

P.G. DIPLOMA IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

Theoretical Approaches to Women's Studies

Concepts and Categories

Block - 1 Nature and Scope of Women's Studies

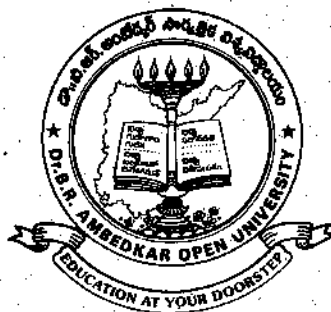
Block - 2 Theoretical Approaches to Women's Studies

Block - 3 Women's Movements

Block - 4 Changing Status of Women in India

**Block - 5 Rise of Women's Movement in
Pre Independent India**

Block - 6 Contemporary Women's Movement in India



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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Women's studies emerged as a field of enquiry due to the articulating of women's question by the contemporary women's movement. Women's studies is variously defined as "Studying Women's problems with women's perspective, looking at women in the world from women's point of view" and so on. Women's studies is designed to visualise understanding, 'Awareness', and 'Action'. The educational role of women's studies is most important role because it has an impact on 'change', women can change their lives, change the nature of knowledge what being taught, and change the society and its values.

This book deals with the topics in women's studies which are included in course-I of P.G. Diploma in Women's studies offered by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The syllabus is divided into six blocks and thirteen units. Block-I deals with the emergence of women's studies its nature and scope. Block-II deals the specificity of women's oppression in the light of new theoretical and conceptual frameworks such as liberal, radical, marxist and socialist feminism and reveals how feminism fundamentally changed the very political traditions that it borrowed from. Block-III comprises of women's movements in west, socialist and thirdworld countries, which aims to rewriting history and pushed the women's question at central stage. Block-IV is the survey of changing status of women in India during Ancient, Medieval periods and the impact and implications of social reform movements in modern India. Block-V deals with the peasant, tribal movements such as Telangana struggle, Punnapra Vaayala struggle, Worli Adivasi struggle and Tehbhaga movements. It also deals with the women's role in Indian struggle for freedom. Block-VI deals with the New Women's wages, domestic violence, rape, gender equality etc and makes gender a part of political discourse. It also deals the subsequent emergence of National commission for women which acts as an agent to help women in their redressal of grivences.

The University hopes that the course material will be more useful for the students to learn the subject better and also have a holistic and complex understanding of society.

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BLOCK – I

Nature and Scope of Women's Studies

Unit - 1 : Emergence of Women's Studies as a field of enquiry and its roots in Women's Movements

Unit - 2 : Nature and Scope of Women's Studies

BRAOU

Unit - I : EMERGENCE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AS A FIELD OF ENQUIRY AND ITS ROOTS IN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Contents :

- 1.0 Objectives
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Emergence of Women's Studies as an Area of Research
 - 1.3 Objectives of Women's Studies
 - 1.4 Impact of Women's Movements on Women's Studies
 - 1.5 Summing Up
 - 1.6 Model Examination Questions
 - 1.7 Books for Further Reading
-

1.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain the emergence of women's studies as an area of research
 - Identify objectives of women's studies
 - Analyse the impact of women's movements on women studies
-

1.1 Introduction

When Bandaru Achhamamba, who was one of the earliest feminist historians in India, wrote her 'Abala Sacharitra Ratnamala' almost a hundred years ago, she did not write as a historian. There is so much talk today of women's lack of a sense of self-worth, but that was not the problem. Achhamamba clearly regarded herself as engaged in an extremely important enterprise and it is difficult for anyone, however critical or hostile, to deny her pathbreaking contributions either to the substance and the theory of women's history in India or to the methodologies of research in the field. Yet she did not regard that as her primary task or her principal achievement. Achhamamba came to history with a demand that had its origins in the women's movement. The preface to Abala Sacharitra Ratnamala, the first of the three volumes she had planned, clearly sets out the aims of her research. She wanted first, to establish with evidence that those who regard women as less intelligent than men or as cowardly, argue not from fact, but from their own biases. It could easily be demonstrated she argued that women were naturally endowed with dignity and sharp intelligence. Second, she wanted to show that it was only uninformed people who could claim that education would spoil women, for factual evidence clearly suggested the contrary. Finally, she wanted to put together for the use of the sisterhood of women, a comprehensive and systematically researched work which they could draw on the course of their work.

In a way, we can say that this is a prelude to women's studies. The orientation and commitment that Achhamamba gives to her scholarship makes many demands on scholarship,

asks many questions of knowledge. These demands and questions that women scholars since Achhamamba have been making are grounded in the soil of our particular history and our society. Women's studies centres/ departments that have emerged since the late seventies and are grounded in the new women's movements that compelled the states, international organisations, academicians the world over to address for the first time the issue of 'gender'.

In India (as you will see in the section on women's Movements in India) the post emergency period, gave rise to a new political consciousness among women. The declaration of the United Nations of 1975 as the women's year, is the culmination of this new consciousness the world over. The publication of the report on the status of women in India "Towards Equality" made many startling revelations. The constitutional guarantees of equality of women were hardly met. Economic dependence, illiteracy, unemployment, dowry, domestic/ marital violence continued to subject women to oppression and women continued to be invisible from the public scene. Three decades after independence and planned development of the country, women were found in the least paid jobs, working long hours and bearing full responsibility of household work, many a time working in family production units without wages. The growing adverse sex ratio shocked the members of the committee on the status of women in India (SWI). Political participation of women was declining except at the time of voting. Yet, what is striking is that these realities, concern about women's status hardly got reflected in the academic or in the prescribed syllabus of universities/ colleges. The Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) felt the need to encourage studies on women, particularly on women from the lower classes since 1976. It also helped in developing new perspectives in the Social Sciences, through examining basic concepts like family, household, women's work etc. Since 1970s research interests in women have not only gained momentum but the stance and areas of researches have also significantly changed.

1.2 Emergence of Women's Studies as an area of Research

Concern for women and research on women is not new in India. The social reform movement of the 19th century was born out of concern for women and opposition to social evils such as 'Sati', Child marriage etc. The objective of the pre independence research very often was to justify social reform or to provide back bone for reassertion of India's cultural pride which had been battered by colonial rule and the onslaught of western culture. The focus of such research, whether the period was ancient India or modern India, was on the minority of women belonging to the elite. After independence, women were largely ignored or subsumed in the agendas of both the academia and political parties. For the majority of social reformers, women's equality was hardly on the agenda. They aimed to improve the status of women in the family, not in the society as a whole. There were contradictions in what the reformers did. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, for example brought about the Sati legislation. However his concern was not women but in bringing about some changes in the society as a response to colonialism, and not necessarily to improve human condition. Eshwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Jotiba Phule were radicals and talked about mass education for the entire population, abolishing polygamy, bringing about changes in the Institution of marriage and major transformations in the relationship between individuals. Jotiba Phule argued that the subjugation of women is an instrument of maintaining brahminical tradition in the society. He spoke about the total reconstruction of the society, to get rid of dominance relationships. Leaving out these few radicals, most reformers were really talking about improving the lives of women within the family. When they talked about women, they meant middle class women, who were more comfortably placed and they never went beyond the middle class. The issues of women's equality emerged as a political issue only during the transformation of the freedom movement into a mass movement. The question of women was not raised in the earlier discussions of the Indian National Congress. It is only when the nationalist movement became a mass movement, a people's movement for freedom under the

leadership of Gandhi, Women's status became an issue. Gopalakrishna Gokhle asked "Why should anyone believe in a nation unless he/she has a stake in it?" He further argued that unless the depressed classes are assured a position of equality and given a stake in the future, the nationalist movement will never be able to get their support. There can be no mass movement without the participation of women. Freedom movement needed the support of women and for that women must have a stake, a status as partners in that struggle, although it was not clear as to what that status would really be. Women's equality as an issue emerged out of this debate.

In the euphoria of independence era, women's issues were relegated to the background. Constitutional recognition of equality of women, extension of fundamental rights to women along with development programmes were seen as sufficient to ensure women's equality. The decline and the split within the Indian National Congress and the worsening economic crisis of the late 60s and 70s culminated in the declaration of National emergency in June 1975. It was in such a context that the report on the status of Women (Towards Equality) was published.

The Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) decided to promote the programme of women's studies with a clear mandate to focus on 'invisible' women and three distinct objectives: 1) to identify the work for needed policy changes 2) to persuade the social science community to re-examine the methodology, concepts, theories and analytical apparatus of social research, which had successfully excluded women's roles, status and situation from the entire arena of the social investigations, and 3) to revive the social debate on the women's question, which had emerged as a major issue during the freedom struggle, but had faded into oblivion in the period after independence. The first national conference on women's studies was held in 1981 and since then the issue of incorporation of women in the curriculum has not only been seriously considered, but centres for women's studies also emerged. At the meeting of experts on women's studies and social sciences organised by UNESCO in 1982, it was specified that though the major task of women's studies is to make women visible in the curriculum, it was equally important that care is taken not to misrepresent nor mystify women. It was observed that while, on the one hand disciplines like sociology, history, or politics discuss women's status, they hardly provide women's perspective; on the other hand disciplines like economics, psychology, education have yet to be made sensitive to incorporate women's dimension in their courses. The purpose of women's studies, incorporation of topics on women in various disciplines is to provide a critical instrument for examining society which has been so far biased towards men. Women's studies programmes have been supported by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the ICSSR. The pressure of women activists and academicians has made the Indian academia aware of the critical role of women in society and compelled it to acknowledge and incorporate women into the curriculum. However, there are problems that one faces in changing or introducing women's gender studies in traditional establishments, that have so far ignored women.

Thus the popular notion that women's studies in India has been influenced mainly by feminist movements in western countries is both exaggerated and ahistorical.

1.3. Objectives of Women's Studies:

While women's studies has its roots in the various movements within the country, it is possible to say that women's studies contributed among other factors, to conceptualise and continue the ongoing debates within the women's movement in India in the post 1977 period.

The post 1975 research was different from the objectives of pre-independence research. It moved away from a monolithic understanding of India's culture to closer acquaintance with the diversity and pluralism of Indian society. For example it was clear that developmental processes/plans did not affect all people in the same way. Women were the first to be thrown out of employment in times of economic crisis and in the processes of mechanisation. The interaction of macro processes of change and the micro level experience of women required a far greater interdisciplinary approach. Thus Women's Studies research involved new methodologies,

concepts, interactions of theory and field experience. A very important aspect of the new approach to women's studies is the abandoning of value free notion of existing social sciences which are not free from deeply ingrained notions of inferiority of women. As gender discriminations operate both at the ideological and social structural level, social sciences will have to be reworked if women have to attain equality. Thus women's studies must be understood as an instrument for women's development and also as a necessary input to deepen the knowledge base of various disciplines.

Women's Studies thus is the pursuit of a more comprehensive, critical, and balanced understanding of a social reality. Its essential components include 1) Women's contribution to the social process 2) Women's perception of their own lives, the broader social reality and their struggles and aspirations 3) roots and structures of inequality that lead to marginalisation, invisibility and exclusion of women from the scope, approaches and conceptual frameworks of most intellectual enquiry and social action. Women's Studies should, thus, not be narrowly defined as studies about women or information about women, but be viewed as a critical instrument for social and economic development. The national forum for women's studies defined the objectives as 1) to conscientise both men and women by helping them to understand, recognise and acknowledge the multi divisional roles played by women in society 2) to promote better understanding of the process of social, technological and environmental change 3) to contribute to the pursuit of human rights 4) to investigate the causes of gender, disparities analysing structural, cultural and attitudinal factors 5) to empower women in their struggle against inequality and for effective participation in all areas of society and development 6) to render invisible women visible in particular women of the underprivileged strata and 7) to help develop alternative concepts, approaches and strategies for development.

1.4. Impact of women's movements or Women's Studies

The post 1975 women's research enabled the women's movement to arm itself with a much larger body of information about the invisible majority and was thus able to draw in the concerns and the priorities of the latter into the perspectives of the movement. The earlier women's movement was handicapped by a very small number of educated women who could gather and analyse social data to influence its own leadership. This handicap confined the concerns of the earlier women's movement to a few social problems that affected women in the urban middle class, and at a later date, some problems of women workers in the organised industry. The extension of the post 1975 research to peasant women and women in the informal sectors qualified women's studies for the discipline of it as a "thrust from below". Thus the popular notion that women's studies in India has been mainly influenced by feminist movements in the western countries is not correct.

The revival of the women's movement from the late seventies brought new dimensions and directions to women's studies. Issues of violence-domestic and social, sexual exploitation, representation of women in the media became issues for academic research. The complex structures of subordination and their reassertion in new forums in the ideology of revivalist, fundamentalist, communal and ethnic movements have deep implications for women and such gender issues came under scrutiny. Investigations into peasant women's roles in the rural economy and their undiscovered history has raised new questions and drawn women's studies closer to ecological and environmental movements. Investigations into women's marginalisation and exploitation in the informal sector, in the educational process, in communication and media and in the political process have turned women's studies into one of the major critics of the patterns of 'development' and the choice of strategies. Issues of women's rights and political participation can no longer be understood as unrelated to social structures (family, marriage, caste, class, community) built on gender inequality. Women's movements in women's studies by subjecting traditional disciplines to gender scrutiny have enriched knowledge.

1.5 Summing UP

It has become increasingly clear as a result of the work done over this decade that women's studies or feminist research, is not necessarily only about women. Its starting point is certainly women, or rather the need, not just to describe but to change the situation of women. But as recent discussion clearly demonstrate, and much of the research we are doing today shows, the scope of feminist scholarship is not restricted to women, but impinges on all major questions in the humanities and social sciences as well as in the applied sciences today.. The question of women is not a separate issue. Gender is central to our social architecture.

1.6 Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following questions about 30 lines each,

1. Explain the process of how women's studies emerged as an area of research?
2. What are the Objectives of Women's Studies?
3. Discuss the impact of women's Movement on Women's Studies.

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What were the women's issues taken up in post Independence era?
 2. What are the Components of Women's Studies
-

1.7 Books for further reading

Alison Jagger, - Feminist Politics and Human Nature, Sussex. Herefords, 1983

Machinary Towards a Feminist theory of the State, Harvard University Press cambridge, 1989.

Simone de Beauvoir, - The Second Sex trans. H.M. Parshely (New York : Alfred Knopf 1952)

Sandra Harding Introduction(ed) - vol on Feminism and Methodology, India Viewers Press Bloomington 1987.

Virginia woolf. - A room of ones own har court trade tqvonovich New Yorkk 1957

Unit - 2 : Nature and Scope of Women's Studies

Contents

- 2.0. Objectives
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 - 2.2.1 Gender and Sex
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 - 2.5.5 Literary Criticism
- 2.6. Summing Up
- 2.7. Model Examination Questions
- 2.8. Recommended Books

2.0 Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Analyse key concepts of Women's studies
- Describe the scope of women's studies
- Estimate the impact of Women's studies on History, Anthropology, Economics, Sciences and Literature.

2.1 Introduction

The uniqueness of Women's Studies as an academic field has been its integral connection to the women's movement. This link with a social-political movement influences both the kinds of questions addressed by the discipline and the concepts developed by it.

Activists in the movement became aware that only through a careful analysis of how different structures of oppression operate, can women begin to talk about changing them. For those engaged in the field of Women's Studies, then, feminism is not merely

an academic or a purely polemical issue, not just an intellectual debate. Rather, it is a struggle for the interpretation of our daily lives, for the space in which we can develop concepts that will help transform those lives.

2.2. Key Concepts in Women's Studies :

2.2.1 Gender

Perhaps the most far-reaching and radical shift in perspective made possible by feminist thought is linked to the concepts sex and gender. Although sex (male, female) may be biologically determined, gender (masculine, feminine) according to feminists is socially, historically and culturally constructed. The concern is not necessarily with whether there is a biological difference or not, but with the fact of its social significance. As Juliet Mitchell has it, feminism "transforms the ideological notion that there is a biological opposition between sexes which determines social life" and argues instead that "there is a contradiction in the social relations between men and women" and that this contradiction is historical, not natural.

A central insight of feminism is that the social construction of gender has led to and perpetuates asymmetrical relations between men and women. As Simone de Beauvoir's influential book *"The Second Sex"* made clear, a woman is made, not born; a woman is not born a woman but becomes one. This assertion enabled women to historicize what seemed to be their natural and unchanging condition, and thereby to challenge the powerful belief system that is the gender ideology of each society. The questioning of women's subordination proceeds, therefore, by asserting that femininity has a history, that there is no such thing as an "eternal feminine" or a "female nature". What we have been taught to see as a material fact is now seen as an enforced socio-cultural norm presented as natural and true. To take an interesting example, European and American people are now taller than before since their biological norm is changing; however, the social norm which requires women not to be "too tall" makes some doctors prescribe hormones for tall women to control their growth.

Since a powerful belief system makes its power invisible by equating gender with sex, and defining it as a fact of nature rather than as a set of cultural expectations, feminism insists on shifting the question from whether there is a male or female nature to what our beliefs are about male and female nature. For Alison Jaggar, this shift is not enough, and we need to question not only gender but also sex. She argues that biological differences are produced on the level of the species also, mentioning Chinese footbinding, narrow Western shoes and tight clothes which restrict women's freedom of movement and produce what seem like natural characteristics. Reproductive capacity, she asserts, is partly a social product : with bipedalism, human use of tools required larger brain size and larger skulls. The problem was resolved by the birth of the human being at an earlier stage of development. Adults, already walking on two feet, could carry children, and developed a mode of social organization to support extended infant dependence. Jaggar does not contend that human biology is entirely a social product; for her, the complex interplay between human biology, social organisation and physical environment

produces new forms of life. Biology therefore is susceptible to change over time.

2.2.2 Nature and Culture.

Another significant pair of concepts interrogated by feminists is nature and culture. Although this differentiation exists most obviously in the Western context, evidence from anthropologists suggests that most societies share some form of the idea. Women are often imaged as closer to Nature than men, being associated with biological reproduction, which is seen as their primary function. The qualities of non-human nature come to be associated with women, and are eventually seen as part of women's nature itself. In the nineteenth century, an emerging and self-confident Western scientific consciousness played a crucial role in redefining and perpetuating the identification of female with nature and male with culture. Scientific endeavour was linked to masculinity and the male spirit, and the passive Nature "discovered" by science was linked to the feminine. Scientific culture was seen as a struggle between male reason and female superstition, between modernity and tradition. The progress of human history was indicated by an increasing mastery over Nature, and women personifying Nature also came increasingly under new kinds of male control. In other realms, nature was personified as woman and mother, to be revered and adored but not to be seen as human.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Western medicine began to define health according to occupation (and therefore according to class). Further, when occupation was linked to biological characteristics (manual labour for the more animal-like lower classes, and intellectual labour for the refined upper classes), permissible occupations for women were also defined according to natural criteria. Women's health, therefore, depended on their fulfilment of a restricted social role, that of motherhood. The family came to be seen as the essential biological unit of social life. Hence, the woman [of the middle and upper classes] was conceptualised as feeble, irrational, frivolous and in constant need of male protection. It was said that women's minds worked differently from men's betraying a singular incapacity for rational scientific thought. However, women, like nature, could function as a source of moral regeneration. We see similar redefinitions of femininity in the Indian context in the last 200 years. Feminists are asking what interests are served by using biologically based opposite terms as analytical categories. Is it the obscuring of social divisions and inequalities which is at stake in the deployment of supposedly biological differences?

2.3 Private/Public Patriarchy

Parallel to the nature/culture distinction are the ones between private and public, and between personal and political. Although women do many different kinds of work in different societies, they are often primarily defined by their reproductive labour. The private realm, which has usually included sexuality and procreation, is seen as more "natural" than the public sphere. Today labour is defined as that which is paid for in the public realm of the economy, but in some societies such as ancient Greece the economy was part of the private sphere. Under capitalism, the home stopped being the centre of

production when newer forms of economic organizations emerged. Not only that, the home became a refuge from the world of economic production, and came increasingly to be defined as the woman's place. With the ascendancy of liberal political theory, the private was exempted from regulation by the State; sexual and family relations were described as "private", and "natural human affections" were exercised in the home. The physical abuse of wife and children was socially tolerated; neither was it subject to legal action. Feminist recognition of and challenge to domestic violence has helped erase the boundary between private and public realms.

Wife-beating, for example, is not treated as an individual or family problem, but one that concerns the society at large, since the fundamental reason for the woman being beaten is that she is of the female gender and therefore traditionally vulnerable to male abuse. Feminist intervention has helped change the legal apparatus of many countries in such a way as to make visible atrocities on women within the so-called private sphere.

This brings us to another important feminist re-conceptualization. "The personal is the political" has long been a slogan of the women's movement. Recognizing the personal as political, according to Catherine Mackinnon, means seeing the force of politics in the personal sphere and the force of the personal in the political sphere. To know the politics of women's situation, therefore, is to know the personal lives of women. One of the most important strategies developed by feminist groups in the West in the 1960s was "consciousness-raising" women came together to speak about their personal experiences, and discovered in the process that their problem was not merely their own but one shared by all women. Surely, then, the problem was not rooted in some individual inadequacy but in social structures which perpetuated themselves through the privatizing of oppression. In realizing that they were oppressed as a group, women began to recognize the need for acting together as a group to change the established order. The metaphor employed to describe the sharing of experience suggested bringing into consciousness things known before only at the unconscious level as women learned to see how they had "become" women. Legitimizing their own experience by sharing it, women redefined their feelings of discontent. Earlier, they would have been called and seen themselves as crazy, badly adjusted, bitchy or even hormonally imbalanced. Now they began to see these feelings as a response to their social condition. The 60s consciousness raising groups had antecedents in the "speaking bitterness" campaigns of the 1930s in China, when the Communist Party helped organize sessions where peasant women spoke in public about their sufferings in the family and thus laid the ground for political solidarity with each other.

Looking beyond their immediate experience as women to the processes and structures shaping that experience, feminists learn to confront the daily practices through which male dominance is exercised. A key concept used by feminism to describe structures of dominance is patriarchy. The term refers literally to the rule or power of the father, and can be extended to mean the institutionalization and manifestation of male dominance over women and children in the family and in society at large. Patriarchy is sometimes specifically used to refer to men's control over women's bodies and their

sexuality, their reproduction and their labour. Two cautions to keep in mind while employing the term : that patriarchal practices are not isolable but always exist in inter-relation with economic and political formations, culture, law, religion, etc., and that patriarchy is not something outside history but is continually reconstituted in history.

2.4 The Scope of Women's Studies :

The goals of feminist inquiry include, importantly, providing for women explanations of social/political phenomena from the perspective of women. Consequently, feminism does away with "universal man" and focusses instead on culturally and historically different men and women, examining the specific characteristics of their experience.

Traditionally, research in the social sciences has helped men answer questions about "how to pacify, control, exploit and manipulate women" or other oppressed groups. Knowledge produced by these groups, on the other hand, does not strive after "pure truth" but wants to know how to change existing conditions, how to understand the forces working against their growth and emancipation. What becomes important here is the perspective or location of the researcher, who is no longer an invisible, omniscient authority but a person with his/her own history, of a particular gender, class, caste or race, who brings a certain combination of beliefs and assumptions to the research he/she undertakes. The feminist researcher must attempt therefore to place herself on the same plane as that which is being studied, and particularize herself (provide the context from which she comes) just as she pays attention to the specificity of her subject matter.

In other words, feminists contend that the context (of research) includes the knower, that knowledges are specific to observer and context, that all research has specific aims, perspectives and positions of articulation. What is being questioned here is the time-honoured distinction between objective knowledge and subjective opinion, between knower and know. What is being asserted is that knowledge has a point of view. To question the value of "objectivity" is not to valorize "subjective" bias, but to acknowledge the conditions of production of knowledge. An examination of these conditions would also reveal the complicity of so-called objective knowledge with the oppressive social structures they endorse and help to perpetuate.

2.5. Impact of women studies

Women's Studies has had a transformative impact on many disciplines across the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. We choose just a few examples here to demonstrate how the women's perspective has profoundly altered existing paradigms of knowledge.

2.5.1 History :

According to feminists, history has traditionally been the story of men, told by men from a male perspective. Women were left out of "his" story because what the discipline considered significant was confined to male-dominated activities in the realms

of war, politics and the formation of dynasties.

Another reason for the invisibility of women had to do with the universalizing of human experience which made it possible to subsume "woman" under "Man".

Two kinds of responses were inevitable at first, responses leading to what Gerda Lerner has termed compensatory and contributory history. Feminist historians concerned themselves with exceptional women, like the Rani of Jhansi or Queen Elizabeth, who were seen as performing male roles; similarly, they studied those aspects of the women's movement which could be defined as political in the old, pre-feminist sense of the word. Only the women who attained male standards of achievement were sought to be included in history. This move left untouched the existing paradigm of what counted as historically significant.

Those interested in women's history then attempted to document the lives of the majority of women in the past. The rich empirical studies produced with this aim helped redefine the criteria for what counted as historical evidence, since historians now asked questions about the quality of (women's) daily lives, the conditions in which they lived and worked, the ages at which they married and bore children; about their work, their role in the family, their class and relations to other women, their perception of their place in the world; their relations to wars and revolutions.

Women's history has also questioned the categorization of private and public spheres, suggesting that this division does not simply describe historical reality but seeks to perpetuate notions of "woman's place" and "man's world". In understanding the family, for instance, the public/private dichotomy obscures questions of the changing significance of women's position within the institution as well as those of the social functions of the family.

Periodization in history has traditionally been done according to conquests, revolutions, wars, etc. Some feminist historians have argued that so-called periods of "progress" (such as the Renaissance or the French Revolution) did not necessarily benefit women. Joan Kelly suggests that "there was no Renaissance for women, at least not in the Renaissance". In pre-industrial society, women's labour was essential, whereas in industrial society, partly because of the introduction of the monetary system, they became as a rule economically dependent. The same factors, such as humanist education, which liberated men from the constraints of the past, served to fashion new modes of subordination for women, as we have indicated in the discussion of the Indian colonial context in the first part of this introduction.

Sometime the exclusive focus on women's experience or agency as in the discussion of the "female world" of love and ritual in 19th century America, or the networks of female friendship and sisterhood in 19th century China tend to reproduce the separate sphere of women designated by traditional history. There is also the related problem of seeing "women" as a homogeneous category while asserting their difference from "men"; what tends to happen is the inadvertent negation of history and the suppression of class and other differences between women.

The use of gender as an analytical category would allow feminist historians to

shift their focus from women to the cultural ascription and the socially sanctioned meanings of sexual difference. As Joan Wallach Scott points out: The term "gender" suggests that relations between the sexes are a primary aspect of social organization (rather than following from, say, economic or demographic pressures); that the terms of male and female identities are in large part culturally determined (not produced by individuals or collectivities entirely on their own); and the differences between the sexes constitute and are constituted by hierarchical social structures.

The feminist critique of history needs to take into account, that it is not merely an "incomplete record of the past" that is a matter of concern, but the history as a discipline in its conventional form participates in "the production of knowledge that legitimized the exclusion or subordination of women" and therefore in the reproduction of social inequalities.

2.5.2 Anthropology:

The case of anthropology is slightly different from that of history. because of the discipline's traditional concern with marriage and kinship, women have always been a major presence in anthropological accounts. The problem, unlike in history, is therefore not one of more empirical study. rather, the problem is one of how women have been represented. In a famous study of Australian Aboriginal women, it was discovered that the perceptions, and therefore the representations, of male ethnographers differed from their female counterparts. Whereas the former saw women in the society being studied as profane (non-sacred), excluded from rituals, and economically insignificant, the latter emphasised the central role of women's rituals, the respect they commanded from men, and their far from marginal role in subsistence.

The problem as many feminist anthropologists saw it, was one of male bias. Male ethnographers came to the field with their own assumptions about the relationship between men and women, assumptions deriving not only from their gender but also, importantly, from their Western cultural background. They perceived all differences as inequalities and tended to take for granted a hierarchical organization of society which gave women a subordinate place. In a certain study, the isolation of women's menstrual huts allowed anthropologists to declare that the women of the community were considered unclean: whereas a paralld isolation of huts for men made them pronounce on the sacredness of male ritual activity. Clearly, "adding women" to anthropology was not a solution. What was required was an interrogation of its conceptual frameworks.

To illustrate the magnitude of feminism's challenge to anthropology, we could look at sally Slocum's well-known essay "Woman the Gatherer". The title reformulates a familiar anthropological phrase Man the Hunter, referring also to another familiar description of an early phase in the development of humankind the Hunting-Gathering stage. Slocum argues that male bias in anthropological research has been responsible for seeing the ability to hunt and kill as the primary motivating force in the growth of the human race. She points instead to the part played by women not only in bearing and nurturing the young but also gathering roots and fruit for the sustained maintenance of the social group. It would not have been possible, suggests Slocum, to obtain animal

meat everyday. In the absence of men's daily contribution to the food needs of the kinship group, a large share of the burden was borne by women. It is only this continued life together, ensured by the work of women, which led to humankind's evolution.

Sally Slocum's intervention indicates the need to reformulate fundamental analytical and descriptive categories. The feminist anthropology of the 1970s was primarily an anthropology of women; the category of "women" was often taken for granted in a universal and a historical manner, and the power relations between (usually white) female anthropologists and the "primitive" female subjects of their research tended to become invisible. As in the case of history, when women studied women there was every likelihood that a separate sphere of scholarship would be formed, leading to new marginalization of women's concerns.

In the 1980s, feminist anthropologists have asserted that the category "woman" (or "man, for that matter") must be carefully investigated for its meanings in any given context. The project of feminist anthropology is now being redefined as the study of gender rather than the study of women. The focus is on "how racial difference is constructed through gender, how racism divides gender identity and experience, and how class is shaped by gender and race".

2.5.3. Economics:

It is in the area of economic analysis and theory that the women's movement has had its major impact in India on the social sciences. Since the problems foregrounded by feminist economists in the Third world are quite different from those addressed in the First World, and since unlike in the other social sciences there exists a vast body of feminist writing in economics, it might be useful for our purposes to focus exclusively on the specific questions being raised in our context.

The two major issues preoccupying feminist writers on economics in India are (a) women's work and (b) "development and women". The first concern arises partly out of the inadequacy of the modern economic concept of paid work (a concept coming out of Western capitalist economies) in accounting for the kinds of work performed—especially by women—in the Third World. The concern is also for the invisibility of women's work in national statistics regarding Gross National Product, statistics which provide the foundation for development planning and public policy.

In a system of production which is not purely capitalist, home-based productive activity is a significant factor in the economy. Such activity clearly involves the labour of not just one person but the entire family, in particular the women of the household. A potter, for example, is considered by mainstream economists to be a productive worker and a primary wage earner; whereas his wife who prepares the clay is not seen as being engaged in productive work. The mochi who makes the chappal is considered a primary wage earner, while the women of his family who clean, soak, dry and stretch the hide are not "working". The man becomes the individual economic man, operating in isolation, working by himself.

Women's work when it is acknowledged is seen as merely supplementing male work or male income, never as complementing it. This perception has a profound impact

not only on the wages paid to women but also on the valuation (its importance both to society and to women themselves) of female labour. Although in many subsistence households women are actually the main wage earners, this fact disappears from the data on national production. Another reason for this contribution to become invisible is that beedi workers make beedis at home, and domestic chores merge with income-earning activity; there is no clear demarcation of the working day since it spans all the working hours of the woman.

The feminist economist's concern with statistics and the collection of data is reflected in the extensive debates on the criteria employed by the national Census. In the 1991 Census, for example, the head of the household was inevitably seen as male, in spite of the fact that particular man may not even be the primary income earner of the family. This raised the question of who collected the statistics and from whom. Often the census taker was male, and for various reasons spoke only to the men of the household. Cultural perceptions of male significance clearly coloured the data obtained, as did the only voices—male ones—which were heard when the information was sought and offered. Critics of male-centred economics have therefore challenged the hitherto unquestioned neutrality and objectivity of the researcher or collector of information, and alerted economists to the different criteria which might make women's work visible and statistically significant.

Most Third World countries, able neither to perpetuate a primarily agricultural economy nor fuel the growth of an industrial one, end up choosing strategies which presuppose that only a particular model of development is appropriate if not inevitable. Obliteration of poverty in the Third World was sought to be accomplished through free enterprise and the unlimited growth of Western science and technology. Even where a nation like India tried to achieve self-reliance in an area such as food production, the development model ensured the creation of new dependencies on foreign technology, dependencies that have only increased with time.

"Modernisation" of the means of production has often led to the displacement and marginalisation of women workers, as in the textile, coir, beedi, match, coal and other industries. The arrival of tractors and other machinery in agriculture has pushed many women labourers into unskilled occupations, since the new technical knowledge is by definition unavailable to them. Gradually, the large numbers of male labourers excluded from the modernisation process ultimately put pressure on the jobs still held by women. This is not to say that male agricultural labourers who can operate the new technology now earn a great deal more. Their labour is still subsidised by a range of (largely female) activities, for a subsistence or survival economy requires extensive domestic work by women. In some "poverty alleviation" programmes, for instance, a cow is provided to a rural family to aid the process of capital accumulation required by the dominant developmental paradigm. This process of accumulation is predominantly at the cost of women, whose domestic labour is compounded by the task of maintaining the cow, while they have no control over the new income generated.

Feminists have pointed out that the dominant model of development stresses certain kinds of "progress" at the expense of scarce national resources which could be

used instead to make available the fuel, fodder and water required by subsistence households. The provision of these never becomes a developmental priority because the endless and invisible labour of women goes into their daily collection. Besides, "development" which encroaches on common land and forest areas often makes fuel and fodder more difficult to obtain than before, suggesting that western-style development models focus on the creation of new wants rather than help people satisfy their basic subsistence level needs, some economists demand a fundamental critique of the economy and the re-evaluation of Third World country's primary goals. Clearly, such a re-evaluation is bound to have a significant impact on women who are the worst sufferers under the present system.

The worldwide commercialisation of economies, expansion of markets and the consequent "economic growth" contribute substantially, contend feminist economists, to the marginalization of women. A document which reviews field studies from all over the world at the end of the international women's decade (1975-1985) concludes that by and large, "women's relative access to economic resources, incomes and employment has worsened, their burdens of work have increased, and their relative and even absolute health, nutritional and educational status has declined". To take just one example, the representation of women in the total labour force in India has shrunk from 34.44% in 1911 to 17.35% in 1971. Science, technology and "development" produce what Maria Mies has called the "housewifisation" of women and the erosion of their control over resources of various kinds, a control that now becomes gendered as male. The solution to women's disempowerment is not, some economists argue, to place all women in the cash economy but to transform the priorities which require the growth of such an economy in the first place.

2.5.4. The Sciences:

Science provides for the modern period the exemplary paradigm for objective and disinterested knowledge, a knowledge which is the authentic source of truth about the world. If, as its practitioners claim, science is observer-neutral and value-neutral and culture-free, how could it possibly contribute to the oppression of women or anyone else? In order to make possible the question as to how science can subjugate women, we need to glance first at the radical critique of science which began to emerge both in the West and in other parts of the world in the late 1960. This critique challenged the notion of science as an abstract accumulation of knowledge, revealing how those who controlled science were predominantly white upper-class men from advanced industrial societies. Not only the higher level practitioners of science but also its managers and ideologists are elite males. As Hilary Rose puts it, "Within science as within all other aspects of production, women occupy subordinate positions, and the 'exceptional women' who 'make it' in this man's world only go to prove the rule'. Famous women scientists like Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin or Barbara Mc Clintock were treated by their colleagues and the world at large as eccentric and unfeminine. The message they got was that either one could be a successful scientist or a "real woman". If the acquisition of scientific knowledge depends on possessing certain essential masculine qualities, we can begin to ask questions about whose knowledge it is, who benefits from it and whose

exclusion it perpetuates.

Historians of science have analysed the writings of Charles Darwin to show how his theory of evolution (the struggle for survival, "natural" selection, the survival of the fittest) drew on the 19th century prejudices of political economy and sociology rather than on pure empirical facts. What Darwin's theory provided was an interpretation of the facts, an interpretation which helped rationalise and justify preexisting practices in the capitalist economy (such as the laws regarding the poor). The contemporary theories of sociobiology which derive inspiration from Darwinism endorse "natural" hierarchies and biologically based subordination. The implications for women should be evident. Science has since its inception seen masculinity and the male body as the norm, the universal human. Femaleness requires explanation because it is not the norm, for women's bodies are seen as imperfect versions of the original human/male body. We referred earlier to the recurrent imaging of nature as feminine, and to the project of science as the conquest of nature. Contemporary science is inventing new forms of control over female bodies in the area of reproductive technologies such as in-vitro fertilisation. The aim of science seems to be the control of women's fertility rather than that of men. Not surprisingly, the major feminist critiques of science have been in the areas of medicine and biology.

The skills of healing that women had acquired over centuries were gradually appropriated by men as medicine became a profession, a profession defined like others by its exclusiveness. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English have argued, the female lay healer operated within the community in a large network of mutual support while the male medical professional hoarded up his knowledge as a kind of property, to be dispensed to wealthy patrons or sold on the market as a commodity. His goal was not to spread the skills of healing, but to concentrate them within the elite interest group which the profession came to represent. Thus the triumph of the male medical profession is of crucial significance. It involved the destruction of women's networks of mutual help leaving women in a position of isolation and dependency and it established a model of expertism as the prerogative of a social elite.

The witch hunts that lasted for centuries in most European countries as well as America were part of the violent conflict between two paradigms of knowledge which ended in the obliteration of female dominated systems of medicine. In our context too, the technologization of medicine has deskilled thousands of lay healers, midwives, and others. Increasingly in the urban and semi-urban areas, and in the last twenty years or so, medical specialists have displaced general practitioners as well as other non-allopathic healers. In a largely illiterate society, more and more women are deprived of an understanding of their own bodies (an understanding dismissed as superstition) and handed over to the expert who will tell them how to deal with their sickness.

Western medicine has usually seen women's illness as connected with their reproductive organs. The common advice given to a woman complaining of sickness or debility is to get married; if she is already married, she is told to have a child; if she already has a child, she is told to have another one; if all else fails, she is asked to have her ovaries or her uterus removed. In earlier years, both mental and physiological

illness was attributed to women with "unnatural" or "unfeminine" aspirations. The early American feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman was confined to the house by her psychiatrist for what was diagnosed as a psychotic ailment, whereas according to her the cure would have meant asking her to be more involved in public life.

Modern medicine, in treating disease symptomatically, is often not prepared to offer a far-reaching cure. In fact, its very definition of disease may be conceptually so narrow that it is not able to account for a wide variety of problems. Take the example of backpain, which leads to osteoporotic (caused by bone-thinning) fractures in later life. Doctors sometimes scold women for their bad posture, unable to deal with the real causes of backpain: housework, beedi making, transplanting, social moulding and disciplining of bodies during adolescence, calcium deficiency due to women's culturally conditioned self-denial and consequent lack of basic nutrients, or the deprivation of milk and food surplus caused by the cash economy. Any attempt at solving the problem of recurring fractures in women demands not merely a more responsive health care system but a radical and far-reaching change in their daily lives, a change which this initial framing of the problem can only gesture towards.

Not only do women's diseases tend to become invisible in the dominant paradigms of medicine, they are accounted for—when they have to be—as characteristic of the irretrievably imperfect female condition. As the neurophysiologist Ruth Bleier points out, there has been a growing commitment in science over the last hundred years to "proving the biological inferiority of women, the biological innateness of gender differences, ideas previously taken for granted....." Bleier emphasises the gender and racial differences, which are "scientifically unresolvable", are always brought to the fore for political reasons. Discussing in detail Geschwind's theory about masculine and feminine brain development, Bleier shows how hidden cultural prejudices, semantic tricks (word-substitutions) and peculiar sources of evidence (studies of rat brains rather than humans!) combine to produce an assertion that the male hormone testosterone is responsible for superior mathematical ability in males. Although a single hypothesis like the one above may have very little independent scientific support, "together, supported by each other, they create the illusion of a structure of weight, consistency, conviction and reason". It is this illusory framework within which questions of gender difference are posed, and neatly resolved.

2.5.5 Literary Criticism:

As far back as the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft was practising a kind of feminist criticism in her Vindication of Rights of woman (1795) when she attacked the popular "sentimental" novels of her time for making women readers think they were as silly and helpless and incompetent as they were depicted as being. In this century, Virginia Woolf (A Room of one's Own) (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir, (The Second Sex) (1949) have provided pioneering analyses of the problems encountered by women as writers and readers.

Woolf points out that all the institutions of higher learning have for thousands of years been controlled by men and functioned solely for their benefit, all the wealth and power of the world is concentrated in their hands. Men always comment that there are

brilliant women portrayed in old tales. But when one reads works of history or of poetry, a strange picture of woman begins to emerge:

"Imaginatively she is of the highest importance: practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could hardly spell, and was the property of husband."

Men never fail to mention that there are no great women writers in the past, but never ask the question why? Even if a woman in Shakespeare's time had Shakespeare's genius, she would not have been able to write. It is "unthinkable", says Woolf, that a woman of that time would have had Shakespeare's talent: "For genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people. It is not born today among the working classes. How, then, could it have been born among women whose work began almost before they were out of the nursery, who were forced to it by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom?"

Woolf offers a lucid analysis of the conditions which produce "great" literature, conditions which have for centuries eluded all but a few women. Speaking of the modern period, she argues that without an independent income, solitude and privacy and leisure, no writer of either sex can attain "greatness". In this classic of the feminist tradition, first published in 1929, Virginia Woolf touched upon many of the themes which were to preoccupy twentieth century literary critics writing from a women's perspective.

A profound and comprehensive critique of women's contemporary situation was offered by Simone de Beauvoir in 1949, preceding by more than a decade the great second wave of the women's movement in the West. De Beauvoir declared that a woman was not born a woman, but was made feminine by society. Man sees himself as the absolute Subject, and woman is the primordial other, often and Other who consents to the process of othering. While the first part of the book deals with the biological, psychoanalytical and historical materialist viewpoints regarding women as well as with historical evidence and myths about women, the second part examines the lives of women in the modern world. In 1970, two major feminist works were published: Germaine Greer's "The Female Eunuch," (1971) and Kate Millett's "Sexual Politics" (1977). Millett's book covered a range of writers, from Henry Miller to Sigmund Freud, persuasively showing the "interests" which underlie ostensibly realistic or neutral depictions of women. She pointed out that women in male fiction, for instance, occupied a limited range of positions: mothers, "good" devoted wives, "bad" dominant wives, betrayers, seductresses, prime spinsters or muses. Her argument was not only that the real world of women's experience did not find a place in literature, but also that social and cultural contexts must be studied in order for literature to be understood.

Germaine Greer's book, again not focussing exclusively on literature, nevertheless contributed to the shaping of the agendas of feminist literary criticism. Like Millett, she

too does not examine literature in isolation from the culture which forms it. In Shakespeare's plays, for example, she finds depictions of love and marriage which indicate that romantic love had become, by the 16th century, the basis of marriage, and that the nuclear family was beginning to emerge as the primary unit in a developing consumer economy. In fact, tracing the growing tyranny of the nuclear family in the West is one of the important concerns of Greer's book.

What these feminist critics were able to demonstrate was that "literature" was profoundly historical, that it was a cultural product rather than an individual one, that so-called great authors were not exempt from any critique of their culture. Millett and the others addressed mainly the writings of men, and examined the stereotypes of women they presented. The critics who came slightly later tended to focus on writing by women, and to explore the possibilities of resistance offered by the activity of writing. In positing an alternative space for women, these critics appeared to give up on the explicit critique of the dominant culture and may be even on the idea of change that was so central to feminism.

In the process of asserting the femaleness of all women's writing, the attempt has been to "naturalize" female literary creativity in such a way as to make universal a specific 19th century set of concerns. In this theory of women's writing, "patriarchal", as Tharu and Lalita suggest, "bears no relation to class, race, or empire". Similarly, "The cultural context for women's writing is (seen as) a sort of female enclave untouched by masculinist assumptions and the woman writer is imaged as free from ideology". The idea of the female writer eternally and universally struggling for release from patriarchy leaves no room for understanding how male domination, and female subordination, is inflected by class, caste or colonialism.

Although the powerful and positive assertion of a "female nature" for instance, was made possible by feminism, ultimately such an assertion takes away the critical edge of feminist politics and assimilates it painlessly into bourgeois humanism. Feminists, especially after the 1960s, had proudly drawn on women's experience to legitimize and validate the demands they were making. Feminist politics included a critical re-interpretation of women's experience which challenged patriarchal ideology, an ideology strengthened in its contemporary formulation by 19th century liberal humanist doctrine. Liberal humanism claimed the centrality of man in the universe, and saw the individual as the source of all meaning and action. The period of the Industrial Revolution in Europe saw the triumphant rise of capitalism and the installation of the notion of the "individual" in bourgeois political economy, philosophy, law and the newly emerging social sciences.

As a consequence of the series of displacements caused by the diverse critiques of liberal humanism, including Marxism (with its proposition that social being determines consciousness), psychoanalysis (with its idea that the individual mind is not a coherent whole but comprises several parts often in conflict with each other) and structural linguistics (with its concept of language as a chain of signs with an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified, and the notion of meaning as differential), expressive realism and individualism have been seriously undermined.

2.6 Summing up

A feminist politics which seeks to establish solidarity among women all over the world must not only be sensitive to the differences between women; it must also avoid conflating representations of women in gender ideology with the way women experience their lives. Feminists must be attentive to the fact that what they can draw on as a political resource is not some unmediated reality in itself but an interpretation of their experience. The radical possibilities of transformation inherent in feminism depend on the nature of this interpretation, an interpretation, that enables the critique not only of everyday life but of the very categories with which we perceive the world.

2.7 Model Examination Questions

- I. Answer the following essay type questions in about 30 lines each
 1. Discuss three major concepts of Women's Studies. What, according to you, is their validity in analysing women's lives ?
 2. What are some of the different areas of scholarship on which feminist thought has had an impact ? Discuss in detail at least three such areas.
- II. Write Short Notes to the following Questions in about 15 lines each.
 1. Write about the scope of Women's studies.
 2. What is the impact of women's studies on History.
 3. Give a short account of impact on women's studies on the sciences.

2.8 Recommended Books

- Alison Jaggar : "Feminist Politics and Human Nature" Sussex : Harvester, 1983
- Ashish Nandi (ed) : "Science, Hegemony and violence", OUP Delhi 1990
- Bina Aggarwal : "Structures of Patriarchy" : State, Community and Household in modernising Asia", Kali for Women, New Delhi 1988.
- Ehrenreich English, : "For there own Good" : 150 years of Experts Advice to women, Anchor, New York, 1978
- Gloria Bowles and Renate Duell, Klein (ed), : "Theories of Women's studies, London : Routledge and kegan Paul, 1983
- Hillary Rose and Steven Rose (ed) : "Radicalisation of Science", Macmillian, London 1976
- Joan W. Scott, : "Gender and the Politics of History", Columbia University Press, New York 1988
- Juliet Mitchell: "Women The Longest Revolution Virago, London 1984,
- Lerner Virago : "The Majority Finds its past Lerner, placing women in History", OUP New York 1979 :

Mackinnon : "Towards a Feminist Theory of the State" Harward Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1989
Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a world Scale : women in the International division of Labour zed books, London, 1986

Ruby Regyna Reitered) Towards an Anthropology of women (monthly Review Press, New York, 1975
Simone de Beauvoir. The second sex, Parshley Alfred konpf, New York 1952

Sandra Harding, Introduction to edited volume Feminism and Methodology, Indian Univ. Press Bloomington 1987

Turil moi : "Sexual Textual politics", methwel London 1988.

Wollstonecraft, : "Vindication of Rights", ww Norton New York 1975.

Virginia Woolf, : "A Room of one's own" Harcount New York 1987.

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BLOCK – II

Theoretical Approaches to Women's Studies

Unit - 3 : Liberal and Radical Feminism

Unit - 4 : Marxist and Socialist Feminism

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Unit - 3 : Liberal Feminism and Radical Feminism

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3.0 Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able.

- To analyse liberal feminist perception of womens subordination and their approach to feminism.
- Analyse the approach of Radical feminism and its perception of womens issues.

3.1 Introduction

Most approaches to feminism classify it into four main categories : liberal feminism, radical feminism, marxist feminism and socialist feminism. Such a classification is useful in terms of distinguishing within feminism different analyses, ideologies, and strategies which then lead to different political practices. While all these feminist groups agree on the fact of women's subordination in almost all societies, the differences among them obtain because their perception of the reason for, and the nature of, the subordination itself vary. The particular mode of theorizing and acting upon an issue then characterizes the identity of a feminist group.

However, the boundaries between these different schools is not as rigid as the mode of classification may suggest. In fact, most feminist groups seek to critically and usefully engage with one another, learn from one another, review their fundamental assumptions in the light of criticisms from other groups and also collectively consolidate upon their gains.

3.2 Liberal Feminism

The liberal feminist goal has been to incorporate women into the mainstream of public life. They assert that the absence of women from the 'public' sphere was not due to a lack of ability or a conscious decision to stay away, but because women were denied opportunities. Liberal feminists, consistent with the liberal ideals they uphold have constantly sought the repeal of sex biased laws. Liberal thought believes that public law could help change private attitudes better than struggle or protest. Their strategy for social change involves the use of rational argument, for which they make use of various media. They write and publish books, appear on television, sit on committees and stand for public office. Their demand for sex blindness in public attitudes began to appear inconsistent with their demands for gender specific privileges such as state sponsored child care and pregnancy benefits. The liberal feminist dependence on state intervention seems inconsistent with the liberal belief that the state should stringently limit its interventions. Liberal feminists however believe that the state should intervene on behalf of women to change gender discriminatory laws, to provide benefits to women which would permit them to enter public life to best fulfill their self-interest. The liberal feminist frame work reveals several loopholes in liberal theory.

3.2.1 Normative dualism

The liberal conception of normative dualism assumes a mind-body dualism where the individual's rational abilities were privileged over her/his physical person. Normative dualism implied that individuals are essentially self-sufficient and able to exist apart from society. Alison Jaggar has characterised this as "political solipsism", implying thereby that individuals are essentially solitary beings who make decisions independent of society.

3.2.2 Abstract individualism

Abstract individualism, another principle central to liberal theory complements the principle of normative dualism. It assumes that individuals have personal beliefs and convictions which are independent of societal influence. Critics of liberalism have pointed out that ideas do not exist outside of society and individual opinions are formed through interactions in society. Naomi Scheman comments that humans have "emotions, beliefs, abilities and so on only in so far that they are embedded in a social web of interpretation that serves to give meaning to the bare date of inner experience and behaviour" (Scheman quoted by Jaggar, 43).

3.2.3 Rationality

The Liberal belief in the freedom of the individual explains the liberal conception of rationality. This asserts that individuals were gifted with rational ability which enabled them to make rational decisions. Rationality in liberal thought legitimates the instrumentalist position which equates rational ability with the maximization of individual utility. Liberal theory believes that individual rational ability would prevent individuals from exploiting their rational abilities at the expense of the common good. The conception of community and social responsibility is at odds with the liberal belief in individual autonomy. It does not take into account that individuals may be mistaken in their conception of their own interest, or even in their perception of truth and morality.

Liberal feminism's close dependence on liberal theory is responsible for the male bias intrinsic to its framework. Liberal feminism, following the principles of liberal thought reveals a similar legitimization of reason and rational abilities. This attitude ignores the fact that women's reproductive biology compels them to have a closer relationship with their physical selves than liberal theory would permit. Women's experience of interdependence would prevent them from conceptualising theories such as those of normative dualism, abstract individualism and rationality. All these theories privilege the individual existing apart from society, a situation quite distinct from women's experiential field. The liberal theory of equal rights is similarly biased to favour the male individual. It does not consider that individuals of different sexes, races and classes have differing needs which a theory based upon universalized standards of rationality, equality and 'fair' competition is hardly able to address.

Liberal feminism's bias towards the rational has influenced its devaluation of any work involving physical labour. This principle explains their contempt for household work and consequently for women who have to undertake this work. Alison Jaggar has used a word coined by E.V. Spelman, "somatophobia" which means hostility towards the body, to refer to this liberal bias (Jaggar, 1986). Somatophobia, could be cited as a probable reason why, within the liberal framework, women have been associated with nature and consequently their rational abilities have been devalued. The privileging of the rational provides justification for the exaggerated benefits provided to workers who exercise their 'minds' more than they do their bodies. This closes off any space in which manual workers can demand higher wages and more amenable working conditions. The distinctions maintained between mental and manual labour epitomise a decidedly antidemocratic conception of society which liberal theory should address.

3.2.4. Equality of Opportunity.

Central to liberal theory are the principles of equality of opportunity and meritocracy. Liberal feminism used these principles to argue for equal rights and opportunities for women. When considered together the principles of equal opportunity and meritocracy invalidate each other. It does not account for the fact that differences in situation such as race, class and sex often do not permit individuals to claim their rights. The theory of meritocracy similarly ignores the fact that what comprises the meritorious will always be determined by those who occupy positions of power and privilege. A

meritocracy generally tends towards conservatism because the 'meritorious' rarely choose to share their class privilege, instead it (the meritocracy) works towards perpetuating class differences by consciously excluding 'outsiders'.

3.2.5. Public and Private sphere

The liberal preoccupation with privacy is echoed in the liberal feminist separating of the public and the private sphere. The liberal valuation of the rational, which is associated with the public sphere, which has been associated with the non-rational.

This association of the non-rational with the private is probably a consequence of the confinement of areas such as women, sexuality and procreation to this sphere. While liberal feminism has not offered a detailed challenge to the existence of the private sphere, they have succeeded through the help of legislation to expand the space of the private sphere. Using the liberal argument, that each individual has the right to maximise self-interest they have fought for legislations providing women with child care assistance. They have also used the law to repeal laws which are discriminatory in areas of marriage, divorce and inheritance. It is around the subject of sexuality that liberal feminists exercise the liberal demarcation of the spheres of the private and the public most stringently.

3.2.6. Capitalist State:

Since liberal feminist thought draws most heavily upon liberal theory, it validates the conception of the capitalist state. Liberal feminism does not believe that the subordination of women was a structural feature of capitalism. It therefore does not perceive any need to oppose the capitalist system. The task that liberal feminists have set for themselves is the application of the liberal principles of equality, liberty, autonomy, justice and self-fulfilment to women. Liberal thought conceives of the state as a neutral body which would limit its interference in the lives of its citizens to the barest minimum. The state's primary function was to ensure that all individuals were able to claim and exercise their fundamental rights of equal access and privilege. Liberal feminists have used this argument to justify the entry of the state into spheres which has earlier been perceived as part of the private sphere. Liberal feminists argue that women's compulsory commitments to the household prevented them from utilizing their full potential.

3.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism unlike or Marxist feminism does not draw upon or operate within a large political or philosophical framework. Liberal and Marxist feminisms have histories that are 300 and 100 years old respectively. Radical feminism is however a fairly contemporary phenomenon, having its beginnings in the late sixties. Though radical feminism has drawn upon the thinking of earlier feminist work the originality and radical thrust of its insights challenges earlier perspectives. Its emphasis on feelings and interpersonal relationships marks radical feminism clearly as a 20th century phenomenon.

Radical feminist ideas first began to be articulated by women in the new left movement. These women however soon discovered that even within this movement

which was committed to social justice and peace, women were marginalised and forced to occupy subordinate positions. The experiences of these largely white, middle-class and college educated women were the sources from which radical feminism developed. The discovery that sexual oppression cut across class, race and ideological persuasion convinced these women that they should work together to uncover the roots of sexual oppression. Their decision to call themselves radical feminists refers to their commitment to this intention. This later developed into their conviction that women's oppression was at the root of all other forms of oppression.

The newer radical feminists no longer emerge from among the ranks of left groups. Moreover, they do not work within an explicit political theory. Radical feminism is increasingly a grass roots movement which nurtures a thriving women's culture whose aim is to provide a feminist alternative in fields as diverse as culture, health, sexuality and even technology. Radical feminism has been influenced by various traditions as colourful and exotic as zen and astrology. Given this wide range of influences it is not surprising that though radical feminism has provided many invaluable insights into the nature of women's oppression it has not been able to articulate an unified theory.

The common class and radical background shared by the majority of radical feminists ensured a universality in their vision and consequently an inability to sympathise with the perspectives of women from other class and racial groups. The increasing sophistication of recent feminist thought derives from the work of a group of French radical feminists. Their work and the efforts of a few radical feminists has attempted to avoid the earlier tendency towards a false universalization and work, instead towards conceptualising a more materialist and dynamic analysis. Radical feminism's contribution to feminist analysis has been its attempts towards making visible the distinction between the sexes, not only in obvious spheres such as employment and the law but also in the areas which comprised the 'personal' such as marriage, sexual choice, Customs such as food habits and dress codes. One of the most sustained and textured radical feminist analyse of women's oppression was Shulamith Firestone's . *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970). Firestone, uses materialist analyses to analyses society. She however made a radial break with Marxist method in her startlingly original perception of sex as the primary category of analysis.

Since radical feminism has no definite paradigms there are numerous theories which they espouse. Alison jaggar has identified four different radical feminist conceptions of human nature. They are: sex roles and androgyny; women's biology as a problem; women's biology as a solution; and one is not born a woman.

3.3.1 Women's Biology as Problem

In their attempt to discover a material cause for the historical oppression of women, radical feminists turned to biology. Biological difference was the most obvious area of difference between the sexes. Ironically, biology has been often used by anti-feminists to explain the oppression of women as intended by nature. Various radical feminists have interpreted biology differently to identify the cause for the subordination of women.

For some, women's oppression by men was necessary in order to suppress women's "biologically determined inordinately high, cyclic sexual drive" (Jaggar, 890.) The continuance of societal life was dependant upon the distinctly ant-feminist rationale of the continued subordination of women.

Susan Brownmiller believes that women's oppression was rooted in human anatomy, in the fact that men were anatomically able to rape women, while women were incapable of retaliating in kind. Brownmiller's is essentially a liberal position which locates the possibility of change in legal reform and protection for women.

The most original and thought provoking of these biologically based studies is Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectic of Sex (1970). Firestone was influenced by Marxist thinking and attempted to provide a historical and materialist analysis of women's oppression. She perceived Marx and Engel's preoccupation with the production of food, clothing and shelter too narrow because it paid scant attention to procreation. For Firestone, the relations of procreation rather than production constitute the base, what is ordinarily called the economy was better viewed as part of the superstructure.

In the final analysis however Firestone's analysis falls short of the radical ideal because it holds male and female anatomy rather than the institution of male dominance responsible for women's oppression. She does not call for a political struggle but instead looks towards an androgynous world, this vision does not fit in with the increasingly separatist and militant tendencies of grassroots radical feminism.

3.3.2. Women's Biology as Solution

Since the 70's radical feminists have become increasingly reluctant to locate the causes of women's subordination in women themselves - they see it as part of the syndrome of blaming the victim. Instead with increasing radical feminist research to substantiate their claims the belief has been strengthened that male biology is responsible for women's subordination. Feminist research has shown that men control women through the threat of physical violence and rape. This fear, radical feminists believe has prevented women from participating fully or energetically in varied activities. The radical feminist insight into male aggression derived from their conviction that men were dangerously different from women, and this difference lay in male biology. Several feminist writers speculated that male aggression was due to the presence of the male hormone testosterone. Interestingly the same argument was used by the anti-feminist writer Steven Goldberg in his book The Inevitability of Patriarchy (1973) to legitimise male supremacy. This theory about male aggression had a strong effect on certain radical feminists who now began to advocate women's separatism by forming women only societies. This vision was elaborated upon in the radical feminist cult novel The Wanderground : Stories by Hill Women (1979), by Sally Miller Gearhart.

Other radical feminists used the biology argument differently. They saw female biology as superior because of its lifegiving abilities. Radical Feminists began to perceive psychological qualities in women which derived from their biological ability to bear children. This idea developed into the conviction that women had special powers which made them closer to nature, the non human world. These powers affirmed the inherent

superiority of female biology. Much of radical feminist writing is poetic and mystic, celebrating women's instinctual capacities. Writers such as Susan Griffin and Mary Daly relate these instinctual abilities to women's latent 'wildness'.

The radical feminist move to celebrate women and women's culture is generated by a revolutionary impulse. In doing this they have subverted and undermined patriarchal values by celebrating those precise ideas which patriarchy had degenerated such as women's closeness to nature, their ability to perceive the world through feelings rather than through reason, the rejecting of the heterosexual ideal of marriage and motherhood, through the adoption of lesbianism, the celebrating of the varieties of women's bodies and bodily functions such as menstruation which patriarchy had seen as unclean.

3.3.3. One is not born a woman :

One of the most important contributions of radical feminism was to make the invisible, visible. Practices which had once been considered the natural lot of women under the gaze of feminist political analyses began to appear as socially modified. Radical feminists analysed institutions such as marriage, compulsory heterosexuality, childbearing, prostitution and housework. However, in a move opposed to radical feminists who celebrated women as part of the natural world, a body of work opposing this position has emerged from a group of French radical feminists and a few American radical feminists. They include Christine Delphy, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Monique Wittig. These feminists are trying to elaborate upon a theory of feminine writing or 'écriture féminine'.

The goal of radical feminists is the creation of a sexless society where the relations between master and slave are rendered useless.

Radical feminists thinking has enormously widened the scope of contemporary political theory by foregrounding the subordination of women. By doing this they forced the question of women's oppression into the political domain. The radical feminists' intention has been to uncover the structures by which women have been suppressed and through this process evolve strategies to destroy them. Radical feminist thinking has enriched the conceptual scope of feminist thinking by their theories, such as the 1960s slogan, the "personal is political" and the conceptualization of patriarchy as figuring the system and method of male domination.

The "personal is political" was a slogan used by various feminist groups. It was however the radical feminists who used it to refer to their conviction that the male domination of women entered every sphere of women's lives, even those designated as the 'personal' or private, by liberal theory. Radical feminists asserted that there was no distinction between the public or the political and personal spheres. The oppression of women existed across these boundaries to validate their conviction that the unequal relationship between the sexes should be analysed under the rubric of "sexual politics".

Since radical feminists perceive the subordination of women as universal and all pervasive it follows that they should also believe that the oppression of women was the primary form of domination. This therefore implies that it is women's subordination

which ought to be dealt with before any other form of oppression. The perception that women's oppression was a universal phenomenon explains the radical feminist conviction that women should be seen as a "class whose membership is defined by sex" (Jaggar, 102). The concept of sex-class which characterises women as the oppressed class has as an oppositional force, men as the ruling class. Such a categorisation explains the radical feminist conceptualization of the male ruling class as comprising the "patriarchy"

3.3.4. Patriarchy

In conscious feminist opposition to patriarchy, radical feminists suggested that women adopt matriarchy as a social structure where women would rule. The matriarchy would involve the reversal of patriarchal practices.

Using concepts such as patriarchy, the personal is political and the conviction that women's oppression was universal, radical feminists were able to identify a few of the ways in which men oppress women. Since radical feminists locate the causes of women's oppression in sexual difference the areas and methods of their oppression are based upon women's sexuality. These include motherhood which is forced upon the majority of women, sexual slavery to which women are subject, and finally to male control of women's bodies.

3.3.4.1. Rape

Patriarchal society underlines the violence of its attitudes towards women by attempting to normalize acts such as rape. It does this by often claiming that the 'victim' deserved to be raped either because she asked for it, or because she had sexual relations with more than one man. Another reason that patriarchy has often used to validate rape is the discourse focussed around the mythical strength of the male sexual drive. Such reasoning stresses that the threat of punishment was the only method by which men could be dissuaded from making rape common practice. However, this does simply that if the constraints of the law were removed women would immediately be victim to male sexual aggression. The unchecked rape and abuse of women and children during periods of war or other crisis provides evidence of this.

The threat of rape, from which women can never be free of is one of the methods that patriarchy has used to control women. Susan Griffin believes that rape is an act of violence which always carries with it the threat of death (Jaggar, 262). Radical feminists see rape as a weapon that men have used to ceaselessly convince women of their powerlessness and their subordination to the male establishment.

3.3.4.2. Prostitution:

Another form of sexual slavery which has thrived under patriarchy is prostitution. Radical feminists perceive prostitution as another form of rape or sexual coercion. Kathleen Barry in Female Sexual Slavery has documented the existence of a world wide "traffic" in women. Not only are prostitutes coerced into their profession for male sexual gratification, they are simultaneously branded as fallen women who are denied access to the 'decency' and 'decorum' of the middleclass world.

3.3.5. Lesbianism

One of the most crucial of the radical feminist proposals for social change was the call that women give up compulsory heterosexuality and turn instead to lesbianism. Since radical feminism perceives marriage as an institution similar to slavery, the only way to escape and oppose this was to either 'walk out' of one's marriage or totally negate the option by choosing to remain single. Radical feminists conceive of marriage as a means by which women's insecurities compel them to support patriarchal structures. They however perceive the institution of heterosexuality as one that is more deeply entrenched than even marriage. Heterosexuality, radical feminists believe keep women from building strong ties with each other, while supporting patriarchy. Radical feminists like Ti-Grace Atkinson have called for the expansion of the implication of the word lesbian from only the sexual to include also the continuum of women's friendships, either political or emotional. Other feminists have opposed this view by claiming that to remove the sexual from the word lesbian would result in a loss of its subversive capacities. The word lesbian would then begin to seem almost synonymous with feminist. The decision to choose to be a lesbian is perceived by many radical feminists to be a political choice made in the interests of the struggle for women's release from sexual slavery. The political relevance of being feminist is evident from the fact that lesbianism threatens patriarchy by removing women from spheres where they exist as sexual objects for men.

Radical feminists see lesbianism as the means by which sexual relations could be restructured, this however is not the only method they espouse towards the creation of a women's culture. Radical feminists have undertaken to make good the severe shortfall in healthcare, educational and employment opportunities available to women. They have therefore developed communes, often rural communes where women live and work and share equitably of the produce. They have started healthcare centres which provides quality healthcare for women at cheaper prices than that provided by the patriarchy. Radical feminists have consciously attempted to revive knowledge systems which had once been associated with women such as witch craft, midwifery, ancient goddess cults etc. Radical feminist institutions work towards fulfilling those needs of women which patriarchy does not and cannot hope to fulfill. It attempts to provide a work environment devoid of the pressures of hierarchy, sexual harrassment, dangerous working conditions and unequal pay scales. These institutions work on socialist principles quite distinct from those advocated by Marxism. The radical feminist, socialist endeavour is as deeply concerned with the means of production as with the ends.

Radical feminists protest does not have the organized appearance of Marxist protests. It generally involves small groups of people attacking patriarchal institutions, not perhaps with the belief that they would destroy it as much as with the intention to reveal the existence and the depredations of these institutions to the majority of people unaware of this.

The radical feminist validation of lesbianism as the only alternative to patriarchy does not take into account the fact that most women are unable to make these choices because of their race and class positions. The radical feminist position on motherhood

similarly does not take into account the fact that the majority of women cannot exercise their choice as to whether or not they want to have children. Women from third world nations and women of colour often have little access to reliable contraception. Alternately, these women have functioned as guinea pigs for researchers on reproductive technologies from the industrialised world. They have often been subject to forced sterilisation programmes. These and other similarly situated women are far removed from the radical feminist vision of women who have seized control of their bodies.

It is ironic that while the radical feminist insistence on the political significance of reproductive biology challenges traditional conceptions of the 'natural', many other radical feminists continue to conceive of reproductive biology as a given. This position undermines the insights of various researchers who have attempted to show that just as biology determines social organization, society similarly modifies biology. Marxists believe for instance that biology is not a pre-social, pre-historical given. The hand, for example is both a product of labour, as much as it is an organ of labour. Moreover, biological determinism, has often been used to justify and perpetuate various manifestly unjust and cruel social systems, such as racism, slavery, warfare and sexual discrimination. One method of countering the 'logic' of biological determinism, which bases itself on a supposed universality, is through the citing of alternate examples. Feminists, for example, have often called upon the work of Margaret Mead to counter anti-feminist beliefs that the sexual division of labour was a trans-historical and natural given. Biology, researchers have determined is not a presocial given which remains constant but is constantly being modified by factors such as physical environment and technological and social development. An alternative to a simplistic biological determinist argument would be the elaborating of a dialectical and historical perspective on human sex differences. Alison Jaggar has pointed out that a dialectical perspective would challenge the distinction between sex and gender that earlier feminists had established. Within this framework, biology or sex was a fixed entity, while gender was perceived as a set of variable social norms which determined the behavioural patterns of the sexes.

3.4. Summing UP.

Liberal feminism has derived a great deal from Liberal thought. These include liberal conceptions about normative dualism, abstract individualism, rationality, egoism, competition, individual autonomy and self fulfilment, limited state intervention, the distinction between the private and public realms, and the validation of Capitalism as an economic and political system. However it is these very principles on liberalism and consequent liberal feminism which are open to critics as shown about.

Radical feminist claims about the nature and extent of women's oppression are both a historical and universalist. These claims do not take into account the variety of ways in which women have withstood and resisted male domination. This historical perspective on patriarchy provides room for interpretations that verge on the biologically deterministic.

These critiques of radical feminism notwithstanding, its contribution to the feminist struggle can never be underestimated. Radical feminist thinking succeeded in destroying

the facade which separated the political or public realms from the private or personal by foregrounding sexuality and sexual difference as unexplored areas in political thought. Radical feminists also conceptualised male dominance in terms of patriarchy which made evident to feminists the systemic nature of male oppression of women.

3.5. Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following Essay- type Questions in about 30 lines each.

1. What are the principles of Liberal feminism.
2. Analyse the approach of Radical Feminism and its perception of women's issues.

II. Write short answers to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What is Normative Dualism?
2. Give a short account of Abstract individualism.
3. Write about the radical feminism perception of women's biology as a problem?
4. What is Lesbianism? Explain the approach of radical feminist to it.

3.6. Books for further reading.

Barret Michele, "Women's Oppression Today" : Verso, London 1980.

Jagger, Alison, M: "Feminist Political and Human Nature", New Jersey, Rowman and Allan held, 1983

Joan. W.scott, "Gender and the politics of History", Columbia University Press, New York 1988.

Toril Moi - "Sexual / Textual Politics", Methuel, London 1988

Sheila Rawbotham :in Degral Hillery Fen "Right Beyond the Fragments : Feminism and the under of socialiam" merven press, London 1977.

Penguin 1972; 1973 Simon de Bouveior - Second Sex Deugren 1972.

Unit - 4 : Marxist Feminism and socialist Feminism

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- 4.1 Introduction.
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4.0. Objectives.

After going through this Unit you should be able to.

- Analyse Marxist feminist perception of women's oppression.
- Analyse the concepts of Socialist Feminism and their perception of women's role in economy, domestic sphere, Market and family.

4.1. Introduction

The following account of Marxist feminism is situated within the framework of traditional Marxism (restricted largely to the writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.)

Marxism as a political and economic theory is concerned with the system of capitalism. It primarily focuses on the exploitative class relationship (i.e. the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class) which forms the basis of capitalism. Apart from providing a detailed negative critique of capitalism, Marxist theory also argues that the factors leading to the downfall of capitalism are inherent within the capitalist system itself and therefore it also provides a blueprint of the society that will succeed capitalism. This society is called a socialist one since the means of production in it will

belong to the society as a whole.

4.2. Marxist feminism

Given that the emphasis of Marxism is the attainment of a classless (and not a genderless) society within socialism, Marxism does not have a comprehensive theory of women's oppression. Yet, Marxism's contribution to feminism is enormous in terms of the conceptual tools that it has provided. The Marxist method of historical materialist analysis in particular has proved invaluable to feminist analyses. A historical materialist approach is opposed to universalisms and notions of human essences. Instead, this method of investigation stresses on the need to attend to historical specificities, especially, details about the mode of production as it exists within the period under study.

Marxist feminism (and as we shall see, socialist feminism as well) has used this method to great advantage in analysing women's subordination and oppression.

4.2.1. Capitalism the cause of Women's oppression.

Marxist feminism, identifies capitalism as the main cause of women's oppression. In this context, Engels "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" which explains the link between women's oppression and capitalism is treated as the foundational text. Most feminists have felt the need to engage with Engels work either to use it as the starting point for developing their ideas or to state their difference with the explanation that he provides.

According to Engels, pre-capitalist societies were characterized by a "natural" division of labour between the sexes. Women looked after child rearing and domestic work while men were responsible for providing the means of subsistence. There was no hierarchy involved in such an arrangement, though Engels suggests that women may have been dominant since they could trace a common descent as opposed to men. However, according to Engels analysis, agricultural production changed the equation between the sexes by creating a product surplus. Since these developments took place in the male sphere, men claimed the ownership of this surplus. Now men began to dominate women and their sexuality, since they wanted to pass on their property only to their biological offspring. Engels analysis until this point is applicable to all women. Under capitalism, however, he feels that only the bourgeois woman is subordinated in this manner because she has no economic independence, whereas, the working class woman is on equal terms with the working class man.

According to Marxist feminism, therefore, capitalism is the sole reason for the oppression of women. Marxist feminism recognizes two kinds of oppression that women face in a capitalist society-- as workers earning their wages and as unpaid housewives. As paid labour force (i.e. working class women), the oppression of women is regarded as being similar to that of the working class man who experiences alienation. The market is perceived as an area free from sex specific exploitation.

Marxist feminist theory traces the second kind of oppression (that of housewives)

also to capitalism. Marxist feminists argue that the exclusion of a large majority of women from the work force serves the interests of capitalism. The ideology of the woman's role in the family requires her to look after the interests of the family members without expectation of payment for the services rendered. It is pointed out that his non-payment towards services that contribute to the reproduction of the modes of production (labour power through procreation, by attending to the sick and disabled etc..) proves beneficial for capitalism but entails oppression of women.

Under capitalism, the woman's work at home is excluded from capitalist relations and is placed in the sphere of emotions instead of economics so that the woman has no economic independence in spite of the enormous amount of housework that she does. The lack of economic independence, Engels points out, leads to the control of women's sexuality by men and this lack of economic independence makes her a victim of male dominance.

Therefore, Marxist feminist theory believes that the liberation of women can be achieved only with the overthrow of capitalism and through the institution of communism. As a first step, however, they believe that women must enter the public realm and become economically independent so that they can develop their own identities instead of being treated as sex objects. Marxist feminist theory also calls for socialization of domestic work within the communist society so that the woman can develop her potential. It points out that in the pre-capitalist division of labour, house work and child rearing was collective and hence to that extent public.

As mentioned earlier, Marxism has contributed immensely to feminism by challenging liberal notions of universalisms and abstract individualism. It has argued that fundamental social changes are required to eliminate exploitation of the working class and of women instead of mere appeals to the state. It has enabled the development of the very important feminist notion of social constructionism or "gender". However, Marxism has not adequately addressed the question of women's oppression because of its problematic assumptions about women's nature. These assumptions result from gender-blindness in various analyses. Though traditional Marxism recognizes class as influencing every walk of life, it does not attribute the same importance to gender. It categorises some issues as "women's issues" suggesting thereby that women are dominated/ exploited in only certain areas.

4.2.2 Feminist Critic of Traditional Marxism

From the feminist point of view, the main problem with traditional Marxism is that it upholds the importance and independence of the analytical category of capitalism to the exclusion of all including patriarchy. Moreover, even in the application of its theory of capitalism, Marxist theory has not been consistent. It doesn't apply the key Marxist concepts to women's household work. It believes that progress and historical development can take place only in the public domain of production while the private domain to which women, sexuality and procreation is assigned is unchanging. This distinction minimizes the importance of women's labour outside the market and hence

perpetuates notions of male supremacy and male dominance. It also obfuscates the fact that women's subordination is part of the economic foundation of the capitalist society. In fact, by accepting the distinction of the private and the public, Marxist theory unwittingly accepts a basic feature of the capitalist ideology that it seeks to undermine.

Socialist and radical feminists have also criticized traditional Marxism for not addressing issues such as marriage, prostitution, rape, sexual discrimination or harassment. Since it is blind to the sex segregation of jobs within the market, traditional Marxism believes that with the entry of women into the sphere of production, their oppression will end. This solution doesn't explain the sexual harassment that women continue to face both within and outside the market even after they are employed as wage workers.

There are a number of other problems as well with Marxist feminism. For instance, Engels historical explanation of women's subordination doesn't explain how surplus was first created in the male sphere since women were involved in food gathering before agriculture became the main occupation. Moreover, Marxist feminism doesn't explain why certain functions are allocated to women and certain others to men. It takes the sexual division of labour as "natural" and as a given. Many feminists have pointed out that though child bearing may be specific to female biology, child rearing is not and therefore men should take as much responsibility as women in bringing up children.

Feminist critics of Marxism have also pointed to the sex discrimination evident in the left revolutionary organisations. Positions of power and influence within these organisations are occupied by men, and women are expected to do clerical or menial work. This is justified by arguments that uphold the political experience and leadership qualities of the concerned men. Such arguments are ahistorical since they ignore the fact that the lack of these skills among women is grounded in a discriminatory social structure.

Therefore, a framework that has class inequality at its centre cannot address questions of male dominance or inequality of the sexes. Traditional Marxism views capitalism as the main cause of oppression and therefore believes that with the overthrow of capitalism, gender oppression too would be overcome. Therefore, many Marxists believe that feminism leads to a division within ranks. They regard feminism as bourgeois since they believe that feminism emphasises women's struggle for equality over and above that of the class struggle. However, as the account of socialist feminism reveals, feminist demand for equality recognizes the capitalist, imperialist and racist framework within which women's subordination takes place. It therefore demands the transformation of society as a whole so that these inequalities which reinforce and legitimise each other are wiped out.

4.3. Socialist Feminism:

Socialist feminism is at times conflated with Marxist feminism. It is also referred to as "materialist feminism". This is because of the importance that socialist feminism gives to the Marxist method of historical materialist analysis. However, socialist feminism

is different from Marxist feminism in a number of important ways. Like radical feminism, socialist feminism believes that earlier established political theories are incapable of addressing the question of women's oppression and so political, economic and social categories must be reconceptualized a new. Socialist feminism seeks to develop a political theory and practice that combines the most useful insights of radical feminism with Marxism while avoiding the problems associated with both these systems of thought.

4.3.1. Concept of freedom

While the socialist feminist conceptualization of freedom is rooted in the Marxist tradition, it also radically differs from it and in fact ends up transforming some of the central Marxist tenets. In contrast to liberal theorists who situate freedom in the private realm, outside the jurisdiction of state regulation (Though contradictorily, liberals look to the state itself to safeguard these rights), Marxists believe that freedom exists only in the public realm where through conscious political action the course of history is decided. Socialist feminism challenges this viewpoint by challenging the very distinction between public and private.

Marxism uses the binary opposition of public/ private. The private is demarcated as the area of sexuality and procreation in which development is not possible while the public is the social, political and economic realm where changes can be brought about. As pointed out earlier, such a viewpoint fails to take into consideration the necessary connections between, and the essential unity of the two spheres. One of the major contributions of socialist feminism has been to systematically reveal these connections to undermine the public/ private divide that has been inimical to the interests of women.

