role of Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, and Pandita Ramabai in advocating for women's rights and social justice.

Unit - III

Constitution, Laws and the changing status of women: Women and Political Participation in India, Right to Vote, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment and Participation in Local Governance, - Constitutional and Legal Safeguards for Women - Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles and Fundamental Duties -Laws related to Inheritance - Dowry Related Laws

Objectives

- ❖ To analyze the impact of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments on women's participation in local governance.
- ❖ To examine the laws related to inheritance and dowry, ensuring the protection of women's rights.

Women and Political Participation in India

Women's political participation in India has evolved significantly from the pre-independence era to the present. Though India has seen strong women leaders like Indira Gandhi, political representation of women remains a challenge due to social and structural barriers.

Right to Vote for Women in India

- Indian women gained the **right to vote** in 1950, with the adoption of the Indian Constitution.
- Unlike some Western countries where women had to struggle for suffrage, India granted **universal adult franchise** (right to vote for all adults) from the very beginning.

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992)

These amendments were **landmark reforms** in promoting women's participation in **local governance**.

1. **73rd Amendment (Panchayati Raj System)**

- Implemented in 1993, it provided **constitutional status** to the Panchayati Raj institutions.
- **One-third (33%) reservation for women** in all three levels of the Panchayati Raj system (Village, Block, and District levels).
- Enabled millions of rural women to enter political leadership roles.

2. **74th Amendment (Urban Local Bodies)**

- Applied similar reforms to **Municipalities and Urban Local Bodies**.
- Reserved **one-third of the seats** for women, including seats for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) women.

Impact on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

- Increased women's **representation** in local governance.
- Strengthened **grassroots democracy** and gave women decision-making power.
- Encouraged women to engage in **developmental activities, sanitation, education, and public health**.
- Created **role models** for future generations of women leaders.

Challenges in Women's Political Participation

- **Patriarchal mindset** and male dominance in politics.

- **Lack of financial resources** and support for women candidates.
- **Social and cultural barriers** restricting women's mobility and decision-making.
- **Political violence and harassment** against women leaders.

Way Forward

- **Increase reservation** for women in **State Legislatures and Parliament** (Women's Reservation Bill pending in Parliament).
- **Capacity-building programs** for women leaders in local governance.
- **Encouraging women's political participation** through education and awareness campaigns.

The **73rd and 74th Amendments** have been significant in increasing women's participation in Indian politics, but more reforms are needed to achieve **gender equality in governance**.

Constitutional and Legal Safeguards for Women

Constitutional and Legal Safeguards for Women in India

The Indian Constitution and legal system provide various safeguards to promote **gender equality**, protect women's rights, and prevent discrimination. These safeguards ensure that women can live with dignity and participate equally in all aspects of life.

1. Constitutional Safeguards for Women

A. Fundamental Rights (Articles 14-18, 19, 21, 23-24)

1. **Article 14** - Ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
2. **Article 15(1)** - Prohibits discrimination on grounds of **sex**, **caste**, **religion**, **race**, or **place of birth**.
3. **Article 15(3)** - Allows the **State** to make special provisions for women and children.

4. **Article 16** – Provides **equal opportunity in employment** for men and women.
5. **Article 19** – Guarantees **freedom of speech, expression, and movement**, allowing women to participate in all activities.
6. **Article 21** – Ensures the **right to life and personal liberty**, protecting women from violence, trafficking, and exploitation.
7. **Article 23** – Prohibits **human trafficking and forced labor**.
8. **Article 24** – Prohibits the **employment of children** in hazardous jobs, indirectly protecting young girls from exploitation.

B. Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) (Articles 39, 42, 44, 45)

1. **Article 39(a)** – Ensures **equal access to livelihood** for both men and women.
2. **Article 39(d)** – Guarantees **equal pay for equal work** for men and women.

3. **Article 39(e)** - Protects the **health and safety** of **women workers**.
4. **Article 42** - Directs the State to provide **maternity relief**.
5. **Article 44** - Encourages a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** to ensure gender equality in personal laws.
6. **Article 45** - Promotes **free and compulsory education** for **children**, benefiting girls' education.

C. Fundamental Duties (Article 51A)

- Article 51A(e) directs Indian citizens to **renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity**, like dowry, child marriage, and harassment.

D. Reservation in Local Governance (73rd and 74th Amendments, 1992)

- **33% reservation for women** in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, empowering them in local governance.

2. Legal Safeguards for Women

A. Laws for Protection Against Violence and Exploitation

1. **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** - Protects women from physical, emotional, and economic abuse in households.
2. **The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961** - Prohibits the giving or receiving of dowry in marriages.
3. **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** - Prevents child marriages and protects young girls.
4. **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013** - Provides protection against workplace harassment.
5. **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956** - Prevents trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.

6. **The Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 354, 375, 376, 498A**
 - Provides punishment for crimes such as molestation, rape, and cruelty against women.

B. Laws for Women's Empowerment and Welfare

1. **The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017)** - Provides 26 weeks of paid maternity leave for working women.
2. **The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976** - Ensures equal pay for men and women for equal work.
3. **The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (Amended 2005)** - Grants daughters equal inheritance rights as sons.
4. **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986** - Provides financial support for divorced Muslim women.
5. **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 (Amended 2021)** - Allows legal abortion up to 24 weeks in special cases.

6. The National Commission for Women (NCW) Act, 1990 -

Established the **NCW** to safeguard women's rights.

Conclusion

India has **strong constitutional and legal safeguards** to protect women's rights and ensure equality. However, challenges like **gender discrimination, domestic violence, and unequal opportunities** persist. Effective **implementation of laws, education, and awareness** are crucial for empowering women and achieving true gender equality.

The constitution of a country is *suprema lex*. A written constitution with a Bill of Rights, like ours, seeks to place certain human rights and fundamental freedoms beyond the reach of ordinary laws because these rights do not depend on the whims of an amoral majority or the outcome of any election. Such rights are not the gift of any law or the constitution. Instruments like Bills of

Rights respond by recognising rather than creating or conferring them. As Prof Edwin Corwin said, “They owe nothing to their recognition in the constitution, such recognition was necessary if the constitution was to be regarded as complete.” The debt of constitutional concepts to Natural Law cannot be overlooked. Natural rights become entrenched rights under the constitution as limits on State power. Thomas Jefferson writing to James Madison in 1787 said that ‘a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.’ The moral worth of a society is reflected in its aspirations, the ideals it pursues and the values it cherishes. Throughout history humanity’s chief concern has been the search for and the preservation of values which impart grace and significance to civilization and also to individual human lives. The genesis of a bill of rights may be traced to the Magna Carta in 1215. Formal human rights principles came to be drafted and adopted in the UN Charter in 1945 and in the more detailed Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Those principles were subsequently expanded upon in the two International

Covenants in 1966. While the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights formulated legally enforceable rights of the individual, the one on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was addressed to the States to implement by legislation. The Constitution of a country, it is said, embodies and expresses the goals and aspirations of the people depending upon the history of that society. It contains certain core political values and beliefs which cannot be tinkered with by transient public opinion. “This narrative of the progressive expansion of the types of rights available to individuals seeking to defend their liberties from invasion- from natural rights to common law rights and finally to fundamental rights-is consistent with the account of the development of rights that important strands in constitutional theory present.” The Indian Constitution reflects the best in our past, is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the present and is resilient to cope with the demands of the future. The values of the Constitution are reflected in the Preamble and in Parts III and IV. The Preamble has been spoken of as the guiding light and the Directive Principles of State Policy as the Book of

Interpretation. The ideal is to achieve the goals in Part IV while protecting the rights in Part III. The Constitution provides for stability without stagnation and growth without destruction of essential values. The historical and political developments in India made it inevitable that a Bill of Rights or Fundamental Rights as we call them should be enacted in the Constitution. Constitutional guarantee for human rights was one of the persistent demands of the leaders of our freedom struggle. It was made as early as in 1895 in Lokmanya Tilak's Swaraj Bill, repeated by Annie Besant in 1925, the Motilal Nehru Committee in 1928 and the Tej Bahadur Sapru Committee in 1945. The incorporation of a Bill of Rights was a feature of the U.S. Constitution which the British Parliament consistently eschewed in the Constitution Acts it enacted for Canada in 1867, Australia in 1900 and India in 1919 and 1935. The movement in favour of legally enforceable human rights grew after World War II. "What was deplorable became recognised as inevitable and was next applauded as desirable", as deSmith remarked. The case for guaranteed rights is simple and irrefragable.

The limitations imposed by constitutional law on the actions of Government are essential for the preservation of public and private rights, notwithstanding even the representative character of political institutions. The philosophy underlying Bill of Rights and judicial review is that constitutional limitations are the only way of ensuring the survival of basic human freedoms. When human rights are incorporated into the municipal law and guaranteed by a written constitution they are justiciable and enforceable. A written constitution with judicial review is adopted by a country because it refuses to believe in ‘the Divine Right of Parliaments’, which Herbert Spencer called ‘the great superstition of the present.’ Rene Cassin, the principal architect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when asked as to why an entrenched Bill of Rights was necessary said, “Because men are not always good.”