4.3.2 Rationality

Another characteristic feature of socialist feminism is that it refuses primacy to any one analytic category such as class, sex, race, nation etc.. In this respect, it is distinct from the other schools of thought. Liberal theory, for instance, privileges rationality and attributes male dominance to irrational views that can be overcome by rational arguments. Liberals insist on an essential and universal human nature thereby erasing all differences between individuals and societies. Radical feminist discourse, on the other hand, attaches a lot of importance to sexual difference since it believes this difference to be the root cause of oppression. Marxist discourse for its part emphasises the category of class as explaining all human relationships within a capitalist society. Socialist feminism differs from these perspectives in its insistence on the equal importance of categories such as gender, class, race and nationality etc.. As Alison Jaggar points out, "socialist feminism argues that capitalism, male dominance, racism and imperialism are intertwined so inextricably that they are inseparable; consequently the abolition of any of these systems of domination requires the end of all of them. Socialist feminism claims that a full understanding of the capitalist system requires a recognition of the way in which it is structured by male dominance and, conversely, that a full understanding of contemporary male dominance requires a recognition of the way it is organized by the capitalist division of labour." (PP124-125)

4.3.3. Individual Identity

Apart from the importance that socialist feminism gives to these necessarily linked aspects of an individual's identity, it also draws on a number of other sources to explain women's subordination and suggest ways of overcoming the problem. Towards this end, socialist feminist theory uses psychoanalysis to help explain the connections between gender identities (masculinity and femininity) and the hierarchised sexual division of labour. Psychoanalysis together with the historical materialist method is used to reconceptualize sexuality and procreation in the interests of women.

Sexuality

Sexuality has been one of the important areas that socialist feminists have consistently tried to theorize. Given that identities of women have for the most part and in all periods been defined by their sexual and procreative functions, feminist interest has been forced to engage with the complex issue of sexuality. The radical feminist insight that sexual activity, far from being "natural", is determined by social practices and power relations between the sexes has been accepted by socialist feminists. However, they do not endorse the radical feminist viewpoint that sexual relations are unchangeable because they are biologically determined. Instead, socialist feminists seek to analyse the history of sexuality and the material conditions that shape them so as to suggest ways out of the seeming impasse of sexual discrimination against women. This historical perspective has revealed that the nature of sexual relationships has been changing along with notions about permissibility in matters of sex.

4.3.4 Women's role in economy

A number of debates within socialist feminist theory have been concerned with characterizing the economic foundations of the society and women's role in it. In their criticism of traditional Marxian theory, socialist feminists have pointed out that on the one hand Marxist theory ignores women's labour outside the market, and on the other, has been gender blind to women's work even within the sphere of the market. Therefore, it has been inadequate to the task of addressing the problem of women's domination. Socialist feminism has sought to provide the necessary corrective to this aspect of Marxist theory in its attempt at explaining the political economy of gender.

4.3.5. Women's role in domestic Sphere

Among socialist feminists while there is complete acceptance regarding the importance of the women's role within the domestic sphere, there have been differences about characterizing this contribution as "productive" or "non-productive" as understood within Marxist terminology.

"Productive labour", according to traditional Marxism, incorporates those efforts within market relations that are directly involved in the production of commodity goods. Correspondingly, "reproduction" is used to mean one of the two concepts: reproduction of the means of production which takes place at the level of the

"superstructure" where in the capitalist ideology is made predominant through the family, religion, education, law etc.: or reproduction (in the sense of procreation) of labour power. Therefore within this framework, the domestic labour of women would be termed non-productive. Some feminists have sought to reconceptualize these categories by arguing that domestic labour is linked to the market in a reciprocal way. The unpaid services of a woman within the household influences the wage rate in the market. Conversely, the market has the effect of shaping sexual and emotional relationships within the family. Therefore, they argue that women's domestic labour should be recognised as "productive labour."

4.3.6. Dichotomy of Market/family

However, other feminists hold that working within the dichotomy of market/family serves a very limited purpose. Therefore emphasis should be shifted from the nature of the goods produced in these spheres (Which marks them as distinct) to the nature of the hierarchical relationships that are evident in both the realms (the parallels between the two helping to close the gap). Within the household, the proceeds from the woman's labour is appropriated by the male head and the workman receives only maintenance in return.

Even when working within the market, women face male domination and are oppressed by the gender biased nature of the market jobs available to them. Therefore, from the women's point of view, whether within the market or outside, male dominance characterises the society. Socialist feminist analyses have emphasised this aspect while also marking the difference in the nature of domination in each of these spheres. One of the most significant contributions of socialist feminism has therefore been to trace the connections between the sexual division of labour in the domestic sphere and sexual division of labour in the market. In the process they have undermined the binary oppositions of public/private and market/family.

In keeping with their conceptualization of the problem, socialist feminists have made various suggestions for social change. They have stressed on the need for women's reproductive freedom so that she is free to decide not only in matters of procreation but in matters of sexuality as well. Once freed, they argue, from the pressure of compulsory motherhood Women will be able to develop their potential in other areas. Some feminists feel that a greater and more equal involvement of men in the process of child rearing will to a large extent eliminate the gender bias of the conscious/ unconscious mind.

Others argue that reproductive freedom can be achieved faster if social structures that shape concepts of motherhood and childrearing are changed. Since the contemporary market is sex segregated and keeps the women in low-paid and low-status jobs, women have to depend on men for bringing up children. Therefore, economic security for women increases their reproductive freedom. Alternatively, the establishment of a community childcare system would not only solve the problem of finance but would also reveal the amount of work involved in it thereby erasing the distinction between private and public. Reproductive freedom is thus not restricted to procreation and sexuality alone but is closely linked with economics as well.

Socialist feminism therefore perceives the need to change the economic foundation of society along with attitudes to women's work in order to abolish male domination. And this, as its analyses have shown, requires a necessary transformation not just in the family, in sexuality, in education, or in the work place but in just about everything.

4.4 Summing UP:-

The classification of feminism has its own advantages and disadvantages. It helps clarify the nature of differences within feminism. It also points to the constant attempt within feminism to understand and fight women's oppression. This process necessitates a continuous evaluation and modification of the existing theories. However, it also has the effect of freezing the different feminisms in a framework of incompatibility. Given that the different feminisms have altered themselves in significant ways and may continue to do so, a descriptive classification of feminism will always have to face the risk of being dated.

Marxist feminism believes that capitalism is the main cause of women's oppression. Capitalism, according to Marxist feminists, excludes a large number of women from the labour market and so renders them economically dependent on men. Working with the notion of the separatedness of the public and the private sphere, traditional Marxism regards women's labour within the domestic sphere as non-productive. Therefore, it sees women's entry into the labour market and following that their fight against the class system as the only way out of their oppression. Instead of seeing economic independence as a means of freedom for women, traditional Marxism regards it as an end in itself.

Socialist feminism seeks to combine the most liberating insights of radical feminism with that of Marxism, trying to avoid the problems of both systems at the same time. It uses the Marxist method of historical materialist analysis not only to address questions regarding the economic foundations of the society but of sexuality and procreation as well. The major contribution of socialist feminism has been in its dismantling of the oppositions between the public and the private, and the market and family. Socialist feminism recommends reproductive freedom and economic independence of women as the necessary conditions of their emancipation from a patriarchal system. It is also emphasises the transformation of other oppressive systems such as capitalism, imperialism, and racism since it believes that all these systems are inextricably interlinked.

4.5. Model Examination Questions:

I. Answer the following Questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Most feminist theories are grounded in well established political traditions. Yet the feminist theories have radically transformed the central assumptions of these traditions. Do you agree with the above statement? Substantiate your answer.
2. Feminist theory can be used as a means to the political end of attaining women's emancipation. Which of the different theories, in your opinion, best serves this end? Substantiate your answer.

3. What is the conception of human nature and human society in each of the different schools of feminist thought?

II. Write Shorts on the following Questions in about 15 Lines each.

1. Write about the feminist critic of traditional Marxism.
2. Socialist Feminist Concept of freedom.
3. How do the Socialist Feminist Perceive the women's role in economy?
4. Write about the dichotomy of market/family.

4.6. Recommended Books:

Barrett, Michele. "Women's Oppression Today". London: Verso, 1980.

Engels, Frederick. The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. New York: International Publishers, 1972.

Jaggar, Alison M. Feminist Politics and Human Nature. New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983

Ramazanoglu, Caroline. Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression. London: Routledge, 1989.

BLOCK – III

Women's Movements

Unit - 5 : Women's Movements in the west and Socialist Countries

Unit - 6 : Women's Movements in the Third World Countries

BRAOU

Unit -5 : WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE WEST AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

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5.0 Objectives :

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- Analyse the womens movements for voting rights in the west.
 - Analyse the Women's liberation movements in the west
 - Analyse the women's movements in socialist country
 - Analyse women's movement in China.
-

5.1 Introduction

Women were not treated on par with men before the advent of capitalism. They had no identity of their own and were considered as properties of men. It was man's duty to be kind to his wife and the other women. The woman had no responsibility towards herself. She could be punished "for her own good" or reprimanded for misbehaviour. Similarly woman's sexuality was under man's control. At this stage, almost all restrictions imposed on women concerned her physical self. 'Purdah' in our country is one such example. Similarly, in China, bandaging of women's feet was a custom. The smaller the woman's foot, the more beautiful it was considered. Western women were made to wear chastity belts. Though all these methods restricted women physically, the means to blunt her mental faculties were not available in the society then.

In capitalist societies that emerged later, elaborate ideologies got developed which could police our thought processes and their limits. In the present times, even though our bodies are not in purdah our minds and vision are permanently veiled and thus curtailed. Social (male) values, ideologies and moral codes have succeeded in making women internalise their own suppression and practice self-policing. Capitalism brought about a set of new values like individualism, equality, freedom, fraternity etc. The industrial revolution of early 19th century created circumstances where it was possible for women to break physical barriers and step into the outside world. Women were necessary to industry as workforce. The image of a 'new woman' was required for the emerging values of "new society". Woman was being shaped as a mother (producer who would be an ideal consumer of new bourgeoisie social values and could instill the same in the family as well. Circumstances necessitated women to come out of their purdah, break their chastity belts and out of the four walls of their houses. Woman was seen as an individual with a personality of her own, and as someone who could have certain rights along with men. Women's education, health, women's rights and voting rights were the new demands. At this stage, the struggle for voting rights, called as suffragette movement started in western countries.

In the history of movement, three basic theoretical strands can be seen. 1) liberal bourgeoisie framework 2) socialist framework 3) women's liberation framework.

5.2. Movement for Voting rights:

The origins for this movement lie in the civil liberties movement launched against the slavery of blacks in America. There were basically two main groups in this. One group has limited its demands to voting rights. They had no contact with women working in industries. The second group formed in New York went further and questioned issues like marriage, morals, tradition and organisation of labour etc. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Stanton were the chief organisers of this group and they ran a magazine "1868 revolution".

Issues like abortion, divorce, prostitution, women's bodies etc were debated in this magazine. Though the fact that injustice was meted out to women was recognised clearly, the agenda of the magazine was to change men into good people. That suppression of women is what makes men and women in this particular way was not realised fully. Time has not still come when women question their own weakness or lack of fighting spirit.

Few women in the group spread the idea of 'free love' i.e. they questioned forcible sex in marriage and contended that wife need not agree even if the husband forces her.

Though Elizebeth Stanton had propogated divorce, it was not accepted much. Workers were in a dismal position in the industry then. 'Family wages' along with regular wages became a social necessity. Granting of family wages, a landmark victory was gained after many hard fought workers struggles. It paved way for 'nuclear family' which was becoming a reality. The 19th century movement was strongly linked to the issues of marriage and family. Were there any other options available to women, other than marriage and family? So neither 'free love' nor divorce got any real support. Apart from all these, birth control devices, which were convenient to women did not exist in

those days. In these circumstances, women only supported their families and did not find fault with them. So the movement remained largely conservative.

Before we reduce voting rights struggle as a liberal movement, we have to remind ourselves of the then circumstances, the state of capitalism and the male superiority values prevailing then.

5.2.1 What were the issues that were fought and won?

We have to recognise how they have helped establish revolutionary traditions. In western countries, between 1890-1910 women were working in increasingly large numbers in industrial sector. In the family's financial structure, women's wages were as important as man's. When unemployment increased, the family was entirely dependent on the wages of women and children.

In America, in 1814 women in Lovell factory have started 'Factory Girls Album'. Here issues like working hours, lesser wages were being debated. Women who only knew managing households so far, have started recognising their capacities in the factories, and started to understand the effects of implementing their collective decisions. In the major strikes of New York and Philadelphia in 1909, 75% of workers participating in the strike were women.

5.2.2. What were the resources gained by women in these struggles?

The suffragette movement mainly brought the 'right to vote'. Pressure started for birth control devices. Middle class women in England fought for higher education, reforms in laws and property. England fought for higher education, reforms in laws and property rights. In France, right from 1840s women workers have started making efforts to have creches for children, and women's health, health of family, child care have become major issues of debate. Divorce was supported. The communes which were formed as a result of the 1848 revolution in France, have started taking measures which supported women in the families. Women who lost their men in the revolution have started getting pensions, whether they were legally wives or not. This continues to be a major revolutionary change to this day. Women formed their own clubs as they were not allowed in men's clubs. Men found this extremely difficult to accept. Whether to allow women's clubs which were "conspiring" against their superiority or to sit together with women and allow them to talk about women's liberation was a burning problem to men. It is no surprise then, that dozens of cartoons appeared lampooning women of these clubs.

With the advent of industrialization, the woman who earlier was not even responsible for herself, grew as an individual who had certain rights along with man. But if one looks at the aspect of social relations, new pressures have begun on the woman. The Nuclear family gained popular approval. The woman who was not the only one responsible in a joint family earlier, now had to bear the burden of her family. Taking care of the husband when he comes home after a hard day's work and to bring up the children with new social values in the emerging bourgeoisie society was upon her now. And if we look at the sexual relations in the Victorian age, the wife who earlier did not

know what sex meant had acquired a new sexuality. In earlier times, it was a matter of prestige in society if the husband went to a prostitute. Now she had to become mother, wife and prostitute to the husband. She had to take care to remain attractive to her husband and at the same time also see that he has a decent respect for her. Her happiness and pleasure was dependent on looking after the man's every little need all the time. In short, mentally and morally she has enormous responsibility now.

5.3. Women's liberation movement:

Around 1960s, women started to increasingly becoming aware of their 'second class citizen' status. President Kennedy set up a committee to study women's conditions in society. Esther Peterson and Eleanor Roosevelt were responsible for this move. This committee released its report in 1963. United States was the only country among western nations which did not establish creches until then. Many aspects relating to women's educational and employment opportunities were also discussed in the report. In 1960 Betty Friedan published her work 'feminine Mystique'. The book deals with middle class educated women and the loneliness in their lives and it raised a storm. Black American woman, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson wrote an essay criticising women's role in "Students non violent conditions Committee (SNCC)" which she helped set up in 1964. The other comrades in the committee only for ridiculed it. Women have started to set up special caucuses at students unions and political meetings. They had to face men's ridicule and anger. In the 1966 "students Democratic Society" convention when women demanded that the term "women's liberation" should be included in the Draft Bill, were booed and thrown out of the seminar with rotten eggs and tomatoes. Number of such incidents occurred. In 1966 "National organisation of women" was started with Betty Friedan as an important member. This organisation filed hundreds of cases in courts against discrimination of women in jobs. They demanded increased representation of women in legislatures.

A movement was started to legalise abortion. However, they refused to accept that family also plays a crucial role in the suppression of women. This movement was run in a liberal bourgeoisie framework which demanded women's rights.

In 1966, Dr. William H. Masters and Virginia Johnson published their path breaking work "Human sexual response". It is the result of extensive research on sexual feelings and experiences. This book raised a storm as it shattered long held views and beliefs in society. It exposed as a lie, that women could not have sexual pleasure and satisfaction without intercourse with men. This book proved that other parts in a woman's body are equally important in responding to sex and capable of experiencing orgasm. This was mind-blowing and revolutionary knowledge concerning women. It shattered the pride and importance men had, in their ability.

5.3.1. Consciousness raising campaign

Around this time started the "consciousness raising campaign" In 1966-67 women formed small groups and started working together. As usual, they faced scorn from

men. Similar campaign which brought revolutionary changes in China was subjected to humiliation here. Still women's liberation groups were started in all universities. Creches, nurseries and communes have started to function. Shelter homes began for destitute women and widows. In 1970, a movement started with the slogan that housewives should be recognised and compensated for their domestic labour. Women workers in factories went on strikes.

If we look back from a woman's perspective in the way the movement took shape in the 60s and 70's, it seems that the world has permanently changed. There is not enough opportunity for women to speak up as before, be it regarding equal wages, or in deciding whether to give birth to a child or not. This decade attacked this "conspiracy of silence". The myth of "Biology is destiny" was exposed. It necessarily brought a change in society where women are considered as child producing machines. A war has started between reproduction and women's freedom, especially in the background of governments' efforts to control population explosion. For the first time in history, women's sexuality has become the main issue. The rigid view that sex relations can be there only between men and women was vigorously questioned.

The first time, sexist terminology and language were questioned. Vulgarity in literature, obscene and semi-porn to pornographic language in advertisements, films and media were protested and movements started. Demands have arisen to make changes in law in these areas. A new culture is being shaped. The meaning of the very word 'politics' has changed. The situation has come now when the view that politics as pertaining to males and the outside world has dramatically altered. The issues which earlier remained in private world like family, domestic work etc have become a part of politics now. A group or an individual training to dominate or suppress others, in the name of caste, class, community or sex, irrespective of capability, intelligence or experience is now regarded as practicing oppressive politics. Women now recognise that "power" comes from having control on their own lives. Similarly, for a better understanding of this power politics, feminist movement has analysed the qualities and constructions that are exercised in 'domination politics'. The word 'knowledge' has started to acquire different connotations and meanings. It proves beyond any doubt that the present knowledge is limited and is incapable in understanding the world with women's perspective.

5.4 Women's movement in the socialist countries:

In the socialist Movements at the end of 19th century women's liberation became a live issue. Marx and Engels were not the only ones responsible for this as their writings on women's issues were not available for a long time after that. Women themselves brought the pressure and raised the question of women's liberation in Socialist Movement. Apart from this, writers and thinkers have shown the link between revolution and women's liberation. Added to the liberal feminist movements in industrially developed western countries, especially in US and UK have helped the thinking of socialists.

Some books published then, have stimulated these thought processes. For example:

in "what is to be done?" the novel written by Cherneshvsky in 1860, the story relates to a liberated woman where an inspired and ideal portrayal of Free union's is pictured. August Bebel's work 'women-socialism' published in Germany in 1879, whose translated version appeared in UK in 1885, inquired into the relation between women's lib and Socialist movement. Ibsen's "Doll's House" also propagated women's liberation. Some other works of those times also show the bonds between socialism which is sought to be established with these new principles. Socialist literature spread the idea that bourgeoisie petty theories, secret clandestine relations, have no place in socialism and that divorce would not even be necessary as all decisions would be made by mutual agreements between both individuals.

It is already mentioned that women had worked together on major problems even before Marx and Engels. Some examples would illustrate this better. In 1789 French revolution, the food crisis (lack of bread) became a problem for women. Women took to streets and picketed carts selling bread at town halls. Working class women i.e. washer women, fisher women and petty shopkeepers have matched their steps with bourgeoisie class in the processions. Between 1792-93 they attacked groceries shops. Women did not participate in large numbers only in the attack on Bastille prison. These programmes were again taken up in paris commune in 1848 and 1871. More than 700-800 women took out a procession to stop blood shed in Versailles. In 1871, permission was not granted when women sought to raise an all-women batallion. Some women went with their husbands and brothers. In short, women took part in all the revolutionary programmes of this period. That was the first time women in France came out of their seclusion. In Russia also, women's clubs were formed during the revolutionary movement similar to the clubs formed in France in 1848 revolution as mentioned earlier. These clubs helped in laying the foundations for a new culture and a new kind of family in Russia. Women's role in the struggles and the programmes have strengthened the idea of women's liberation. Not only discussions, but how to bring about the family structure collectively and similar other issues were hotly debated in women's clubs. In these discussions, women tried to understand all kinds of theories.

What could be basically seen in these movements is - when struggles are on for changes in the outside world, what effect have these on women- that suppression continues in the family and the outside world became the crucial problem. Whether family should change when the social norms change was the question. There were no theories to understand these various processes. In women's histories, though we find enough practice or application in women's lives, there was nothing available in theoretical form. Women in revolutionary movements had to contend with not only male superiority or dominance, but also their own indifference, lack of control on their lives, lack of birth control and other such problems. How to understand them? There were no answers to these questions.

Under the guidance of Alexandra Kollontoi, women in Russia have undertaken several programmes to improve their self-activity. Women were prepared to do all kinds of work, and hence had to face the criticism that 'women had no discipline' and that 'anarchy prevailed'. They took part in strikes and revolutionary programmes in large numbers. The Russian Revolution also became a major testing ground for women's history. For the first time this 'collective action' had left its unforgettable stamp in

history. Major reforms were made in family laws. Marriages started to get registered. Another progressive step was women's names were registered as equal citizens. Obtaining divorce became easy. Property laws were modified to give property rights to women.

Though women achieved much in social and financial policies, they continued to be suppressed in the private domain in the aspects of marriage, family relations, child birth and raising children, sexuality etc there was not any perceptible change. All the efforts made to bring about such changes simply sank without any trace in history. Revolution could not put forth solutions to these problems. Communes faced major problems and economic struggles alone could not solve them. To instill courage and hope in the hearts of women suppressed over generations was difficult task. On the contrary revolution has romanticised and idealised sacrifices and travails of the times. Sexuality was not an immediate concern to the revolution as economic needs and so was an unnecessary issue. Problems relating to sexuality become uncomfortable. Women's necessities became irrelevant issues. The ideals which inspired the early stages of capitalism like hardwork, self sacrifice, individual effort etc came to be idealised once more. Suppression in the private domain and families continued even as private ownership vanished from public sector in economic and production policies. Neither any theories nor solutions were put forward in this crucial sphere.

Since 1920s, violent backlash has started to hit feminism. 203 women were murdered in Uzbekistan in 1928. There was an instance when a girl was murdered by her own father and brothers for daring to wear a swim suit. Attacks have started on women who cut their hair short. The only way a woman could survive was by suppressing her sexuality. While it attracted a great deal of admiration when Marx and Engels spoke of gradual decline of the institution of family, it only provoked censure and seemed unpardonable coming from socialist feminists.

5.5 Women's movement in China

A brief review of Chinese revolution makes it clear to us what feminist movement learnt from women's liberation movement. Long before 1911, certain secret organisations were active in China, and women played crucial role in them. They worked as spies and agents against Japanese imperialists. Sometimes they even started their own organisations called "Blue Lanterns" and "Yellow lanterns". They were set up for mutual cooperation among women. These organisations also sheltered destitute women and widows. In the 1911 revolution, women participated in military brigades with great courage. One major gain of the revolution was the abolition of the chinese custom of tying of handages to women's feet. Women started to take part in workers struggles. In 1912, educated girls attacked parliament and protested against inequality. At the time of the First world war debates started about changes in marriage laws and about the position of women in family structures. Mao started to write articles about suppression of women in progressive magazines from 1919 onwards. An incident that moved Mao tremendously was when a new bride committed suicide just before the marriage procession was to start. He wrote essays on women's helplessness and the ways to flight and overcome it. There is no

doubt that Chinese feminism has grown with progressive nationalist movements and within it.

In 1921 Chinese Communist party has started a magazine called "women's voice" Chinese communist party gained unprecedented support from urban feminists for all these activities. Women's liberation movement spread to towns and villages. Girls took part in protests with new enthusiasm. To cut the hairs short became a part of the protests. An interesting thing happened in Chinese revolution which was not seen at any time in history. This movement was called "speak bitterness campaign". This meant that at meetings and forums women spoke against their husbands and other family members expressing their resentment, anger and sorrow. There were instances when collective actions were taken against the culprits. It is no exaggeration to say that feminist movement learnt a good deal from this struggle.

Revolution changed the economic equations in society and made efforts to establish equality in family. Basically it gave them a chance to speak and empowered them. It shattered the silence in them. Still the most crucial problem of women's sexuality remained unresolved. It was difficult to loosen the "weave of social relations" in the communes. The importance of men as fathers, husbands and sons remained intact. The men earned the wages for the work of daughters and daughters-in-law. What were the reasons for this? The same answer again and again. At various stages in history, we find that many aspects like women's circumstances, their struggles and trend-setting protests are put to 'practice' and become a part in women's lives. The main defect seems to be the lack of any comprehensive theory which could understand these struggles and practices and put them in a systematic manner. However valuable those experiences are in practice, if they are not concretised and evolved as a theory, those times and struggles are pushed out of the periphery, in the ruthless folds of history and are lost forever. And as those who forget history are condemned to repeat it, we make the same mistakes all over again.

After the Chinese revolution until about 1960s, there has been a lull in the world situation. It can be said that Second world war and its aftermath was the reason for that. Later, there were protests and anti-war demonstrations about the American-Vietnam war. Similarly, various student movements started in parts of Europe. The 1968 student revolution of France was important in them. The inspiration to this movement came from Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre. By then, the first feminist work "Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir was already published. In other countries, 'new left' trend has started in the communist movement. As mentioned earlier, any struggle waged for liberation or a 'new-society' would certainly make every woman who participated in the struggle to think and reflect about her own freedom and independence. It enables them to question the essence of 'life'. Only then do we actually realise, however progressively women speak out in forums, ultimately women are reduced to cooking food, handing over teas in meetings and discussions etc., and that real policy decisions are anyway, taken by men.

5.6 Summing UP

The women's movement today argues not merely for writing women to history, but rewriting history as history of people half of whom are women. It is important to remember that changing status of women is related to and dependent on the changing needs of society as well. The 'Change' progress, and 'Status' are not fixed in time and space and therefore need to be understood critically. Women's condition was Changed in the west and in the Socialist country. The western Liberal countries which have seen the process of industrialisation earlier than others have democratised their systems such as state and societies by often extending individual rights to various sections - men, minorities etc- while Patriarchal authority and institutions continued.

Women attained certain rights, such as right to vote, to divorce, property etc., In the Socialist countries equal rights for men and women were recognised. The Participation of women in revolutionary struggles for socialism pushed the women's question at centre stage, at times raising issues of power relations within the family and other issues like domestic work. Some of the strategies such as speak bitterness campaign in china enabled women to speak publicly of their oppression within the family and society and this questioning the patriarchal relations and culture.

5.7. Model Examination Questions.

I. Answer the following essay type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. What are the issues that were fought and won in the movement for voting right, in the west?
2. Analyse the women's liberation movements in the west and estimate its impact,
3. Bring out the account of women's movements in socialist countries

II. Write short notes to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What were the resources gained by women in their struggle for voting rights in the west?
2. Write about the consciousness raising campaign in the west?
3. Give a brief account of women's movement in China.

5.8 Books for further reading.

1. Sheila Rowbotham : Lin Pegal, Hilary Jen Right: "Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the making of Socialism". Making Merlin Press, London, 1979.
2. Sheila Rowbotham: "Women, Resistance and Revolution" , Penguin, London 1972.
3. Sheila Rowbotham: "Women's Consciousness, Man's World", Penguin Books, 1973
4. Elianor Flexner: "Century of Struggle - The Women's Rights Movement in the United States", Harward University Press, First publication-1959.

5. William Hinton: "Panshen", Penguin, 1972
6. Simone de Bouveior: "Second Sex", Penguin, 1972
7. Juliet Mitchell: "Women's Estate", Penguin, 1971.
8. Stree Shakti Sanghatana Working Group: "Manaku Teleyani Mana Charitra", Hyderabad-1986.
9. Robin Morgan : "Sister hood is Powerful":- An Anthology of Women's Liberation Movement Vintage Books, 1970
10. Levin, Leyons Steinum; "The Decade of Women: A Mis history of the Seventies in Words and Pictures", Paragon Books, New York, 1980.

BRAOU

Unit - 6 : Women's Movements in the Third world Countries.

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6.0 Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- analyse the women's movements in Asian countries,
- analyse the women's movements in African countries,
- analyse the women's movements in Latin American countries.

6.1 Introduction

The major factors that have shaped the modern history of the third world countries are colonialism and imperialism. The third world resistance to colonialism and imperialism, the participation of women in the national liberation movements and armed struggles are what one might call the beginnings of contemporary women's movements.

6.2 Women's Movement in the Third World Countries

Colonialism and imperialism have had a deep impact on the socio-economic, politico-cultural systems of the Third World. The colonised were trained for dependence and were rejected as equals. The racial 'supremacy' of the white man gave him inherent right to exploit and suppress ("civilize" in their terms), the coloured imperialism that disrupted the indigenous economies and usurped power from the colonized. It created a

generalized discontent and gave rise to nationalist movements. The emerging tensions and the call for new roles for both men and women gave rise to social reform movements. The demands of national liberation movements and social reform movements centered around freedom from foreign rule, economic security, education, monogamy, secularism etc. These demands were necessary for the readjustment of social structures to the changing power relations. Where movements called for social revolution, a reordering of class relations, it necessitated a relooking at gender relations as well. The very nature of participation of women in these movements helped to give a theoretical shape to the 'woman question'. Feminism and "feminist" movements that arose in the 60s and 70s demanded nothing short of a reordering of gender (and class) relations. (The attempt here is to briefly survey the participation of women in various movements in the Third World and the emergence of the new women's movements. For obvious reasons, it is not possible to take up each of the Third World countries, but we can scan through history and pick up movements that raised issues that are relevant to the present day women's (feminist) movements).

The beginnings of women's movements can be traced back to the 1920s and 30s that resembled the equal rights movements of western capitalist countries. This was also a period of nationalist resurgence. However these women's movements were not significant due to the very weakness of the bourgeoisie which led the movement. Modernisation was equated with westernisation and was sometimes imposed by the State. Ex : In 1920 the nationalist revolution of Turkey led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who rejected the Islamic basis of Turkey, abolished Ottoman Caliphate as religious head of Islam, Turkey carried out internal reorganisation, ended the veil for women and banned polygamy. In the year 1934 women were enfranchised. A note of radicalism was inherent in these movements and it privileged a few women. Literature the novel particularly and later films became vehicles of propaganda for social change. In Indonesia, the novel "Under Full Sail" written by Tahdir Ahisjahbana discussed the problems faced by working women. the heroine of the novel breaks her engagement to participate in women's movements. Breaking away from the "cage of a home" and seeking a career is the way to emancipation - A new consciousness and a new woman; yet it excluded a vast number of women from poorer families.

National independence movements created conditions where women were called upon to move outside their customary spheres of activity to areas considered legitimate by the movements. Political choices for women depended on the nature of movements for national independence. Nevertheless these movements gave impetus to women outside the small social elite. Arab women identified themselves completely with Arab nationalism and organised the first women's congress in Palestine in 1929, protesting against Zionism and the import of fire arms into Palestine. They discarded their veils. After 1932, they extended outwards and organized mass demonstrations. However no social basis for the liberation of Arab women could be established as the state of Israel was created and the movement itself collapsed.

In India by 1900 educated women involved in religious groups raised voices of discontent. As early as 1857, women are reported to have taunted men and pushed them

to rise in mutiny. As the nationalist movement picked up momentum by 1920s and 30s, women participated in a larger scale. Women demonstrated, picketed shops, faced lathi charge and went to prison. Women workers in Punjab joined the movement in large numbers. However, where the nationalist movements were led by the bourgeoisie, the participation of women was limited to the middle and upper middle class, educated women. It is only when nationalist movements became revolutionary that they began even to consider women's issues. The nature of revolutionary movements, armed struggles being different, the participation of women was also qualitatively different—they carried arms, acted as couriers, were involved in underground work. Dominated by men as they were, they did not evolve any framework for women's emancipation other than the nationalist frame work. Age old traditions and ideology of women as the bearer of children and as the carrier of traditions and culture operated even in these revolutionary movements. While women see the anti-imperialist struggle as the only hope, they face the dilemma of being pushed back into the traditional roles. Attempts at questioning of these rules are often seen as 'westernisation'.

A revolutionary feminist consciousness that probes and questions the hitherto ignored areas of Gender relations, sexuality, housework, family, marriage etc. is beginning to be articulated in the countries of the Third World and the countries of a theoretical framework are just beginning to be visible.

The Third World refers to the countries of the three continents Africa, Asia, Latin America which have been colonised at one time or another and have attained independence. The 'Third World' is not a homogenous entity, i.e. the nature of their socio-cultural, economic system varies as the nature of their independence movements and governments. What is characteristic and common to them all is the fact of colonisation, articulation of indigenous systems with colonisation and the complexity of changes that are the result of such articulation. Women's movements must be located in this context. As the area to be covered is vast, we shall scan through the three continents with specific references to some where women's movements have been more articulate than others.

6.3 Vietnam :

Among the Asian countries where women's participation assumed a militant form were Vietnam and China where Confucian ethics pervaded the social structures and supported male authority. "Women's only business was in the kitchen and she was 'hard to educate'. In the highly hierarchical society, peasants and concubines occupied the lowest rungs. The peasant women maintained the undercurrent of resistance. As peasant women toiled along with their men they were more in the open than the middle class women who were bound to the family walls. In Vietnam more than a thousand years ago Trieu Thi Thinh organised a peasant uprising against the Chinese feudal lords in Vietnam. When the revolt failed, she committed suicide rather than submit to serfdom.

6.3.1 Historical Background :

It is essential here to recapitulate the history of Vietnam. In the period of scramble

for colonies in the mid 19th century, Indo-China (Annam and Tongking) or what is now Vietnam passed under French rule in 1880s. Later it came under the Japanese. After the surrender of the Japanese after the IIInd war, Bao Dai, ruler of Annam abdicated in favour of Ho Chi-Minh leader of the League for the independence of Vietnam or the Vietminh - about a tenth of whom were avowed communists. When the French and the British troops landed in South of Vietnam after the war was over, the French clashed with Vietminh around Saigon. The Vietminh, with the help of Japanese and Chinese instructors and supplies, were able to go on an offensive and by 1950 the Vietminh received formal recognition from the communist block and later its own communist party was formed. By 1953 over a third of all the villages in Vietnam were under the Vietminh control and only half of the reminder were securely in French hands. The Geneva conference in 1953 divided Vietnam at 17th parellel, north of which was under Communist control and in South under the French. It was agreed that free elections would unify Vietnam. In the north the communist government under president Ho Chi-Minh consolidated itself with the support of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In South Vietnam a repressive government under Ngo Dinh-Diem came to power. The Viet-Cong, the successor to Vietminh began to fight the Government. The National Front for the liberation of South Vietnam was formed in Hanoi in 1960. The Struggle for the liberation of South Vietnam was countered by increasing US military presence. Thus began the long struggle of the Vietnamese against American imperialism. It continued till 1973. The war came to an end under President Nixon and later Vietnam was unified.

With French colonialism came a different kind of exploitation. Peasants were forced to leave the villages and their lands to work in mines and weaving mills. Women who were forced into towns often became destitutes and took to prostitution. Unmarried mothers and their children were rejected and despised. Rape was not considered a crime if the victim was a Vietnamese. The 'woman problem' was closely knit with the anti-colonialism. Small groups of women raised the question of equal rights but failed to make it a movement as there were many contradictions. With the formaiton of the Indo-Chinese communist party, in 1930 (renamed Vietnamese Workers Party in 1951) the question of emancipation of women was integrated with class emancipation and the National Liberation Movement. The 'Women Problem' was central right from the start. In 1931 the party recognised the women as the most oppressed element in society and proclaimed equality of the sexes as the principal task of the revolution. Large number of women entered the women's organisation of the party and resisted first the French and later the Americans. Continuing colonisation created a tradition of resistance in Vietnam. Conditions of war and rebellion have drawn women into their fold and men and women shared suffering and pain which was the legacy to their children. Women worked underground, talked to people about the French and organised sabotage. One woman who was tortured by the French left this poem on the prison walls, written in her own blood

"A rosy cheeked women here

I am fighting side by side with you men!

On my shoulder weighs the hatred which is common to us

The prison is my school, its inmates my friends

The sword is my child, the gun my husband"

The course of the war and the nature of the warfare affected the lives of women and the course of their emancipation. In the North Vietnam, thousands of women participated in the war against the French, but mostly in the roles that were extensions of traditional roles. They supplied ammunition and food, blocked roads, looked after the wounded, carried messages, and provided hide outs. While these were all essential, they were not the same as the role played by men in terms of strategy and leadership. (In the South, women moved into the position of outstanding significance as the nature of war itself was different and the distinction between a military front and the rearguard was less clear).

6.3.2. Women's Role :

During these long years of struggle Vietnamese women participated at all levels. The nature of the struggle against the French and later American imperialism in the South brought women into positions of outstanding significance. In 1961, the Union of Women for the liberation of South Vietnam was formed. The totalizing effects of war made it impossible to distinguish the liberation of women from national liberation. The brutality of war brought uncommitted women also into the movement. Old women wore uniforms. A committee of women fighting for the right to live and the dignity of Vietnamese women was formed, as rape and sexual molestation were rampant. They invented indigenous methods of demonstrating - they would all walk from different directions as if they were going to the market, older women would walk with sticks, then they would all converge in front of the offices. When they removed their scarves they became banners. When women were arrested, fresh battalions would be brought in. Women with children came and stayed till the authorities gave in and released their comrades. Women's unions united women of varied political and religious views and built up confidence and initiative among women.

The nature of struggle in the north and south have their implications for women's participation. In the north while women did not fight at the front, they took over administration of villages. Commitment to communist party which was more cohesive and substantial, improvement in the position of women is quite evident. As early as in 1950 land reforms gave women equal allotment of land and equal wages, maternity leave, labour insurance etc. But women were often hampered by their own lack of education and sense of inferiority. In 1950 women's education was considered useful only for writing letters. By 1970s most women could read and write. However 50% of labour force (in 1970s) was women, but were behind men in terms of skills and within the party. There were reports of women resigning because of strain of housework and lack of confidence. Many party members were scornful of women's ability and yet felt threatened. Continued war forced them to recognize the need for women to take over party work while men were away fighting. The stress in 1960 was on the five Equals plan - Equality in fighting, in labour, in party leadership and administration, in management of society, and in the family. All the women did more workdays than men

in the communes (as inquiries revealed), knew as much about the situation in the fields, received less help, and had much less chance to learn. There was resistance on the part of men for separate women's bodies and to women at decision making positions. This was overcome by open criticism of some party leaders and their ideas of women. Polygamy and child marriage were outlawed by the law in 1960 and Ho Chi-Minh justified it on the ground that the liberation of half of society was necessary to build socialism. He stressed the need for overcoming of feudal and bourgeois thinking in men.

Thus while war created a basis for women's liberation, it also restricted the process as military needs took priority over communal canteens, child care centres etc due to limited resources. But even under continued bombing, nursing facilities were provided for the 59% of the children in the north. Cooperative groups pursued the three look afters care for children, cook the rice and shop for other women. Service teams helped working women. Nurseries had to move from place to place to escape bombing. Problems of scarcity affected availability of medicines, particularly birth control methods and moral persuasion was used as substitution for contraception - not to marry till mid twenties, abstinence and fidelity as part of military morale during war etc. Self denial inculcated by Buddhist, confucian principles is a part of Vietnamese culture and combined with Marxist just behaviour, commitment and sacrifice seems to have carried the revolution through.

6.4. Africa

In the colonial African societies, great variations existed in the social and economic positions of women, and little generalization is possible. The impact of colonialism, however was broadly uniform. Such status and independence as women enjoyed were diminished, and such rights as they possessed were undermined. The colonial rulers who came out to Africa from Europe carried with them 'Western' conceptions of gender relations and responsibilities, and came at a time when these allowed only the most restricted public roles to women. What is more, the governing classes in the colonies were exclusively male. The creation of colonial economies tied into the international capitalist economy substantially worsened, the situation of women. This is not to say that women were particularly favoured in the pre-colonial Africa. The development of African societies-partly under external stimuli but largely as a result of internal dynamics over centuries led to a process of stratification which tended to undermine their status well before the colonial period. Colonial rule, however, accelerated and deepened the subordination of women.

Women in pre-colonial Africa enjoyed considerable autonomy in terms of family organisation and residential arrangements. They have religious roles and specialised fertility rites. They often lived in extended families or (in polygamous societies) in relatively independent and virtually female headed households. They often had effective control of economic resources, in money or land. Africa has been a "region of female farming par excellence" in agriculture, colonial economies excluded women from areas of production in which they were previously involved. Women also played a key role in

certain traditional societies, such as the 'queen mother's in southern Ghana. She was the 'king maker'. There were women's associations to control areas of interest to them and to provide alternative structures of power, representation, solidarity and control. In 1920, in Nigeria, when the new administrative system introduced by the British threatened the authority of women, women's solidarity organisations were activated in widespread protests, demanding among other things the appointment of women as district officers and warrant chiefs. In the ensuing uprising tens of thousands of women were mobilized over an area of 6,000 Sq meter of Calabar and Owerri provinces. Native courts were attacked, and warrant chiefs ridiculed, as women drew upon networks and ritual traditions that had maintained their status in pre-colonial society. The movement known as 'women's war' was put down by fire arms.

Women were often resistance leaders, against early European traders. Nehanda, a Shona priestess led a revolt against the British in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and was hung for her role in 1896. In Kongo, a priestess of the cult of Marinda, Dona Beatrice established her own version of Christianity and led a rebellion against the Portuguese Kongo leadership. It was so effective that the king had her and her infant burnt to death. In the early nationalist struggles, women played a crucial role in west, east and central Africa. In Zambia, women's sections of the United Nationalist Independence party (UNIP) women organized urban and rural protests, literacy drives, voter registration, rallies and boy-cotts. In Nigeria, 'market women's' support became crucial for winning elections. In South Africa they staged off in 1913 pass laws for women until the 1950s. The Bantu Women's league of the African National Congress, led the fight against the apartheid regime. Despite frequent hostility from men within and outside the African National Congress, women like Charlotte Maxeke provided leadership.

Despite the role of women in Independence movements independence itself brought little improvement in women's position. Women occupy the lowest rungs of the political ladder. Zambia's women's brigade of UNIP are now content to be back benchers. Educated women have benefited to a certain extent. However, literacy continues to be low. Labour migration has increased divorce rate leaving women to feed their families. Most governments of independent African countries have not reversed colonial policies in any radical manner, as a result of which poverty and unemployment continue to plague the continent. Women are the worst affected. Despite Marxist commitment, Zimbabwe Land Settlement Scheme (1985) has not changed customary land rights and women's rights are contingent on marital status. Zimbabwe women's Bureau protested bitterly but to no avail. Given these impediments many African women have turned away from politics. However in those countries where armed struggles have been waged, such as Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau women's position is somewhat different and there is a continuing debate on the question.

6.5 Mozambique :

Mozambique experienced the most abusive colonialism under the Portuguese.

Women peasants were the most oppressed although they constituted the backbone of peasant agricultural production. Male peasantry was incorporated into wage labour. 80% of the population lived in rural areas. Illiteracy was 90% and 100% for women. Forced labour and forced cultivation, taxes, cash crops all eliminated women from all positions of power. After a bitter armed struggle for liberation, led by the FRELIMO, Mozambique became independent and faced chaotic economic conditions. In 1977 FRELIMO congress declared itself Marxist-Leninist and decided to change the FRELIMO from a broad front into a vanguard party and limited membership to militants. Broad masses were to be incorporated into the political process through mass democratic organisations under the tutelage of the party. One of them was the women's movement (OMM) This had very important consequences for women.

When FRELIMO started in 1962 and formal womens organisations started in 1967, women helped in guerilla war as providers of food, shelter, transport. There was resistance to incorporating them into the military but later they were admitted as full members in the women's detachment. This was small and did not reach leadership levels. It was used for mobilising social service tasks, education, establishing orphanages etc. There were very few married women in the organisation. OMM which was formed in 1973 was small and fragmentary until after independence. The main tasks were political mobilization of women, incorporation in production, raising of cultural and scientific level as against obscurantist and tribal outlook. The marxist analysis of the party located women's oppression within the context of their economic exploitation. Family and domestic division of labour were seen as trivial.

FRELIMO's original emphasis was on the peasantry in the rural north. (The party itself was located and stronger in the north) as the main force in the anti colonial struggle. Now after 1977 it is seen as the less dynamic partner in the worker peasant alliance as the peasantry cannot create the basis for transition to socialism, and as peasantry tends towards the agrarian bourgeoisie. But as the proletariat is small and lacking in political experience in Mozambique it is the vanguard party (which can consist of any class) and leadership that must take up the task of building socialism. Thus democratic centralism came into operation and mass organisations became important as contact points between party and people. After independence battle for production has replaced battle for national liberation. Cooperative agriculture and communal villages were basis for political organisation, centres of health, education and nodal points of agriculture. Later it was the state farms which got most funds and inputs. Development of cooperative agriculture show that in 1983 only 2% of agricultural investment went into cooperatives, support to family sector virtually non-existent. There were very few members in cooperatives. This is central to women's question.

The OMM was not an autonomous movement but a channel to inform women of FRELIMO's policies for example campaign for vaccination, campaigns for collective agriculture and against bride price etc. The conference of 1984 undertook campaigns for "better mothers", campaigns to give three meals to children. This makes sense from public health point of view but it created more work for women and women were assumed to be responsible for children. There are no communal feeding centres and

campaigns for fathers sharing in the work would not be successful. FRELIMO was not prepared to face these conflicts. However OMM's activity and campaigns encouraged women to leave their traditional roles. In 1983 at the 4th congress 15% of delegates were women. Women were present at local level but absent at central, state and party organs. Monthly meetings of OMM were supposed to make suggestions on policy and send to party, but hardly any were made. So it is the party which made policies and decided what women's issues were!

FRELIMO did not address the problem of domestic labour, that is, accumulation from peasant production to finance industrial urban development and the contribution of rural women to production. FRELIMO only exhorted men to help but not as a duty. Women were warned not to demand it. Centralised planning and dominance of men in national planning have weakened women's role. Men continue to be reluctant to send women as wage labourers. Only single women and mothers worked as wage labourers. Although most cooperatives were run by women, where there were men and women, women devoted less time to cooperatives. Most women were engaged in isolated family production. In 1980, 83% of work force was engaged in agriculture, but 93% of these were in family agriculture 2.5 million adult rural women as opposed to 25,000 in cooperative farming and few thousand in state farms. However in 1983, the 4th congress of FRELIMO decided to give more support to family, and private sector, as state farms failed to produce surplus. The crisis of peasant production in Mozambique is a crisis of women's production and of gender relations.

6.6 Algeria :

Algeria was a french colony from the 1830s to 1962. In 1954 the national liberation movement took the form of armed struggle in the face of resistance to Algerian independence from the white settlers. After a 7 years bitter struggle against the French, Algerian independence was conceded by Gen De Gaulle in 1962. Many reports and writings tell us of Algerian women resisting French colonialism. In a story called "Manifestation" (which in French means demonstration written of Francis Fytton) reports of an algerian girl (Nefissa) encountering with the French forces. (On 17 october 1961). At the risk of being humiliated by the French she insists on going with her FNLA (Algerian national liberation front) comrades. When caught, she refuses to join other women who were only wives for she insists that as a militant she cannot leave her comrades. The French commander humiliates her by pulling out her panties right in front of her Algerian comrade. The Algerian man watches helplessly the racial and sexual molestation of Algerian woman.

Colonialism and colonial policies had their own contradictions. The French in their bid for modernizations made laws against polygamy and child marriages, campaigned against the veil and began schools for girls, thus eroding the traditional Algerian culture. For Algerian women this brought a little emancipation, Europeanization meant a relative freedom. Fanon talks about French employees forcing Algerians to bring their wives to parties, which to the Algerian was like prostituting his women.

The subjugation of Algerian woman was the affirmation of Algerian's manhood (manliness). For the Algerian workers in France who left their wives at home, white women became the objects of revenge as they could not confront the white man. Liberation movement was intimately related to hope of self-esteem and the qualities he identified with his manhood, for this meant that he had to reclaim her rather than liberate her.

The decision to involve women in the NLFA (National Liberation Front of Algeria) was not easily taken. The urgency and necessity created by anti colonialism created conditions for their involvement. In 1955 NLFA decided to involve women. At first they approached wives of militants, widows and divorced women. Then young girls volunteered as messengers. As the veil was conspicuous they removed it and filtered with the French to get entry into European quarters. Soon she was carrying bombs. Fanon analyses the changed relationship of Algerian women with her own body. By the absence of the veil she discovers and invents the new dimensions of her body in a totally revolutionary fashion. But when colonial authorities began to search her, she went back into the veil as a conscious political step, and transformed it into a revolutionary instrument. Participation in liberation struggle changed women's relationship to her family - no more arranged marriages. The path of women's liberation evolved along with National Liberation Front.

In the post colonial Algeria (it became independent in 1962 after a 7 year guerilla war with the French) women received contradictory messages from the party. Whatever the participation of women, the inner structure of consciousness of men remained hostile to women's liberation. Most posts in the party went to men as women were 'backward'. Women were subjected to sexual jokes, paternalist attitudes were common. The temptation for women was to slide back into the veil rather than face hostile barrage of male opposition. Male female segregation came back slowly. There were no new laws with regard to family and marriage; divorce continued by simple repudiation. It was common that "Women make consous (it is an Algerian dish) and men make politics" finally men recovered what they lost to colonialism - their control over their women! As problems of economic development became worse, women were pushed back and revolutionary Islamic humanism reverted to the most reactionary measures in relation to sex and family particularly after Ben Bella (Leader of FNLA and the first Prime Minister of independent Algeria) was over thrown. There was a paranoia about Bolshevik atheism, Western materialism. Women were seen in their traditional roles now that independence was achieved El Moudjahid (the leading newspaper) could say (in 1969) that "all morality and depravity in the family or in society is determined primarily by the behaviour of the woman. Her role is all important".

The choice for the Algerian woman was individual submission and defiant rebellion. It was not easy to rebel in the changed conditions. Throughout 1970s Algeria slowly moved towards an Islamic state with all its implications for women.

6.7 Latin America :

The development of women's movements in Latin America is closely linked with the independence movements and more with revolutionary movements. The women's struggles in Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia have raised questions which are crucial to women's movements today. The nature of the anti-imperialist struggle is closely linked to these struggles.

Towards the end of 15th century Portugal and Spain began to colonise Latin America. Those lands that were discovered by Christopher Columbus became Spanish colonies. In May 1493 Pope Alexander VI issued a papal Bull which divided the uncharted world between the two rival powers Portugal and Spain by drawing a line of demarcation down the globe. Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia are some of the Spanish colonies. Brazil became a Portuguese colony. Due to various historical and geopolitical reasons, Latin American colonies attained independence before the dawn of 20th century.

6.8 Cuba :

Cuba experienced Spanish rule for many more years than did any of the other colonies (where independence movements were fighting throughout 18th century and became independent by the beginning of 19th century) and during most of the 19th century that rule was appallingly corrupt. Towards the end of the 19th century the United States became involved in the Cuban movement against Spain. After 1895 U.S. intervention in Latin America became more and more forceful. U.S. regards any progressive government in Latin America as a threat to its own interests and has been supporting military dictatorship and lending support to rebels (Contras) against revolutionary and progressive governments.

In 1898 U.S. fought against Spain and forced her to evacuate Cuba and Puerto Rico and from 1898-1902 Cuba was under U.S. military rule. U.S. invested large amounts in sugar mills and Cuba came to be dominated by U.S. interests. The corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista protected the U.S. interests, perpetuated workers poverty because the sugar industry the mainstay of Cuban economy gave them employment for about four months in the year. Demands for reforms came in the 1940s from the University students. Fidel Castro a law student of Havana University led the Guerilla war against Batista in the Sierra Maestra, the forested mountains in Eastern Cuba, and finally on 31 December 1958 the Batista regime was overthrown.

Through these years of repression and struggle Cuban women have emerged as a major section of the society. The struggle itself has taken different forms at different stages. The film 'Lucias' made in 1960 depicts the struggle of three generations of women. Lucia of the first generation (1868) is betrayed by her Spanish lover, fights a lonely battle and ends up in individual tragedy. The second Lucia in 1930s participates in the movement against the Machado dictatorship, but when Batista takes over, her lover is killed and she is left to wander helplessly as her friends settle into a comfortable life. The third Lucia - a black woman living in the country, married to a young white

farm worker who drives a lorry. Already, the focus has shifted, she has the freedom to love and she and her husband live a carefree (apparently) and passionate life. But she has to confront the contradictions of her own sexuality and the attitudes of her husband who is pathologically jealous and hostile to her independence. He locks her up in the house to prevent her from learning to read and write from a boy of fourteen. She leaves him with a note that she is not a slave! Eventually, she returns as they long for each other. He is overjoyed to see her, but she says that she wants him and her freedom too. They start quarrelling again. A little girl who is watching them bursts into laughter. The film shows the contradictions in women's lives in the post revolutionary Cuba and the narrow options that women had. Nevertheless, Lucia enters into an era which was not possible before the revolution.

Cuba before the revolution had a semi-feudal society and military government. The poverty and oppression were worst for women, particularly for working class and peasant women. Colour was decisive in determining the status of a person in highly hierarchical society. Haitians and Jamaicans were right at the bottom. Colonialism, catholicism and slavery produced a kind of matriarchy in which older women were responsible for holding things together. The cult of the noble motherhood meant the acceptance of a particular kind of female assertion. It imposed a heavy burden of 'virtue' on the women, virginity was all important.

Around 1860s when the struggle against spanish colonialism developed, women participated bravely along with their husbands. Rosa Castellano, Anna Betan Court who were in the forefront led movements demanding equality in 1860s. In early 20th century suffragette kind of a movement developed. In 1934 women got the right to vote. This brought into focus the contrast between legal equality, economic and cultural subordination. Later, in the struggle against Batista, women joined the rebels at Sierra Maestra, Haydee Santa Maria who was one of those who attacked the Moncada Barracks in 1953 was arrested and tortured and yet did not reveal the hideouts of the rebels. Although a red army battalion of women was formed, guerilla fighting did not encourage women. They were mostly involved in traditional tasks such as cooking, nursing etc. Guerilla democracy meant complete male control. Che Guevara said that men had a mixture of admiration and resentment for women. To prove themselves, women had to work doubly hard. He mentions women like Lydia and Clodmira who 'proved' themselves successful in a male world!

In 1960, a federation of Cuban women was set up. The drive was against illiteracy, for women entering into production and participate fully in political and social life and slowly develop revolutionary political consciousness. Women were given military training and in light industry, food industry etc. Division of labour is still somewhat on traditional lines. Ex : Cane cutting is done only by men. The federation campaigns against these traditional ideas. Now there are women mechanics, tractor drivers, engineers, city planners, publishers etc. Although there is resistance from families and husbands to women in key posts, there is no open opposition, as within the bonds of underdevelopment and marxist traditions of female emancipation, there is clear commitment to the liberation of women. Fidel castrol believes that sexual and racial oppression cannot be ended in

capitalism but socialist ownership does not automatically secure their abolition. It needs a revolution within revolution.

The problem of house work and their involvement in education raise the question of communal facilities to look after children, cooking for the family etc. The problem of material resources and countering traditional ideas is not easy to resolve. Attempts have been made. Every housing community is provided with educational and nursery facilities, boarding schools etc. Yet communal life or communes is not a priority. To meet the general needs of a revolutionary society, facilities have been provided for women so that they could join production. But there is no attempt to create new forms of the family, and the question of equitable distribution of household tasks is almost dismissed. Despite everything it is the Cuban woman who does most of the housework. What is even more important is the question of female sexuality. Abortions and contraceptives are easily available yet the party does not actively disseminate them as they do not want to upset old prejudices and also because of the political nature of population issue. In Cuba babies still mean proof of manhood and men do not want women to control their sexuality. Attitudes with regard to these questions range from old peasant morality to the present youth.

Propaganda against 'communist free love' led to segregation of schools in 1966. Castro who is known for his openness feels that free love might only mean old predatory male habits. The most revolutionary Cuban men become paternalist when it comes to saying that women too derive pleasure from sex. Women think this is taboo for men. There is ambiguity about status of women and sexual relations. While attempts at creating new positive alternatives are on, conquest of material underdevelopment gets top priority. It is generally the students and other privileged who are more exposed to the incongruities and raise the issue of need for a revolutionary cultural creation.

6.9 Nicaragua

Nicaragua is a country where the repressive dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza stood out even by Latin American standards. After half a century of struggle Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won a resounding victory and overthrew somoza regime in 1979. The Somoza family was the ruling family since 1930s. The U.S. occupied Nicaragua from 1929 to 1933 ruled it through the proxy of the Somoza family since 1930s. By 1979 Anastasio Somoza who inherited the presidency was the head of a multimillion dollar business empire which accounted for more than half Nicaragua's total GDP. In 1961 the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) (named after the nationalist hero of struggle against United States occupation between 1929 and 1933, Augusto Sandino) developed in the 1970s into a mass movement. Divided into three currents which provided complementary rather than conflicting paths (endorsing respectively strategies of insurrection, prolonged popular war in the country side and proletarian organisation and revolution) - it eventually won a position of unchallenged supremacy in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship.

Nicaraguan revolution was made largely by youth and women. The economy under Somoza rule denied even the minimum means of livelihood to a large number as the Somoza family owned 40% of total economy and 30% of all arable land. As a result many men left their families unable to bear poverty leaving women to fend for themselves and their children. This made women work for almost anything. The proportion of women wage earners rose from 14% in 1950 to 21.9% in 1970 and to 28.7% in 1977. Women were active in other areas not reflected in statistical surveys. It appears that the revolutionary participation of women is partly due to their integration in the national economy. Women became the centres of families emotionally, ideologically, and economically - particularly peasant and working class women. As repression cut across classes, women from other classes also joined. Yet traditional left parties were not successful in organising women, as they were more structured parties rather than mass organizations involving grassroot members. Women successfully organised themselves, participated in every task as militants, in support tasks, involved in every fact of opposition. They built the broadly based organisation of women. The Association of Nicaraguan women confronting the nation's problems (AMPRONAC). By the end women made 30% of Sandinista's army and held important leadership positions commanding from small to full battalions. For many poor women political life began with 1972 earthquake. It was women who bore the brunt of it as mothers and as providers.

Revolution did not demand the dissolution of women's identities but required subordination of their specific interests to the broader goals of overthrowing Somoza. This raised the important question of relationship between socialist revolution and women's emancipation. How did the Sandinistas formulate women's interests and how have women fared under their rule? Socialist reconstruction in Nicaragua took place under conditions of dire poverty and scarcity. Unlike many other socialist countries (such as Cuba, Mozambique, China, South yemen etc) Nicaragua's commitment to socialism is based on mixed economy, non alignment and political pluralism. Opposition was permitted within limits Sandinista promised different kind of socialism - creation of new army, popular control of organs of state power, more democratic and independent society, compared to other third world countries. It became a symbol of hope to socialists, and for women it held out a promise, for the revolution occurred in 70s when feminism of late sixties took shape and when Latin American women in Mexico, Peru, and Brazil were mobilizing themselves. When the women's newspaper *somos AMNLAE* addressed some of the debates of western feminism, FSLN did not denounce it as 'counter-revolutionary feminism' also perhaps because it needed the support of AMPRONAC. The hopes were not belied even after the revolution and women reached high positions in society. On March 8, 1978 women celebrated with women's demands and later joined United People's Movement. AMPRONAC became Luisa Amanda Espinosa Association of Nicaraguan women (AMNLAE) and raised the slogan "No revolution without women's emancipation and no emancipation without revolution". However, hardly a few years later, Nicaragua faced the problems of counter revolution supported by the U.S, in 1982 and this proved to be a drain on the resources. Commitment to women's emancipation got diluted. AMNLAE talked less of feminism and more about wider struggle- defence of the Revolution.

By 1984 more than 1/3 of national budget was channeled to defence. A state of emergency was imposed in 1982 and lifted only in 1984 when elections were held.

Sandinista revolution has indeed brought about improvement in the lives of poorest classes. Illiteracy was reduced from 50% in 1970s to 12% in 1985. The legal revolution gave full rights to women. Potrayal of women as sex objects was banned. Newspapers and television are free from sexist advertising; the tradition of paying salaries to male head of peasant families is given up. Women are given full membership in cooperatives. Family responsibilities within the family are redefined. The new constitution effective from January 1987 recognises a number of gains made. By 1987 women occupied 31% of managerial positions in the govt; constituted 27% of the leadership of Sandinista front and 25% of the FSLN membership. Although women are not represented at the highest level - the Nine member National Directorate - a number of women occupy one step down governmental positions, as heads of provincial govts, party officers, police etc. There is a climate of acceptance of women in these positions. There is a dramatic increase in women in salaried agricultural work because most men joined armed forces and local militias. 37% of industrial workers are women mostly in textiles, food processing, chemicals, plastics and paper industries.

Although many facilities are provided for working women and political and economic participation gives greater power and self confidence to women, women of all classes complain of burden of family and household responsibilities. 25% of working women are domestic servants, which implies that 25% are not able to take up jobs outside their families. It is pointed out that on an average a peasant woman and her family work 17 hrs, on house work and child care; of this the father and son together contribute only 50 minutes. The mother spends 9 hrs 39 minutes and her two daughters 6 hrs and 39 minutes. Thus domestic work appears to be a great hurdle to women's liberation. Plans to build child care centres, expansion of health and education services have been slowed by war and economic devastation. The solution however is not communal care but that men should also share in house work.

Often child bearing and reproductive rights are ignored. The power of the Catholic Church and deep rooted sexism are responsible for this. Birth control is legal and available through public health clinics and pharmacies. Supply is erratic, and there is not public campaign and societal support. There is ambiguity on abortion, technically it is illegal, but the police force will not enforce it. Poor women go to alley (quack) abortionists and many women die. Many people also feel the need to build the nation that has suffered too many deaths. It is difficult to estimate the impact of the Contra war. While defence is essential, how far this justified putting away the women's issue is a debatable point. On March 8, 1987, AMNLAE took an important decision to redirect its work as a leader of a movement and not as a mass organisation itself. It would do its work from within other organisations rather than organise women separately. This is a compromise that AMNLAE has made. In 1987 the FSLN recognised the need for ideological change and attacked Machismo reproduced through different ideological vehicles family, schools, church, advertisements etc. The proclamation of the FSLN came strongly in support of need on confrontation with the ideology of Machismo in

private realm of the home and personal relations. Thus the Nicaraguan movement carries an on-going debate on bread and butter issues and feminism.

6.10 Summing Up

In the third world countries women's participation in the nationalist and liberation struggles enabled them to attain certain rights and legal protection. Colonialism gave rise to some very important changes both in economy and socio-cultural and political relations of the countries. This meant complex adjustments of 'traditional' societies to processes of modernisation. Women's question often shifted depending on the broader needs and compulsions of the society as perceived by those parties in power. If women have gained in some ways, they have lost in some other ways.

6.11 Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following essay-type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Analyse the women's movements in Asian Countries.
2. Analyse the role of women in the movements in African countries.

II. Write short answers to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. African Movement
2. Nicaragua Movement

6.12 Books for further reading

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BLOCK – IV

Changing Status of Women in India

Unit - 7 : Indian Women in Ancient India

Unit - 8 : Women in Medieval Period

Unit - 9 : Social Reforms and their Implications

BRAOU

UNIT - 7 : STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIA

Contents :

- 7.0 Objectives
 - 7.1 Introduction
 - 7.2 Women and Marriage Customs and Family Structure in Ancient India
 - 7.3 Social Evils
 - 7.4 Economic Status of Women
 - 7.5 Religious and Educational Aspects
 - 7.6 Summing up
 - 7.7 Model Examination Questions
 - 7.8 Books for Further Reading
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7.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you should be able to

- Analyse the marriage customs and family structure in Ancient India.
 - Identify the social evils which existed in Ancient Indian Society
 - Estimate the economic status of women
 - Analyse the religion and Educational aspects in Ancient India.
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7.1 Introduction

When we talk about status of persons what is meant by status and how to determine it is an important question, generally, in social sciences, (economics, political science and sociology etc.), status means having power to effect changes in political and social system in the society. In fact, how this power influences and controls the individuals social status cannot be determined by a single factor. Economic, social and political conditions are interrelated and they change imperceptibly. In India there are caste and class distinctions but also with religion, religious texts and religious politics which create beliefs. All these factors are important to determine her status.

The materials for a study of the life of women in Rigveda are very scanty. Hence any observation is bound to be based on literary works and archeological sources. By these sources, we can understand that women in vedic period played an important role in social and religious activities. Though she was treated as a part of property, she, nevertheless, used to enjoy property rights in the family. Jainism and Buddhism favoured the freedom of women and admitted them into their order and utilized their services for

religious preaching. In Rigvedic period women were educated. Due to several factors and social conditions there was a noticeable change in the status of women. Women's position was degenerated in medieval period and hence child marriages, 'Sati', and prostitution were rampant. Gradually Bhakti movements arose and fought against the caste system and Brahmanical order and tried to change the society. Women not only participated in these movements but tried to bring change. The social evils in the medieval period led to social reforms in the 19th century. British imperialism changed India into a colonial country and there is an impact of British influence on all these movements. We will discuss all these in this unit.

7.2 Women and Marriage Customs and Family Structure in Ancient India

If we want to estimate the women's role and status in the society, we have to consider the social conditions and their freedom of power. The materials for a study of life of women in Rigveda are very scanty. Hence any observation is found to be based on literary works and archeological sources. To know about pre-history, even literary sources are available. There were many constraints on human activity. Division of labour was absent. The society was not evolved. Some of the features of the primitive society such as superstitions, customs, worship of Naga, Waterspirits, love of music and dance etc are still in our society to day.

The principal deity of worship of people was mother Goddess, a prototype, standing and semi-nude female figure. This was found in archeological findings. Human sacrifices were supposed to have been offered to mother Goddess as it established by the seals. By means of the seals and 'Nagna Kabandha' found in Harappa and Mahenjodaro or the Indus valley civilization, we can estimate the position of women in that society. The worship of mother goddess was an indicator in matrilineal society. Women enjoyed a position of high esteem in that society. No religious rites and rituals could be performed without female partner. The position of women in society can be gauged by the way in which the birth of a girl child is received in the family. Still, the same is prevailing. In a Kannada poem it is written that, 'A daughter is born and the house falls to pieces. A son's birth sets rejoicing even by the latch of door, picture on the wall....'. Therefore, the birth of a girl-child is considered inauspicious or not, on which we can estimate her status. In Rigvedic period people prayed god for male children. This indicates the fact that girl children are not equal to male children in the society. So there is a strong tradition of idolisation of sons in Hindu family. It is known from the Rigveda and Brahmanas that a prince 'Harischandra Vaidasa Aiksraka,' asked Narada about the importance of a son. Narada replied that "a daughter is a misery and a son a light in the highest heaven."

The position of a girl in society and the amount of freedom she enjoys are evident from the description of 'Samana', contained in the various hymns of Rigveda. 'Samana', was a winter festival of the people of Rigveda. This was meant for recreation. Poets thronged there to acquire fame, bowmen to exhibit their skills, horses to run races and women irrespective of their age, to seek festival arena, a camp fire was burnt around

which all men and women sit and enjoy each others company. The existence of the word 'Arajur' which meant a girl who grew old at her parents house without marriage. That means marriage was not indispensable for a girl in that society. Moreover, we have no evidence about child marriages in vedic period. In Rig vedic period we find the prevalence of monogamy. There were several types of marriages such as 'Kshatra' or 'Rakshasa', Swayamvara and prajapatya are important among them. Before the marriage ceremony, a prayer was offered to God Vishnavasu, protector of virgins. He used to transfer her to the husband from father. Then the husband becomes the master of the household. Motherhood was respected and adored by the whole mankind. Wife is called as Jaya (Victory). In vedic age marriage bonds used to be sacred. The word 'Dampate' indicates the relationship that existed between husband and wife. It was a compact unit in the society. The primary duties of women were to bear children and rear them up. The women who were inactive in productive activity bestowed all their attention to procreation and rearing up children. This was considered to be a degenerating factor in her life. The man who was responsible for begetting children became womens God. The womenhood in the vedic period had its heights and depths, its brighter and darker spots. She was regarded with respect in every sphere of life and she was not subjected to any of the merciless laws of any unsympathetic society. There was no discrimination between the male and female in the worth of god.

The picture of 'Samana' shows some aspects of the early civilisation where we get the glimpse of a society free from conventions. Capturing women for purposes of marriage was followed. It shows the affection, love and their self-choice. This is an Indo-European feature. During the later vedic period, the position of women had considerably declined. They did not enjoy the respect which they enjoyed in the early vedic period. Marriage was not only desirable but imperative for a girl. Prayers in the form of in contrations were invogue for securing good husband. The unmarried girls of Rigvedic period found it difficult to lead a free and happy life afterwards.

The 'Samana' festival, the position of women became unfavourable. The value of a wife was not by love and affection but, it was enhanced by the amount of dowry that she brought to her husband. The bridegroom was not expected to see the bride until the marriage was over. She was brought to the place of the ritul covered with a veil. From the nuptial hymns it appears that husband was the absolute master of the wife and appropriated dowry as well as the earnings of his wife. The ideal wifehood was to be good and affectionate to her husband. It was said that 'let the wife to the husband speak words full of honey but not otherwise.' During the period of Brahmanas, religion and social life were so intermingled that one could not distinguish from the other. The Nagarika inscription shows that Nagarika, the wife of Satakarni, performed shrauta sacrifices and made a number of donations of money, elephants and kind etc. In the Rastrakuta dynasty of the 8th century a queen issued a grant in her individual capacity.

To ceremonise the marriage the saptapadi was introduced. The bride has to take along with the groom seven steps; each has its own quality. The bride has attained all the qualities imperative for the happiness and prosperity of her married life by traversing the seven steps with her prospective husband. By this both of them became friends and promised to become inseparables in their lifetime. In Rigvedic period monogamy was

As far as movable property is concerned woman had the full rights on them. It was recognised under the category of 'Stridhana'. This is connected with kanya sulkam or bride price. Though it is a bad social custom, its only positive feature is it contributes to 'stridhana'. The husband has to recognise her ownership on it. Similarly wedding gifts like gold ornaments and costly clothings belong to her exclusively.

In course of time the scope of 'Stridhana', was further enlarged and she would exercise absolute control over them. Even landed property was also given to her as a part of 'Stridhana'. This would devolve upon her daughters later on. Married woman, who earned livelihood are however, very few. The rest have been occupying the position of subordination to her husband on account of her backwardness due to illiteracy and want of general knowledge and experience. The Mitakshara school recognized the widows right of inheritance, only if her husband has separated from the joint family before his death. This share is treated as 'Stridhana', of the wife. Jeemuta vahana, the founder of Dayabhaga school belonged to the liberal school and he was in favour of the rights of inheritance. Further, the Dayabhaga school went to the extent that a widow had the rights share even in the joint family. Her estate would be as absolute as that of her husband. Jeemutavahana was reluctant to grant to the widow a full estate of inheritance. Therefore, she had only limited rights in this regard.

Women students were divided into two groups 'Brahmavadins' and 'Sadyoodhvahis', who were lifelong students of theology and philosophy. Many women used to specialise in 'Purva Meemamsa'. 'Gargi' had the honour to be the spokes person of the distinguished philosopher at the court. The searching cross - examination of yagna-valka by gargi shows that she was a diadaetician to carry on the spiritual pursuits. The second type of institution was meant for imparting advanced education to the students, popularly known as academics. Thirdly, the king used to arrange national gatherings or congree. The representative thinkers of the country of various schools were invited to meet and exchange their views on these occasions.

During this period, education was mostly centred in the family. Brothers, sisters and cousins probably studied together under the guidance of family elders. Perhaps one could trace origins of co-education to this. Even the initiation ritual to acquire Aryan status, in course of time, dropped out altogether.

The foregoing account establishes the fact that the position of women on the whole was altogether unsatisfactory. But her position slowly declined later on. In the later vedic period, the society as whole became more rigid regarding religious rituals, caste taboos, family and marriage customs. The absolute custom of 'Sati', was revived and widows were prohibited to remarry.

7.5 Religious and Educational aspect :

In the vedic and upanishadic periods when post - puberty marriages were the order of the day, religious and spiritual ideals were held in high esteem in the community. They used to permeate the atmosphere and enhance the moral tone. Grown up maidens and youth followed strict rules and regulations of celibacy. In the early period men

regarded women as unclean, mainly because of periodical menstruation. The same was also the case during the time of confinement. That means reproduction was considered to be the main function of the women. But, Bigamy was considered to be inauspicious. The 'Upanayana' ceremony of girls used to take place as regularly as for the boys at the appropriate time. After upanayana girl used to follow a discipline more or less similar to that of boys. In the later vedic period the prohibition of Upanayana amounted to spiritual discipline more or less similar to that of boys. In the later vedic period the prohibition of Upanayana amounted to spiritual disenfranchisement of women and produced a disastrous effect upon their general position in the society.

Mahavira, the founder of Jainism favoured the freedom of women and believed that they had the right to attain 'Nirvana'. Buddha was reluctant to admit women in his sangha. Later, he admitted them. After the admission of women into the order provided an indirect incentive to the cause of female education. Nuns continued to figure in Buddhist Monastic life. However, during the later period these nunnaries went out of vogue.

Society treated courtesans with a certain amount of respect as they were the custodians of fine arts. That is the reason why they are called as 'Kalavantulu'. In Buddha's time Amrapali, the chief courtesan of Vaisali, got the considerable admiration in the contemporary society. Salavati, Ambapali contemporary and competitors at Rajagriha enjoyed an equally high status.

Education occupied an important position in the ancient Indian social structure. There were three different types of institutions which imparted education to people. During this time students lived in the house of the teacher and performed several duties and improved in moral and spiritual disciplines. This training was not uniform to all the castes.

Women were permitted to receive education. 'Sarvanukramanika' refers to twenty women authors who contributed their interpretations to Rigveda. Lopamudra, Visavara, Sataka Nivavari, Bhosha, Indrani, Sachi were among the scholars of that time. Sulabha maitreyi, Pratheleyi, Gargi was figured high for their scholarship. R.K. Mukherjee opined, "the women of those days had access to the highest knowledge and played their part in the intellectual life of the Country". They made significant contribution to the advancement of scholarship. It is highly regrettable that the details of their scholarship are not available to us.

The discontinuance of 'Upanayana' system, the neglect of education and lowering age of marriage produced disastrous consequences. The conditions of women's status, tonsure of widows' heads all these gradually came into practice. Excepting in vedic age, after the vedic period women's position declined.

7.6 Summing up

In Ancient India, the Vedic Brahmanism, Buddhism as well as Jainism tried to control and regulate feminine power as they perceived women as a problem to be

solved. Women's moral and social lives were controlled through religious texts, rituals and patriarchal power. There was a duality in the role of women. On the one hand her sexuality was to be curbed and on the other, that very sexuality would provide offspring and ensure continuity. The birth of the son was of utmost importance in a property oriented society. Women do not enjoy any property rights except stridhana. Barring few instances of women educationists during Rigveda, women's education was at its lowest ebb in Ancient India. During later vedic period the society became more rigid in the matters of caste, taboos and religious rituals, family and marriage customs and subsequent social evils such as sati and enforced widowhood that crept into the society deteriorated women's status.

7.7 Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following Essay-type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Explain the social, economic, religious conditions of Ancient India?
2. Describe the status of women during Rigvedic period.
3. Explain the status of women in the later vedic period.
4. Describe the system of marriage which existed in ancient Indian society?
5. What are the property rights of women during the ancient Indian period?
6. What was the role of woman in the religious aspect during the ancient Indian History?
7. Explain briefly education and public affairs and the role of women played in ancient India.

II. Write short Answer to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. Worship of mother Goddess.
2. 'Samana' festival.
3. The practice of Sati in Ancient India.
4. Women slaves
5. Stridhana
6. Dayabhaga system.

7.8 Books for Further Reading

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6. Ramesh Chandur Dutt - "A History of Civilization in Ancient India", Delhi, 1972.
7. Dev Raj Chanana - "Slavery in ancient India", New Delhi 1990.
8. జె. వరలక్ష్మి - "యుగయుగాల్లో భారతీయ మహిళ", హైదరాబాద్, 1977.
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Unit - 8 Women in Medieval Period

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- 8.1. Introduction
- 8.2. Religious Movements
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 - 8.3.1. Purdah
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 - 8.3.5. Prostitution
 - 8.3.6. Women's Education.
- 8.4. Summing UP
- 8.5. Model Examination Questions
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8.0. Objectives.

After going through this unit you should be able to

- Analyse the Changes brought out by the religious movements such as Sufi and Bhakti Movement during Medieval Period
- Analyse the Social conditions and traditions that prevailed in the Medieval Period.

8.1. Introduction.

Medieval period is an important period in the history of India. From the 8th century A.D many changes were witnessed in political, economic, social, religious and cultural spheres. The important factors of these changes were due to feudal system and the mode of production. In fact, it was a new epoch in Indian history.

In the early medieval period, North India was divided into a number of kingdoms. The Chola kingdom was in power in the South India. The teachings of intellectuals and the religious priests were found in Indian thought. The main reasons for this philosophical thinking was due to relations between Indians and Arabs. The new traditions that emerged out of this interaction were the Sufi and the Bhakti movements.

8.2. Religious Movements

The Sufis followed a new path of love and affection through which they could reach nearer to God. In their view all human beings are equal and should be respected.

Most of the Hindus were influenced by this.

8.3. Bhakti Movement

In addition to Sufism, Bhakti movement also prevailed during medieval period. The Alvars and Nayanars of the Tamil devotional cult had started the tradition of preaching the idea of Bhakti. For this, they wrote many hymans and stories. Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak were the religious preachers who condemned the caste system in the society. They created an opportunity for women to participate in the Bhakti movement along with men. For instance, Potuluri Veerabrahman condemned caste system and said that the Vedic knowledge was not limited to Brahmins alone, and that all should have equal access to knowledge. He advocated changes in marriage system. He condemned child marriages and held that there should be no pre puberty marriages. He admitted women into his order and made them important preachers of the religions. He proved to the society that women also play a significant role as religious preachers. Eswaramma, his grand daughter, was a prominent lady who spread the ideas through the medium of easy and intelligible songs called 'Tatvas'. In fact, people who preached religion in this new method were from the lower castes. They were motivated by the aim of social betterment. Meerabai composed the finest hymns and sang them with devotion to identify herself with Lord Krishna. Meera Bai was the only devotee who sacrificed her luxurious life for the sake of her love and affection to him.

Despite many movements and many ideological influences women's position did not improve and they were considered as inferior to men. Infact, her position got worsened day by day. Seclusion of women under Purdah became more widespread. Other males should not see her face. Women expressed their subservience to men in their writings. In a Bengali poem the wife expresses to her husband like that

"You yourself are my treasure
The chain of gold around my neck

.....
I am a woman, weak, power less!
Stay at home with me, my friend".

Similarly, a Marathi writer wrote that " her husband was her God. She was his servant and slave". she was expected to spend the whole day and her life in performing household duties.

"Jani says, my Lord,
I have become a slut
to reach your home".

These two instances are sufficient to convey the status of women in the Medieval period. That was the reason why many movements in different places emerged against this oppressive tradition of domination of upper castes, Hindu religious traditions and the rituals.

Another important factor is that most of the poets were women. To these poetesses

of the Bhakti movement, institutionalised new movements gave scope to express their ideas. Women's poetry moved from courts to temples and to the work place. The hidden ideas of the common women were expressed. The feminist historian Neera Desai expressed "Bhakti movement was a response from the Medieval Hindu society".

8.4. Social conditions and traditions during Medieval Period

In the beginning of the Bhakti movement, women got sympathy. Alvars and Nayanars in Tamil Nadu, Veera Saiva movement in Karnataka, Varkari religions in Maharashtra created space to feminist writers and philosophers. After those movements women did not get the same sympathy. Tulasidas and Guru Nanak are the writers of that contextual time. The scholarship of feminist writers should go in depth to collect the primary data, and also interrupt the conditions of the ordinary women. Then only these movements will be able to reveal the real position of the woman folk of that period. During the 12th and 13th centuries, the artisan production increased dramatically. Women played an important role in this process. This new fact denotes how woman took up the responsibility in her household affairs in the family as a part of Bhakti movement. Similarly, her role in the day-to-day affairs of men also denotes her significant role.

8.4.1. Purdah

Patriarchal social systems and traditions, social norms and practices were common in Medieval period. But among most of the backward classes in the villages, the patriarchal norms were very much limited for example upper castes women practiced 'purdah' system while the lower castes did not.

Women were secluded from the outer world and kept in harems and palaces. R.C. Majumdar wrote that purdah system prevailed among Muslims. Hindus adopted the same system from Muslims and used it as a protective measure to save the honour of women and purity of the social order. Women rarely used to go out. Even if they wanted to go, they used to go in palanquins. Queens like Rudrama Devi, Chand Bibi, Nurjahan as they did not follow this system. Some prominent scholars expressed the view that the purdah was adopted by the Hindus "to protect the woman from being carried away by Muslims.

Gradually, this practice became a symbol of civilization, Hindu family and caste system. It was adopted to protect woman folk especially in the areas where Muslim power was dominant.

'Purdah', though borrowed from Islamic custom, if we go deep into the Hindu scriptures, it is also found among the Hindus. Women were expected to be modest and lead a secluded life. Even after the danger of Muslim aggression was over, 15 per cent of adult women were kept in 'Purdah' as a symbol of prestige among the higher classes. Next to purdah, the other practices that concerned women were marriage, sati, child marriages, female infanticide and the low status of widows. They were manifestations of women's status during that time in Indian society.

8.4.2. Child Marriages

There were many causes for the custom of child marriage. The consummation in child marriage was done even when a girl-child was below 12 years. During the pre-maturity stage as the girl was shy and obedient, there was no problem for the man. She was not equal to him in the sexual intercourse. Another reason for the child marriage was that she could procreate many children for a longer time. She was expected to give birth only to male children. Child marriages paved the way for early widowhood and pushed them back to the parental homes where they led their pathetic lives.

Child marriage became a crushing burden to poor families. When a girl child was born the only thought for her parents was her marriage and provide for her dowry. Child marriage is an age old custom. It is intertwined with religion. Law makers also strengthened this practice.

It was a symbol of poverty and national degeneracy. Early marriages caused great cruelty to child wives. In one instance, the girl child who came to the parental house was brought back to her husband's house by the mother who said:

"When I gave her in marriage to you,
she became a dead child to me".

In fact marriage became irrevocable for women. Her consent or desire for marriage or sexual intercourse with her husband was ignored. Pre-puberty marriage was a custom. This practice was more prevalent among Brahmins. Gradually, this was followed in other castes also. At the age of eight or nine years marriages were performed. Sometimes the unborn child's marriage was also decided by parents.

8.4.3. Enforced Widowhood

In addition to child marriages, widowhood and barrenness were considered to be humiliating for women in India. The treatment she receives is often an index to the society.

The custom of tonsure of widows was a very ugly and unfortunate practice. Widows came to be regarded as un auspicious. They were disfigured. These practices are of recent origin and growth. The inauspicious widows were prohibited from attending marriages of their own children. There was hardly any sympathy for widows. To avoid the impurity she was not allowed to participate in religious rituals, and her head was shaved. The orthodox people would not accept meals or water from her hand. To escape from the horrors, the 'sati' doors were opened to her.

There was recognition for a widow in the society, if she wished to continue her life with in-laws, but life was hell, even with the parents as well. If she was a middle aged woman, at least there is scope for her to live with her children. Her dress, her shaven head, all speak volumes of widowhood for which we have to blame the orthodox society, traditions, religion and patriarchy. This custom of enforced widowhood was confined to the Hindus and that mainly to the upper castes. Widow remarriage is prevalent among the lower castes. Among Muslims, child marriage was not practiced, and even widow marriages were allowed. In this connection, we have to note that

among Muslims there was no caste system. The Koran allows polygamy. It permits a man to divorce at pleasure. Whatever the influence of the religious scriptures on society, their analysis and practice will change according to the changing conditions of society. In Hindu religion, the child wife in a child marriage does not know about the meaning of marriage. Manu, the Law giver in ancient period, said that it is unlawful for a woman to even mention the name of a man. The wife is not allowed to remarry after the death of her husband. "Once a widow is always a widow".

8.4.4. Sati

Alternative to widow remarriage was 'sati'. there was no other inhuman and abominable practice than 'sati'. As a precaution against failure of courage, women, performing 'sati' were often drugged or the wood was tied down upon the body, so that escape would be impossible. We can imagine how inhuman it is and how cruel it is. In one incident the by-standers were shouting out:

"Cut her down, knock her down with a bamboo,
tie her hand and foot and throw her
again in the fire".

Religious thinking and superstitions in the society were such that it was believed that if the woman burnt herself she shall remain in paradise with her husband and attain salvation, it gets salvation on either side of the families for ten generations to live in paradise.

In medieval times that is to say from 12th century A.D. to 17th century A.D., 'sati' was practiced in all the regions of South India. It prevailed under the rule of Kakatiyas, Yadavas, Hoyasalas, Padma Naiks and the Reddy Kingdom. The foreign travellers, Nuniz, Necolo conti mentioned about the prevalence of 'sati' during the Vijayanagara period. Ibn-Batutas writings bear testimony of this practice. D.D. Kosambi said that this horrifying custom of 'sati' was completely un-known in the eastern regions till the early feudal times, that is till the 7th century A.D. There are many instances of Sati during the Medieval period. Rani Yasomathi committed sati when her husband Prabhakara Vardhana died. Prabhakara Vardhana was the brother of Harshavardhana. Peran Devi, the wife of Ala Raju of Palnad, and Syamangi, wife of Balachandra, performed 'sati'. These are only recorded incidents of sati. there are countless other evidences of 'sati' in history.

The existence of 'sati' was found mostly in the Brahman communities. Later, this practice appeared in non-brahman families also. The evidences of 'sati' practice could be gleaned from a number of literary sources of Medieval Andhra. The "perantalu" Goddesses are local people who committed 'sati'. Sati temples are found throughout Andhra Pradesh. The hand with wearing colourful bangles.

In spite of the wide prevalence of 'sati' in the south, north India witnessed the obnoxious practice much more. This practice was among the Greeks and the seythians also. Gradually, it had undergone a change and emerged as a practice of 'sati' in Medieval times. Wife belongs to a different family. it was due to patriarchal structure, sexual control on her was exercised. This was one of the reasons for the prevalence of

'sati'. The 'sati' practice took a different connotation among the Rajputs. it was called 'Jauher': women and children in Royal families used to perform 'Jauhar' before their men went to war. Emperor Akber brought legislation on the prohibition of 'sati'.

We need to understand the social circumstances in which women were practicing Sati. How is it related to familial relations, economic relations or the rights of inheritance, the roles played by male and female in the family, their attitude towards religion and worship and their adjustments in the changing society. All these factors should be examined from a historical perspectives. The Dayabhaga system as to that who should inherit the property of the deceased husband also contributed to the practice of 'sati'. The status of women living in the medieval period could be analysed with reference to the socio-economic conditions of that period and the ideology of patriarchy.

8.4.5. Prostitution:

Another institution that prevailed in Medieval period was prostitution. This practice degraded the status of women in the society. It was a recurring problem in Hindu Society. In south India the 'Devadasi' and 'Nautch Girl' were used to identical terms. In the west and central India, these girls were considered to be a separate class or caste. These were 'Kalavantin' or 'Kalavantulu'. They are invariably courtesans.

The 'Devadasi' were different from 'Muralis', 'Jogins' and 'Basvis'. The institution of Devadasi is known as religious prostitution. In medieval times, 'Basvi' system was practised in Karnataka state. This practice was prevalent in Belary, Dharwar, Mysore and under different names in Maharashtra and Telangana areas. This obnoxious practice was prevalent among the scheduled castes and backward communities like 'Dommara', 'Boyal', 'Baindar' communities. In these communities, one of the girl children was dedicated to a local god or goddesses. The reasons for dedication are absence of male issues or sometimes to salvage the family from problems caused by drought and cyclones in those villages. Girl dedicated to the Goddess has to lead the life of shame. The girl will become a public slut. That is the reason why we call it as religious prostitution. This exploitative tradition, in course of time, became a way of life and she is considered as 'Nitya Sumangali' she has no widowhood. She is taught to read, dance and sing and instructed in every seductive act.

Childless woman used to purchase children from poor families or by kidnapping them and adopting them for dedication purposes. Illegitimate children and young widows were brought to the brothel houses and trained in prostitution. For centuries, these women were trained in dance, music and other arts. They used to entertain the public. These dancing girls were beautiful and attractive, besides being endowed with repartee and being good conversationalists. Perhaps these were the only women who were free from patriarchy in India. But they were sexually exploited. They are deprived of security for their life. Unfortunately their ample earnings made them to have a luxurious life which attracted other girls to follow this profession.

The state that neglects to use the potentialities of its women and regards them only as wives and mothers well assuredly lag behind in the march of nations. The subordination of women in hindu society was confirmed and strengthened with the passage of time. It became a settled fact in the feudal stage of the country's development. All these evils

and superstitions in society including infanticide, prostitution are prevalent because of religion, superstitions, ignorance, lack of education and exposure to society.

8.4.6 Women's Education

In medieval times education was limited to a fraction of society. Superstitions and religion swayed over the lives of women for centuries together. Religious life in society was greatly influenced by Brahmin domination. Women had to observe a number of religious observances called 'vratams'. However, such religious observances were confined to the richer sections of the society. The poorer sections were satisfied with what they got in their life.

In medieval society, nobody paid adequate attention to women's education. There were no Muqtabas and Madarasas for girls. Primary education was given to some women belonging to the richer sections of the society. The co-education system that was in vogue during the vedic period discontinued in medieval times. The poorer sections of the society had no educational facilities. Professor Atulananda Sen says:

"The education of women, irrespective of Hindu and Muslim patronage was confined to the well to do sections."

Few examples of educated women of this age were Raziya Sultana, the daughter of Iltutmish of Delhi Sultanate. She received formal education as well as training in the martial arts. Later on, she became the queen and became famous. Such examples, are few and far between. Arts and crafts were taught to women during the reign of Gaiasuddin Khilji. Chand Bibi appeared on the ramparts of the fort of Ahmadnagar in male attire and fought against Akbar. Tara Bai was a famous lady in maratha regime. In south India, Aru Mangammal's reign is still remembered. Sir John Malcolm praised the administrative genius of Ahalya Bhai Holkar.

Similarly, Rani Rudrama Devi of Kakatiya dynasty was an outstanding example of courage. But such type of examples are few. But they are sufficient to speak about the greatness and reputation of India. In addition to them, Mughal princesses played a notable role in the court life of Agra and Delhi. Jahannara and Roshnnara. Dhara Shukov and Aurangazeb supported these princesses repectively. Zabunnisa the daughter of Aurangazeb, was a well known poetess.

In Medieval Indian History, women were considered to be mentally inferior to men. According to professor Ashraf, women's activities and status were subordinated to men. The position of women was understood in terms of service to her husband and depended upon him at every stage of life: as a daughter, under the wardship of her father, as a wife, under the tutalège of her husband, and as a widow, under the care of her eldest son. This was stated by Manu in his 'Manu Dharma Sastra'. In a word, her life was a state of perpetual wardship under her father and the social laws and customs stamped her with a sort of mental deficiency. She had no life without husband. Home was her abode and temple. Always she was to be pure and chaste.

In general, women were distrusted and kept in seclusion. Their life was confined to male members in the family. If a husband severed his relations with his guilty wife, she was provided with maintenance. Her life in relation to her husband was one of

honourable subordination. For any social function, performed by Hindu men, the presence of their wives was required. She is described as 'Ardhangi'. (Half of the man) and was given importance.

Contemporary Bengali literature throws vivid light on the darker side of Indian marriage system, of a tender, beautiful girl being married to a deaf, un inspiring wretch of and girls losing their complexion by constant broodings over the melancholy of fate. It was miserable plight of women of how the Mukhopadhyay, Chatopadhyayas, the Ghosis, Basus, Guhas occupied the chief positions in the scale of 'Kulinism'. Buchanan points out how these Kulin Brahmins boast of having many as wives as possible. Marriage in Bengal was thus a mockery for women. parents of female children were forced by this social custom to get their daughters married to aged Kulin Brahmins. Thus they used to escape from social ostracism.

The position of Indian women in North India tended to deteriorate in the earlier period of Muslim invasions. In south India due to the evolution of social life, women's life was somewhat better. Consequently, in every field, women acquired reputation and expertise in every field. The weakness of Indian woman hood during medieval days arose because there was no central direction to social mobility. Patriarchial practices and norms made her a weakling, She lost all her finer qualities in the drudgery nature of work. She could not come to limelight. These social evils led to social reform movements in the 19th century.

8.4. Summing UP

In medieval Indian History we can estimate the position of women in political, economic, social and religious spheres. With a view to meet the inroads of Islam, more effectively Indians made the caste system more rigid. Bhakti movement brought new changes in caste system and religious practices. Women participated in Bhakti movement and contributed towards Bhakti, poetry and music. That was the reason why "Bhakti movement was a response to medieval Hindu society". The alternative to widowhood was 'sati', an abominable and inhuman practice. In Medieval India upper and lower castes dedicated their daughters to God's and Goddesses and as a result, Devadasi systems and Prostitution came into practice. The social evils in Medieval period led to the degeneration of women. Hence the social reform movements came during the 19th century.

8.5. Model Examination Questions

1. Write answers to the following essay type questions. in about 30 lines each.
 1. Write briefly about the status of women in the medieval period.
 2. 'Bhakti Movement was a great reformist movement in medieval period. Explain.
 3. Describe 'Purdah' system and child marriages and explain how women faced deplorable conditions during the medieval period.
 4. Describe the evil practice of 'sati' custom.

II. Write short notes to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What were the causes of anti-nautch movement in the Medieval period.
2. Write about the progress of women's education during medieval period.

8.6. Books for further reading

1. A.S. Alteker - "The position of Women in Hindu civilisations", Delhi, 1991.
2. Kumkum sangari, sudesh vaid- "Recasting women" Essays in social History new Delhi 1989.
3. Leela Malathi - "The Bhakti Movement and the status of women", a case study of veerasaivism, New Delhi 1989.
4. K.M. Pannikar - "women of India in Medieval Period", new Delhi.
5. Mrs Marces, B. Filler - "The wrongs of Indian Womenhood", London, 1900
6. S.C. Ray Choudhri - "Social, cultural and economic history of India earliest times to present times" Delhi 1987,
7. Susie Tharu, K Lalitha ed - "Women writing in India 600 BC to the Present", Delhi, 1985.
8. Raghuvamsi - "Indian society in the 18th Century" New Delhi, 1969.
9. V. Lalitha - "Sati in Deccan", Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Calcutta Session, 1990
10. Romilla thappar - "Sati in History", Hyderabad Book Trust, 1988.

Unit -9. Social Reforms and their implications

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9.0. Objectives

After going through this Unit, you should be able to

- Analyse the factors responsible to the abolition of Sati and Infant marriages.
- Analyse the efforts taken by social reformers for Promotion of Widow re-marriages.
- Describe the promotion of Women's education.
- Analyse the efforts of reformers for the abolition of Devadasi custom
- Identify the implications of social reform movements.

9.1. Introduction

The Hindu society was hierarchically divided into castes and sub-castes and continues to be so even today. Geographical expansion and growth of new crafts were some of the important reasons for the origin of these castes and sub-castes. They were endogamous groups in which inter-marriage and inter-dining were strictly prohibited. Caste system was thus very rigid and fragmented. We can divide these caste groups as the privileged, the under privileged and the untouchables.

With the disappearance of both local and governmental patronage, the system of education deteriorated to a great extent. Blind superstition and cruel social custom took root every where. It is in this context of social structure that we need to analyse the social 'evils' that existed in the society. The most glaring of them can be classified as 1) religious 2) social and 3) economic. The cruelest of socio-religious evils was 'sati'. Domestic slavery, the worst of the economic evils, was common in India.

Women, mostly of upper class, held a deplorable position in society. The Hindu social system believed that the daughter never belonged to it. A girl was considered as a pawned ornament to be given to the owner when he demanded it. Hindu law restricted Hindu women from rights to property. Female education was controversial as girls were rarely educated and the general view was that early marriages for girls should be performed. 'Kulinism' and dowry system - both 'vara sulka' and 'Kanya sulka' were some of the evils connected with the marriage system. 'Kulinism' led women to lead an immoral life. The position of widows was deplorable. Primarily this was the reason for the self-immolation of women. The de-generation of Hindu society could be further illustrated by many other inhuman practices like sati, infanticide, self-sacrifice and torture. That is the reason why, the movement for the liberation of women occupied a key place in social reform movements in India.

Most parts of India were brought under the colonial rule by the beginning of the 19th century. The Anglo-French struggle led to the control of the seas and, more particularly, for positions of strength on the Coromandal coast. The annexationist policies pursued by Governor Generals like Dalhousie and Wellesly almost completed the conquest of India, even though the British had encountered serious resistance from the Indians in the form of Great Revolution of 1857. In the post-1857 period, the British discontinued the policy of conquest and allowed the native princely states to govern themselves, though under strict British control.

These British administrators generally followed a policy of aloofness and were absorbed in their own concerns and showed little or no interest in the social problems of India. A gradual change in the outlook of educated men began to emerge through their increasing contact with the West and its philosophy, sciences and political ideals. When human minds are stirred by new ideas, society cannot remain static. So, as a logical sequel to the various stimulating forces, there dawned during the first half of the 19th century, a new era of social and religious reform in India. In this context a note should be made of the contribution of ideas and activities of Missionaries towards social reform. Their main aim was to spread Christianity. They propagated the idea that the social and economic advancement of a community must proceed simultaneously with its spiritual advance.

In the sphere of Hindu social reform, there were movements for caste reforms, equal rights for women, widow-remarriages and campaigns against infant marriages and crusades against social and legal inequalities. In the religious sphere movements were launched against superstitions, ideology and polytheism. These movements were initiated by the new intelligentsia which imbibed the liberal western culture. They believed that the new society should be built on the foundations of liberal doctrines like liberty, freedom of expression and social equality. They attempted not only to reform religion but made attempts to reconstruct social institutions and social relations.

The major Hindu socio-religious reform movements during the 19th century were 1) Brahmo Samaj 2) Prarthana Samaj 3) Arya Samaja 4) The reform movement initiated by B.M. Malabari and 5) The National social conference. These movements abolished the social evils like sati, child marriages, prostitution etc.

9.2. Abolition of Sati

The prominent feature of the first half of the 19th century in India was the dawn of modern age. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer of this age. He was the founder of the Brahmo Samaj. Brahmo Samaj had no image of God or Goddess. It was a revolutionary idea in the history of India.

Ram Mohan Roy was a pioneer of modern education in India. He was associated, in the initial stages, with the founding of the Hindu college. He himself ran the Anglo-Hindu school. The syllabi included Mechanics, Astronomy and western thinkers like Voltaire and Euclid.

Being aware of the social evils of his age, Raja Ram Mohan Roy dedicated his life to eradicate them. He mastered English thought and western culture. He read Christian religious literature. He was no mere philosopher, critic or religious reformer. He was a stern fighter against social evils and a champion of those suffering from social oppression. This particular streak of his personality was very well illustrated by his historic campaign against the inhuman custom of sati.

The practice of sati was prevalent during Mughal administration. William Carey reported 438 and 300 cases of Sati in the years 1803, 1804 respectively in the vicinity of Calcutta alone. On the 3rd of August 1812, Wauchope, Magistrate of Bundel Khand, solicited instructions of the Nizamat Adalat about the policy to be pursued in sati cases. The original suggestion of Nizamat Adalat that the sacrifice might be checked immediately in certain districts was not considered by the Governor General. Certain rules were framed in 1813. The Magistrates and other officers were ordered to prevent the use of force or drugging in sati cases. The Sati of pregnant women and of girls during menstrual periods was to be forbidden. The police were required to take note of these cases as early as possible. Sati was never a voluntary proposition. At the time of the event of sati there would be no friend to advise or protect the woman. The greedy priests and her kith and kin did not go to her rescue and save her from this evil. They were all interested in 'sati' practice.

At first, the British government continued to follow a policy of non-interference in matters relating to the social life of the Indians. Cole Brookes digest of Hindu Law contained the following expression, "No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the fire". Otherwise, in her successive transmigration, her soul would join the body of an animal. On 4th January, 1805, J.R.Elphinstone, Magistrate of the Bihar district, informed the government that he had prevented the sati of a girl of Bania caste at the request of her friends. Lord Wellesley did not introduce any decisive measure against the practice before he left his office on the 31st July, 1805. Certain rules framed in 1813 authorised the Magistrates and some other officers to prevent the use of force or drugging in Sati cases.

Rammohan Roy used his journal 'Samband Kaumudi' as a weapon for his agitation against the practice of sati. This journal began to appear from July 1819. Lord William

Bentinck consulted Ram Mohan Roy, the great Indian champion of the anti-sati movement, who issued a brochure entitled 'Abstract of the arguments' regarding the burning of widow considered as a religious rite. It was Bentinck who really helped Ram Mohan Roy in the abolition of sati:

To Bentinck belongs the glory of being architect of the abolition of sati. But it was Dalhousie who completed Bentinck's mission of suppression of 'Sati'.

On 4th December 1829, The Governor General passed the regulation in the Council declaring the practice of Sati illegal and punishable by criminal courts. In spite of the anti-sati measure of 1829 and the growing strength of Reform Movement, stray cases of attempted or accomplished sati were reported from various states of British India. For example, a dreadful incident of Sati had taken place at Jodhpur when Raja Man singh died on 4th September, 1843, and his queens were burnt with him. His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad who proclaimed that the act of Sati within his dominion would be considered a crime, could not succeed in its abolition completely.

The practice disappeared gradually with the spread of knowledge, and under the growing influence of the modern Indian Reformation and the earnest efforts of some British officers. In spite of all these efforts, we cannot but remember the recent case of Roop Kanwar in Rajasthan, who committed sati that stirred the emotions of all Indian women.

After the death of Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen was the first Indian reformer who envisaged the need for an all India association for social reform. He started the agitation for legislation against child marriage and polygamy and in 1872 the Brahmo Marriage Act was passed. This act abolished early marriages, made polygamy penal, sanctioned widow marriages and inter-caste marriages. But this act was confined to Brahmos alone. It was further strengthened by Shivanatha Sastri.

9.3. Abolition of Infant Marriages

The grave evil during the 19th century was child marriage. Early maternity was an evil of great magnitude. It contributed very largely to maternal and infant mortality. In many cases child marriage wrecked the physical health of girls. It also had psychological effects stunting their growth. After the marriage, she was considered the property of the bride-grooms parents. Undue restrictions were imposed on her movements. She could not run about or play or talk loudly or laugh in the presence of elders and strangers. Thus she was robbed of the brightest period of her life, her girlhood and youth. She knew only two stages of life, namely childhood and womanhood. Thus from the stage of infancy itself she was forced into maternity. Here is a short poem by Anjana in the anthology entitled 'Neelimeghalu'. The title of the poem is 'mother toy'.

I felt happy for becoming mother of the toy

At present I am both mother and toy too

Social reform movement condemned child marriages in Andhra. Gurajada Apparao

wrote a play in Telugu on this problem, 'Kanya Sulkam' (bride price), the most well known play, in which he depicted vividly the evils of child marriage. Bucchamma, a character in the play, married an old man and became a young widow. Another widow was Meenakshi who became a fallen woman. All these characters represent the pitiable plight of child brides. Gurajada, an early feminist writer in Telugu Literature, made a prophetic statement that 'modern woman will re-write her own history'.

Sir John Megaw, Medical adviser, at the India office estimated in the census of India, Vol.I that "100 out of every 1,000 girl wives are doomed to die in child birth before they have ceased to be babies". Thus, thousands of mothers die in child birth every year in India.

9.4. Widow Marriages

Iswara Chandra Vidya Sagar (1820-81) was the first to make the question of widow marriage a cause and the object of an immediate campaign. Vidya Sagar published two articles in 'Tattwabodhini Patrika' in favour of widow marriage and distributed pamphlets for this campaign. Quoting from the Shastras such as Parashar Samhita, he proved the validity of widow marriage. He submitted petitions to the government to pass legislation in favour of this. Vidya Sagar undertook the practical task of performing the first widow marriage on 7th December, 1856. His efforts bore fruit and the government passed the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856. Vidya Sagar fought against Kulinism. Unfortunately, his efforts in this direction did not succeed.

An adequate idea of the intolerable hardships of early widowhood can be formed only by those, whose daughters and sisters have been deprived of their husbands during their infancy. The miserable condition of widows, the cruel and inhuman customs were fraught with the most mischievous consequences to society. If widow marriage be allowed, it will remove the torment of life long widowhood, diminish the crimes of prostitution and infanticide. "As long as salutary practice will be deferred, so long will the crimes of prostitution, adultery, incest and foeticide flow on an ever increasing current, so long will a widow's agony blaze in the fierce flames".

In South India, before Kandukuri Veeresalingam's active role, some attempts were made in that direction by R. Raghunatha Rao and Chentsal Rao. Chentsal Rao worked as the Secretary of the Widow Remarriage Association in Madras. This association limited its activities to publishing a few pamphlets. Among them, 'stri Punarvivaha Sangraham' by Paravastu Venkata Rangacharyulu of Visakhapatnam, published in 1875 was the most notable. Even before that, after Keshuchandra Sen's visit to Madras, the first published tract (translated from Kannada tract) was called 'Hindu Vivaha Sastra Sangrahamu'. This has a limited scope of prescribing the age limit for marriage. Some articles were published in favour of and against this system in 'Purushartha Pradayini' journal from Machilipatnam, and "Tattwabodhini" from Madras.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu, like Vidya Sagar, was also a practical reformer. He performed the first widow remarriage on 11th December, 1881. By 1905, 63 widow

marriages were performed in Andhra out of which 57 were from the Brahmin community. In this connection Gandhiji said "we cry out for cow protection in the name of religion, but we refuse protection to the human cow in the shape of the girl widow".

The social reformers not only performed widow remarriages but also started homes for the rehabilitation of the widows and the destitute women. For example, when Parvathi Bai Athavale became a widow, "her head was shaved, and she had to dress as a widow". In the widows home founded by her brother-in-law, Professor Karve, she worked for female education, change in Indian marriage customs and the plight of Hindu widows. Similarly, in Madras Presidency, Bengal and also in the Punjab many Widow Homes were started which worked for rehabilitation.

Even in Bengal where it had its beginnings, the movement had not made much progress. Though widow remarriages are not looked down upon now, child marriages are taking place extensively even today. However, the practice of 'Kanyasulkam' is replaced by 'varasulkam' or dowry. Dowry system has assumed menacing proportions. This evil is responsible for many dowry deaths and bride burning, particularly among the middle class families.

9.5. Abolition of Devadāsi custom

Next important movement was the 'social purity' movement. Its chief object was "The purity of private life, the abolition of Devadasi system". It comprised a major activity namely the eradication of nautch. The reformers considered that "the maintenance of purity in the relation of the sexes is vital to national greatness and prosperity".

The social purity movement started with anti-nautch, which agitated the minds of the reformers mainly on three grounds. 1) Improving morality in society 2) Upliftment of women 3) Removing the stigma that came to be associated with fine arts like music and dance.

The devadasis were patronised by leading members of society such as advocates, officials and business men. They were kept as concubines. Such unfortunate women numbered more than two lakhs in Madras Presidency alone.

Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu was the leader of the 'social purity' movement in Andhra and Madras city. The anti-nautch movement in his opinion, is not about fine manners, but good morals; not mere elegant breeding but pure living.

Lord Wenlock, the then Governor of Madras (1891-96) refused to attend such entertainment. This was followed by other officials. Another related incident, which drew wide protest for violating public morals, was an official Eardley's relationship with a married woman, who was not divorced from her husband. The opponents of Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu felt, that the cause he championed was bound to fail. Through his satire 'Vesya priya Prahasanam', Veeresalingam refuted their arguments.

9.6. Women's Education

Cultured womanhood in India is not a gift of modern civilization. India has an excellent tradition of female education. Women in India were not steeped in the darkness of ignorance, but contributed to the rich knowledge of Indian heritage. Many women poets and writers flourished. Women studied religious literature and were conversant with literary works of the time. Some women belonging to the aristocratic families were trained in the art of management and military training. Rani Bhavani of Netore and Sri Devi Ahalya Bai of Indore were striking examples. Zamindars and other aristocracy would instruct their daughters in the elements of managerial techniques, so that in times of need they were competent enough to manage their husband's estates. A Bengali Newspaper of 1822 stated as follows "there are many fortunate men having educated wives". There were many educated women in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Dravida, Telangana and other places, who managed their estates. Such instances, were few and far between.

Gradually, in India, social reform movements started for the purpose of women's development and emancipation. Women lived in social bondage for centuries and did not possess any property rights. They had no opportunity to develop their identity and self respect. Kamala Devi Chatopadhyaya, a pioneer of women's movement in India, said "Deprived of all education, confined within the four walls of the house, seeing little of the world and knowing little of it, immersed in superstition and opposed by customs, our women, to our shame be it said, are no better than slaves". The backwardness of women was attributed to their ignorance resulting from lack of education. The Govt. made no efforts to strengthen education system till the middle of the 19th century. Dalhousie decided to extend support which was likely to lead to more important and beneficial consequences and bring a "change in the habits of the people". Missionaries were the pioneers in women's education. But inspite of their efforts, the Christian missionaries could not attract girl students from the upper strata of the Indian Society to their institutions. The missionaries attached great importance to female education. Several hindrances in their path, crippled their efforts.

Another reason was that, the instruction in Christian missionaries was mostly of religious character, and hence it did not appeal to Indian sentiments. An enlightened public opinion in favour of girls education was gradually gathering momentum. However, the orthodox sections of Hindu community opposed girls' education. The editor of 'Samachar' Darpan' (Calcutta) published a note in his journal attacking female education and its advocates. Gnyaneswara published a note for the improvement of female education and for the introduction of social reforms. In the Andhra region, Kandukuri Veerasalingam held the view that the progress of a nation depended on the education of women. He opined that ignorance was the main cause of superstitions and social evils. In his speeches he stressed on the spread of scientific knowledge and the growth of national thinking. Thus, inspite of hostile opinions against female education in certain quarters, faith in its importance for general improvement of society has also increased. Veerasalingam made a stirring appeal in these terms:

- 1) The education of females is a duty which we owe to ourselves.
- 2) The education of females is a duty we owe to our country.
- 3) The work of female education is a duty we owe to God.

If we take the state of female education in the Madras Presidency between 1830-1837, several boarding and day schools were opened by several missionaries. Besides missionary efforts, a few local people also contributed immensely in this direction. Goday family in Visakhapatnam district, Maharaja of Vijayanagaram, Raja of Pithapuram patronised girls education. Mary Carpenter's visit to Madras in 1887 gave a much needed stimulus to female education, by generating favourable public opinion and Government support. In the coastal districts of Andhra region, the orthodox section led by Kokkonda Venkataratnam were still voicing vehement opposition to women's education. Special mention has to be made to the girls school started by Veeresalingam at Dhawaleswaram. It is here that Veeresalingam started the journal for women, 'Satihita Bodhini', which set example for an epoch of women's journals in Andhra, like 'Sundari', 'Telugu Janana', 'Kamaleswari', 'Chintamani' and 'Savithri'. Some of them were edited by women themselves. Articles on female education, child marriages, and fine arts were published in the columns of these journals.

The spread of organised social reform movement outside Bengal, was largely due to the Zealous activities of the Brahmo leaders led by Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen, Balagangadhar Sastri Jambhekar. It was a source of inspiration and provided intellectual impetus for the young generation of Indians in the mid 19th century in Bombay. Devendranath Tagore pleaded for widow remarriage and liberalisation of caste rules. He started a weekly journal 'The Bombay Darpan' which was the first in western India to espouse the cause of social reform.

Lokahitavadi, Whose real name was Gopal Hari Deshmukh was one of the earliest writers to speculate on the social and political condition in western India in the first half of the 19th century. He carried on propaganda against the caste system, child marriages and the plight of widows.

Another reformer of Western India during this period was Jotiba Govinda Phule who founded 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. He took interest in girls education and started a girls school in Poona in about 1850. In 1863, to prevent infanticide, he set up a home to shelter the orphaned children of unfortunate widows. "His work is the anguished cry of the suppressed classes trying to get back their own rights after centuries". His greatness lay in "the idea of social revolt a century ago which needed great courage".

Against this background, Prarthana Samaj was founded in 1867 with Ranade as its guiding force. Under his tremendous organising capacity and inspiration, the Prarthana Samaj started night schools and reading rooms for low caste workers in Bombay. He evinced keen interest in the education of girls and started an orphanage at Pandharpur. His wife Ramabai Ranade took part in several women's struggles. Initially both Ramabai and M.G. Ranade were associates of Pandita Ramabai in running 'Sarada Sadan', the widows home she had founded.

In the words of a well known scholar and humanist, Pandita Ramabai was "the greatest woman produced by Modern India and one of the greatest in all history.. the one to lay the foundations for a movement for women's liberation in India. "Ramabai was one of the few 19th century women who were able to support themselves with their writing. She also founded and supported a chain of Homes for widows. 'Stree dharma neeti' (1882), 'High caste Hindu women' (1888) were her great writings. She also worked for the education of women.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj (1875) was well versed in the vedas and was a religious preacher. He made Aryasamaj a strong instrument of social reform and social service. The Arya Samaj led a fierce crusade against child marriage and rallied public opinion. It decided that the most suitable age for marriage for women was 16, and men 25. Orphanages and widow homes were established.

9.7. Implications of Social Reform Movements

The Indian social reform movements grew in different regions without coordination between them. So they lacked uniformity. The vastness of the country and its variety of problems was one of the many reasons ascribed to this. Hence no uniform and nationwide reform movement could be organised till late 1880s. These reform movements, by and large, were confined to and beneficial for the upper castes, which were affected by many social evils. The reformist ideas and their influence seldom percolated to the lower strata of the society. Another notable factor was that these reformers were primarily concerned with socio-religious reforms. They never bothered about the crucial economic reforms in society.

These religious and social reform movements of the 19th century created an awareness among Indians and paved the way for the growth of political consciousness. This political consciousness was the backdrop of Indian National Movement. Socio-religious reform movements helped spread the liberal ideas of reform among the people, and revived many extinct Indian social and religious institutions. The impact of the western ideas and the simultaneous changes that were taking place in the Indian social structure, coupled with the efforts of reform leaders, made the people aware of the need to modernise the ancient civil customs and traditions. These ancient customs and practices stood in the way of national advance. The emergence of national consciousness was the singular achievement of the 19th century religio-social reform movements. Historians are of the view that Ramohan Roy through his reform efforts, heralded the 'modern age' in India. These movements prepared the necessary environment for the rise of purely secular and political reform movements in the last two decades of the 19th century. They played a historically progressive role in successfully attacking medieval ideology and hastening the growth of rationalism, scientific spirit and democratic ideals of liberty and equality.

Much criticism was levelled against the social reformers regarding the scope of the widow remarriage movement as it was primarily confined only to a section of society, that is the upper castes. Among the lower strata of society there was no

necessity for it, because widow marriages were permitted until at least the sanskritisation process caught on. So very few of them remained unmarried. Despite the herculean efforts made by Vidya Sagar, the movement made only limited progress in Bengal.

The opponents of reforms also argued that social reformers were not bothered about the temperamental suitability and mutual compatibility of couples in performing widow marriages. These factors ruined the peace of these newly wed couples later on. Reformers were further criticised for their alleged negligence of adjustment problems of married couples and for their over enthusiasm in performing more widow marriages.

In the context of widow marriages, several of the couples were not genuinely imbued with idealism or reformistic zeal. Some of the bride- grooms married widows with the hope of making money and securing social recognition. Later on, they became disillusioned and developed ill-feelings towards the reformers. During the initial stages of these movements, the reformers faced serious obstacles and they had to compromise on several aspects. Another noteworthy aspect of these movements was that their success depended mostly on the personal idealism, sacrifice and resourcefulness of the reformers. In many instances, circumstances would change once the particular reformer disappeared from the scene.

With regard to the spread of education and in particular women's education, the reformers were not sure about its quality and content. Women's education, as critics pointed out, was meant to prepare them as good housewives and ideal mothers. The curriculum was mainly designed for this purpose and included the imparting of skills such as knitting, embroidery, training in hygiene etc. Again it should be understood that at this stage, the vision of the pioneers of women's education did not go beyond making a woman an ideal house wife. She should become an enlightened partner of her husband. One reason why women's problems formed the main plank in the social reform agendas was the pathetic condition of women in the society. Women were considered as objects of sexual enjoyment and were treated as domestic slaves with no rights or privileges.

9.8. Summing Up

The 19th century liberalism and idealism influenced the minds of reformers. They were convinced that the elements of civilization introduced by the British Government such as English education, a well-knit administration, law courts, modern communications would place the British rule as a great benefactor seen from a proper historical perspective. In spite of their limitations, the religious and social reform movements played a historically progressive role. They were the first clear attempts to break away from the ritual ridden and tradition bound medievalism. The early reformers who came under the influence of the western ideas attacked superstition, obscurantism and stagnation into which the Indian society has fallen. They shook the very foundations of traditional religious beliefs and age old practices and brought about a major transformation in the social thinking of Indians. These movements created awareness among Indians and paved the way for the promotion of political consciousness.

9.9. Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following Essay - type questions in about 30 lines each.

- 1) Explain the social, religious conditions of India during 19th century.
- 2) As the founder of Brahma Samaj, and as a reformer who worked for the eradication of social evil 'sati', what was the role played by Raja Ram Mohan Roy?
- 3) Describe the misery of child marriages in India.
- 4) What were the circumstances that paved the way for widow remarriages and what was the role of social reformers?
- 5) How do you explain the degeneration of the society on the basis of Anti-nautch movement
- 6) Explain briefly the social reform movements in places other than Bengal.
- 7) What are the implications of social reform movements

II. Give short answer to the following question in about 15 lines each.

- 1) The contribution of Christian missionaries towards social reform movements
- 2) Arya Samaj
- 3) Prarthana Samaj
- 4) Women's education.
- 5) Social purity movement
- 6) Pandita Ramabai Saraswati.
- 7) How can you conclude that social reform movement was confined to upper castes alone.

9.10. Books For Further Reading

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BLOCK – V

Rise of Women's Movements in Pre-Independent India

Unit - 10 : Peasant, Working class and Tribal Movements

Unit - 11 : Women in Freedom Struggle

BRAOU

Unit - 10 : Peasant, Working Class and Tribal Women's Movements

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10.0 Objectives

After going through this unit, you would be able to

- Analyse the women's role in Telangana armed peasant struggle
 - Analyse the women's participation in Punnaprah Vayalar struggle.
 - Explain the course, nature and impact of Warli Adivasi struggle
 - Describe the women participation in Tehbhaga Struggle.
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10.1. Introduction

Through the colonization process by the British, political and economic changes began to occur in the Indian subcontinent from the middle of 19th century onwards. Initially the East India Company concentrated more in the thriving trade centres of Surat, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. But by the end of 18th century, it spread its wings wider and managed to consolidate its power, mainly through army regiments in all the important towns in the country. As a part of the British administration, changes began to occur in the structures of land tax, tenants and land ownership. The high rates of taxes collected from the people and the profits were repatriated to England.

As a part of their industrial policy, British rulers have managed to undermine indigenous products and the systematic destruction of native agricultural methods started. With a new tax policy peasantry were pushed towards insecurity, poverty and back breaking loans which devastated farmers and made life more miserable. The permanent tax system introduced in 1773, heralded a new feudal system. The section which till then were only the collectors, now occupied thousands of hectares of lands driving out poor and small peasants from their own lands. The erstwhile tax system used to be linked with the vagaries of nature like floods, famines and other calamities. But With this new system, irrespective of the land's yield, taxes were collected forcibly which pushed the peasantry into the quagmire of poverty giving up the little land they owned with never any hope of recovery.

On one hand, while the agricultural scene was languishing in this way, on the other hand, indigenous industrial products also suffered badly. The communities involved in the traditional fields of textiles, pottery, goldsmithy, blacksmithy etc. too were pushed into extreme poverty. The famed handlooms from India, with centuries of tradition behind them, suffered irreparable damage, with high taxes imposed on them, which ultimately tore them apart. To provide market for the British products, Indian cloth products were pushed away, and people even had to face curbs and restrictions to produce cloth with their traditional mastery. In such conditions, men and women had to leave their traditional professions and work in British industries, and as daily wage labourers in agricultural estates. Food crops made way to commercial crops like rubber, jute and tea. This produce was transferred as raw materials to British industries.

From mid 19th century onwards struggles have started here and there against British rule. Much before the First war of Independence or 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, opposition to British rule started in various parts of the country. All these various strands of opposition intensified to form strong peoples' movements which emerged by the turn of 19th century. There are fundamental differences in the forms of struggles-social reform movements, national movement, peasant and tribal movements and labour movements. In this chapter we will mainly discuss the peasant and tribal movements and women's role and participation in them. The important ones are Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle, Punnapprah Vayalar struggle in Kerala, Tehbhaga movement in Bengal and Warli Adivasi struggle in Maharashtra.

10.2. Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle

There were independent Princely states which were not directly under British administration. The Nizam state was one of them. Aurangzeb, the last monarch of Moghul dynasty appointed Asaf jah in 1713 as the Subedar of Deccan. Asaf Jah who was given the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk declared himself independent and thus became the founder of Asaf Jahi dynasty.

10.2.1 Socio Economic conditions for the outbreak of the struggle.

Hindus and Muslims who came to the region of Deccan along with Asaf Jahi procured huge lands or Jagirs, or joined the Deccan army as high officials and took up

positions as Revenue officers. The possession of these jagirs was hereditary. Not only they collected tax from the lands, but also snatched controlling rights over excise, forestry and water resources. Every village had a certain portion of land called 'Inam lands' which the Nizam would gift away to people who served him loyally. The rest of the lands called as 'Khalsa Lands' were under the Nizam Government. Here 'Riotwari system' was prevalent.

Before the implementation of the 'land survey agreement', middle men used to play major role in collecting tax from the Khalsa lands. At a later stage these middle men were given the titles of Deshmukh, Sardeshmukh, Desai and Sardesai. They acquired unlimited lands in Khalsa areas and became landlords.

The inhuman practice of 'bonded labour' was very much prevalent in Jagir and Khalsa areas. Whether it was the barber, potter or the washerman or persons belonging to any other caste, they had to willingly serve the landlords without any wages or rewards. If Revenue officers, Forest officers, or Police and Excise officials came to the village on duty the villagers were expected to serve them in all chores, without any remuneration. The small marginal farmers and agricultural labourers had to first work in the fields of the landlords and only then they were allowed to go to work on their own. There was no security for the farmers' crops. Harsh punishments were meted out by the landlords in order to exercise full control over the villagers. Women did not dare to wear either good clothes or flowers in their heads. If the call came from the landlords or his wife they had to simply run and obey the commands, even if they had sat down to eat. Women could not even breast-feed their babies while working on the fields of the landlords.

Under the Nizam rule, social conditions were unbearable and extremely painful. Linguistic or cultural rights were nonexistent. There was little scope for education. As the medium of instruction was Urdu in middle and high schools, people who did not possess any knowledge of Urdu were barred from entering the schools. Student activities were curtailed or totally prohibited. Struggles were waged in the late 19th century by the people for exercising their cultural rights. Schools catering to other languages were started. Andhra Maha Sabha was founded as a part of this programme. Andhra Maha Sabha became the centre for not only social and cultural activities but for political programmes as well.

10.2.2 Role of Andhra Mahila Sabha

Another important development was the emergence of the women's organisations. Andhra Mahila Sabha that was founded in 1930. Even if they were reformist in nature, they provided the much needed vital platform for women. Feudal culture gave a sanction to many social practices. 'Purdah' system was extensively practiced, not only by Muslim women, but also the middle and upper class. Hindu women could not go out of their houses without purdah. Women speaking out from a public platform was a totally unthinkable idea. It is in these tough conditions that Andhra Mahila Sabha along with Andhra Maha Sabha emerged on the scene. Until 1942 both organisations had joint meetings together. Eventually Mahila Sabha started branching out on its own and had

regular meetings with an independent status. Most of the members of Andhra Mahila Sabha belonged to upper and middle classes. Fired by the nationalist ideals, they took up various issues like women's education, prevention of prostitution, abolition of purdah system, widow remarriages etc. and fought for them. Around the same time, Navajeevan Mahila Mandali was started in the city of Hyderabad. It had 2000 active members. Many women from this organisation actively participated in Telangana Movement. Women's Organisations by providing public space to women gave them an opportunity in participating and shaping social life.

Andhra Maha Sabha gave a structure and shape to people's discontent and anger over the inhuman and dictatorial rule of the Nizam. The Telangana peasantry waged a relentless battle against the feudal system. It is these farmers who formed the backbone of the Telangana Peasant movement struggle. Poor peasant women stood guard day and night in the fields and faced the enemy. It was a question of life and death to them. Even the middle classes and rich farmers entered the fray, as they too had faced the ire of the landlords, though at a different level. Similarly, The middle class from urban areas too joined the fight. And women from these sections stepped into the movement along with their husbands and brothers.

In the Nizam state, the landlord not only had full rights over the land, but also exercised authority over every man and woman who were dependent on these lands for their livelihood. The landlords or the Telangana Zamindars counted every man, woman and child living in the estates as part of their properties. Women suffered a great deal more than men in this dispensation. If the landlord took fancy to any woman, she had to immediately surrender to him. If a woman got married, she had to spend her first night with the landlord. They had to look after the landlord's and his family's needs serving them as female slaves. Countless men and women of Telangana fought such a system from 1946 to 1951 and their heroic struggle has become historic.

10.2.3. Communist Leadership

This people's movement under the leadership of Communist Party took a new turn and became an armed struggle and battled against the feudal system and the Razakar Armies of the Nizam. After India won independence, with swift Police Action the Nizam state was integrated into Indian Union in 1948 and the movement continued for 3 more years after that.

The movement could continue for such a long time, only because it enjoyed people's support since they believed that Sanghas and Dalams alone could liberate them from the Jagirdari system. The rural peasantry was the backbone. Women brought out all their hidden strengths and inner resources and willed themselves to work under any circumstances. Without any formal training they perfected the system of fighting the enemy unitedly. Sexual assault or violence did not frighten or deter them. Circumstances forced them to even leave their infants behind for the security of the dalams. Disguised as men, they worked as couriers passing secret messages. The entire responsibility of providing shelter to members, and running of secret dens fell on women. Though armed, gun wielding women in dalams were few, they faced all kinds of problems under very trying circumstances. Apart from day to day problems, they even fought on

issues like man-woman relationships and male dominance in society.

10.2.4 Impact of the Telangana Armed Struggle.

There is no doubt that the Telangana Struggle proved very beneficial to the peasantry. The farmers who got the land in the land distribution programmes became the owners of the land. Leasing rights were guaranteed. It can be said that the most progressive law among all the land reform laws in the entire country, the kouludari law (1950) was seen achieved through this struggle. In the feudal system, the cultural and theoretical suppression of women was qualitatively very different from suppression of men. So it has to be said that qualitative changes have occurred in the lives of men after the abolition of feudal system and bonded labour.

10.3. Punaprah Vayalar Struggle

Travancore is an independent Principality of Kerala region in colonial India. Dictatorial feudal system was in vogue here too. The influence of National movement was quite strong in other parts of Kerala. The 'Quit India Movement' started in 1942 against British rule intensified the differences between the two main political parties, Congress and Muslim League. At the same time, it was imperative to fight against growing Japanese imperialism in the world. Around this time, the Communist Party gave a call to make efforts and strive for Hindu-Muslim unity. In this context, a women's convention was organised at Calicut. Representatives from Madras, Cochin and Travancore regions attended the meeting. All the sections of the society found a place in the meeting, from peasant women, labour women, teachers to housewives. The convention passed a resolution calling for struggle against fascism. This call evoked massive response in Kerala and women joined the movement in a big way.

In this situation, peoples' movements have started in Travancore state protesting against the fascist rule of the kings. People's awareness increased and they raised their voices against issues like abysmally low wages and grinding poverty. Increasing consciousness in the peasant and peoples' movements had a great effect on women, especially peasant women. Thousands of women were mobilised into the movements. Problems related to land emerged in the forefront as a major issue. Peoples' movement was started against the misrule of Travancore ruler C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. The role of women in this movement deserves special mention.

On Oct. 17th ' 1946, a call was given to all sections of the people to fight the feudal landlord. More than 50,000 people including large number of women launched large scale protests and demonstrations on the streets. Ramaswamy Iyer first sent a large contingent of policemen and later armed rowdy sheeters and hooligans to disrupt and terrorise the people. Men and women obstructed the march pasts being conducted by the army in front of their work places. The people did not step back even after the army threatened to open fire.

A massive political strike started on Oct. 21st with more than a lakh of workers drawn from various sections taking part in it. Dockyard workers, rubber, oil, handlooms

and workers from other fields were major partners in the strike. A man was killed when police opened fire on the striking workers. Enraged by this ugly turn of events, workers destroyed the police station. This incident paved way for military administration. Army rule spread to all corners of the state. Violence and atrocities on the people, looting the houses and razing them to ground, raping women of all age group whether young or old, became a daily occurrence.

Women, men and children ran for their lives, fleeing the scene of violence and took shelter in the Vayalar region. Rama swami Iyer sent the army to destroy the whole Vayalar region. As the area was surrounded by water, people braving danger readied themselves to fight the enemy soldiers approaching in boats. In spite of this, more than 500 men and women died in the army firing. The main weapons of women in this struggle were only sickles and stones.

On October 24th overcoming the army seige, more than 10,000 men and women participated in a major procession which culminated at the military head quarters of Punaprah. Under the orders of commander, the army fired from every corner until the ammunition was exhausted. But keeping in mind the experience of Vayalar, men and women stratgically and very skillfully attacked and beat the army with minimum loss of lives. In the struggle, seven workers were killed. Workers, men and women risked their lives and fought the battle against dictatorial feudal system and succeeded in their mission.

10.4. Warli Adivasi Struggle

About 60 kms from the industrial city of Bombay, in the Taluqs of Dhahoma, Palghar and Ambargaon of Thane district live the Worli tribals. This is the saga of the struggle they waged against slavery and bonded labour from 1945 to 1947. If we are looking into the history of the region, hundreds of years ago, these Adivasis owned and controlled the lands in and around the forests. In the colonial period, not only the British but also the people from the plains started to illegally encroach upon their lands. Taking advantage of the Adivasi's illiteracy and innocence, they occupied vast amounts of their lands.

After gradually taking possession of their lands, the merchants started controlling the lives of these tribals and turned them into bonded labourers. In these circumstance, where they were totally dependants on the landlords for every small need generations of tribals continued to live as bonded labourers.

Very cruel punishments were meted out to the tribals. Plucking out a fruit from the trees belonging to the landlords, invited such inhuman punishments like tying them to the trees and whipping, setting fire under the feet and burning them alive etc. If anyone was unable to go to work, or failed to repay loans, apart from the cruel treatment, even little children were not spared and were forcibly turned into bonded labourers. The tribal women were considered as an extension of their properties of the landlords. These women were either raped or used for their enjoyment. They had no right to either

express disinterest or oppose the landlords. If the tribals got married, their spouses automatically became the 'wedded slaves' of the landlords.

10.4.1 Role of Kisan Maha Sabha

In 1945, for the first time, opposition started to build against such oppression. Some tribals attended the 'Kisan Maha Sabha' organised by the communist party in Thane district. They started to organise themselves against force labour. Smt. Godavari Parulekar was the individual who worked instilled courage and spirit of unity among the Adivasis. She lived with them in their huts, ate whatever they ate, and explained them about the miserable living conditions. Day and night she strived for their upliftment untiringly and tried to increase awareness and consciousness about their lives. The tribals affectionately addressed her as 'bai'.

On May 20th, 1945, the Kisan Sabha organised a major public meeting, which was attended by thousands of Adivasis at Jhari. Women, men and children from every corner of the region started to organise themselves unitedly against bonded slavery.

In another meeting which took place at kosal on October 8th, it was decided to raise against the unjust practice of wedded slaves. The people who attended the meeting took out a procession to different areas, stopped before the houses of landlords and raised slogans calling these wedded slaves to return back. The procession continued with more and more people joining them.

Unable to accept the united stand of the tribals the landlords conspired with the police and various attempts were made to demoralise the movement. The rumour was spread that Godavari Bai's life was in danger and that they had to rush to the village. When the tribals gathered in the village, they were fired upon by the waiting police. In these clashes a tribal, Jaitya Gangad was killed and several were injured.

Holding Godavari Parulekar and her husband S.V. Parulekar responsible for the incident, the officials banished them from the district. Many Adivasis were arrested. Around this time, police and the landlords subjected the tribals to gruesome violence, and tried to destroy the movement. But the Adivasis stood committedly in their struggle, struck work and stopped cutting grass from the landlords fields. As the required amount of grass for the metropolis of Bombay, was daily sent from this region, the officials had to agree to their demands as they had no other alternative. They not only had to withdraw the banishment order on Godavari Bai, but also had to release all the arrested persons. They increased the daily wages of the tribals for cutting fodder. This victory has tremendously increased the confidence of the tribals by leaps and bounds. The felling of trees was carried out in a big way during the festivals of Dasshera and Dipavali. The contractors made huge profits by selling these trees as timber. But the tribals who cut these trees were given less than 25 ps as wages. The tribals demanded that Rs. 1.25 be given uniformly as daily wages in all the forest areas where tree felling was done. As the contractors and landlords did not accept this demand, the tribals stopped work for miles around the forest area. The Adivasi movement did not stop even after the Government, contractors and landlords tried their best to disrupt the strike. Finally in the negotiation held under the leadership of Godavari Parulekar, the contractors agreed

to pay Rs. 1.25 as daily wages. A written agreement was also drawn up. But instead of implementing their accord, the government on November 14, 1946 declared emergency in the area and more than 200 Adivasis were arrested and jailed. Godavari Bai and few others were once again banished.

Encouraged by the government's act, the landlords with the help of police and the rowdy elements started to openly harass and intimidate tribal men and women. Even the wage increase agreement was not implemented. Tribals once again started their protest and continued with the strike even though their leaders were still in prison. Wrong cases were booked against them. When the Advocates of Bombay who came in support of Adivasis were violently attacked. The press carried on a campaign in favour of the Adivasi struggle and gave it wide publicity. With this the Government had to once again give in and withdraw the orders of banishment. In February, 1947 Godavari Parulekar was once again arrested on charge of making provocative speeches and inciting people. People especially the women faced the government's wrath. Army was called into Thane district. In spite of facing severe restrictions and hardships, Adivasi men and women stood unitedly to make the movement a success. Finally, in February 1947 the army was sent back. The government passed orders abolishing bonded slavery and released all the arrested tribals. Thus the Worli Adivasis scored a major victory over the existing feudal system.

10.5. Tehbhaga Struggle

The state of Bengal enjoys a place of pride in the history of independence movement. A major struggle was put up against the division of Bengal. Similarly the Santhal uprising of 1855-56, peasant revolts at a latter stage, the movement against the Bengal famine in which men and women participated were the other important revolutionary milestones. Against this background, the struggle that was waged against the feudal system, especially by rural peasant women culminated as the historic Tehbhaga movement. To understand this movement we have to carefully observe the existing land structures and problems. Jothedars were the owners of vast lands. Farmers lease the lands from Jothedars and cultivated them. Irrespective of the yield, crop or no crop, 3/4th of the produce had to be given to the Jothedar. Farmers had no rights over the land. Though all the expenses were borne by the farmer, major part of the crop was taken away by the Jothedar. Even the grass cut along with the crops had to be given away.

The Zamindars or the landlords who were primarily tax collectors under the British government in the 18th century, amassed thousands of acres of land and became powerful landlords perpetuating the feudal system. And these lands were given to the Jothedars. Gradually, along with the Zamindars, the Jothedars too became the instruments in the suppression of rural peasantry. The suppression of people in the system continued, not only in the matter of agriculture, but also in several aspects in the daily lives. Women had to suffer double pressures. They were suppressed equally both by their own men and the Jothedars. Women had no financial freedom in any aspect.

We shall briefly look at the run of events to understand the background of Tehbhaga

movement. From 1938 onwards, the Kisan Sabha was making efforts to organise the peasantry and build a movement against the feudal system. In November 1946, the peasantry started to protest against the Jothedars and artificially induced famine in the districts of Dinazpur, Rangapur, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Midnapore, Jessore, Khulna, Mainmarsing and 24 paraganas. Even though communal riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out both sections unitedly worked in the movement. Women from lowest classes who suffered suppression the most, became frontline leaders and directed the movement. They took up the leadership after successfully fighting the violent attacks of henchmen. They strived for their rightful share in the yield. With the slogan of, land belongs to the tiller the movement spread to all the areas in the region. Women organised themselves into groups and toured every village alerting the people against the unjust system and against the illegal hoarding of foodgrains by the merchants and traders. This inspired the peasant women a great deal and they fought spirited battles against police and the landlords henchmen and prevented the crop from being taken away by the Jothedars, during the harvesting season. At several places the Jothedars tried to incite communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in order to destroy the peasant revolt, but could not succeed.

The movement entered an intense phase by December 1946 after spreading into several other areas. The government had to accede to the demand of the peasants that if the Jothedars did not supply the farmers with agricultural implements, seeds and cater to other needs, they ceased to have any rights over the crops. Many Jothedars threatened by the movement fled to the cities. The Govt., which did not bother to check the movement in its early phase, unleashed terror on the peasantry at a later stage. Police arrested the farmers, especially women and tortured them. Even while protesting state violence, the peasant movement under the guidance of Communist Party spread to all the regions. Tehbhaga movement left its stamp as an important historical peasant revolt.

10.6 Summing UP

Thus it is observed that towards the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, women began to play an active role in Indian Politics by taking part in various movements, peasant, tribal and labour movements all of which contributed in intensifying the national struggle that took place in these times. However there is a fundamental difference between the nature of various Peasant and tribal struggle and the national movement. While the nationalist movement was reformist in nature the other movements had class struggle of their background. These struggles with diverse backgrounds hence succeeded in rising social consciousness of the people. In all these struggles, facing restrictions and hardships, women stood unitedly and fought against not only the oppressive land lords but also against the evil customs which prevailed in the society.

10.7 Model Examination Questions.

I Answer the following essay type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Analyse the factors responsible for the emergence of Telangana Armed Struggle and estimate its impact.
2. Give an account of the course and impact of the punnapra Vayala struggles.
3. Analyse the women's role in the Tehbhaga struggle.

II. write short answers to the following questions in about 15 lines each .

1. Womens role in Telagana armed peasant struggle.
2. Explain the nature of worli Adivasi struggle.
3. Write about the spread of Telangana struggle.

10.8 Books for further reading

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UNIT - 11 : WOMEN IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Contents :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Freedom movement - Women's role
- 11.3 Organisational Effort - Issues debated
- 11.4 Women's Magazines
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- 11.6 Model Examination Questions
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11.0 Objectives

From a study of this unit you should be able to :

- Analyse women's role in the freedom struggle,
- Analyse the debates which emerged on women's issues,
- Assess the role of magazines in the national movement.

11.1 Introduction

When we look at the history of women's movement in India chronologically, social reform movement made an impact first, followed by national independence struggle. We already discussed it in the 4th unit. From the middle of 19th century, under the influence of British rule, fundamental changes began to take place in political, social and economic spheres. They made a strong impact on Indian culture. In general historical research on these changes basically pertained to two levels; political and economic. Changes in economic structures, changing agricultural modes, legal changes in land reforms are easily discernable. On the other hand, we find social histories, and social reform movements which prominently highlighted and discussed women's issues.

Though there are similarities in the women's issues discussed in 19th century's social reform movement and 20th century's national struggle, we find many fundamental differences regarding its form and structure.

Women's education became a major issue in the 1860s. It is evident from the various historical evidences, that in Bengal, Bombay and Madras states, extensive debates took place regarding the content of education required for women. Efforts were made to establish girls' schools as purdah system for women was prevalent then. Issues like child marriages and its disastrous consequences were highlighted. By 1880-90s child marriages were actively discouraged and petitions were submitted to the British

Government repeatedly to raise the age limit for marriages. Women's education then was geared towards shaping women as 'good wives' and 'good mothers'. Though some history and arithmetic were taught for General knowledge, important subjects of study for women were moral values, cleanliness, tailoring etc. The social reformers influenced by the British thinking, mainly focussed on these issues in their writings. This aspects becomes clear from observing the then magazines, "Satihita Bodhini" and "Telugu Janana"

Some of the activities that women from traditional families were prevented from were : learning music, playing etc. The prevalent view was that these aspects add to the moral degradation of the society. It was also thought that English education was meant for men only who move in the outside world and quite unnecessary for women.

The change from social reform movement to freedom struggle has not taken place in a day. We cannot see a clear dividing line between them. Many issues, debates and individuals helped the movement grow in strength. Another important factor was the contribution of newspapers.

Women's issues have undergone considerable transformation in the changing economic and political scenario in the country. Nationalist thinking became crystallized in different ways. A new and more powerful woman, with her recently acquired independence and self confidence took shape from this ferment. With obedience and patience and constantly striving to uphold family values day and night, overcoming the difficulties with a smile, and at the same time using the well perfected traditional capabilities, this new woman's image was born in literature also, as the one who struggled to keep the flag of the nation's moral values flying high. This generated a strong impact. If we observe the various stages and incidents in freedom struggle, and women's role in it, this influence is clearly visible. Women's movement in this period took on an institutionalised shape along with the national movement. Many women's organisations were formed all over the country with different distinctive viewpoints. Women's magazines were started with the spirit of nationalism.

From the latter part of 19th century, women have begun to take part in various protests, processions and organisations. They faced lot of opposition from men and their families. As per the report of the 1887 Congress meeting, 10 women representing various women's organisations attended the sessions. One of them and the one who mobilised the other women to attend the session was Pandita Ramabai. But these women were allowed only to attend the session and not to participate in the deliberations or vote for resolutions. From 1905-1908's Swadeshi movement against Partition of Bengal, women have started to participate in national movement in large numbers. Congress party increased the momentum of the movement in 1905 by making petitions, passing resolutions against partition and organising protest marches. The wives, mothers, daughters and sisters of men in the movement were drafted as support to the ongoing struggle. Middle class women have voluntarily given away large chunks of jewellery as donations to the movement. The national freedom movement was also influenced by extremist and revolutionary men and organisations. Women in western India were more attracted to revolutionary activities of these organisations than the nonviolent struggle.

11.2 Freedom Movement - Women's Role

Women's participation became essential to provide a broad based foundation to the freedom movement. Inspired by Gandhiji's call, thousands of women came out of their homes and joined the movement. Though there is some criticism about Gandhiji's views on women's equality, there is no doubt that he more than anyone else, encouraged women to participate in the movement. The very modes of protest undertaken like Nonviolence, Satyagraha and Non-cooperation have been instrumental in women taking to the movement in a big way. Gandhi believed that many people's movements failed basically because of women's conditions in the society and their inability to participate in the protests. He recognised that women could take part in Satyagraha etc effectively because of their fortitude and forbearance inspite of their illiteracy. A wing called Desa Sevika which supported nonviolent social reforms was present even in the early 20th century in the Congress party. In 1918, Indian National Congress and Muslim League recognised women's right to vote. Indian Women's Congress was established in 1927. The women's organisations which emerged later, totally supported women's movement of the congress.

From 1908 onwards Swadeshi movement gained momentum. The Home Rule movement during the first World War was a major activity in the national struggle. Annie Besant, an Irish woman, played an important role in this movement. There was a lull in the movement until 1917. With the introduction of Satyagraha by Gandhiji, the nationalist struggle took a different turn from 1917 onwards. The main intention of Gandhiji's Satyagraha was to protest against British Government's policies in a totally different and a nonviolent manner. British officials used to forcefully collect the revenue taxes from the people, even though the country was reeling under terrible conditions of continuous famines. In 1919 there were country wide protests against the Rowlatt Act which completely suspended the people's civil rights. British army has indiscriminately and mercilessly fired upon the thousands of unarmed men, women and children assembled at Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab to protest nonviolently. Thousands of people were among the dead even as per the Government records.

The Government introduced Montague-Chelmsford reforms to implement certain constitutional changes as a result of the Home Rule movement. The Government appointed Simon Commission with all British members which was sent to all parts of the country in 1928 to oversee and supervise the reforms. With this act, the national movement which was inactive until then again got revitalised. All the political parties took part in the rallies, and marches protesting against Simon Commission, with the slogan 'Simon go back.' In the meeting of all political parties, for the first time a rough draft for an autonomous Indian Constitution was written. The final report was drafted under the leadership of Motilal Nehru. Though this report has not demanded 'Purna Swaraj' or complete freedom, a strong plea was made for Dominion Status and adult franchise for all men and women. In all these activities, we find women actively participating as individuals and also representing organisations. Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Aruna Asaf Ali and Durgabai Deshmukh emerged as frontline leaders.

In 1931, the Indian Women's Congress, submitted a resolution to the Viceroy asking for certain important features to be included in the constitution.

1. Equal rights and responsibilities for all without any gender discrimination.
2. Equal opportunities in employment, business and administration.
3. Equal opportunities for women to participate in electoral process.
4. And that special nominations or reservations for women were not necessary.

Though there was not much change in women's social status until 1937, women legislators grew in number and occupied third position in the world. All the restrictions on practising women advocates were removed by the Legal Practitioner Act of 1923.

In the following year i.e. 1929 at Lahore, the National Congress session passed the resolution of 'Sampurna Swaraj' or complete independence. The protest programme was drawn under Gandhiji's leadership. National schools and colleges were begun in this period. Boycotting foreign goods and courts became the norm. In 1930 January, Gandhiji sent a petition with 11 proposals to Lord Irwin. They were prohibition of liquor, release of political prisoners from jails, reduction in the military expenditure, reduction in the salaries of civil administrators, amendments in the National Weapons Act, reforms in criminal investigation dept, regularisation of rupee value, encouragement to Khadi and village industries, 50% reduction in land tax, to employ Indians in harbours and dockyards; to lift taxes on salt etc. A month later, under Gandhiji's leadership, the historic 'Salt Satyagraha' was started. The salt march started on March 12, 1930 and continued till April 6th, covering a distance of 240 miles on foot with hundreds of Satyagrahis joining Gandhi. They would regularly halt at various villages and explained the purpose of this Satyagraha to the people. As a result of this, lakhs of people were inspired and Dandi Satyagraha created a storm. At various places in the country thousands of men, women and children rejecting the Govt. salt Act, braved countless inhuman lathicharges and courted arrest.

Men and women working on the Charkha in their frontyards gave the Satyagrahis massive support and encouragement. Sarojini Naidu was the first woman to be arrested in the Satyagraha. By making and selling salt thousands of women became a part of the movement. They organised rallies boycotting liquor and foreign goods. Women were mobilised towards the movement in this unique way. For the first time women in large numbers started to take part in the national movement. Women's role was envisaged from different dimensions by many women in their writings. Sarojini Naidu saw it as spiritual power of Mother India. Annie Beasant described the women's role as the spirit of Hindu women's souls and Margaret Cousins saw it as the representation of greatness and nobility of Hindus and the strength of Muslims, and Kamaladevi Chatopadhyay as the village women's spiritual rejuvenation and power.

With the call of "Quit India" in 1942, the national movement which was sailing smoothly, became a great tidal wave. British Government arrested all the Congress leaders and imprisoned them. With this act, the Government invited people's wrath from all sections of the society including village poor, urban middle class, the workers etc.

208 police outposts, 332 railway stations, 945 post offices were reduced to ashes as a result of the people's rage. Though the Government reacted by unleashing terror on the people and resorted to brutal killings, the spirit of freedom has not taken a beating and movement continued unabated until India achieved Independence in 1947.

Women's role and contribution in the movement has been immensely significant. In the beginning, women gathered and picketed foreign shops and made a bonfire of foreign goods. Rural women went one step further and entirely stopped the transport of foreign goods by lying across the roads. Women emerged as leaders in their own right, took the responsibility and kept the momentum strong, when men were arrested. Women were also active in militant activities. Women were active not only in the national movement but also in the various armed struggles against the British Government. Preetilatha Wadekar, a terrorist was killed in the raid on Chittagong Arms Depot. Kalpana Dutt, Beena Das, Shanti, Suniti Ghosh, Suhasini Ganguly and many other women were involved in revolutionary activities. Gidello, a woman activist in Manipur led a movement against Taxes. British Government took serious action on Belian Grang, a Tribal Community for leading the movement against forced labour. In 1940s women actively took part in various peasant movements in different parts of the country. In the history of women's movement, these experiences of grass root level women not only provided great understanding, but also it can be seen that contemporary women's movements could not have progressed much further or achieved its goals without the cooperation of women of peasant and labour communities. Tehbhaga movement in Bengal, Telangana armed peasant struggle, tribal uprising in Warli have all greatly enriched the national movement. However, as the national movement led by congress party under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was basically in the reformist framework concepts such as class struggle or struggle against gender discrimination did not find place in this movement. All India Women's Conference (AIWC) was able to mobilise large number of women from the urban areas. It could not involve the lower class women in its work, as it was basically run within the middle class framework.

11.3 Organisational Efforts - Issues debated :

1910-20's was witness to the emergence of women's organisations all over the country. They not only enhanced women's role and Participation in the national movement, but also actively put forth and organised different thought provoking debates concerning women's issues. The early women's organisations were greatly influenced by the Aryasamaj and Brahma Samaj.

Women's organisations started functioning in a small way since late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were mentioned in the women's magazines of those times. 'Vanga Mahila Samaj', 'Aghora Kamini Nari Samithi' of Bengal, 'Satara Abalonnathi Sabha' of Maharashtra, 'Mahila Seva Samaj' in Bangalore, 'Bharat Mahila Parishat' in Benaras, 'Prayaga Mahila samiti' in Allahabad were a few of them. Some of these were run with social reform as goals and functioned as fora for debates and discussions on women's condition. Efforts were made to give a nation wide form to all these various organisations by forming Mahila Congress in 1908 at Madras with the women of Southern states. 19

presentations were made in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi and English. Though it did not gain a national character immediately, efforts continued in all the major cities. Indian Women's Association was started in 1917 with Annie Besant, Dorothy Janaraja Dasa, Malathi Patwardhan, Ammu Swaminathan, Srimathi Dadabhai and Smt. Ammu Jambal at the helm. It can be said that Indian Women's Association was the first organisation to raise its voice and fight for the demands of women workers. Important nationalists joined hands and worked together with the Association. This organisation was the first to discuss the issue of maternity benefits for women workers. Though the demand for maternity leave was made in 1921 Jamshedpur strike, nothing came out of it. This issue was again taken up in the All India Trade Unions congress for discussion. Gandhiji had no contacts with this organisation. Stalwarts like Annie Besant, Wadia, N.M. Joshi were involved with this organisation. After a number of debates and protests, the Bombay Maternity Bill was passed in 1929.

In 1920s members of the Association organised the women workers. Issues like women workers having to work over time in the mills, absolutely no job security of any kind and lack of any maternity benefits repeatedly came up for discussions.

Women's education became an important issue of debate. Many discussions centered around women's rights, health, hygiene became a part of nationalist agenda only through the efforts of women's organisations.

11.4 Women's Magazines :

The role played by women's magazines in the social reform movements and national movements deserves special mention. From 1880 onwards until 1920's, it was women who enthusiastically participated and took the movement forward, spread it far and wide and fought for certain fundamental changes. But this fact was never given any recognition. An important achievement of those times was women's magazines that were started in various languages, especially under the leadership of women themselves which ran for long time with an extensive readership. All this at a time when women's education was still in its infancy. Some important magazines were 'Bharathi' in Bengali which was brought out from 1818 to 1912 under the editorship of Swarna Kumari Devi, Kiranmayi Devi and Saralakumari, 'The Indian Women's magazine' brought out in English from 1901 to 1938 with Kamala Sathyanathan as its Editors, 'Savitri Patrika' in Telugu in 1900 with Pulugurta Lakshmi Narasamamba as the editor, 'stree darpan' in Hindi which started in 1909 under the leadership of Rameshwari Nehru, 'Karnataka Nandini', Kannada magazine from 1917 to 1922 with Nanjangudu Tirumalamba as the editor etc. Others were 'Bhama Bodhini' in Bengali, 'Sundari Subodh', 'Stree Bodh' in Gujarathi, 'Hindu Sundari' and 'Janana' in Telugu, 'Khatoon', 'Tehjol Nishaan', 'Ismath' in Urdu were the other important ones. Most of the writings in the magazines were by women and these were totally aimed at reaching the women readership. A wide spectrum of issues were discussed in these magazines. The early reformist writings highlighted and debated issues like travails of widows, perils of purdah system, the importance of education etc. Women's writings came forward and efforts were made to bring them

into the political parameters as part of the public agenda, and new dimensions to issues were discussed minutely. But at the same time, male reformers, made women the central focal point, and made her wholly responsible for the right and wrong doings of the society and discussed the changes that women had to bring about in themselves and in the society.

For example, in the issue of 'widow remarriages' the discussions centered around 'widows sexuality'. On the one hand, condemning the unjust and brutal attitude of the society towards widows, they also on the other hand preached that widows should conduct their lives with high moral values. To avoid pitfalls like sexual waywardness, the solution given was that widows should be brought back to the family life again. Whereas women, writing in the magazines opined that education was the basic need for the widows to help them stand on their own feet and live independently. This was a dimetrically opposite viewpoint countering men's argument. Though there was a broad agreement on widow remarriages, it was felt that the issue merited a wise decision after deep and intense thought.

We can see that several women writers writing in the magazines have taken a stand that education was more important than marriages for the widows.

Women's writing was introduced in a big way in the entire country through women's magazines. Nazar Sajjad Hyder, Shyamala Devi, Hymavathi Devi, Saraswati Rajwade, Lalithambika, Authar janam', Bandaru Achamamba, Kotikalapudi Seetamma have all made important, constructive and thought provoking contributions in their respective languages.

The concept of 'nationalism' was also given a different dimension in the various debates in the magazines. It was expressed that the nation cannot progress without women's education, freedom and women's rights and nationalism was crucially linked with all these issues. The strong sentiment repeatedly underscored in these writings was that these issues, should first be discussed and efforts made to improve women's lot through education.

That 'nationalism' came to be defined thus and efforts made to increase the understanding of this ideal way an important contribution. The meetings of women's organisations, reports, debates undertaken for the spread of education were regularly reported in these magazines. Another important feature was to portray women leaders who participated in the various struggles in the national movement and a detailed discussion concerning the political aspect was highlighted.

11.5 Summing Up

Womens issues have undergone a considerable transformation in the changing socio economic and political scenario in the country. If we observe the various stages and incidents in the freedom struggle, womens role and contribution has been immensely significant. Women began to take part in various protests. Processions and organisations from the latter part of the 19th century. Women acvely participated in the constructive programmes intiated by Gandhiji. We notice a gradual change in the women participation

by 1920. During this period women activists were found in courting arrests. Women's mass participations seen in 1940's. Women were also active in militant activities in militant activities in. They also participated in various armed struggles against British government. Many women's organisations all over the country gave an institutionalised shape to the women's movement. Women's magazines also immensely contributed for women's participation in the freedom struggle.

11.6 Model Examination Questions

- I. Answer the following essay-type questions in about 30 lines each.
 1. Analyze the women's role in the Indian freedom movement.
 2. Discuss the debates which emerged on women's issues during freedom struggle.
 3. Estimate the role of women's magazines in the freedom struggle.
- II. Write short answer to the following question in about 15 lines each.
 1. Write about the significance of the women's role in the freedom struggle.
 2. Estimate the role of women's organisations in the freedom struggle.
 3. How did the women's magazines address the women's social evils and causes in the 20th century?

11.7 Books for Further Reading

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BLOCK – VI

Contemporary Women's Movements in India

Unit - 12 : Rise of New Women's Movements

Unit - 13 : National Commission for Women

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UNIT - 12 : RISE OF NEW WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

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- 12.5 Women's Movement in 1990's
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- 12.7 Model Examination Questions
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12.0 Objectives

After going through the unit, you would be able to

- Explain the issues and framework of Women's movements from 1970's,
- Analyse the women's movement during emergency and post emergency period,
- Explain the issues taken up in the womens movement in 1990's.

12.1 Introduction

The pre 1970s women's movements as we have seen were part of social reform movement of the nationalist struggles for independence and were more often than not affiliated to political parties. Their programmes were subsumed in the party programmes or were reformist at best, they also had structures and hierarchies on the same lines as the parties, they were affiliated to. The new women's movements of the 70s differ on all these counts. The disillusionment with political parties, the increased awareness of the oppression of women and the marginalized sections (Dalits, blacks, tribals etc.) gave rise to new organizations that set their own agendas. The new women's movements that arose from the rise of small groups of women with common interests refused to be affiliated to any political party. They rejected formal organisations, hierarchies and 'leaders' in order to ensure true democratic discussion and functioning. They were not mass organisations that enlisted membership. They functioned as small groups with conscientising of women as their most important agenda. Their agendas were for more radical in that they raised questions that were hitherto not seen as public issues or

'political'. From domestic violence to wages, to state repression to communalism became agendas that questioned the very power relations/structures within the society. This has its own implications for the state, its social base and powers. Such a questioning by the new women's movement destabilised the long accepted notions of family, society and state.

The women's movement throughout the seventies and eighties compelled governments (the world over) and international organisations and the United Nations to establish committees to take up several issues such as - women's wages, domestic violence, rape, employment etc - and make gender a part of political discourse. It is in this context that in India the women's movement compelled the planners to include a chapter on 'women and development' in the sixth five year plan (80-85) for the first time. Likewise, in response to women's movement the central government established commissions to go into the question of law with regard to rape, dowry etc. The agitation over Mathura case led to significant changes in the Evidence Act, the criminal procedure code and the Indian Penal Code.

12.2 New Women's Movement from 70s - New issues and frameworks

Over the last two decades a vigorous and uneven women's liberation movement has taken shape in India. A whole range of women from different classes, castes, and communities have participated in the movement along with activists drawn from a variety of political trends, parties and groups which can be broadly categorized as liberal, Gandhian, socialist and radical in their frameworks. It would be relevant to say that most women's organisations were affiliates of political parties and generally followed party programmes and also led by men.

It would be relevant to say that most women's organisations were affiliates of political parties and generally followed party programmes and also led by men. From 70s women's groups of various kinds organised themselves around their own issues and claimed a certain autonomy. Shahada in Dhulia district in Maharashtra is recognised for the important role it played in the movement of Bhil landless tribals against the extortionate practices of the landlords most of whom were non-tribals. In 1972 the Shramik Sanghatana was formed in Shahada which took up struggles against land alienation. Women played a militant role leading demonstrations and mobilising masses. Gender based issues began to be raised by them expressing consciousness of their oppression as a sex. It led to the development of alcoholism as an important issue.