As the Supreme Court significantly observed in *Minerva Mills*: All States – whether communist or democratic- purported to govern for the welfare of the people. What distinguishes a democratic State from a totalitarian one is that a free democratic

State respects certain basic human rights or fundamental rights. The subject of fundamental rights was debated in the Constituent Assembly for 38 days. Thereafter the Assembly adopted a fairly comprehensive array of basic human rights covering a wide spectrum. It is a very elaborate and complex Bill of Rights, now covering 27 articles dealing with fundamental rights, divided into 8 sections. The American Constitution declares rights in terms apparently absolute, leaving it to the courts to limit the rights thus declared. Our Constitution declares the rights and prescribes the limitations/ restrictions in the Constitution itself. The Constitution created a new fundamental right -Art 32, the right to move the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights. This is a unique feature of the Indian Constitution; such right is not available in any other constitution. Thus it is not merely a declaratory Bill of Rights but a judicially enforceable one. The bulk of the fundamental rights is what is contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. Part III of the Constitution enumerates fundamental rights. We begin with the

concept of 'State' in Art 12. The constitutional mandate in many of the provisions is to the State not to violate fundamental rights. 'Fundamental' in Part III as qualifying rights means that the rights are basic to or essential for the liberal democracy set up by the Constitution. Their essential character is fortified by limiting legislative power, providing that any transgression of the limitations would render the offending law void and the aggrieved party can seek redress- vide Arts 13 & 32. Thus Fundamental Rights are backed by legal sanction. The State is prohibited from making laws inconsistent with Part III. The objectives of the Constitution as declared in the Preamble are guaranteed ⁴ by the various fundamental rights. Fundamental Rights are to the Indian democracy what 'the Tenth Legion was to Julius Caesar, the Old Guard to Napoleon and the Eighth Army to Montgomery', as Palkhivala picturesquely put it. Fundamental Rights are enforceable against 'State' as defined in Art 12 whose import has been expanded over a period of time. The question remains whether judiciary is 'State' in case of violation of fundamental rights. Justice

Hidayatullah's powerful dissent in *Mirajkar* is beckoning. The Supreme Court's view in that case perhaps calls for a revisit.

art IV of the Constitution contains the Directive Principles of State Policy. This is taken from the Constitution of the Irish Republic-Directive Principles of Social Policy which in turn had taken the idea from the Constitution of Republican Spain. The idea can be traced back to the Declaration of the Rights of Man (France) and the Declaration of American Independence. Directive Principles are non-justiciable, there is no legal or judicial remedy for violation thereof. The sanction is political, namely, the next election. Directive Principles are fundamental in the governance of the country. Art 37 mandates that the State shall apply them in making laws. 'Fundamental' in Art 37 also means basic or essential, but it is used in the normative sense of setting before the State goals which it should try to reach. Fundamental Rights are backed by legal sanction. Directive Principles are left to the sense of duty of those charged with governance of the country. Both Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles are an integral part of the

Constitution which 'aims at bringing about a synthesis between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles by giving to the former a pride of place and to the latter a place of permanence. Together they form the core and constitute the true conscience of the Constitution.' Taking together they form a charter of social and economic democracy in India and represent the basic principles which aim at the creation of a welfare State. The real importance of Directive Principles is that they contain positive obligations of the State towards its citizens. These are not insignificant; if fulfilled, the pattern of society will change. They are revolutionary and yet to be achieved in a constitutional manner. Herein lies the real value of embodying them as an integral part of the Constitution. Through the Directive Principles the Constitution will steer clear of the two extremes – a proletarian dictatorship which destroys the liberty of the individual and a capitalist oligarchy which hampers the economic security of the masses.

The Indian constitutional experience and the role of the judiciary in protecting liberties, upholding constitutional values and

enforcing constitutional limitations has, on the whole, been fascinating and heart warming. The judicial endeavour has been in the direction of integration of Parts III & IV in the process of constitutionalising socio economic rights some of which are expressly included in Part III and a large number of which have been read into and derived from them. What Justice Chandrachud said in *Kesavananda* set the tone for all this: “What is fundamental in the governance of the country cannot surely be less significant than what is fundamental in the life of an individual. That one is justiciable and the other not may show the intrinsic difficulties in making the latter enforceable through legal process. But that does not bear on their relative importance.... The basic object of conferring freedoms on individuals is the ultimate achievement of the ideals set out in Part IV... If the State fails to create conditions in which the fundamental freedoms can be enjoyed by all, freedom of the few will be at the mercy of the many and then all freedoms will vanish.”

Judicial interpretation and creativity led to the theory of penumbra and emanation and inclusion of many other rights as fundamental rights. For instance, the right to freedom of expression was held to include the freedom of the press and the freedom to know the credentials of those contesting elections. The expanding horizons of the right to life and personal liberty in Art 21 have embraced a variety of rights- more than 25, the latest being the right to privacy. It has been underscored that life is not mere animal existence. It is to live with dignity and enjoy all the faculties which make life and living worthwhile and meaningful. The role of the judiciary assumes importance in the context of enforcing socioeconomic rights which are positive as distinguished from protecting personal freedoms which is negative in nature. The nature of the protection that the citizens need depends upon the interpretation of the content of entrenched 6 rights in the changing times. This is done by an activist, responsive and responsible judiciary and the task requires vision and statesmanship. The theory that fundamental rights are watertight compartments has long been

discarded since Cooper followed by Maneka. Arts 14, 19, 21 form the vital trilogy of constitutional provisions whose ethos informs one another. They have been said to be the three sides of the golden triangle. Each freedom has different dimensions and there may be overlapping between different fundamental rights. It has been rightly said that no article in Part III is an island but part of a continent. Cardinal rights in an organic constitution have a synthesis.

As observed by the Supreme Court, “The Indian constitutional experiments with the right to property (Arts 19 (1) (f) & 31) offer an interesting illustration of how differences in the interpretation of the fundamental law sometimes conceal- or perhaps expose- conflicts of economic ideologies and philosophies. With the right to property conceived as a fundamental right at the inception of the Constitution, it found so strong an entrenchment that in its pristine vigour it tended to be overly demanding and sought the sacrifice of too many social and economic goals at its altar and made the economic cost of social and economic change

unaffordably prohibitive. Inevitably the constitutional process of de-escalation of this right in the constitutional scale of values commenced culminating, ultimately, in the deletion of this right from the Fundamental Rights Part.” Despite the fact that some rights have been substantially modified in scope as a result of Constitutional amendments, the chapter on Fundamental Rights taken as a whole remains a formidable bulwark of individual liberty, a code of public conduct and a strong and sustaining basis of Indian democracy. But all rights have corresponding duties. While we are obsessed with our rights, we need to pay heed to our duties and responsibilities. No right can ever be absolute. Fundamental rights are no exception. Their exercise can be reasonably restricted so as not to conflict with the rights of others. Under the Constitution no values or rights being absolute, all important rights and values must be qualified and balanced against other important and often competing rights and values. This is imperative and inevitable in the very nature of things. 7 Such balancing of fundamental rights is a constitutional necessity. It is the duty of the Court to strike a

balance so that the values are sustained. The Supreme Court is not only the sentinel of the fundamental rights but also a balancing wheel between the rights, subject to social control. Every right gives rise to a corresponding duty articulated beautifully by Mahatma Gandhi: “I learned from my illiterate but wise mother that all rights to be deserved and preserved come from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this one fundamental statement, perhaps it is easy enough to define duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed...” Walter Lippmann the renowned American political commentator echoed the same idea: “For every right that you cherish you have a duty which you must fulfil. For every hope that you entertain, you have a task you must perform. For every good that you wish could happen... you will have to sacrifice your comfort and ease. There is nothing for nothing any longer.” Even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the vital link between human rights and responsibility. Art 29 states: Everyone has duties to the community

in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. Freedom of speech and expression does not give one the right to defame and harm the good name and reputation of others. If we have a right to life we have the obligation to respect life. If we have a right to liberty we have the obligation to respect other people's liberty. If we have a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, we also have the obligation to respect the thoughts, religious principles and beliefs of others. No freedom is absolute. If it were it would soon degenerate into licence and destroy the freedom itself and work against public interest and public good. It has rightly been said that liberty must be measured against the community's needs for security against internal and external peril. Liberty is not, as Learned Hand said, the ruthless, unbridled will, it is not freedom to do so as one likes. Liberty cannot rest upon anarchy, it is conditioned upon an ordered society. 8 Similarly equality must be measured against the need for a hierarchy of social functions by which the community integrates its life and work.

When we talk of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, we cannot forget Fundamental Duties. The statement of objects and reasons of the Constitution 42nd Amendment Act considered it necessary to specify the fundamental duties of the citizens and make special provisions for dealing with anti-national activities of individuals and associations. Article 51A in Part IVA laid down the fundamental duties. The intention is to place before the country a code of conduct which the citizens are expected to follow. It is the duty of every citizen to obey the constitutional mandate. What is true about Directive Principles applies equally to Fundamental Duties. Although Fundamental Duties cannot be enforced the Court can certainly take them into consideration while interpreting a law which is amenable to more than one interpretation. In the ultimate analysis the only way to bring adherence to Fundamental Duties is through a vigorous public opinion that there is need to adhere to them for the orderly progress of our society. Discourse on fundamental rights cannot be divorced from fundamental duties or else we do disservice to both.