In Gujarat, what was probably the first attempt at a women's trade union was made in Ahmedabad, by Gandhian socialists attached to the Textile Labour Association (TLA), originally founded by Gandhi. At the initiative of Ela Bhatt, who worked in the women's wing of TLA, the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA) was formed which worked in the several different trades in the unorganised sector, but shared a common experience of low earnings, poor working conditions, harassment from those in authority (contractors and police) and lack of recognition of their work as socially useful labour. The aims of SEWA were to improve these conditions of work through collective bargaining.

During the railway strike in the early part of 1970s, which almost brought the day to day Government to a stand still, mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters of the workers lay down on railway tracks to prevent trains from moving, picketed offices, and organized marches. (Tharu & Lalita, 1993) In 1973, the United Women's Anti Price-Rise Front was formed by several women including Mrinal Gore of the Socialist Party and Ahalya Rangnekar of CPI-M, to mobilise women in the city of Bombay against inflation. The movement grew rapidly, becoming a mass women's movement demanding that both prices and distribution of essential commodities be fixed by the Government. Many housewives came into the movement and new forms of protest were invented where thalis and rolling pins were used as symbols of protest.

The anti Price-Rise agitation spread to Gujarat where the Nav Nirman movement formed by the students under the influence of Jaya Prakash Narayan in 1974 took up the campaign. Several issues like corruption and black marketing along with soaring prices were taken up by the movement and soon it became a mass movement joined by thousands of middle-class women. In its course the movement shifted focus from the issues taken up to an all out attack on Indian State which was seen as undemocratic.

In the same year as the Nav Nirman movement developed, the first women's group of the contemporary feminist movement was formed in Hyderabad, the Progressive Organisation of Women (POW). The activists of POW found it important to have a organisation made up exclusively of women, articulating women's concerns and analysing the concept of patriarchy. POW organised on issues that were directly affecting women's lives. This brought hundreds of women together in campaigns against dowry, eve teasing, obscenity in films and literature, price rise etc. The campaign against "eve teasing" taken up by the POW brought into the open the hostile and sexually threatening conditions all women had to deal with in their daily lives, in their work places, colleges, universities and the streets. The activities of POW was in no way limited only to Hyderabad, women started taking up issues with fervour and seriousness all over the Telangana region.

12.3 Emergency

The proclamation of the State of emergency in June 1975, led to a severe curbing of all activities that were questioning state power. The POW was not spared the repressive strategies of the State. It was branded as a front organisation of an underground party, thus making it illegal. The emergence of this group established certain important traditions in the women's movement of Andhra Pradesh. The necessity for a separate women's organisation it was proved. It showed that as an autonomous women's organisation it was more successful in drawing out women students than mixed student groups. The immense potential of having separate women's groups became extremely appealing to other radical student groups who had earlier criticised the concept of having an autonomous women's organisation.

1975 saw the sudden development of a whole spate of feminist activity in Maharashtra. This is seen by some feminists as being partly due to the U.N.'s declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year, perhaps the declaration did provide a kind

of focus for activities centering on women. But it seems likely that these activities would have taken place in any case, for an interest in women's problems started developing in Maharashtra from the early seventies, with the shahada movement and anti price agitations. The U.N. declared 1975 as women's year due to the rise of women's movements and the increasing articulation of their needs and demands all over the world.

While this is true for certain groups, it is also a fact that the declaration of Emergency in 1975 led to a break in the development of the women's movement, for many political organisations were driven underground and thousands of activists were arrested. The lifting of Emergency in 1977, and the formation of Janata Government in 1978, led to a renewal of some of the movements of early to mid-seventies and women's groups were formed all over the country in the main cities.

12.4 Post Emergency Period : Women's Movement - Issues

The late seventies saw the emergence of a number of autonomous women's organisations in the major cities of India - Forum Against Oppression of Women in Bombay, Stree Sanghursh Samithi and Saheli in Delhi, Samata in Mysore, Vimochana in Bangalore, Stree Shakti Sanghatan (SSS) in Hyderabad. The new strategies of political engagement expanded the entire scope of the women's movement.

12.4.1 Violence Against Women

One of the major campaigns taken up in Andhra Pradesh during this period was police rape or custodial rape. Rameeza Bee's rape by four policemen, the eventual murder of the husband who protested against the rape, came up in 1978. Police guilt was clearly established at the commission of enquiry set up at that time. But in the trial, the police were acquitted. Stree Shakti Sanghatan followed up this case together with other women's organizations and demonstrations were held against the acquittal of the policemen.

The issue of rape has been one that most contemporary feminist movements internationally have focussed on, firstly because sexual assault is one of the ugliest and most brutal expressions of masculine violence towards women, and because of what it shows about the way in which the woman's body is seen as representing the community. Moreover, the issue of police rape achieved new significance in 1978, just as feminist groups were in the process of formation, through the incident in Hyderabad, where Rameeza Bee was raped by several policemen, and her rickshaw puller husband murdered because he protested at the gang rape of his wife. Following this rape and murder, several people attacked police station, laid the rickshaw puller's dead body in the station verandha, set up road blocks, cut the telephone wires, stoned the building and set fire to some bicycles in the compound. Two platoon of armed police were called in to quell the crowd's fury. Politicians entered the fray and the Chief Minister was gheraoed the next day by members of the opposition. In the course of the gherao the police fired on the crowd, further exacerbating the situation. The next day, a Hyderabad bandh (closure of all services) was called to protest the firing, curfew was declared in sixteen areas and

nine people were killed and eighty injured by police firing in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The agitation continued even when the Army was called in, and could only be repressed after President's Rule was declared and a commission of enquiry into the rape of Rameeza Bee and the murder of her husband was appointed.

In 1979 there were women's demonstrations against incidents of police and landlord/employer rape in Sangamner, Patiala and Malur village in Karnataka, while in Guwahati there were huge rallies protesting the rape of women by the army in Kamrup. As part of the Jharkhand movement, a move to campaign against mass rape was started in the Santhal Parganas, and the Delhi feminist group, Stri Sangarsh, was asked to do a report on incidents which had occurred there in mid 1979. Campaigns against these incidents, however, remained isolated from each other until 1980, when an open letter by four senior lawyers against a judgement in a case of police rape in Maharashtra sparked off a campaign by feminist groups. Known as the Mathura rape case, the incident had occurred several years earlier, when a seventeen or eighteen year old girl, Mathura, was taken by local policemen to the police station and raped there.

Under pressure from her family and the villagers, a case was registered against the policemen, who were acquitted at the Sessions Court, convicted on appeal at the High Court and later acquitted by the Supreme Court. The defence argument for the policemen was that Mathura had a boy friend and was thus a loose woman who could not by definition, be raped. The letter was in protest at the Supreme Court's acceptance of this argument.

Coming upon this letter in February, 1980, the Bombay feminist group, Forum Against Rape (which now calls itself the Forum Against Oppression of Women - FAOW), decided to campaign for the reopening of the case, and wrote to feminist groups all over the country to propose that demonstrations be held on International Women's Day (March 8), to demand a retrial.

Groups in seven cities responded to the Forum Against Rape letter and on March 8 there were women's demonstrations in Bombay, Delhi, Nagpur, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Hyderabad, demanding a retrieval of the Mathura case, the implementation of relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and changes in the law against rape. In both Bombay and Delhi joint action committees of feminist groups and socialist and communist party fronts, mainly students, were formed to co-ordinate the campaign. Thus the campaign against rape marked a new stage in the development of feminism in India; the networks which had begun to form in 1978 were now being consolidated and expanded, and used to co-ordinate action; at the same time, through joint action, feminism began to be drawn into mainstream political activism.

12.4.2 Dowry Campaign

The first protests against dowry in the contemporary feminist movement were made by the Progressive Organisation of Women in Hyderabad in 1975. Though some of their demonstrations numbered as many as 2000 people, the protests did not grow into a full fledged campaign.

After a lull of about two years, a new movement against dowry started in Delhi.

This time it was against violence inflicted upon women for dowries; especially against murder and abetment to suicide. There have since been protests against dowry harassment and murder in several parts of India, almost simultaneously, and there were reports from Bombay, Calcutta, Patna, Baroda, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Hyderabad of similar action. The protest demonstrations did have the desired effects in creating a public outrage. It was however impossible for women's groups to maintain the level of activity necessary in view of the sheer number of complaints that poured in. While some of the groups decided to follow up only those that gave scope for public campaigns, others continued to work with individual cases. Only in Delhi has there been a sustained agitation against dowry and dowry-related crimes. Among the reasons for this is that Delhi seems to have had the highest reported number of murders of women for dowry.

On June 1, 1979 Stri Sangharsh organised a demonstration against the death of Tarvinder kaur, a young woman who lived in Delhi, saying that her death was murder and that she was killed because her parents could not fulfil the ever-increasing demands of her in-laws. Impetus for this demonstration came, in fact, from the Indraprastha College Women's Committee, formed in 1978, who told Stri Sangharsh of the murder and suggested that they demonstrate. The Indraprastha College Committee, and the Progressive Students' Organisation all marched under the Stri Sangharsh banner, adding both numbers and militancy. The demonstration was widely reported by the national press and in the next few weeks there was a spate of demonstrations against dowry deaths.

Until this time women's deaths-by-fire has been put down as suicide, and even these suicides were rarely seen as being due to dowry-harassment. No-one (including the police) had ever bothered to investigate them, or even categorize them. And mostly they had been passed off as 'private affairs which took place within the family and which were no concern of the state. Within weeks, however, feminists reversed the indifference of decades, linking death-by-fire with dowry harassment, showing that many official 'suicides' were in fact murders. In some cases, victims of dowry murder had often lived long enough to indict their husbands and in-laws of murder (in their dying declarations), but the obligatory police follow-up had been so delayed and so cursory as to yield little or no evidence; such cases were then written off as suicide and the whole matter forgotten.

However, when feminists raised their voices against this situation, insisting that dying declarations be treated as evidence, that police procedures be tightened up, and these murders be confronted by society, some people did listen, and some joined in the protests as well. The first Stri Sangharsh demonstration had tribled by the time it reached Tarvinder Kaur's in-law's house: not only did neighbours join in with their children, but so did sweepers, domestic workers, and passers by.

After some months of campaigning however, several groups began to feel the need for a more direct method of communication with people when raising the issue of dowry. Discussions on this gave rise to the idea of having a street play and some months later Stri Sangharsh gave the first performance of its street play, Om Swaha, an

attack on dowry and dowry murder, based on the lives of two women.

The play proved enormously popular and soon people from all over began to ask the group to visit their locality and perform the play there. For many middle class women who were in the play, this was a first attempt at activist work.

The anti-dowry campaign raised some very important issues. Women's groups initially worked using a civil liberties framework, regarding these deaths as atrocities. The Dowry Death Investigation Committee, formed in 1984, enabled a large number of women to work against the problem of dowry deaths. The Committee, consisting of women from various fields, started the process of investigating and following up cases of dowry deaths.

Both in the rape campaign as well as the anti-dowry campaign, the demands were addressed to the government, the police and the legal system. The result was a spate of legislation that in no way could curb the problem. The issue seemed to lie in the complex nature of power relations in the family, in the school, in short in all the institutions of civil society. It was an important realization for the understanding of the micro-politics of women's oppression.

12.5 Women and Health

In Andhra Pradesh the momentum generated by the Stree Shakti campaigns has been carried forward and serious analyses done and actions initiated on issues pertaining to women's health, reproduction, sexuality along with a host of other issues. Women's health was a major area in which feminist initiatives have questioned the power exercised over the women by the medical system. Being a woman means a particular physical upbringing, onerous household responsibilities, repeated pregnancies, lowpaying, poor quality work, sexual harassment etc. all of which have noticeable effects on women's health. Most of women's illnesses are neglected both by the family as well as the medical system.

Stree Shakti Sanghatana's investigation of a village medical camp that was about to inaugurate a 12-month trial procedure of Net-en revealed that the women did not know that they were participating in an experiment and one whose consequences were fairly uncertain. A writ was filed in the Supreme Court demanding a halt to these trials.

The campaign against Net-en (1985), a long acting injectable contraceptive was the first to focus on preventive action in the field of women and health and also questioning (the government's) family planning methods that were harmful to women's health. In a way it claimed the right to information and choice for women.

The introduction into family planning programmes of long acting hormonal implants and injectables has been a centre of raging controversy. Women's fertility has been subject to control by international population organisations, multi-national drug companies and the medical system. Moreover, these agencies are invoking the founding demands of the women's movement itself as they market these drugs. Women's lives, rights of self-determination and choice, privacy, autonomy, and empowerment is now part of

their agendas.

The pro-woman, indeed feminist, credentials of those who research into and promote these contraceptives are further consolidated when their initiatives are seen as enabling and empowering women in conservative religion-bound contexts. In today's context where control of population is promoted as the answer to wide-spread poverty, rising unemployment and lack of medical/educational amenities, control on women's bodies assumes a bigger stake.

Making an analysis of the impact of the women's movement in society is fraught with problems. Women's issues are finding a wider audience of journalists, film makers, development organisations, government agencies, civil liberties groups and mass organisations. A whole new set of political questions are shaping up feminist articulation. Such a wide coverage is also problematic as the fine grained politics of the women's movement is in the danger of being depoliticised and co-opted by the likes of fundamental groups and population organisations.

By the eighties, Feminists began to move away from their earlier methods of agitation, such as public campaigns, demonstrations, etc. feeling that these had limited meaning unless they were accompanied by attempts to develop their own structure to aid and support individual women. By this stage the feminist movement had undergone a process of fragmentation which took a variety of forms, from development of profession and issue-based groups to the development of distinct and organisational identities (Kumar, 1993).

12.6 Women's Movements in 1990s

In the nineties three major issues demanding an immediate engagement are those of caste, communal/religious affiliation and problems emerging from the liberalisation of the economy. The agitations they have been associated with have been popularly alluded to as the pro-anti Mandal and pro-anti Mandir agitations.

In the anti-Mandal agitation the upper class/upper caste women took part in large number in the struggle to do away with reservations for backward castes and dalits. Women students participated enthusiastically in demonstrations and blockades mourning the "death of merit" and arguing that the nation was in need of saving.

Similarly, in Chunduru upper caste women took to the streets complaining loudly of harassment by the dalits. Sexual harassment was cited as justification for the punishment meted out to dalits by upper-caste men.

The year 1993 saw a spontaneous social movement occurring in the villages of Andhra Pradesh. The anti-arack movement was primarily initiated by the poor rural women of Nellore, a district in AP. Working only within their villages, enforcing the closure of local arack shops and targeting the excise department officials and the excise police, they effectively confronted the State and destabilised its economy.

Because of the kind of struggles they launched against the sale of arack, these

women have changed their social position and gained a control over their everyday lives. Using arrack as a starting point they have articulated issues ranging from family, economy, health, education, to housework and personal relations. As the Anveshi team report (1993) rightly questions, should the agitation be viewed as yet another phase of women's ongoing struggles against patriarchy, or are new understandings necessary to contend with the dynamics of this struggle?

Left based women's groups have played an active role in helping the village women to organise against arrack. These groups are also involved in a number of other struggles that rural women are waging for land rights, better wages in the unorganised sector and related issues. Recently a joint action committee has been formed by women hailing from a number of women's organisations demanding total prohibition of the sale of arrack. New dalit women's organisations have emerged which are articulating a politics that stems from their own oppressive conditions of being dalit women.

12.6. Summing Up

Through public interest litigation as in the cases of injectible contraceptives (Neta) and police rape and appeals against a variety of judgements on custodial rape, family violence etc., the movement demonstrated the inequalities in gender relations that are embedded in the legal process. Movement demanded that laws should be changed to be more sensitive to women in their contexts. The campaign against dowry violence brought into focus the 'Private domain' of family that prevented women from having access to protection against family violence.

Looking back over the years of the contemporary Indian feminist movement one cannot but be struck by how enormously it has spread and how rich it is. It is perhaps the only movement in recent times that encompasses, and links such issues as work, wages, organization, environment, ecology, civil rights, sex, violence, health, family and social relationships, etc. The women's question is being raised today in cities, rural areas, small towns as well as in mass organisations. Journalists, civil liberties organizations, activists, teachers, artists, film makers, development agencies, and even policy makers have been party to shaping it. (Tharu)

12.7 Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following essay-type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Trace the rise and evolution of the new women's movements in India.
2. What are the differences between the earlier women's movement and the movement that arose in the seventies?
3. What are the issues that were of concern to the women's movement of the 70s.

II. Write short answers to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What is the impact of women's movement on government policies?

2. Write about the Anti Arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh.

12.8 Books For further reading

1. Radha Kumar, "The History of Doing: An illustrated Account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India 1800-1990" Kali for Women, New Delhi (1993)
2. Ilina Sen, (ed) "A Space within the struggle : Women's participation in people's movements" Kali for Women. New Delhi (1990)
3. Nandita Gandhi and Nandita Shah "The issues at Stake : theory and practice in the contemporary women's movement in India", Kali for Women, New Delhi (1992).
4. Kannabiran, Vasanta "Report from SSS. A Women's group in Hyderabad, A.P." Feminist Studies Vol. 12 No.3, Fall 1986.
5. Lokayan Bulletin - Special issue 'On the Women's Movement' Vol. 4 No. 6 (1986)
6. Sangari, Kumkum and Vaid, Sudesh (ed) : "Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History" Kali for Women, New Delhi (1989)
7. K. Lalita : "Women in Revolt: A Historical analysis of the progressive organisation of women in Andhra Pradesh" from Wieringa, Saskia (ed) "Women's struggles and strategies" Gower Publishing, Vermont (1988).

Unit - 13 : National Commission for Women

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13.0. Objectives

After going through this unit you would be able to

- discuss the location, agenda and functions of the Commission,
- identify the various activities that the Commission has involved itself with.

13.1 Introduction

As we have seen in the previous section, women's movement has raised several issues that were ignored by the state and society. The strength of the movement lies in that it compelled policy makers to take cognisance of the gender issue and its implications for public policy. Formal and informal dialogue between national women's organisations and government officials and policy makers led to the inclusion of a chapter on women and development in the sixth five year plan for the first time in the planning history of India. In the year 1985 the government of India worked the second

Non-Aligned Movement conference on women and Development and the official delegation included several leaders of the National Women's Organisations. In 1988 two documents were released which clearly revealed the divergence between the perspective of the government of India and movement based initiatives on gender role, issues and participation of women. The Report of the National Commission on self-employed women and women in the informal sector represented the voice of a substantial section of the women's movement and of women's studies scholars.

The National Perspective Plan (NPP) for women upto the year 2000 was on the other hand prepared by a team of consultants for the Department of Women and Child Development with no intersection with activists. The NPP was criticised by women's organisations for its anti democratic proposals such as filling up of 30% reserved seats by nominations. Soon the government took measures to establish a National Commission for women. The National Commission for Women was constituted by the government of India on 31 January 1992, under the National Commission for Women's Act of 1990. The role of the Commission is to be understood as an agency that is geared to help women in the redressal of their grievances. Some of the main objectives with which the commission has been developed are

- (1) To investigate, examine and review all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution;
- (2) Review of implementation of both women specific and women related legislations and suggest amendments wherever needed.
- (3) Developing linkages with various other women's groups in the country is another important item on the agenda of the Commission.

13.2 Composition

National Commission for Women is a permanent commission and consists of seven full-time members including a chairperson, five members, and one member secretary. The present chairperson of the Commission is Ms. Jayanti Patnaik. Section 3(2) of the Act sets out the qualifications required for all the members of the Commission including the Chairperson.

- (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 or organisation committed to increasing the employment potential of women, women's voluntary organisations (including women's activists), administration, economic development, health, education or social welfare : Provided that each member 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 all-India service or holds a civil post under the union with appropriate experience.

The chairperson and every other member of the Commission will hold office for a period not exceeding three years.

13.3 Functions

The Commission has been setup to enable the Central Government to consult on matters affecting women. Apart from being an advisory agency for the state, there are other functions with which the Commission has been entrusted. These functions are to be understood as guidelines for the Commission to take up activities in the future.

- 1) commissioning special investigations of specific problems related to violation of the provisions of the Constitution and cases of atrocities against women;
- 2) conducting research to suggest strategies of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres
- 3) evaluating the progress of the development of women under the Union and all states
- 4) inspecting jails, remand homes, and other institutions and places of custody where women are lodged voluntarily or involuntarily
- 5) providing for the expenses of litigation involving issues affecting a large body of women

An interesting feature of this commission is that in examining complaints, the Commission has the powers of a civil court in trying a suit; it can summon and enforce the attendance of any person and examine him or her under oath, require the production of relevant documents as well as issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents.

13.4 Activities

The Commission has initiated various activities both at the level of conducting micro-studies research and going to the help of individual/groups of women who have been victims of physical violence. This is in no sense an exhaustive account of all the activities of the Commission. A few sample cases in which the Commission has involved itself and received media publicity have been discussed in the following sections.

13.4.1 Analysis of legal statutes :

The Commission set up three Expert Committees to examine and review the provisions of various legislative measures affecting women. With the help of these

committees, the Commission identified clauses that are anti-women in the Acts dealing with the offences of dowry, sati, sale of minor girls in the criminal procedure code. In the realm of family laws it has recommended the amendment of the Hindu Marriage Act and guardianship laws which place women in an extremely disadvantageous position. For example in the guardianship laws the father is the natural guardian for legitimate children while for illegitimate children, the mother is the natural guardian, Compulsory registration of marriages is also suggested by the Commission to protect the rights of the women within marriage.

13.4.2 Critique of women's issues in popular media :

The commission organised a conference in March 1993 focussing on the issue of representation of women's issues in the media with special emphasis on the electronic media. Women's issues are either totally absent or when they are included their portrayals are quite stereotypical. The Commission in its findings realised that in tele serials, women's programmes and children's programmes messages are conveyed which are largely anti-women and reinforcing certain concepts like the idea of a women's place being in the home. In the news and current affairs section, news items were mainly concerned with men, leaving women out as if they only exist in the private sphere.

13.4.3 Support to victims of Physical Atrocities :

As stated earlier the Commission supports women who have been victims of atrocities like rape. Bhanwari Devi, an Anganwadi worker of Rajasthan was raped by the local people of her village in which she attempted to stop a child marriage from taking place. The Commission responded to a demand from women's organisations to take up this case.

Women rallyists in Uttar Pradesh who were campaigning for a political cause were gang raped by the security forces which took place in October, 1994. The Commission has taken up this case and has filed reports with the government alleging police brutality. The NCW team not only recorded the statements of the two women who were raped and a dozen others who were molested, but also gathered evidence by making physical examinations.

13.4.4 Supporting the demands of air hostesses who have complained of discrimination at work :

In June 1995, the Commission threatened legal action against the Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA). Following a complaint from a senior air-hostess, the Commission has directed the Indian Airlines pilots' body to stop off-loading air-hostesses from the aircraft. The ICPA has issued a directive to its pilots that no pilot should fly with air-hostesses who draw salary higher than some of the pilots. The Commission has criticised the ICPA directive to its members saying it amounted to "gross insult, inequality and humiliation" of the air-hostesses. Apart from this the Commission has also decried this directive as violative of the constitutional provisions.

The Commission has been helpful in supporting individual women's prolonged

legal battles to get compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Commission has also sponsored research on issues like maternity leave for women - one of its important recommendations to the government being that women should be granted six months maternity leave twice in their career. Apart from the above few cases there are many other projects initiated by the Commission in the areas of health, family violence, education, electoral bodies like Panchayat Raj etc.

13.5 Summing Up

There seems to be an observation that so far, the Commission has relied heavily on Delhi-based experts for reasons of convenience, has interacted mainly with Delhi-based NGOs, and has taken up issues on an adhoc basis. There is a need for the activities of the Commission to be widely publicised. Opportunities to become involved in its activities be they regional workshops, subcommittee meetings, or public hearings should be made available. The Commission should also develop strategic alliances with women's groups throughout the country, on one hand to identify and work on key issues and on the other to establish its credibility as a politically relevant organisation.

13.6 Model Examination Questions

I. Answer the following essay-type questions in about 30 lines each.

1. Write about the composition and functions of the National Commission for women.
2. Give a critical account of the activities of the national commission for women.

II. Write a short notes to the following questions in about 15 lines each.

1. What are the objectives of the National commission for women.
2. What is the composition of National Commission for women.
3. Give a short account of National commission for women's support to victims of physical atrocities.

13.7 Books for Further Reading

1. Report of National Commission for women, Government of India New Delhi 1993.
2. Krishnaraj Maithrayi (ed) women vision - past and present", Indian Association of women's studies, New Delhi 1995
3. Mainage Mukhopadhyaya - Silver shocks, women and development in India, Oxfam, 1994.

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P.G. Diploma In Women's Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences

Sociology

SYLLABUS

Course - I : Theoretical Approaches to Women's Studies : Concepts and Categories.

Block - I : Nature and scope of Women's Studies

Unit - 1 : Emergence of Women's studies as a field of enquiry and its roots in women's movement.

Unit - 2 : Nature and Scope of Women's Studies

Block - II : Theoretical Approaches to Women's studies

Unit - 3 : Liberal and Radical Feminism

Unit - 4 : Marxist and Socialist Feminism

Block - III : Women's Movements.

Unit - 5 : Women's Movements in the West and Socialist Countries

Unit - 6 : Women's Movements in the Third World Countries.

Block - IV : Changing Status of Women in India

Unit - 7 : Women in Ancient India

Unit - 8 : Women in Medieval Period

Unit - 9 : Social Reforms and their Implications.

Block - V : Rise of Women's Movement in Pre - Independent India.

Unit - 10 : Peasant, working class and Tribal Movements

Unit - 11 : Women in Freedom Struggle.

Block - VI : Contemporary Women's Movements in India

Unit - 12 : Rise of New Women's Movement

Unit - 13 : National Commission for women.

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**Course - I Theoretical Approaches to Women's studies:
Concepts and Categories**

MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Time : 3 Hours

Max. Marks : 100

Min. Marks : 35

Section - A

Answer any four of the following eight questions in about 30 lines each $4 \times 15 = 60$
Each question carries 15 marks.

1. Discuss three major concepts of women's studies, what according to you is their validity in analysing women's lives?
2. What are the principles of Liberal feminism? Analyse their approach to women's issues.
3. Feminist theory can be used as a means to the political end of attaining women's emancipation. Which are the theories, in your opinion best serve this end?
4. Analyse the women's liberation movements in the west and estimate its impact.
5. Explain the women's status in the social, economic religion context in Ancient India.
6. Analyse the implications of social reform movements.
7. Analyse the factors responsible for the emergence of the Telangana Armed struggle and estimate its impact.
8. Trace the rise and evolution of the new women's movements in India.

Section - B

- II. Answer any five of the following ten questions in about 15 lines each
Each question carries 5 marks

$5 \times 8 = 40$

9. What are the components of women's studies?
10. What is normative dualism?
11. Write about the socialist feminists' conception of freedom.

12. Give a brief account of women's movement in China.
13. Briefly explain the women's movements in Latin America
14. Write about the progress of women's education during medieval period.
15. Analyse the women's role in Tehbhaga movement.
16. Estimate the role of women's organisations in the freedom struggle.
17. What is the impact of women's movements on government policies in India.
18. What are the objectives of the National Commission for Women?

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Faculty of Social Sciences
P.G. Diploma In Women's Studies
Course-1 Theoretical approaches to Women's Studies :
Concepts & Categories

Time : 2 Hours

Note :

1. Do not copy the answer directly from any of the books.
2. As far as possible, try to answer the questions independently in your own words.
3. If it is necessary to quote from any source, give the correct reference.
4. Use your own foolscap pages for writing the assignment.
5. Leave sufficient margin for the comments of the evaluator.
6. Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.

Assignment - I

Max. Marks : 15

Part - A

Min. Marks : 6

I. Answer any one question in about 30 lines

- 1) Discuss the Nature & Scope of Women's Studies.
- 2) Discuss any two theoretical approaches to Women's Studies.

Part - B

II. Answer any one question in about 15 lines

- 1) Women's movement in the West.
- 2) Socialist feminism.

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6. *Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.*

Assignment - II

Max. Marks : 15

Part - A

Min. Marks : 6

I. Answer any one question in about 30 lines

- 1) Discuss the status of Women in Ancient & Medieval India.
- 2) Discuss the role of Women in the tribal movements.

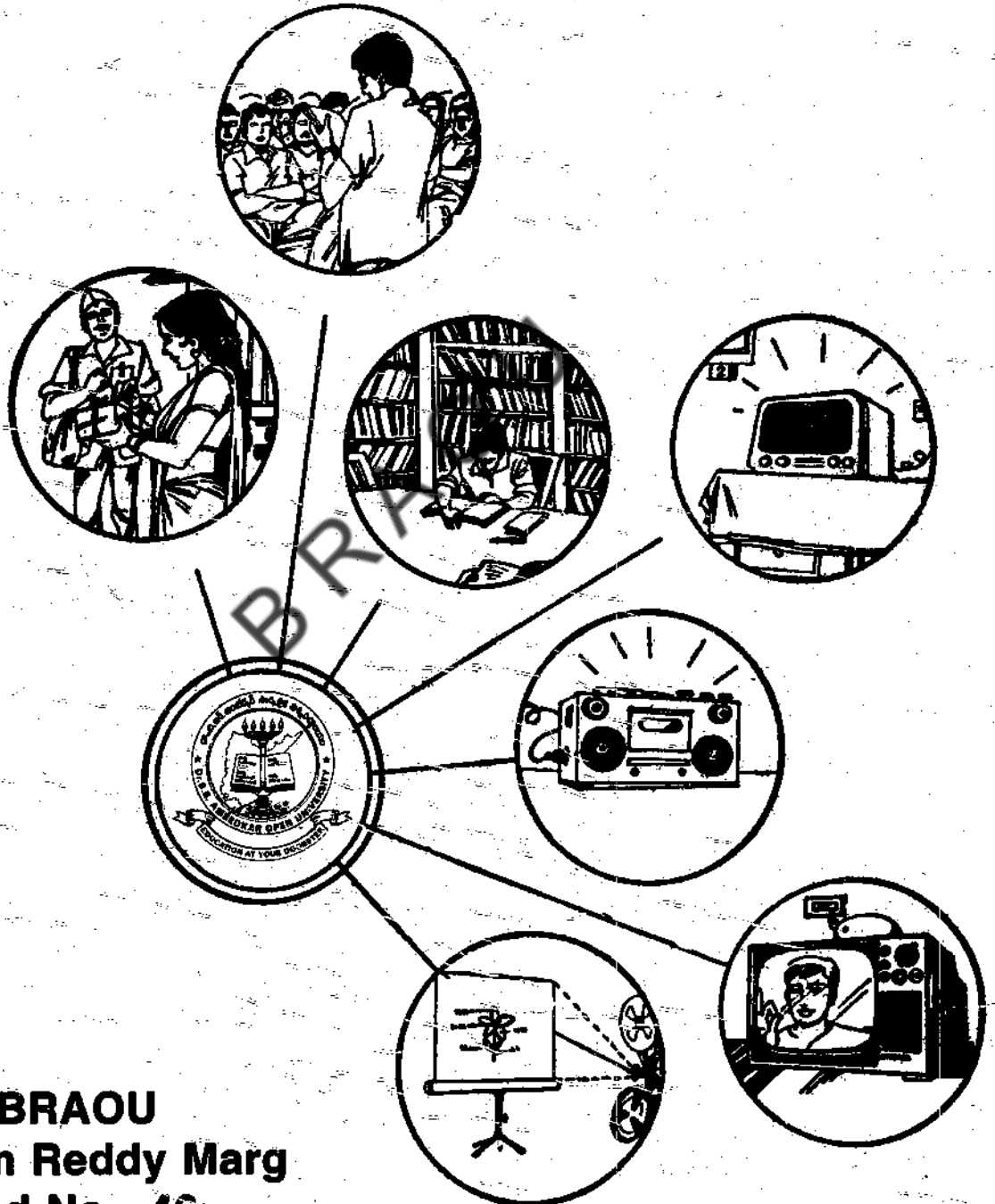
Part - B

II. Answer any one question in about 15 lines

- 1) National commission for Women.
- 2) Role of peasant women in the Women's movement.

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University at Your Door Step



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Ram Reddy Marg
Road No. 46,
Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad

WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA



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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Women's studies has emerged as a field of enquiry due to the articulation of women's issues by contemporary women's movements. Women's studies is variously defined as "Studying Women's problems with women's perspective, looking at women in the world from women's point of view" and so on. This programme is designed to create an understanding, 'Awareness' in and 'Action'. The educational role of women's studies is most important role because it has an impact on 'change', women can change their lives, change the nature of knowledge what is being taught, and change the society and its values.

This course entitled "Women in Contemporary India" is a part of P.G.Diploma programme in Women's Studies offered by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Open University.

Block I deals with Institutional Frame work. Unit I deals with the Private Domain - Family and Marriage. Block II deals with Socialisation Process and the agencies of Socialisation. Block III is concerned with Social Issues in the Contemporary Indian Society. Block IV deals with Women and Work. The units under this block discuss the concepts work and domestic work, and why women's work remains invisible. They also touch upon conceptual biases in measuring women's work. Block V deals with women in National economy. The units deal with the topics organised and unorganised sectors, women in the informal sector, legislations passed and government initiatives for women. Block VI deals with Women in Development. The units under this block deal with the concept of Development, Impact of Modernisation on Women, appropriate technology for Women and Women's Development through plans. Block VII discusses about Emerging Perspectives and NGO's. Block VIII deals with the role of media and literature in the development of Women.

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BLOCK - I

WOMEN AND RIGHTS

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UNIT - 1: THE PRIVATE 'DOMAIN'

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- 1.5 Summary
- 1.6 Model Examination Questions
- 1.7 Suggested Books

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- distinguish between Public and Private 'Domain' of Women's life,
- identify various types of families and their functions, and
- discuss the significance of marriage in relation to women.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of human life on this earth, human beings, men and women, motivated by the 'will to live' and the 'will to procreate' have been engaged in an endless struggle for survival. The realisation that there were more chances for the safety and survival of the child, if the mother lived with the child and cared for the child, led to the establishment of the institutions of marriage and family. In marriage and family living, the social roles, the expectations, obligations, rights, duties and relationship of husband, wife and children were defined.

The human anatomy dictated the roles. Man, because of his physical strength, was stronger and woman, because of her need for dependence, especially during pregnancy and child birth was assigned a secondary role of dependence on the man. A woman's main function was bearing and caring for children. Hence the hearth and home became her domain. Daughters born were socialised for their future roles as wives and mothers and were never considered persons in their own right. Compared to a son, daughter was treated as inferior. The traditional sphere of a woman's activity was restricted to the family and home, but she did work on the family farms, fields or any other economic activity (usually the man's domain) as and when extra labour was required. She performed this activity in the company of men and members of her own family. This situation was more true of the women from the low income groups. As they shared the economic activity, they enjoyed more freedom and a more equal status among their men groups.

In this unit we will study what is private domain and public domain, the rights and roles of women in the private domain.

1.2 THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DOMAIN OF WOMEN

Domain in general refers to the field or the sphere of activity. In this context the sphere of activity of women has always been the household, in which she is a member. This sphere of activity of women which is restricted to the household could be considered as private domain of women. It is only in the recent past that women started moving out of the household accepting responsibilities in various work situations. This has been made possible because of increasing urbanisation and industrialisation and consequent educational opportunities. This new role of a woman is part of a new sphere of activity which is called the public domain of women.

1.2.1 Status of Woman

A historical perspective of women in India shows that there were distinct stages of elevation and fall in their status. Women during the vedic period enjoyed a very high status, she had equal rights which the men held. Woman was considered as man's companion, friend, his fellow-worker and never treated as his subordinate. She enjoyed the property rights and had access to the property of her father and husband. Woman in the intellectual arena was competing with men, she was able to discuss political and social problems freely with men. In matters of selecting their partners in marriage women exercised their preference. Pre-puberty marriages were uncommon and 'Swayamvara' type of marriage gave an opportunity to women to select marriage partners and women had the privilege of adopting a child.

In the post-vedic period the position of women deteriorated considerably. Manu, the propounder of Hindu Law made women entirely dependent on man and subjected her to the authority of father, husband and son in the different periods of her life as daughter, wife and mother. His dictum was "for women there can be no freedom at any stage of life". This position of women continued throughout the period of Hindu rulers and was reinforced by Muslim masters whose custom and tradition were noted for the complete subordination of women by man and which considered women as inferior being to men.

The Britishers first adopted a policy of non-interference of the social and religious life of the people of India, essentially to win their cooperation in the administration of the country, this led the women to go down imperceptibly in social status. They had to lead a cloistered life and moved within the narrow sphere of their kitchen. Cooking, child bearing and rearing and catering to the relatives, In-laws and husband, comprised their work and life. They had practically no idea of the ever changing world outside, except what they learned from their menfolk.

The Indian women was treated as an appendage of man with a distinct and meekly accepted conception of her family duties and obligations, she did not have even the haziest awareness of her rights in the early years of British rule in India. The decline in the Indian women's status is clearly evident, in the customs relating to marriage, religion and property, widowhood, dowry, role in the family, basic attitudes with respect to social image of woman etc.

The spread of English education which was an essential characteristic of British rule, and blend of Western and Eastern culture enabled women to realize their subordinate position and persuaded them to regain their legitimate status. The various Hindu revivalist organisations, such as the Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj gave great impetus to the awakening of womanhood. Educated woman came forward demanding equal rights with men. Already in the middle of the 19th century, the Mahila Samithis and Woman's Organisations took steps to abolish the purdah and child marriage and encouraged widow marriage. They enlightened the public on health and sanitation and pleaded for equal rights for woman, in franchise and education. As a result an awareness was created in society about the low status of women and the need for uplifting them.

The movement for the emancipation of women which slowly started from the middle of the 19th century was hastened in the 20th century especially after First World War. The Indian Reform act of 1921 enfranchised a small section of Indian population for the first time and women formed part of that section. After First World War, Mahatma Gandhi set the pace for the progress of Indian women in all spheres of life. He noted Manu's dictum as "a symbol of our barbarism". He advised women to emancipate themselves from the drudgery of the kitchen. In response to Gandhi's appeal, women came out in thousands and took part in the national movement.

The Second World War and the resultant socio-economic upheaval brought about changes in social relationships, and to the awakening of the masses and rousing of their consciousness about the rights of people. The U.N.O. in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in equal rights of men and women.

The values set forth by Indian Constitution envisage a socialistic pattern of society under democratic form of Government, where in equality, freedom and non-exploitation are assured to all sections of the people irrespective of race, religion and sex as their fundamental rights. Article 15 of the Constitution lays down that "The states not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex".

Various Acts enacted by the Indian Parliament, such as the Hindu Marriage Act and Hindu Succession Act, have brought the major section of the Indian women socially on par with men. Scientific and technological progress all over the world has accelerated the process of change in the position of women in India.

In rural and urban India, women today are breaking the social and psychological barriers and are assuming new responsibilities. Women's economic horizon once confined to domestic serventhood or labour on the farm, has expanded considerably. Women from all shades of life started working in other fields. They are now employed as teachers, doctors, officers in the Government departments and commercial establishments. The growing participation of women in the economic development of the country is evident from the fact that in the organized sector the number of women employees has increased over a period of time.

The report of the Ministry of labour, Government of India (1964) on women's employment, points out that whatsoever the stage of economic or social development of a country, four factors prevail, which lead women to join the work force, i.e., "(a) inadequate income of the principal earned which forces women to work and supplement the income, (b) mishaps incapacitating the bread winner, (c) death of the bread winner and (d) women's desire for economic independence and for securing higher standard of living. Besides these, the desire on the part of women to give expression to their own talents and skills as a factor, which cannot be ignored. The opposition to the gainful occupation of women is steadily diminishing even among traditionally minded orthodox and conservative groups."

1.3 THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

The family is the basic social institution from which other social institutions have evolved as increasing cultural complexity necessitated them. A study of the family makes us to understand what the family is in particular and in general we can understand other social institutions, their basis and significance.

The family is a social group, in which men, women and children live in a network of mutual relationships and obligations. It is expected to meet the basic needs of all its members and provide a sense of belongingness.

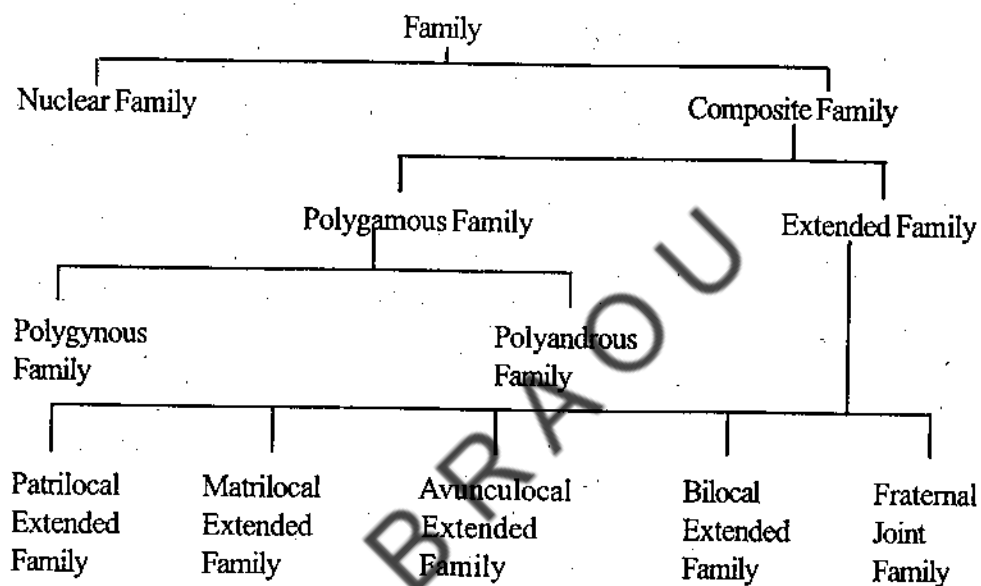
"Family organisation forms the core of the society's sexual division of labour, marital norms and a system of control over resources, rights, duties and privileges of the members". (Neera Desai & others)

"Significance of family for the women is more vital than for men, because one can talk of the social problems of men without involving the family, but for women their social problems cannot be understood without dealing with their family functions". "The social value placed on the role of women in the family is responsible for her subordination to man and for her lack of access to economic and political resources even she contributes equally or more when compared with men to the family economy". (Neera Desai -Page 185)

1.3.1 Types of Family

The typologies of families based on single criteria such as marriage, descent, residence, authority, succession and composition are not complete, because employing a single criterion does not allow us to consider other criteria to study various aspects of family and using of single criterion cannot be considered as having universal applicability. Therefore classification based on multiple criteria is adopted. Murdock, Redcliff Brown and several other sociologists and anthropologists have constructed typologies of families on the basis of multiple criteria such as form of marriage, patterns of residence and kin composition. This typology is most commonly used in studying household structures in different societies.

The following chart shows the types of families evolved by Murdock based on multiple criteria.



The nuclear family consists of a married man and a woman with their offsprings. The composite family is an aggregation of two or more nuclear families. It may be divided into two types: the polygamous family and the extended family. A polygamous family consists of both polygynous and polyandrous families. In a polygynous family one man plays the role of husband and father of several nuclear families, but in polyandrous family it is one woman who plays the role of wife and mother in several nuclear families.

An extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent - child relationship, i.e., by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents. Depending on post - marital residence an extended family may be patrilocal, matrilocal, bilocal and avunculocal.

The families based on descent are patrilineal families if the descent is traced through the male line and matrilineal family is the one where the lineage is through female line. This lineage leads to a kind of authority which results in the formation of patriarchal and matriarchal family systems. The discussion on typology of family concentrated on more on these two types of families because it is authority within the family which decides the status of an individual.

Indian family is typically a Joint family. Joint family is found in almost all religious groups and all over the country. In India the two major modes of descent are - the patrilineal descent and Matrilineal descent. The family in India is largely patrilineal and patrilocal except some communities in South Western and the north eastern regions. "The core of the family are the males who trace" their descent from a common ancestor. In the patrilineal family son is considered as the heir of the family & he is the natural successor and preference is for a son. He performs the rites of lighting the funeral pyre and offers Shradha to ancestors. Women who could not produce sons were illtreated and sometimes men remarried. In the patriarchal family with male descent the sexuality of women is controlled to maintain the purity of the caste. "Practices like prepuberty marriages ban on widow remarriages & practice of sati are means of containing the woman within the caste and family fold. "In the Indian Society men are given freedom to choose their life partners. According to Leela Dube "Under the Brahmanical law women's role is to enable the male mode of descent by producing sons." Woman is the field and man is the seed and seed is considered as superior.

1.3.1.1 Features of Women in the Patriarchal Family

1. "The woman is dependent socially
2. Her status is measured in terms of ability to produce male children through whom the patriliney is perpetuated.
3. Woman has no share in the property. Though laws have been enacted to correct it, cultural norms hold stronger against its implementation.
4. A woman does not belong to her father's family, even in the husband's family her membership is conditional which is subject to her behaviour.
5. Women have no direct participation in the religion at higher levels.
6. Women are controlled by the family practically in every facet of their life."

Matrilineal family is found in Nayars and Tiyyars of Kerala and also in some parts of Karnataka and Tamilnadu. Matrilineal Joint family in Kerala is called "Tharwad". This family is formed by a woman, her sons and daughters and daughter's sons and daughters. The daughters husbands are occasional visitors. In the Tharwad the woman is not dependent on her husband. She does derive her status from him. The husband does not enjoy any right over the wife's property or over his children. In the tharwad the brother of the woman yields power in making decisions over property but the woman enjoyed full property rights and inheritance.

1.3.1.2 Features of Women in Matriarchal Family

1. "Women are not socially dependent on men.
2. It is through woman the family lineage is accounted. Children owe their social placement through mother.
3. The women are not under obligation to produce male children.

4. A woman is a member of matrilineal group and continues to be so even after marriage.
5. Woman fulfils religious and social responsibilities at the higher level.
6. She controls her own life and her children and in case of marital breakdown children remain with her."

The matrilineal society though women are seen as powerful matriarchs, one finds that power and social control is exercised by males either husbands or brothers. In this type of Joint family men's superior power is recognised. The division of labour between the sexes emphasises different rights and expectations.

1.3.2 Functions of Family

Family performs four important functions, while performing these functions the family brings about an order in the life and behaviour of individuals.

1.3.2.1 Sexual Function

The family includes husband wife relationship. As a result of marital union the husband wife relationship has become a socially approved means to control sexual relations and a socially approved basis of the family. Sexual relations are prescribed and regulated in order to bring about an order in the society.

1.3.3.2 Economic Function

Husband wife relationship is not merely a sexual union but it is a sexual union with economic co-operation. There are sexual unions without economic co-operation and economic units without sexual relationships. The family entails both sexual and economic relationship. Even in this economic co-operation with sexual relationship, the tasks which each partner performs rest on sex based division of labour. Family provides economic security to the young, the old, the disabled and incapables. Family performs the basic function of producing and distributing of economic resources among its members.

1.3.3.3 Reproductive Function

The task of perpetuating the lineage is an important function of the family. Sexual co-habitation between the spouses in general leads to the birth of offspring. The family nurses and rears its offspring. However a child can become part of a family even without being born to the husband and wife who initially constitute the family. Here the family does not perform the reproductive function but performs the function of rearing the child.

1.2.2.4 Educational Function

The child before he/she becomes an adult member in the society must acquire knowledge and skill to face and fulfill the tasks allocated to him/her. This process of learning starts in the

family and the responsibility of enculturation and education are the primary functions of the family. The individual members of the family depending upon their capabilities take up the responsibility of training and educating a child. Though other institutions have been created to take the role of educating a child through his/her growth and development in the society, family remains as an unique organisation creates experiences which will have lasting impact on the child and it is in the family a child learns his/her first lessons of the life.

1.3.3 Family among Hindus

The type of family which the Hindus have, is popularly known as Joint Family. According to sociologists there are two types of families (1) a nuclear family, (2) an extended family. Though several others typologies have emerged it is from these two types of families the other forms have emanated. In Hindu joint family the property right and decision making are passed to the eldest male member of the next generation. This right over property results in enjoying certain authority. This authority is called patriarchy. Hence, the Hindu joint family is identified as patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal extended family.

1.3.4 Family Among Muslims

Among Muslims monogamous families are prevalent. Koran permits a man to have four wives at a time, yet only few Muslims seem to follow this as a general rule because it is only the upper limit, but not a necessary condition. Based on authority the Muslim family is either patriarchal or matriarchal (Kerala Muslims). The descent in a family is traced through the father which is known as patrilineal and matrilineal descent is followed by Kerala Muslims. The Muslim family in terms of its structure follows an identical pattern as that of the Hindus.

1.3.5 Family Among Christians

The predominant type of family that is found among Christians is patrilineal excepting among Kerala Christians who follow a matrilineal rule. "A matrilineal Joint family in Kerala is called tharward. It comprises of woman, her sons & daughters & daughter's sons and daughters. Husbands are occasional visitors. Women's brother has considerable power in making decisions over property matters". Although the descent is traced through women, power rests with men. Division of labour between sexes emphasises differential rights and expectations."

1.3.6 The Role and Status of Women in the private domain

Family is the area in which the role of women is traditionally the most prominent. Women had practically no role outside the home in traditional middle and upper class families and their whole life had been spent within the household. The family is patriarchal, with all its members economically dependent upon the father, who by tradition received respect and obedience from his wife and children. The son is considered more important in the family compared to the daughter because religiously and economically the former is more useful. Not only the son performs the funeral rites necessary for salvation but son is a potential wage earner and supports his parents in their old age.

Manu Samvita affirms that woman is a subservient, dependent being and her rightful place is under the guardianship, successively of her father, husband and son, and her lot has not really changed even after centuries. Right from birth to death the dice is heavily loaded against the girl in most of the Indian families.

A Hindu girl is brought up to believe that life after marriage revolves around her husband and that she is to be totally devoted not only to him but also to his family. The function of a woman has been to bear children and motherhood is a woman's one exalted state. Without sons, the father could not usually attain salvation.

In Indian families, the sex roles have traditionally been clearly defined. Psychological and sociological studies have revealed that women have almost always been relegated to a lower position, in which, society expects them to be passive and powerless, less intelligent and weak. By tradition, the woman is a housewife, takes care of children and husband, cleans, washes, sweeps, cooks and always serves others first. Any change in their position will be reflected in their activities within the family and it will also affect all the other members of the family. So the family provides the most suitable area for examining the changes in women's status brought about by their employment. The contemporary, society has changed and is still changing and along with it the position of woman is also changing. The higher education of women, exposure to western ideas through mass media, and the constitutional guarantee of "equal opportunities of employment" have led them to come out of the four walls of their homes in search of "personal fulfilment" and "economic independence". Women from the middle and upper classes have entered the occupational field - some for personal reasons of boredom in the home or desire for self-expression and independence while others on account of discontentment with their position in society.

Another effect of this is the redistribution of the work within the family, so that the employed women can still participate in their work while continuing many of their traditional familial obligations. The modern families tend to preserve a satisfactory division of labour. The tasks previously assigned to the wife are being assumed or shared by the husband and wife jointly so that the wife can have near equal responsibility for earning the family living. Where the husband, male members do not share the house-hold work, alternative help of a relative or servant is often sought. The employment and education of women have given them resources, which their unemployed counterparts do not have. The salary of a working woman is a substantial contribution to the family income which would be expected to give her greater interest in financial decisions and greater respect from her husband and other members of the family. The participation of the women in the activities of the outside world through her job gives her contacts with fellow-workers, which lessens her dependence on her husband for emotional support and increases the knowledge and skill she brings to decision-making. "What ever the mode of descent or type of family woman's role as a mother is central and life for her is determined by her biological function".

1.3.6.1 The Role and Status of Women in the Joint Family System

The status and role of woman in India is governed by the great tradition of the Hindu joint family system and its norms and values with respect to interactions within the family and the family roles of men and women. The Hindu joint family is patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal. It is composed of patrilineally related males (with their dependents - women and children) who have right to family property and share common budget, residence, hearth and religion.

All the menfolk in the family are born, brought up and play adult roles in the same family they have a right in the family property, are socially considered to continue the family line, name and status. Kinship is established through men. They are the permanent members of the joint family. For a woman, the family in which she is born as a daughter is not considered as her permanent abode, though she had a right to nurturance and maintenance in this family of birth. She is looked upon as a transient member, a liability to be handed over on marriage to a suitable man in her rightful in-law family. Every woman must marry and on marriage, she moves from the family of orientation to the family of procreation. She gets significant roles and status as wife, mother and housewife in the in-law's family.

The traditional joint family system is male-dominated, woman is considered inferior to, dependent on, to be under the protection of men all through her life, under father in the childhood, under husband in the youth and under son in the old age.

The woman's role in the domestic sphere is within the household. She has to cook and serve family members, clean and look after home, and take care of children. Woman is highly praised and idealized as faithful wife, sacrificing and serving housewife and devoted mother. She is treated not as a person but as a wife, mother and house wife.

In a joint family, decision-making and exercise of authority rests with men. The head of the family in consultation with other men plays the authority role, while women were only indirectly involved in the decisions with respect to family matters. Women's opinions may be sought, but it is the men who decide. Women do not enjoy freedom of movement in the traditional joint family system. She is secluded and protected and is under constant supervision. Girls are strictly supervised and controlled from childhood and daughters-in-law are confined within the household. Only adult women enjoy some freedom of movement, that too in the company of other women.

In a joint family, roles were allocated among women members on the basis of age and kinship. Important women's roles were daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, mother and house-wife.

1.3.7 Woman as Daughter

The pre-marital status and role of a woman have been defined and patterned differently in several societies at different point of time. In traditional Indian society the daughter is under the strict control and supervision of her parents, right from birth till she attains adulthood and beyond. Her role, behaviour and attitude, all are culturally defined and patterned. "The role she has to perform as a daughter is fixed and pre ordained but her view of the world and attitudes are fixed and defined. The traditional Indian society has gone to the extent of creating a psychic-orientation and perception for the daughters which reflect those norms and values which govern the life of the Indian women. With modern education and the changing value system we only find certain changes coming about in their opinion to certain extent as to what a daughter should be but still the old values seem to dominate this perception of a daughter".

1.3.8 Woman as Wife

The average Hindu wife lived up to the ideal of a wife being sita or savithri. Later when societies have experienced several changes she has not been regarded as being equal to her

husband. She was expected to merge her individuality with that of her husband. Though husband and wife relationship is no more governed by the traditional norms and values, it is still expected that the wife's only concern is to care for the husband's interest. Though there is a debate on the equality of wife, it has only led to a strain in husband and wife relationship.

1.3.9 Woman as Mother

The third important aspect in the role of a woman within the family is her role as mother. The involvement and interest of the woman in child rearing, her contribution in developing the basic personality structure of the new born child have made the mother's role very important in preserving cultural traditions and in building the new generation. Apart from these cultural roles her role in the development of the emotional and psychological aspects of the child is also very significant.

Woman as a mother has occupied a place of great honour and prestige in traditional Hindu society. It is believed that there is no preceptor like the mother and she is considered as one of the 'Adigurus'. A woman's status and relationship to family and society changes as she becomes mother. Even in the changed circumstances of modern times the status of a woman has not deviated much from her traditional status. Educated and employed mothers have acquired modern practices in childcare and rearing. A modern mother seems to be more actively concerned with the future of her children and her family.

1.3.10 Woman as Mother-in-law

In the sequence of roles that a woman accepts and performs, the role of mother-in-law is a significant one. It is in this role the woman tries to deliberately establish her superordination over the daughter-in-law. In all other roles which she has performed or has been performing she has never been treated as a superordinate. While performing the role of mother-in-law many women seem to forget that they were daughter-in-law at one time. The experiences of many women as daughter-in-law only speaks of their extreme subordination before mother-in-law.

Though in India traditionally the typical relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has been one of superordination and subordination, but over a period of time certain changes have occurred in this relationship. Especially where the daughters-in-law have been working women.

1.3.11 Role and Status of the Women outside the Home (Public Domain)

Prior to independence, women in the lower strata of society had always worked primarily to make both ends meet. The participation of women in work activity was mainly confined to her role in the family. Her entry into productive work activity outside the home is of a recent phenomena in India. This was made possible because of the increasing opportunities provided in the educational field which subsequently led to suitability of these women to several jobs outside the home. Women not only have entered into certain of those jobs which have been exclusively created for them but also have accepted and entered into those occupations which were considered as unusual occupations for women and were considered as the exclusive occupations for men.

Though entry of women belonging to other economic strata into out of home work activity cannot be ruled out, it is the middle class and upper middle class women who have been entering into gainful employment outside the home, which has been a recent experience in India. Since careers for women have become more common and considering that the career woman's role is not feminine is weakening. The recent efforts to combat discrimination in professions have facilitated many women to accept the career opportunities in different areas.

In this new economic order the first phase has been that the educated women had to choose between career and marriage. It shows that a majority of those who have decided to take up higher education and job had to postpone or forego marriage and family life, mainly due to the opinion that a combination of the two was not considered to be practicable and desirable. But in the later phase of changes that have come about in the society the question of either profession or job was abandoned and a combination of the two, job and marriage have become more common. Even in the early fifties in certain jobs like the Indian Foreign Service, Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service, women were not allowed to continue after marriage but now women are allowed to enter into any job and continue to stay in the job ever after marriage.

There is a change in the attitude of the society and more particularly in the attitude of men, it was considered below dignity or prestige of a man to send his wife to work outside her home. With the raising cost of living, the husband's income alone is not sufficient even for subsistence. There has been a welcome change in this context, today's husbands, relatives and even members of the older generation approve and do not mind, the educated daughters, wives and daughters-in-law working outside the home and encourage them that they should work and supplement the income. Many studies have confirmed that women have the capacity to carry out various jobs as efficiently and successfully as men.

The problems connected with dual roles of women may be viewed as those of burden of work, interpersonal relations within the family, and of role conflict.

1.3.12 Structural Change in Family and Changing Status of Woman

The most conspicuous change in industrializing societies is the decrease in the proportion of extended families and the corresponding increase in the proportion of nuclear families. Most agricultural societies though characterised by extended family systems, the trend is towards establishment of nuclear or independent family organisations.

"The nature of family organisation is related to its economic base, in the traditional joint families it is a patriarchal ideology, which has dominated". Even in families which are nuclear in nature and where livelihood is earned from work in factories, offices and various establishments, "the patriarchal ideology seems to exist as a cultural norm". The traditional joint family structure has always been male biased. Even in the modern nuclear family the position of women doesn't seem to have altered and the male domination persists. In the face of increasing industrialization, urbanisation and consequent women's education, have led women to accept work roles outside the family. This situation has to some extent brought changes in the status of women.

1.4 THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

Most of the societies believe that the objectives of the marriage are to have socially recognised intimate relationship between a man and a woman which is expected to involve the sexual, economic and other forms of interaction which are necessary to have a complete life.

One of the basic characteristics of marriage is its charter which explains why marriage exists and what are its important objectives. The charter of marriage explains the justification of marriage by viewing it as access to sex, parentage, labour, property rights and widening of social relationships.

The second characteristic of the institution of marriage is mate choice or spouse selection. In Indian societies individuals are not free to choose their own marital partners and often they are arranged by parents or other members of the kin.

The third important characteristic of marriage is the financial transaction involved. In several societies marriage involves bride-price (payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family) in some societies marriage involves bride - service (the groom is expected to serve in the bride's family as a substitute to bride-price). In some other societies marriage involves dowry (payments made by the bride's family to the groom's family).

Ceremonies mark another characteristic feature of marriage. Several societies have very few marriage ceremonies whereas a large number of societies have elaborate rituals. These rituals involved ceremonies such as betrothal, initiation of marriage and nuptials.

There are certain specific rules which support the institution of marriage. These rules are proscriptive (which guide as to whom a person should not marry). The prescriptive rules (which guide a person as to whom he/she can marry). Lastly, the preferential rule guides a person whom he/she can prefer in marriage.

It is through marriage a family comes into existence. In India marriage and family are important to women than to men. It is believed that woman attain salvation by fulfilling motherhood.

Among Hindus the rules regarding marriage were strictly enforced on women and caste purity was maintained by controlling the sexuality of women. The following rules are emphasised by tradition for Hindu marriage.

- "1) The principle of Endogamy - marriage within the caste.
- 2) The rule of Exogamy - marriage outside one's gotra and outside certain specified degree of blood relationships.
- 3) Anuloma (hypergamy) or the men of higher castes marrying women of lower castes was preferred to pratiloma - the marriage of women of higher castes to men belonging to lower caste". (M. Krishnaraj).

By 300 B.C. marriage was considered obligatory and powerful norm for girls and parents regarded it as a religious duty to marry off their daughters before puberty. They were instructed to treat their husband like God. In India by 200 A.D. pre puberty marriages were common. Several reformers like Lala Lajpat Rai, Mahadev Govind Ranade worked for the abolishing this custom of child marriage.

In 1972 the civil marriage Act was passed. This act made consummation of marriage before the girl was 10 years punishable offence and the punishment was life imprisonment. In 1929 Sarda Act was passed which fixed the marriage age for girls at 14 and for boys at 18. Child marriages are common in rural areas as the poor have the fear that they cannot protect their women from exploitation by the upper caste men.

1.4.1 Marriage Payments and Status of Women

In order to marry off girls at a very young age to highly educated men of high status, parents pay a price (dowry). Marriage payments in general include bride-price, gift exchange and dowry. Amongst all the forms of marital payments dowry has acquired a special significance because payment of dowry is related to the elevation or decrease in the status of women. Dowry is an integral part of the hypergamous ideology. In the past while giving the daughter in marriage as a gift to the bridegroom (Kanyadan) customary sub gifts of cash and jewellery were given. This infact was not demanded but was voluntarily paid. This payment which began as a humble gift has reached unexpected proportions when it came to be demanded as a precondition for marriage. As long as marital gifts were given women enjoyed high status but when it came to be demanded they seem to have lost their individuality and identity. The practice of bride price we find in south of Vindhya. Whatever gifts the girl received from her own kin and also from her husband was retained by her as 'Streedhan'. The girl had the right to dispose this streedhan or give it to her daughter. In India marriages are arranged and parents of the girl ensure that the boy's family enjoy same or superior status. The boy and girl see each other before marriage.

1.4.2 Types of Marriage

There are different types of marriages which are followed, most of them are based either on the number of spouses or on the type of relationship with the spouse. The family types which most commonly followed are Monogamy and Polygamy.

Monogamy is a form of marriage in which the individual has a single spouse at any given time. Polygamy is a form of marriage in which an individual has multiple spouses at anytime. Polygamy is found to some extent among all religious groups. Among tribals this is widely prevalent. As tribals have the custom of bride price, having more than one wife gives him more prestige. Polygamy includes Polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny is a form of marriage where a man has more than one wife at a time. Polyandry is a form of marriage where a woman has more than one husband at a time. Polyandrous marriages we come cross among today's of Nilgiri, Khasas of Jaunsar Bawar.

1.4.3 Marriage among Hindus

According to Hindu scriptures marriage is considered a sacrament. Hindu marriages are mostly arranged marriages. The essence of Hindu marriage is the right that a householder gets to perform certain important duties which can be performed only in the company of a wife. Most of these duties are considered as sacred rights which cannot be undertaken by a man without wife. The first important aim of marriage is Dharma, the second procreation and the third Rathi which is considered as necessary because progeny is required. Marriage among Hindus is predominantly monogamous, though other forms of marriage are also accepted by giving due consideration to the causes and their consequences. Hindu society is divided into exogamous and endogamous divisions. According to these divisions an endogamous group permits marriage within the group, while exogamy implies marriage outside the group. Caste purity was maintained by controlling the sexuality of women because the rules regarding the marriage were more strictly enforced for women" (Neera Desai and others). In the Hindu marriage the two parties were not regarded as being equals in their delegations and privileges. There was discrimination made in their responsibility for sustaining the marriage. The marital rights of women accorded by society are more restricted than those to men. For example, the man is free to take a second wife on the death of his wife, but his right to bigamous marriage has not been questioned. A woman has to adjust to the husband and she has no freedom to divorce him.

1.4.4 Marriage Among Muslims

Muslim marriage is consideration as a contract, it is an obligation to be fulfilled and it is considered purely a secular ceremony. According to prophet Mohmmad, marriage is a means of creating progeny and assuming responsibility to continue human life and to enjoy woman's love.

Among Muslims a preferential code allows a person to marry a particular relative as desirable or obligatory. There are also certain restrictions prohibiting marriage to certain relatives or between groups, as they are considered incestuous or undesirable. Muslims are divided into 'Shias' and 'Sunnis' and the Shias are divided into Syeds, Sheiks, Moghuls and Pathans. Among these groups each member of a group likes to marry within his or her group which amounts to endogamy. Muslims follow cross-cousin and parallel cousin Marriages. Among Muslims marriage to father's brother's daughter is obligatory. Levirate (Marrying deceased husband's brother) and Sororate (Marrying deceased wife's sister) marriages are also practiced by Muslims. Muslim women have to marry in their own community and they are arranged by parents.

1.4.5 Marriage Among Christians

Among Christians the endogenous norm concerns that, one should marry within their own religion. They follow an exogamous rule which prohibits marriage within their group. Among Christians marriage is prohibited within the seventh degree where each degree refers to a generation. The common law of the church forbids marriage with a deceased wife's sister (Sororate) and also marriage with a deceased brother's widow (Levirate). Christian Church also forbids a man to marry a woman to whom he is a god-father, marriage between a minister of the sacrament and the person baptized, between god-father and sister of the god child and also from other religions. A Christian marriage which is consummated is a sacrament, it represents the union between Christ and church and valid for ever.

Monogamy or the marriage of one man to only one woman at a time is the only form of marriage which is considered as legal among Christians.

1.5 SUMMARY

In this unit the role of the women in different spheres such as home and outside the home and their changing status have been highlighted. The family has been viewed as a basic social institution and the different types of family, their functions have been discussed. The significance of family in different religions has also been mentioned. The concept of marriage, marriage types have been discussed along with marriage payments and the status of women. The practice of marriage by various religious groups is considered to know the significant difference between the religions in terms of marriage as an institution.

1.6 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each

- 1) Define family and discuss the important functions of family ?
- 2) Discuss how the structural changes affect the status of women ?
- 3) Examine the nature of marriage in different religious groups ?

II. Answer the following questions in 15 lines

- 1) Types of Family
 - 2) Role of Woman as daughter and wife
 - 3) Nature of marriage payments
-

1.7 SUGGESTED BOOKS

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12. Sobhavathamma, I, 1991 : "Educated Working Women in Andhra Pradesh", Balaji Publishers, Tirupati.
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UNIT - 2 : WOMEN AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Analyse the ancient laws of inheritance of Hindus and Muslims,
- Examine the barrier to women's rights over claiming, controlling and managing of property among all the communities, and
- Estimate the legislative enactments for providing property rights to women.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The property rights for women in India are based on socio-cultural institutions of patriarchy that is not only descent traced through the male line of ancestry, but all the property rights and legal control is invested in the male. In such a context, women has no status conferred by either

economic power or political power. She is reduced to a liability who must be provided for during her life by those having the economic power and nonentity who must be controlled by those holding political power in either case, the man.

Women's property rights are guaranteed by various inheritance and personal laws which are primarily based on religion. Over time, the legal systems of different religions have undergone modifications especially under various enactments.

During pre-independence era, some reforms in law and legal customs had been pushed through by the British and the Indian social reformers. In independent India, the constitution guaranteed freedom and equality to all persons regardless of sex, class, caste or other social and economic differences that exist in the society.

2.2 LAWS OF INHERITANCE

Inheritance laws existing in India vary primarily by religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi) and among the Christians also by religion with variations between Goa and Pondicherry and the rest of the country.

2.2.1 The Hindu Law

The Hindu law of property goes back historically to the classical Indian legal treatises or Dharmashastras composed between 200 BC and AD 200. However it was during the 12th century that the two main Hindu systems of law - Mitakshara and the Dayabhaga - emerged and prevailed upto the late 19th century when the British first introduced modifications.

2.2.1.1 Mitakshara System

Under the Mitakshara System which is prevalent in much of India, there existed a community of interests and rights to ancestral property of the Hindu undivided family, held jointly only by male coparceners consisting of four generations of males- man, son, son's son, and son's grandson - who became coparceners on birth. However over self acquired property woman had absolute ownership rights. Under this system a woman could also heir to her father's ancestral property if she had no brothers, in which case she could inherit either directly or indirectly on behalf of her son. Essentially this gave her an interest in the property and not the right to alienate it. In all other instances daughters and in-coming wives had maintenance rights only and widows enjoyed a limited interest.

2.2.1.2 Dayabhaga System

Under Dayabhaga system, prevalent mainly in Bengal, the man had absolute ownership over all his property, whether it is ancestral or self acquired and could be bequeathed only to his sons. Women inherited as widows or daughters in the absence of heir in the male line, but they enjoyed only a life interest in this inheritance, having the right to manage but not alienate it.

2.2.1.3 Stridhana System

There was nevertheless some recognition in traditional law of female property rights expressed in the concept of stridhan. According to one interpretation in Tabials (1973) indicate

that in earliest Dharmashastra texts, it included only movable gifts such as ornaments, clothes and household utensils, given to a woman in marriage and meant to be under her control. In the later texts, it tended to include any property given to her before or after marriage by the members of her natal and marital families. Under Mitakshara, the property of a woman inherited or obtained via partition of Joint property was also considered as part of Stridhan.

Dayabhaga made distinction between the streedhan and inherited property and women had control over the streedhan only.

2.2.2 The Islamic Law

Islamic law by contrast did legally recognise women's right to ancestral property including movables, although not equal to man's. At the same time in relation to agricultural land in most states Islamic law was necessarily prevailing customary law and women were typically excluded. In Punjab for instance, under customary law the widow, the mother and even the daughters were excluded by male agnates and often by near male collateral as well. At best, rights of maintenance were granted (Koul 1988).

In fact only community among whom there appears to have been a clear recognition of women's rights to inherit landed property are some of the matrilineal groups. In this context, Marumakkottayam and Alisyasanthana law systems require a special mention. Under these systems, applicable to the matrilineal community of Kerala and South Kowra (Karnataka) respectively. And clearly from the custom and usage that female and her descendents were the primary had there customary laws received a special treatment in enactments by the British and subsequent under 1986 Hindu Succession Act.

2.3 PROPERTY RIGHTS

2.3.1 The Hindus

The property rights of Hindus are today governed by the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 applicable to all states except Jammu and Kashmir and covering 86% of population. This Act sought to verify the Mitakshara and the Dayabhaga Systems and purported by - to lay down a law of succession whereby sons and daughters would enjoy equal inheritance rights, as would brother and sisters. Under this enactment, in case a Hindu women dying intestate any property inherited from her parents, husband or father-in-law in the first instance, devolves equally upon her sons, daughters and children of predecessor children. In case of self acquired property, the husband too counted as a primary heir.

Under this Act, all heirs male or female have absolute ownership over all property inherited and not just a life interest in it. The Act also gives unrestricted testamentary rights to owners. The 1956 Act was reduced but not eliminated pre-existing gender inequalities, and several major sources of inequality persist such as..

Inequality in Law :

1. Since the concept of Mitakshara joint family succession continues to be recognised

except in Kerala & Andhra Pradesh where there have been modifications subsequent to the Act, some of the basic guided inequalities persist, such as indicated below

- a) As only males can be coparceners in the joint family property wife, sons, daughters have a right only in the father's natural share than the direct coparceners by birth of sons.
 - b) Males were to maintain the independent right to the coparcenary, females lose the possibility of benefiting from such property.
 - c) A man can convert self acquired property to coparcenary in which case daughters who would have enjoyed equal share with the sons in the self-acquired property loose out.
 - d) A man's self-acquired property if inherited by the son becomes coparcenary property for the sons's children thus his son's daughters loose out.
 - e) Married daughters have no residence right in the ancestral home. And while daughters who are unmarried, separated, divorced, deserted or widowed do have residence right: even they could not demand a share if the males do not partition.
2. The children of predeceased daughter do not figure at all in the Class I heirs.
 3. Upon divorce, the wife has no claim to the husband's self acquired property, acquired after marriage. In the act there is no recognition of the notion of matrimonial property.
 4. Tenancy rights are exempted from the scope of the Act.
 5. The unrestricted right to will away property provides an important means by which females can be disinherited.

2.3.2 The Muslims

A vast majority of Muslims constituting 11.4 percent in the population in India, follow Hanafi School of Sunni Law, and a small percent the Shia law. Broadly, heirs are divided into three major categories

- a) agnatic heirs, who are almost all male,
- b) Koranic males who are mostly female,
- c) agnatic cosharers.

A daughter as an only child receives half share of the deceased parent estate as a koranic portion and is excluded by none. If there are two or more daughters and no sons they jointly get two-thirds share which is divided equally among them. The presence of a son who is agnatic heir however constitute a daughters right from that of koranic heir to agnatic - cosharer under which she gets - half of what son gets. A daughter can check her control over her property. They had rights of residence in parents house for ever and right to maintenance until they are married. In case of divorce, charge for maintenance reverts to her parental family after the iddat period (approximately 3 weeks). In case she has children capable of supporting her, the charge falls upon them.

In Islamic law, a woman's identity though inferior in status to a man's is not extinguished in him when she marries. Thus she retains control over her goods and properties. She has a right to the same inheritance as she gives to the other wives if any.

She has a right to Mehr according to the terms of the contract agreed at the time of marriage. A widow gets $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of the husband's estate depending on whether or not there is a child or son's descendants. In case of more than one widow, the collective share of all is $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ shared equally. Full sisters and consanguine sisters also share as Koranic heirs and can get excluded by male agnatic descendants and ascendants as can uterine sisters under specific circumstances. The mother gets a basic koranic share of $\frac{1}{6}$ as does the father.

The shia law of succession is noted to differ from the sunni law especially in two respects

- a) No relative of the propositus is excluded merely on grounds of their sex. Hence males and females who are linked to the propositus in equal blood or degree inherit together although female shares continue to be half of those of males.
- b) The emphasis is on the nuclear family and direct descendants.

In general therefore, Muslim women have inheritance rights in ancestral immovable property, although unequal to men. Also, this right has some degree of protection from testation. It is noteworthy however that in several states in the application of both Sunni and Shia laws, agricultural land gets excluded if there is local statute superceding the Muslim law of Succession in regard to such property as is also the case under Hindu law. Typically, such statutes give primacy to male heirs.

2.3.3 The Christians

The laws applicable to the Christians who constitute 2.4 percent of India's population have tended to vary by location. Until recently those from Goa and Pondicherry were governed by the Portuguese Civil Code, those from Cochin and Travancore (Kerala) by the Cochin and Travancore Acts respectively. Inheritance for the rest and most Christians is regulated by the Indian Succession Act of 1925. Under the above laws other than Indian Succession Act, women have only a life interest in land and other immovable property and have no direct inheritance rights. Under Travancore Act, if a man was survived by a widow and lineal descendants, the widow gets a share equal to that of a son. If however, he has survived by a widow and daughters, the widow took a share equal to that of the daughter. Daughters were entitled to streedhanam, which is the quarter of the share of the son or Rs.5000/- whichever is less. Similarly under Cochin Act, on the death of the Christian intestate man, his widow gets equal to two third the share of a son; if widow and daughters were the only survivors, widow gets share equal to that of daughters. Streedhanam was in vogue, however the daughters have no right to obtain a share in the property of the intestate if she has received or has been promised streedhanam.

On the death of a Christian intestate male if he is survived by a widow and lineal descendants, and the property is not worth more than 5000, the widow gets the entire amount. If he is survived by a widow and the lineal descendants and property is worth more than Rs.5000,

the widow has a charge on the property for Rs. 5000 and remaining property is divided so that the widow takes half of it and the children share the remainder equally. However the special protection for widow is not available to Indian Christians, any child or grandchild of an Indian Christian or any other religion is governed by the Indian Succession Act.

2.3.4 The Parsis

In agriculture land, the devolution is noted so to be in accordance to the Parsi rule of succession applicable prior to 1939 enactment. Here the daughter gets one fourth of what son gets and widow double of what daughter gets. The parents of the deceased get none.

Parsi women are discriminated against by an unjust inheritance laws which have no basis in the community's religious beliefs. The Parsi, a community with 90% literacy, have a strong hold on the Industrial and Professional life of the Country.

Like the Hindu law, there are separate rules for the distribution of the assets of male and a female. The son's share of his property is twice that of a daughter. The widow gets only as much as any of her sons. If the intestates parents survive him, then the father gets the share of the son. But the mother gets only half the share of the daughter. When a Parsi woman dies intestate leaving her husband and children, the property is divided equally among the widower and children.

Thus while a son is entitled to an equal share of the mother's property along with the daughter, the daughter is not entitled to the same right. When she inherits the property of her father, mother and daughters are the most sufferers in this community.

A Parsi woman is afforded no protection against arbitrary decision either, A Parsi male is not bound by any restrictions to will away his property. Children of Parsi women married to non Parsis have no right as under Parsi law they are not considered Parsi. The reason for such discrimination itself lies in the Parsi's fear of losing their distinctive ethnic identity for theirs is a race which has survived in India since 7th century. Parsi personal law is also based on Hindu custom and the rules of English common law. In 1955 Parsi Law Association was created to make a thorough study of Parsi custom and put forward legislative proposals. Two statutes were enacted in 1965 - The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act and the Parsi Intestate Succession Act 1936. The succession Act was re enacted in chapter III part V of Indian Succession Act 1928 and finally modified by an amendment act in 1939. In the smaller town of Gujarat for instance even today, there have been recorded instances of Parsi women being deprived of their legitimate share in the estate of their fathers and husbands.

In overview, therefore legally in relation to men, today women of almost all communities in India, except especially those in matrilineal south-west which retain many of the positive features of traditional Marumakkattayam and Aliyasantana systems have highly unequal access to immovable property in general and to agricultural land in particular. It is noteworthy however that despite this inequality, the passing of Hindu Succession Act of 1956 which is a substantial improvement over Indian Succession Act of 1925.

2.4 LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS FOR PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

The religious personal laws restricted rights over women's claim over property. The courts could not interpret the set laws in absence of any legislative enactments. It resulted in passing of the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937.

2.4.1 The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937

The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937 was hailed as opening of a fresh chapter in the history of women's right to property. The Act introduced important changes in the Law of Succession. The main features of Act were:

1. in case of separate property:
 - a) The widow along with sons is entitled to equal share of the son.
 - b) The deceased sons widow inherits in like manner as son.
2. in case of Mitakshara Joint family, the widow takes place of her husband.

It introduced remarkable changes in the law of succession but unfortunately the rules of devolution set out in the act are so framed that an attempt to resolve one difficulty was often cause in misconception and great difficulties in other cases. The Act in its consequences touches many branches of Hindu law such as Joint family and partition, adoption and maintenance and disqualifications from inheritance and illustrate how piecemeal legislation can result in contradictions and unexpected situations. It was criticised in some quarters as it would lead to a break up of Joint family system. According to others, it was nothing more than half created attempt to tackle the problem of women's right to property.

2.4.2 The Hindu Code Bill

To rectify number of anomalies and uncertainties in the enactment Government of India constituted the Hindu law committee on June 28, 1941. The committee expressed itself in favour of codification of Hindu laws by stages starting with succession. Government appointed a committee with Mr. B.N.Rao as chairman on June 30, 1944. The Rao Committee accordingly submitted its report and draft of the code in 1947. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar was instrumental in proposing and bringing of the Hindu code bill which became a milestone in the saga of women's struggle for equality. When Ambedkar put up the proposal of Hindu code bill in the constituent assembly, lot of criticism was hurled against the bill by conservative members like Pandit Bhargav, Sitaram Raju, D.V.Aragesan, Lakshmikant Mitu etc. However the eminent leaders like B.N.Rao, Durgabai Deshmukh, Alladi Krishna Swamy Iyer strongly supported the Hindu code Bill. The Bill proposed radical reform was required in Mitakshara law of Coparcenary Act that where one of the Coparcenary dies it was necessary that not only in case of his separate property, but also in respect of undivided interest in the coparcenary property, there should be equitable distribution of that share between his son and daughters. Finally Dr.Ambedkar succeeded in passing the four Acts which were incorporated in the Hindu Code Bill, which help women to improve their status.

1. The Hindu Marriage Act 1955
2. The Hindu Succession Act 1956
3. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956
4. The Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956

2.4.3 The Hindu Succession Act 1956

Prior to the Hindu Succession Act 1956, the uncodified Hindu Law, the daughter (married or unmarried) had no right to inherit the property of her deceased father. The Hindu Succession Act provided a daughter the right to inherit the property of her deceased father, along with her brothers and mother. Prior to the Hindu Succession Act a Hindu women has her absolute right only on Stridhan but after the Act whatever property a women gets from any source in whatever form it is she who becomes the absolute owner of the property.

Under the traditional Hindu law, the Hindu female enjoyed very limited rights in relation to property inherited by her. The Hindu Succession Act declared the property in possession of her as absolute property and given her an opportunity to be independent according to section 14 of the Act. Under this section women were given absolute power to dispose of her property as she thinks fit. The Act further lays down certain rules for succession to such property independently of the general rules of succession given under section 8 of the Hindu Succession Act. Though the amended Hindu law has given the women many new rights, she cannot be a member of the coparcenary and cannot ask for a partition.

2.5 UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Neither the personal laws nor the civil laws recognise the value of women's rights in the house. Therefore on divorce, the property is not shared by the husband and wife. Instead she is left without a home, income or any other economic security. If the husband throws out his wife she is often deprived of even her stridhan. Muslim and Parsi women have some property rights but not equal with their brothers. Under their respective laws the son gets twice the share of the sister. Lot of ambiguities and inequalities persist among various personal and civil laws.

Article 44 of the Indian Constitution directs that the state shall endeavour to secure for the citizens uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. The committee on the status of women in India had emphasised that the absence of a uniform civil code and continuation of various personal laws which accept discrimination between men and women violate the fundamental rights and preamble of the constitution which promises to secure to all citizen 'equality of status'. The continuation of different personal laws having different provisions in relation to women's rights leads to inequalities against women vis-a-vis men as well as women vis-a-vis women. There is therefore an urgent need to have an uniform civil code which guarantees equal rights to all Indian women and men.

2.6 NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE PLAN FOR WOMEN 1988

The National Perspective Plan for women recommended the following:

1. A uniform civil code for all citizens to be adopted by the year 2000 A.D.

2. Both spouses should have a joint title to all property acquired by either spouses during subsistence of a marriage and they should hold such properties as tenants in common in equal share. But properties acquired by either spouse, by means of gift or testamentary or inheritance, succession should be excluded from their principle.
3. It should be mandatory by law that daughters/ widows have equal share in properties of their parents/husbands and sons and daughters should have an equal share in the property. The right by birth of the son as coparcener should be abolished and all heirs should be treated as equal as in the case of self-acquired property of the father.
4. Further it should be provided that no one shall have the right to will away more than 25% of the property. The Hindu Succession Act or similar Acts should be amended to provide that no partition of a dwelling house should be affected without the consent in writing of the widow and widowed daughters in law if any and they shall have the right of residence in the dwelling house.

2.7 SUMMARY

The right over property is one which alters the status of any individual. In case of a women, it acquires special importance. The property rights of women in different religions laws of inheritance among different religious groups, their relative discrimination have been discussed to assess the need for property rights in its true sense. In the last few years, property laws have been greatly modernised to provide a more equitable share for women. However what needs to be questioned is not only whether the provisions by laws are equitable, but it is the social system in which those laws operate supportive.

Women are by large ignorant that they have property rights at all. Usually assuming with the collusion of male members of the family that inheritance and control of wealth is the right of men. Secondly few women are trained to demand their rights against the social stigma of family feud over property and the emotional pressure brought to bear on them by friends and relatives. Even if she does need some sense of what is owing to her, the oppressive dowry system by which her 'share' of family property is surrendered to her husband and his family, gives grounds for assuming she has no rights in inheritance. Woman is also deprived of equal sharing in the resources of the family while she was with her parents. In a situation of scarce resources they are always diverted to the male child. Patrilinearity and patrilocality are the twin causes of this. For one, the daughter will not remain a member of family and earning sources conferred in her by a good education will not benefit the family. Patrilocality ensures that when a girl marries, she moves to her husbands house taking with her skills and earning power to benefit his family. The net result is that the women are impoverished by the unequal maintenance.

Therefore, though equitable property laws do help to improve economic status of women this applies to very small elite. The truth is that there are a host of other legal practices that undercut her rights to property, which have not been thought by legislators. The gravity of land pattas to the male head of the family is the one. The fact that most economic transactions are carried out by men is another.

One set of rights is not isolated from another. As long as the women is discriminated against men because she is a woman no matter how personal the context, this attitude will constrict her legal rights. The personal is political, and the political dictates the legal. Therefore in looking for reforms, usage, equality of women, we should look through a integrated perspective. This is where the need for a uniform civil code governing all aspects of life, marriage, property personal rights of all communities is essential.

2.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in about 30 lines each.

- 1) Critically analyse the ancient laws of inheritance pertaining to woman among Hindu and Muslim Communities.
- 2) What are the factors which impinge on women in her claiming , controlling and managing of property?
- 3) Briefly examine the legislative protection given to women over the control over property in pre and post independence era.

II. Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

- 1) Mitakshara
- 2) Dayabhaga
- 3) Muslim laws of inheritance
- 4) Uniform Civil Code
- 5) Hindu Succession Act 1956
- 6) Recommendations of National Perspective Plan for women.

2.9 SUGGESTED BOOKS

- Agarwal, Bina - "A field of one's own - Gender and Law Rights in South Asia", 1994
- Altekar. A.S - "The position of women in Hindu Civilisation", 1959
- Chowdhary Rooplal - "Hindu Women's Right to property, Past and Present", 1961
- De Souza, Alfred - "Women in Contemporary India", 1975
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- Indra Deva, Smt.Srirama - "Growth of Legal System in Indian Society", 1980
- Koushik - "Women's Oppression - Pattern and Perspective", 1985
- Parashar Archana - "Women and Family Law Reform in India", 1992
- Sarkar Lotika - "Status of Women and Law as a instrument of Social Change", 1983
- Srinivas.M.N. - "Principles of Hindu Law and Statutory Enactments", 1969
- Srivastava.T.N - "Women and the Law", 1988

UNIT - 3 : SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Concept and Significance of Socialization
- 3.3 Agencies of Socialization
 - 3.3.1 The Family
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- 3.4 Socialization Process - From Birth to Adulthood
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 - 3.5.4 Language
- 3.6 Recent trends in Socialization and Impact on Society
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Model Examination Questions
- 3.9 Suggested Books

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Delineate the meaning and significance of socialization,
- Understand various agencies involved in the process of socialization, and
- Understand various stages in the process of socialization from birth to old age.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the time of conception via Infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood a person emerges as a human being with specific tastes, likes, dislikes, a set of attitudes and values, roles and responsibilities, purposes and goals, instinctive responses to situations and with a highly personal concept of what he/she is either in family or in society. The process through which he or she acquires an individual personality and internalises societal and peer group norms and values at different stages of life is termed as socialization.

Sex is an important factor in allocation of roles, status and power in all societies. In traditional societies and joint families, socialization, rearing up of boys and girls and child rearing

beliefs and practices were organized on the basis of place, status and roles expected of men and women in family and society. The paternal joint family system confined the woman's roles to the domestic spheres, allocated subordinate status, authority and power to women compared to men, and practised sex segregation in day to day life. Men were providers and protectors of family, hence boys and girls were trained for different adult roles.

3.2 THE CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIALIZATION

The entire process of socialization of female is to internalise the concept of dependency which is crippling to the development of their personality. Infact they have only roles but no personality.

Socialization for gender differentiation and sex inequality starts early in a girl's life. Since she has to leave her father's house where she spends a brief spell of her childhood, she can hardly recall the time spent there and tends to glorify it.

The custom of early marriage ensured that the girls learned the tradition of the new family and transferred loyalties to the new home. After marriage, minimum contact with the natal family ensures further immurement in the husband's home. The custom of kanyadan forbids the parents/older brothers etc to accept anything from daughter's house and parents-in-law did not encourage frequent visits to the father's house. Summing up the whole world of women, Irawati Karve says, a woman's life may not have been all sorrow. As a pet daughter, a beloved wife and an honoured mother, a woman experienced happiness, but whatever it was, frustrated or successful, it was made so, mostly by agencies other than her own will. She was owned by someone and her master made her life.

No wonder there is discrimination in the allocation of resources between the sexes, nutrition, medicare, education and practically everything. Now in the urban educated families, the attitudes are changing, yet the majority of the families, even the well-to-do ones may practice discrimination in the opportunities they give to their sons and daughters. This is done in a bloodless way- the daughters are so socialized that they internalise the norms of subordination to the will and happiness of others. They are taught to serve best foods to the males in the family - first brothers and fathers, later sons, husbands, father-in-law, brother-in-law etc. They write off their share in parental property in their brothers favour in order to enjoy the 'affection' of the brothers and to ensure welcome to their visits in the natal home.

A woman is never a permanent member of her husband's family. She may have to leave if she does not satisfy and she may leave if she is not satisfied. Patriliney in association with joint property and joint family household along with the rules governing marriage prescribe a life of constraint on women and is responsible for a devaluation of her position. It is anxiety of the parents to train her in the strictest manner so that she is used to pain. Then if she is lucky, she may live happily but if the conditions are different and difficult in the husband's house, she will not find it too difficult to adjust, cruel logic but such is the justification given for girls socialization by the parents. (M.Krishna Raj)

3.3 AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

In the course of socialization process several agencies play a significant role in the ultimate development of human personality. Family, school, religion and peer group are considered as important agencies of socialization.

3.3.1 The Family

The family is called the cradle of social virtues. The child gets his/her first lessons in co-operation, tolerance, self-sacrifice, love and affection in the family. The environment of a family influences the growth of a child. The psychologists have shown that a person is what he/she becomes in a family. In the process of socialization of a child there is discrimination between a boy and a girl even within the family. In the process of learning which influences the personality a girl is restricted in acquiring certain aspects of role play considering that they are for boys only. Though boys and girls enter this world in much the same way, the influence of family which is intended varies between the boy and girl. Family trains boys for certain specific roles, though the girls are capable of managing such roles, they are never trained to readily accept such roles.

3.3.2 The School

Once the child leaves the household he/she spends more time in the school, where a child gets education and comes to know what he/she would be as an adult. Even within the school we find discrimination between the boys and the girls in terms of imparting education, from segregation in seating pattern in the class room to what courses a girl should be offered. Even in the play ground we find exclusive games for girls and rarely a girl is entertained in the domain of games which are considered exclusively for boys. Even if a girl shows proficiency in such games, she is not allowed to play such games.

3.3.3 The Religion

The Religion plays a very important role in the process of socialization. The beliefs and the ritual practices of the parents have a bearing on the personality development of the child. Here again we find the girl being insisted upon following certain religious rituals, whereas the boys are not compelled to do the same. Much of what a woman is could be attributed to the religion in which she believes in and practices. Religion, like other agencies has a profound influence on the child and more so on a girl child. The girl child is made to be subservient, attributing it religious sanctions.

3.3.4 The Peer Group

The Peer group which includes play mates and friends is also an important agency of socialization. The relationship between the child and his/her play mates is based on the cooperation and mutual understanding. The child acquires certain aspects from the peer group which he/she may not acquire from parents. The child learns certain informal aspects of culture such as fashion, modes of gratification and knowledge which is forbidden by the parents. Even in the peer group interaction girls and boys are not allowed freely to interact and hence we find girl learning mostly as to what a woman should be from the members of the peer group. Peer group influence on the girl does not seem to alter her position in any way either in the family or in the society.

3.4 SOCIALIZATION PROCESS - FROM THE BIRTH TO ADULTHOOD

The pre-marital status and role of the woman have been defined and patterned differently in different types of societies and in different times. The birth of a female offspring in every society has not been accepted equally. There are societies in which the birth of the female child has been looked at with great disfavour and has been considered as bad omen to the family and to the group. Some of the societies have considered the birth of a female child as an unaccepted personal and social event that these societies have permitted, Aminiocentesis and female infanticide.

Despite the high status of women during vedic period, gender bias is entrenched deeply in the cultural heritage of not only India but in other societies also. Manu, the Hindu law giver, had stated that "Where ever women are worshipped god chooses it as his abode". The scriptures glorified the place of women in Indian society as Devi Shakti. However, in reality the position is different. According to Atharva Veda, which says, "the birth of a girl, grant elsewhere; here grant a boy". Gender discrimination also arose out of Manu's philosophy, according to which "a female is under the guardianship of her father till she gets married: under her husband after her marriage and under her sons after she is divorced or widowed".

Even among the other societies, the status of the female child is no better. In western societies which are democratic and progressive, there are greater chances of divorce, where there are female children.

Gender discrimination, the age old system of inequality and stereotyping of the role of women, have resulted in the low valuation of a girl child. The parents always pray for a son. This perhaps is the attitude all over the country with few exceptions. The situation may be worse in the villages wherein, when the girl is born, there is seldom any joy; a kind of gloom prevails; but the birth of a boy is greeted with elation and pride.

Early aspects of gender learning by infants is almost unconscious. Adults both male and female handle infants differently. "Systematic differences in dress, hairstyle provide clues for the infant in the learning process. By the age of two the child understands what gender is they can categorise whether they are boys or girls. Later they come to know that gender does not change.

The toys with which the children come in contact during childhood emphasize differences between male and female attributes.

Children's books also provide that there are differences in gender roles. For ex., boys are shown as active, independent and taking up advantageous opusuits and outdoor activities while girls are shown as passive and mostly confined to indoor activities like cooking and cleaning. The roles of women and men play are depicted differently. Men are depicted in roles as kings, fighters, policemen.

From the childhood, girls are encouraged to take traditional female roles. Their play materials are dolls and kitchen utensils and gadgets, while the boys play with aeroplanes and

battle tanks. In schools, girls are encouraged to take up needlework and cookery while the boys take to hobbies like wood work, metal work etc. Thus even in the socialisation process in a family, sex stereotypes play their part. Girls are expected to be docile, modest, less talkative and submissive, thus closing the door of creativity and innovation for girls. Gender bias does not stop at the childhood but continues during adolescence too. Traditionally, most parents and teachers inadvertently instill orthodox, and traditional and patriarchal ideas in the minds of children. Gender bias also results in poorer health standards among girls. The gender bias experienced by the girls in the households include the following:

1. Girls get secondary position next to all male members in the distribution of family food;
2. Neglect of Immunization for the girl child.
3. Nutritional deficiencies among mothers, infants, girls
4. Absence of growth monitoring
5. Poor primary health care
6. Lack of safe drinking water
7. Lack of proper health and nutrition education.

Apart from the fear of girls being abused or kidnapped and high costs of her dowry which create bias against girl child, the male child was seen as a means of social security of parents in old age. It was in this context that every family desired to have male children. In ancient Hindu Law there was a provision of adoption of only male child by a childless couple. This gender bias was so ingrained in the social fabric that even women as mothers discriminated against the daughters and sisters, accepted position inferior to their brothers in terms of food, education, recreation etc.

Gender bias is part of social value system which has roots in the family. A female child imbibes all these values which stand in the way of women's development. It is because of this deep rooted bias that girls are discriminated against, which results in denial of basic services necessary for survival, welfare, growth and development of girls. This results in higher infant and maternal mortality, lower sex ratio, and nutritional differences among girls. Lower school enrolment and higher school drop-outs among girls results in low literacy rates among women. Girls are generally expected to do household work looking after younger siblings and milch animals. Similarly even in the field of recreation, girls are supposed to play with girls inside the four walls of their house only.

Socialisation Process - Adolescence

With the onset of puberty dramatic changes take place in the life of an Indian girl. In South India with the onset of menstruation there is change in the status of the girl and it is expressed through rituals and ceremonials. She is kept in confinement for some days and at the end of which there is celebration. She is made to wear half sari which symbolises the changed status of the girl. To strengthen her reproduction organs she is prescribed to eat certain types of foods and asked to avoid certain foods. The puberty celebrations and the special diet restrictions seen to express the value of retrained and controlled sexuality and of motherhood. (Leela Dube).

In North India rituals are not performed but food restrictions are prescribed during menstruation girls are asked to avoid playing rough games. During the period between puberty and marriage restrictions on her movements and interaction with males are imposed. During this period importance is attached to the way a girl carries herself, how she sits or stands. Jumping, running, hopping are considered masculine behaviour and she is asked to avoid them. She is encouraged to speak softly, avoid abusive language. Girls are asked to avoid masculine behaviour to establish her feminine identity. Restrictions in her movements, contacts with outsiders, her physical segregation a girl is expected to create a separate space for herself in places full of strangers (Leela Dube). With the onset of puberty the various restrictions which are imposed on her push her into the private domain of the family. Restrictions of time are also prescribed.

Girls are given training for feminine tasks like cooking, cleaning, menial and dirty household work and child care. "The notions of appropriateness or inappropriateness of particular kinds of work for adult females and males get reflected in the work assigned to girls and boys. The distinction between feminine work and masculine work comes early in childhood and becomes sharper as the child grows up." (Leela Dube)

"The naturalness of the work supposed to be appropriate for girls is conveyed effectively but without generating a feeling of discrimination to little girls by encouraging them in various games which involve dolls, household, kitchen work, washing clothes, marriage, baby sitting and visiting neighbours. Beginning with assistance in cooking and other kitchen work, serving for food, caring for younger siblings, preparing for the worship of family deities, and looking after the aged, girls learn to take over some of the responsibilities themselves". They are made to learn to bear pain, deprivation, to eat anything that is given to them and to acquire the quality of self denial. "The notions of tolerance and self restraint are also rooted in the consciously cultivated feminine role which is embedded in legitimised cultural ideology." (Leela Dube) Girls grow up with a notion of their temporary membership within the natal home. It is through rituals that they come to know that they are temporary members of their parental family.

The problem of adolescence in Indian girls is marked by social and economic issues. The young girls are either illiterate or school drop-outs due to the traditional bias against education for girls. Consequently early marriages, motherhood and familial responsibilities are some of the social conditions which influence the health, nutrition and productivity of these young girls. Having seen her mother attending all the household chores and additional family responsibilities when living with a joint family, the young girl herself takes on her mother's roles and responsibilities in her own in-laws house. The girl leads a life of submissiveness, depriving herself of all comforts in her life. "The Hindu woman was brought up in a house where the ideal of pativrata had been inculcated into the life of her mother and other elderly female members of the family".

3.6 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is considered as the process of learning group norms, habits and ideals. There are four important factors which influence this process of learning. They are imitation, suggestion, identification and language.

3.6.1 Imitation

Imitation may be a conscious or unconscious, spontaneous or deliberate following of the actions of another individual. Mead defines it as "self conscious assumption of another's acts or roles". In the case of a girl child she is often corrected when she imitates a male member and is advised to learn only by imitating females. And even in this they are expected to learn by imitation only certain aspects of life from few women and not every thing from all the women.

3.6.2 Suggestion

According to McDougall suggestion is the process of communicating information which has no logical and self evident basis, it also does not include rational persuasion, suggestion influence the behaviour of the child. While suggesting the child as to how he/she should learn and behave we find identical suggestions are not given in the case of boys and girls. Suggestion itself which is considered to have no logical basis does not seem to apply any logic while discriminating between boys and girls.

3.6.3 Identification

In his/her early age the child cannot make any distinction between himself/herself and environment. Most of his/her actions are natural reactions of which he/she is not conscious. As he/she grows in age he/she comes to know of various objects which satisfy his/her needs. The toys, picture books and individuals with whom he/she interacts become the objects of identification. We find the objects which are offered for identification which allow the child to establish a relationship between himself/herself and the environment are also carefully chosen in the case of girl but not so with a boy. When no such choice is possible, girls are refrained from exposing themselves to such objects or environment.

3.6.4 Language

Language is a medium of social interaction and it transmits culture from one generation to another generation. The child first learns to utter certain random syllables which have no meaning but gradually the child learns the language which is spoken by the immediate family members, mostly the mother. Language learning which is both conscious and unconscious, it is in the conscious part of language learning we find girls are often cautioned against the nature of language which they try to learn. When it comes to the use of certain words girls even are forbidden to use such words whereas the boys are not restricted in the same manner as girls. The submissive nature of a girl is also expected in the nature of language she learns and uses.

3.7 RECENT TRENDS IN SOCIALIZATION AND IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Socialization is a life long process. During each phase of socialization new interactions, role taking and personality development will take place. In the case of the female the process of socialization assumes greater significance particularly in the context of changing roles in a family. The woman has taken on the additional role of being an economic provider to the family. It follows that opportunities for social interactions would necessarily increase. Therefore the women

would have a wider scope for socialization both within and outside the family. This in turn leads to a change in the role delineation. Sharing of domestic activity, contributions to family income, relatively better participation in decision making at home by the women are the emerging trends as a consequence of greater socialization by women. Similarly availability of various facilities such as fast foods, instant mixes, household gadgets, proliferation of services - domestic, social, institutional, educational, banking and recreation - have all facilitated the wider socialization of women. The society in turn has become more open and accommodative to the changing roles of woman.

These recent trends in socialization have been encouraging to women it gives them greater access to all resources and promotes women's development leading to empowerment.

3.8 SUMMARY

The concept of socialization and the significance of socialization process in the development of self have been discussed. The important theories of socialization propounded by Cooley, Mead and Freud have been delineated.

In the process of development of self, several agencies play an important role, the foremost amongst them, the family, the school, the religion and the peer group have been highlighted in this context.

In the process of socialization, there is an inherent discrimination against girl child and the nature of discrimination at various stages i.e., even before birth to old age in the process of socialization have been elaborated. Finally the factors which influence the process of socialization have also been mentioned, even here the girl child is cautioned in imitating, receiving suggestions, identifying and in the usage of language while no such attempt is made in the case of boys.

3.9 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in 30 lines each.

- 1) Define socialization and discuss the significance of socialization.
- 2) Discuss the nature of discrimination against girl child in the process of socialization.
- 3) Discuss the factors which affect the process of socialization.

II. Answer the following questions in 15 lines each.

- 1) Recent trends in socialization
- 2) Socialization and girl child
- 3) Agencies of Socialization : The Family and the School.
- 4) Peer group as a agency of socialization.

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BLOCK - II

WOMEN AND WORK

BRAOU

UNIT -4 : SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
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 - 4.2.4 Rape
 - 4.2.5 Widowhood and Sati
 - 4.2.6 Prostitution
 - 4.2.7 Domestic Violence
- 4.3 Summary
- 4.4 Model Examination Questions
- 4.5 Suggested Books

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to discuss the issue of

- Female infanticide & female foeticide, its causes, and prevention,
- Child marriage, reasons for child marriages,
- Dowry, Dowry deaths & measures to eradicate this evil,
- Widowhood & Sati,
- Prostitution, causes and prevention of this evil, and
- Domestic violence.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Indian society displays a wide variety of social issues. In the Indian society there is still the desirability of boys for continuity of family line and undesirability of daughters as they are considered as liabilities. They are eliminated by female foeticide, which is accomplished through amniocentesis, a technique which is meant for detecting foetal abnormalities. In some rural urban areas of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, U.P. and Gujarat, there are incidents of female infanticides in some communities. Apart from these, females are discriminated against, in providing nutrition and health care. Female mortality is high due to neglect of females. Early marriages, dowry demands before and after marriage have increased and almost everyday there are news items in the local dailies about harassment and torture of brides leading to suicide or

murder by in-laws and husband. Recently there were incidents of widow immolation or sati reported from Deoranla, Rajasthan. Another type of violence which women face is sexual violence, eve teasing and rape. There has been an alarming increase in prostitution and sex trafficking. In this unit we will study about each of these issues elaborately.

4.2 SOCIAL ISSUES OF THE CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY

4.2.1 Female infanticide and female foeticide

Female infanticide is one form of oppression of women practiced in India and China. The practice of female infanticide was first discovered by Jonathan Duncan, a member of East India Company's Civil Service in 1789. Kalloor (1990) defined female infanticide as killing of an entirely dependent child under one year of age, that is killed by the mother, parents or others in whose care the child is entrusted". The custom of killing female babies soon after birth was prevalent among Rajputs of Rajasthan. It was also prevalent in Punjab, Surat, Kutch, Gujarat, Baroda, whole of West Coast, Tamilnadu and Bihar.

It is believed that the practice of female infanticide originated among Jerejah Clan a tribe, which claimed to be high status group of Rajput families. A powerful Raja of Jerejah clan had a daughter of excellent beauty and the raja failed to get her married, as he could not find suitable match for her. So the princess was put to death and with the incident the practice of female infanticide came into existence.

Reasons for practising infanticide

- a. Because of constant wars between Rajputs and Mughals, the Muslim invaders used their power not only for plundering wealth but picked up beautiful Hindu girls to meet their sexual urge. The Rajputs could not tolerate their daughters or wives being touched by the Mughals. In order to save Rajput honour they practised female infanticide.
- b. Superstitious beliefs: In some communities there was a belief that by sacrificing a female child the next child born will be a male child and also the belief that birth of a daughter becomes the source of disaster for the father or the root of family misery.
- c. To avoid raid by strong neighbours: Some tribal groups in order to avoid raids by their strong neighbours who were in quest of wives practised female infanticide. eg. Naga Tribes
- d. To keep the family property within the family.
- e. To avoid the problems of dowry.
- f. Social pressures to beget sons who support the family, as they are an economic asset while daughters are a liability.
- g. Poverty.

Methods adopted to kill female babies

Several methods have been adopted to kill babies and they vary from place to place.

The following are some of the methods to kill female babies.

- a. When the mother is still unconscious the father stepped on the throat of female infant.
- b. Poisonous milk of calotropis or the oleander berries mixed with sugar were given to the female baby or infant. A few grains of coarse paddy were suffed into the mouth of the newborn. The infant breathed the grain into wind pipe and choked to death.
- c. A bagful of sand was used to suffocate the child and sometimes she was strangled.
- d. A heavy dose of opium was given to the child.
- e. The child was smothered with a wet towel.
- f. The baby was stuffed into a clay pot filled with milk. In Bihar large-scale female infanticide is done by dais or traditional midwives. In Bihar these types of deaths are termed as "saurighar deaths" (Indian Express 1995). Adithi a non-governmental organisation has done research in Tamilnadu on female infanticide. In the drought poverty-stricken village of Usilampatti in Madurai district of Tamilnadu female infanticide is said to be a common phenomenon. According to Government Hospital sources out of 600 girl babies born 450 females are victims of infanticide. The custom is practised even today in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Bihar and Maharashtra. Amniocentesis is a modern method of killing female in the womb. Amniocentesis, a scientific technique that was supposed to attack genetic deformities like mongolism, neural tube defects. 'Rh' incompatibility, hemophilia and other abnormalities have become popular in detecting the sex of the baby in the womb and terminating it if it is found to be a female baby. As it has become socially accepted that the birth of a daughter is a disaster and in order to avoid payment of huge amounts of dowry, couples are undergoing sex determination tests and terminating pregnancy if it is a female child.

According to the forum against sex determination Survey report (1989) about 10,000 cases of female foeticide are reported every year from Ahmedabad. In a survey conducted by "Women's Centre in Bombay in six hospitals it was found that out of 8000 fetuses aborted 7999 fetuses were of females. The cost of amniocentesis and female foeticide ranges between Rs.80 to Rs.500 that well-to-do families and also poor families in the rural families can afford". (Maria Mies: 1986, 152). A Survey of slums in Bombay has revealed that many poor women undergo this treatment and pay the money for the test and an abortion of female fetuses because they argue that it is better to spend Rs.80 or even 800 now, than to spend thousands of rupees on the girl at the time of her marriage. (Patel, 1984:69)

In 1982 some doctors in Amritsar saw the chance of their lives to make business out of the anti-women and pro-male bias of patriarchal Indian Society. They advertised and sold amniocentesis as a method of pre-selection, followed by the abortion of female fetuses (Maria

Mies, 1986:151) One of the anti abortion hospital in Bombay after conducting the amniocenteses test recommends the pregnant women to undergo abortion in other clinics and asks them to bring back the aborted female fetuses for further research (Vibhuti Patel, 1984:69). Vimal Bala Subramaniyam is of the opinion that with more sophisticated methods like ultra sound scanning, female foeticide would become much more wide spread than it is now. She blames not only the patriarchal preference for male offspring for these femicidal tendencies, but more so the international philosophy that inspires much of the elitist thinking of the scientists who today dabble in foetal research, embryo transfer and the vast tricky field of genetic engineering (Balasubramaniyam, 1982:1725 quoted in Maria Mies, 1986:152). Female foeticide was advocated as the best way of solving the population problem or control by male doctors and scientists. Not only men even women advocated it as a tool of solving the population problem.

Several Women's organisations protested against sex determination tests and female foeticide as a threatening tendency towards the extermination of women but even today it is carried out in cities like Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Amritsar and also in rural areas.

Preventive Measures of Female Foeticide and Female Infanticide:

- a. The practice of using amniocentesis for sex determination and female foeticide should be legally banned.
- b. Medical practitioners indulging in the misuse of this test and abortion of female fetuses as a lucrative trade should be punished.
- c. Amniocentesis test should be performed only in Govt. approved medical hospitals.
- d. Awareness on the illegality and undesirability of Amniocentesis should be created among people.
- e. Media should be effectively used to bring about change in the attitude of people towards the girl child.
- f. Advertising of Amniocentesis should be banned legally.

4.3.2 Child Marriage

Another social evil is child marriage which has been there in the Indian Society from post vedic period which had received religious and social sanction. Marriages were solemnised for girl children below 9 or 10 years in patrilineal societies where considerable concern for ritual purity is emphasized. According to Veena Das "Women were literally seen as a point of entrance, as gateways to the caste system. If men of ritually low status were to get sexual access to women of higher status, then not only the purity of the women but that of entire group would be endangered. Since the main threat to the purity of the group came from female sexuality, it becomes vital to guard it. Most groups solved this problem by the custom of prepuberty marriages". (Veena Das, 1976, p.135 quoted by Maithreyi...p.35) Marriages were solemnised before the girl was physically, emotionally and psychologically mature.

In the present society this custom of child marriage is prevalent in many states especially in rural areas.

Reasons for Child Marriages in India:

1. According to some writers this custom was prevalent in Indian society when there was the institution of "Nunnery" in two religions - Jainism and Buddhism. When several grown up maidens were becoming nuns against their parents desire, they decided to marry off their daughters before their personality was fully developed.
2. To prevent the possibility of unchastity and protect them from motherhood before marriage.
3. The beliefs that keeping a girl unmarried was a serious dereliction of Hindu tradition and if she is not married before puberty it was believed to have committed sin. Apart from this the belief that each menstrual cycle of the daughter burdened the father with a sin of infanticide and the belief that an early marriage meant a son after puberty.
4. The belief that a girl before puberty gets adjusted well in the in-laws family.
5. Rules of endogamy which prescribe that marriage should be arranged within a certain group and other norms of prescription, preference and proscription which narrowed the field of choice of suitable bridegrooms which forced parents to marry their daughters early to avoid the risk of losing a good bridegroom.
6. Child marriages are prevalent in castes and tribes where there is the custom of bride price; to protect women from the lust of upper caste groups who are economically powerful.
7. Scarce resources of poverty is also an important reason for early marriage of girls.

Consequences Of Child Marriages:

The growth which takes place around 10 to 18 years is stunted due to malnutrition and discrimination of the girl child. As the wombs of the young girls are not fully developed frequent abortions occur and birth of baby at the tender age is hazardous.

Sometimes deliveries had to be forced by the application of forceps. In the rural areas non-availability of these services and abstracted labour lead to rupture of uterus and death of the young mother. Pregnancy induced high blood pressure; Anemia and difficulty in delivery due to disproportion between the pelvic size and head of the baby are some of the major complications, which the young girls have to face. Ida Scudder a famous lady doctor at American mission Hospital at Vellore relating her experiences stated that she was helpless to save child wives (below 14 years) who died in the Hospital. She said that some of them suffered from Vesico-Vaginal fistula laceration of private parts. Dr. Macphail who worked in India stated that women suffered a lot at the time of delivery and because of the rules imposed on them by their social and religious customs and also their habits the mortality rate was high.

Steps Taken For The Eradication Of This Evil:

An important step was taken for the eradication of this evil of child marriages Act in 1891 when the Age of Consent Act came into force. Great social reformer Byramji Malabari (1853-1913) was the first person who made pioneering efforts for the eradication of this evil. Though he was aware that British Government was reluctant to interfere in the affairs of religious importance he submitted his proposal for legislation to Lord Rippen. Malabari published a pamphlet entitled "Infant marriage and enforced widowhood". This pamphlet with his unsparing criticism roused a great deal of interest and did much to mould public opinion. He toured the whole country and enlightened the people about the harmful consequences of this evil system of child marriages. In 1890 he went to England to enlist the support of the people there especially the women. Meanwhile "the Rukmabai case" stirred many hearts and the evils of child marriage came to be recognised.

Another case which accelerated legislation on this subject was the case of Pulomani Dasi who was married to an adult and who died at the age of 11 years. The lady doctor who attended her sent a memorandum to the Government requesting suitable legislation to prevent child marriages, which was supported by 1,500 Indian women who sent a representation to Queen Victoria asking for similar reform.

Women's Associations all over India conducted agitations for the abolition of child marriages. They organised mass meetings and protested at the delay in taking action. The first All India Women's Conference under the presidentship of the Maharani of Baroda met in 1927 at Poona and demanded suppression of the evil custom of child marriage. Again at the meeting held at Madras to celebrate All India Women's day a resolution was adopted for speedy legislation to eradicate this evil. Another conference was held at Delhi under the presidentship of Maharani of Baroda and a delegation of women met Lord Irwin the then Viceroy and leaders of different political parties in the central legislative assembly and urged them upon the need for abolition of evil of child marriages.

In 1929, the third All India conference of women was held at Patna and representatives of the conference urged the members of the Age of Consent Bill Committee to recommend speedy legislation against continuance of this evil. In the Madras legislative council Muthulakshmi Reddy moved resolution for raising the age of consent for marriage and it was unanimously accepted by the council. On behalf of all the women association in the Madras presidency Muthulakshmi Reddy drew a resolution. Mahatma Gandhiji also gave his wholehearted support to their efforts.

The passage of Harbilas Sarda's child marriage restraints Act in 1929 was made possible by the publication of the Report of the Joshi Committee. It was largely due to the agitation by the educated men and women of the country that the bill was placed on the statute book and the child marriage restraint Act came into force in April 1930. Important laws relating to change in the age at marriage passed in India are:

1860 : Indian Penal Code stipulated that sexual intercourse with a wife under 10 years of age was rape.

1894 : Mysore Government forbade arranging or helping to arrange the marriage of a girl who had not completed 8 years of age, the husband was also liable, if over 18 years of age.

- 1904: Baroda Early Marriage Prevention Act stipulated 12 years as the girls minimum age, but her guardians might petition for an exception if her age was above 9 years.
- 1918: Indore state prescribed the age of 14 for boys and 12 for girls as a minimum.
- 1929: The Sarada Act of British India and the baroda Amendment raised ages to 18 and 14 years respectively.
- 1933: Indore state produced an amendment to conform to the ages in the British India.
- 1955: The Hindu Marriage Act forbids marriage of girls under 15.

The Sarada Act came into force in April 1930. It prohibited this marriage of boys and girls below the age of 18 years and prescribed punishment of three months imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000. In the beginning it was believed that the act was applicable to areas under British Government (and not in French territories or in Indian Princely States). So the Act VII of 1938 was passed which clearly denied that the 1929 Act is applicable to all. The child marriage Restraints Act 1976 was passed raising the minimum age for marriage of girls to 18 years from 15 years and for boys to 21 years to prevent early marriage of girls and consequent early pregnancies.

Though laws have been passed to eradicate the evil of child marriage, still we find that it is prevalent in many states of India among different castes, groups and tribes like koyas, mahalis, bhumias and banjaras.

4.2.3 Dowry and Dowry Deaths

In India the families of the bridegroom and the bride arrange marriages. During the marriage negotiations the groom's family demands a certain amount of dowry.

The evil of dowry has been present in India since ancient times. In the Vedic period there are references, which indicate, kings and rich or affluent class people mainly gave dowry. After the Vedic period intercaste marriages were looked down upon and Endogamy narrowed down the choice of eligible bridegrooms. According to Buchman (1942) various factors combined to produce favourable climate for child marriage and the dowry system. As the endogamous restrictions became rigid, Hypergamy became the accepted form of marriage and the race for higher status contributed to the perpetuation of dowry system (Blunt 1969).

Dowry payment does not end with marriage. Gifts have to be given on various occasions and it is continuous process and there are many cases in which the bride's parents had to incur heavy debts, or sell their property to meet the demands of the eligible bridegroom and his parents. In the recent years the dowry demands of bridegrooms have increased to figures beyond the reach of the brides parents. Apart from cash, accommodation, car, TV, refrigerator, scooter, gold, silver are the demands of bridegrooms and their parents. The bride's parents are eager to marry off their daughters giving dowry because an unmarried woman still has neither place nor status in the Patriarchal society (Maria Mies 1986 : 147). The treatment she gets in her in-law's house depends on the dowry she has brought with her. If the in-laws are not satisfied harassment starts immediately to get more dowry. She is subjected to all kinds of humiliations and brutalities and ultimately she is burnt to death. The in-laws inform the police and the public that she has committed suicide by burning herself or an accident has occurred while she was cooking.

The shocking statistics regarding the crimes against women tabled in Parliament (1992) revealed that case of dowry deaths have doubled over a decade. Dowry deaths have increased nearly eleven times from 427 in 1983, 990 in 1985, 4215 in 1989, 836 in 1990 and 4955 in 1992.

DOWRY PROHIBITION ACTS : Realizing the gravity of the situation Government of India passed the dowry prohibition act 1961 to do away the practice of taking or giving dowry and to make such practices an offence. According to this Act it is illegal to demand in cash and kind from the parents of a girl before or at the time of marriage.

According to the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 the penalty for taking or giving dowry is imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years and with fine which shall not be less than Rs. 15,000/- or the amount of the value of such dowry whichever is more. The penalty for demanding dowry (directly or indirectly) is imprisonment for a term, which shall not be less than 6 months but which may extend to Rs. 10,000/- (Ghadially 1968:176)

This Act was modified with the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act of 1984 and also 1986 the new bill empowers any recognised welfare institution or organisation to take up a woman's case in a law court.

Even after 50 years of independence the custom still persists in India and due to the spread of materialistic out look among the people the demand for dowry has worsened. Hardly a day passes without news item about young married women being burnt alive for dowry appearing in the daily news papers. One of the much discussed incidents by the print and television media was the case of three sisters of a family of Kanpur who hanged themselves in their house in 1988 as they were rejected by prospective bridegrooms because the girls' parents could not pay the demanded dowry.

The roots of this custom of dowry can be traced to the fact that in the Indian society the birth of daughter is greeted with disappointment and woman is perceived as a burden. Her work within the family is not recognised as work and is unpaid. When she goes from her father's house to her husband's house she is expected to compensate by taking up the burden in the form of dowry.

Measures to be taken to eradicate this social evil :

1. Compulsory registration of marriages.
2. Education of girls both in the rural and urban areas.
3. Employment opportunities for girls.
4. Educate the masses about the evils of dowry.
5. Educate girls so that they become economically independent.
6. Social boycott of those who give or take dowry.
7. Strict disciplinary action to be taken on Government servants who demand or receive dowry.

4.2.4 Rape

Rape is also one form of exploitation of women. It is a forcible crime committed on women by men to express male chauvinism or domination. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word rape as forcible or fraudulent sexual intercourse imposed on women. Section 375 of Indian Penal Code defines rape as : "A man is said to commit rape who has sexual intercourse with a woman under circumstances falling under any of the following six descriptions.

- a) Against her will
- b) Without her consent
- c) With her consent, when it has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested in fear of death or of hurt.
- d) With her consent, when he, by deception, makes her believe that he is her lawful husband.
- e) With her consent given on account of her unsoundness of mind intoxication.
- f) With or without her consent, when she is below 16 years of age (Saraswathi page 69).

It is an unlawful sexual act of a man with a woman without her consent by using physical force. There are different types of rapists.

It is difficult to assess with any accuracy the extent of rape. Only a small proportion of rapes actually come to the attention of the police and are recorded in the statistics. Majority of women who are raped wish to put it out of their minds, or they are unwilling to participate in the process of medical examination which is humiliating, police interrogation and courtroom cross examination. The trial itself can be frightening. Courtroom procedure is public and the victim has to come face to face with the accused. Identity of the rapist, proof of penetration and the proof that the act occurred without her consent has to be proved. "A woman's capacity to give a definite 'no' in the face of male sexual initiatives is affected by popular stereotypes and images, which may also influence courtroom judgements."

"Rape is related to the association of masculinity and power, dominance and toughness. It is not for the most part the result of sexual desire, but of the ties between sexuality and feelings of power and superiority."

Rape victimization is not unique to a particular age group or caste group or religious group. Rape had for a long time been taken as a normal affair, a feature of the backward or feudal relations prevailing in rural India. But recently rape cases seem to be on the increase in the cities. Rape in the rural areas are committed by landlords and Government officials. In rural areas caste and class oppression is strong and women agricultural laborers, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women are the targets of rape. Tribal women are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault by employers and forest contractors. During the periods of political upheaval rape as revenge occurs for example during India's partition in 1947 several women were raped. Employers rape domestic servants, factory and mine workers are raped by superintendents and other officials.

A rapist may be a person holding a responsible position in society, a landlord, a member of the household like uncle, cousin, father-in-law, brother-in-law and in some cases the rapist may be the father or the brother (Krishna 1982). Women were not only raped by all kinds of men but increasingly by the police, the custodians of law and order. Most of these rapes take place within the police stations and the victims are mostly gang raped (Maria Mies 1986). The first incident occurred in Hyderabad on 30th June 1978. A young Muslim woman from the countryside Rameeza Bee had come to Hyderabad with her husband to visit their relatives. When the couple were returning from a late cinema show, the city police picked up Rameeza Bee and dragged into a police station. There she was detained the whole night, beaten and raped by at least three policemen. After that her husband was also brought to the police station. The police extracted Rs.400 from him. When he learnt that Rameeza Bee had been beaten and raped by the policemen he protested. Then he too was beaten so badly by the police that he died the same day (Muktadar Commission Report 1978).

Women's organisations protested against the rape. Shakila experienced similar brutal treatment by the police in the small town of Bhongir near Hyderabad in 1979. A nation wide campaign against rape was sparked off when a less than 15 year old girl, by name Mathura, a landless labourer residing under Desaijanj police station in Chandapur district, in Maharashtra was raped by two constables in a police station.

It is not only landless labourers and poor tribal women who are raped, even respectable and educated middle class women are victims of brutal police atrocities against women for example the case of Maya Tyagi. Gang rapes have become a fashion of the day throughout the country and women from all communities are victims of rape.

There has been a rise in the number of victims in the age group of under 10 years from the year 1988-91 and in the year 1991 there has been a increase in the number of child victims below the age of 10 years. "Pedophilia" is the term used to denote such crimes (Crime in India 1989). It is a term used to mean significant erotic arousal on the part of a physically mature adult to prepubertal children or to children in the early stages of pubertal development (Jyothi Mehra and others 1995. p.134). Rape of minors is on the rise in many parts of India in the recent years. Newspapers also bear testimony to the fact that girl children in the age group of 6-12 years have been reported to be more victimized (Krishna 1995 p.127).

Effects of Rape on the Victim:

1. Children are prone to a variety of psychological and behavioural disturbances. These include bed-wetting, nightmares, sleep disorders, depression, nervousness, anxiety, sadness, anger, helplessness, hatred, fear, distrust etc.
2. A rape victim's psychological state includes embarrassment, disgust, depression, guilt and even suicidal tendencies (Kewalramani 1992)
3. Apart from physical injury and psychological trauma there is the other problem of unwanted pregnancy.
4. Some children become delinquents.
5. Stigma and social ostracism of the victim and her family.

Legal Provisions against Rape:

Section 376 states that, "Who ever commits rape shall be punished with imprisonment for life or with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years. But which may also be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, unless the woman raped is his own wife and is not twelve years of age, in which case he shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years or with fine or both".

The Criminal law (Amendment) Act 1983 was enacted which aims at providing legal protection to women who are subject to sexual assault. "It contains provisions prohibiting publicity and conducting then proceedings of the courts in such cases in Camera. The Act also introduced categories of offence of sexual intercourse by persons who take advantage of their official positions in custodial situations such as superintendent of remand homes and hospitals, a police officer or a public servant. In any situation of custodial rape, if the victim gives evidence that she did not consent, the court would assume that she did not consent."

Preventive Measures:

1. Sex education should be made compulsory.
2. Pornographic literature, films depicting crime, sexual violation against women should be banned.
3. Severe punishment should be given to persons who rape women and girls.
4. Guidance and counselling centers should be set up in all the cities, towns, etc.
5. Negative attitudes towards victims of rape should be changed.
6. Negative attitudes of parents and society towards girl children should be changed.
7. Anti rape women's groups should be set up in all the cities to draw media attention, assist rape victim, launch prosecutions.

4.2.5 Widowhood and Sati

In the days when the child marriages were in vogue there was the custom of kanyasulkam (dowry), parents married off their daughters to old men without taking the consent of the girl. In some cases the product of child marriage was a child widow.

The status of the Hindu widow was very low. Widows were treated as symbols of misfortune and the sight of them was considered as a bad omen. She could not participate in festivals, marriages or any auspicious occasions in the family, wear jewels, coloured cloths, flowers, bangles, use cosmetics and also be keep herself tidy. Among brahmmins the widows had to tonsure their hair and wear only white sarees. Not only restrictions on appearance but also on eating habits were prescribed. Widows had to eat bland diets, only vegetarian food, without garlic, masalas, onions, fish and meat were restricted. They had to fast regularly and had to sleep on the floor or mat or kusa grass and lead a secluded life. She was barred from remarriage.

Hindu laws and injunctions of the Sages prescribed a life of rigorous self-denial and discipline for a widow. Manu and yagna Valkya who were the writers of early smritis laid specific rules on the duties of widows. They also strongly recommended a pure, chaste and austere life.

Manu prescribed that a widow should "until her death let her be patient of hardships, self controlled and chaste and strive to fulfill the most excellent duty which is prescribed for wives who have one husband only. At her pleasure let her enunciate her body by living on roots and fruits, but she should never mention the name of another man after her first husband had died. She should eschew all healthy food so that she might be able to control her passions and lead an abstentious life". (Manu 157 & 158 verses)

According to Hindu Shastra and Vedas the only choice before the widow is to suffer throughout her life or to commit sati. "Out of two, sati is a better way out because the agony of burning would be short lived compared with the agony of life long widowhood". (Shankara Charya of Pune 1988)

A widow's life was considered a "waiting period". This period she had to spend in prayer so, that in the life after her death she might be united with her husband. Under these circumstances the widow burned herself to death along with her husband's body. Issueless widows had many restrictions than women with children and elderly women. Economic status of the widow is one of the decided factors about the respect given to the widow. Economically dependent widows i.e., either on parents or brothers or in-laws are treated like unpaid servants. Some widows have been forced by their relatives to live a life of recluse so that they can get her property. Some childless widows would be killed by the relatives for their share of property.

Manusmriti prescribed penance for widows hence many women moved to the religious pilgrimage spots like Varanasi, Puri, Hrishikesh, Gaya, Haridwra and Brindavan. Many widows from different parts of India migrate to these centers unable to bear the sufferings given by the family members or relatives in search of solace and also to attain salvation. In these centers they earn their livelihood by selling flowers, garlands or by begging.

In Rajastan, widows commit sati in order to avoid in human sufferings at the hands of their relatives. From the accounts of travellers it appears that widow burning prevailed in Bengal also. According to Edward Thompson editor of the Book "Suttee" (ed. 1928) Rajastan had been the original home of the rite sati from which it had spread over India. For Rajput women it was a pride to commit 'Jauhar' rather than surrender to the enemy. Chastity was one reason for the continuation of sati. The practice of sati was criticised by various scholars in the ancient and medieval period. Ram Mohan Roy was the chief social reformer who worked hard to abolish the practice of sati.

The most significant and effective initiative towards abolition of sati began in Calcutta with the publication of Bengal pamphlets "Sahanaram Bishaye Prabartak Of Nibartaker Samhad" by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1818; "Samhamaran Bishaye Prabartak Nibartaker" in 1819 and "Sahamaran Bishaye" in 1829. In 1929 Lord William Bentick the Governor General of India proposed a legislative enactment regulation XVII Prohibiting sati, which was passed by the British Government on 8th December 1929 as William Bentick Bill.

Reasons for committing Sati:

1. Economic factors
2. Religious Pressure
3. Education
4. Male chauvinism

Laws Passed For The Abolition Of Sati:

1. In 1829 Lord William Bentick the Governor General of British India passed a law to abolish the custom of Sati (Regulation XVII). Under this law Sati became a cognizable criminal offence punishable with a fine and/or imprisonment.
2. Through the efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Hindu Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856.
3. Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Ordinance was promulgated on 1st October, 1987 under which Sati immolation became punishable with imprisonment ranging from one to five years and a fine of Rs.5000/- to Rs.20000/-.
4. The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987.

4.2.6 Prostitution

Prostitution is the worst form of exploitation of women. "The process of commoditisation of women beings with the subordination of women and the delinking of sexuality from human relationships and reproduction; it has reduced women to a tradeable commodity. Underlying approach to sexuality is the concept of sexuality as a purely physiological necessity of males only and sex as a male right. "Though the male customer uses the woman to satisfy his sexual desire he is not held accountable morally or legally but the woman is ostracised by the society. In India prostitution has been in existence as early as that Vedic period. They were the courtesans who entertained rich customers. Apart from them there were the hereditary prostitutes who were dedicated to temples and who had high ritual status and had property rights. They are different from the prostitutes who are commoditised as mere flesh objects. Economic necessity is the main reason why women take up prostitution. Majority of women who enter this profession are not voluntary entrants. Girls and young women are lured by making false promises like providing opportunities in films, monetary benefits, employment etc. In the rural areas landlessness and chronic unemployment forces them to take up prostitution. In India business groups supply girls to politicians and bureaucrats in return for some favours.

Women in brothels line under inhuman conditions. Major part of their earnings are taken away by the pimps. Majority of them suffer from sexually transmitted diseases (STD). The Report of the Committee on Moral and Social hygiene of CSWB in 1958 divided the prostitution into four categories - hereditary prostitutes, religious or traditional prostitutes, victims of social and economic conditions and highly sexed pathological cases. (Towards Equality Report 94) Devadasis, Basivis, Matangis, Jogins, are involuntary prostitutes or hereditary prostitutes.

Causes of Prostitution:

1. Social customs like child marriage, early widowhood, and social taboos on widow remarriage, caste rigidity, dowry system, and the practice of polygamy and polyandry among certain communities, decay of joint family system and low status of women contributed to women taking up prostitution as an occupation.
2. Rape also forces women into this profession.
3. Caste inequality and sex exploitation by economically well off castes.
4. Prostitution has been the traditional caste occupation of some castes.
5. Certain castes in which adultery is not considered as an offence encourage prostitution.
6. Lower caste women support their families through prostitution.
7. Some lower caste women are mortgaged to creditors of loans.
8. Some men who are fond of drinking and gambling encourage women to take up prostitution to earn money (Trivedi)

Girls from socio-economically disadvantaged communities go in for prostitution to earn a livelihood for the family. Bride prices and indebtedness of parents compels girls to earn money to free the family from debt through prostitution. Sometimes girls are enticed by friends, relatives by showing them the easy life they could enjoy in the brothels. Dancing and singing girls known as Nautch girls practice prostitution. College girls and young women practice prostitution to save money to enable parents to pay dowry. Women who are deserted or abandoned by husbands take up prostitution, as there is no other source of income. Urbanization and industrialization of 19th and 20th century drew large number of women into this prostitution.

In the modern society prostitution is practiced in all areas including metropolitan cities of the country. Business centers, Bus stands, railway stations are places where they look for possible partners. Some women take up prostitution due to poverty, desertion, destitution, lack of protection, and family problems. According to some sociologists poverty, unemployment force women to embrace prostitution while some say it is for new experience and entertainment.

"Prostitution involves behaviour which is gender divided (paying for sexual favours) and it is marked for the most part by distinct inequalities". In India women prostitutes are regarded with disapproval and may be subjected to legal penalties while their clients escape without punishment.

Prostitution to some extent helps perpetuate the tendency of men to treat women as objects who can be 'used' for sexual purposes. It is an aspect of patriarchal relations representing inequalities of power between men and women. In some cities like Kolhapur, Nagpur prostitution have formed organisations. They are demanding for a separate colony for them, licensing system.

Some women's organisations which are working for their rehabilitation are demanding reform in law and job reservation for rehabilitating prostitutes. Feminists believe that this social evil can be eliminated by providing education and economic independence for women which will reduce women's vulnerability and also bring about change in the value system of society.

Control and Prevention of Prostitution:

Though complete eradication of this evil is not possible.

1. Living conditions of the prostitutes may be improved.
2. For these who want to come out of the evil, must be given possible help and assistance for proper rehabilitation in the society provided.
3. Efforts could be made to partially controlling the phenomenon of prostitution by controlling and preventing the functioning of procurers, pimps and brothel keepers through frequent raids and rescue operations.
4. Effective implementation of the existing legislations to control prostitution.
5.
 - a) Awareness and educational programs for the people describing the conditions of the prostitutes.
 - b) Vocational training to impart functional skills combined with other supports like financial assistance, marketing etc.
 - c) Medical care and treatment facilities.
 - d) Legal aid facilities.
 - e) Housing

Mass awareness building for attitudes drive with comprehensive and rehabilitative programs and intensification of administrative and legal action along with involvement of selected people and NGO's could be effective in reducing the evil effects of prostitution.

4.2.7 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence which exists in almost all societies is a form of crime against women. Wife beating by alcoholic husbands is one form of domestic violence which exists in all classes of society. Domestic violence is one form of violence leading to female injuries and is present in almost all countries of the world. In many countries there are no laws against domestic violence and where laws are existing they are not enforced strictly. In many societies home is often idealised as a place of security and happiness but domestic violence is part of experience of many women. Violence against women is a common aspect of marriage. There were no laws prohibiting a man from physically abusing his wife. Domestic violence against women is considered as domestic dispute and as police have a policy of non intervention in domestic disputes their attitude tends to be unhelpful. Women who are battered frequently find it difficult to leave the house due to social and economic reasons.

Dowry deaths reported in the Newspapers of our country are a form of domestic violence. The customs of offering dowry in the form of cash, gold jewelry, house, car and other things to the bridegroom and his family is prevalent in Indian Society. If the husband or his family is not satisfied with the dowry, they resort to wife beating and she is harassed, killed or driven to commit suicide. Almost every day there is news of one dowry death in the local newspapers of the different states. In India Government enacted a special amendment to the penal code in 1986 stating that the husband or in-laws will be presumed responsible for the death of a wife during the first seven years of marriage if there is sufficient evidence of harassment.

Causes of Domestic Violence:

- a) argument over money
- b) jealousy and suspicious about the women's character
- c) instigation by in-laws
- d) alcohol
- e) disputes over children
- f) extra martial affairs on the part of the husband
- g) women's economic independence which irritate the husband or desire of the women to take up employment.

Measures to Counter the Problem of Domestic Violence:

1. to create awareness in society that a woman is also a human being
2. organise morcha or dharna outside a wife beaters house
3. Set up homes for battered women so that they can take refuge when their lives are threatened. These homes should be linked up with organisations, which can help women with self employment so that they can support themselves.
4. "Mahila Suraksha Sangh" should be started by women in every locality
5. Counselling.

4.3 SUMMARY

In this unit we have discussed about different social issues of contemporary Indian society. The prevalence of these social issues indicates the subordinate position of women. Female infanticide which is prevalent in the present society is indicative of the bias against girl child. Child marriage has harmful effect on the mind, body and health of the child, hence thought needs to be given to this problem of child marriage.

4.4 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following in 30 lines each.

- 1) Discuss the problem of Dowry and remedies to solve the problem.
- 2) Discuss the methods used to kill female child.
- 3) Discuss briefly the child marriage problem in India.

II. Answer the following in 15 lines each.

- a) Domestic violence
- b) Problem of widow
- c) Rape

4.5 SUGGESTED BOOKS

Neera Desai and
M. Krishna Raj

"Women and Society in India", 1987.

Flania D'Mello

"Domestic Violence : Difference between Working class and Middle class", 1980.

Kapadia. K.M.

"Marriage and Family in India", 1980.

Gail Omvedt

"We will smash this prison", 1984.

UNIT - 5 : CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK : LABOUR, WORK AND DOMESTIC WORK

Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Labour or Work and Domestic Work
 - 5.2.1 Historical Background
 - 5.2.2 The Tyranny of Household Work
- 5.3 Model Examination Questions
- 5.4 Suggested Books

5.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to discuss

- labour or work, and
- domestic work.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

When we ask a woman or a man about his wife as to "What work does she do ?" the answer we often get is, I am a teacher, clerk or officer in a Bank etc., if they are working outside the house and if they do not work outside the house and are only housewives, often the answer will be "Oh nothing". If we probe further and ask who does the cooking, cleaning, washing of clothes, looking after the children, helping with home work, the answer would be "I do". Therefore only those activities which are paid are regarded as "work" and those which are not paid are regarded as "non-work".

Girls continue to work from childhood, in the house, helping in cooking, cleaning and taking care of siblings. In the rural areas after maturity, they work in the field in transplanting rice plants in water logged paddy fields, they clean the cattle sheds, collect dung and make dung cakes and grind oil cakes for cattle feed. They bring water for the cattle and also for the families from long distance. They collect firewood, for cooking their meal. They collect grass, milk buffaloes, care for the children, grind masala, cook, clean the vessels etc. During the harvest season the burden of work on rural women becomes heavier. All these women are not considered as agricultural workers nor are they counted as gainfully employed at all because they do not receive wages for what they are doing.

All this is not recognized as work because economists have told us that work is something which gets paid. Since women do not get paid for their services all that they continue to do does not become work.

Women do 2/3 of all the world's work. In exchange they receive 10% of all the income and own a mere 1% of all the world's means of production (figures produced by U.N. International Women's Year). These figures clearly point out to the facts of patriarchal ideology, where women are seen primarily as mothers and house wives and secondarily as workers. This affects women's material situation also, justifying a discriminatory wage structure, unequal access to technology, information and training and double burden of work.

Therefore it becomes very important to understand women's work. The need to discuss women and work as preoccupied feminist thinkers in recent years. This is primarily because of the changing structure of work in capitalist societies. Today, women's work is radically different from that done by men. Women workers are paid less, they work in small range of occupations. Women are not skilled as men due to a number of reasons hence their chances for promotion are very limited. Because of this reason there are very few women in professions and in management jobs.

Women are considered to be responsible for the maintenance of the home life and the care of children hence most of the time women prefer to work part time in house hold industries. When women go outside the house they have to bear double burden of work in the house and outside. Ideologically males are viewed as "producers" who provide material needs of their women and children and women as "consumers" whose place is in the house hold and they have to perform socially defined roles as cooking, cleaning and caring of children. But this frame work is altered in practice. While more and more women are getting involved in production they are not relieved of household works.

5.2 WOMEN LABOUR, WORK AND DOMESTIC WORK

Women's economical roles and their opportunities for participation in economic activities cannot be done in isolation of the (a) societies stage of development (b) the socio-cultural attitude towards women's role in family and in the wider society and (c) the social ideology concerning basic components of status. At certain stage of development, capacity for work provides higher claim to status, but when society becomes inegalitarian, leisure may substitute work as an indicator of status.

The debate regarding women's economical role and the need for equality of the rights and opportunities for economic participation centres around three arguments.

1. Women's economic subjugation or dependence leads to exploitation and is a denial of social justice and human rights. Both Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi opposed the rigid distinction between men's and women's role from this stand point.
2. That developments of a society requires full participation of all sections of population and opportunities for full development of the potentialities of women. This is the key note of the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.
3. That modern trends in demographic and social changes like rising age of marriage, smaller families, urbanisation, migrations, rising costs and standard of living, calls for greater participation in decision making are introducing major changes in women's roles and responsibilities. A social crisis would result if women are unable to meet these challenges because of social handicaps.

The opposition to increasing women's economic activities springs from

1. The conservative view that women's roles must be confined within rigidly defined limits, man taking care of the outside and woman at home.
2. The fear that chronic unemployment may result if women enter the labour market on large scale. This results in theories of women's 'marginal' role in the economy.

These theories are however, inapplicable to agrarian societies where the family is the unit of production and men, women and children all participate in the production process. Transition from traditional agricultural and household industry to modern organised industry and services and from rural to urban areas destroys the traditional division of labour and substitutes the competitive relationship between individuals as units of labour for the complementary one of the family. Technological changes in production methods call for new skills. Women, handicapped by lack of opportunities to acquire these new skills, find themselves unwanted by the new economy.

Among cultivators, the artisans and those performing menial services in the traditional village economy, women played distinctive and accepted role in both production and marketing. They continued to do so whenever the traditional economic forms prevailed, particularly traditional industries and crafts like weaving, basket making and food processing by hand. Though there are regional variations in the norms governing women's work, a traditional upper class norm - that of excluding women from labour outside the family - still remains a status symbol and is often emulated by many who want to enhance their social status.

Women's economic roles are seen as supplementary, subsidiary and secondary. This ideology permeates the analysis of labour force data and its impact on employment policy and programmes. This attitude is based not only on patriarchal attitudes of looking at women's role as subordinate to men but also on a methodology which generates facts. Women are primarily engaged in household chores or domestic work and other similar activities which are the lowest skilled, lowest paid and predominantly household or household proximate activities. Women perceive these activities as having less value, which is how society perceives them.

5.2.1 Historical Background

Prior to the industrial revolution women were half of an economic unit. The division of labour as created by the capitalist society did not exist. Home and work were inextricably linked. Often men and women worked at home so that the home was the productive unit.

Housework till the middle of 17th century was neither compartmentalized, isolated or solitary. Women's work in rural societies was grueling and virtually unending but it was seen as creative, productive and responsible.

There were wage earners, the families of landless farm labourers no doubt who lived in utter poverty. The labourer got enough food and drink to keep him fit for the job but his children and wife suffered and often worked as servants in the rich homes, hired by the women of the house.

Though authority in the family rested with the husband and patriarchy continued uninterrupted yet men also identified with the home-for it was also his economic base. Men also took interest in rearing and educating children. The structures of the home also contributed to the integration of the family. Houses were not divided into rooms. The hall, which was the entrance of the house was the centre of domestic life. Kitchen and bedrooms were not separated. In upper and middle class homes there were some thirty to forty people sleeping, eating and living together. This sort of living arrangements did much to release women at least the well off, from a great deal of household drudgery.

In the eighteenth century with the coming of industrial revolution women became divided. Upper class women removed themselves from practical household management to the drawing room and the industrial revolution claimed working class women for its own.

The idea that women's place is in the home took strong roots in Victorian England. They shut their eyes to the existing hypocrisy where the idealized picture was of the women in the home and the fate of millions of women who had to go to work outside their homes in factories, work shed and other peoples homes.

The women servant was not a status symbol in the way the male foot man was. Women were kept indoors and out of sight. Housemaids and cooks were not ornamental or symbolic of wealth.

In 20th century there has been a decline in the number of women who only worked at home. The demand for labour in the manufacturing service industries has greatly increased and due to a steep increase in standard of living, people have felt the necessity of two incomes to support a home.

5.2.2. The Tyranny of the Household Work

House work, which includes everything which is done to organise and care for a family and a home is today a depressing task compared to what it was in pre-industrial societies. The reason seems to be in the value attached to house work by society and to the person doing house work. Housework is hard and extracting work. Ann Oakley's study "The sociology of House work, London 1974" of housewives with young children showed that they worked an average of 77 hours per week, including shopping and child care but not including time spent relaxing in the house. This work is monotonous, repetitive and fragmented. Labour saving equipment and ready prepared foods and clothing do not bring about a reduction in these hours but just raise the standards of what must be done. What is most oppressive is the apparent inevitability with which women are destined to their vocation, whether or not they have paid jobs, whether or not they marry or have children. There is no question of any choice for women, as far as house work is concerned. Underlying this is the assumption that keeping house is a natural adjunct or femininity. Wielding a needle or a mop, changing a happy or a bed, not running out of flour or into debt comes easily to women it seems. Women are blamed if they cannot manage these tasks and men praised if they can.

The natural association of women with house work is thought to be rooted in motherhood. The biological facts of child bearing and lactation lead to the primary responsibility of child care, to a close and intimate bond between mother and child, which extends naturally to buying and preparing food, washing its clothes, binding its wounds helping with the homework, discussing its teenage problems, grand mothering its children and so on and so forth.

Men on the other hand usually choose how and how much they get involved with their children. They are expected to take some part but also to be the outside authority and final arbiter. Even his contributions to the routine chores that go to make up house work are often seen as "helping" his wife. The underlying assumption is - the work properly belongs to her, but he will help her out if he has time and if he wants to. For her the tasks are inescapable, for him they are not.

There is no time limit on house work. The work is a continuous process which can never be left for a day off. Indeed the housewife seems to be nothing more than a perpetual motion machine, getting things organised, cooking, cleaning and washing.

Work also expands to fill the time available. As mentioned earlier having labour saving devices like freezer, mixer, iron, does not necessarily mean that women are relieved, it only raises the standard of things to be done.

A housewife is responsible for running the home. She cooks, cleans, shops, keeps an eye on the expenditure and takes care of the members of the household. From her is derived the image of the home that is presented to outsiders. There are a number of proverbs in many languages which harp on this. For eg. a Telugu proverb says "When you see the house, there is no need to see the housewife". So the home and the work it involves is an expression of a woman's identity but it often ends up being the only expression of that identity.

Being a housewife means being economically dependent on someone else and in a society where money is the way, in which work is rewarded, and its importance recognised, being an unpaid worker has undermined woman's status in the eyes of society.

The care of children is not itself an isolating demeaning activity. But for many women it has become more of a burden. Women can no longer rely on cooperating with aunts, mothers, sisters and cousins in bringing up children. So often house work combined with child care hardly leaves woman any time for herself. Even her time and thoughts are not her own. Though the task she may be performing are not complicated or physically arduous. It is a tiring process. House work has low status and even the families for whom it is done seem unappreciative though they complain if the house is uncomfortable, their clothes not clean, their meals not ready and if the woman has no time to give them her attention.

The division of labour in the family is associated with the greater power of men. The principle of the wage earner and his dependents, of the husband who contribute cash while the wife contributes household labour is not a division of labour between equals but an unequal exchange in which the men's interest predominate. If the cash value of a wife's multi various services (or the open market) were computed it would far exceed than what a husband could afford to pay.

Thus it is not house work 'per se' but the low status given to it that has to be questioned. Women's exaggeratedly high standards for housework are not just a product of their own life situation. They are also passed from one generation to another. Historically they were created and reinforced by schools, domestic science propaganda and social workers. Today they are stimulated by the media, especially in advertising.

5.3 SUMMARY

In this unit we have studied what is the work women do and why it is not considered as work. Economists consider the activities as work which get paid. Since women do not get paid for their services their work is not considered as work.

5.4 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following questions in 30 lines each.

1. Differentiate between labour or work and domestic work.
2. What is meant by division of labour?

II Answer the following questions in 15 lines each.

1. Work
2. Domestic work

5.5 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Lindsay Mackie & Polly Pallitto - "Women at work"
2. Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, Jana Eyeren (ed) - "Women & work in India"
3. Devaki Jain & Nirmala Banerjee (ed) - "Tyranny of the Household".

UNIT-6: INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN DATA COLLECTION AND IN MEASUREMENT OF WORK

Contents

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Invisibility of Women in Data Collection
 - 6.2.1 Women's Work
 - 6.2.2 Indian Census and Work
 - 6.2.3 The 1991 Census: Beginning of Change
- 6.3 Invisibility of Women in Measurement of Work
- 6.4 Attempts at Making Women's Work Visible
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Model Examination Questions
- 6.7 Suggested Books

6.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit you will be able to discuss the reasons for invisibility of women's work in data & in measurement of work.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have studied the concepts of labour, work and domestic work. Women if they are not cash wage earners they report themselves as unemployed. Domestic work which is an important avenue of employment of women and girls is unrepresented in the national data systems. In this unit we will be studying about why women's work is invisible in data collection and measurement of work.

6.2 INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN DATA COLLECTION

In India the major sources on work participation are the National Sample Survey, the Decennial census and the statistics of the Directorate General of Employment and Training. The National Sample Survey (NSS) is undertaken periodically and is detailed, in-depth coverage of selected villages and districts and is a good source for rural employment, levels of living etc. The NSS has been changing its scope and has changed its definitions from time to time so there are great variations in coverage especially that of female labour. The Decennial Census is the most comprehensive data source in the Indian context.

The availability of accurate and reliable statistics are very important for any group in a given society in order to analyse trends and evolve policies. In India to get systematic, continuous

and comparable data on any area, are full of hurdles. These data conceal gaps and biases. Different agencies collecting data on same issues but with different concepts, definitions and methodologies have compounded the problem. The problem is more so in the case of women. There is hardly any accurate or reliable data on such crucial indicators like health, education, migration, nutrition, fertility and work participation.

The missing of women from data or the "invisibility" of women in the data is a reflection of the subordination and undervaluation of women in society. As a result of segregation of the sexes women are often inaccessible to data collectors. Besides this, the dominant cultural ideology that undervalues a woman and her role, the lack of the voice of woman in the affairs of the society and the restricted spaces for women only in the inside world are innumerable problems faced by any researcher attempting to collect data on women.

Problems of unemployment, and poverty are the main concerns of development policy in most third world countries. However, these problems are also gender specific.

6.2.1 Women's Work

The first and foremost problem arises on the question what is work or gainful economic activity, especially when we are talking about "women's work".

Women predominantly work indoors, while men spend the major part of their working time in outdoor activities. This does not mean that woman do not perform any outdoor work or men do not perform any indoor work. But this is by and large the domain of work. For woman, the choice of this domain does not rest on any free will it is thrust on them by tradition, culture and ideology where woman are primarily regarded as "home makers".

Household Based Production:

In most of the underdeveloped countries including India, there is a predominance of agriculture and household based production unit where there is non-wage employment of family members. In these household economic units, family members work for generations and work is divided among men and women on some set pattern which varies from region to region. There is usually a tendency to assign to women roles which can be suitably combined with household task which are their primary responsibility. Therefore, their productive role tends to be mainly confined to the private indoor domain of the household.

To an outsider this productive part of their work is often invisible and so it is to the male and even female members of the household. These tasks appear to be small and not worth attaching any separate identity or value. Because of this element of invisibility associated with woman's work there is under enumeration and under valuation in the data system. The data collector seldom realise that these women carry the double burden of housework and productive work.

Women's work and non-marketed or subsistence sector:

In a non-marketed or subsistence sector, the output generated in the household is not sold or exchanged in the market but is directly consumed by the household. The subsistence sector comprised of households with low asset base, be it land area, or cattle or spindles. Because

the total productive work input of household members will be much less in such households having a larger asset base, the contribution of woman, in this, can only be small in absolute size however crucial it might be to the survival of the household. The separate identity of this marginal work which is often performed with woman's other work of housekeeping, is lost in reckoning and becomes invisible in the final data.

Subsidiary productive work:

In wage or salary earning households, where besides the house site, some land is utilised only as a kitchen garden, or for keeping a few poultry birds, a cow, buffalo or few goats. The work performed by women in this subsidiary productive activity is marginal and is totally ignored and often taken as an integral part of the "housework". Women's perception of their role in these activities is no different from that of men or of statistical enumerator.

Thus most of the data collected on women captures only the visible aspect of women's participation in economic activity. Work for wages is noted, but work without explicit payment is often missed. Work outside the home gets covered but work inside the home does not. Often the enumerator may infer the work status characteristic of a woman on the basis of caste or status of the household.

6.2.2 Indian Census and Work

The Indian census also (The 1961, 1971 and 1981 census) adopted a definition of work which is more suitable to advanced industrial economies where work for wages (market oriented work) is the typical norm. Even when women are doing market oriented work, the home based, piece rate work done by women makes it invisible. The census concept of work over emphasises production for exchange and although it does include some non-market production for own consumption, such as cultivation where women are involved, it excludes by strange logic other types of production for own consumption such as livestock maintenance (done by women mostly) and hence these figures do not correspond with the non-market output in the national accounts.

Thus according to 1981 census only a little over 13% women are shown as workers whereas the "Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women Shram Shakti (1988)" states that 89% of the women workers are in the unorganised sectors.

There are in fact seven categories of work performed by women in rural and urban India. These are

1. Wage and salaries employment
2. Employment outside the household for profit.
3. Self employment in cultivation and household industry for profit.
4. Self employment in cultivation for own consumption.
5. Subsistence activities in allied sectors like dairying, other livestock rearing such as poultry, goats, pigs etc. and fishing, hunting and cultivation of fruits and vegetable gardens.
6. Activities related to domestic work such as fetching fuel, fodder, water, forest produce, repair of dwellings, making cow-dung cakes, food preservations etc.
7. Domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, care of the children, the aged and the sick.

The census definition of work as "for pay or profit" covers only the first three categories. Often men may just own the land or "supervise" it, but they are often regarded as cultivators, while women in the absence of men actually carry out all operations are just termed "family helpers", which culturally and socially does not have the same status as that of a cultivator. Another problematic term is "head of the household" which is often a culturally defined term and does not take into account simple households or households where women bear the major or sole part of the economic burden of the household.

Many suggestions have been put forward in various reports to improve the situation. Some of these reports are:

1. Report of the Technical Seminar on Women's Work and Employment (April 1982) Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi.
2. Report of the "Workshop on Conceptual Clarification of Data Relating to Women's Work (December, 1988) NIPCCD, New Delhi.
3. Report of the U.N. - INSTRAW National Workshop on Visibility of Women in Statistics and Indicators, changing Perspectives (July 1989) S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay.

Some recommendations made in these reports can be summed up as:

1. In economic and social service theory household is regarded only as a consumption unit. The household should be treated as an arena of productive activity.
2. There must be uniformity in the definition of work, worker, non-worker, head of the household etc. in the data system and in various ministries and government departments.
3. The concept of composite work should be incorporated to account for the multiple work of women.
4. Main and marginal worker category need great clarity.
5. The question "Did you work at all during the last one year" is problematic and should be replaced by an activity schedule, with multiple choices.
6. Productive activity of women other than cultivation for consumption should find a place
7. The code "household duties" could be bifurcated into two sub codes
 - (i) household work such as cooking, cleaning, child care etc.
 - (ii) work that is productive in nature such as various processing activities, collection of free goods, maintenance activities.
8. There should be more explicit data on home based piece rate workers.
9. There should be more explicit data on unemployment.
10. There should be some training given to enumerators and field supervisors.

6.2.3 The 1991 Census : Beginning of Change

The Research Centre for Women's Studies in SNDT Women's University, Bombay convened on October 13, 1989 a meeting of experts in Bombay which included the representatives from the Regional Directorate Census Operations, Maharashtra. The initiative was due to a United Nations Development Fund for women (UNIFEM) project, which sought to improve the enumerators awareness and understanding of the issues by incorporating some changes in the training manual for enumerators.

The scope of the UNIFEM project was:

1. To improve the data on women's economic activity with in the parameters already set for the 1991 census by the Registrar General's Office on Census operations.
2. To launch a campaign of public awareness with respect to women's work by highlighting their invisible work.

6.3 INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN MEASUREMENT OF WORK

Towards equality, "the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India", showed through evidence of a mass of statistical data it accumulated, which attest to the decline of the status of women since the beginning of the 20th century. Whether we look at the demography ratio of women in the population (1901 there were 972 females per 1000 males and in 1971, 930 females per 1000 and 929 females per 1000 in 1981) at the shrinking size of the female work force (in 1911 female workers were 34% of the total work force where as in 1971 they were 17.35% of the total work force) or at the statistics on female literacy, all are evidence for decline in status of women.

Another major reason for this decline in women's status is primarily her invisibility in the measurement of work with in and outside the family. An important feature of the Indian society is the explicit division of labour on gender and age. Ideologically males are viewed as producers, expected to undertake hard work, and provide for the material needs of their children and women.

On the other hand women are treated as consumers whose place is in the household and perform socially defined roles of cooking, caring and cleaning. This division of work rather than being arbitrary is socially defined. This normative framework is however altered in practice and women are involved in a variety of tasks complementary to productive activities with in and outside the house. Infact women's engagement in productive and income generating tasks is not distinct and isolated from those of cooking or caring for children adding to her double burden. In spite of this double burden and playing multiple roles women's contribution is grossly underestimated and remains invisible.

This invisibility is primarily due to the economists traditional view of time utilisation pattern into "wage employment" and "leisure". Such a framework ignores the economic value of goods and services that women produce with in the household. The discovery of women's invisibility also occurred during the process of documenting rural economic activities in the third

world that brought to the fore the qualitative differences between advanced industrialised countries and the newly developing countries. There were - the existence of a large non-monetised sector, traditional labour intensive agriculture and subsistence production. Production in these economies takes place mainly at the household level. Data systems and the general understanding of work whose concepts and methodologies were derived from the experience of developed economies based on the market system did little justice to the altogether different million of the third world economics, especially rural ones where women are present not as paid labour force which is, "visible" but are engaged in productive activities at household level in mainly non-monetised or subsistence sector that makes them "invisible". By leaving out much of what women do, because they do not fit the definitions, women's contributions go unrecorded.

It is very important to remove this invisibility of women in the measurement of work and make them visible because it does a lot of damage to women's status. By a quirk of definition women's work which is crucial to survival becomes marginal and women who support every one else appear dependent. Thus women get left out in policy or planning. It is a well known fact that opening out schools for girls has not automatically increased girls enrollment. For girls to enter school and stay there, someone else must do what they are doing i.e., assisting in household duties. Women's status in marriage and family, their rights to productive assets, their right to authority and decision making, their wages in the labour market are all affected by the non-recognition of their contribution. If women's work burdens are not understood, their energy requirements get underestimated affecting their health and the family in the long run. Non recognition of women's unpaid activities may lead to "non detection or displacement due to development programmes."

Invisibility of Women's Work in Rural Areas:

Though more than half of the women's population work in rural areas, women's participation and contribution in the development of rural sectors have been a neglected area of study. Active involvement of rural women has generally been ignored because their activities are considered to be economically unproductive, supplementary, casual, optional and dispensable. If their work is properly assessed their participation rate would have been substantially higher than what has been generally assessed.

The general understanding of economic contribution implies economically productive participation with physical and mental activity leading to production of goods and services either for consumption, sale or exchange. Household activities such as cooking, washing, bearing and rearing of children, cattle servicing, preparing the fields ready for the crops and other rural activities which do not result in the production of goods are not considered productive. In agriculture, women perform the supportive role and though they may be doing most of the work, they are not involved in marketing and hence all their work becomes invisible.