That is the philosophy underlying Part IV A. It is now accepted that while we aim at the greatest amount of freedom possible, it is necessary to develop the fullest sense of responsibility that will allow that freedom itself to grow. When rights and responsibilities are balanced, then freedom is enhanced and a better world can be created. All rights and freedoms are subject to imposition of restrictions. What was evolved by the U.S. Supreme Court in its judgements was incorporated into the constitutional provisions in India as Dr. Ambedkar pointed out while moving the Draft Constitution. The several grounds of reasonable restrictions enumerated in the Constitution relate to societal interests of ensuring and maintaining conditions in which rights can be meaningfully exercised and enjoyed. While we heed Jefferson's warning: 'To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to the written law would be to lose the law itself, with life, liberty and all those who are enjoying with us, thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means,' we cannot also lose sight of Lincoln's classic dilemma: 'Must a Government of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of

its own people or too weak to maintain its own existence.’ All this underscores the need and the philosophy of having restrictions on entrenched rights. Such restrictions are prescribed and imposed by law. The judiciary is to uphold the constitutional values and enforce the constitutional limitations. The Court exercising the power of judicial review is the arbiter of the reasonableness of the restrictions. In this area it is not the *Wednesbury* unreasonableness or the Administrative Law standard of reasonableness- where the test is that of a reasonable man. Here the constitutional standards of reasonableness of the restrictions on fundamental rights are those of the Court itself, the Court of judicial review is the arbiter. This is virtually akin to substantive due process, atleast in this area. But the parameters are prescribed as regards the reasonable restrictions under Art 19. It is a subjective assessment by prescribed objective standards. The Court cannot travel beyond what is laid down in Arts 19 (2)-(6). So also in the case of Art 14 as regards classification it would be valid if there is rational nexus between the classification and the object sought to be achieved. In Art 21 when the right to

life and personal liberty is sought to be restricted, the Constitution does not lay down any standards or parameters for testing the validity of such restrictions. It is for the Court – for the judicial conscience to be satisfied. The Court examines whether a limitation or restriction is excessive or justified, whether the legislative objective is sufficiently important to justify the restriction, whether the measures designed to achieve the objective have a rational connection to it and whether the means used to impair or restrict the right are no more than necessary to accomplish the objective. The doctrine of proportionality comes in here. All this has been elegantly and effectively enunciated in one of the earliest cases- *V.G.Row* on which subsequent cases have built. It is also settled that restriction can extend to prohibition in appropriate cases vide *Narendra Kumar*. The point to note is that the greater the restriction, the more the need for strict scrutiny by the Courts. It is 10 interesting that even in UK without a Bill of Rights, they have moved towards the same position. The protection and enforcement of fundamental rights and freedoms is both the power and the duty

of the Courts and the grant of appropriate remedy is not discretionary but obligatory. Even in England with no Bill of Rights it was said over a century ago: “To remit the maintenance of constitutional right to the region of judicial discretion is to shift the foundations of freedom from the rock to the sand.” The US Supreme Court has also held likewise with respect to knocking at its doors to vindicate a basic right. It is well settled that the Supreme Court cannot, consistently with its responsibility, refuse to entertain applications seeking protection against infringement of fundamental rights. A petition under Art 32 has to be entertained if the existence of a fundamental right and its breach, actual or threatened, is alleged and prima facie established. The position of the High Courts is no different in this behalf. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. A keen public awareness and an informed vigilant and assertive public opinion are essential for safe guarding our rights and liberties. Justice Douglas’ caution is worthy of recall, “Nightfall does not come at once, nor does oppression- in both instances there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. It

is in such twilight that we must all be aware of change in the air- however slight- lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.”

Eleanor Roosevelt highlighted the need for these universal rights to be available to all. She cautioned that unless these rights have meaning in small places, close to homes, so close and so small that they cannot be seen on the map of the world they have little meaning elsewhere. These rights should be a living reality known, understood and enjoyed by everyone everywhere. Otherwise they would be mere teasing illusions. And even the right to constitutional remedy under Art 32 would be a sonnet writ on water. Effective enforcement of fundamental rights for the ordinary Indian is possible only when it becomes less expensive, less complex and more speedy. How to address and overcome this problem is a question for another day.

Self Assessment Questions

- Discuss the significance of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in promoting women's participation in local governance.
- Explain the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women in India, including Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.
- Analyze the impact of inheritance laws and dowry-related laws on women's rights and social status in India.

Unit - IV

Women's Welfare Organizations and Schemes:
Women's Indian Association - National Commission for Women and State Commission for Women - Women Development Corporation - women welfare Schemes of the Government of India

Objectives

- ❖ To understand the role and contributions of women's welfare organizations in India, including the Women's Indian Association and the National Commission for Women.
- ❖ To analyze the functions of the Women Development Corporation and State Commissions for Women in promoting women's welfare.

Women's Welfare Organizations and Schemes in India

India has several organizations and government schemes dedicated to **women's welfare, empowerment, and development**. These initiatives focus on areas such as **education, health, financial independence, safety, and employment**.

1. Women's Welfare Organizations in India

A. Government Organizations

1. National Commission for Women (NCW) (1992)

- Protects women's rights and ensures legal safeguards are implemented.
- Handles complaints related to violence, discrimination, and harassment.

2. Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) (1953)

- Works for the welfare of women, children, and weaker sections of society.
- Implements social welfare programs through NGOs.

3. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) (1993)

- Provides microfinance to poor women for self-employment and economic independence.

4. Women's Development Corporations (WDCs)

- Present in different states to promote entrepreneurship and skill development among women.

B. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

1. SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) (1972)

- Works for the rights of women working in the informal sector.
- Provides financial and legal support for self-employed women.

2. All India Women's Conference (AIWC) (1927)

- Focuses on women's education, health, and legal rights.

3. Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh (BGMS)

- Works for rural women's welfare, including education and economic support.

4. Chetna (Centre for Health Education, Training, and Nutrition Awareness)

- Focuses on women's health, reproductive rights, and nutrition awareness.

5. Majlis Legal Centre

- Provides legal aid and support to women facing domestic violence and harassment.

2. Women's Welfare Schemes in India

A. Government Schemes for Women's Empowerment

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) (2015)

- Aims to prevent female foeticide and promote girls' education.
- Focuses on improving the child sex ratio.

2. Mahila Shakti Kendra (2017)

- Provides skill development, employment, and digital literacy for rural women.

3. National Creche Scheme (1994, Revised in 2017)

- Supports working women by providing childcare facilities.

B. Financial and Economic Support Schemes

1. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) (2015)

- Provides loans for women entrepreneurs to start small businesses.

2. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) (1993)

- Offers microfinance to women for self-employment.

3. Stand-Up India Scheme (2016)

- Encourages women entrepreneurs by providing bank loans.

C. Women's Health and Nutrition Schemes

1. Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) (2005)

- Promotes safe motherhood and institutional deliveries.

2. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) (2017)

- Provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women.

3. **Poshan Abhiyaan (2018)**

- Aims to **reduce malnutrition** among women and children.

D. Women's Safety and Legal Protection Schemes

1. **One Stop Centre Scheme (2015)**

- Provides **support to women facing violence**, including medical, legal, and psychological help.

2. **Nirbhaya Fund (2013)**

- Funds projects to improve **women's safety in public spaces**.

3. **Sakhi – One Stop Centers (2015)**

- Established across India to assist **women affected by violence**.

4. **Swadhar Greh (2002)**

- Provides **shelter, food, and rehabilitation** for women in distress.

E. Education and Skill Development Schemes

1. National Scheme for Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) (2008)

- Provides financial support for girl students in secondary education.

2. Skill India Mission (2015)

- Offers skill training for women to enhance employability.

3. Ujjwala Scheme (2016)

- Focuses on the rehabilitation and welfare of women rescued from trafficking.

Conclusion

India has a strong network of government and non-government organizations working for women's welfare. However, awareness,

proper implementation, and monitoring of these schemes are essential to ensure gender equality and empowerment.

The National Commission for Women

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (Act No. 20 of 1990 of Govt.of India) to:

- review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women ;
- recommend remedial legislative measures ;
- facilitate redressal of grievances and
- advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women. In

keeping with its mandate, the Commission initiated various steps to improve the status of women and worked for their economic empowerment during the year under report. The Commission completed its visits to all the States/UTs except Lakshdweep and prepared Gender Profiles to assess the status of women and their

empowerment. It received a large number of complaints and acted suo-moto in several cases to provide speedy justice. It took up the issue of child marriage, sponsored legal awareness programmes, Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats and reviewed laws such as Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, PNDT Act 1994, Indian Penal Code 1860 and the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to make them more stringent and effective. It organized workshops/consultations, constituted expert committees on economic empowerment of women, conducted workshops/seminars for gender awareness and took up publicity campaign against female foeticide, violence against women, etc. in order to generate awareness in the society against these social evils.

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (Act No. 20 of 1990 of Govt.of India) to review the Constitutional and legal safeguards for women; recommend

remedial legislative measures, facilitate redressal of grievances and advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) recommended nearly two decades ago, the setting up of a National Commission for women to fulfill the surveillance functions to facilitate redressal of grievances and to accelerate the socio-economic development of women. Successive Committees / Commissions / Plans including the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) recommended the constitution of an apex body for women. During 1990, the central government held consultations with NGOs, social workers and experts, regarding the structure, functions, powers etc.of the Commission proposed to be set up.

In May 1990, the Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha. In July 1990, the HRD Ministry organized a National Level Conference to elicit suggestions regarding the Bill. In August 1990 the government moved several amendments and introduced new provisions to vest the commission with the power of a civil court.

The Bill was passed and received assent of the President on 30th August 1990. The First Commission was constituted on 31st January 1992 with Mrs. Jayanti Patnaik as the Chairperson. The Second Commission was constituted on July 1995 with Dr. (Mrs.) Mohini Giri as the Chairperson. The Third Commission was constituted on January 1999 with Mrs. Vibha Parthasarathy as the Chairperson. The Fourth Commission was constituted on January 2002 and the government had nominated Dr. Poornima Advani as the Chairperson. The Fifth Commission has been constituted on February 2005 and the government has nominated Dr. Girija Vyas as the Chairperson.

Constitution of the Commission

Section 3

National Commission for Women Act, 1990

(Act No. 20 of 1990 of Govt. of India)

1. The Central Government shall constitute a body to be known as the National Commission for Women to exercise the powers conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to, it under this Act.

2. The Commission shall consist of :-

(a) A Chairperson, committed to the cause of women, to be nominated by the Central Government.

(b) five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of ability, integrity and standing who have had experience in law or legislation, trade unionism, management of an industry potential of women, women's voluntary organisations (including women activist), administration, economic development, health, education or social welfare; Provided that at least one Member each shall be from amongst persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively;

(c) a Member-Secretary to be nominated by the Central Government who shall be:- i. an expert in the field of management, organisational structure or sociological movement, or ii. an officer who is a member of a civil service of the Union or of an allIndia service or holds a civil post under the Union with appropriate experience.

The Mandate of the Commission

SECTION 10

National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (Act No. 20 of 1990
of Govt. of India)

1. The commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely:-

a. Investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws;

b. present to the Central Government, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguard;

c. make in such reports recommendations for the effective implementation of those safeguards for the improving the conditions of women by the Union or any state;

d. review, from time to time, the exiting provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measures to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;

e. take up cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities;

f. look into complaints and take suo moto notice of matters relating to:- i. deprivation of women's rights; ii. non-implementation

of laws enacted to provide protection to women and also to achieve the objective of equality and development; iii. non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women, and take up the issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities;

g. call for special studies or investigations into specific problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommend strategies for their removal;

h. undertake promotional and educational research so as to suggest ways of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres and identify factors responsible for impeding their advancement, such as, lack of access to housing and basic services, inadequate support services and technologies for reducing drudgery and occupational health hazards and for increasing their productivity;

i. participate and advice on the planning process of socio-economic development of women;

j. evaluate the progress of the development of women under the Union and any State;

k. inspect or cause to inspected a jail, remand home, women's institution or other place of custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise and take up with the concerned authorities for remedial action, if found necessary;

l. fund litigation involving issues affecting a large body of women; m. make periodical reports to the Government on any matter pertaining to women and in particular various difficulties under which women toil; n. any other matter which may be referred to it by Central Government.

2. The Central Government shall cause all the reports referred to in clause (b) of sub-section (1) to be laid before each House of Parliament along with memorandum explaining the

action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the Union and the reasons for the nonacceptance, if any, of any such recommendations.

3. Where any such report or any part thereof relates to any matter with which any State Government is concerned, the Commission shall forward an copy of such report or part to such State Government who shall cause it to be laid before the Legislature of the State along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the State and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any such recommendations.

4. The Commission shall, while investigating any matter referred to in clause (a) or sub-clause (i) of clause (f) of sub-section (1), have all the powers of a civil court trying a suit and, in particular in respect of the following matters, namely :-

a. summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath;

- b. requiring the discovery and production of any document;
- c. receiving evidence on affidavits;
- d. requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;
- e. issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents; and
- f. any other matter which may be prescribed.

Self Assessment Questions

- Discuss the role and significance of the Women's Indian Association in the welfare and empowerment of women in India.
- Explain the structure, functions, and objectives of the National Commission for Women and State Commissions for Women.
- Analyze the key women welfare schemes implemented by the Government of India and their impact on women's

Unit - V

Women and Economy: Women and Economic Growth - Women in Unorganized Sector - Impact of Globalisation on Women's Employment - Women Entrepreneurs - Poverty and Developmental Issues: Self Help Groups - Women and Media: Women in Print- Visual and Social Media

Objectives

- ❖ To understand the role of women in economic growth and their participation in the unorganized sector.
- ❖ To analyze the impact of globalization on women's employment and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

Women and Economic Growth - Women in Unorganized Sector

This unit begins with a conceptual discussion on work and workers and state of women's work participation in India and abroad. Women's work participation has a special cultural connotation in India as a lot of activities undertaken by women are not considered as work in the economic sense of the term. Again the values of caste and ethnicity, localised customs and traditions

are widely attached to it. Notwithstanding all these conditions, a large number of women are engaged in visible economic activities. A vast majority of them are devoid of skill and education and are employed in the unorganised sector. We will discuss in this unit the conditions and types of employment of women in the unorganised sector. Women are employed both as labourer and self-employed in the unorganised sector. They have diverse manifestations for the rural and urban areas. We will discuss these manifestations in detail in this unit. Women workers encounter a lot of problems while working in the unorganised sector. Some of the major problems faced by them are also explained in this unit. The Government and non-government organisations have taken several initiatives to help and to organise the women workers in this sector. Some of these initiatives are discussed in the last section of this unit.

Work, Worker and Women

As we proceed on discussing women's work participation in the unorganised sector, it is imperative on our part to clarify the concept of work at the very outset as the unorganised sector absorbs

different varieties of workers including the unpaid family workers. The unorganised sector is also known as the informal sector as this sector is not regulated by strict rules and procedures of the state and in many occasions rules and regulations are not implemented at all that stipulate the terms of appointment, job norm, social and physical security, labour welfare etc. In many occasions where rules and regulations exist are not implemented at all. So a conceptual clarity is required especially about the concept of 'work', 'worker' and then on the form and extent of women's work participation in this sector. Work participation is an important indicator of one's status in society. The notion of work, however, has been diversely conceptualised over time and space. This diverse conceptualisation has adversely affected not only the processes of acquiring information about women's work participation, but their status in the society. In India, so also elsewhere, work is conventionally considered as an economic engagement that is used to produce commercially viable goods and services. Those who are involved in economically viable activities are considered as 'workers' and those

who are involved in noneconomically viable activities are designated as non-workers. Now let us elaborate the concept of work as used in the census of India.

The Concepts of Work and Workers in Indian Census

According to the Census of India 1991 “Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity. Such participation may be physical or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also effective supervision and direction of work. It also includes unpaid work on firm or in family enterprise”. Let us have a brief idea on the concept of “worker” as used in the Census of India over the years and the changes this concept has undergone.

The data on the economic activity of the people collected upto 1951 census were based on income and the dependency concepts. Persons whose ‘work’ produced economic returns were considered workers and the rest were considered the ‘dependents’. As a result a large number of women were included in the category of dependents since their activities were not evaluated in economic

terms. The classification of population as “workers” and “non workers” based on the concept of work was introduced in 1961 census. In the case of seasonal work, a person was considered as a ‘worker’ if he/she had some regular work more than one hour a day throughout the greater part of the ‘working season’. In the case of regular employment in any trade, profession, service, business or commerce the basis of work was satisfied if the person was employed during any of the 15 days preceding the day on which the enumerator had visited the household. In the 1971 census, however, population was divided into two broad streams of main activity as “workers” and “nonworkers”. The reference period adjusted was one week prior to the date of enumeration in case of regular work in trade, profession and business. The 1971 census registered a sharp decline in the work participation rate as compared to 1961 census. The economic questions of the 1981 census were reformulated so as to first divide the population into those who had worked anytime at all during the year proceeding the Census and those who had not worked at all during the year. The

latter were termed as non-workers. Having classified the population into these broad groups an attempt was made to subdivide those who had worked anytime into two groups: (i) main workers i.e. those who had worked in some economic activity for the major parts of the year (183 days or more) and (ii) marginal workers i.e., those who had worked less than 183 days during the last year. Thus, mutually exclusive groups of “main”, “marginal” and “non” workers have been introduced since the 1981 census.