Rural women's productive participation in the rural development process can be classified as:

1. laboureres and workers
2. cultivators
3. producers and traders, but most of these works done by women remain invisible. Women go out to a distant tank or river to bring water for the household. They move to distance

places in the jungle to collect fire wood , they work in the fields for planting, weeding, harvesting , making cakes out of dung for fire, also involved in taking out and making curd, butter, ghee which are then marketed in towns. Women who do not have any land of their own work as agricultural labourers, make beedis, perfume sticks, do construction work, or get involved in making of roads, buildings, digging of wells etc. and their economic participation cannot be overlooked.

The nature of functions performed by women in rural families varies from region to region and one social group to another. There are certain agricultural operations which are undertaken by men labour alone and certain other by women labour exclusively. Normally tasks which need more of physical strength are done exclusively by men labour while lighter jobs are entrusted to women labour. Digging or deepening of wells, climbing a coconut tree, driving a tractor for ploughing and transport , threshing are normally done by men. Application of manure, transplanting of seedlings, weeding, cleaning and storing grains , kitchen gardening are done exclusively by women . Sometimes there are no such rigid division of labour between men and women. Different tasks are performed by both men and women, like application of manure/ chemicals, fertilizers, irrigating fields etc.

Normally, high caste women of land owning households do not undertake field work, although they are involved in post-harvest phases of work within the home stead. Most of the field tasks on such farm households assigned to women are performed by hired female labourers from the scheduled and other lower castes.

"To sumup the undercounting and undervaluation of women's work emerges because of

1. definition of productive work/gainful work;
2. questions that slot on a priority basis on who is a worker;
3. respondent bias - when male, due to notions of women's work; when female due to self-perceptions on one's way of responsibilities;
4. seasonal, intermittent nature of women's work that makes it difficult to fit it in with notions of regular work;
5. their provision of subsistence goods being non-monetary per excluded;
6. difficulty of separating housework, collection of free goods, unpaid family labour and wage labour in the case of women;
7. unpaid female family labour do not get counted as the respondent is usually a male head;
8. definition of who is head of household is biased against women, who despite shouldering all the economic responsibility are not defined as heads;
9. ignoring of intra household differences that lead to ignoring of women as producers, consumers, decision makers in policy planning". (Meera Desai & Maithreyi Krishna Raj)

6.4 ATTEMPTS AT MAKING WOMEN'S WORK VISIBLE

There have been various methodologies attempted to remove the invisibility of women in the measurement of work. Attempts have been made to see what activities go on in the rural economy. The device used is "time disposition". How does each member of a rural household spend his/her time during the entire day? The second step is to categorise the activities into various slots that are analytically meaningful such as market activities subsistence production, household work etc.

Time allocation studies began to be of use in Africa and South East Asia in the seventies and ILO has been instrumental in encouraging many of them. In India, Devaki Jain was the first to initiate in 1976-77, a time allocation study. (Report on Time Allocation Study and its methodological implications/Devaki Jain and M.Chand, New Delhi, 1982).

This study sought to test the hypothesis that female work participation in India was under-enumerated because of the nature of female work and wage. The study used a combination of techniques - a survey with the questionnaire method, followed by time use data. The sample consisted of 127 households drawn from three villages in Rajasthan and West Bengal with a 15% weightage to poor households.

The study showed that whatever the method of investigation, such as the decennial census (27th and 32nd round) whatever the area (region wise) and whatever the level chosen (state, district or a village) for men, the differences in work participation remained insignificant but for women and children the variations were very large.

The study also highlighted very sharp regional differences in the pattern of women's work (more outdoor work for Rajasthan women and more indoor work of West Bengal women). There was a double peak for female labour-high participation before puberty, a drop and then a rise again after 25-30, showing the impact of marriage and fertility. For men on the other hand, peaks coincided with seasonality of agricultural and non-agricultural operations. The influence of life cycle is more dominant in the case of female labour.

Another very important study which contributed to removing the invisibility of women in measuring work was the Anker Khan, Gupta study on "Women's participation in the Labour force - A Methods test in India for improving its measurement, ILO, Geneva 1988".

They dealt with three basic questions regarding under-enumeration of women work.

1. Was this bias due to definitions used.
2. Due to the sex of the interviewers.
3. Due to poverty respondents being male.

They then went on to compare various definitions in various activities. These definitions were

1. Paid Labour force (PDLF) persons engaged in wage or salary employment for which they are paid in cash or kind.

2. Market Oriented Labour force (MKTLF) persons unpaid labour force + persons engaged in an activity on family farm or family enterprise that sells some or all its products and services.
3. ILO-Labour force (ILOLF) persons engaged in activities whose products or services should be included in the national income statistics according to U.N. recommendation, whether or not these activities are monetised.
4. Extended Labour force (EXTLF) persons in the ILO labour force + persons who perform an activity that contributes to meeting their family's basic needs for goods and services that are generally purchased in industrialised countries.

The difference in various activity rate was sizeable from 13% in DPLF 32% in MKTLF, 38% in ILOLF and 91% in EXTLF.

The findings also yielded estimates of proportion of female labour engaged in non-monetary activities and the amount of time involved.

Time use methods thus help us to categorize work and make a measurement of female unpaid work. However there are some difficulties in the approach. Observation is intrusive and tiresome to the observed. The intrusiveness of continuous observation can be overcome by random visits, selected in such a way that the household is visited on different days and at different times and seasons.

Another major problem is the lack of uniformity in categorisation of the activities. A third problem relates to the inadequacy of recording only time spent. We need additional data regarding tools used and the physical exertion involved. A rural housewife may spend five hours in the house work and the kitchen and her counterpart in the west also spend only five hours but there is an enormous difference in the strain involved.

6.5 SUMMARY

In this unit we have examined the Conceptual framework of women's work. Economists have told that work is something which gets paid and since women do not get paid for their services all that they continue to do, does not become work. Therefore it is very important to understand women's work whether it is in the household.

Indian Census had uptill 1981 adopted a definition of work which was more suitable to advanced industrial economies where work for wages (market oriented work) is the typical norm. However since 1991 there are some beginnings of change. Towards the end we have attempted to highlight few studies which attempted to remove the invisibility of women in the measurement of work.

6.6 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

1. Write short notes on the following in about 30 lines each.
 1. How has patriarchal ideology affect women's status as far as work is concerned?

2. Critically examine the status of women with regards to work prior to the Industrial Revolution?
3. Write a brief note on the tyranny of the household.
4. What are the reasons for the invisibility of women in the data? Account ways as to how it can be improved.
5. Examine any two studies which attempted to study the invisibility of women in the measurement of work.

II Answer the following in about 15 lines each.

- (i) Housewife and work.
- (ii) Indian Census and the woman.
- (iii) Few reports which attempt to make women's work visible

6.8 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Lindsay Mackie & Polly Pattullo (1981), "Women at Work", Tavistock Publication., New York 1981.
2. Steephonie Coontz & Peta Henderson(ed) (1986), "Women's Work, Men's Property" Verso Published, London, 1986.
3. Vironica Beechey (1987), "Unequal Work", Verso Publishers, London, 1987
4. Patricia Vaydan off (1987), "Work and family life" Sage Publications, U.S.A. 1987
5. Michele Barrett and May Mc Intosh "The Anti Social Family" Verso Publications, U.S.A.
6. T.M.Dak (ed) (1988), "Women and work in Indian society " Discovery publishing House, Delhi, 1988.
7. Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, Jana Everett (ed) (1984), "Women & Workin India" Promilla & Co Publishers, New Delhi ,1984.
8. Devaki Jain & Nirmala Banerjee (ed) (1985), "Tyranny of the Household", Shakti Books NewDelhi, 1985.
9. Anker Richard , M.E.Khand & R.B.Gupta, "Women's participation in the labour force "ILO Geneva.
10. Jain Devaki, (1982) "Report on Time allocation study and its methodological implications. New Delhi 1982.

UNIT - 7 : WOMEN IN THE ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED SECTORS

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to discuss about

- Women in the organised sector
- Women in the unorganised sector
- Women in home based production

- Women in agriculture
- Various studies on assessment of work done by women
- Technological change and women

By the end of this unit, you will be able to understand the contribution of women in organised, unorganised, home based production and in agriculture.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The main characteristics of economic development is the progress towards an increasingly intricate pattern of labour specialization. In communities which are at the earliest stages of development, practically all goods and services are produced and consumed within the family group, but with economic development more and more people become specialised in particular tasks and we have the most popular classification of the economy into organised and unorganised sector.

7.2 DISTINCTION BETWEEN ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED SECTORS

The division of the economy into organised and unorganised sector is based on the market structure, technology used and the relationship with the Government. An organised sector contains large manufacturing firms, operating in oligopolistic markets sheltered from foreign competition by high tariffs and quantitative restrictions selling their products mainly to middle and upper income groups.

The unorganised sector contains a very large number of small producers operating on a narrow margin in a highly competitive product market, selling a variety of goods and services. Its products are sold mainly to low income groups, though there are obvious and significant exceptions such as domestic services.

While the organised sector has relatively protected labour force having strong trade unions and its workers are covered by effective labour legislation. The unorganised sector on the other hand is dominated by the small enterprises. In addition to the self and household employment which often is a fair proportion of the total labour impact, these enterprises are run by labour hired from the pool of highly competitive casual labour which is neither protected by trade unions or state legislation. While the organised sector uses by and large capital intensive technology which is often imported, the unorganised sector depends on labour intensive technology which is almost entirely indigenous.

7.3 WOMEN IN ORGANISED SECTOR

When we look at the census data we find that only a small proportion of women are employed in the organised sector. The representation of men in the organised sector is almost six times more. Most of the organised sector units are concentrated in the urban and sub-urban areas.

Here are few statistics to show us the representation of women vis-a-vis the men in the organised sector.

Percentage of Women in the organised Sector:

Year	Public		Private		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1971	92.0	8.0	84.0	16.0	89.0	11.0
1981	90.3	9.7	82.5	17.5	87.8	12.2
1991	87.7	12.3	81.3	18.7	85.9	14.1

Source - DGE & T Ministry of labour, Government of India, New Delhi.

Therefore men have more representation than women in the organised sector. About 56% of the women employed in the organised sector are in community, social and personal services, 16% each in transport, storage, communication and financing, insurance, real estate and banking. Therefore in all women constitute only 4% of the total work force in the organised sector.

A large number of studies which have concentrated on the area of women and work have brought to light a very disturbing finding i.e., the growing decline in the participation of women in the organised sector. Long term trends of decline in female employment have been observed along with women's absorption in the unorganised sector.

Trends in distribution of women workers 1911-1971 (in 000's)

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Service	Total	Female workers % of total force	As % of total labour force
1911	30989	6137	4767	41802	33.33	34.44
1921	30279	5409	4407	40095	33.73	34.02
1931	27177	5147	5276	37600	27.63	31.17
1951	31062	4554	4923	40539	23.30	28.19
1961	27274	6884	5224	59402	27.96	31.53
1971	25060	3307	2931	31298	11.86	17.53

(Towards Equality Report 1975 P.153)

7.3.1 Reasons for Decline of Women's Participation in Labour Force

There have been various reasons put forward to explain the decline of women's participation in the labour force.

1. Economic Advancement :

Some studies for eg. A.Oakly's "Housewife" in its chapter on "Women and Industrilizaion" Penguin U.K. 1976, has shown that in the early stages of capatalist development a large number of women were in the workforce. With economic advancement women withdrew from working and become primarily housewife. Though the decline of women from workforce with economic development is not a universal feature, it occurs in some cases under certain conditions.

2. Initial Sexual Division of Labour :

In a society in which virtually all women marry very young and bear children, the responsibility of family life coupled with this factor made women an unarchiable sort of labour. So variation in the employment of women derives in part from differences in social customs.

3. Protective Legislation :

All such provisions for women workers, though accepted in every state, impose burden some obligation on employers which it would serve no purpose to ignore or be little. As such an employer cannot feel much enthusiam for shouldering additional burdens which he can easily avoid by preferring male labour which is also available in abundant supply.

4. Rationalisation :

Industries as they develop, go through rationalisation, a structural and technological change which increases the productivity of each worker. The argument is that women work in the least skilled section of the factory and hence rationalisation displaces women from these jobs.

5. Reserve Army of Labour :

Women are often referred to as a 'reserve army of labour' - a section of the working population which enters into and passes out of the labour force depending on the needs of the industry and economy. Women are seen as being supported by their family and accept their unemployment for easier than other sections of the population. Thus they do not tax the management and government and they form a politically less volatile groups.

6. Needs of the Family :

Emelser, N.J. "Social Change in the Industrial Evolution" - An application of the theory to the Lancashire cotton Industry (1770 - 1840), Kegan and Paul, London, 1959, argued the the withdrawal of women from labour force occured because of the changing family structure. Earlier the site of production and the site of maintenance and reproduction of the family was the same - the home. With the development of the factory system the site of production became separte from the site of the family maintenance. Smesler argues with all the members of the family male, female and children working in the factory, there was a breakdown of the family structure and so women were withdran so that tasks associated with reproduction and maintenance be performed.

7. Women and Organization :

The lack of organisation amongst women and the unions as being representative of male workers has been seen as a reason for the decline of women workers.

7.3.2 Women in White Collar Occupation

If we look at whitecollar occupations, statistics will point out to some broad trends in the employment of women.

1. One of the most important trend in women's employment is that they tend to cluster in few occupations like teaching, nursing and clerical jobs.
2. Women are clustered either in low status or prestigious professions eg. most of the women teachers are concentrated in school teaching. According to the committee on the status of Women G.O.I 1975, P.206, 71% of the women teachers were primary school teachers and 21% were in secondary schools. They were very few in colleges and fewer still in Universities. The committee gives following figures (percentages) of the employment of women vis-a-vis men in some selected occupations. Physicists & Surgeons 7:10 Lawyers 1:20, Teachers 30:0, Nursing 72:10 and Scientists 10:90.
3. In spite of having the same qualifications, since women are employed in private sector or in the lower rung of the jobs they receive low salaries than men.
4. The report on the committee on the status of women (G.O.I 1975) also focussed on the alarming trend and the growing decline in the representation of women in all occupations. For the proportion of women teachers declines from 26% in 1965-66 to 18.2% in 1970-71. The number of administrators in 1963 was 10,351 but it declined to 6237 in 1966. The number of engineers in 1969-70 was 140 but in 1971-72 it was increased to 994.
5. The proportion of highly educated and professionally trained unemployed women is fairly substantial. Nearly 22.12% of women as compared to 1.81% of similar qualified men are self unemployed i.e., are unemployed and are not seeking any jobs. The main reason for this is the domestic responsibilities of women and preference for not seeking employment when it is not necessary.

Though access to education and employment reflects only a formal equality or parity and is very superficial index of women's status, statistics relating to the declining trend of women in various occupations indicate the women are not achieving this formal equality. There are a number of studies on working women which have shown that although many women came out of the domestic sphere, it has not brought about radical changes in societal attitudes particularly those of men. The traditional norms relating to feminine and masculine behaviour continue to persist and women who are working experience acute role conflict. They have to combine the dual roles of mother and housewife on one hand with that of the working women on the other. For women, what has taken place is merely a 'role extension' or 'role expansion' rather than 'role modification' or 'role redefinition'. (For details on these aspects related to working women see 'Maria Mies' 'Class struggle and Emancipation' *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 15, 1973. Rhoda Goldstein, *Indian Women in Transition*, The Scare Crow Press, New Jersey 1972. Promila Kapur, *Marriage and The Working Women in India*, Vikas, New Delhi 1971, Kala Rani *Role Conflict in Working Women in India*, Chetna Publications, New Delhi, 1976.

7.4 WOMEN IN UNORGANISED SECTOR

The unorganised sector is also known as 'unregulated' 'unprotected' or 'unenumerated sector' because of its diversified definitions. The unorganised sector can be defined in terms of registration license or in terms of employment, size, location etc.

The unorganised sector can be further classified into three sub-sections.

1. The irregular sector consisting of begging, various forms of casual labour such as gardening, washing etc.
2. Small scale economic activities commonly non wage and carried on by family concerns at home in home based production.
3. Contract work done out side the home for wages.

we are mainly concerned with the last two.

This sector is also called the 'unprotected sector' because the wages and conditions enjoyed by the workers in the formal sector are not available here.

7.4.1 Characteristic of the Unorganised Sector

The unorganised or informal sector as the name suggests is non formal in its character and operation. The characteristics which represent a pattern of continuous variation in a typical developing country labour market.

1. Entry

The unorganised sector can be started very easily and in some cases, without license or without registration. They need not follow the legal formalities like formal sector enterprenures.

2. Scale of Operation

All units in informal sector are small in size and more in number. In general single worker establishments or self employed workers would be found more in this sector.

3. Ownership

An informal sector unit has entirely indigenous ownership of its means of production. The proprier organises and controls the activity of the enterprise.

4. Legal Status

Most of the informal sector activities do not have any legal status and are hence not protected by law.

5. Production Techniques

Most of the operations here are labour intensive and predominantly manual and adopt low productivity techniques of production.

6. Marketing and Pricing

The informal sector relies more on personal selling. They do not have the advantages of branding and packing and with no advertisement and promotion.

7. Accessibility to the Government

A step motherly attitude of the Government is observed in the case of informal sector. While the formal sector may have certain amount of patronage from the Government in regard to the availability of organised capital market, bank finance, foreign technology, imported raw material protection from foreign competition, none of this is available to the informal sector unit.

8. Labour Market

The labour market for the informal sector is unregulated and highly competitive on the supply side. Here the wages are also very low when compared to the formal sector.

As mentioned earlier most of the home based production would also broadly fall with in the unorganised sector. However for the sake of convenience we have divided the work of women in the unorganised sector into two.

1. works like construction work, brick making, working in some industry which women do for wages out side their home.
2. Activities like beedi making, garment making, food processing, textile industry, dairy production etc. Which women do for an earning, inside their homes in home based production.

7.4.2 Women in Construction Work

According to the census of 1971, there were 204,000 women construction workers in India. Comprising of 10% of the rural and 9% of the urban workers. There are great regional variations among the construction workers. Harijans or schduled caste members make up the majority of construction workers in India. In most of the cases language, caste and class barriers inhibit direct communication between employer and worker.

Though India has progressive labour laws these do not apply to the construction workers since they are in the 'unorganised sector'. In 1971 a law; abolition of contract labour act; sought to eliminate the practice of contract labour and provide some benefit such as maternity leave to women labourers in this field but often these laws are violated.

Many construction projects buildings, roads, bridges, railway lines etc. are in Public sector and are done by the Government but these are constructed on contract. The contractor avails the services of the labour. Most of these labourers are hired for a temporary period and though the Government regulations provide for amenities such as creches, sanitary services, holidays, specified maximum hours and minimum wages rate these condition are often not met. In many cases contractors bring the whole families from depressed states or districts. This practice of using migrant labour depress the local wage rates.

A typical construction of a building starts with excavation needed to lay the foundation. This work is done on sub-contract by foundation workers who do the earth work, digging etc. Often they also construct the foundation. Next is the pouring of concrete which is done by concrete pouring groups.

The third sub-contracting is done for centering work. Centering work is using centering material such as iron or wooden planks/sheets, ports, bamboo or wooden sticks to construct a temporary frame work needed to assist the construction of concrete building, roof. Lastly come the specialists steel bar benders, carpenters, painters, plumbers, electricians who are involved as specialists in various stages of construction work.

Women are employed in almost all the work related to construction process from foundation work to masonry and beyond. They help in removing over ground material once excavated, carrying water, sand, jelly cement for foundation laying and concrete pouring, carrying stones, bricks and tools required at all premises. Women also carry centering material, smoothen the surface with available local material and do the curing operation.

Since there is a lot of sub-contracting in this area only temporary employment is available in the industry. There is a principal employer with massive capital out lay at one end and a complex chain of hierarchical relationships and lakhs of construction workers with highly insecure subsistence level of living on the other. In between lies the whole hierarchy of intermediaries contractors and sub-contractors so that there is no link between the employer and worker. Women become totally invisible in this sector and their terms of employment, types of work, housing and living conditions are all determined by the nature of recruitment. Older women workers and pregnant women are not preferred for work. If recruited nursing mothers are --- rest to feed their infants and there is hardly any child care facility provided at the sites. In many cases the lunch breaks are reduced to a minimum. All the work done by women is reparded as unskilled and they are not included in the skilled category. Women's contribution in every type of work whether large or small remain extremely undervalued. Pay given to men is therefore denied to them.

There has been some attempts to measure the intensity of work done by women by gurija etc.(1989) in construction work. For eg. in concreting, it was bundles each weighing 7-8 kg passed through the hands of women. In an 8 hour shift therefore an incredible 32,000 kgs would have passed through a women workers hand. For necessary work women carried 9-12 bricks (ech weighing 2.5 kg) on their heads and moved with grace and skill among the scaffold.

While doing the earth work women carried on their head 15 kg of mud and walked 30 feet to deposit the mud and return. In an hour this was expected 180 times. In an 8 hour shift a women on an average would have walked 13 km carrying about 21000 kg of mud. While using a crowbar to dig into the mud women would do this 15 times a minute.

In curing women were found carrying water in pots each weighing 8 kgs. 15 times per hour to pour over concrete structures.

Since construction work is in the unorganised sector Women do not get any social security benefits. Women start at a very young age in the industry and have a lesser chance of emploment as they age. Women over 50 years are particularly vulnerable because with decreasing capacity

to work they are unlikely to be preferred for employment. The industry does not offer any terminal benefits to older women in the form of gratuity or age old pension.

Among the construction workers, women employed are most affected for reasons of ignorance and lack of organised strength. They have neither the support of militant unions nor the where withal to fight in courts. They are handicapped by the domestic obligations and the economic imperative to earn a wage. Thus the contractor gets away even by denying them equality in work and wages and the deprivation of basic amenities and minimum standards. Small jhuggies, or squatter settlements become the homes of these people. They live in dirt, squalor and constant want. Washing, bathing and daily hygienic needs have to be done in unfiltered filthy water often in scant supply and in the open. Small children just run around in the dirt as there are no creches where the children can be left. Infant mortality is high and access to medical facilities minimal.

For women, the construction work also does not provide a steady income throughout the year. Little work is available during the monsoon and many of the women must seek work as agricultural workers or as casual labourers in other industries. They are often in debt having borrowed money from the contractor and this is another reason, why they are not allowed to leave.

7.4.3 Brick Making

According to one estimate not less than 1.20 lakh workers male and female are engaged in hand moulded brick making. Since no brick kiln employs more than 20 persons at a time, brick making is considered a cottage industry. There is a rigid compartmentalisation of work on the basis of sex in the brick industry. Women are employed exclusively for carrying head load, while all skilled and semi-skilled works such as moulding, shaping, stocking etc. are done exclusively by men. Women perform all the physically exhausting work but their wages are only about half of those earned by men, yet many women continue in brick making for want of work opportunities elsewhere and for subsistence.

7.4.4 Fishing Industry

Though women from fishing households were never directly engaged in what many very narrowly defined as fishing, they did participate in a large number of related activities, not all of which got necessarily paid for, but which supported the household's income earning capacity.

Before mechanisation and modernisation set in, fishing was a low income, low skilled and low status occupation. Most of the fishing crafts were manually operated and a large number of men needed to operate them. Most of the fishing was confined close to the sea coast in mud water layers of the sea. During monsoons fishermen experienced several months of inactivity.

Women in these households apart from looking after children and doing the domestic work also supplemented the household income. A major income earning activity was head load fish rendering. They would carry on their heads fish in baskets over a distance of 10 to 15 km. and sell it from door to door. They would also engage in defibing of coconut husks and manual rope making. Many would do fish drying and net making and repairing. Some would also collect

shells. Now fisher women are supplied with nylon twine by the village merchant who was formally a fisherman. They make the netting at home, which is collected at regular intervals and paid at fixed rates. This is more remunerative today than it was in the past.

Women are now also engaged in prawn business, which covers buying, processing or selling prawns or working for wages as prawn peelers. However, with more and more multinational business houses entering this field, relatively small, independent entrepreneurs who had come up from the fisher men and fisher women of the villages have been thrown out or forced to work as waged labour for these multinational companies. Thus with a lot technological advancement and more and more mechanisation taking place in the fishing industry, women tend to lose out to men.

According to the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 94% of the women workers are engaged in the unorganised sector of the economy and the rest in non-agricultural occupations.

The problems faced by the women in this sector are many.

1. There are no regularised laws or code to be enforced by the State, the employed women on wages in unorganised sectors are exploited by the employers.
2. There are no time regulations or time limits for women who are engaged in organised sector. Often here women work more time for low wages.
3. There is no question of additional wages for women working in the unorganised sector.
4. Whereas women get medical aid and maternity facilities free of cost in the organised sector, no such facilities are available to women in the unorganised sector.
5. Often in the unorganised sector women get less pay than men for the same work. Not only this but wages of women vary from place to place.

There is a lot of exploitation of women in the unorganised sector, because there are no state laws for protection of women against low wages, overtime work, no medical aid or maternity leave or equal pay for equal work.

The major and most serious threat to technological change in India has been the displacement of female labour in several industries leading to increased poverty among women. While agricultural modernisation has a mixed effect creating employment for some and displacing others in rural and other small industries, the impact has been unequivocally negative.

In fishing industry even though women play a dominant role in the production process and in marketing, the socio-cultural values of fisher folk assign an inferior status to women. The introduction of deep sea trawlers has on the one hand created wide class disparities within the fishing community and on the other destroyed the coastal fish availability due to intensive deep sea fishing.

Similarly the setting up of cooperative dairy units and dairy processing has often left the women out of cash while increasing their work burden.

In cotton handlooms, woolen cottage industry and hand block printing there has been a mass displacement of women. Between 1974-1981, there was an additional of 2.31 lakh cotton power looms which started as unauthorised looms but have been regularised since by the Government. They have put out of action an estimated 13.86 lakh handlooms in the country. Women who were involved in pre-weaving tasks are hard hit. In the five states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, nearly 2.58 lakh handloom women workers were displaced between 1961 and 1971.

In the woolen cottage industry in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka, nearly 20,000 women are employed as part of family production units well integrated with sheep rearing. It is an industry which not only meets the demand for warm clothes from locally produced raw materials with inexpensive tools without using power and employing hereditary skills but provides seasonal employment in non-agricultural months. Woolen spinning and weaving has now been taken over by mills leading to massive unemployment for men and women. In addition, export of sheep and lamb has reduced raw material for this cottage industry.

In the case of handprinting industry the benefits of expanding demand for printed textiles are going to machines instead of our unemployed men and women. An estimated 2,50,000 jobs have been lost, a major section of the losers being women. In the name of export promotion, technological change is introduced but the aggregate increase in export earnings conceal employment distress at micro level and creation of greater inequality because the sections that gain and the sections that lose are different.

Similarly though there are no quantitative estimates of the extent of labour displacement in coir industry, this industry is also being threatened by mechanisation.

Many micro studies have demonstrated the inverse relationship between income level of the household and women's participation. The lower the income level, the greater is the pressure on women to seek work to sustain themselves and their families. The relationship between income or being employed by itself is not an indicator of status. The kind of work done the terms under which it is done, the reasons for which it is done is really what matters. To the majority of female workers, who are also poor, work is not a matter of choice nor is it ennobling because much of it is unskilled, back breaking, tedious work with low rewards. The poorer the family the greater the work burden on women. It is often assumed that a decline in female work participation rate as reflected in official statistics indicates voluntary withdrawal by women. If this were true, there ought to be higher dependency ratio, but the high turnout of women job seekers, N.S.S data on women's informal economic activities all refute this suggestion. With the steady increase in population growth and poverty, there is indirect evidence that there is a substantial increase in the number of females seeking work. The employment opportunities for women are unfavourable and diminishing and they are pushed into greater poverty and poverty indices show that among the poorer classes, women are poorer. Women are forced to look for any means that are available however discriminatory the terms and they accept any work to support themselves and their families.

7.5 WOMEN IN HOME BASED PRODUCTION

In the last decade though considerable attention was paid to identifying and calculating the value of women's unpaid domestic work, there was hardly any attention paid to women's work for cash income in the home based production. The study of this sector assumes importance because most of the income derived from this work frequently provides the very basis for family survival particularly among the extremely poor.

There are very low accurate statistics existing on the number of women engaged in home based production due to the lack of recognition of home based producers as workers in most national data gathering systems. Hence home based workers have yet to capture the attention of policy makers and planners. Home based workers have certain common features, among them are very low wages, long and erratic working hours, fragmentation and atomisation of the workforce and the absence of any form of workers organisation. A wide range of productive activities can be included in the home based work. These would include piece rate work in the production of handicrafts, beedies export garments with in subcontracting system, rearing of small animals and poultry at home.

Home based workers can be classified into two types.

1. Those who are given the raw materials by their employer, who pays by piece rate according to the amount produced.
2. Those who buy all these raw material themselves and earn by selling their finished goods.

Beedis, agarbathis, paper bags, garments, cotton pod shelling, groundnut pod shelling, hand embroidery, zari work, grain cleaning, block printing, match-stick making, papad rolling, sub assembling electrical and electronic items, packaging and labelling industrial goods are some examples of home based products.

Piece rate home based workers are generally, women who combine their household tasks with income generating work. The hours of work vary from part time work of four to five hours to an over extended day of fifteen hours. Their earnings are not more than Rs.5 to 10 per day. Illiteracy rates are very high in these trades and child labour is a very common among these workers.

The employer of these home based workers vary from biggest iron and steel manufacturers to smallest papad makers. Their work may vary from bringing and hemming for textile companies, rolling beedis for beedi factories or filling and packaging for pharmaceutical companies. The company maintains a warehouse where it stores the raw material and distributes it to the women to take home, receives the finished product and puts a brand name on it. This employer either gives work directly or through a contractor. The contractor is often from the same community as the worker and is often a former worker.

Since home based piece rate workers are not included as workers in the factories act they are not covered by most of the labour laws. They are also not covered by the minimum

wages act. However special legislation has been passed for beedi workers which covers home based piece rate workers. The act provides for a special beedi welfare fund which provides free health, housing and scholarship to beedi workers and their children. (For details see Zarina Bhatti)

There is no official policy to ensure employment for home based workers or to improve their lot. Technological changes often displace thousands of such workers. For eg. A new type of shell less cotton pod planted in Gujarat displaced approximately 30 thousand home based cotton-pod shellers. When public sector cement companies were instructed to use new Jute bags instead of re-sewn ones, nearly 10,000 bag stitchers were affected.

The home based worker leads to certain advantages for the employer. They do not have to invest in machinery, or initial capital expense, the worker providing their own tools and machines. The home based workers form a dispensable pool of workers for the employer. He employs them whenever and frequently as he needs them and dismisses them when he no longer requires their services. As the workers cannot unionise and are not covered by labour laws and often have not yet been reached by trade unions the employer provides them no welfare, no health insurance, maternity coverage, provident fund or paid holidays.

7.5.1 Problems Faced by the Home Based Workers

Most of the home based workers work in their tiny room which serves as their work place. This often results in overcrowding and is often hazardous for the health of the worker and the family members when they inhale tobacco in the case of beedi making, since most of these workers work at home combining wife, home makers and mother roles all in one. They lead very strenuous lives often working fourteen to fifteen hours a day often leading to ill health. Since they are not aware of the outside world, the market force, buying and selling abilities are often limited, they tend to be exploited more.

7.5.2 Some Areas Where Home Based Work is Done:

Beedi Industry : Here women roll beedis along with children mostly girls and earn about Rs.20 for 100 beedis. Most of these women come from OBC, SC and ST's from very low income groups often below the poverty line.

Beedi production is carried out at various levels and each level in turn consists of several stages. Usually factories employ only few workers whereas a major proportion of beedis is produced outside the factory in the workers homes.

The factory owner, who is the principal employer, supplies the raw materials- tender leaves, tobacco and yarn in huge quantities to middlemen (contractors) for a specified number of beedies. These middlemen in turn distribute the raw materials to several workers attached to them to roll a stipulated number of beedies in their homes. When the rolled beedis are returned to the middlemen, they are then sent to the branch office, where they are distributed to different set of home workers for labelling. The workers return the labelled beedis to the branch where they are stacked, cured and booked for dispatch to the principal employers.

The four main steps involved in producing a beedi are rewinding the thread, cutting the beedi leaves, rolling the beedi and folding the beedi head. It is useful to give a brief description of these four stages to understand how the different aspects of beedi making facilitate the creation and maintenance of diversion of labour to highlight the high labour absorption capacity of this occupation. Particularly important is the opportunity to employ the children and women in beedi making and to bring out the exploitative relationship between employer and workers and that between the assistant worker and the main workers and to understand the health hazards resulting from the monotonous nature of work.

The women bring the raw material home and share the work with other members of the family, including children and at times with neighbours. This is necessary because beedi rolling involves several stages all of which are time consuming and it is not possible for one woman to work for a long duration of time and perform all the stages of beedi rolling. The leaves have to be first cleaned, washed and dried. They are then cut according to the size of the particular brand of beedis. There are three main steps involved in making a perfect beedi. First tobacco is to be spilled in the leaf and tied with the thread. The pinch of tobacco rolled into a beedi must be accurate enough failing which the beedi may be too small or too big. Such abnormal beedis will not only be rejected by the contractor but the worker will also incur loss because the big beedis consume more tobacco than the required level. In order to rectify the loss the women then have to buy extra tobacco from the market. While rolling the beedi between the thumb and forefinger enough pressure must be applied to make the top end of the beedi appear broader than the bottom end. Halfway through the rolling the beedi bottom is folded in to prevent the tobacco from leaking. The beedi is tied when it is fully rolled. Then the beedi-head (or top) which is wider than the bottom, is folded in to complete the making process.

Given the fact that each contractor has hundreds of home workers employed by him, beedis pour in every day in large numbers. Since physical counting of the beedis brought in is a laborious task for the employers, they have their own method of counting. Each bundle should hold 12 or 24 beedis. The contractor judges the bundles by stacking them in trays which are designed to hold usually several thousand beedis. The beedis are then sent either to the factory or to another branch from where they are distributed to different sets of home workers for labelling.

Beedi making is one of the largest industries in the informal sector with appalling working conditions, incredibly low wages and uncertainties and exploitation. It has not yet attracted the attention of economists, administrators, and policy makers to any significant extent. Yet it is an industry which feeds millions of rural and urban poor through the unorganised labour of women and girl children.

A survey of ILO estimated that about \$450 million (Rs.340 crores) worth of beedis are produced annually, but only about \$160 million go to the beedi worker as wages. Nevertheless, beedi making is an important source of income for the poorer rural households, because women's earnings from beedi making, constitute on an average, as much as 45.5 percent of the total income of the simple household. This indicates their level of poverty. The ILO study also shows that the contractors who supply the raw material for the manufacture of beedis in homes, rarely pay more than the equivalent of half the statutory minimum wage, since this is almost impossible to enforce.

Beedi making is an extremely labour intensive , back breaking and strenuous occupation but women and girl children continue to do it because this, atleast provides them with a livelihood , in the absence of any other. In addition to the economic exploitation of the beedi workers they are also exposed to occupational health hazards.

The nature of the work is so monotonous that after a few years the work becomes mechanical . There is no room for creativity or innovation. The nature of beedi work is such that a women cannot take her eyes off it even for a moment if she is to make the required number of beedis for a day. This takes its toll of people's eyesight, as they grow older. As the beedi worker is seated at the same place and in the same position for hours, there is no body movement involved, except the monotonous movement of the two fore arms. This results in back ache, leg ache, head ache, piles etc. A more serious threat to the health of the beedi worker is posed by the inhalation of tobacco fumes to which the workers are continuously exposed. Studies from other parts of India have shown a high incidence of T.B. , asthma, allergy and continuous cold among the beedi workers.

Garment Industry : Women do various kinds of work such as cut work , embroidery, crochet, tracing pattern on to dresses, stitching various types of hooks and buttons, and supply to the garment industry.

Food Processing : Most women are employed in pickle , masala and papad making. The workers receive their work by way of an agent, and owners of small shops with retail outlets, combining production and sales. Many women are also employed in shelling of fish which are then delivered to freezing units for further processing, grading and packaging.

Textile Industry : Though the textile industry is dominated by large scale factories using capital intensive production methods, and small workshops using powerlooms also exists. Now increasingly home production is also carried out by the handloom weavers families using manually operated looms. Here most of the unpaid family labour is used, for women and children do most of the preparatory work.

Dairy Production : A very ambitious programme in India at alleviating rural poverty is operation floods. Funded by the host of international agencies this is India's dairy development project aimed at benefiting India's landless and small peasants. A large number of women especially from among medium and lower farmers are drawn into it. For them while dairying involves an intensification of the work process accompanies by little or no changes in the status or access to milk for consumption.

Crafts Production : Some of the other areas where women work in home based production are agarbathi, bamboo work, producing articles like baskets, fans and windows , cane work, wooden comb works, pith work, the making of garlands wreaths and flowers out of pith and mat knitting.

7.5.3 Measures to Help Home Based Workers:

The biggest problem related to home based workers is their invisibility. There are no official or even unofficial records of their existence, their conditions and their contribution to the national economy. Extensive research is needed to provide data on their economic and social

conditions. Such research will help ensure that when policy decisions are taken, their impact on the employment of home based workers will be considerable and given priority.

There is need to recognise home based work as work and offer them protection and extension of support services. As long as factory work alone is recognised as work, home based production will not get a strong foothold in the world of labour and production.

Piece rate workers will continue to be fed work by owners who want to avoid labour legislation. Hence home based workers should get benefits similar to factory workers such as minimum wages, leave, provident fund, gratuity, home, etc. A special welfare fund should be set up to provide creches, medical services, group and maternity insurance to home based workers.

The home based workers are presently outside the labour movement. Trade unions should include these workers as members. Issuing an identity card is one way of beginning the process of formalisation.

There is a need to organise these workers. All these workers are dispersed and work as individuals. They have to be brought together to work collectively at improving their own situations.

Government formalities, procedures, rules and regulations need to take into account the illiteracy of home based workers. When workers have to deal with administrative machinery and institutional forms of assistance they are forced into written transactions, required to provide written documentation of their bonafides of their income, purchase and sale all this which becomes difficult and they become exploited by middle men. Hence there is a need to increase the literacy level and make the benefits of development reach them.

In order to make home based production a viable economic activity, a great deal of time, money and effort have to be invested. The future of home based production and women workers will depend on the extent to which these efforts are successful.

7.6 WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

It is the agriculture sector which absorbs the largest proportion of India's workforce both male and female. Indian women's contribution to agriculture is significant and crucial both to agricultural production and the women's household.

The report of the committee on the status of women in India made the following observation "Any assessment of the role and problem of women in Indian agriculture has to take note of the nature and structure of the agricultural economy with its characteristic features of land relations, labour utilisation and the role and functions of the credit system". (Toward Equality G.O.I. Report 1974, P.162.)

7.6.1 Categories of Women Involved in Agriculture

In agriculture we come across two categories of women.

1. A woman who works on farms, held by themselves in ownership or lease. These are self employed women and are classified as cultivators.

2. A woman who works in another person's land, without exercising any supervision or direction in cultivation, for wages in money, kind or share of produce. She has no right or lease or contract on land on which she works and is termed as agricultural labourer.

Thus a large number of adult women in India are not just housewives, but are in fact farmers working on land. However agricultural policy is still dominated by the false view that 'farmers are men while women are housewives'. In fact agriculture employs 85% of all economically active women. However, women continue to be 'invisible' in agriculture.

7.6.2 Invisibility of Women's Work

There is a conceptual inability of statisticians and researchers to define women's work inside the house and outside the house. It is also related to the fact that although women work to sustain their families and communities most of their work is not measured in wages. Women's work also becomes invisible because women are concentrated outside market related or remunerated work and they are normally engaged in multiple tasks. "Time allocation Studies", which do not depend on a prior definition of work reflect more closely the multiplicity of tasks undertaken and the seasonal even daily movement in and out of the conventional labourforce which characterise the livelihood strategy for most rural women.

7.6.3 Some Studies on Assessment of Work done by Women:

Whether it is shifting cultivation, subsistence and low input agriculture, or high external input agriculture, women work longer and harder than men.

1. According to Fernandes Walter and Geeta Menon "Tribal Women and Forest Economy", Indian Social Institute, New Delhi 1987, in the tribal economy of Orissa, shifting cultivation (Bogodo) women spend 105.4 days per year on agricultural operations compared to men who spend 59 days per year on agricultural work.
2. According to Vir Singh "Hills of Hardship" The Hindustan Times Weekly, January 18, 1987, in the Indian Himalayas, a pair of bullock work for 1,064 hours, a man for 1212 hours and a woman for 3485 hours in a year on a one hectare farm.
3. J.B.Bhati and D.V.Singh, in "Women's contribution to Agricultural economy in Hill Regions of North West India" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.22, No 117, April 25, 1987, have calculated that in the hill agriculture of Himachal Pradesh women do 37 percent of sowing work, 59 percent in interculture (weeding) 66 percent of harvesting, 59 percent of thrashing and 69 percent of tending farm animal. In terms of over all farm work they contribute 61 percent of the total labour.
4. K.Saradamani, in "Labour land and Rice production: Women's Involvement in three states" Economic and Political Weekly, 22(17, 1987, States that in the rice production in the three states of Kerala, Tamilnadu and West Bengal the contribution of women is neither marginal nor insignificant. Through their work, knowledge and skill both categories of women (Labourer's and land owning) make crucial contribution to the production of proceeding of rice as well as to household expenditure. They are also aware of technological changes and influence their acceptance or rejection.

5. Joan Mencher's study, "Women's work and poverty : Women's contribution to household maintenance in two regions of south India" in D.Deoyar and J.Brue (ed). "A Home divided Women and Income control in the Third World" (Stanford University Press, 1987), shows that women's contribution to the household income is immense and besides this in agriculture more than two third input is female. Besides ploughing which is an exclusive male task, women have a predominant role in transplantation, weeding, manuring, fertilising, harvesting, thrashing, measuring, winnowing, drying, stacking and carrying.

7.7 WOMEN AS BREADWINNERS

The invisibility of women's work is also linked in part to the view of man as the primary breadwinner. The focus on only male labour in agriculture involves the concept of the "Head of the Household".

Today , major economic and social transformations are occurring which, whatever the culturally ideal position of men and women in society may be , are changing household formations and patterns of obligations rapidly and substantially. Nearly 35% of the households below the poverty line are headed by women (Gail Omvedt "Effect of agricultural Development in the Status of Women" Maharashtra 1981). This fact challenges the image of the model poor rural household as male headed and of farming as a predominantly male occupation.

Even where there is a male earner, women's earnings form a major part of the income of poor households. Moreover women contribute a large share of what they earn to basic family maintenance than men. A number of studies however show increase in women's income. Translated more directly into better child health and nutrition. It also increases a women's personal security and hence the security of children in poverty stricken households (Mencher, and K.Saradamani).

Even though women contribute significantly to food production and food consumption with in the household, agricultural officials and village men perceive women as 'inactive' and dependents. This leads to 'unequal wages', for the most of the strenuous jobs that women do are considered 'light' and 'unskilled' work.

Thus women's role in production and consumption of food are linked to family welfare in ways that men are not. Women have also been experts in the breeding and feeding of farm animals which include not just cows and buffaloes but also pigs, chicken, ducks, and goats. In forestry too, women's knowledge is crucial to the use of biomass for feed and fertilizer. Knowledge of the feed value of different fodder species of the fuel value of firewood types and food products and food species is essential to agriculture related forestry in which women are predominantly active. In low input agriculture fertility is transferred from the forest and farm trees to the field by women's work, either directly or via animals.

7.8 TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND WOMEN:

There is strong evidence to show that technical change in agriculture associated with higher capital intensity, greater mechanisation of production and post harvest operations, the

development of crop and livestock with varied characteristics geared to the requirement of commercial commodity production has been accompanied by changes which women experience in unique ways. These include the loss of knowledge, skills and production contributions.

Women's knowledge has been the mainstay of the indigenous dairy industry. Dairying, as managed by women in rural India embodies practices and logic rather different from those contained in the dairy science imparted at institutions of formal education since the latter is essentially an import from Europe and North America. Therefore, with dairy development, trade in dairy products shifts out of the household and the income is no longer under female control. Increase in sale of milk may mean less consumption in the household. It means more work for women who are engaged in the task of care and feeding of livestock.

Irrigation is another area where this change can be seen. Traditionally irrigation was based on water harvesting and water was transferred from the small ponds to the fields through the bucket system operated manually, and women were very active here. The introduction of diesel pumpset has made irrigation a male monopoly. This has not reduced women's work load.

Many women's access to resources including entry is actually declining, while their need for food and income is increasing. Women are the most important collectors and users of biomass. The increasing scarcity of biomass is multiplying women's work.

The focus of the 'green revolution' has been increasing grain yields of rice and wheat by techniques such as dwarfing, monocultures and multicropping. For an Indian women farmer, rice is not only a food it is also a source of fodder for cattle, straw for thatch. High yielding varieties have increased women's work. The destruction of biological diversity undermines women's diverse contribution to agriculture by eroding biological sources of food, fodder, fertilizer, fuel and fibre. The shift from local varieties and local indigenous crop improvement strategies can also take away women's control over seeds and generic resources (Vandana Shiva).

7.8.1 Women and Access to Resources

While women play a predominant role in agriculture and food provisioning women's participation in agriculture extension training and research is next to insignificant. Women constitute a mere 0.59% of India's agricultural extension workers. Since almost all extension workers are men, women's roles and skills are usually over looked even in areas where they do most of the work. Further sex segregation discourage contact between women farmers and male extension agents.

Similarly, women's access to credit is also severely restricted. They do not have the collateral (land title and cattle) required for agricultural loans. All women cooperatives have been highly successful in dealing with these issues.

With the process of commercialization women's traditional land rights were eroded. Land reform programmes as well as the tendency towards the breakup of communal land holding especially in areas of tribal and customary tennures have led to the transfer of exclusive land rights to males as head of households. The 'head of the family' concept which is used as the basis for land redistribution, has historically ignored both the existence of the female headed households and the rights of the married women to a joint share in land.

The ecological decline in common property resources and the decline in access to what remains due to force of privatisation has meant that women work harder and are less able to fulfill their multiple roles in the maintenance and care of the farming system and the farm household. Thus a growing imbalance exists between women's access to land, labour, capital, services and facilities on the one hand and demands of production on the other.

7.8.2 Shift from Cultivators to Labour status for Women:

Through out the country, women's loss of control over production process has been associated with an increase in the burden of work and increased dependence on wage labour. Statistics show us a dramatic shift from cultivator to labour status. Commenting on this aspect the "status of women G.O.I. Report 1974 P.162 remarks "The Decline of Women cultivators from 183.6 lakhs in 1951 to 92.6 lakhs in 1971 i.e. by nearly 50 % can be attributed to increasing popularisation leading to loss of land or inadequate growth of productive employment opportunities on family farm leading to withdrawal of women from active cultivation.

The increase in the number of agricultural labourers from 12.6 millions in 1951 to 15.7 millions in 1971, a shift from less than one third to more than half of the total women workforce, is the greatest indicator of increasing poverty and reduction in the level of employment and not of improving rights and opportunities for economic participation.

More recently, the increased commercialisation of agriculture and monetization of economy have resulted in the transformation of agriculture labour into wage employment. Cultivators hiring agricultural labourers by the day have for the most part replaced long term agreements between persons with rights in the land and landless labourers. Instead of whole families working for a landlord, individuals are hired. Agricultural labour is seasonal work with long period of unemployment and under employment during the year. Although the landless were certainly oppressed by the earlier ties of dependence on landlords, there was some chance of aid when times were hard. Today operating in the cash nexus, labourers eat only when they can find work.

Brita Brandtzaeg, in "Women Food and Technology" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XIV, No.47, November 24, 1979, Points out "The overall trend in Women's role in agriculture, a shift from cultivator to labourer status, can only be explained by loss of land for subsistence cultivation and inadequate growth of productive employment opportunities on family farms which leads to withdrawal of women from active cultivation.

Maria Mies study on "Indian Women in Subsistence and Agricultural Labour", (Vistaar Publications, New Delhi) 1987, however presents a different point of view. In a study of women in Nalgonda district of the Telangana region, she clearly shows that women continued to be the main labour force in agricultural production and any modernisation of agriculture that had taken place (eg. the introduction of electric pumps for irrigation) had displaced men to a greater extent than women. The reason for this was the restructuring of the sexual division of labour in the process of modernisation of agriculture.

The division of labour within the household tends to be complex and interdependent, so that any change in the pattern or timing of work or changes in the allocation of tasks and distribution of resources, have consequences for other tasks, that may be essential to the maintenance of the household and the farming system.

Thus there is a clear need to understand the role played by women in agriculture. The recognition that most women in India are farmers, necessitates a reorientation in agricultural research, development and extension. An urgent need exists to match research and production system to the role women play and to create mechanism to strengthen and enhance these roles. This would go a long way not only from the point of view of creating equality but contributing effectively to agriculture and food security of the country.

7.9 SUMMARY

In this unit we have looked at women's role in the national economy. We have highlighted the distinction between organised and unorganised sectors. A large number of studies concentrating on women and work have brought to light a very disturbing finding of growing decline of women in the organised sector. We have highlighted the reasons for this decline. We have also looked at women in the unorganised sector. Some of the areas that have been highlighted are construction work, brick making, fishing industry. We have also highlighted the role of women in home based production and the problems they face. We have then looked at women in agriculture and the shift from cultivators to labour status for women.

7.10 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following in about 30 lines each.

- 1) Critically examine the differences between the organised sector and the unorganised sector.
- 2) What are the important characteristics of women's employment in the organised sector.
- 3) Critically examine the nature of women's work in construction, brick making and fishing industry.
- 4) Critically examine some of the areas where women are employed and the problems faced by home based production.
- 5) Critically analyse few research studies by women in agriculture.
- 6) What impact has technological change had on women in Indian agriculture.
- 7) Write a short note on the recent trend and reasons for the shift of women cultivators to labour status.

II Answer the following in about 15 lines each.

- 1) Women in Construction.
- 2) Women in home based industries.

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UNIT - 8 : WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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8.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to discuss

- The characteristics of informal sector,
- Problems of women in the informal sector,
- Government policies and programmes for women workers, and
- Organisations providing support for women in the informal sector.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The dichotomy of formal and informal sector is of recent origin and has been widely used as convenient method of analysing the structures of urban economies. The International Organisation (I.L.O. 1972) pointed out that informal sector was self reliant, small scale and is ignored by the Government, not provided the infrastructure, credit facilities and employed workers who are

poor, work for long hours and earn low incomes. They lack access to credit facilities, training, health services, government subsidies and are ignorant of social legislation. They live under exploitative conditions.

According to Keith Hart (1973) informal sector comprises of self employed workers and new entrants to the urban labour market who are forced to take up jobs in this sector due to lack of skills and experiences, and lack of adequate opportunities in the formal sector.

By using this concept of informal sector International Labour Organisation has given recognition to the role of the working poor their contribution to this sector and to the national economy. There are two sets of criteria which are used to differentiate the formal sector and informal sector - first is the type or size of enterprise and second is the conditions of employment. The enterprise related criteria of informal sector are - pre entry, family ownership, use of indigenous resources, labour intensive, small scale operations, adoptive technologies, unregulated and competitive markets, skills obtained outside formal education system.

The second criteria which is used to describe the informal sector is on the basis of conditions of employment - uncertain working hours, wages, irregularity of employment, absence of formal working contract, no legal protection and with no permanent employment. The poor working women in this sector are dependent, subordinate and exploited.

8.2 WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

According to 1991 census 95% of women workers are engaged in informal sector. Large number of women in this sector are concentrated in home based industry, as piece-rate workers, casual labourers and petty trading and continue to be invisible. They are underestimated, unrecognised by policy makers and governments as they carry out their work at home and in the neighbourhood and is considered only as an extension of domestic work. "The document of the World Bank on Gender and poverty in India highlights the invisibility of women in the labour force, owing to the definitions of work and methods of measurements of that work which ignores work done by women in the household and for the household".

8.2.1 Categorization of women workers in the informal sector

The Government of India in 1987 set up the National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector to

- 1) "examine the status of women in the self employed sector .
- 2) to assess the impact of various labour legislations on the self employed women especially in respect of maternity benefits and health insurance,
- 3) to identify the constraints and the gaps in productivity training , credit, upgradation of skills and marketing ,
- 4) to undertake a survey of the effects of macro policies relating to investment, production and technology on the status of self employed women ,
- 5) to suggest measures for removing the constraints which adversely affect the integration of self employed women in the national development process".

This commission though it was appointed to study 'self employed women' it covered all poor women because they had some important characteristics like

- a) fewer and poorer opportunities to work
- b) greater impact of unemployment, and casual nature of work
- c) greater vulnerability because of lack of skills and education
- d) lesser mobility
- e) heavy responsibilities
- f) a systematic social practice of underrating women's work and
- g) lack of access to better technologies, tools, and productive assets

On the basis of the nature of their enterprise and on the conditions of employment the National Commission on self employed women and women in the informal sector categorised women workers in the informal sector as follows:-

Based on Nature of enterprise criteria

- 1) Home based workers including artisans and piece-rate workers such as beedi workers, garment workers etc.;
- 2) Petty vendors and hawkers;
- 3) Contract and sub contract labour;
- 4) Service providers such as domestic helpers, washer women, scavengers etc.;
- 5) Women engaged in processing work (both in traditional and nontraditional);
- 6) Construction and other manual workers and ;
- 7) Workers in primary occupations such as agriculture, forestry, dairying, small animal husbandry etc.,

Based on Conditions of employment

- 1) Self employed
- 2) Wage earners working outside their homes and inside their homes. Under wage earners working outside their homes include construction workers, contract labour. Under wage earners working inside their homes include workers working in beedi industry, garment industry, agarbathi industry.
- 3) Unpaid family helpers (handicrafts, pottery, own cultivation).

The National Commission in its report highlighted the specific sectors in which women workers were found in large numbers. In the industrial and manufacturing activities women are found in large numbers in cashewnut processing units, cotton spinning units, beedi manufacturing units, tobacco processing and manufacturing units, canning and preservation units, wool spinning and weaving, tea plantations and small livestock rearing units.

In the primary sector women are concentrated in agriculture and small livestock . In the agriculture, mining and quarrying sector women workers are employed as casual labourers. We have learnt the categories of women workers based on the criteria of enterprise and conditions of employment . Now let us see the problems these women face.

8.2.2 Problems of women in the informal sector

Women in the informal sector face the following common problems :-

- 1) lack of access to raw material
- 2) access to credit and marketing facilities and
- 3) inadequate knowledge of the market demands.
- 4) Health Problems

8.3 INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN WORKERS

The Indian Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights . The following are those fundamental rights which are enshrined in the constitution.

- Article 14 - guarantees equality before law
- Article 15 - prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex
- Article 15(3) - empowers the state to make any special provision for women and children
- Article 16 - guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment
- Article 19 - grants the right to freedom of speech, to form associations or unions
- Article 23 - prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labour.

Apart from these articles there are certain Directive Principles that concern women workers.

- Article 39(a) - the right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally.
- Article 39(d) - equal pay for equal work for both men and women
- Article 39(e) - protection of the health and strength of workers - men, women and children from abuse and entry into avocations unsuited to their age or strength.
- Article 41 - right to work, education and public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement and other types of undeserved wants.
- Article 42 - just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Article 43 - provision of work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure of social and cultural opportunities and the promotion of cottage industries.

8.4 LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Before independence a sizable proportion of women were working in industries, mines and plantations. They were employed in unskilled and semiskilled types of jobs at low rates of wages. In 1920's labour laws enacted. They are i) The Indian Factories Act 1922, The Indian Mines Act 1923, The Indian Workmen Compensation Act 1923, The Indian Trade Union Act 1926 and The Trade Dispute Act 1929.

After independence the Minimum Wages Act (1948), the Industrial Disputes Act (1947), Payment of Bonus Act (1964), Employees Provident Fund Act (1965) were enacted. In the Factories Act 1948, the Employee State Insurance Act 1948, the Plantations Labour Act 1951, the Mines Act 1952 special provisions were made for women workers. The Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and Equal Remuneration Act 1976 are specifically for women workers only.

8.4.1 Recommendations of various Committees and Commissions

Committee on the Status of Women in India (1971) was appointed by Government of India to

- 1) "examine the constitutional, legal and administrative provisions that have a bearing on the social status of women, their education and employment.
- 2) assess the impact of these provisions during the last two decades on the status of women in the country, particularly in the rural sector and to suggest more effective programmes.
- 3) consider the development of education among women and determine the factors responsible for the slow progress in some areas and suggest remedial measures.
- 4) survey the problems of working women including discrimination in employment and remuneration.
- 5) examine the status of women as housewives and mothers in the changing social pattern and their problems in the sphere of further of education and employment.
- 6) To undertake survey or case studies on the implications of the population policies and family planning programmes on the status of women.
- 7) suggest any other measures which would enable women to play their full and proper role in building up the nation".

Committee on the Status of Women in India (1971) revealed the disturbing inequalities faced by women in work and wages and declining number of women in industry. It also identified exclusion of women from regular employment and access to legal rights. It pointed out that women in the unorganised sector were beyond the reach of laws which provide security.

The committee on the status of women stated that though Indian constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and directs the state to secure equal rights to adequate means of livelihood, equal pay to equal work, and just and humane conditions of work. The labour laws enacted reflect the attitude of protection and welfare. This emphasis of equality & greater employment opportunities has not been reflected in the laws. It also pointed

out that women working in the unorganised sector were outside the reach of the laws enacted by the Government. "The committee pointed out that lack of a well defined policy indicating areas where women require special assistance and protection is a hinderance to women's development as it leaves them without access to knowledge, skills and employment."

The committee recommended to extend the Maternity Benefit Act 1961 to all industries which are not covered by the act and to include anti-retrenchment clause in the Maternity Benefit Act.

- a) To reduce the limit of women workers from 50 to 20 in order to provide creche facility.
- b) To give permission for women to work upto 10.00 pm and provide them transport and security.
- c) Implement Maternity Benefit Act in all states & to extend the employees state insurance scheme in all areas.
- d) Legislative enactment of Article 39(d) of the constitution (equal pay for equal work)
- e) reservation of a definite quota for women for training within the industry to arrest retrenchment. It also recommended provision for part time employment, expansion of national employment service, provision for special leave without pay, enforcement of laws protecting women workers, increase in the number of women inspectors in labour departments, organise labour unions in the field of agriculture and industry, formation of women's wings in all trade unions.

National Commission on Self Employed Women(1987)

This commission investigated the impact of general labour laws on women workers. This commission was appointed to

- a) " examine the present status of women in the self employed sector with special reference to employment, health, education and social status.
- b) to assess the impact of various labour legislations on the self-employed , specially in respect of maternity benefits and health insurance.
- c) to identify the constraints on increase of productivity self-employed women and the gaps in training, credit, upgradation of skills and marketing.
- d) to survey employment patterns, including production relations and assess their impact on the wages of self employed women.
- e) to undertake a survey of the effects of macropolicies relating to investment, production and technology on the status of self employed women.
- f) to consider the link between the productive and reproductive roles of self-employed women with special reference to their health status.
- g) suggest measures relating to all sectors for removing the constraints which adversely affects the integration of self employed women in the national developmental process".

This commission stated that women workers rarely benefit from the introduction of mechanisation and new technology but suffer a high incidence of casualisation. Though women contribute to the family income and national economy they remain invisible and their work is undervalued. They face economic exploitation and are paid low and discriminatory wages.

The National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in Informal Sector in its report "Shramshakti" discussed about the impact of general laws and specific laws on women workers. The commission recommended to enlarge the definition of women workers to include paid and unpaid activities performed by women within the home or outside. It also recommended to devise strategies which can help to enhance the ownership of and the control over productive assets by poor women.

The Minimum Wages Act 1948

- 1) The National Commission recommended fixation of minimum needs, standardization of time ratio to piece rate, one women member in advisory boards and committees fixing minimum wages. The commission recommended to keep in view the basic minimum needs of the worker and her family for sustenance when fixing the wages so as to enable the worker to cross the poverty line.
- 2) To list out occupations and to notify minimum rates of wages against them.
- 3) Fixation of piece rates must be specified with reference to what an ordinary adult woman can produce or achieve in a period of eight hours of work and that output must entitle her to earn what would be the minimum time-rate wages per day in that employment".

The commission recommended a fall back wage (75% of time rates wages) to be paid to the worker in occupations where wages are fixed and paid on piece rates, and if the output of the worker is low due to non-availability of raw materials etc. It also suggested to implement of Employment Guarantee scheme to ensure adequate earnings to women in the unorganised /informal sector.

It also suggested that a national or atleast regional minimum wage rates be fixed and the same may be periodically revised and the rate be published. The commission suggested in setting up advisory boards and committees for fixing/revising minimum wage rates to women members and involve to represent the interests of women workers.

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970

The Commission criticised that this Act has not been properly implemented and large number of women workers were entering the manufacturing sector on contract basis. It recommended that wherever the system of contract labour is abolished the principal employer must take all the affected contract labour in his direct employment. It also suggested to draft the definition of the term "employee".

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:

The National Commission recommended establishment of a central fund to from that fund the women workers may be provide benefits. It suggested that both men & women employers should pay a percentage of the total wages to the fund & this fund should be controlled and

administered by the ESI. It also stated that it is not necessary to prescribe any period of service to enable women to obtain maternity benefits. The Commission recommended to the State Governments to take the responsibility of providing maternity benefits when it is not possible to extend the same through a special fund.

Equal Remuneration Act, 1976:

The commission recommended that 15% of women candidates be given preference in training in ITIs & prescribed that qualifications may be relaxed for women. It suggested deletion of Sec.16 of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

Plantation Labour Act, 1951:

The Commission recommended amendment in sec(ee) of the Act to consider the parents of female workers as well as dependents. (In sec(ee) Act the parents of a male worker are considered dependents).

Workmen's Compensation Act, 1932:

The commission recommended elimination of the words "whose employment is of a casual nature". It suggested that in the case of death of a women worker due to accident the compensation payable must be more than what is payable under the law. It recommended that all women workers must be compelled by law to take Accident insurance policies. It also recommended amendment of law to compel employer to retain in service, a worker who has suffered partial disablement due to employment injury.

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986:

The commission recommended prohibition of child labour by 2000AD and to provide childcare facilities.

Home based women workers: The Commission recommended that a new legislation may be passed which gives greater visibility of women. It also stated that this new law should provide for Tripartite Boards.

National Commission on Rural Labour 1991:

This commission in its report recommended amendment of existing patrilineal inheritance laws which discriminate women and provide women co-ownership in land and productive assets. It also recommended that along with employment guarantee schemes for unskilled women workers, technological skills may also be provided so that they can face technological change & mechanisation. It recommended for a central legislation for agricultural workers & to establish a mechanism to extend benefits which are enjoyed by women in the organised sector.

8.5 GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN WORKERS

The Government of India adopted the five year plans as vehicles of the Governments policy to develop the economy of the country. The emphasis of the first plan to the fifth plan was to develop industry and agriculture. It was believed that the development of these two areas

would lead to overall social development, and women would also be benefitted. In these plans the policy approach towards women was of providing welfare facilities. In the first five year plan (1951-1956) the central social welfare board was set up for the welfare of women. The second five year plan highlights the need for enabling facilities like maternity benefits, equal pay for equal work, creches and training for women workers. In the third & fourth five year plans (61-74) the emphasis was on education and improvement of maternal health and child welfare. The emphasis of the fifth plan (74-79) was to train women workers. In this plan period the report of the Commission of status of women in India was submitted which had its impact on approaches of government to women's development. It coincided with the international women's decade. During this plan period the Government of India appointed a "Working Group on Employment of women". A chapter on women and development was included in the sixth plan document and attempts to cover women under poverty alleviation programmes and starting of new schemes followed. The emphasis of eight and ninth plans was on 'empowerment'.

In 1978 the National plan of Action for women was prepared by the National Committee on women. This Committee identified the problems hindering participation of women as wage employees. It made the recommendations that where women are employed in significant numbers the Central and State Governments should (1) ensure equal opportunities for women's participation, (2) in rural areas at first point of entry give preference to women candidates, (3) provide special facilities for women where women's participation is negligible. It also recommended to raise the maximum age of entering into Government service upto 35 years to encourage women who dropped out of employment to reenter employment.

Following the National Plan of Action the department of women and child development (DWCD) was established by Government of India under Ministry of Human Resource Development.. This department was set up to function as a model agency for women's development.

National Perspective Plan for Women, 1986:

The National perspective plan is a set of recommendations which are aimed at the welfare and development of women. This perspective plan for women identified the most critical factors affecting women's employment as follows:

- 1) "Segmentation of labour market which works against women.
- 2) adverse implications of technological growth for women
- 3) 'lack of unionization of female workers
- 4) absence of purposeful human resource development policy aimed at improving women's employment and productivity through training and
- 5) lack of National labour policy encompassing workers in the unorganised sector."

The NPP recommended to extend the support services like creches, ESI and Maternity Benefits to cover the unorganised and agricultural sector where large number of women are working..

In 1992 National commission for women was set up to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women and recommend remedial measures. The commission organised a National workshop in 1993 to review the new macro economic policies under Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP).

The following recommendations were made:

- 1) "institutional and policy measures to industries where women are employed in large numbers like handicrafts, handloom etc.,
- 2) to establish tripartite fund for social security
- 3) decentralisation of anti poverty programmes
- 4) expand the coverage of labour laws"

To tackle the problem of poverty Government of India introduced the following programmes:

- a) programmes providing self employment
- b) programmes providing wage employment
- c) special area development programmes
- d) programmes pertaining to land reforms
- e) programmes imparting training for skill formation

8.5.1 Programmes providing self employment

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) along with the other associated programmes of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas(DWCRA), Wage Employment Programmes of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) are aimed at alleviating poverty.

Self Employment Generation Schemes for Women:

The main feature of these employment generation schemes is that they provide credit at highly concessional rates or subsidies for self employment and a direct provision of short term wage employment by the Government.

Development of Women and children in Rural Areas(DWCRA):

This programme is a sub scheme of IRDP introduced

- 1) "to strengthen the economic base for rural women by providing them credit and subsidies.
- 2) to provide support services to enhance women productive skills and efficiencies and also to mitigate their drudgery in their multiple responsibilities.
- 3) to enhance their bargaining power and decision making abilities through collectivization.
- 4) to train them in productive skills and group dynamics
- 5) to orient the development functionaries to respond positively to the needs and constraints of poor women."

Under this scheme 10-15 women members from poor households are grouped for providing credit, skill training, infrastructural support for self employment and also cash (revolving fund of Rs. 25000). It operates through District Rural Development Agencies(DRDA).

The other programme under self employment promoting scheme is Rashtriya Mahila Kosh. Under this scheme credit for self employment is provided through voluntary organisations. Funding is also done through women's development corporations, cooperatives and other agencies.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) also has scheme of financial assistance to voluntary organisations for setting up small scale industries.

Another self employment providing scheme is Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) (1989). The two programmes, wage employment programmes of the National Rural Employment Programme(NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were combined into this scheme.

Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojna(PMRY) is yet another self employment promoting scheme which gives preference to women. This scheme provides subsidy for setting up small enterprises and it is implemented through the District Industrial Centres (DICs) of state governments.

Khadi and Village industries commission also provides self employment schemes which are implemented through the state KVIC Boards and DRDAs. It provides subsidiary loans, supplies of raw materials.

8.5.2 Programmes for Wage Employment :

Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY), the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), and the Nehru Rozgar Yojna (NRY) are the major wage employment programmes.

The Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) programme has the objective of providing employment of 100 days to one member of each family of rural landless in the country. This scheme is implemented through DRDAs and panchayats of the states. The Nehru Rozgar Yojna (NRY) is implemented in urban areas and has 40% of such employment is reserved for women.

The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) which has been introduced in 1993 provides employment during agricultural season. It is implemented through panchayats. The Deputy Collector of a district is incharge of implementing this scheme. This scheme caters to the creation of economic infrastructure and community assets for promoting employment. 100 days of employment is provided to poor under this scheme.

8.5.3 Support Services

An important aspect of the welfare programmes of the Government from 1980s was of providing support services. This was done to reduce overburdening drudgery of daily chores which women perform for the survival of the family. Women in order to supplement family income take up marginal occupations like tailoring, collection of fodder, firewood, cowdung etc. Unless they are provided alternative ways of reducing their burden, it is not easy for women to take up employment outside the home.

In 1982 a cell on science and technology for women was set up by the Department of Science and Technology. This cell divided the various technologies for women into the following four areas.

- 1) Technologies for drudgery reduction
- 2) Employment Generation Technology
- 3) Health and Sanitation Technologies
- 4) Technologies for Minimising occupational Hazards

The department of Science and Technology in 1985 undertook a project known as All India Coordinated Project on fuel. Through government agencies and other agencies like CAPART and Non government agencies selected technologies were disseminated to people. Other programmes like provision of safe drinking water at easily accessible distance were also undertaken. Under the National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB) social forestry programmes have been implemented. The main aim of these programmes is to bring land under fuelwood and fodder plantation so that fuelwood and fodder are available to women for their daily need.

Though provision of creches /daycare centres for childcare was considered essential for working women, very little effort is being made to put that into practice. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) launched by the Government in 1975 provides parttime creche facilities to poor working mothers. Under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) there is National Maternity Benefit Scheme which provides cash assistance to women from households below poverty line.

In 1972 a central scheme of assistance for constructing hostel buildings for working women was initiated. Later in 1980 provision for day care centres for children was included in this scheme. The Department of women and child Development (DWCD) and Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) are implementing this scheme.

In 1993-94 Indira Awaas Yojana was introduced to provide free houses to poor women. This scheme is implemented through DRDAS and beneficiaries are selected by the Gram Panchayats and house allotment is made in the name of women or in the joint ownership of husband and wife.

The various programmes which have been implemented to alleviate poverty are providing a short term relief to women. The emphasis of these programmes has been "to promote cooperative groups of women workers as part of the ideology of empowering them and also providing a sustainable form of economic activity. To enable rural women to have control over their savings and financial resources the Mahila Samridhi Yojana was started in 1993. The Yojana offers rural women facilities of small deposits with attractive interest rates through rural post offices".

8.6 ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Poor women played important role in various movements like nationalist movement, labour movement and other specific issue based movements.

Khadi was the issue which concerned the needs of poor women during the nationalist movement. They also participated in various labour movements. They participated in jute workers

struggle in Bengal, Textile workers struggle in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Coimbatore, Coir workers struggle in Travancore and also in North east plantation workers struggle and the Chipko movement. After the declaration of international women's decade, groups with feminist perspectives were formed which are struggling to give visibility to women's work. The following are the groups which are struggling for women in the informal sector - Self employed women's Association (SEWA) in Gujarat, working women's forum(WWF) in Tamilnadu, cooperative development foundation in Andhra Pradesh, NGO's such as Adithi in Bihar, Deccan Development Society in Andhra Pradesh. Apart from these Non-Governmental organisations the Government of India had introduced the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas(DWACRA) programme.

8.6.1 Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

This organisation was founded by Anasuya Ben of Ahmedabad, Gujarat in 1972 and in 1981 it was associated with TLA (Trade union). The main objectives of this organisation are

- a) "to organise and unite women, bring together all groups of unorganised urban and rural women.
- b) to create social and economic institutions for providing self employment and security and
- c) to struggle for justice and equality for their members".

Sewa has established the sewa women Bank, sewa academy, sewa health unit, sewa legal aid unit, sewa video unit, sewa penal unit. It organises rural women workers into groups and cooperatives and provides them training, support services like raw materials, marketing facilities, and social security. This organisation tries to improve the women's earning capacity through the process of organisation, and by providing support services it empowers women workers. Pressure from SEWA led to the establishment of National Commission on self employed women to study the status of poor women.

8.6.2 Working Women's Forum

This organisation was established by Jaya Arunachalam in 1978 in Tamilnadu mainly to empower women in productive and reproductive roles. The objectives of this organisation was

To provide organisation support to women workers on trade lines, provide visibility to the valuable economic role played by the poor women workers and to address the critical needs of women such as credit, employment and other support services

This forum organises women and provides credit facilities, raw materials, skills and training to its members and helps in marketing their products.

8.6.3 SAMAKYA (sahavikas)

This organisation is a voluntary action group based at Hyderabad. In 1992 it was renamed as Sahavikas. In mid 1986 Samakya had helped Thrift Cooperative Association (TCA) to promote rural women's thrift cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh.

1. "to operate and develop Cooperative Development Fund for the benefit of MCA's member cooperatives.

2. to use the services of senior Cooperatives and well wishers of the cooperative movement who were not interested in contesting for cooperative officers, but who, because of their knowledge, commitment and credibility could focus attention on cooperative issues and help to create a favourable environment in which cooperative could flourish ; and
3. to initiate a dialogue within and across various categories of cooperative in Andhra Pradesh and else where, so that common problems faced by cooperatives could be solved through combined action".

In mid 1986 Samakya had helped Thrift Cooperative Association (TCA) to promote rural women's thrift cooperatives in Ranga Reddy District. However, since the formal separation from (TCA) in 1987 it started setting up women's thrift societies in Warangal and Karimnagar districts with the following objectives:

1. "to evolve cost effective, sustainable replicable models for women's thrift cooperatives
2. to engage women in cooperative endeavour
3. to create possible constitutes or the Regional Association of Thrift Cooperatives (RATSCs)
4. to make available to the more established industrial worker dominated RATCs in South India as a resource agency to hammers women's cooperative movement".

The above organisations are organising poor working women, strengthening their economic base and are lobbying for the reform of legislation.

The various income generation schemes are concentrated in only limited government departments. Implementation of these programmes is through involvement of Non government organisations. The focus of the various programmes on women is narrow. The emphasis on Gender relations is very little. "The provision of credit is insufficient to stimulate long term self employment without other supports and market access and demand . The various wage employment schemes implemented provide only temporary employment at low wages. These schemes are discriminatory in terms of wages paid to women compared to men. In many of the programmes the role of women in the production, collection and utilisation of fuel and fodder and the related problems are not adequately emphasized.

8.7 SUMMARY

In this unit we have seen that majority of women are employed in the informal sector. It comprises of self-employed workers and new entrants to the urban labour market who lack skills, education to take up jobs in the formal sector. They earn low incomes, work for long hours and lack access to credit facilities, training and are vulnerable to exploitation. They lack organisation, worker consciousness and due to low level of technology are prone to drudgery. We have also discussed about various programmes for poor women's development and also organisations which are working for women's development.

8.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following in 30 lines each

- a) Discuss the characteristics and problems of women in the informal sector.
- b) Discuss the constitutional provisions for women workers
- c) Discuss the various programmes undertaken for women workers

II. Answer the following in 10 lines each.

- a) Self Employed Women's Association
- b) DWACRA
- c) Working Women's Forum

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UNIT - 9 : CONCEPTUAL FRAME-WORK OF DEVELOPMENT

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- 9.8 Suggested Books

9.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to :

- discuss the various conceptions of the word development, and
- discuss the various approaches to women's development

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Countries in the World have been classified as developed countries and developing countries. One of the important criteria employed to distinguish a developed country from an underdeveloped country is its per capita national income. However, it has been found that gross national product is not a sufficient measure as it does not indicate social and economic welfare. Though GNP per capita has limitations it is often used as an index of economic development. World Bank classified economies according to the gross national product into high-income economies, middle income economies and low-income economies. Countries with high income economies were called developed countries and countries with middle income and low income are referred to as developing countries. Europe, North America, Australia and Japan are referred to as developed countries and Asian, African and Latin America are considered as developing economies. Most of these developing countries were under colonial rule and suffered the worst type of colonial exploitation. They were left with distorted economies, poor health and education systems, poor communication and transport systems. After the Second World War the Asian and African countries succeeded in getting freedom and wanted to improve the standard of living of the people. They

were prescribed with a modernisation formula, which is the exact copy of the policies and strategies applied by the modern industrialised countries. Modernisation is an approach to development. Underdeveloped countries adopted national development planning as the principle instrument of development. In this unit first we will study the different conceptions of development and the approaches to women's development.

9.2 CONCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

The underdeveloped countries first identified that Lack of Capital, lack of skilled labour, Management and expertise, lack of Infrastructure, Modern Technology and Foreign exchange were obstacles to development and decided to develop the manufacturing capacity or industrial capacity of the country. This was done to shift the economy producing agricultural and primary products to one producing capital goods for world market so that they could gain scarce foreign exchange. Development advisors believed that international aid would help a developing country to acquire needed capital goods and technology to enable it to integrate into the world market. This conception of development as growth assigned a key role to import capital and technology. Till mid sixties the underdeveloped countries gave very little thought to modernize agriculture. "By the mid sixties many developing countries realised that inability to produce sufficient food for the urban masses was a major constraint to the development process" and land reforms were introduced in many countries in order to use land more productively. In order to increase food output high yielding varieties of grains like maize, wheat, rice and other technical packages were introduced which are known as "the green revolution package". With the introduction of high yielding varieties of grains (HYV) and new technology, these countries could produce enough for domestic use and also for export to other countries. Scholars like Gunnar Myrdal stated that "While the theory predicted that through trickle down effect all social strata would benefit from economic growth fostered by modernisation and industrialisation, in reality the development as growth paradigm was accompanied by the economic and social marginalisation of large sectors of population and found that benefits of development were not reaching the majority of poor at the bottom in the developing countries". Disparities in income, underemployment, shortage of food indicated that this trickle down effect had not materialised. Rural poverty increased which led to many small farmers selling their agricultural lands. Women who produce for their families were overburdened with work. In the early 1970's it was realised that about 40% of the developing world's population had not benefitted from the rise in the gross national product per capita and structural changes in the economies which were undertaken during 50s and 60s. Hence many economists rejected the definition of economic development as economic growth. Critics argued that this model of economic development failed because it has not addressed the issues of distribution. They argued that the main reason for failure of this conception of development was the unanticipated population growth and insufficient attention given to distribution. They pointed out that majority of the population did not benefit from growth paradigm because they were only minimally incorporated into the market.

By early 1970's it was widely recognised that modernisation theory with its accelerated growth strategies based on maximising GNP has failed to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment and financial benefits had not trickled down to the poor. In 1972 the World Bank officially shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to the broader concern with the eradication of absolute poverty and promotion to redistribution with growth. Realising the limitations of traditional approach i.e. economic development with economic growth, economic development was redefined in terms of redistribution with growth. Economic growth, equity and self-reliance were the three objectives of this conception.

Indicators were developed to measure the three objectives i.e. economic growth, equity and self-reliance.

This conception of economic development with redistribution with growth was considered better than the conception of development with growth. This conception of development gives importance to self reliance and it rejects dependence on foreign aid and places importance on planned redistribution of income and agriculture for economic development and at the same time industrial development is also considered essential for development.

The experience in most of the countries showed that while growth itself was seldom impressive, the problem of inequality and poverty remained unabated. Disparities of income and wealth increased. Employment and supply of essential goods did not increase making the lot of the poor even worse. It is in this context Basic Needs Approach accompanied by anti poverty programmes were introduced to take care of distribution aspect that a number of anti poverty programmes were introduced. The idea of this approach was to meet basic needs food, nutrition, health, education and housing as well as through employment and income generating activities the low income groups.

Basic necessities of life, education, health, employment and equity in the distribution of income and wealth were included under the dimension of welfare. "The focus on "basic needs" initiated a gradual reconsideration of women's contribution to development. Even though it was realised that women provided their families the basic needs i.e. food, water, clothing and health and worked under humble conditions, no development concerns have been directed to improve the conditions under which they worked.

Basic human needs approach was also criticised by economists & others which led to the introduction of Human Development Paradigm which was introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990.

Economic growth measures as you know focus on the expansion of income while human development measure embraces includes all human choices - whether economic, social or political. Human development index defined human development "as the process of enlarging people's choices. The most important ones are 1) to lead a long and healthy life 2) to be educated and 3) to enjoy a decent standard of living".

This shows that this paradigm embraces the entire society and not just the economy. The political, cultural and social factors are given as much importance as the economic factors.

There are four essential components in human development paradigm :

- 1) Equity
- 2) Sustainability
- 3) Productivity
- 4) Empowerment

Standard of Living : by GDP

In 1995 gender related development index was introduced. This gender related development index measures the achievements in the same dimensions and variable as human resources index. It also takes into account inequalities between men and women.

This indicates whether "women are able to actively participate in economic and political life". The main focus of this measure is on "participation, measuring gender inequality in key areas of economic, political participation and decision making". So far we have studied the different concepts of development.

9.3 EMERGENCE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

During 1960-70 women were absent from discussions of development theory and practice. Rural community development schemes which were introduced made efforts to involve people to identify projects which bring about rural development but no efforts were made to identify women's needs. Development planners believed that women's needs would be taken care of by the family, where the man is the head of the family then assumed that any benefits directed at the head of the family would automatically benefit all the other members in the family. Women were never considered as carrying out economic activities, but they were considered only as mothers and child bearers. Hence they devised family welfare programmes, which gave instruction in improving nutrition, health, hygienic and home science. It was in this decade Gender became an issue in development.

It was from 1970's women's issues and women's development were conceptually linked. The focus of Development planners shifted to issues of equity of distributional patterns and the target groups were the poor sections of the society. Concern with distributive issues led to research into the conditions of poor. The findings of these research works showed that women constituted the largest population of the poor. It was in this decade that the contribution of women to the family economy and family welfare was recognised and appreciated. Women came into the picture when population growth rates increased at a faster rates.

Empirical research findings showed that concentrated focus on women's mothering role was the main reason for not considering women's contributions. In 1970 Esther Boserup's book women's Role in Economic Development was published. Her findings showed that women were doing more than producing and rearing children. They were working in the informal sector, in many industries and also in agriculture and were playing an important role in economic production. She stated that by not providing them access to modern tools and training, women were displaced from their traditional occupations. With displacement, their financial position weakened and their social status was also lowered. Empirical research carried out in rural areas showed that women were providing their families with food, water, health and education and were over burdened with work. International Labour Organisation (ILO) also recognised that women were over burdened with work. During the 1970s and 1980s there was an expansion in research work and publications which had impact on the planners which pointed out the absence of women in developmental programmes. Women's needs were ignored by the planners. This contribution to the family and society was not recognised which marginalised women. Though there was a shift in the development approach to better the conditions of the poor, it did not produce much change in the development policy towards women. Emphasis still remained on women's role as procreators and

child bearers and rearers and secondary importance was given to women's role as economic producers. In the developing countries research showed that a large proportion of poor households were headed by women and the policy response at the national level was limited. The international agencies which were providing aid to poor were providing aid to small-scale income generating activities. The income generating projects provided poor women a means of earning income. They did not provide childcare services to women.

Rapidly expanding population in developing countries brought women into focus. Funds were provided to conduct research to determine the fertility. The research findings suggested that improvement of women's education and their employment opportunities and their participation in public life and decision making bodies would bring down fertility. To solve the problem of rapid population growth the policy makers adopted population control policies. To promote family planning women were considered the most appropriate agents for the population control programmes.

In 1970, United States Government was pressurised by women to do something for women in the developing countries. In 1973 US Senate adopted the Percy Amendment which added a provision to the foreign assistance Act to encourage and promote the integration of women into all aspects of development planning and policy making bodies. Women in development office was set up by USAID. Pressure on US by NGOs resulted in designating 1975 as the International Year of Women and a decision was taken to hold "World Conference on women and development" in Mexico. Several countries were asked to prepare country papers on the status of women in their countries. India also submitted the report on "status of women" in India. United States also prepared a report which was titled "Current trends and changes in the status and role of women and men". The theme of 1975 UN women's conference which was held in Mexico was "Equality, Development and peace". Government officials, other delegates, NGOs attended this conference. 73 percent of these delegates who attended the conference were women. World Plan of Action (WPA) containing a list of objectives relating to (1) improved educational opportunities for women (2) better employment prospects, equality in political and social participation and increased welfare services" was presented to the delegates.

In the world plan of action it was suggested to recognise women's work and reevaluate the roles traditionally assigned to men and women. It recommended that governments should establish national machinery to promote women's interests and to setup woman's units in their organisations. It made suggestions of holding the second world conference in 1980 to revise and appraise implementation of World Plan of Action. The world conference made the recommendation of declaring 1976-85 as UN Decade for women. In 1976 a voluntary fund was established to provide funds to projects which were undertaken during the women's decade. This fund was named as UNIFEM. It provides financial and technical assistance to women's organisations working for women's development through national governments. In 1983 International Research and Training Institute for the advancement of women (INSTRAW) was set up in Santo Domingo. This branch was assigned the work of promoting "the UN convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women and other international legal instruments."

After the international women's conference a number of non-governmental organisations, and women's support groups were established. Foundations and other government agencies provided financial assistance to women's organisation to carry out women development programmes. By 1981 a number of International non-governmental organisations started functioning which were listed out in the yearbook of International organisations. At the national levels several governments made efforts to set up national machinery to promote women's needs and interests. In 1980

women's second UN women's conference was held at Copenhagen. The theme of this conference was "employment, health and education". This conference was attended by delegates from 145 countries and NGOs. At this conference the progress made and the obstacles encountered at the national level in implementing the 1975 world plan of action were discussed and reviewed. The findings showed that in most countries progress was made yet there was "stagnation and deterioration in women's condition in national life. Though there was an increase in the labour force participation rates, women were employed only in feminine jobs and were paid low wages. In development planning, economic activity was defined in terms of the market. Women's contribution in home based production was completely ignored. In the school enrolment ratios of girls and boys there was some improvement. In the courses and printed material sex stereotyping still continued. Female illiteracy rates were high and there was not much improvement in the Health Status of women. Political participation of women also has not improved during the women's decade.

In the second UN women's conference on women issues like health, education, employment opportunities, redefinition of the term worker were discussed, and an unanimous decision to improve the lives of women was taken.

The decade 1980-89 had mixed effects for women. The Structural adjustment policies worsened the lives of a large number of women.

There was growth and increasing strength of women's organisations from the village to the international level. Several women's departments and ministries were established. These women's departments were located in Ministries which were concerned with welfare.

Women in development activists pointed out that women's invisibility to planners and development practitioners was due to poor data collection techniques or data bases. UN made efforts to include a number of questions in the census questionnaires. As a result of this effort a large body of data regarding women's activities was available by the end of 1980's.

In 1985 UN conference was held in Nairobi where it was decided to set up National and international machinery to further women's interests. The Nairobi forward conference adopted by consensus to promote the empowerment of women.

In 1995 the fourth world conference on women was held in Beijing, China and the plan of action emphasised Human rights of women and the need to mainstream a gender perspective in policy making and planning and to achieve gender equality.

9.4 POLICY APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Decade for women (1976-85) played an important role in highlighting the invisible role of women in the social and economic development of developing countries and there was a shift in the approaches of policy makers. The focus of research studies which was on role of women within the family and women's reproductive responsibilities moved towards understanding women's employment and productive activities. By focussing on waged women workers in the informal sector both in rural and urban areas the research findings of various studies helped in identifying poor women's income generating activities. The focus of policy makers also shifted from welfare oriented approach which assumed motherhood as the important role of women in the development process to other approaches, which emphasized the productive role of women.

9.4.1 Welfare Approach

Welfare Policy approaches were introduced during 1950s and 1960s to bring women into development as better mothers and still continues to be used. This approach is based on the assumptions that motherhood, child rearing is the most effective role of women in economic development and Women were identified as vulnerable groups along with the disabled and the sick and welfare provision for the family were provided. The welfare approach assumes men's role to be productive and women's role nonproductive.

This policy approach is family centered and Mother-child dyad was identified as the unit of concern. Mother's clubs or Mahila Mandals were created. The most important concern of the welfare programmes was physical survival by providing food and aid. The various welfare programmes implemented focussed on women in their reproductive role and special attention was given to pregnant and lactating women. Mother-Child Programmes (MCP) were started to distribute cooked food to guarantee nutritional improvement of children at the feeding centres and health clinics. These centres also provided nutrition education for mothers.

Family planning programmes were included in the welfare policy to control population since 1970 onwards. Population planners and various agencies which were concerned with population problem identified women in their reproductive ages responsible for limiting the size of the families. They believed that by disseminating contraceptive knowledge to women population growth can be controlled.

9.4.2 The Equity Approach

Equity approach was introduced during the UN Women's decade 1975-85 to gain equity for women in the development process.

Research studies conducted during 1970s showed that women contributed to the productivity of their communities particularly to agriculture. These studies showed that women's economic contribution is neither referred in the national statistics nor women's contribution was visible in data in the planning and implementation of development projects. Women were negatively affected by the modernisation projects. With innovative agricultural methods and sophisticated technologies, women were thrown out from their traditional productive work. With displacement their incomes, power and also their social status declined. Tinker (1976) stated that the negative impact of development on women is due to the errors in planning. She identified three types of errors 1) "family to acknowledge women's economic contribution and utilize women's productive role 2) errors that reinforced values which restrict women to the household performing child bearing and child rearing activities and 3) application of western values regarding women's work which are not appropriate based on the research evidence of adverse impact of development on women WID group in the United States stated that the capitalist development models introduced in the developing countries widened the gap between men and women. They recognised that women were ignored by USAID projects. Therefore they worked to influence the USAID policy. The result of this was the Amendment to the percy Amendment Act (1973) to the foreign Assistance Act. This approach recognised that women play two roles in society 1) Reproductive role 2) productive role and contribute to economic development but their contribution is neither recognised nor acknowledged.

Equity approach recognised that women are active participants in the development process and by providing access to employment and the market place women can be brought into the development process. According to Buvinic (1986) the emphasis of the equity approach is on economic independence of women. This approach emphasized legislative measures as a means to ensure equity. The theme of the second International Women's Conference was "equality, development and peace". The World Plan of Action reflected the equity approach Integrating women into the development process was the main goal.

9.4.3 Anti-Poverty Approach

By 1970 it was recognised that the modernisation theory introduced in third world countries with its accelerated growth strategies had failed as it has failed to redistribute income. The problems of poverty and unemployment were not solved and the financial benefits of rapid economic growth had not tricked down to the poor people. This anti poverty approach was introduced from 1970 onwards to ensure poor women increase their productivity. This approach recognised the productive role of women and viewed women's poverty as the main reason for their underdevelopment and not subordination. This approach identified that economic inequality between men and women is due to poverty. The emphasis of this approach is to reduce inequality between men and women. It aimed to ensure poor women increase their productivity and enable them to earn income through small-scale income generating projects. World employment programme was initiated by the international labour organisation. The major policy objective was to provide employment and the working poor were identified as the target group. The other approach was the basic needs approach to meet the basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and also education, human rights and employment, which are social needs. According to Buvinic "low income group women were identified as the target group to be assisted, because they were ignored by the previous development plans and secondly because of the traditional importance of women in meeting the basic needs of the family". This equity approach recognized the productive role of women. It identified that women's poverty is due to the following reasons:

1. Lack of access to private ownership of land and capital
2. Sexual discrimination in the labour market

The equity approach tried to increase employment and income generating options of poor women through better access to productive resources. The population control policies also recognised that education and employment programmes increase women's economic contribution and reduce fertility. This approach was criticized because it is believed that this approach provides employment to women so that their practical needs are met but it does not meet strategic gender needs.

In 1994, the report of the committee on the status of women highlighted that the economic policies of growth had tended to marginalise women. A majority of women in India were and still having low status and they are working in the informal sector. Data indicates that women, on the whole have not made any major gains in terms of employment. Only a small stratum has been able to enter the organised sector especially the public sector. One positive development has been that over time there has been a decline in under employment even with the unorganised informal sector.

9.4.4 Efficiency Approach

Since the 1980s the debt crisis the efficiency approach has been the development approach. The main purpose of this approach is to ensure that development is more effective and efficient through women's economic contribution.

"The world economy deteriorated from mid 1970s onwards. To overcome this problem stabilization and Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP), which were designed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, were implemented. Efficiency and productivity were the two objectives of the structural adjustment policies. Since the introduction of the policies there has been a decline in the economic levels and cuts in the social expenditure especially in health, education and food subsidies have been noticed. The New Economic Policy (NEP) with its structural adjustment programme has initiated policy changes towards expanding the role of the private sector and relying on increasing market forces for the private sector and resources. The NEP directly affects the agricultural sector as it aims to link Indian agriculture to world market on the one hand, and to remove input subsidies on the other. It may target even the consumption subsidies and the public distribution system. It has the effect of undermining subsistent crops as cash crops and exports receive greater emphasis. It carries the prospect of considerable reduction in the work force in the formal sector. Women are the first to go as they are largely in the aided social sector of health and education. As large number of men loose employment, the load on women to earn through the informal sector increases".

SAPs assume that unpaid activities of women will continue regardless of the way in which the resources are allocated. Women's reproductive work is completely ignored by the SAPs. SAPs have forced women to increase their labour and have forced them to work harder and for longer hours both in paid and unpaid work. The time allocated to productive and community-managing activities has increased. Reproductive activities are given secondary priority.

Thus the new economic trends will further aggravate the marginalised of the vulnerable families such as displaced and migrant families, families of landless and marginal female headed households. These families are at risk as they lack access to and control over resources".

9.4.5 Empowerment Approach

This approach is the recent women's development approach, which came into existence through third world women's feminist and grass roots organisations' experience. The purpose of the approach is to empower women through self-reliance. "It also acknowledge the inequalities between men and women and the origins of women's subordination in the family and stated that women experience oppression differently according to class and race". This approach arose out of failure of equity approach. The main purpose of this approach acknowledges the inequalities between men and women and the origins of women's subordination in the family. It emphasizes the fact that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. It maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels. This approach stressed the importance of women's organisations and acknowledges the functions of traditional organisations. It seeks to assist the traditional organisations to create awareness of feminist issues. This approach recognised the triple roles of women ie. the reproductive role, the productive role and community role. Through bottom up women's organisations empowerment approach seeks to raise women's consciousness to challenge subordination. It seeks address the patriarchal system as the root of women's subordination.

9.5 APPROACHES TO WOMEN IN INDIA

After India achieved independence government adopted the welfare approach to women. The international aid agencies also adopted welfare approach. Welfare measures for women were envisaged in the first five year plan (1951-56). Community Development Programme was introduced and in line with this philosophy emphasised organisation of women into Mahila Mandals or Women's clubs. The Central Social Welfare Board was established in 1953 to initiate and supervise the welfare programmes meant for women.

The second five year plan (1956-61) continued the earlier approach. It recognised the need for the organisation of women as workers. It stated that women should be protected against injurious work, should receive maternity benefits and creches for children. It also emphasized the implementation of equal pay for equal works and training to improve the skills of women to compete for higher jobs.

The third five year plan (1961-1966) emphasized female education as a major welfare strategy. In social welfare rural welfare services and condensed courses of education were provided a major share of the budget. The health programmes concentrated on providing services for maternal and child welfare, health education, nutrition and family planning.

The fourth five year plan (1969-74) emphasized women's education. The basic policy of this plan was to promote women's welfare within family and outlay on family planning was increased to reduce the birth rate from 40 to 25 per thousand through mass education. In the 1970's poverty alleviation programmes to combat poverty were introduced. Immunisation of pre-school children and supplementary feeding for children, expectant and nursing mothers was given high priority in this plan.

The fifth five year plan (1974-79) emphasized the need to train women who are in need of income and protection. This plan coincided with the international women's year. In 1976 a national plan of action was drawn. Health, family planning, nutrition, education, legislation and family welfare were identified as important areas for formulating policies. Functional literacy programmes to equip women with skills and knowledge to perform the functions of a housewife were emphasized. The women's welfare and Development Bureau was set up to initiate policies and coordinate women's development programmes. In 1975 Integrated Rural Development Services scheme was introduced. This scheme contained a package of nutrition, health and educational services.

The sixth five year plan (1979-84) recognised that providing mere welfare oriented programmes is not adequate, hence women should be involved in development programmes. It recognised women's lack of access to resources as critical factor which is impeding their development. The programme providing joint pattas (titles) to men and women was initiated in this plan. In this plan "family" rather than "women" remained the basic unit of development. Steps to improve skill levels among women to provide joint pattas to women, to give access to productive inputs, to develop appropriate technology to lessen the household burden of women were initiated. In 1982-83 the Development Programme of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) was initiated. "Since 1980's there has been a shift in poverty alleviation programmes to one of improving allocative efficiency."

The seventh five year plan (84-89) operationalised the concern for equity and empowerment. The emphasis of this plan was "to create an awareness about their Rights and privileges, training women for economic activity and employment."

"Women were treated as mothers with plenty of time on their hands, rather than as economically active, already overburdened by work." Planning commission paid special attention to women's development in the three major areas i.e. education, social welfare and health. National development strategies promoted women's grass root organisations (Mahila Mandals) as a policy to provide services to women, for organising income generating activities. But these organisations failed to improve the conditions of women.

After 1975 there was a shift in the policy towards women's issues. This shift was due to the pressure from two sources, the disturbing findings of the committee on the status of women and the impact of the international women's decade 1975-1985. In India a major shift in the approach to women came with the sixth five year plan. Apart from the above sources research data about the marginalisation of women in the development was also available. The sixth plan emphasized (1) "economic independence, educational advance and access to health care and family planning as essential for women's development (2) need for a disaggregated approach to solution of women's problems (3) the crucial role of grass root level organisations of women especially in rural areas". The need for an asset base and independent access even to family assets is recognised the problem "to give joint title to husband and wife in all development activities involving transfer of assets, particularly in programmes for distribution of land, house sites and beneficiary oriented economic units". The family was considered as the basic unit of development. In the government departments special cells were set up. Mahila Mandals and voluntary organisations were asked to continue their activities in raising the status of women.

The concerns expressed during the UN Decade for women were incorporated into the state policy with the seventh five year plan 1985-90. Women are viewed as the unit of development and not the family so that they could be the beneficiaries of government schemes. The emphasis was also to "raise awareness about women's oppression and on the need to build up women's self-confidence". "The seventh plan envisaged an integrated and much prolonged approach to women's development." The National perspective plan for women 1988-2000 A D which was the second policy document on women was published during the seventh five year plan. This perspective plan reviewed the existing policies and programmes for women and suggested future plan of action. The national perspective plan for women 1988-2000 AD strongly recommended "separation of welfare and development activities under the social welfare Boards and Women's Development Corporations". They recommended involvement of voluntary organisations and training programmes for women.

The eighth five-year plan emphasized community participation in the development process. This plan focused on human resource development and special focus on women or on other marginalised groups was absent.

For the betterment of women the government provides institutional support "the national level, the Development of women and child development acts as a machinery within the government to guide, coordinate and review the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organisations". At the national level the central social welfare board acts as an apex organisation. The National Institute of Public Cooperative and child development (NIPCCD) assists in research and training. The National Commission for women which was set up to see the implementation of

constitutional and legal safeguards and protection of women rights and privileges. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up in 1993 to promote the flow of developmental credit to poor working women. Women's cells have been set up in different departments.

Women in development programmes introduced in India include training programmes, credit programmes and income generating schemes for women. Poverty alleviation programmes were launched in 1970. These programmes are aimed at providing, creating self employment (IRDP, DWACRA) wage employment (Employment Guarantee Scheme EGS in Maharashtra and the JRY) and the minimum needs programmes for providing social services.

Women's Development programme in Rajasthan and Mahila Samakhya programmes in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and the two development programmes for empower.

9.6 SUMMARY

In 1950's independent countries were under the colonial rule decided to develop their economies by adopting the western model of planning. They first thought 'industrialisation and modernisation' will develop their economies and the development benefits would trickle down to the bottom and automatically all would benefit. By 1960-70 it became clear that the benefits of development were not reaching the poor and were harming women. This caused concern and Gender became an issue in development. Several women research scholars pointed that women were neglected in development planning. Women were further marginalised by the process of development. Based on the research findings and criticism from scholars and feminists the planners reexamined the goals and means of achieving development during 1970-80 which is considered as second development decade. Non-government organisations pointed out the absence of participation by poor and women in the development programmes. In response to this the basic needs approach accompanied by antipoverty programmes was introduced.

In 1975 United Nations organised global conference on Women & Development in Mexico and declared the decade 1975-85 as the Decade for Women. World Plan of Action was formulated. Several conferences were held later to discuss how to integrate women into development. With the pressure from women's movements and declarations of the various conferences and plan of Actions governments set up women's ministries, women's departments and also National commissions to evaluate the impact of various development programmes on women and to integrate women's concerns into planning process.

9.7 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in 30 lines each.

- 1) Discuss how development was conceived in 1950
- 2) Discuss how development was conceived after the "international Women's year."
- 3) Discuss the impact of different approaches on women.

II. Answer the following questions in 15 lines each.

- 1) Discuss the welfare approach.
- 2) Discuss the Antipoverty approach.
- 3) Discuss the Development approach.

9.8 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Muralidhar C.Bhandare - "The world of Gender Justice" (1999), HAR-Anand Publications.
2. "National Perspective Plan for Women" 1988-2000, Govt. of India, 1988
3. ShramShakti - "A Summary of the Report of the National Commission on Self Employed women and women in the informal sector".

BRAOU

UNIT-10 : MODERNISATION AND WOMEN

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you will be able to

- Discuss the concept of development, and
- Impact of modernisation on women.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The notion of development in early economics was simple and uninvolved. Development meant the capacity of static national economies to generate and sustain an annual increase in their Gross National Product at the rates of 5% to 7% or more. Though developmentalism is an old and powerful western idea, most major western contributions to development economics, with the exception of Marxism, were made in the 1950s and later. The decade of the 1960s was designated by the UN as the "Development Decade; the target laid down for the period was the attainment of 6% annual growth rate of GNP. Another indicator used by economists was the relationship between the growth of per capita GNP and the ability of a nation to expand its output at a rate faster than the growth rate of its population. Such a notion of economic development aimed at a planned alteration of the structure of production and employment. The size and share of the rural agricultural sector was to decline, those of the urban industrial sector, involving the growth of manufacturing and service industries were assumed to expand progressively. Non-economic social indicators of development were touched upon only in passing. The trickle down effect of overall per capita GNP growth was expected to provide more jobs and economic opportunities, ensuring wider diffusion of the benefits of growth.

But in the developing countries things did not work out the way economists had predicted. The "invisible hand" [a term originating in Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations, written in 1776] did not wave a magic wand. The social benefits of growth remained confined to small sections of the population, without reaching down to the person on the street it was increasingly felt that development cannot be viewed independently of non-economic dimensions of development. There was the need for qualitative change which would in turn facilitate quantitative change. Hence development was redefined and related to the objectives of 1) elimination of poverty, 2) inequality and unemployment within the framework of a growing economy. Three core values were gradually incorporated in the notion of development: life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom of choice.

The growth strategies of the first three decades after world war II had caused disappointment. Therefore there was a need for rethinking goals and strategies of development, both in the developed and the underdeveloped countries. The principal ingredients of an alternative paradigm was identified. Economic growth undeniably tops the agenda for development, but a consideration of its distributional dimension is also equally important. While planning for economic growth, it is necessary to keep in mind the broad human and social objectives. In other words, the vital question to be constantly asked is, economic growth for what? The goals will have to be set in terms of enrichment of the quality of life, giving high priority to meeting the basic needs of those living in absolute poverty and constituting nearly one-half of the Third world. Investment in people, is as necessary an input for economic growth. Meanwhile a careful watch will have to be maintained on rapidly depleting nonrenewable resources and environmental constraints will have to be borne in mind. Western levels of affluence and consumption may not be possible or even desirable. There is no point in setting impossibly high goals; development must be sustainable. Within the national context of development, attention will have to be given to the central problem of the eradication first of absolute poverty and then of poverty in general. It has been convincingly demonstrated that poverty lies at the root of most of the problems of the Third World Countries. The situation is likely to deteriorate if the present structures, which perpetuate and reinforce exploitation and oppression are not demolished. A dynamic approach to structural change, therefore must receive high priority in all plans of development. This is a requisite to successful solution of the problem of poverty; welfarism is no answer. Further, to ensure equal participation in development, a policy of affirmative action - positive discrimination - is indicated. Without it, conditions of genuine equality of opportunity cannot be achieved. The policy should cover all deprived sections of society, including women. However, the most well-intentioned efforts geared to allow access to the poor and depressed sections of society to the planning and to the fruits of development, are likely to fail if they are not backed by imaginative programmes of conscientization. The common people must know their rights and understand their responsibilities. Conscientization and education hold the key to effective human resource mobilisation and participative decision-making. Thus the meaning of development has broadened over the years. The different conceptions that have emerged are: development as economic growth, development as change in the social and political structures accompanying economic growth and development as activity of economic growth, equity and self-reliance.

10.2 MODERNISATION AND WOMEN

Modernisation and development have come to be keywords in the contemporary dialogue on the human condition though the two concepts have different intellectual ancestry they have come close to each other in substantive meaning.

Modernity may be understood as the common behavioural system historically associated with the urban, industrial, literate and participant societies of western Europe and North America. This system is characterised by a rational and scientific world view, growth and ever increasing application of science and technology, together with the continuous adaptation of the institutions of society to the imperatives of the new world view and the emerging technological ethos. These societies have registered impressive economic growth and continue to do so. Early in the twentieth century Japan and later certain other Countries have achieved modernisation in varying degrees many other aspirants have also succeeded atleast partially, in acquiring different levels of modernisation. Some of them are pushing forward for more of it. India too has enjoyed the fruits of modernisation to certain extent. But the more advantaged sections of society have tried to corner for themselves all the benefits of modernisation. Little effort was made to bring structural modification and institutional change. The vested interests of different sections of modernising elite effectively blocked these alterations.

More often than not, the benefits of modernization for women are mixed. The positive aspects of modernisation are combined with forms of oppression that perpetuate women's powerlessness and isolation. Patriarchal values and normative structures established several centuries ago still persist, though in a different garb. The reality of women's subordinate position is indicated through the adverse sex ratio of women, the growing domestic violence, increasing number of dowry deaths and rape cases.

The two corollaries of modernisation are industrialisation and urbanisation. The urban women have better access to education and employment which are unavailable to the rural women. Although industrialisation extends new employment opportunities to women, most women in industry do the lowest paid, least skilled work.

Ester Boserup, a leading economist concerned with the issues of women and development has summed up the difficulties facing women in developing countries:

Although both men and women may become victims of development, it is more difficult for women to adapt to new conditions because (1) family obligations make them less mobile than men (2) their occupational choice is more narrowly limited by custom (3) they usually have less education and training and (4) even without these handicaps they often face sex discrimination in recruitment. Moreover, in Third World countries, a larger percentage of the female (than the male) labour force is engaged in traditional occupations. These traditional occupations being gradually replaced by modern enterprises in economic development.

Studies on the impact of technology indicate a definite decline in employment opportunities due to the deepening capital intensity in the industrial sector. This is more true in the case of female employment. Female labour participation in industry declined to the lowest level in 1950. The factors responsible for the negative impact of economic development on women were : (1) structural changes in the economy which eliminated what were female occupations (2) the newly started industries being inhospitable to women, because of a new ideology about men's and women's spheres (3) many of these industries being urban based made it difficult for women to combine child care and domestic work with paid work outside the home. Urban employment calls for some level of education, long distance travel and long hours of absence from home. Further, no kin or neighbour's support can be expected in the urban situation and (4) work organisation changed in form and content but women's roles did not change. They still carried the sole responsibility of childcare and domestic work.

Structural changes in industry through rationalisation and modernisation :- The impact of modernisation of economy in India has been the exclusion of an increasing proportion of women from active participation in the productive process.

The most important factor contributing towards the declining trend in women's employment is the policy of heavier investment in capital intensive industries and technology. The initial adverse impact of more sophisticated technology in industry on the employment of women was a global trend. When modern industry first started in India, the process of production included several stages of manual and semi-manual operations. With increasing mechanisation some of these operations became obsolete. As a result, there was decreased demand for female labour who were engaged in manual operations. The introduction of high speed machinery has not only reduced the rate of absorption of new labour but has also led to the displacement of earlier labour. This increased the unemployment rate.

It is generally believed that women have limited aptitudes and are not capable of developing higher skills required for machine operations although this is not borne out by empirical evidence. Some of the new industries like electronics and telecommunication have found women capable of acquiring the skills needed for these sophisticated mechanised operations.

The so called 'lack of aptitude' of women spring from lack of training. There is evidence that in many industries women are not given any chance to acquire training when new processes are introduced. Both the management and the trade unions are conscious that training should be provided to workers to prevent them from becoming redundant, but the same need is overlooked in the case of women employees. The main impact of modernisation and new technology is thus on the women who become dispensable.

Apart from the absence of training within industry, women are handicapped by lack of pre-recruitment training particularly technical training. Vocational and technical training for women is a new development and the number of women with such training is still small. The majority of the women being displaced from employment as a result of technological changes are the illiterate and the semiliterate workers. Thus illiteracy continues to constitute a big barrier for learning new and sophisticated methods of operations.

It is often pointed out that workers in the lower income groups and women in particular are still very much under the influence of the traditional pattern of family and caste occupations. There is a reluctance among these workers to change their occupations or to acquire new skills. The refusal of women to change their modes of dress and ornaments in the interest of safety in factories is cited as an example of their tradition bound attitudes. However empirical evidence shows that the situation is changing rapidly. Increased exposure to mass media, particularly films are changing the attitudes of these women. Modes of dress and living are also changing rapidly.

The technological changes and the preference for higher investment in capital intensive technologies have contributed largely to a rising level of unemployment. But the unemployed men have better access to employment information as they are relatively more literate and do not suffer from restricted mobility like the women. A large number of women are handicapped by their ignorance of job opportunities. Many women are still ignorant of the existence of employment exchanges.

The causes of decline of the number and proportion of women in industry, lie primarily in their displacement from the old industries like textile, jute and mines. This decline has not been offset by the increase in women's employment in the new industries. The major share of industrial development in the post-independence period has gone to heavy industries which are capital intensive. Their failure to generate adequate employment opportunities have affected workers in general and women in particular. This is due to their lack of competitiveness and bargaining power which are linked to their low levels of literacy and social status. This has created a gap in the earning power of men and women and is responsible for the wide spread belief that female labour is less productive.

Trends of Economic participation in the Post-Independence period:-

Unorganised Sector:- An overwhelming majority of women workers are engaged in the unorganised sector of the economy. Among these the largest proportion is engaged in agriculture and the rest in non-agricultural occupations. The unorganised nature of this sector has kept the women workers outside the reach of most laws that seek to protect their working conditions.

Agriculture has continued to receive the burden of surplus labour force - Participation rates in agriculture during different decades show a steady rise after 1947. This is generally explained by the pattern of industrialisation of our country.

In the post-independence period, with rapid increase in the modern and organised sector of industry, the share of household industries declined rapidly. Since they constituted the biggest traditional source of women's employment outside agriculture, women were the greatest victims of this process of economic transformation.

The gradual commercialisation and modernisation of the economy and the efforts made by Government to replace traditional by modern institutions of credit and marketing to stabilise ownership of land and to maintain minimum wages, have by no means succeeded in 'organising' the production relations or in controlling the degree of exploitation of the weaker sections. They have not solved the problems of low productivity, poverty, unemployment and under employment. Wages of women are uniformly lower than those of men, even within the low wage structure of all workers in this sector.

Many of the women workers are unpaid family workers, both in family enterprises and in wage employment where their contribution to the family earnings as helpers of the men earners is not always realised or admitted. Most of these women fulfill dual roles by engaging in economic and household activity.

Services and Professions:-

Development has opened some new avenues for women. The services and professions have provided comparatively greater opportunities to them in the post-independence period. Earlier both in the public and private sectors women's participation was practically confined to health and education, though the II world war period ushered in small but significant entry of women into clerical and secretarial occupations. Modernisation and education have enabled some women to enter new professions or occupations which were totally closed to them earlier. For example, the presence of women in the public services and other jobs in the tertiary sector is now an accepted fact. For certain limited jobs, women are even preferred.

While the range of jobs open to educated women has widened in both public and private sector, the demand for unskilled women labour is shrinking.

The immediate factors responsible for the emergence of women in non-traditional fields of employment in the post-independence period are :-

- (a) the constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in matters of employment,
- (b) development of women's education and their entry into areas of education and employment hitherto monopolised by men,
- (c) and increasing tendency among the urban educated women to take up paid employment which reflected gradual ideological change in social values as well as the growing economic pressure on urban middle class families,
- (d) expansion of employment opportunities in the tertiary sector as a direct consequence of the increasing rate of development.

The constitutional guarantee of 'equality of opportunity' and nondiscrimination 'on grounds of sex' in employment and the specific directive 'to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people' had a direct bearing on the employment aspirations of middle class women. The emphasis on women's equality, that emerged during the last phase of the freedom movement had strongly influenced the attitudes of educated middle class women. The immediate expression of this was found in the period after independence in three spheres: (1) in higher education (2) the employment market particularly for jobs requiring higher education and (3) in politics. Women began to compete for services under the Government and the success of a few in these most prestigious occupations, which had hitherto been the monopoly of men, inspired other women and helped them to shake off their traditional inhibitions and lack of confidence.

The possibility of employment under Government provided the stimulus that women's education had lacked so far, particularly in the field of higher education. The demand for equality broke down the resistance of academic authorities and opened training in engineering and other applied and vocational sciences to women which had been monopolised by men.

Apart from education, the most important force behind the increasing entry of this new class of women into the field of wage employment is described as 'emancipation born out of necessity'. With the exception of those in the higher strata of society, the majority of women took to work for economic reasons. An increasing number of urban middle class women find that they have to support their families both before and after marriage to reduce the economic burden of their families. Rising prices, increasing costs of education and housing and absence of social security have been increasing the degree of economic pressure on these families. But for a significant segment of these working women, it was aspirations for a higher standard of living that has brought about the need for more than one earner in the family. There were non-economic reasons also for women to take up employment. Some women felt that they had a right to work so as to utilise their education and training.

In the public sector, while the number of women employees in the categories of professional, technical and related workers and primary and middle school teachers, has been continuously rising since 1960, their proportion to total employees has more or less remained constant with only minor fluctuations. The number of women in administrative executive and managerial work is steadily increasing. So also in the category of clerical and related work. The number and proportion of women workers in transport and communication has not increased significantly while in services, sports and recreations, their number is going up.

In the private sector, the categories where both the number and proportion of women to total workers has shown a steady increase are : Clerical and related work, service, sports and recreation and primary and middle school teaching. There was a general slump in the employment of women in all categories in 1963, except for unskilled office workers.

Women employed in the management cadre belong to the upper middle class, where no distinction is made in the education of boys and girls. These highly educated women hold degrees in specific disciplines, relevant for business management. Some of the fields where they are usually employed are in public relations, advertising and market research. There is also a trend to employ women more in areas where the clientele consists primarily of women or where the nature of jobs calls for a woman manager. The expansion of the hotel industry for example has opened some new avenues for women in the field of marketing, personal management, housekeeping and public relations.

In some traditional industries, however, women have not yet been accepted at the management level nor has the industry developed yet the conditions suited to the life cycle and special requirements of women. It is for this reason that women find it difficult to reach the top level jobs, although some of the industries have opened their management cadres to women.

Professions:-

Teachers:- Teaching as an occupation, particularly at the school stage, requires relatively little training beyond general education in comparison to the professions of medicine, law etc. In the prevailing social ethics, a long term professional training for women is still accessible only to a minority among the upper middle class. The second reason for the preference of this profession is the respectability attached to the profession in society, inspite of its lower salary structure. It also gives women comparatively more time for her household duties, as there are more vacations and limited hours of work.

Doctors:- Medicine has been an accepted and respected profession for women for a considerable period but the general tendency has been for women to concentrate in the practice of obstetrics and gynecology. In recent years, they have also entered paediatrics, surgery, medicine, pathology, radiology, anaesthesia etc. A new field for women doctors is administration in hospitals and public health.

Nurses:- Regarding the other categories of medical personnel, there has been an increase of nurses, mid-wives and health visitors. While these professions do not carry the same status as that of doctors not the same pay scale, there is no doubt that their status has increased in the post-independence period. Before independence, a taboo on women taking up this profession was imposed by many communities. Today with better training opportunities in nursing schools and colleges the status of the profession has gone up. There is also an increasing trend of migration of qualified nurses to foreign countries.

Lawyers:- There is an increase in the number of practising lawyers but very few women are being extended the opportunities for judicial appointments. A change in this trend is necessary not only in the interest of women in this profession but also for women in general who find a lack of understanding of their personal difficulties in family matters from the judicial profession.

Social Workers:- A new profession that has mainly emerged after independence is social work, a field where leadership had been generally assumed by women on a voluntary basis in the years before independence. The majority of professionally trained social workers today work in institutions, departments and organisations engaged in social welfare, both public and voluntary. Schools of social work admit men and women equally but it is the women who get employment in this profession with greater ease. This is mainly because women are less selective about the type of employment available, positions held by the majority of women in this profession are generally in the middle and the lower category with very few holding key posts.

Concentration of women in low level jobs in clerical and related services:-

The demand for unskilled women labour is shrinking both in public and private sectors but the growth in the number of women in white collared jobs is definitely on the increase. Both in public and private sectors lower grade jobs like receptionists, clerks, stenographers and typists are absorbing more and more educated women.

Central Services:- The Central services threw open their ranks to open competitions, giving equal opportunities for women since 1948. There was a slow but steady increase in the number of candidates as well as entrants in the IAS/IFS/IPS examinations. In the other services like the Indian economic service, the statistical service and engineering service, the proportion of women continued to be low. The number of women appearing for the Indian Forest Service examinations has been very small. The Indian Police service which initially refused to accept women has thrown their doors open to women. Data on other Central Services are not available.

An overview of the trends since independence reveals that the contribution and achievement of women in the tertiary sector have been significant. The number of women working as lawyers, engineers, technologists, scientists, accountants and auditors, journalists, business managers and executives may be small compared to men, but they indicate a qualitative change. Consciousness, solidarity and self-reliance among women should be made to develop. The Socialist feminists and Radical feminists use the Marxist frame work to explain difference between the status of men and women.

10.3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

10.3.1 Marginalisation of women in India

"Adequate means for livelihood or employment is the chief objective of development". There has been little progress in the achievement of this right for both men and women but estimates of employment and underemployment clearly indicate that the position is worse for women.

The traditional village community in India consisted of the cultivators, the artisans and those performing the menial services. In each of these, women played a distinctive and accepted

role in the process of earning a livelihood for the family, putting in sometimes more, sometimes less and often equal amount of labour. The same as the case in both production and marketing products of agriculture and handicrafts. The marketing of vegetables, processed and semi-processed food stuffs (dried fish, preparations of rice and pulses etc) and handicrafts (baskets and woven fabrics) are still marketed by women in most parts of India.

Among the agricultural classes and particularly among marginal and landless agriculturists, earning a livelihood is still a family endeavour; the pattern of women's participation varying according to regional cultural norms. In agricultural operations, the jobs traditionally done by women are sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing and winnowing.

The plough culture implied the use of animals in agricultural operations and enabled agricultural communities to produce more. The greater productivity of agriculture liberated a section of the community from the necessity of participating in food production. Although there was a general taboo on women engaging in ploughing, some women undertook ploughing where male members of the family were absent and they could not afford to hire male labour. This no doubt, resulted in some loss of prestige for these women.

The cultural norms that influence the engagement of women in manual labour outside the home vary according to their position in the social hierarchy. Gradually the process of excluding women from labour outside the home has itself become a symbol of higher status. As more and more productive tasks were taken out of the woman's hands, the woman was transformed from an equal partner to a subordinate position. Thus began the marginalisation of women.

The general decline of handicrafts from the 18th century led to increasing pressure of population on agriculture and increasing poverty in the rural sector, resulting in migration. In majority of the cases only the males migrated but when there was prospect of employment for the women also, as in plantations, mines and jute and the textile industry, the migration was of families. When men migrated alone, the women continued to depend on agricultural work as cultivators or wage earners.

With the development of modern and organised industry, the share of household industries declined rapidly. Since household industries constituted the biggest traditional source of women's employment, other than agriculture, women were the greatest victims of this process of economic transformation. Many of these household industries like hand weaving, oil pressing, rice pounding, tobacco processing etc., had to face stiff competition from factory production.

With the development of modern organised markets and increase in the number of intermediaries and whole sale trade, the marketing of the products of traditional household industry which was one of the important avenue of earning for women has been gradually disappearing. As a result, the participation rate of women in the service sector has recorded a steady decline.

In the initial phase of industrial development, most industries employed a considerable number of women and children, although they were confined to certain unskilled and semi-skilled type of work at lower rates of wages. Technological changes however, affected the employment of women in these industries because women could not acquire the new skills demanded by modern industry due to the absence of opportunities for training. They were also handicapped by illiteracy and lack of mobility. This further marginalised women and created a gap in the earning power of men and women.

Another factor which excluded women from industry was technological change and rationalisation of the process of production which reduced the demand for unskilled labour. Since the majority of women in the modern industrial sector were employed as unskilled workers, they were the main victims of this change.

Women in the unorganised sector of the economy were also marginalised because of the very nature of unorganised sector. More than 90 percent of the women workers are engaged in unorganised sector of the economy, majority being in agricultural occupations. The unorganised nature of this sector puts these workers outside the reach of most laws which protect the security and working conditions of labour. Labour organisations are mostly absent, and even when present, are in formative stage and ineffective for women workers.

The gradual commercialisation and modernisation of the economy and the efforts made by the Government to introduce modern institutions of credit and marketing, stabilise ownership of land, and to maintain minimum wages have not succeeded in "organising" the production relations, control the exploitation of women and other weaker sections or solve the problems of low productivity, poverty, and unemployment. The impact of the "unorganised" nature of this section has been greater on women. Even within the low wage structure of all workers in this sector, wages of women are uniformly lower than those of men. Many of these women are also unpaid family workers, most of them fulfilling dual roles in economic and household activity. The tendency to view women only through the screen of families and households and not as individuals in their own right has reinforced women's economic role as marginal.

Conceptual bias in measuring women's work has also led to the marginalisation of women. Women's work has been particularly subjective to bias in methods of enumerating workers. The Decennial census being the most comprehensive data source in the Indian context, any conceptual bias in measuring women's work introduced into the census, can have far reaching implications for women. According to 1911 census, "A woman who looks after her house and cooks food is not a worker but a dependent. A woman who collects and sells firewood or cowdung is adding family income and should be shown as worker, as also a woman who regularly assists her husband in his work, but not one who renders occasional help".

In the 1961 census, the workers were classified as main workers and marginal workers. Women were consigned to the category of marginal workers. This was, inspite of the fact that women do household work which include cooking, washing, cleaning, child care and participate in all kinds of family enterprises. During the decade 1961-71, while the male and female population in the working age group increased by 20 percent and 21 percent respectively, the male workers showed an increase of 16.2% while the female workers showed a decline by 41.4%. This was the direct result of classifying majority of the females as marginal workers in the census.

The 1971 census was definitely biased against women because it recognised as workers, only those who reported their main activity as participation in economically productive work. This meant that women whose main activity was household, and those who reported so due to cultural perceptions were counted as non-workers.

The work participation rate of females went up from 14.22 in 1971 to 19.67 in 1981 and 22.73 in 1991. The WPR of females is still lagging behind that of males which was 51.56 in 1991.

However, mention should be made of a novel feature of the 1991 census. For the first time in the history of demographic records there has been a gender sensitisation of the census through an attempt to capture women's work in the informal sector.

It is clear that the marginalisation of the economic role of women rests on a set of cultural assumptions about the secondary importance of anything women do.

10.3.2. Invisibility of Women's work

Though women are major partners in agriculture, their contribution is unrecognised and undervalued. Besides, many productive activities of women in agricultural households are hidden under the label of domestic work and hence become totally invisible. Women bear an inordinately heavy work load, their returns being not commensurate with their work. In a country where the majority are poor, women have the responsibility to earn a supplementary income for the survival of their families, in addition to their responsibilities for housework and child care. They engage in collection of fuel, water and fodder, that take up considerable time but their activities are hardly visible. Women are an essential production force in the economy of developing countries, but the "statistical purdah" created by existing methods of defining and measuring the labour force renders much of women's work invisible.

The invisibility of women to planners and administrators was rooted in the tendency to view women as part of household labour and not as individuals in their own right.

10.3.3. Feminisation of Poverty

There is a growing perception of poverty as an increasing female phenomenon. Poverty is an area where the situation of women has taken a dramatic turn for the worse, given the fact that women are generally living longer and receiving less support from families, husbands and fathers. The number of rural women living in poverty has really doubled over the past 20 years. This is one reason that "poverty of women" was identified as one of the critical areas of concern for the Fourth world conference on women (1995).

In the past, poverty was considered a rural phenomenon, but today there is growing impoverishment among the urban population also. Further, feminisation of poverty has become a problem of the industrialised countries as well.

In India, low labour utilisation and seasonal unemployment are a manifestation of rural poverty, where individuals are forced to take up jobs that are least remunerative and cannot ensure minimum sustenance. The basic problems that effect women's opportunities for employment in this sector, spring from their helpless dependence caused by limited skills, illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status.

The object poverty of these workers is also the result of their lack of control over adequate productive resources. The effect of landlessness, a persistent gap between income and consumption, lack of continuous employment and low social position is further enhanced by perpetual indebtedness. The cumulative effect of all these factors is that the worker is deprived of all bargaining power and sinks further into poverty.

According to the Planning Commission, the proportion of people below the poverty line has come down slightly although in absolute numbers, it is no different. The higher level of unemployment and underemployment among women implies that greater proportion of women are under the poverty line. An increasing rate of destitution among females has been reported in recent years. Unfortunately no reliable data is available to estimate the extent of destitution among females.

10.4 SUMMARY

In this unit we have seen that India after achieving Independence accepted the goals of planning and started economic planning in 1951. Agriculture output was first given priority to solve the food problem and later industry. Introduction of modern technology had positive impact as well as negative impact on women. In many sectors women were either pushed out of workforce by modernisation and mechanisation. Agricultural modernisation/ industrial growth policies have tended to widen gender disparities.

10.5 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in 30 lines each.

- 1) Describe the Development paradigm followed by India.
- 2) Discuss the positive aspects of Development on women.
- 3) Discuss the negative aspects of Development on women.

II. Answer the following questions in 10 lines each.

- 1) Impact of Development on women in Agriculture.
- 2) Impact of Development on women in small scale industries.

10.6 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1.	Desai, Neera & Maithreyi Krishnaraj	"Women and society in India", 1987.
2.	Dube, S.C	Modernization and Development" The Search for alternative paradigms", 1988.

UNIT - 11 : APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY FOR WOMEN

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11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit you will be able to

- discuss appropriate technology needed for rural women, and
- discuss appropriate technology needed for urban women.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the last lesson you have studied how women were adversely affected by Modernisation and technological changes which were introduced in the Indian society. Introduction of technology and commercialisation have led to mass production and this in turn has increased employment opportunities. Women employment in some sectors like electronics improved. But a large number of women were thrown out of employment. They were displaced from their traditional occupations. The modern technology requires new skills which women lack. Women do not have access to the skills and training. They are forced to move out of skilled occupations into unskilled occupations. 80% of female workers are agricultural labourers, a large number of them are farmers displaced by mechanisation and new technology. Women were forcefully pushed to the position of reserve force (employed when necessary and pushed out when not necessary). To protect women from displacement simple or appropriate technology should be developed. In this unit you will study about the appropriate technologies for women.

11.3 APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY FOR WOMEN

Infrastructure for Women's participation in a Modernizing Economy:-

The Sectorwise examination of women's rights and opportunities for economic participation, indicated that the major forces, affecting women's employment, stems from structural changes within the economy. The change from traditional to a modern market economy, from unorganised relations of production, from labour to capital intensive technology and the intensification of socio-economic inequalities, all have had an impact on the employment situation. Women being a vulnerable group with fewer avenues open to them, have been affected more adversely than men.

11.3.1 Education

Modern methods of production, marketing and planning call for higher level of knowledge and skills than those required by a traditional economy. The increasing complexity and interrelationship between production and investment and the process of competitive selection increases the importance of education and dissemination of information.

Though educational opportunities did expand in the post-independence period, it was relatively slower among women, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. The expansion was much faster at the level of higher education. In the case of women, it was the urban middle class that availed of both secondary and higher education. On the other hand illiteracy was on the increase. This pattern of educational development, coupled with the changes in the economy has, inevitably affected the economic opportunities of women. The work participation rate by education level shows that while employment opportunities for educated women have increased, that of illiterate and semi-literate women have declined. The displacement of illiterate and semi-illiterate women workers were greater from organised and from non-agricultural occupations into the unorganised sector. Among the educated women, the work participation rate of women who had received a technical degree or diploma (like medicine and teaching) was substantially higher than those who had received non-technical degree or diploma. It was also evident that the average waiting period before getting employed was lower for males than females. This acts as a deterrent for many women from seeking employment.

The dilemma of idleness among educated women:

The paradox of women's employment is that while illiteracy drives many out of employment education does not necessarily lead to their employment. Labour market does not always provide full productive and appropriate jobs to all aspirants. Many women therefore prefer to avoid the pressures of competition. Traditional prejudice against women working outside the home is another factor that deters educated women from taking up employment.

However, the changing social scene and economic pressures are inducing more and more educated women to seek employment but the absorption capacity of the economy is limited. Further there is also failure to appreciate the need for an institutionalised pattern of labour utilisation that takes note of women's roles as housewives and mothers.

11.3.2 Vocational and Technical Training

The need to relate education and particularly vocational training to actual employment opportunities has been repeatedly emphasised by various expert bodies like the ILO, the National Commission on Labour, the All India Council for Technical Education, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research and the University Grants Commission.

In the view of the large scale displacement of women from employment as a result of structural and technological changes taking place in the economy, vocational training of women requires special attention and priority. This has been emphasised by the International Labour Conference in 1965 and the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in their reports. In India, the National Committee on Women's Education, had pleaded strongly for better and more extensive facilities for vocational training for women, particularly since the general educational system paid little regard to the needs of industry and commerce.

The inadequacy of vocational training opportunities for women, widens the productivity gap between men and women at all levels and makes them unwanted by the economy. Training facilities when they are provided, display the existing social bias regarding the suitability of particular occupations for women which leads to over-concentration in a limited group of occupations.

The opportunities for vocational and technical education for women can be classified as (a) on the job training (b) pre-employment training-technical and professional (c) training programmes undertaken by different government departments and voluntary organisation for developing skills. To these can also be added professional training imparted at the university level.

On the Job Training:

Women have been greater victims of rationalisation and modernisation in industry mainly because of inadequate opportunities for on the job training. No doubt some new industries like electronics and telecommunication are providing in service training to women, But the disparity in opportunities available to men and women is glaring. Further there is evidence of certain degree of bias in confining women trainees to limited group of trades only.

Pre Employment Training:

More women are found to opt for non-engineering trades than engineering trades. The non-engineering trades which are most popular among women are cutting and tailoring, embroidery and needle work, knitting and stenography. Among the engineering trades, more popular courses are drafting, instrumentation, radio and T.V. mechanics, surveying, carpentry and painting.

On the recommendation of the National Committee on Women's Education, the Ministry of Education took up a scheme to establish Women polytechnics for post-matriculation training in industrial, commercial and public service occupations in accordance with the developmental needs of the economy and for promoting awareness of new opportunities for the gainful employment of women. Courses like commercial practices, stenography, catering and food technology are very popular while some other trades are not as popular and the drop out rate is

high. One reason for the unpopularity of these courses is the absence of adequate assistance in placement which results in many women remaining unemployed on completion of these courses. Another reason is that very often courses introduced are not related to the demands of the region. For example, dress and costume designing, a significant avenue for employment of women in bigger cities, hardly constitutes a relevant source of employment in the interior of the country. Too much concentration on the same course could also lead to lowering of job opportunities.

Technical training for women is a relatively new field in India. The absence of greater assistance, in the placement of successful trainees and the failure to relate training to the employment potential of the area made parents reluctant to send their daughters to these institutions. This situation warranted corrective action.

In 1968-69, the All India Council for Technical Education reviewed the functioning of women's polytechnics and found the need for:-

- (1) A direct relationship to be established between courses of training provided and employment opportunities available. For this purpose each polytechnic was to have an advisory committee with representation from prospective employers,
- (2) Each polytechnic to establish a production centre in the relevant field to provide practical training in order to improve the effectiveness of the course, with the assistance of small scale industries departments of the State concerned,
- (3) Polytechnics to offer short term job-oriented courses in selected fields where employment opportunities exist,
- (4) Polytechnics to start an employment advisory service for its students,
- (5) The institutions to set up service units to cater to the needs of the local public in such matters as providing practical services, blue prints, model estimates etc.

It is to be noted that some private institutions in the larger cities which provide placement service and ensure that the training given is related to the actual employment potential of the area, have proved to be highly successful. The secretarial training school, started by the Young Women's Christian Association, in Delhi is an example. The success of this training school lies in its placement assistance and in the liaison that it maintains with employing agencies.

In the present socio-economic set up, self-employment of women requires much more than training in particular productive role. Without knowledge of the market mechanism and capital resources, training alone cannot help women to face the competition. Although All India Council for Technical Education had recommended the setting up of production centres in the relevant field to provide practical training, most women's polytechnics have not been able to accomplish it. Without such training in organisation of production and marketing and in procuring capital and raw materials, it will be difficult for many of the women trainees to utilise their training in self employment.

Training programme undertaken by different agencies in charge of development:-

Unlike the more formal programmes of pre-employment training, in the sphere of informal training programmes, a great deal of emphasis has been given to training women by various

agencies in charge of development and welfare. All agencies specifically concerned with women's welfare and development, both government and voluntary, have always attracted the highest priority to improving women's earning capacity.

Training schemes to improve the earning capacity of women:-

Programmes have been developed to solve the economic needs of women, hard-pressed by the processes of social change and the break down of family support, to needy widows, deserted and aged women as well as women from lower income groups.

(1) The Central Social Welfare Board is the most important agency providing assistance for these programmes operated by autonomous and voluntary organisations. It provides financial assistance for setting up production units in small scale industries, handicrafts and ancillary units for larger industrial undertakings. On a very minor scale, some socio-economic schemes were initiated by the central social welfare board to provide leisure time employment to women in lower income groups and help them supplement their income. This was undertaken in cooperation with State Governments and State Social Welfare Advisory Boards.

At present the Socio-economic programme of the CSWB provides financial assistance to voluntary welfare institutions and cooperative societies for setting up small production units, where needy women or handicapped persons are given initial training and subsequently provided with employment. In the implementation of this programme, the Board as well as voluntary institutions and cooperative societies obtain technical assistance from the National Small Scale Industries Organisations and regional offices of the All India Handicrafts Board and All India Handloom Board.

(2) Training of development Cadres:- Under the insistence of various developmental agencies, particularly the Central Social Welfare Board, training courses have been developed for village level workers (gram Sevikas, Mukya Sevikas, Bal sevikas etc.) by agencies like the Kasturba Memorial Trust, Visva Bharati, Jamia Milia and various schools of Social work. They are mostly pre-service or in-service training for those cadres, fully financed by the government.

(3) The Indian Council for Child Welfare also runs several centres in different parts of the country for pre-service and in-service training for Bal-sevikas. The training is financed by the Government.

(4) The Ministry of Health has training programmes for Health visitors and auxillary nurses and mid-wives for both rural and urban areas.

The ministry of Food and Agriculture has organised several community canning and food preservation centres. The four institutes of catering technology and applied nutrition in the country, though not exclusively for women, train women also.

Under the coordinated programme for community development, training is given in selective productive activities like kitchen-gardening, poultry keeping, diary science etc.

The Ministry of Home affairs has a scheme for training of women and children of Central Government employees belonging to the low income groups. Training is provided in

cutting, tailoring and embroidery. Similar programmes have been initiated in a few of the states by the Department of Welfare, Labour, Industry and Education for training mainly in sewing, embroidery, handicrafts and tailoring. Much of this well-meant effort became futile because they are not linked to production and marketing. Even without these handicaps, the scope of the programmes is limited and can make only a marginal impact on the employment needs of women. It is unfortunate that although these welfare and development agencies are appreciative of the employment needs of women, their efforts are suffering from lack of coordination and adequate resources. Better degree of planning, coordination and redistribution of responsibilities in these fields would prevent considerable wastage of resources and instil a greater sense of urgency and productivity in these schemes for improving women's earning power.

Special problems of Working Women:

Part-time Employment:-

While part-time employment presents a partial solution of the employment needs of many women, there is no generally accepted definition of such type of employment in terms of hours, remuneration and other facilities. The occupational categories, which employ the largest number of part-time workers are cleaning and related work, both in private households and institutions. Other areas where part-time work is common are agriculture, commerce and manufacturing, particularly in consumer goods industries.

For women who need employment to augment the family income, and whose inability to arrange child care or home responsibilities, part-time employment could be a boon provided it carried adequate remuneration and adequate security and protection.

Some countries have already provided safeguards for working mothers, protecting their right to employment in jobs previously held for a stipulated period of absence after maternity leave. The government of India while supporting such policies as an ultimate objective, felt that in developing countries, the more pressing problem is the expansion of employment opportunities for the vast numbers of the unemployed and underemployed.

Re-entry after a prolonged absence for family reasons may pose a greater problem in white collared jobs and professionals. Technological, Scientific and Organisational developments during the period of their absence, tends to make the previous experience of such women obsolete. Provision for part-time employment should reduce the problem of lack of continuity in such cases.

Problem of Late entry

Women seek employment at a later stage primarily for economic reasons. They usually are also lacking in previous experience. Loss of financial support due to widowhood or separation from husband make their need for employment more acute. In many cases, such women also lack educational qualifications. The condensed courses have tried to meet their educational problems to certain extent but unless the age limit for employment is relaxed it would be difficult to solve their employment problems.

Childcare Services

The need for child care services for employed women has already been accepted though legal provision for it has been made only for women in organised industry. No such arrangements are available for women working in offices or the vast mass of women employed in the unorganised sector. The few private creches or nurseries being operated by voluntary organisations or individuals are inadequate and generally too expensive for poorer women.

The ILO has suggested that governments should take steps to coordinate the provision of these facilities by employers, voluntary agencies and community efforts to ensure their even distribution.

Accommodation and Security

The problem of accommodation has become acute for working women both in urban as well as rural areas. The problem is acute for both single women who are not fully accepted by rural society and for married women with families.

The employers responsibility for providing adequate housing is generally not fulfilled. For unmarried working women, some efforts have been made during the last two decades to provide hostels with the aid of voluntary agencies. The Central Social Welfare Boards programme in this connection is being supported by the Department of Social Welfare. Their numbers are however, still very limited and cater to the needs only of middle class working women. The problem needs to be solved by coordinating efforts of Government, employers and voluntary agencies.

Service Conditions

The national objective of integrating women into the process of development at all levels require the acceptance by the society of the multiple roles of women as home makers and participants in the economic process. This calls for changes in the recruitment rules of various categories of women workers. Firstly age limit for recruitment needs to be relaxed. Secondly the services of those who continue to work on ad hoc basis needs to be regularised. Thirdly women shouldn't be discriminated against in terms of adequate pay scales and promotion opportunities. Fourthly in the case of transfers, the convention of posting husband and wife to the same place has to be strictly followed. Lastly provision for adequate transport or transport allowance has to be made to women who have to carryout touring duties.

11.4 NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

The essentials of the new economic policy are (a) marketisation and privatisation (b) globalisation (c) modernisation and (d) concentration on productive efficiency and GNP growth rate. The "Structural adjustment" in seeking these will have adverse consequences on the vulnerable segments of the population such as women, unorganised labour, migrants and the poor in general. In the case of poor women the impact is apt to be much heavier, firstly, as consumers and secondly as working members of society.

The Government has made it clear that the process of globalisation, modernisation and marketisation will involve the closure of a large number of industrial enterprises. This will create substantial unemployment in both the organised and unorganised sectors of industrial manufacture. Amongst the industries likely to be heavily affected are textiles, especially the handloom sector, construction and construction materials industries, sugar industry, leather industry and a variety of small scale industries which are not direct ancillaries of large-scale units. Some kinds of food processing industries may also suffer because of competition from foreign industries, like Nestle, Cococola, Pepsicola and Kellog.

Reduced employment as a result of the above will affect women both directly and indirectly. Since in many industries women are employed in the relatively low skill areas, import of modern technology will probably lead to a cut-back in such jobs, proportionately more than in others. Secondly, since large number of men will also be without jobs, they become potential competitors with women for the low skill and low paid jobs.

The government has declared that the interests of workers will be safeguarded through a variety of safety nets in both public and private sectors. If these involve both re-training and re-employment programmes, efforts should be directed to secure the interests of women through non-gender discriminatory schemes of action.

The structural adjustment process also offers new opportunities to women. The expansion of the private sector in industry and other areas will mean that there would be agencies other than the state, which can provide answers to the problems of work and welfare. The new situation can be taken advantage of by sensitising these agencies to the problems of women's development. Besides, the import of new technologies and processes will open several new job opportunities for both men and women, provided they acquire the required new skills.

The new agricultural policy may be influenced by the developments in bio-technology abroad. Therefore it is expected that the trends in land-based activities such as dairy, poultry, sericulture, and commercial forestry will gather momentum. In all these areas, the scope for employment of women is substantial. On the other hand, a number of cottage industries in which women are engaged will be adversely affected by changes in both technology and market structures.

As regards the service sector, the new economic policy is likely to provide increased opportunities for women. The spread of higher education has created a vast pool of educated women who can take advantage of these new opportunities. Such opportunities afford the further advantage of flexibility in matters of hours of work, modes of operation and work organisation. The paradox of women's employment is that while illiteracy drives many out of employment, education does not necessarily lead to their employment. Non-utilisation of education could be voluntary (due to social taboos) or involuntary (due to non-availability of suitable jobs.). Health, family planning, nutrition and child care are other areas of high potential for remunerative engagement of women.

The report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India observes that "while several factors have handicapped Indian women from being effectively integrated into the process of development, the lack of a well-defined policy indicating areas where they require special assistance and protection, leave them without access to knowledge, skills and employment. The

policy followed in employing women in various concerns reflect the continuation of old prejudices regarding women's efficiency, productivity, capacity for skills, and adaptability to job situation. Certain industries declare them to be unsuitable for technical as well as manual jobs, others declare them to be unsuitable for managerial and administrative jobs as well as unskilled work. Yet another group finds them unsuitable for field duties. The general tendency appears to be, to find them unsuitable for all jobs other than clerical. The CWSI report therefore recommends the adoption of a well-defined policy to fulfill the constitutional directives and Government's long term objective of total involvement of women in national development.

Modern methods of production, marketing and planning call for higher levels of knowledge and skills than those required by a traditional economy. The increasing complexity and inter-relationship between production, investment and the process of competitive selection increases the importance of appropriate training and dissemination of information.

With regard to appropriate training for women the following recommendations were made:

1. Reservation of a definite quota for women for training within the industry in order to arrest their retrenchment as a consequence of modernisation.
2. Reservation of a similar quota for training women apprentices under the National Apprentices Act.
3. Developing programmes of vocational training in close relationship with industries.
4. Polytechnics for women should provide a production centre with assistance from the Small-Scale Industries Department of the state concerned.
5. Department of training programmes in production and market orientation to develop self-employment.
6. Development of vocational training programmes for both illiterate and semi-literate women workers.
7. Development of training-cum-production centres in small scale or cottage industries in both rural and urban areas to provide employment to women near their homes.
8. Specific provisions for part-time employment of women by suitable revisions in recruitment rules and service conditions.
9. Expansion of the national employment service, particularly in rural areas to provide employment information and assistance to women.

11.5 POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

The development of women in India who according to the 1991 Census represent 48.1 % of the country's population and in absolute numbers 407.1 million, (including Jammu & Kashmir) has been the centre-stage in our development planning right since independence. However, it was in 1980s that women were recognised as a separate target group and given their rightful place in developmental planning by including a separate chapter viz. "Women and Development" in the Sixth Plan Document (1980-85). This marked the final breakaway from a welfare approach to women's problems in the earlier years. Since then, all efforts of the Government have been directed towards mainstreaming of women into the national development process by raising their overall status.

11.5.1 Rights and Privileges

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralising the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. The Fundamental Rights, among others ensure equality before the law, equal protection of law, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Article 14 confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. While Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc., Article 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women. Similarly, Article 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens. Article 39(a) further mentions that the State shall direct its policy towards securing to all citizens, men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood, while Article 39(c) ensures equal pay for equal work. Article 42 directs the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. Above all, the constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 15 (a)(e) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

11.5.2 Legislative Measures

Special legislations have been enacted to make this de jure equality into a de facto one. The State has enacted the following women-specific and women-related legislations to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriages, dowry, rape, practice of Sati etc. The Equal remuneration Act of 1976 provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 amended in 1976 provides the right for a girl, to reject a child marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956 as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence.

An amendment brought in 1984 to the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence. The second amendment brought in 1986 makes the husband or in-laws punishable, if a women commits suicide within 7 years of her marriage and it has been proved that she has been subjected to cruelty. Also, a new criminal offence of "Dowry Death" has been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976 raised the age for marriage of a girl to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 years and makes offence under the Act cognizable. The Factories Act of 1948 (amended upto 1976 provides for establishment of a creche where 30 women are employed (including casual and contract labourers). The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 legalises abortion by qualified professional on humanitarian or medical grounds. Amendments to Criminal Law 1983 provide for a punishment of 7 years in ordinary cases of rape and 10 years for custodial rape cases. The maximum punishment may go upto life imprisonment. A new enactment of Indecent representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986 and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 have also been passed to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation.

11.5.3 Policies Advocating Women's Concerns

In addition to the women-specific and women-related policies enunciated in various plan documents, the Government has also been creating an enabling policy environment in which women's concerns can be reflected, articulated and redressed by the Government, the Voluntary Sector and the Corporate World. As part of this effort, many policy instruments have been brought forth, over the years, leading to Action Plans and programmes in several spheres. Some of the important policy-guiding documents include: The National Plan of Action for Women (NPA) adopted in 1976 became a guiding document for the development of women till 1988 when a National Perspective Plan for Women was formulated. The National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP) (1988-2000) drafted by a Core-group of Experts is more or less a long-term policy document advocating a holistic approach for the development of women. "Shram Shakti"- the Report of the National Commission of Self-Employed Women and Women in Informal Sector (1988) examines the entire gamut of issues facing women in the unorganised sector and makes a number of recommendations for the betterment of women in the informal sector relating to employment, occupational hazards, legislative protection, training and skill development, entrepreneurship development, marketing, credit etc. The National Expert Committee on women Prisoners (1986) examined the condition of women prisoners in the Criminal Correctional Justice System and made a series of recommendations relating to necessary legislative reform, prison reforms and reforms of other custodial institutions and rehabilitation of prisoners in so far as women prisoners are concerned, The National Policy for Children (NPC) adopted in 1974 considers children as country's supreme assets. Therefore, the State accepts their nurture as its own responsibility. Further, it also recognises child development as an important step in building up of human resources which is pivotal to the economic and social progress of the country as a whole. National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (NPA) 1991-2000 is an integrated multi-sectoral decadeal plan of Action for ensuring survival, protection and development of children with a special gender sensitivity built for girl children and adolescent girls. In addition to these women-specific policies, there are many more women-related policies like National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986), National Health Policy (NHP) (1983), National Commission for Women's Act (NCW) (1990), which have been influencing the welfare and development of women and children in the country.

11.5.4 Evolution of Women's Development and Emergence of the National Machinery:

The hierarchial structure of Indian Society with its diverse and complex socio-economic institutions, organisational patterns and cultural values makes it difficult to introduce uniform policies and programmes to be equally effective with different groups. Therefore, even the planned interventions launched through Five Year Plans could not bring forth the expected changes in the socio-economic status of women in India. Thus, the situation remained more or less the same till early seventies. It was in 1971 that a break-through was made when a Committee on 'The status of Women in India' (CSWI) was set up to undertake a comprehensive examination of all the questions relating to the rights and status of women in the context of changing socio-economic milieu in the country and problems relating to the advancement of women.

The recommendations of the Committee have led to a comprehensive programme of legislative and administrative measures aimed at removing the economic and social injustice, disabilities and discrimination to which women continued to be subjected. Followed by this were

the two important events, viz, the International year of the Women (IWY) in 1975 and the International Women's Decade 1975-85. Participation of India in these two international events had given an opportunity to the state and its people to make a self-assessment of their success and failures in fulfilling their commitments towards the betterment of women.

The International Women's Decade which ended in 1985, left a lasting impact on the member countries to take up both long term and short term measures in achieving the 'Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women upto the year 2000'. The first step taken in this direction by the Government of India was to revitalise the governmental machinery at the national level by setting up a separate Department of Women and Child Development under the newly created Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Women's Welfare and Development (WWD) Bureau under the erstwhile Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare has become part of the new Department and continues to be the national machinery for the advancement of women in India.

11.5.5 Role of National Machinery

The Women's Bureau in the Department of Women and Child Development being the national machinery for the advancement of women in India - is made responsible for mainstreaming women into national development by raising their overall status on par with that of men. The Bureau, in its nodal capacity formulates policies and programmes, enacts/amends legislations affecting women and co-ordinates the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organisations working to improve the lot of women in the country. The programmes of the Bureau include - employment & income generation, welfare and support services and gender sensitization and awareness generation programmes and so on. This phase was followed by experiments with different strategies- control, decontrol, import substitution, export promotion, industrialisation, population control, community development and intensive agricultural development, eradication of poverty and unemployment. Currently the search is for a more viable organically linked and comprehensive strategy of development.

11.6 SUMMARY

In this unit we have studied the impact of modernisation on women and appropriate technology for women's development. Modernisation has contributed in the worsening of economic conditions of women. Mechanisation has displaced women from their traditional occupation. They could not enter the modern occupations as they lacked education, skill and training. Hence they need for appropriate technology.

11.7 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following in 30 lines each.

- 1) Discuss about the appropriate technology needed for women working in the Agricultural sector.
- 2) Discuss the different training programmes undertaken by different agencies.
- 3) Discuss the new economic policy and impact on women.

II Answer the following in 15 lines each.

- 1) Legislative measures
- 2) Rights & privileges of women in India.

11.8 SUGGESTED BOOKS

Desai, Neera and M.Krishna Raj : "Women and Society in India".

BRAOU

UNIT - 12 : WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLANS

Contents

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Development of Women through Five Years Plans
- 12.3 Impact of Plans and Policies on Women
- 12.4 Empowering Strategies - Government Initiatives
 - 12.4.1 Special Thrust on Employment and Training for Women
 - 12.4.2 Welfare and Support Services
 - 12.4.3 Gender Sensitization and Awareness Generation
 - 12.4.4 Special Initiatives*
- 12.5 Summary
- 12.6 Model Examination Questions
- 12.7 Suggested Books

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson you will be able to discuss:

- Development of Women through plans,
- Impact of policies and plans on women, and
- Empowering strategies for women.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

India after achieving independence decided to develop the economy through economic planning. The development of the economy through economic planning was undertaken to achieve steady economic development in the market economy, remove unemployment, poverty and economic inequalities and achieve self reliance and self sufficiency. A number of programmes were implemented. This unit discusses the efforts made by the Government for Women's Development.

12.2 DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS

The concept of women's development in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) was mainly 'Welfare' oriented. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in 1953, undertook a number of welfare measures through the voluntary sector. In the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) women were organised into Mahila Mandals to act as focal points at the grass-root level for

the development of women. The Third, Fourth and other Interim Plans (1961-74) accorded high priority to education of women, measures to improve maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers were also introduced.

This plan recommended functional literacy for women. It also recommend the need to train women in need of income and protection. Fifth plan coincided with a) international women's decade and b) submission of the Report of women in India (CSWI).

National plan of action 1976 was the major outcome of this report and it identified the following areas a) Health, b) Family planning, c) Nutrition, d) Education, e) Employment, f) Legislation, g) Social Welfare to formulate and implement action programmes to raise the status of women.

There was a shift in the approach for Women's development from welfare to Development.

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), as stated earlier, it was a landmark in the history of women's development as it received recognition as one of the developmental sectors and was included in the Sixth Plan Document as a separate chapter for the first time in the history of developmental planning. The Sixth Plan, adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a three-pronged thrust on health, education and employment. DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) was launched in 1982 as a subcomponent of IRDP for the social and economic upliftment of women.

In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), the developmental programmes for women continued with the major objectives of raising their economic and social status and to bring them into the mainstream of national development. A significant step in this direction was to identify/promote the "beneficiary-oriented programmes" for women in different developmental sectors which extend direct benefits to women.

The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97), which was launched in 1992, promises to "ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women" and special programmes will be implemented to complement the general development programmes. Therefore, the flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment will be monitored with a greater vigil.

Women must be enabled to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process. This approach of the Eighth plan marks a further shift from 'development' to 'empowerment' of women.

In order to meet both the increasing and challenging needs of women and children, there has been a progressive increase in the Plan Outlays over the period of last four developmental decades. The Outlay of Rs.4 Crores in the First Plan (1951-56) has gone upto Rs.2000 crores in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97).

12.3 IMPACT OF PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN RAISING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The impact of various developmental plans, policies and programmes over a period of four developmental decades (1951-91) have brought about perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women in the country. Important achievements in the major thrust areas are listed below:

In the field of Health, significant gains in respect of women's health status have been achieved. Expectancy of life for females at birth which was 31.6 years in 1951 was estimated to rise to 59.1 years in 1986-91. The infant mortality rate declined from 129 in 1978 to 79 in 1992. Similarly, the sex differential in Infant Mortality Rate has now been almost bridged. However, the 0-4 age specific mortality rate, even though it has significantly declined from 53.0 in 1970 to 33.3 in 1988, continues to show higher female mortality. Although, maternal mortality rate in rural India still continues to be uncomfortably high at 324 per 1,00,000 live births, it showed a declining trend from 468 in 1980 to 324 in 1989. The sex ratio of women has been declining from 972 in 1901 to 927 per 1000 males in 1991. This is a matter of great concern and various studies are being undertaken to identify the complex set of factors responsible for this.

Similarly, in the field of Education, a number of steps were taken up for promoting women's education and equality in line with the National Policy of Education, 1986. The main strategy for education was a distinct orientation in favour of women's equality and empowerment. Although, the female literacy has come up to 39.4 per cent in 1991 from 0.7 in 1901, the level is unacceptably low. The enrolment rate of girls in primary schools has also improved from 66.62 in 1981 to 86.0 in 1991. However, the drop-out rates among girls at primary level at 58.3 remains high compared to that of boys. However, the higher decadal growth rate of female literacy (66 per cent) as compared to male literacy (43 per cent) provides some consolation.

In the field of Employment and Training, the Directorate General of Employment and Training has established six Regional Vocational Training Institutes (RVTI) and one National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) for women. These institutes provide training facilities in the basic, advanced and instrumental level skills. Further, about 230 ITIs/Wings were set up for women. By the end of the Seventh Plan, it was envisaged that placement cells would be set up in the regional and national vocational Institutes. Provisions were also made exclusively for training and rehabilitation of handicapped women. Beside these, other developmental sectors also conducted employment oriented training. As a result of these efforts, employment of women in the organised sector has gone up from 19.30 lakhs in 1971 to 35.72 lakhs during 1980. Employment in public sector increased steeply from 8.62 in 1971 to 22.13 lakhs during 1989. In private sector, female employment has gone up from 10.68 lakh in 1971 to 13.59 lakhs in 1986, the number of women job seekers in employment exchanges rose from 11.25 lakhs in 1975 to 54.60 lakhs in 1988. As per 1991 census, the female work participation has gone up from 19 percent in 1981 to 22.6 percent in 1991 in respect of main workers.

12.4 EMPOWERING STRATEGIES - GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

12.4.1 Special Thrust on Employment and Training for Women

In line with the Eighth Plan strategy, the nodal Department of Women and Child

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

Support to Training and Employment Project (STEP):

The programme of STEP, launched in 1987, aims to upgrade the skills, of poor and assetless women, mobilise, conscientize and provide employment on a sustainable basis to women in the traditional sectors such as - agriculture, dairying, fisheries, sericulture, handlooms, handicrafts etc. In addition to training and employment support, the three special features which this programme includes are - 'gender sensitization', 'women in development (WID) inputs' and provision of 'support services'. Since the inception of the programme till March 1993, it has provided employment opportunities for 92,065 women with a total expenditure of 28.86 crores. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) has earmarked a plan provision of Rs.57 crores to provide additional employment to 50,000 women.

Training-cum-Employment-cum-Production Centres: (NORAD):

The second major programme of Training-cum-Employment-cum-Production Centres which is commonly known as NORAD assisted 'Training Programmes for Women', extends financial assistance to public sector undertakings/corporations/autonomous bodies/voluntary organisations to train women in non-traditional trades and provide employment on a sustainable basis. Priority is given for training in modern and up-coming trades like electronics, electrical, watch assembly and manufacturing, Computer Programming, Printing and Binding, Handloom, Garment making, Weaving and Spinning, Hotel Management, Fashion Technology and Beauty Culture, Tourism, Bakeries/Confectionery and Office management. Since the inception of the programme in 1983, 34982 women and girls have benefited both from training as well as employment opportunities. A total expenditure of Rs.17.80 crores incurred under this programme during the last ten years has been fully reimbursed by the Norwegian agency for International Development (NORAD). In the Eighth Plan, a plan provision of Rs.20 crores exists to train/upgrade skills for about 25,000 girls and women in non-traditional trades. This programme not only plays a preventive role in keeping the young and adolescent girls away from early marriage, but also keeps them gainfully engaged with economic independence and self reliance.

Socio-Economic Programme (SEP):

The third major programmes of employment and training for women is the socio-economic programme (SEP) implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB). SEP provides 'Work and Wage' to needy women such as destitutes, widows, desorted, economically backward and handicapped. Since the inception of the programme in 1958 till today, it could provide wage and work to 1.47 lakh needy women with a total expenditure of Rs.48.68 crores. In the Eighth Plan (1992-97) a Plan provision of Rs.25 crores is available under this programme to assist 70,000 women with employment opportunities. SEP takes care of both literate/semi-literate and illiterate women. Trades promoted under this programme include both traditional and agro-based industries besides non-traditional trades.

Condensed courses of education and vocational training for Adult Women (CCE & VT):

The scheme of condensed courses of education and vocational training for adult women started in 1958 and recast in 1975 by the Central Social Welfare Board. It aims to provide new vistas of employment through continuing education and vocational training for women and girls who are school drop-outs. Under the employment and income generating training -cum- production centres for women nearly 3000 women were given training in skills in modern industries and they were provided employment also. A number of voluntary organisations organised condensed courses of education and vocational training courses by which 1,11,000 women were benefitted.