Women’s Work Participation: a Global View

There has not been any uniformity in the patterns of women’s work participation across the countries. This varied pattern is mostly due to cultural considerations and lack of women’s access to educational and training facilities. It is usually found that women with a higher rate of literacy have a higher rate of work participation. It is again reinforced by the fact that developed countries who have a higher rate of literacy than the developing countries have a higher rate of women’s work participation. According to the estimate of United Nations 42.5% of female

population of India belonging to the age group of 15 years and above are workers while for Australia, Canada, US and UK female participation rates are 56.7%, 60.7%, 59.6% and 53.5% respectively. For Pakistan and Bangladesh these are 36.7% and 66.5% respectively. It is important that Bangladesh has an exceptionally higher rate of women's work participation. It is mostly due to the fact that a vast section of women in Bangladesh is engaged in the family, farm, in fishing and household industry.

There is a qualitative variation in the work participation rate between the developed and the developing countries. In the developed countries the dominant majority of the female work force is employed in the service (for example 88% in UK, 87% in Canada, US and Australia) due to their higher access to education and training. In the developing countries, on the other hand, most of the women are engaged in agriculture (for example 77% in Bangladesh), mostly due to the lack of education and training facilities. In the industry women's employment has remained within 10% to 12% in the developed and 9% in developing countries. In

this sector, women's work participation rate is not sharply unequal between the developed and the developing countries. So far as the women's contribution to the category of family workers are concerned there are sharp variations because of cultural considerations.

Work Participation In Unorganised Sector : Form and Extent

According to National Sample Survey (1999-2000) 92.4% of the total workforce in India is employed in the unorganised sector. So far as the women's employment in this sector is concerned they constitute over 82.6% of the total female work force of the country. In India only 18.1% of the female work force is employed in the organised sector and the remaining 81.9% is employed in the unorganised sector. Even in the urban areas almost 80% of the women workers are employed in the unorganised sectors like household industries, petty trades, services, buildings and construction activities. In the rural areas women predominantly work in agricultural sectors which are essentially unorganised in nature. Women's work participation in this sector is widely

conditioned by several cultural considerations, localised norms, values and traditions which together form the basis of gender construction. The sexual divisions of labour within family, caste, and ethnicity based division of labour also condition the form and extent of women's work participation in the unorganised sector in general and in agriculture in particular.

In the unorganised sector women are mostly engaged in the manual activities. However, work participation in the outdoor manual activities are usually shunned by upper caste women as these are considered culturally 'demeaning' stigmatised and derogatory. You will find mostly rather invariably that the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and the Other Backward Class women are involved in the outdoor manual activities - in cultivation, construction, road clearing, sweeping, vegetable selling, domestic work etc. Thus the caste based division of labour, conventional values and norms to work, on-going processes of socialisation on the one hand, and the lack of proper education and training facilities for women on the other, contribute significantly

for their work participation in the unorganised sector in India. You will find that, a vast chunk of illiterate, or semiliterate women from the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and the Other Backward Class background are pushed to work in the unorganised sector of the economy due to livelihood insecurity, lack of training and education and lack of availability of job in the organised sector. In the unorganised sector their employment is mostly characterised by (a) physical capacity to work, (b) lack of proper laws and regulations to protect the interest of workers, (c) lack of organisational strength of the workers, (d) employment insecurity, (e) seasonal wage variation, (f) gender based wage discrimination and so on.

In the wake of globalisation and introduction of the structural adjustment programme there have been noticeable changes in the form of women's work participation in the unorganised sector of economy. The UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 observed that "in many regions of the world women's participation in the enumerated work in the formal and informal labour market has increased significantly and has changed during

the past decades. While women continue to work in agriculture and fisheries, they are increasingly involved in micro, small and medium sized enterprises and in some areas have become more dominant in the expanding informal sector. However, due to difficult economic situation and lack of bargaining power, resulting from gender inequality, many women have been forced to accept low pay and poor working conditions and thus have often become preferred workers Women have been particularly affected by the economic situation and restructuring processes which have changed the nature of employment and in some cases have led to a loss of jobs, even for professional and skilled women. In addition many women have entered the informal sector owing to lack of other opportunities”.

In India, it is important to mention that the scope of employment in the unorganised sector is expanding at a faster rate than that of the organised sector. According to the Planning Commission of India unorganised sector of employment is expanding with a labour force growth of 1.5% while the organised

sector with a growth of less than one per cent. It has been primarily due to a sharp deduction in employment growth rate in the public sector. According to the Planning Commission growth of private sector jobs has accelerated after 1994 and has been much higher than public sector in recent years (Planning Commission cf. Government of India 2002).

Types of Employment

There are mainly two types of workers in the unorganised sector, viz. (i) the self-employed and (ii) the wage earners (casual labourers). The self employed are again employed in variety of activities viz., as cultivators and artisans etc. in rural areas; vendors, hawkers etc. in the urban areas. As wage earners they are also employed in variety of activities as agricultural labourers, plantation labourers in rural areas; construction labourers, domestic servants etc. in urban areas. Let us explain some of these categories of workers.

Self Employment in Rural Areas Cultivators:

India is still predominantly an agricultural country. A large section of women workers are engaged in agriculture as cultivators. However, over the last five decades there has been a gradual decline of the category of cultivators. Declining land-man ratio in the rural area, increase in the marginal sizes of landholding, insufficiency of small sizes of landholding to provide food security has pushed large section of female work force to opt for wage earning as the immediate source of livelihood security. As mentioned in the earlier section of this unit participating in outdoor manual agricultural activities has a cultural connotation. Only the Scheduled Caste, Schedule Tribes and the Other Backward Class women participate in the outdoor manual activities of sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing of grain, protecting of crops from birds and animals etc. However the post harvesting activities like processing, storing, cleaning, winnowing etc. which are mostly done inside the house are done by women of most of caste and ethnic groups. They, however, remain as unpaid household workers and mostly categorised as non-workers. It is important to

take note of the fact that agricultural mechanisation has increased the burden of intra- household activities of women of landed households. However, their work contribution remain, largely invisible. In many areas of the country women for higher castes are now found to supervise agricultural activities as cultivators.

Self Employment in Urban Areas

There are several categories of self-employed workers in the urban unorganised sector. Women from traditional artisan household are at time found with their traditional occupations engaged in the activities of potters, cobbler, iron smith etc. working as self-employed in the urban areas. Hawking and vending of vegetables, fruits, fish etc., have remained to be the key areas of women's self-employment in the urban areas. A large number of women are found to be employed in new type of activities like beauty parlours, dying, polishing, and assembling and processing of commercial items within the household.

Wage Labourers A large section of female workers work in the unorganised sector as wage earners or labourers. They have

different manifestations in the rural and urban areas. In the rural areas they predominantly work as agricultural labourers. As shown in Table 3 there has been gradual increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers in the female work force from 23.9% in 1961 to 39.4% in 2001. This shows a trend towards casualisation of female work force in the rural areas. Again there has been absolute concentration of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class women in the category of agricultural labourers. Their high concentration in the category of agricultural labourers implicitly and explicitly reflect the extreme form of livelihood insecurity and poverty of these labour household. The plantation workers also more or less belong to this category. In urban areas the construction labourers, maid servants are the predominant categories. Many a time type also work in various factories, offices as casual labour as sweepers, attendants etc.

Women Unorganised Labourers within the Organised Sector

A good number of women workers work within the organised sector as casual, part-time or contract labourers. These

workers are usually deprived of the several benefits like job security, pension, social security, maternity and child care etc. which are provided to the regular workers. At time they are also given a piece-meal activities in many of the small scale industries. They also work for years on casual and contract basis. The employer do not register their name as employees to retain the status of their enterprises as small-scale industries and thereby to get benefits of the small scale industries. Again as they are registered as regular employees they are deprived of the benefits which are given to the regular employees.

Problems Encountered By Women Workers In Unorganised Sector

Women workers in the unorganised sector encounter several problems which are distinctively different from the problems in other sector. In this section we shall be highlighting some of these problems:

a) Low Wage In the unorganised sector Minimum Wage Act is not strictly implemented. The women workers are usually given a

lower wage than the prescribed one. It is rampant both in the agricultural and non agricultural sector. Studies conducted in several parts of the country (see SinghaRoy 2004) show that women are invariably paid a low wage in agriculture. Most of the women labourers are not unaware about the Minimum Wage Act. Political parties mobilising women labourers at the grass-roots mostly tend to ignore this issue.

b) Seasonal and Gender based Wage Variations As the Minimum Wage Act is not strictly implemented, wages of the women labourer usually vary in terms of peak and the lean seasons of agricultural and the construction activities. In the peak season they usually get relatively a higher wage than the lean season. Again in agriculture gender based wage differential is generally a rule than an exception. Women labourers are usually paid half of wages of their male counterparts for doing the similar type and amount of activities. In most of the places they are to work from sun-rise to sunset to get the meagre wage.

c) Health Hazards In the unorganised sector women are to work in hazardous conditions. In agriculture they are to deal with pesticides and chemical fertilizers with their bare hand, naked eyes and nose. In the rice transplantation activities they are to stand and work in mud for hours without getting their legs and hands covered with shoes and gloves. Many of them become the victims of infectious diseases. In the handlooms, bidi making etc. activities they are to inhale in unhealthy atmosphere and many of them develop T.B. etc. diseases and respiratory problems. In the urban unorganised sector they are to work with hazardous equipments and unhealthy working conditions.

d) Working with Risk Many of women workers work in the mine or in the high raised constructions ignoring the concept of basic physical safety. In most of the construction sites they are to work even without a helmet. As they constitute the cheap pool of labour, contractors usually appoint them, in violation of the rule, to maximise the margin of their profit.

e) Illiteracy and Lack of Training Most of the women workers in their sector are either illiterate or semi-literate. They are devoid of educational and training facilities required for upward social or economic mobility. Training initiatives for alternative economic activities are either inadequate or seldom reach out for them. Employer never sends them for training or for gaining skill. In the event of introduction of new technology, they are mostly shunted out.

Organising Initiatives: An Overview

Since last few decades there have been several initiatives both on the part of the government and the Non-Government Organisations to organise the women workers in the unorganised sections. Let us discuss some of these initiatives:

Non-Governmental Organisation Initiatives In India there have emerged several important organisations like Self-Employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad, Annapurna Mahila Mandal in Mumbai, the Working Women's Forum in Madras etc to organise women workers for various types of self-employment

ventures. In BWEE 04 you will learn more details about these initiatives, as all these experiments are innovative and distinctive in their own term. For example the Working Women's Forum (WWF) was formed at Madras in 1978 from the results of a participatory needs assessment of poor women in the Madras slum communities. Since then it has been mobilising the poorest, and the marginalized women working in the unorganised sector. These women have been organised by WWF through credit cooperatives and collective spirit of unionism that has brought about a sea change in their lives. Due to the intervention of the WWF thousands of women now have been relieved from the clutches of perpetual indebtedness and dependency on moneylenders and other middlemen. Women have thus been able to save, create assets and improve the quality of living. The movement of the WWF has grown out the commitment to ensure that an independent nationalist country like India, must create space for bottom-up, participatory development models that could offset the dependency, welfare, charity, and patronage

approach to poverty alleviation. This movement propagates for self-participation, promoting natural leadership at the grassroots from the poor 'themselves'. The working women's Forum, Self-employed Women's Association etc. are working in the urban areas. There have been organising initiatives in the rural areas as well. In Andhra Pradesh, the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF), an NGO which was established in 1982 by the paddy farmers' cooperatives, has helped local women to establish their own thrift and credit societies. Another interesting example of this type is that of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Banaskantha District in Gujarat. This district is mainly an arid region in the northern part of the state. The people of this region are affected by natural calamities, persistent poverty, low literacy rates, high mortality and a constant need for migration to other areas in search of gainful employment during the drought periods. SEWA tried organising the women in the region by unionising them (Government of India 2003). The Banaskantha Women's Association (BWA) is a federation of women's village

level produce's groups, which was formed with SEWA's assistance. The BWA helps the women by forming credit groups. You will learn details of these activities in BWEE-04.

Governmental Initiatives The government has initiated several schemes and programmes to protect the interests of the women workers working in the unorganised sectors. There are a number of government-sponsored schemes, which are meant for the economic upliftment of the rural poor. These include the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and Training of Youth for Self-employed (TRYSEM) and so on. These schemes cover both men and women who live below the poverty line in rural areas. A scheme, which is meant only for women, is the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme. This scheme is a part of the IRDP and it attempts to help the poor women in the rural areas. The objectives of this scheme are to provide financial and institutional benefits to these women so that they are able to increase their income through self-employment. It is also presumed

that the economic uplift of the women will improve the quality of childcare since it is the women who have to take care of the children (Government of India 2003).

a) It is realised that skill development and capacity building are important aspects for organising women workers. The government has also formulated several schemes accordingly. “The Programme of Support to Training-cumEmployment for Women (STEP) was launched in 1987 to strengthen and improve the skills for employment opportunities for women below povertyline, in traditional sectors of agriculture, small animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, cottage and village industries and sericulture, social forestry and waste land development where women are employed on a large scale. The focus is mainly on marginalized and assetless women, female-headed households and women of other dispossessed groups. Since the inception of the programme about 5,63,983 women have been covered under 131 projects in different parts of the country”.

b) This scheme of Swayamsiddha was launched in March 2001 in 650 blocks (including the 238 erstwhile Indira Mahila Yojana blocks). The vision of Swayamsiddha is to develop empowered women who will demand their rights from family, community and government, have increased access to and control over, material, social and political resources, have enhanced awareness and improved skills; and are able to raise issues of common concern through mobilisation and networking. The immediate objectives of the scheme are establishment of self-reliant women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs), creation of confidence and awareness among members of SHGs strengthening and institutionalising the savings habit in rural women and their control over economic resources; improving access of women to micro credit; involvement of women in local level planning; and convergence of services of DWCD and other Departments. This scheme will be implemented by the State Governments through the identified nodal departments and project implementing agencies

c) The Swashakti Project (earlier known as Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project). The objectives of the project are : (i) Establishment of more than 16,000 self-reliant women's self-help-groups (SHGs) having 15-20 members each, which will improve the quality of their lives, through greater access to, and control over, resources; (ii) Sensitising and strengthening the institutional capacity of support agencies to proactively address women's needs; (iii) Developing linkages between SHGs and lending institutions to ensure women's continued access to credit facilities for income generation activities; (iv) Enhancing women's access to resources for better quality of life, including those for drudgery reduction and time-saving devices; and (v) Increased control of women, particularly poor women, over income and spending, through their involvement in income generation activities.

d) Rashtriya Mahila Kosh : The National Credit Fund for Women (Rashtriya Mahila Kosh) was set up on 30 March 1993 with corpus fund of Rs.31 crore with the major objective of meeting the credit needs of poor women, particularly in the informal sector.

The Rashtriya Mahila Kos is managed by a Governing Board comprising 16 members. The Minister of State for Women and Child Development is the Chairperson of the Kosh. The Kosh has sanctioned upto 30 April 2002 loans amounting to Rs.11,092.87 lakh to benefit 4,23,125 women through 1,016 NGOs.

e) To take care of the welfare of unorganised labour, the Government has enacted various legislations such as the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; the Contract Labour (Regulations and Abolition) Act, 1970; the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (RE&CS) Act, 1979; the Building and other Construction Workers (RECS) Act, 1996, etc.

f) National Commission on Labour : The First National Commission on Labour was constituted in 1966 which submitted its report in 1969 after detailed examination of all aspects of labour problems. Since then, substantial changes have occurred. With a view to suggesting rationalisation of existing laws relating to labour

in organised sector and evolving an umbrella legislation for ensuring a minimum level of protection to the workers in the unorganised sectors, the Government set up on 15 October 1999 the Second National Commission on Labour. While developing its framework for its recommendations, the Commission would, inter-alia, take into account the emerging economic environment involving rapid technological changes, globalisation of economy, liberalisation of trade and industry and emphasis on international competitiveness as also the need for bringing the existing laws in tune with the future labour market needs and demands.

g) It is important to note that “the main focus of the policies of the Government with regard to women labour has been to remove the handicaps under which they work, to strengthen their bargaining capacity, to improve their wages and working conditions, to enhance their skills and to open up better employment opportunities for them. A separate cell, namely, Women Labour Cell is functioning in the Ministry of Labour to address these problems. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and Equal

Remuneration Act, 1976 are the protective and anti-exploitative legislations which have been enacted to protect and safeguard the interest of women workers at the workplaces. The equal remuneration stipulates payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for same and similar nature of work. The Act also prohibits any gender discrimination in recruitment and service conditions. Under the Act, a Committee has been set up at the centre to advise the Government on providing increasing employment opportunities for women and generally reviewing the steps taken for effective implementation of the Act. Similar Committees have also been set up by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Central Advisory Committee at the National level and the Advisory Committees at the State level along with competent authorities oversee the process of implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

Impact of Globalisation on Women's Employment

Women and Employment Women (especially, but not exclusively, in wage-earning household) will be affected in several

ways by the macro-economic policies. The move from formal to informal employment and public to private sector typically favours the feminization of 'employment at the margin'. It would lead to much more insecure and poorly paid work conditions with minimum regards for labour standards. Women may be literally pushed into the labour force, usually on highly disadvantaged terms. This is due to the pressure to maintain minimum levels of household income. For example, reduction of subsidies to basic amenities such as energy sources, sanitation and water supply and to basic services such as health, not only reduces household income but puts special burden on women who typically bear the responsibility for providing these within the household.

There is a growing casualization of female labour and the clear indication that growing use of female labour has been associated with greater insecurity of labour contracts and the generally inferior conditions and pay. The unorganized sector, the biggest source of female employment (94%) will be affected by foreign capital as well as trade liberalization in terms of availability

of employment opportunities for women. The entry of MNCs such as General Foods, Nestle, Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola and Kellogg in agro-processing industries is going to affect women workers where their Globalization and Women: concentration is large. The import of modern technology will lead to a cut back in low skill jobs. A Critique of women on the hand and push them into low wage regime or undertake more strenuous jobs for the same pay (Krishnamurthy 1993). Deflationary policies may force poor women in urban India to fend for themselves as selfemployed in the labour market. Devaluation with trade liberalization could be expected to increase demand for female in the export industries, but the kind of employment offered would be both insecure and low paid. Most importantly, women are likely to be exposed to working conditions that are hazardous to their health. Import of certain products provided by the informal sector will decrease employment. Example can be cited of the import of waste paper and gum. Waste paper pickers, mainly women and children in the cities, earn their livelihood by collecting waste paper, plastic, tin and

other scrap material. They sell these to the contractors who again sell it to the paper or plastic mills for recycling. Recently large scale import of waste paper into India depressed the prices that waste paper pickers got for their materials. As a result, their incomes went down by half. Similarly, import of gum into India from Sudan depressed the prices given to gum collected from 'Baval' trees from Rs. 12 per kg to Rs. 4 per kg.

Another implicit change evident is the increasing importance of contractors/subcontractors and jobbers who emerge as important source of job access. Women working on wage either in small manufacturing units in the export-of domestic sector outside their houses or others who get work at home on piece rate would find that their dependence on middlemen would increase. This is inevitable as production would no longer be carried out under the same roof. Once again, this entails insecurity of employment and income, though other forms of abuse cannot be ruled out. Thus, given the low levels of education and skills of women workers, the patriarchal structures of power and control, their obligatory

domestic responsibility, the process of women workers will increase.

Women and Health

The most visible and direct impact of the new climate of liberalization and legitimization of profit maximization can be seen in the health sector. Health is basically a function of proper nutritional care of an infant beginning with pregnant mother's health, rational hours of work burden, cleaner environment, occupational safety. Under SAP policies, like all other sectors which influence women's entitlement, health sector has also come under the 'cost benefit' syndrome. The Eight plan, 1992-97, is a good indicator to understand the impact of SAP. The philosophy of economic growth and market efficiency is reflected in the whole plan document. There are some 'new policy options' offered in the plan to make 'primary health care accessible, acceptable and affordable to all'. However, on a closer look, this does not appear so. The new options offered are:

- i) Re-organisation of the Indian system of medicine and homeopathy.
- ii) Encouragement of private sector (hospital, dispensaries, clinics) through tax incentives and accreditations and other 'suitable returns'.
- iii) Lowering birth rates through Family Planning Programme
- iv) Inclusion of non-communicable diseases in the priority list.

The primary healthcare infrastructure, the only affordable health delivery system for the poor is absent in these new options. The degradation of environment and biotic medical resources raise a question mark on the feasibility of the success of Indian system of medicine. Encouragement to private sector by relief diverts resources to the rich. For women, health is not a simple issue of distributing pills (be they nutritive, curative or contraceptive). There are two basic prerequisites for women's health: a) A multi-pronged attack on poverty, social injustice and cultural myths. b) Identification of critical health needs and developing basic as well as secondary and tertiary support services of provide

comprehensive PHC around then]. These basic tenets of women's health have been gradually undermined through international policy decisions, heavily influenced by the monetary interests of the North. The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) converted women's health into issues of 'safe abortions' and reproductive rights. It marginalised the issue of comprehensive PHC, social security and investment in building infrastructural facilities. Population control measures are part of IMFIWB conditionality programme under SAP. To achieve this, attention is focussed on FPP in isolation. Contraceptives, oral, implanted or technologically applied are all concentrated on women. Sterilization without proper safeguards have become the norm for women. Unsafe experiments with contraceptives NET-EN or NORPLANT, without proper testing are being conducted on women. FPP subsume the largest part within the inter-sectoral distribution of funds and the curative mechanism for the disease of the rich. AIDS has become another priority, getting large funding from WB.

Women and Education

The productive base of Indian society as of world society is changing into more and more technological orientation. Therefore, women's entitlement to education for being prepared to play multiple roles --productive, reproductive and citizenship is essential. The NEP (1986) as amended in 1992, in its thrust on education for women's equality, the necessity of women's larger access to vocational, professional and technological education in existing and emerging technology areas has been recognised and emphasized once again. But the base of the educational pyramid is rather narrow. The number of female illiterates is more than male illiterates by 70 million even though the female population is less than the male population by 32 million. Rural female literacy is about half of urban female literacy. The female literacy rate, as per 2001 census is 54.16% while for male it is 76%. Another indicator for growth is access to education for women in terms of the enrolment of girls as a ratio of total enrolment at various stages of education. Enrolment figures available for 1991-92 indicate that it

is 39% at the primary stage, 35% at the middle stage, 28% at the secondary and higher secondary stage and 32.5% at the higher education stage. In rural areas, for every 100 girls in class I, there are only 40 in Class V, 18 in Class VIII, 9 in Class X and only 1 in Class XII. In urban areas it is 82, 62, 32, 14 respectively. The Programme of Action (POA) admits that if 10 to 12 years of basic education is the requirement for entrance to technical education, rural girls hardly have a chance, moreover these facilities are mostly located in urban centres. It is the urban middle class the rural well-off who have used the opportunity offered by vast expansion of educational facilities.

AID Under Social Safety Net The increasing availability of international aid under the social safety net programme particularly for the elementary education, literacy, vocational education at the school level has been both a blessing and a curse. It has eased the resource constraints to universalization of education on the one hand and education for all the other. It has become possible to plan district level primary education projects and literacy projects.

However, it has caused a rise in the development management costs of primary education and literacy efforts. It has been reported that while earlier the village classroom for the primary school was built for Rs. 25,000, now the cost has been stipulated at Rs. 1,25,000 (5 times more than the earlier cost). While the community provided support to the building up of infrastructure for the village school, it now sees it as the responsibility of the state with so much money available. Educational managers at the level of the State and the districts are quick to accord priority to the construction of classrooms than locating the para-teachers in the local community who could provide support to the enrolment, retention and performance aspect of school education. Non-formal education appears to have become a low priority programme. However more research in the area of trends in public expenditure, per capita expenditure, enrolment rates at the primary level, rate of growth of enrolment at this level and vocational and technical education is required.

Public Distribution System (PDS) PDS has provided a source of food support and security especially in times of food scarcity. In the backdrop of prevalence of massive poverty, dependence on agriculture along with its uncertainties, provision of necessary food items at subsidized rates becomes imperative.

Globalization and Women: A Critique An almost universal system of PDS of necessary items - wheat, rice, edible oil, kerosene, sugar and coal on subsidized prices was prevailing in the country until June'97. However, the system suffered from inadequate and uneven allocation of food and poor delivery system. With the SAP and NEP, the PDS has become a target of pro-liberalizers on the ground that subsidy provided in the system is detrimental to efficient resource allocation. A 'targeted' PDS replaced the universal PDS. During the reform period, the central issue prices of PDS items were increased - central issue prices of wheat and rice rose by 75% and 92% respectively during Jan. '91 and Feb.'97. This combined with targeting, less allocation, poor delivery system decreased the total take-off of essential items from PDS. This has

hit the poor household very hard. And within the household, the subsistence burden has fallen on women. It is observed that women spent more time travelling to cheaper shops, preparing cheaper food, eating less in order to feed the family.

Women Entrepreneurship

Introduction Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. According to European Commission “a female entrepreneur is a woman who has created a business in which she has a majority shareholding and who takes an active interest in the decision-making, risk-taking and daytoday management. A woman entrepreneur is therefore a confident, creative and innovative woman desiring economic independence individually and simultaneously creating employment opportunities for others. Traditionally, women businesses are

mainly the extension of kitchen activities concerned with 3Ps, i.e., pickles, powder and pappad; but due to various schemes of the government and efforts of various voluntary organizations, such as Mahila Mandals, the number of women entrepreneurs is growing continuously. Now, with spread of education and awareness, the span of activities of women entrepreneurs has shifted from 3Ps to 3Es, i.e., viz., Engineering, Electronics and Energy. Although the number of such units is not large, but it can be noted that women are putting up units to manufacture solar cookers in Gujarat, small foundries in Maharashtra, TV Capacitors in Odisha and Electronic Ancillaries in Kerala. It is worthwhile to mention some of the successful women entrepreneurs in the country which include Smt. Sumati Morarji of Shipping Corporation, Smt. Yamutai Kirloskar of Mahila Udyog Limited, Smt. Neena Malhotra in exports and Smt. Shahanaj Hussain in beauty clinic cosmetics. It is observed that women entrepreneurs are getting success due to their untiring hard work, perseverance, tenaciousness, determination, patience, optimism, intelligence, confidence in them and most importantly,

their compelling urge of wanting to do something positive in their lives.

Entrepreneurial Traits of Women Entrepreneurs Following are main entrepreneurial traits of women entrepreneurs: •

Imagination: It refers to the imaginative approach or original ideas with competitive market. Well planned approach is needed to examine the existing situation and to identify the entrepreneurial opportunities. It further implies that women entrepreneurs have association with knowledgeable people and contracting the right organizations offering support and services. • **Persistence:**

Women entrepreneurs must have an intention to fulfill their dreams. They have to make a dream translated into an enterprise. Studies show that successful women have worked hard. They persisted in getting loan from financial institutions and other inputs. They have persisted in adverse circumstances and in adversity.

- **Attribute to Work Hard:** Enterprising women have further ability to work hard. The imaginative ideas have to come to a fair play. Hard work is needed to build up an enterprise.
- **Ability and Desire to Take Risk:** The desire refers to the willingness to take risk and ability to the proficiency in planning, making forecast, estimates and calculations. Profits are the reward of risk. Enterprising women take risk, but the risk is well calculated. It offers challenges where chances of survival and failure are on equal footing.

Role of Women Entrepreneurs

The role or functions of women entrepreneurs can be following.

- Exploring the prospects of starting new enterprises,
- Undertaking risks and handling economic uncertainties,
- Introducing innovations,
- Coordinating administration and control, and
- Routine supervision. It may be observed that these functions are not always of equal importance. For example, risk-taking and

innovation functions are of utmost importance for establishing, diversifying and running the business successfully co-ordination and supervision functions become important in improving the efficiency and attaining the goodwill for the business as well as in assuring the smooth balanced operation of the enterprise. In the case of women enterprises, usually the same lady performs all these functions and sometimes, she may also take the assistance of other female staff members. In most of the cases, a woman is the owner of the business enterprise. Following types of business are suitable to the women entrepreneurs.

- Manufacturing a product for direct sale in the market,
- Manufacturing a product or a part of the product to meet the short term or long-term order of a large industrial company, and
- Operating purely as a sub-contractor of raw materials supplied by the customers. The women entrepreneurs prefer to deal in consumer goods which have always a demand in the market. They prefer to deal in intermediate goods which are used in the

production of other products and mostly they are manufactured to the orders of large companies.

Factors influencing Women Entrepreneurship in India

Following are some of the factors which influence women entrepreneurship in India.

- **Geographical Factors and Social Factors:** The society the state and the area to which she belongs also influence the entrepreneurship. If she is a Punjabi or Gujrati belonging to their respective state will become entrepreneurs.
- **Caste System:** The caste system also influences as a woman who is Sindhi may start a business at an early stage as in their caste or communities it is a trend.
- **Family Culture and Traditions:** Women entrepreneur will remain entrepreneur if its family tradition is so or if she belongs to a pioneer entrepreneur.
- **Government Aids and Policies:** Government can never increase entrepreneurship; it always helps an entrepreneur. A capable person only can become entrepreneur even if she gets aids or

adopts policies to start a venture. Government can help poor class people with reservations. Government help can be of significance if entrepreneur takes its help for logical conclusions. But for this, caliber of an entrepreneur is also seen.

- **Inherent Capabilities and Efficiency:** Capabilities to withstand the competition with males requires guts and dare to become an entrepreneur. Females require same capabilities as that of males. They get benefit of being females only when the service has to be rendered to women only like in hospitals etc. Capabilities influence the entrepreneurship, but efficiency is also required as if the person has capability to become an entrepreneur but if she is not efficient to run the venture, she cannot become a better entrepreneurship.

Motivating Factors of Woman Entrepreneurs

There are four motivating factors which influence a woman entrepreneur:

- **Recognition:** A woman entrepreneur is motivated by recognition in respect of admiration, regard, esteem and celebrity. It is

communication tools that reinforces and rewards the most important outcomes entrepreneurs create for the business.

- **Profit:** It is not the true motivation which influences an entrepreneur. Welfare of the employees, payment of tax to the government, is indirectly improving the living conditions of the entrepreneur. Thus, the real motivation for Apple to create and sell popular products like iPod, iPhone and iPad is probably not money, but the interest.

- **Influence:** It is the capacity or power of a person to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions etc. of others.

- **Internal Motivation:** It is the main factor which motivates businesswomen. It is the internal factors which are very much important for the motivation. It includes creativity, respect, and happiness of other people.

Opportunities of Women Entrepreneurs in India

The modern world women has been able to overcome the hurdle of society's perception of considering them to the confined

to the four walls of the house or viewing them as weak entrepreneurs caught up in limited business area such as papad making, pickle preparation food items, paintings, handicrafts, etc. They have been able to show a remarkable shift from these small entrepreneurs at ventures to modern technology-based business ventures such as:

Computer services, maintenance, information dissemination, and trading in computer stationary

- Quality testing, quality control laboratories
- Sub-assemblies of electronic products • Nutrition clubs in schools and offices
- Communications centers like STD booths, cyber cafes.
- Screen printing, photograph and video shooting
- Distributing and trading of household provision as well as saris, dress materials
- Stuffed soft toys, wooden toys
- Mini laundry, community eating centers
- Job contracts for packaging of goods

- Photocopying, typing centers • Beauty parlors
- Poster and indoor plant library
- Recreation centers for old people

Community kitchens

- Culture centers
- Travel and tourism

Barriers in the Path of Women Entrepreneurs Following are the barriers or constraints that restrict the expansion of women entrepreneurship.

- **Financial Problem:** It refers to the major problem of women entrepreneurs that arise due to the lack of access to funds. It is difficult for them to arrange the requisite fund as they may not possess any tangible security and credit in the market. Generally, the family members of women entrepreneurs do not have confidence in their capability of running the business successfully. Women entrepreneurs even face problems in financing day-to-day operations of enterprises, including purchasing of raw materials and paying wages to labors. The lack of access to funds makes the condition of women entrepreneurs

extremely vulnerable. The complexities and the complications in the process of obtaining bank loans usually deter women from establishing enterprises.

- **Production Problem:** Production problem act as a main problem that discourages women to be entrepreneurs. The data shows that the participation of women entrepreneurs in the production is minimal due to complications involved in the production process. In a manufacturing enterprise, production involves the coordination of a number of activities. Improper coordination and delay in execution of any activity cause problems in production. This may become difficult for women entrepreneurs to coordinate and control all the production activities.

Marketing Problem: Marketing problem refers to the problems of women entrepreneurs in marketing their products or services. Lack of mobility and heavy competition in the market makes the women entrepreneurs dependent on middlemen. Middlemen take a huge amount of money to market the products.

Women entrepreneurs lack information on changing market and find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular.

- **Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Socio-cultural barriers refer to the constraints and barriers imposed on women entrepreneurs by the society. In conventional countries, such as India, the major role of a woman is acknowledged towards her family. She has to perform primarily her family duties irrespective of her career as a working woman or an entrepreneur. A woman entrepreneur has to bear double responsibilities; she has to manage her family as well as her business.

Women and Media

The relationship between women and media is complex and has evolved over time, reflecting societal changes, cultural norms, and the fight for gender equality. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of women, influencing their roles in society, and either reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes.

1. Representation of Women in Media

Women have been portrayed in different ways across various media platforms, sometimes reinforcing traditional roles and at other times challenging stereotypes.

a) Print Media (Newspapers, Magazines, Journals)

- Historically, women were either ignored or portrayed in domestic and caregiving roles.
- Feminist publications emerged to highlight women's issues and rights.
- Today, print media increasingly covers gender equality, women's achievements, and social challenges.

b) Visual Media (Films, Television, Advertisements)

- Traditional media often showed women as dependent, weak, or focused on beauty.
- Contemporary films and TV series have begun portraying strong, independent women in leadership and professional roles.

- Advertisements sometimes reinforce unrealistic beauty standards but are gradually shifting towards more inclusive and empowering messages.

c) Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)

- Social media has provided a platform for women to express themselves, share experiences, and mobilize movements .
- Women activists, journalists, and influencers use digital spaces for advocacy and awareness.
- However, issues like cyber harassment, trolling, and online abuse remain major challenges.

2. Challenges Faced by Women in Media

- **Underrepresentation in leadership roles:** Women are less represented as editors, directors, and decision-makers in media organizations.
- **Stereotypical portrayals:** Media often objectifies women or limits them to traditional roles.

- **Gender pay gap:** Women in media industries often earn less than their male counterparts.
- **Cyber harassment and online abuse:** Women, especially activists and journalists, face digital threats and targeted attacks.

3. Role of Media in Women's Empowerment

- **Awareness and advocacy:** Media highlights issues like gender violence, workplace discrimination, and women's rights.
- **Encouraging leadership:** More women are entering journalism, film-making, and digital content creation.
- **Promoting positive role models:** Media representation of female leaders, scientists, and entrepreneurs inspires young women.

Self Assessment Questions

- Discuss the impact of globalization on women's employment and economic opportunities in India.
- Explain the role of self-help groups (SHGs) in empowering women and addressing poverty and developmental issues.
- Analyze the representation of women in print, visual, and social media and its influence on gender perceptions.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Recommended Books

Anil Kumar Jha, “Gender Inequality and Women Empowerment”, Axis Books, New Delhi, 2012.

NandalSantosh , “Women and Development”, A Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2012

Rani Sandhya, “Development of Women – Issues and Challenges”, Discover Publishing House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2012.

References

Elson Diane, et al. “Gender Equality and Inclusive Growth: Economic Policies to Achieve Sustainable Development”, UN Women, 2019

Jenny Edwards, Andrea Cornwall, et al., “Feminisms, Empowerment and Development: Changing Women’s Lives”, Kindle Edition, 2014.

Priyanka Sharma Gurnani, “Women Entrepreneurship – Emerging Dimension of Entrepreneurship in India” Educreation Publishing House, New Delhi, 2016.

Rao, Pulla, “Political Empowerment of Women in India – Challenges and Strategies”, ABD Publishers, New Delhi, 2012.

Web sources

1.<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2982549/>

2.<https://www.sociologydiscussion.com>