Under the scheme of assistance to women in distress 9,260 women were trained in 267 vocational courses in non-traditional trades. Since the inception of the programme in 1958 till March 1993, about 6.90 lakh adult women and young girls received continuing education and vocational training with a total expenditure of Rs.57.75 crores. In the Eighth Plan, a provision of Rs.40 crores is available to conduct 4,500 courses to train 1.35 lakh women/girls.

12.4.2 Welfare and Support Services

The national machinery has a wide network of support services for women and children belonging to lower economic strata through voluntary organisations. These support services represent an important plank for the empowerment of women as they reduce the burden of child care & employment related problems as detailed below:

Hostels for Working Women:

In order to promote greater mobility for women in the employment market, the nodal Department launched a scheme of hostels for working women in 1973 to provide 'safe and cheap' accommodation to single working women who come to the cities/towns for the sake of employment. Voluntary organisations were assisted in the construction of 344 hostels for working women by the end 84-85.

Creches for Working/ailing Mother's Children:

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

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):

This scheme, described as India's gift to her children is today the world's largest and widely acclaimed child development programme. ICDS provides a package of supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, treatment of minor illness, nutrition and health education, pre-school education (to children in the age group of 3-6 years), and other supportive services like water supply, sanitation etc.

Schemes for Adolescent Girls:

For the first time in India a special intervention has been devised for adolescent girls using the ICDS infrastructure. This scheme focuses on school drop-out girls in the age-group of 11-18 years and attempts to meet the special needs of Nutrition, Health, Education, Literacy recreational and Skill development of the adolescent girls. It attempts to make the adolescent girl a better future mother and tap her potential as a social animator. The schemes for adolescent girls has already been sanctioned in 507 blocks of the community and when fully operationalised would benefit about 4.5 lakh girls.

Early Childhood (Pre-school) Education (ECE) :

This programme is designed to improve the children's communication (language) and cognitive (social, emotional, intellectual and personality development) skills as a preparation for entry into the primary schools. From 1100 ECE Centres in 1986-87, it extended to 4635 centres by 1987-88. This programme is being implemented in the nine educationally backward states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA):

DWCRA is a sub scheme of IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) and came into existence in 1982-83 for the empowerment of women and children at the grassroot level. An employment generation programme called Jawahar Rozgar Yojana has been introduced in 1989 which provides 80 percent reservation for women. The Training of Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) Scheme prescribes a norm of having atleast one-third of the trainees as women.

12.4.3 Gender Sensitization and Awareness Generation :

The treatment meted to women and girls in different modes of human communication, mirror the prevailing attitudes and values towards women in a particular society. It is necessary to break the vicious circle of existing 'undesirable' images and project positive image of women and girls as potential human resources and assets.

The Government of India attaches great importance on these efforts which trigger changes in societal attitudes towards women. An integrated media campaign projecting a positive image of both women and the girl child through electronic, print and film media is the most important component of the government's communication strategy. A large number of TV spots, documentary films, radio programmes with positive message about the girl child and women, have been produced by the Department.

To sensitize planners, policy makers and the enforcement machinery, a country-wide gender sensitization programme has been launched since 1991. So far, the major states of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Delhi have been covered. Special campaigns to combat atrocities against women have also been launched throughout the country in collaboration with the State Home Departments and NGOs.

Monitoring of Beneficiary Oriented Schemes (BOS) for Women:

The BOS Department specially monitors 27 beneficiary oriented schemes which are women specific and reports directly to the Prime Minister's Office. It also monitors developmental indicators relating to 'Equality for Women' in the priority programmes of the Government. While such monitoring helps focus special attention on gender perspectives, the process itself is expected to help in consciousness raising within the Government.

12.4.4 Special Initiatives:

National Commission for Women:

In January, 1992, the Government has set-up a statutory body called National Commission for Women with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary; and to look into complaints involving deprivation of the rights of women. Similar Commissions are also being set up at State level.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:

Setting up of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh - a National Credit Fund for Women in 1993 - is yet another innovation. The Kosh, as visualised, aims to reach the poorest of the poor and assetless women who are in need of credit but cannot reach the formal banking or credit system through the mediation of thrift and credit groups and NGOs. This would help develop a national network of credit services for women in the informal sector and expect to boost self-employment ventures. This Kosh would lend to NGOs working in the field, who in turn would lend to poor women in the informal sector. During the first six years, the Kosh hopes to cover over 2 lakh women.

Legal Literacy Manuals:

A legal literacy manual was brought out in 1992 with the aim of educating women about the laws concerning their basic rights. These manuals have been written in a simple and illustrated format so that even semi-literates and neoliterates are able to comprehend them. They cover a wide range of subjects namely, laws relating to working women, child labour, contract labour, adoption and maintenance. Hindu, Muslim and Christian Marriage Laws including right to property, dowry, rape, kidnap and police procedure. The manuals have been distributed to State Governments and NGOs for wide dissemination and are being translated into all the 14 Indian languages.

The National Plan of Action for Children (1992) and the National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000 A.D.)

The two Plans of Action are both integrated and multi-sectorial in their approach to ensure 'survival', 'protection' and 'development' of children with an ultimate objective of building up a better future for children. While the Girl Child - being an integral part of the total target group of children is expected to derive full benefits from the general Plan of Action, her gender specific needs will be taken care of by the Plan of Action for the Girl Child with a focus on the Adolescent Girl.

National Resource Centre for Women:

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

Gender Sensitisation of 1991 Census:

For the first time in the history of demographic records, an attempt was made to capture women's work in the informal sector in 1991 census. The provisional data of 1991 census on "Workers and their Distribution" has shown that there was a substantial increase in the female work participation during 1991 census when compared to that of 1981.

Mahila Samridhhi Yojna (MSY):

Another initiative to empower women by raising their economic status is the scheme of 'Mahila Samridhhi Yojana (MSY) launched on 2nd October 1993. The scheme of Mahila Samridhhi Yojana aims to promote among the rural women the habit to save and improve their financial assets. This, infact, will provide an opportunity for women to exercise greater control over their own household resources. This scheme, in brief, revolves around MSY deposit upto Rs.300/- by a rural women which when kept for a lock-in period of one year shall receive the Governmental incentive of 25% on the deposit. The maximum governmental contribution would be limited only to Rs.75/- in an year. This is one of the most innovative experimental project for the economic betterment of rural women all over the country.

40% Reservation of Benefits for Women under Poverty Alleviation Programme (1989):

Under various poverty alleviation programmes of rural development sector, 40 percent of benefits have been reserved for women belonging to the Below Poverty Line Groups (Families living 'below poverty line' are those whose annual income is about Rs.6000/- to Rs.11,000/-).

Reservation for Women in Grass-root Democracy (1992):

The recent 72nd and 73rd Constitutional amendment Bills passed in 1992 by Parliament marks a holistic event in the lives of Indian Women as they ensure 1/3 of total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas. As a result of this, women have been brought to the centre-stage in the nation's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions at the grassroot levels. About 0.8 million women are going to emerge as leaders/ decision makers at grass-root levels and enter into public life through the existing 0.23 million local bodies all over the country. Of these, about 76,200 will be the Chairwomen at the village, block and district levels. (Recently 33.3 percent reservation for women has been implemented for employment and education also).

Training in Leadership Development:

A massive country-wide training programme was launched in 1993 to extend leadership training for the 8 lakh women Panchayat Members/Chairpersons, emerging as a result of the recent 72nd and 73rd Constitutional Amendments.

Voluntary Action:

The Central Social Welfare Board, which is an apex agency of voluntary organisations at national level promotes voluntary action and community participation through its country-wide network of more than 12,000 voluntary organisations at the grass-roots level. Besides these, there are many more voluntary organisations working at Block/District/State level in the field of women and child development.

Strategies during the Nineties:

In the nineties, the strategy was to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women. Special programmes with greater gender sensitivity were implemented to complement the general development programmes. The flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment are being kept under close scrutiny and surveillance as these contribute a great deal towards bringing women into the mainstream of national development. Employment and income generation activities including self-employment with training for upgrading of skills is a major intervention for raising the status of women.

Although the problem facing poor women in India are daunting, the combined efforts of the government and NGOs have created an ambience of concern for women and a heightened sense of gender perspective. Whether it is in the field of education and literacy, health and environment, sanitation, training and income generation, science and technology, media and advertising or even legislation and judicial reforms, women's concerns are fast getting flagmarked. These issues have not only entered into the rhetorics of planning, but are today reshaping conventional paradigms of development debate. The challenge before us today is to translate this concern at the level of Government and voluntary organisations into a wider societal awareness which in turn can shape praxis at all levels whether the household or society as a whole.

12.5 SUMMARY

India realises that real development cannot take roots if it bypasses women, who not only represent half the population but represent the very kernel around which social change must take place. Although the development of women has received high priority through all the five year plans, the shift in the approach for women's development from "Welfare" to "development" came about in the Fifth plan. Since then all efforts of the government have been directed towards mainstreaming of women into the national developmental process. During the Eighth plan period special programmes for women have been implemented to complement the general development programmes so that they are able to function as equal partners in the developmental process. This approach marks a further shift from development to "empowerment" of women.

12.6 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following questions in 30 lines each:

- 1) Describe the efforts made by the Government in the first four plans towards women's development.

- 2) Discuss the sixth five year plan .
- 3) Discuss the empowering strategies undertaken for women's development.

II Answer the following questions in 15 lines each.

- 1) Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- 2) Mahila Samridhi Yojana
- 3) Gender sensitization and awareness generation.

12.7 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Report of the committee- on the status of women in India.	Towards Equality , Dept. of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi, 1974.
2. Government of India Report:	Policies and Programmes for the advancement of women in India, Dept. of women and Child Deve- lopment, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, 1993.
3. Desai, Neera & Maithreyi Krishnaraj	Women and Society in India. Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1987.
4. Indian Association for Women's Studies	The New Economic Policy and Women, Bombay, 1993
5. Dube, S.C.	Modernisation and Development : The Search for Alternative Paradigms, Vistaar Publications, 1988.

UNIT - 13 : THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT - UN AND ITS AGENCIES

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- 13.0 Objectives
 - 13.1 Introduction
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 - 13.3 International Context
 - 13.4 U.N and its Agencies and Other International Organisations
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13.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you will be able to describe the

- Women's movement,
 - discuss the endeavours of U.N for the development of women, and
 - discuss about the other international organisations and their activities.
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13.1 INTRODUCTION

In the early days of the Women's movement it was naively believed that there was "Universal subordination of women". By implication it meant that once women became conscious of this, they would unite in 'sister-hood'. Subsequently this proved to be a wrong assumption, for women were divided among themselves in many ways - by class, by race, by level of economic development and so on.

From 1830 to early twentieth century, the arguments for equality between the sexes focussed on discrimination against women created by social institutions. Women agitated for the right to vote, the right to education. They drew attention to their legal dependence on their fathers and husbands. In effect, the early feminists were fighting for citizenship rights and did not question accepted sex differences.

13.1.1 The Women's Movement

The women's movement is seen as two waves with long inactive troughs in between. On the crest of the first wave, and during the first two decades of this century, the Suffragists won the vote for white women in most Western countries. The second wave, post-war feminism, erupted suddenly in the late 1960s. In U.S.A. the re-awakening of feminism was encouraged by

three major events. First, President John Kennedy established the Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. The Commission issued a report documenting the inferior position of women in the United States and set up a citizen's advisory Council and State Commissions to deal with the problems addressed in the report. Second, in 1963 Betty Friedan published her landmark work *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE*. In this book, Friedan argues that women are given no road to fulfillment other than wife and mother. They have no identity apart from their families, find themselves unhappy, and cannot even name their problem. The second class status of women which was pointed to in the Kennedy report was bolstered by Friedan's assertions and research. The third event heralding the return of feminism was the founding of the National Organisation for women (NOW) in 1966, with Betty Friedan serving as its first President.

It is important to remember that NOW was framed during the turbulent 1960s, an era of heightened political activism and social consciousness. The drive to organise women occurred during a time when Blacks, Native Americans Hispanics, poor people, students and anti-Vietnam War activists were also competing for, public attention through mass demonstrations for their respective causes. NOW has been made up primarily of middle-class, college educated and professional women. However in the decades since its founding NOW's membership has expanded considerably bringing in more non professional and younger women. There was a second branch of the movement which was more radical in orientation. The belief in passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is what both the branches agreed on. Many other activities on the agenda for the women's movement were international in scope.

The United Nations (UN) declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and 1976-1985 as the "UN Decade for Women", with member nations working on resolutions for equalising the status of women. Official Conferences were held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985 to assess the progress of resolutions. A fourth world conference was recently held in Beijing (1995). Along side each official conference ran, parallel ones made up of hundreds of Non-governmental organisations which brought women from all over the world and all walks of life together.

Even with the inevitable backlash with which any movement for social change must contend, the women's movement has at the very least been successful in sending its message throughout the world. This message suggests that issues related to women's inferior status will no longer be ignored and will be addressed through campaigns at all levels to end this inequality.

The women's movement focussed on concepts like patriarchy, feminism and sexual division of labour. It started working at and articulating issues in broader terms and moved from talking about women's issues to developing a feminist perspective on all issues. In India, intensive advocacy from the early Seventies by the women's movement resulted in the formulation and launching of specific programmes and schemes by the Indian Government for women's development and empowerment. The release of "Towards Equality", the Report on the Status of Women in India in 1975, was a landmark. With the growth of a vocal women's movement, many issues concerning the invisibility of women's work, employment, women's collectives, health care, credit, empowerment etc., have been discussed and debated. A great deal of this discussion found its way into the planning and design of government programmes. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up DWCR, STEP, TRYCEM, Rural Credit Schemes, the Women's Development Programmes (1984) and Mahila Samakya (1988) were initiated. The Women Question became visible and there was a feeling that the women's movement was

beginning to make its mark. "Empowerment" of women is a current slogan of feminism, Empower them through making material resources available - improving their education, health, well-being; increasing their physical and mental strength; bolstering their self-confidence; giving them a positive self-concept; equipping them with legal rights. In addition to all these there was the realisation that it is the collective strength of women that will really bring about a change; a change towards more balanced gender relations.

13.3 THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT - UN AND ITS ORGANISATIONS

Over the years, the United Nations has been instrumental in promoting recognition of women's rights and in codifying these rights in legally binding international agreements. Since the UN Charter (1945) a series of landmark conferences and summits were held by the UN for the promotion and protection of women's rights. They are:-

- 1945 - UN Charter- the first international instrument to establish principle of equality for men and women- is adopted.
- 1946 - Commission on the status of women is established to promote women's political, economic and social rights.
- 1948 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.
- 1949 - Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and exploitation of the prostitution of others is adopted by the General Assembly.
- 1951 - International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopts Convention Concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women workers for work of Equal Value.
- 1952 - General Assembly adopts Convention on Political Rights of Women; first global endorsement of political rights.
- 1957 - Convention on the Nationality of Married Women is adopted, granting women the right to retain or change their nationalities.
- 1960 - Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect to Employment and Occupations is adopted.
- 1962 - General Assembly adopts Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.
- 1967 - Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is adopted.
- 1975 - The world conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico city) adopts first world Plan of Action - First Decade for women-Equality, Development, Peace is proclaimed.
- 1976 - Voluntary Fund for the U.N Decade on Women and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) are established by the General Assembly.
- 1979 - General Assembly adopts Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

- 1980 - The world conference of the UN Decade for Women (Copenhagen) reviews progress at mid decade.
- 1985 - The third UN conference on Women adopts the Nairobi forward looking strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for women becomes UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) , an autonomous organisation within the UN Development Programme.
- 1991 - First World Survey on the Role of Women in Development is published.
- 1991 - The World's Women: Trends and Statistics, a compilation of data on the Global situation of Women is published.
- 1992 - UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro) recognises key role of Women in sustainable development.
- 1993 - Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women is adopted by the General Assembly.
 - World conference on Human Rights (Vienna) integrates violence against women and other women's rights issues into overall UN human rights agenda.
- 1994 - International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo) makes empowerment of women for the first time an integral part of development.
- 1995 - Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) reviewed and debated critical areas of concern and adopted a platform for Action.
 - Agenda of World Summit for Social Development reflects full range of women's issues : declaration makes commitment to ensuring equality.

In this charter of 1945, the United Nations announced its commitment to the equality of men and women. The year 1975 was declared as International Women's year and the years 1976 to 1985 were recognised by the United Nations General Assembly as the United Nations Decade for Women. Thus on international level effort was put forward to focus on one half of the world's population who "perform two-thirds of the world's work, receive one tenth of the income and own less than one-hundredth of its property" (United Nations, 1985:3).

The United Nations' Decade for women was inaugurated in Mexico City in 1975. Although every region, somewhere in its past, has some experience of women's activism, the assembly in Mexico city was the first occasion in history when women representing all religions, all cultures, all religions and all political systems met in the same place, at the same time, seeking a common vocabulary with which to make a common cause. Inevitably, there were uncertainties, confusions and conflicts. But these tended to be submerged in an overwhelming eagerness to create a global movement of women.

The triple goals of the Women's Decade were Equality, Development and Peace. The Decade stated its goals and targets in the declarations of Mexico in 30 paragraphs, and a world

Plan of Action in 219 paragraphs, supplemented by 34 resolutions. These covered key sectors of national, regional, and international policy and planning, touching on nearly every vital aspect of the human condition.

Five years later in 1980, the UN conference on women held in Copenhagen engaged in a mid-Decade stock taking and filled the gaps with which it found with a programme of Action consisting of 287 paragraphs and 45 resolutions. These five years were years of combating invisibility of women, violence against women and patriarchy.

1980 to 1985 saw a tremendous organisational expansion. Many autonomous groups had matured and began to coordinate their activities and to articulate their political platform for the emancipation of women. Along with the three UN Conferences during the Decade for Women NGO gatherings had been held simultaneously and much data was generated from both governmental and non-governmental agencies concerning the state of the world's women.

It also became clear that there was an urgent need to devise suitable means to identify and make visible the full extent of the work of women and their contributions in the unenumerated and domestic sections.

The Decade can claim credit for rescuing women from statistical invisibility by generating a healthy scepticism about national census figures and bringing to surface the hitherto unenumerated facts about women's economic participation. The data pointed to certain stark realities. The Final United Nations Inventory of the decade, its world Survey of Women's condition based on information submitted by over 100 governments, documents the stunning absence of women from the formal institutions and processes which internationally, nationally and locally determine priorities and allocate resources.

After the UN Decade of Women, the ideological environment had suggested that a Decade is too short a period to topple the patriarchal mind-set of centuries. Hardly any dent was made on the deeply rooted socio-cultural value systems and attitudes which subordinate women. However in those ten years women have been waging an unrelenting ideological offensive which can only gain strength and not be reversed. Women have been upgrading their technical skills, learning new ways to communicate and to produce knowledge. Above all, they have been sensitized to the value that knowledge is one sure path to empowerment. The Nairobi women's conference of 1985, propelled government of India to formally establish the Department of Women and Child Development, as a part of Ministry of Human Resource Development. In the Post-Nairobi phase, the Indian Association of women's studies (IAWS) and other networks of women's organisation intensified their activities. As a result, a wide range of voluntary groups, teachers and researchers got involved in the women's movement.

The National perspective Plan for Women (NPP) 1988-2000, drafted by a core-group of experts is more or less a long term policy document advocating a holistic approach for the development of women. The National commission for Women was established in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act. The NCW is empowered to review the rights of women and advise the government on all policy matters affecting women for safeguarding the rights of women.

In 1995, two global events took place. One was the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum on Women held in Beijing, China. The other global event was the world summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen. This World Summit reflected the full range of Women's issues and made a commitment to ensure equality and equity between women and men. Both these global events will serve as a bridge to the 21st century, as they have made plans and recommendation on gender and development issues for the future. Many of the issues debated in these two gatherings have already been considered at other recent high-level international gatherings including the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio; the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

The main objectives of the Fourth World Conference on Women were:

- To adopt a platform for Action concentrating on key issues identified as obstacles to the advancement of women throughout the world.
- To determine priority actions to be taken by the international community including the UN, between 1996 and 2001 for the advancement of Women.

In the UN Fourth Conference on Women 1995, the platform for Action focussed on 12 "Critical areas of Concern" that are identified as obstacles to the advancement of Women. They are: 1.Poverty, 2.Education, 3.Health, 4.Violence, 5.Armed Conflicts, 6.Economic disparity, 7.Power-sharing, 8.Institutions, 9.Human rights, 10.Mass Media, 11.Environment, 12. Girl child.

Besides the UN, various other international bodies and NGO's have evinced keen interest in women's issues. In the past two decades, so many international conferences have been organised that it is not possible to list all of them. The commitment and active participation of these bodies have resulted in the visibilisation of the Women's question. As we move towards the 21st Century, the drive for women's rights is accelerating and taking on a powerful and global momentum.

External expertise, international training, opportunities and associated equipment for developmental needs of various regions are provided by these projects. The UNDP's programmes coordinate developmental activities in the sectors of health, social forestry, education, community development, transport, communication etc. This agency collaborates with the Govt. of India in economic and social sector.

In developing countries the projects aim at helping them to make better use of their human and natural resources, improve standards of living, to expand productivity and contribute more fully to the world economy. UNDP projects focus on the implementation strategy in such a manner that women's interests are furthered and safeguarded. UNDP with its office in New Delhi funds women in development projects.

13.4 U.N AND ITS AGENCIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Major agencies of the United Nations:

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

2. United Nations International Children's Emergency fund (UNICEF)
3. World Health Organisation (WHO)
4. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
5. UNIFEM.

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) :

It was in 1965 the United Nations development programme came into existence by merging United Nations expanded programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) with the United Nations special fund (UNSF). This agency supports a large number of projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America and parts of Europe

2. United Nations International Children's Emergency fund (UNICEF) :

United Nations international children's emergency fund was created in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children. This organisation has been playing a commendable role in the service of children and women. In the year 1979 UNICEF had celebrated the international year of the child. Women who are bypassed in the development process are given priority by UNICEF policies and programmes. In cooperation with Government of India UNICEF provides services like Health and Nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, skill acquisition, and formal and nonformal education. This organisation tries to draw the attention of public and political parties to the condition of girl child in the country.

3. World Health Organisation (WHO)

This Agency was established on 7th April 1948 with a mandate of Global Health. World Health Organisation Headquarters are based at Geneva (Switzerland). One of the function of this organisation is to promote maternal and child health and welfare and to improve nutrition, housing, sanitation, economic and working conditions and other aspects of environmental hygiene. It provides expertise for promoting women's Health. It also provides information, counselling in the field of health.

4. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

This specialised agency was established in 1919. The mandate of this organisation is "More jobs, Better jobs, Industrial Harmony, social Justice". In India this agency is providing financial grants to non-governmental organisations for projects aiming for the development of women in areas of Punjab, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Delhi. Its focus is on employment opportunities and self employment schemes for women in rural and tribal areas.

Australian Development Assistance Bureau:

The Australian government provides aid through the Bureau for economic and social development. Fund was established to assist developing countries to meet the needs of women.

This organisation is providing funds to intergovernmental organisations, nongovernmental organisation, government department, educational and research institutions for project and schemes designed for women's development.

British Overseas Development Administration:

This organisation works through Government of India and provides grants to women related projects.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Since 1985 its priority has been women in Development. It provides assistance to projects in the areas of training, institutional development, employment and income generation for women.

Care-India

This voluntary organisation was established in 1950.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

It is an international nongovernmental organisation which is supporting activities empowering women. Health, nutrition, income generating training and education, improve the environment are other areas of concern for CRS.

Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)

Projects in the field of Health, Agriculture, drinking water and sanitation are given priority by this international organisation. Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh are the four states where Danida's activities are undertaken. "The focus of women in development programmes is the integration of women's aspects in all development projects and lays emphasis on women's productive roles.

Development Cooperation/Women in Development

This agency aims for the improvement of economic and social position of women. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh are the five states where this agency concentrates.

This agency is providing assistance to projects which are aiming for the development of women like vocational training for women, conducting seminars, workshops on women and development, income generating activities and prevention of sexual violence activities.

The Ford Foundation

This agency provides financial assistance to non agricultural organisations and women's groups. The major programmes of this organisation are in the areas of women's health, legal services, economic development of women, women's studies, research on women.

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

This agency was established in 1970 in Canada and it provides funds and expert advice to third world countries. Agriculture, food and nutrition, social and all sciences are areas of investigation which are supported by this agency. Women in industry, informal sector, agricultural sector, and social participation of women are the four areas of research and projects under these are provided with funds.

Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD)

This agency provides funds to projects which are for women and with women. Women's groups are given financial aid. Research on issues concerning women, production of films on women, books by and for women workshops and conferences on women are given support by NORAD.

OXFAM (America)

The women in development programme of oxfam America aims to develop women of poorest and weakest section and supports organisations of women in this sector.

Save the Children Fund (SCF)

Health programmes, economic and social development programmes are supported by SCF. The women in Development programmes cover with related activities of women. It gives grants for promotion of pre-primary, primary, secondary school education, rehabilitation of physically handicapped children and income generation programmes.

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

Programmes in health sector, social forestry sector and drinking water are supported by SIDA. The women in Development programmes of SIDA tries to involve women in the above mentioned sectors. Women's organisations and other voluntary organisations working with women in the field of income generation activities are supported by SIDA. It supports projects where women are beneficiaries as well as participants and also projects relating to training programmes for women like vocational training etc.

SWISS Development Corporation (SDC)

This agency is mainly associated with the Government of India and supports projects in the fields of rural development, livestock, technical training for industry. It attempts to highlight and to increase women, participation in the above mentioned areas.

5. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

This international agency gives priority to programmes for development of women, their participation in development activities, and women's access to and participation in economic activities in agriculture, environment and industry.

United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)

The focus of this agency is in the field of family planning and maternal and child health programmes that respond to women's needs. It provides support both financial and technical assistance to the Governments.

13.5 SUMMARY

The U.N. has organised four world conferences on women, including the recent one in Beijing. Apart from these, the U.N. has set priority themes for women for every year starting from 1992 to 1996 within the broad framework of equality, development and peace. Women's issues have also been taken up in other UN sponsored international meets. Along with each UN conferences a parallel one made up of hundreds of non-governmental organisations which brought women from all over the world and all walks of life together. The international effort put forward by the UN has resulted in member nations working on resolutions for equalising the status of women. The UN Decade for women provided much data from both governmental and non-governmental sources concerning the state of the world's women. From the data, it was clear that the underlying cause of the inequality of women is that their primary roles are domestic in nature; those of mother and wife and although these roles are vital to the well-being of the society, they are undervalued and unpaid. Yet such roles consume half of the time and energy of women.

The triple goals of the women's Decade were Equality, Development and Peace. The UN has organised four World Conferences on women, including the recent one in Beijing. Apart from these, the UN has set priority themes for women for every year starting from 1992 to 1996 within the broad framework of 'Equality Development and Peace. Women's issues have also been taken up in other UN sponsored International meets. Along with each UN conference ran a parallel one made up of hundreds of non-governmental organisations which brought women from all over the world and all walks of life together. The international effort put forward by the UN has resulted in member nations working on resolutions for equalising the status of women.

The visibilisation of the women's question, especially during the International Women's Decade, has spawned a number of structures and 'machineries' within the state.

13.6 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following in 30 lines each

1. Discuss about women's movement
2. Discuss about international organisations working for women's development.

II Answer the following in 15 lines each

1. Main objectives of Fourth World Conference
2. U.N.D.P.

13.7 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Report of the Committee: Towards Equality . Department of social welfare,
on the Status of women Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. Govt. of
in India. India, New Delhi, 1974.
2. Government of India: Policies and programmes for the advancement of
Report women in India. Dept. of women and child
Development, Ministry of Human Resource
Development , New Delhi, 1993
3. Desai, Neera & Mithreyi Women and society in India, Ajantha Publications,
Krishnaraj Delhi, 1987
4. Indian Association for The new economic policy and women, Bombay, 1993
Woman Studies
5. Dube, S.C. Modernisation and Development: The Search for
alternative paradigms , Vistaar publications, 1988.

UNIT - 14 : NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to discuss the Role of Voluntary organisations in the development of women.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

A striking phenomenon in recent times is the emergence of various types of women's groups and organisations, pressing for women's rights and drawing the attention of society on one or the other of the burning problems women suffer from. There is a feeling that a new era in women's movement has begun. In fact, the emergence and growth of women's organisations has been one of the important stages in Indian women's history. Besides women's organisations, support to women's cause has come from grass-root organisations like left political parties, trade unions, non-party organisations working for deprived sections of society, civil rights groups and others.

14.2 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The social reformers of the nineteenth century were the pioneers in focussing attention on women's issues like child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, purdah, denial of education to women etc. They felt that extending educational opportunities to girls, bringing about legal reforms and creating awareness about the disabilities faced by women will help bring about social transaction. The social reform movement did not challenge the patriarchal value system, nor did it argue for wider participation of women. Infact, the wife and the mother roles were reemphasised by the social reformers. Even so, the reform movement played a crucial role in creating awareness of the general oppression of women in the nineteenth century society.

The growth of the Nationalist movement, particularly the inspiration and strength provided by Gandhiji, gave legitimacy for women to participate in the movement. Thus while the social reform movement created awareness to the disabilities faced by women, the Nationalist Movement provided an opportunity for women to take part in extrafamilial activities which gave them a new sense of power and self-image.

14.3 NATURE OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

A number of women's organisations were started in 1880s. Many of them were dominated by benevolent men reformers who promoted the cause of social reform.

With the formation of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927, a new trend set in. A product of the nationalist ferment, AIWC was inspired, formed and dominated by women, unlike previous women's organisations which owed much to male leadership. It began with a modest objective of promoting education for women and creating awareness about evil social customs. Though many of the leading women of this organisation had participated in the nationalist struggle, it formally declared itself as a non-political body. Its constitution declared that it would be guided in its work by principles of justice, personal integrity, equal rights and opportunities for all. It was a deliberative body and as an affiliating organisation it attempted to carry on programmes of women's uplift through its various branches all over India. In the earlier years, the AIWC emphasised the role of mothers and harped upon traditional feminine values like selflessness and love, as guides to their efforts in the development process. From the 1930s the AIWC talked in terms of equality between the sexes as a necessary condition of social development.

It also played a very important role in creating a favourable climate for new social legislations. The Sarada Act 1929 forbidding child marriage, the Dissolution of the Muslim Marriage Act (1939), the Bill for the better supervision of orphanages, rescue homes and marriage bureaus were all made possible because of the pressure of AIWC. It was successful in drawing attention to the need for reform in family law by various means, including persistent lobbying on the Hindu Law of Marriage and Succession until its eventful passage in 1955. In the 1930s it advocated the appointment of a committee to investigate the success of legislation on the age of marriage. AIWC played a leading part in the Hindu code debate for twenty years in the face of the British Government's lukewarm attitude and later against the influence of conservative forces within the ruling party. Credit goes to AIWC for whatever limited reform has been achieved through

the enactment of Hindu Law of Marriage and Succession 1955 and 1956.

During the pre-Independence phase various state-level and local organisations were also founded, some by different castes and communities. Some of these women's organisations set up rescue homes which provided shelter for women oppressed by their husbands or joint family members but they made no attempt to conscientise women to the roots of their suffering.

A very important aspect of these women's organisations was that their leaders served as role models for women who wanted to take part in activities outside the home.

Though women's organisations were not direct wings of political parties, some of the women were members of political parties and took part in political activities. Although AIWC demanded equality, it was not anti-men. The women's movement it propagated was not separate from the larger mass struggles. As such, feminism and nationalism were closely inter-linked.

14.4 POST-INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT

India achieved freedom in 1947 and with that event ushered in a new era of hope and buoyancy. India adopted the policy of planned social change to be realised through the path of development based on mixed economy. Equality of sexes was established through the Constitution of free India, which atleast formally terminated the centuries old unequal status of women.

The creation of a Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953, to expand existing welfare programmes by providing financial assistance and professional advice to existing voluntary organisations was an important step that had serious implications for the growth of women's organisations. A number of organisations dependent on CSWB, proliferated but by becoming target-oriented, the women's organisations lost their earlier dynamism. Similarly, the establishment of Mahila Mandals in the rural areas as part of community development programme have no doubt generated a mushrooming of Mahila Mandals. However, even the Mahila Mandals have not been able to reach the masses of women, and much needs to be done in this area.

The Planning Commission also worked on the belief that welfare programmes will automatically reach women and did not focus on women's issues till the late sixties.

This was also a period when the condition of the mass of people was deteriorating. It has been marked by economic crisis and stagnation, rising prices, increasing landlessness and generalised discontent both in rural and urban areas. Politically, the left was fragmented by the break up of CPI into three separate parties. What was significant during this phase was that though women's issues were not taken up, women were mobilised in large numbers and they participated in the general struggles of the rural poor, tribals and industrial working class. A major source of radicalization of women during the 1960s was the Naxalbari Movement which affected the women of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala. The agitations against the molestation of tribal women by the rural rich and issues like alcoholism and wife beating were able to draw hundred of women. Similarly the anti-price rise movement of early 1970s mobilised women of the middle classes.

The left parties like CPI and CPI(M) had recognised the need for mobilising women for serving their own political goals. Hence CPI established a National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) affiliated to the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).

Thus by the late sixties and early seventies, though the mainstream women's organisations were busy carrying programmes of cultural activities, craft classes and beauty shows, the poor women were getting entrenched into the wider movements.

14.4.1 Women's Movement in the Seventies and After

The year 1975 heralded two or three crucial events. It was in the early part of the year that the committee on Status of Women in India (CSWI) presented a powerful document entitled "Towards Equality" which pointed out some of the glaring inequalities existing in Indian Society and the worsening position of women in Indian society. 1975 was the International Women's year (IWY) which was later extended to a decade. The decade not only provided an opportunity for drawing attention to women's issues but it also stimulated the growth of new women's groups. During this period for the first time, March 8th was celebrated as International Women's Day and United Left conferences of women were held in Pune and in Trivandrum. These were indication of a new orientation among the women's organisations.

Besides mainstream organisations, women's organisations could be divided into six categories. They were as follows:

1. Agitational, propagandist, consciousness raising groups which may be termed autonomous groups.
2. Participation in grass-root or mass-based organisations like trade unions, agricultural labourers organisation, democratic rights groups, tribal organisations, etc. acted as instruments of mobilisation, when women's issues like wife beating, sexual harassment by the landlords and alcoholism of men were taken up for action by these organisations.
3. Groups that concentrate on providing services, shelter homes etc. to needy women.
4. Professional Women's Organisations such as doctors, lawyers etc., that seek to agitate against discrimination.
5. Women's wings or fronts of the political parties.
6. Groups involved in research and documentation on women's issues wherein both academics and activists were involved.

The emergence of autonomous groups that exist independently of any political party is a noteworthy phenomenon, as they provide an alternate pattern of working for women's cause. The members of these groups and organisation are only women. They take up women's problems without any interference from any party, although individual members may retain their political affiliations. Their major concern is to fight against oppression, exploitation, injustice and discrimination. The western feminist movement has influenced Indian Women's groups

considerably through its literature, its style of functioning and the nature of issues raised. Many of the members claim themselves to be socialist feminists. These groups are found in almost all the urban areas. These groups have interesting names which suggest feminist solidarity e.g., Saheli (female friend), Sahiyar (comrade), Maitrini (female friend), Manushi (woman) etc. some of them have also adopted names which suggest women power like *stree sakti*, Nari Santa Manch (association for women's equality), Vimochana (liberation), Chingari (spark), Mahila Sangarsh Samiti etc. (Women's struggle association).

These groups have taken up various issues like atrocities against women, rape, alcoholism, wife-beating, dowry harassment and murder, violence in the family, problems of working women, traffic in women, oppression of lower class, lower caste and minority women, media distortion of women's image, personal laws, health issues, problems of women in slums etc. Various strategies have been adopted to mobilise public opinion such as issuing pamphlets or leaflets, signature campaigns in support of demands and organising protest rallies, sit-ins and demonstrations. Street corner meetings, street plays, skits and songs and poster exhibitions are also organised. Newsletters and journals in regional languages are published to reach out to large number of people.

Besides bringing about general awareness towards women's issues, these groups have been successful in exposing the conservatism of the judiciary as in the Mathura rape case, in stopping the telecasting of programmes and the staging of plays with gender bias, and in getting obscene billboards removed.

While new women's groups are emerging on the Indian scene with youthful enthusiasm, the established women's organisations like AIWC, YWCA and NFWI are also getting activated. They are trying to reach out to the lower section of the society and are also organising meetings around issues of dowry, rape, personal law etc. In 1980, they jointly issued a "Development perspective for women in the 80s" and organised a Joint Decade Review Conference in 1985. Similarly, the political parties and particularly the far left groups who had earlier given priority to general political issues, are now recognising the need of special attention to women's issues.

The autonomous groups maintained their distance from the government and all political parties and concentrated on highlighting precisely those issues which they felt had been suppressed or neglected by the major political forces such as those concerning crime against women or violence within the family. It attracted into its fold the numerous voluntary organisations working for the upliftment of women.

A growing academic interest in women's issues is one of the striking features of the 1980s. The establishment of the Indian Association of women's studies in 1981, has been a landmark in the development of women's movement. Initiatives were taken to start a debate on some of the fundamental issues facing women's movement and to generate more Indian Data. Economists interested in Women's Issues held seminars focussing on technical problems of women and work, women and poverty, women and technology. Similarly the International workshop on women and Household discussed some of the theoretical issues like definition of the household, structure of production, kinship systems, role of the state etc. Several seminars and workshops on current as well as basic issues were organised by women's study centres and university departments.

All these activities have encouraged both activists and researchers to produce material on women. In fact the latter part of the decade is marked by a number of publications on women in the form of books, journals, articles, and pamphlets.

With all these developments, there was a growing feeling that we needed to understand feminism in an Indian context, third world reality being different. Societies that had experienced colonial rule, now find themselves in a situation of transition from tradition to modernity. Extreme poverty, high levels of illiteracy and the hold of obscurantist cultural values make the situation of third world women unenviable. Therefore, for Indian feminists, the linkage between their struggles and wider movements of oppressed classes became very crucial. As the sufferings of both men and women are severe, organising joint actions had become a necessity.

India has a rich tradition of selfless voluntary action. While the governmental interventions in this sector are operationalised largely through NGOs, the initiatives that the latter have themselves developed are rich and diverse. These efforts have often demonstrated the success of alternate models of empowerment and development.

Two decades after the commencement of the International Year of Women (1975) we can see some visible changes in the policies, programmes and laws on women drafted by the government of India. The government is also coming forward with programmes that are to be implemented through a combination of NGO and official inputs. Thus a movement towards interdependence seems to be taking place. By 1980s, the women's movement was dominated by autonomous women's groups and by 1988, it had expanded its base to include women from NGOs and state sponsored programmes.

In the following pages, we will briefly discuss some of the established women's organisations and supportive organisations. Mention will also be made of the state-sponsored programmes that include NGOs and Women's Groups.

14.5 WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

14.5.1 All India Women's Conference

The All India Women's Conference was founded by Margaret Cousins, an Irish lady, who had made India her home. Her main concern was women's education but gradually AIWC took up various social and economic issues concerning women such as purdah, child marriage, divorce, women's property rights etc. It became a leader among organisations fighting for women's rights and equality.

Many eminent women such as Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamaladevi Chatopadyaya, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Muthulakshmi Reddi, Begum Saheba of Bhopal, Rani Lakshmi Bai Rajwade and others came into the fold of AIWC.

As a leading NGO, AIWC is represented on various committees and commissions on social welfare set up by the government, like status of Women's Committee (1975), National Vocational Training for women, the Implementation of legal Aid Scheme (1982), National Integration Committee etc. It is one of the voluntary organisations whose comments are sought by parliament on proposed legislations affecting women.

At the International level, AIWC is affiliated to the International Alliance of Women and has consultative status with ECOSOC, UNICEF, FAWA, PAN PACIFIC and South East Asian Women's Association, ESCAP, and the United Nations Associations, Delhi.

Objectives of AIWC

1. To work for a society based on the principles of social justice, integrity, equal rights, and opportunities for all.
2. To secure recognition for the inherent rights of every human being.
3. To support the claim of every citizen to the right to enjoy basic rights and liberties.
4. To create awareness among women so that they utilise to the fullest the fundamental rights conferred on them by the constitution of India.
5. To cooperate with people and organisations of the world for the implementation of these principles which alone can assure permanent international amity and world peace.

Legislative Reforms Initiated by AIWC

AIWC was instrumental in bringing forth several legislative reforms to benefit women and children. Following are some of the pre-independence legislative measures.

1. Monogamy in family law.
2. Inter-community marriage
3. Women's rights to:
 - (a) Divorce and re-marriage
 - (b) Maintenance from separated husband or son
 - (c) Adoption of child (for single women)
 - (d) Acquire, inherit and hold property.

14.5.2 Indian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS)

The establishment of IAWS in 1981, has been a landmark in the development of women's movement in India. From its inception, the IAWS has been an organisation of academics, researchers, activists and other feminists. It started looking at and articulating issues in broader terms and moved from talking about women's issues to developing a feminist perspective on all issues.

The need to incorporate women's studies in higher education system has been felt the world over for more than two decades. In the west, women's studies is a "Movement-born" programme. Unlike the west, in many of the countries in the Asian region the emergence of women's studies has not been a product of a movement outside academia. As a result many women's studies programmes have been introduced at the initiative from above. A major push

to the programmes was undoubtedly given by the women's Decade. Initially there was considerable dependence on western ideas, models, methodologies and scholarships but the Asian Women scholars soon realised that there was the need for a third world focus if not an Asian Focus to the understanding of the gender problem. In the NGO '85 Conference at Nairobi in July 1985, about 22 activists, researchers and policy makers prepared a document enunciating a Third World Women's perspective on development, described as DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a new Era). Similarly Asian Women's Research and Action Network (AWRAN) initiated a debate on the relevance of feminism in Asia and the special features of the Asian feminism.

The education system in India has been rather lukewarm in promoting the values of equality and gender justice. Further, it is found that in many ways the education system actively reinforces gender differences through curriculum and teacher bias. The indifference of the system in incorporating women's dimensions in the syllabi was made clearly evident at the first National Conference on Women's Studies (NCWS) held in Bombay in 1981.

The major goal of this conference was to stimulate a concern for putting women's studies into the heart of the University system.

Since then LAWS has been organising National seminars at regular intervals on currently relevant themes. The second national conference was held in Trivendrum in 1984 and focussed on women and work. The third was held in Chandigarh in 1986, the theme of which was women, struggle and movements. The fourth was held in Andhra University, Visakhapatnam in 1988 and was on Rural women, poverty, survival and struggle for change. The fifth National Conference was held in Calcutta in 1991 and was on religion, Culture and politics. The sixth was held in 1993 in Mysore the theme of which was - The Dynamics of the new Economic Policy: Implication for women. A seventh National Conference was held in December 1995 at Jaipur. It concentrated on stocktaking of the many programmes and alternatives of women's movements and reviewed the new trends in our economy and society and their influence on women, men and the movement. The theme was - "Looking forward - Looking Back : insearch of feminist vision, alternative paradigms and practices".

Apart from these a series of seminars and workshops have been held to evolve perspective, structure and training for women's studies programmes. The U.G.C., the body for policy and support for higher education in India has accepted the need for introducing women studies in the curriculum of the University system by providing financial support to various activities like organising seminars, workshops and summer institutes, conducting researches on women and encouraging establishment of centers for women's studies at Departments of Universities.

The Women's studies activists and academics, the world over, agree that women at present have a lower status than men, that socially, economically and politically women are discriminated against and this state of affairs is unfair and must be changed. However, there is a difference in the analysis of the origin of subordinate status of women and why the lower status has persisted; what strategies are to be devised to end this subordination and such other queries.

14.5.3 Mahila Dakshata Samiti

The objectives of the Mahila Dakshata Samiti is to work for the various issues involving women. It aims to bring about social awareness and to focus attention on the evils of dowry system, child marriages and atrocities against women.

Mahila Dakshata samiti came into existence in 1977 and has been in function ever since. There are branches in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. At present, it is very active in Delhi, Maharashtra and in Andhra Pradesh. It publishes a bilingual journal by name 'Bharatiya Janani'. The Andhra Pradesh branch of Mahila Dakshata Samiti was started on February 20, 1990 at Hyderabad, on the initiative of Ms. Suman Krishna Kant. The branch handles various programmes and has set up district branches at Nizamabad, Vishakapatnam, Warangal, Karimnagar and Chittoor. Committees are set up to look after family counselling work, slum improvement, child welfare, adult education, social and legal awareness, health and hygiene, consumer education, media and care of the old and sick. The Hyderabad branch has 4 counselling centres, 8 Adult Education Centres, 4 Sewing Centres, 1 Medical Centre, 1 Self-defence centre, 1 Working Women's hostel and 1 school for children. It organised rallies, area meetings and seminars on the occasion of SAARC year of the Girl-child and in celebration of International Women's year. Its activities could get a fillip under the inspiring leadership of its president, Ms. Suman Krishna Kant, who incidentally is also the wife of Andhra Pradesh Governor.

14.5.4 Andhra Mahila Sabha

Andhra Mahila Sabha was founded and nurtured by Ms. Durgabai Deshmukh. Established in 1937, even before Andhra Pradesh formation it grew into gigantic proportion in the cause of service to women. At present, it provides as many as fifty different categories of service. Prominent among the institutions run by the Sabha are "Ayakasa", imparting vocational training to students, Mahila Vidyalaya with hostel, "Mallamma Devi Mahila Mandiram" to educate women who could not pursue their studies and Iswari Prasad Dattatreya Orthopaedic Centre. Under the enlightened leadership of Ms. Durgabai Deshmukh, educational institutions from kindergarten to Post-graduate levels sprung up. Nursing Homes were converted into full-fledged Hospitals with several specialities. A "Mini Hospital on wheels" was set up in Ranga Reddy District. A Rehabilitation Centre for physically handicapped children has been running on efficient lines. "Literacy House" as the centre for Adult Education Programmes has been established. Starting of Multi-purpose Health Workers Training Schemes, Urban Family Welfare Centres, Mobile food and Nutrition Extension units, Centres for Pre-school training and Teacher's training, free Legal Aid centres and old Age Homes are other special features of Andhra Mahila Sabha.

Ms. Deshmukh has always emphasised the importance of 4 pillars (4P's) - personnel, publications, public reporting and public accountability for service organisations. It can be proudly stated that Andhra Mahila Sabha has been following this advice scrupulously.

14.6 ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTIVE OF THE NGOS

14.6.1 PRIA

PRIA is a society for Participatory Research in Asia and is in existence since 1982. It accepts the philosophy and practice of Participatory Research as an appropriate methodology for people - Centered development and social transformation.

The National Networking activities around issues of voluntary organisations/NGOS led to the emergence of PRIA as an institution that promotes and strengthens such organisations. The roles and relevance of support organisations as part of the movement of NGOs got demonstrated and articulated by PRIA.

In the first phase (1982-86) it provided new and practical possibilities for the promotion of truly participatory, gross-root development of the marginalised and oppressed "(in particular the tribals, women and dalits). This period generated a number of initiatives in areas like adult education, community participation in primary health care, deforestation and land alienation, worker's education and occupational health, participatory training, planning, evaluation etc.

Phase two (1986-1989) was marked by the growth and promotion of the principle of participatory Research in areas of training, planning and evaluation. These methodological innovations were widely applied in such sections as health, literacy, women's development, occupational health, natural resources etc.

In the phase three of PRIA, the programmes were further expanded, the preparation and publication of learning materials, reports and periodicals was made a regular activity. New regional support organisations like UNNATI (Rajasthan) JANAMITRA (A.P) and SAHAYI (Kerala) were catalysed. Asian and International recognition was translated into programmes of action largely within South-Asian and South-East Asian region.

The present programmes and work of PRIA is organised around four distinct yet interrelated centres. Each centre has three types of activities.

1. Studies, research and documentation.
2. Educational events, workshops, training and consultations.
3. Preparation and publication of educational materials (including audio-visual).

1. Centre for Participation and Governance:

The central focus of this centre is to strengthen citizen participation in shaping their own future. The framework of EMPOWERMENT as evolved from the practise of Participatory Research has essentially implied a twin process of learning and organising as a vehicle for people-centred and people-controlled development. The centre attempts to enhance Participation of and local self-governance by marginalised sections of the society.

2. Centre for Occupation and Environmental Health:

The focus of this centre is to contribute towards making work and living places "healthier". It promotes regular monitoring of occupational and environmental health hazards to different sections of people. It works to influence such policies and legislations as affect the status of occupational and environmental health in the country.

3. Centre for Institutional Development:

The focus of this centre is to work towards strengthening the institutions of the civil society. PRIA's experience of working in the arena of capacity building of grass-roots NGOs over the past decade clearly suggests the growing importance of strengthening the institutional structure and process of such organisations so that they can play the wide and complex roles that they are being called upon to play today.

Further, the centre is also developing programme areas like policy advocacy, research and analytical capability, strategic planning and resource mobilisation and internal mechanisms of governance and accountability for NGOs and their networks.

4. Centre for Global Alliance:

The historical roots of PRIA in the regional and international Networks of Participatory Research have acquired greater significance at this juncture. The issues of participation and governance as basis for alternative paradigm of development need to be addressed in the global context. In recent past, demands on PRIA's involvement in Asian level networking of NGOs has grown, so has its role in building coalitions and alliances across the Asian region. Both in its networking and its professional educator roles, there is the need to take an active global stance.

This centre, therefore, has the twin purpose of building Networks and Alliances for Asian and Global Solidarity and advocacy on the one hand, and strengthening the capacities of NGOs and others in the areas of Participation Governance and Institutional Development, on the other.

14.6.2 SEWA

SEWA stands for Self Employed Women's Association. It supports women who either work at home or as vendors in the street. The motive behind SEWA's work is to help workers in unorganised sector gain their rights and social justice. Over the last two decades SEWA has been successful in working with rag pickers; conducting literary classes, building low cost housing and environmental sanitation.

It was SEWA's persistent pressure that led in 1987 to the Government of India setting up a National Commission of Self-employed Women. The Commission's report - Shram Shakti (1988) has brought out these women's realities and aspirations and has made valid recommendations. The report forms the basis for a number of innovative labour laws and break throughs in conventional thinking towards unorganised sector.

14.6.3 Mahila Samakhyas:

In the 1980s, women's movement was dominated by autonomous women's groups; by 1988, it had expanded its base to include women from NGOs and state-sponsored programmes. Mahila Samakhyas was a programme set up by the government but has involved NGOs, women's groups and feminists in its planning and execution.

The genesis of Education for Women's Equality Programme, better known as Mahila Samakhyas (MS) lies in the recognition by the Education Department that existing policies and programmes have failed to bring formal and non-formal education into women's lives. Part-IV

of the National policy on education (1986) clearly states that because women are doubly oppressed by gender and class, a special effort will have to be made to reach out to them. Mahila Samakya was initiated to operationalise this policy.

14.7 SUMMARY

The women's movement re-introduced concepts like patriarchy, feminism, sexual division of labour into its language and analysis. It started looking at and articulating issues in broader terms and moved from talking about women's issues to developing a feminist perspective on all issues. Activists and academicians aided in the development of women's studies and made inroads into development planning, census enumeration and government schemes. New women's groups and NGOs have been instrumental in creating awareness towards women's issues. The women's movement in India called for the transformation and creation of a just democratic and equal society. Recently there seems to be an overall shift in the role of the state with regard to women's issues. It has come up with many legal reforms and policies for women; a national commission for women and reservation for electoral seats. The introduction of the Mahila Samakya programmes for instance illustrate the definite shift in governments' role.

14.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I Answer the following questions in 30 lines.

- 1) Trace the emerging perspectives of the women's movement.
- 2) What were the changing foci of the National Conferences of IAWS?
- 3) Trace the role of NGOS in the women's movement in India.

II Answer the following questions in about 15 lines each.

- 1) The emergence of women's autonomous groups in India
- 2) The role of AIWC
- 3) "Towards - Equality"
- 4) UN Decade for Women

14.9 SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. Mair, Lucille, M.	"International Women's Decade: A Balance Sheet" Centre for Women's Development, New Delhi, 1985
2. Bulbeck, Chilla	"One World Women's Movement" Ajanta Publications, New Delhi, 1988.
3. Indian Association of Women's Studies	News letters of IAWS

4. Monographs of Research Centre for Women's studies SNDT University	Contributions to women studies series
5. Desai, Neera and M.Krishna Raj	"Women and Society in India" Ajanta Publications, Bombay, 1987.

14.10 GLOSSARY :

Modernisation	-	The process by which a society becomes more internally differentiated and complex and in which science and technology guides change.
Marginalisation of Women	-	The prevalent tendency to look upon the women as a supplementary earner and the man as primary-earner even if employed only seasonally, consigns women to the status of 'marginal worker'.
Invisibility of Women	-	Most of women's productive activity being hidden under the label of domestic work renders women's work invisible.
Empowerment of Women	-	To instil a sense of mastery to women who have hitherto felt powerless.
Feminisation of poverty	-	It refers to the fact that women constitute the majority of adult poor.

UNIT - 15 : WOMEN AND MEDIA

Contents

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15.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you will be able to look at media with a critical angle and understand the negative effects of the global culture of mass consumption on women.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The mass media has become today's most powerful vehicle in the moulding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles. It has reached every home, town and country. It has invaded even the most remote communities living in the back yards of modernizing societies. It has become one of the most important tools in the so called modernisation process, transmitting ideas and aspirations and bringing about a shrinking world with the speed and scope of its communications network. Mass media has become the purveyor of a global culture.

This global culture of mass consumption has had many negative effects on traditional societies and communities (including India). It has led to a breakdown and rejection of community values and ties displacing traditional forms of the community entertainment and expressions of culture and a pattern of consumption which homogenizes consumer tastes as it is totally alien.

15.2 REACH OF THE MEDIA

In 1972, the United Nations's commission on the status of women noted that in all its efforts to promote the advancement of women, it had encountered a serious obstacle in the deep rooted attitudes of men and women which tended to perpetuate the status quo. The commission also observed that those attitudes were due to the cultural patterns which to a great extent,

determined thoughts and feelings about women and men. These in turn were being disseminated on a vast scale as a result of technical advances in mass communication media.

All this has been successfully achieved due to the special nature of communication techniques of the mass media. Because the mass media is the 'one way only' communication, it has the ability to process, filter and unify information so that readers, listeners and viewers become passive participants i.e. mere vessels of information. It is precisely this ability that makes mass media so pervasive and penetrating. By gradually shaping public opinion, personal beliefs and even people's self perception, media influence the process of socialisation and shapes ideology and thinking. Today majority of the newspapers and magazines are owned by a handful of business houses and television and radio are under the total control of the party in power. Because of the increasing commercialisation, television and radio time is also controlled by a few rich business houses. In this way, the views, prejudices and interpretations of a few people come to be accepted by the majority. Such views become respectable and objective, they become facts and prescriptions, the prevalent ideology. The minority which controls media uses this technique to strengthen its own position. Therefore media often acts as a conservative force in society, one which wants to maintain the status quo and avoid major changes, whether in relation to class or sex.

It is often said in the defence of media that it reflects current social reality. On the one hand it reflects what exists but on the other, it affects social reality. By being selective in what it shows, and how it shows it, it interprets and creates its own reality. A part of this is the selective reinforcement of values, attitudes and behaviour. Thus by always perpetuating the view that the men play a more important role than women, media misrepresents the roles women play.

15.3 WOMEN IN ADVERTISING

Today the growth of sales promotion articulated through the medium of advertisement has paralysed the development of industrial capitalism, whose hall mark is commodity production, profit, competition, freedom of choice and enterprise are integral aspects of commodity production.

Advertisement and publicity, which have emerged to increase commodity sales and hence profit, have become the lifeline of commercial mass media, as evident by the enormous sale of commercial time to advertising in the film and television media and the space in print media.

Advertising projects the idea of freedom of choice for the purchaser and the freedom of enterprise for the manufacturer. It turns consumption into a substitute for democracy in society, masking the more undemocratic elements.

It proposes through a hidden persuasion that we transform ourselves by buying some thing more in order to become enviable. The state of being envied is made out to be a state of glamour. The admen probe the human psyche, unearth subliminal human needs, values and aspirations. They exploit subconscious drives and desires. They promise the fulfillment of such yearning into the product. They sell not just the cigarette but the promise of male power not just the face cream but the promises of womanly beauty, not just the Gold Spot but the promise of female sensuality, not just Vim but the promise of ideal wifehood.

15.3.1 Historical Background of Advertising

A glimpse of ad films from 50's to 90's shows the ever increasing suability, sophistication and professionalism in the sexist idiom. This sexist imagery, which discriminates in favour of men, treat women as inferior and subordinate to men and project women as sex symbols.

The 1950's and the early 60's represent the immediate post independence era. Nationalism, patriotism, unity, integration and progress were the watchwords of the day, Advertising was at its infancy. Ad films were simple and direct. Their use of Hindi cinema form and their recourse to mythology and legend was part of the national culture surge. Sexist portrayal too in ad films of this period were direct and crude sexist imagery and representation were drawn from an Indian feudal culture. Abduction sequences, the good man vs bad man, the notion of women as men's property and the celebration of male power in male sports were dominant representation that marked the ad films of this period.

The late 50's and early 60's witnessed an aggressive drive towards a western, modelled economic growth and development. Industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation became the order of the day. There was a flood of western consumer goods and the consolidation of a western urban culture in India. Women the seductress and sex symbol became popular representation of women. Men on the other hand were portrayed as 'naturally virile, polygamous beings, the prey to female seduction. Pure sex was gently but distinctly peddled in the ad, with a careful emphasis on poetry, fantasy and scenic beauty, subtle and passive sexual symbolism, sipping cool drinks through a straw the release of fuzz portrayal of gushing waterfalls etc.

In 1970's and 80's advertisement came of age in India. Professionalism and sophistication became the marked features of advertising. This was also a period in which the women's liberation movement, the demand for equal rights to women and radical gender role changes were beginning to consolidate in the west. The status quo and male ego were beginning to feel threatened and the need for reassurance of femininity and masculinity became important in society. Advertisers used the situation to reinforce traditional gender, role and trait stereotypes more subtly and at a deeply subliminal level.

Today in the 90's advertisers with great professionalism and technical advancement are using the situation to reinforce traditional gender role and trait stereotypes more subtly. Thus today we have two kinds of images that are put across. Women as the seductress and women as the ideal housewife.

15.3.2 Images of Women in Today's Advertisement:-

The first kind of advertisement capitalise on the female body as an object to be feasted upon and consumed by eager male eyes. This is no better seen than in images of women in seminude and suggestive poses, revealing big breasts on calenders, advertising cigarettes, tractors, paint and machinery. Most of these women in the picture are half reclining and smiling. They have a very soft expression on their face and are obviously very relaxed. The overall expression is one of an 'empty look' or dummy like expression devoid of any personality while men in the picture often demonstrate a thoughtful expression implying some intellectual processes.

The other kind of women portrayed are the housewives. While men are portrayed as successful professionals and important decision makers, women in advertisements are cast as 'housewives' who busy themselves and keep happy with rice cookers, washing machines, sewing machines, washing powders and soaps. Men are seldom if ever seen, sharing household chores whilst women are beaming with pride and happiness with the latest household appliances being advertised, as if housework necessarily and always equals women. Such advertisements deny the growing trend of women engaging themselves in occupations and activities outside the home and imply that their being house bound is the natural order of the things. The growing acceptance of the idea that men should also share in the tasks of housework is entirely absent.

While time saving products that are extolled as reducing labour are probably desired most by working women who are time hurried, the purchasers in these ads are not working. These advertisements reduce women into Mrs. Mop kits, dusting and vacuuming, polishing and washing, rejoicing in soaps and clothes brightness.

A woman's place according to these advertisements is not only in the home, but in the kitchen and the laundry room.

Many advertisements portray women not only as servile and passive but also devoid of intelligence. Women are often shown to be madly in love with housework. Thus they can be seen gently and lovingly caressing and inhaling the fragrance of clothes and towels washed with a certain detergent, plates cleaned with a particular cleaning powder and floors polished with a particular brand of polish.

The real evil of the media image of women is that it supports the sexist status quo. In a sense, the fashions, cosmetics, and feminine hygiene advertisements are aimed more at men than women they encourage men to expect women to sport all the latest trappings of sexual slavery- expectations women must then fulfill if they are to survive.

Then what about those who have not the means to fulfill these expectations, to keep up this facade. They are made to feel worthless and unwanted, even unloved. We may hate ourselves as human beings as women and curse our misfortune. We create such untold misery, unhappiness and bitterness for ourselves. We have become enslaved by the mass consumer culture which exploits and makes victim of all women.

15.4 NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF WOMEN

Women's issues are today as much a part of the 'media mix' as say bonded labour, environment and economic development. In the past the print media has been criticised for (a) neglect of women's issues in coverage and comment (b) perpetuation of sex role stereotypes and (c) sexual exploitation of women's bodies.

The last two charges remain as valid today as they were before. Even while giving generous space and coverage to women's issues the general media subverts the women's question in a variety of ways. It does this subtly as well as blatantly through

1. Contradictory images
2. Selective coverage

3. Reinforcement of traditional values
4. The operation of new values
5. Hostility to feminism &
6. The use of humour
7. Instant headings

1. Contradictory Images

A same magazine or newspaper may have comments on women's anatomy at one place and in the same issue report on atrocities against Indian women which could include interviews with active groups and lawyers.

Except for the left oriented progressive journals and papers where women's issues are written about as a part of an editorial policy to focus on all socially relevant issues, the general media, despite its coverage on women's issues, doesn't really have an overall editorial perspective or a committed and ethical stand on the women's question. Like a consumer product the mass media opts for a mix that sells. Where women are concerned, this mix once contained exclusively sexist fare. Now there is an added component - serious reportage on women - because the women's question is 'in'.

2. Selective Coverage

Some issues get written about but many others don't. Some issues like population policy are covered without incorporation the women's perspective. Dowry deaths and rape are staples for the media. These reports are sensationalised in a manner which either serves to titillate the readers or desensitise them. Judgements on marriage, divorce and dowry are obvious 'news' and are quickly followed by an elaborate editorial but judgements related to employment don't attract the same interest or get written about.

3. Reinforcement of Traditional Values

While in India as elsewhere in the world, women are questioning old roles and values, they are found to face conflict. To focus exclusively on the problems of liberation as it were and imply that the old values serve women's interests better. Many newspapers with their regular back page homilies from religious discourses on the sacred duties of the ideal wife and motherhood, selectively reinforces and endorses traditional values while apparently focusing on the women's question.

4. Operation of New Values

There is often an enhanced coverage of women can make it to the top formula. The ingredients are normally a scientist, a judge, an IAS officer. These while shifting attention from the social system, while propagating that the woman too can succeed massage, also downgrade women's achievement because they are superficial and lack the perspective which could make them meaningful. For these papers while feminist struggles and analyses of issues are low priority for writing about, feminist celebrities are not.

5. Hostility to Feminism

Media's treatment of women's question can be summed up in the dictum, "Selective coverage of women's oppression yes, but feminism no". Feminism by going to fundamentals and questioning deeply entrenched and accepted values is a threat to the comfortable patriarchal order of which the media people both men and women are themselves a part. Though like all decent people they abhor dowry deaths, rape and atrocities on helpless women so while reporting on more blatant and visible forms of exploitation and acknowledging that injustice must be fought, the media's attitude is that feminism is not the way to go about it. Through distortions in headlines and texts they have created new stereotypes and conveyed the message that feminists are extremists who reflect the opinion of a small minority, most women themselves do not want radical change, feminists are anti male, anti motherhood and pro free sex etc. Such hostile stereotyping will persist unless the media people make conscious efforts to put aside their pre conceived notions about bra burning lubbers and familiarise themselves through social science research and analysis with feminist theory and practice.

6. The use of Humour

Many papers use a very laboured brand of humour to comment on out of the ways news items. Topics like wage for housework, high bride price, paternity leave or men sharing housework have brought in a number of cartoons reducing the most serious news items on women's struggles to cruel jokes.

7. Instant Headings

Almost as bad as headlines which denigrate liberation and the lubbers are the instant headlines which reveal the total lack of interest on women's issues. Any serious article analyzing the women's dimension can be safely headlined "The feminine mystique" or 'sexual politics' or 'the second sex'. Headings for a demonstration a protest or a rally are often a choice between "women up in arms" and "women on the warpath". Another favorite heading for a report on a seminar or a conference is "women of the world unite". The subject discussed could be health, employment or atrocities, but the heading will be the same, it does not tell who is participating, where or why.

15.5 WOMEN IN TELEVISION AND THE FILMS

Though the reach of TV is much more and it reaches directly into our homes the television is also guilty of sexism, distorting of the image of women and propagation of sex stereotypes - Mothers, housewives, dependent and passive. Women are very rarely shown as working women - capable professionals, labourers, farmers. Women in rural areas grow at least 50% of the world's food. They work in all aspect of cultivation, including planting, thinning, weeding, applying fertilizer and harvesting..... In some regions they also market what they grow. In many developing regions, according to a publication of Food and Agriculture organisation of the U.N. a quarter of half of the rural households are permanently or defacto headed by women.

Yet, the television on any agricultural programme only depicts the male farmer. All experts interviewers, model farmers are men. Women, marginal farmers and the landless do not feature in these programmes at all.

The advertisement on television also show a bias towards women. Though we have a law which bans the giving and taking of dowry, a public sector company (LIC) actively encourages people to save for their daughters wedding, through its advertisement.

The bias against women is not confined to serial and ads, it permits even the T.V. news and current affairs programme. According to a stud, "sex roles in Doordarshan programme" by Anita Dighe, Prabha Krishnan and Poornima Rao, an analysis of the programme and commercials telecast in July 1986 revealed that news coverage relating to women did not exceed 2.5 minutes of any news bulletin, the focus of all women's programmes was on the home as the main stay of their lives, in the farmers programme only two telecasts in a month raise the question of a livelihood for women, otherwise the contribution of women to agriculture and the rural economy was totally ignored. The comparers and experts were overwhelmingly men and no women featured in the political programmes. A quick glance at Doordarshan's programmes even today will show that things have not changed much.

The earliest films made in pre-independent era were mythological. Cinema enthusiastically upheld traditional values -reiterating, underlining and reinforcing them.

Then came the period in 50's and 60's of romantic social films. Heroines were coy their identities being limited to being daughters of tyrannical parents and adored objects of both the hero and the villain. If married they were long suffering daughter-in-law who sacrificed everything to save the family honour even if the family treated them worse than slaves. Reward came their way in the end in the form of reconciliation as devi.

The 70's and 80's saw the rise of the action films. These revolved around the revenge of the wronged hero theme. The only women who mattered was the heroes mother, who was the epitome of all that's pure in this soiled world. Fathers are always killed in these films so that only one man can occupy centrestage.

Subscribing to the predominantly orthodox views of the large majority of their audience rather than acknowledging the reality of women's growing influence and contribution to society, film makers generally prefer preconception of the status of women which perpetuates male domination in society. As such these portrayals reflect not so much as society as it is evolving as how they would wish it to remain. So we have images of women with in the family as wife and mother and beyond the family - the courtesan. Women are seldom shown as understanding or supportive of each other. They are in fact the preserver of tradition and each others worst persecutor while male comorader is has always been strong and is emphasized in most films.

Thus the media has characterised the participation of women primarily in terms of consumer values. The image of women displayed and projected by the media has led to the moulding of attitude and perception both in man and women which are at variance with the positive values in our culture. Women are stereotyped as housewife, mother and the consumer of goods. They are always packaged as attractive, demure, passive and submissive as either mothers or wives, whereas the qualities of dominance, power, intelligence and double standard of morality are emphasised in men. Women are made to consume fashions, cosmetics, household goods, western tastes and values in the consumer society with the help of mass media.

15.6 CREATION OF AN ALTERNATIVES - THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

As a shaper of ideology of a public, media influences society and women in a major way. It effects all aspects of women's lives including their self image. It also influences decisions regarding women's development. Thus we have to take media, as seriously as we take political and economic issues in our fight for liberation.

It is important that we recognise the manipulative role and the class and gender bias of media and that we challenge it. Instead of remaining a total in the hands of men and the elite, media should be increasingly controlled by those who want to challenge and change the present system.

Women's groups and women's organisations should campaign against the sexist portrayal of women in local advertisements, calenders and other mass media.

Women journalist in the press, radio, T.V. and magazines have an important role to play in the full integration of women in the nation's development process. They should increase the media coverage on women's issues like sex tourism, dangerous drugs and contraceptives affecting women the effects of V.D. on women and unborn children.

The mass media should also work for a better image of women in the press, to try to change the stereotype image that the public have and the image the women have of themselves. They should also highlight women's contribution to the home and the family.

Women's groups should also do their own investigative reporting on women's issues with in their realm of experience, and publish newsletters and magazines. They could also set up an information net work with in the country to share and exchange information and experience that can bring women together and work towards a plan of action.

The government must take a more committed role to raise the status and dignity of women and their image as portrayed by the mass media. It must ban all advertisements, calenders and product-display which make use of women as sex objects.

We must create alternatives in different media and use them to inform and empower women to get women out of their isolation. We must make ourselves more visible and audible so that our concerns do not remain unarticulated and unattended.

Not only must we create alternative messages but also evolve alternative methods of working together, methods which are more democratic and participatory and which break the divide between media makers and media takers.

It is heartening to see many women making feminist films, publishing magazines writing songs and plays to express themselves and imitate a dialogue with other women to challenge stereotypes and myths. Though the fight is a long hard one because the adversary is very strong it must continue with a single minded devotion and only then can media be able to play a positive role in the development of women.

15.7 SUMMARY

Today mass media has become the most powerful vehicle in the moulding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles. Media has a far reach and is very pervasive and penetrating. However media often misrepresents the roles women play. This can be seen in advertising, newspaper coverage of women, and representation of women in TV and films. We have also looked at the creation of an alternative and finally we have emphasised on the role of media the development of women.

15.8 MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following questions in 30 lines each.

- 1) Critically examine the role played by mass media today?
- 2) Examine the portrayal of women in the ad-film culture?
- 3) Critically analyze any ten advertisements on Television or a magazine, and illustrate how they represent women.
- 4) How are women portrayed in the print media?
- 5) Critically analyse the portrayal of women in cinema?

II. Answer the following questions in 15 lines each.

- 1) Analyze any three films or television serials and illustrate how women are represented in these?
- 2) Examine some of the alternatives for a positive representation of women in the media.

15.9 SUGGESTED BOOKS

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UNIT - 16: WOMEN AND LITERATURE

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- 16.0 Objectives
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- 16.2 Representation of Women in Myth and Classical Literature
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- 16.10 Model Examination Questions
- 16.11 Suggested Books

16.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to discuss how women is potrayed in magazines, literature, children's books and novels.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature can be divided into two categories from a feminist point of view namely, literature produced by men and literature produced by women. While the first category of literature may even be produced by women what is important is that is reflects a male bias, perception and attribution about women while the second does not.

When we talk of women and literature we have to look at two distinct varieties

1. Women as consumers of a male produced literature, and
2. Women as writers

The first category would include stereotyping of women, the exploitation and manipulation of women, within this broad category we can include

1. Representation of women in myth classical literature
2. Women in Children's books
3. Women in Women's Magazines
4. Women in Novels
5. Women in Pornographic Literature

The second category would include women as writers, women as the producer of literal meanings, with history themes, genres and structures of literature by women.

16.2 REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MYTH AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE

In the myth and classical literature the identity of women is focused primarily on the relationship of woman to man and the good woman is synonymous to being a good wife. Very rarely is the focus on mother daughter or father daughter relationship. We do have the mother child relationship in the form of Krishna Yashoda but the focus is on the child rather than the mother. The highest aspiration for women was to see her husband as a god and be a pativrata. (devoted only to husband).

Majority of the myths convey message that women must be chaste and faithful and with these virtues women can overcome any adversity. Thus Damyanti successfully identifies her prospective husband Nala from five identical men. Savitri's devotion is displayed in following her husband to the world of dead and she is rewarded with a renewed life for satyavan. Because of her chastity and wifely devotion Arundhati is able to transform her seducers into children. Only Ahalya is not chaste enough to see through the deceit of Indra in assuming her husband's form and so she is turned into stone though she herself was a victim. Most of these tests are written by men and they have stereotyped the ideal woman as visualised by them.

It is of great interest to note that in our ancient traditions five Panchakanyas figure prominently Ahalya, Draupadi, Tara, Kunti and Mandodiri. But none of them could be the ideal wife so they have lost their status to Sati, Savitri and Sita. Ahalya's moral slip, Draupadi's polyandrous marriage, Tara's second marriage with her brother-in-law and obtaining sons from other than her husband and mandodiri though obedient and faithful lacks substance and fades away.

In contrast we have sati or parvathi who stands for all that is chaste and could not even tolerate the character assassination of her husband by her father and preferred to jump into the fire and obtain death rather than listen to words against her husband.

Savitri is so chaste and faithful that she is able to wrestle her husband's life from the hands of Yama and a part of heaven is named after her. This part of heaven is called the "Savitri Loka" and all devoted and pious women aspire to go here after their death and a difficult vrata "Savitri Vrata" is performed by married woman to avoid widowhood.

Sita stands out among all the women as the most docile, uncomplaining and the silent sufferer. She prefers death than questioning her husband's action. If sorrow is an index to greatness then Sita is the greatest of woman whose life is nothing but a succession of sorrowful experience.

In the Valmiki Ramayana itself we can see the portrayal of womanhood and the development of the image of women in the Aryan prototype as a contrast to woman in a tribal society. Though the rakshasas or Vanaras are at a lower stage of economic development their women appear to be strong, independent individuals where as women of the Aryans or naras are totally subservient to men.

The Vanaras occupy forest lands and mountain tracts and even in Lanka we have no evidence of agriculture. One can see the existence of group marriages because though Vali and Sugriva are married to Tara and Ruma respectively they are seen at different times sharing both women. They do not have moral taboos of chastity which is used to subordinate women to men. Anjayana conceives Hanuman through Vayu even though her mate Kesari is alive. Though Ruma is abducted by Vali, Sugriva accepts her back without any reservations. Among the rakshasa also women seem to enjoy greater freedom Surpanakha freely roams through the forests. Even the brother sister bond seems to be stronger among them. After her humiliation at the hands of Lakshmana, Surpanakha appeals to her brother to avenge her humiliation. In contrast Sita appears to have no one to turn to after being driven out of the palace and has to seek refuge in a ascetic's ashram.

Through the portrayal of women in the Ramayana especially Sita's with feminine self sacrifice, virtue, fidelity and chastity being the key words the text became a powerful instrument in popularising the twin notion that women are the property of men and sexual identity for women was life's major virtue. Even when wronged in the end Sita does not retaliate but takes recourse to ending her agony in a suicidal action by entering the earth.

A further development to the Sita myth occurred in the medieval times with Tulsida's "Ramacharitramanas" which spoke of the "Lakshman Rekha" whereby Lakshman commanded Sita to live within the protective boundary and no harm would come to her. This resulted in these dictum that if women stayed within the bounds set for them they would be safe and once they stepped out nothing could save them. The Ramayana clearly advocates that women have to remain chaste and submissive even in the face of the greatest odds. If the humiliation is too great for her she may end her life by seeking an honourable death but there is no question of an 'honourable life' for her.

In contrast to the women of Ramayana, the women in Mahabharata are neither chaste nor passive. Draupadi comes across as a very strong individual and she is in sharp contrast to the image of fidelity to a single male which became the dominant aspect of idealisation of women in the classical tradition.

Draupadi does not suffer in silence and strongly condemns the pandavas for humiliation they have inflicted on her. She behaves defiantly when the kauravas drag her into the assembly. She argues with the elders seated in the assembly court on the legal position of a slave and asserts that since Yudhishtira gambled away his own person before he gambled her he had already lost his authority over her. As a final view she decides never to bind her hair as a constant reminder of her humiliation until the insult done to her is avenged.

Thus it was not these women in the Mahabharata who could be the ideal women because they were not self sacrificing, chaste, virtuous and faithful to only one man. These were women who had a mind of their own and could think and decide for themselves and acted in ways which they thought best. These women continued to have a secondary image. In contrast we have images of women like Sati, Savitri and Sita who were represented as the ideal women because they represent chastity, purity and singular faithfulness to their husbands and not destroyed by any thing. They preferred a honourable death than to live a dishonourable as in the case of Sati and Sita and were rewarded for the virtues as in the case of Savitri.

16.3 WOMEN IN MAGAZINES

The first question that arises is that why are there special magazines for women and none for men? (except of the pornographic variety). How are women defined in these magazines. We have to look at the number of women magazines present abroad and in India to get an answer to this question. We have a number of such magazines abroad such as "Her World", "Female", "Keluarga", "Jelita" and "Wanita". In the Indian context some of the important magazines are "Eves weekly", "Femina", "Savvy", etc. The cover of these magazines is very colourful, glossy and artistic in design. All these magazines have a beautiful woman on the cover, with a winning smile or a misty look. These woman are always beautiful, famous and glamorous.

They represent the ideal woman, a woman whose looks, figure clothes and lifestyle, personify the present woman. These magazines sell us a view as defined by male parameters of what we should be and what we should do to achieve this. While it is true that often there may be more women who produce this kind of magazines, but what is important is that all of them share a, "male world view", of what women should be.

Another important feature of these magazines is the large number of glassy advertisements. Nearly 35 to 40% of these magazines are covered with glossy advertisements.

Most of these advertisements relate to perfumes, deodorants, cosmetics, soaps, toothpastes, brasseries, panties, cosmetics, liquid cleaners, detergents, baby foods, mattresses. All these are geared to help a women fulfill her role of a perfect woman.

The main theme running through these magazines is 'beauty and attraction', with emphasis being placed heavily on women's fashion and beauty care. Most of these magazines give tips on how to remain beautiful, what to use for the eye, and how to care for them. Women flipping through the pages of these magazines cannot but feel that they have to do what the articles tells them, if they are to become beautiful, attractive and desired. They are made to feel ugly, ashamed and inadequate if they do not do these things. They are forced to follow the instructions religiously and buy lotions, creams, conditioners and make up that have to go with it. Women are thus brobeaten and deceived into keeping up with the fashions and in the process they buy and further reinforce the images they see in these magazines. A good figure and good looks remain incomplete without good clothes to go with them and so these magazines also gave a lot of emphasis on fashions.

The fashions are aimed at the women, so that they will try to copy and look as glamorous and saleable, as models who wear them. The message is loud and clear, women must tailor their clothing, body and behaviour such that they become desirable, distracting and passive objects. These are fashions designed by men, who want their women beautiful, well dressed and sophisticated. Even when women design these clothes the parameters are the same.

Many of these magazines which target women remain merely an illusion, a relief, for most housewives from their daily drudgery. And it is precisely this ability of these magazines to offer vicarious enjoyment that enable housewives to forget their reality and are therefore so popular.

Women's magazines are also incomplete without different recipes and ways to better cooking tips. These range from sumptuous dinners, mouth watering desserts and sweets and cakes. These glossy dishes beckon to the imagination, motivating women to channel all their resources and skills towards converting these photographs into a reality.

These magazines also offer features like a horoscope. Most people devour this column every month to find out what is in store for us. Women begin to have a tendency to explain their misfortune and problems by their horoscope. They become fatalistic and begin to accept their lives, problems, dissatisfaction and miseries as preordained and do not even question it.

A number of these magazines also have a lot of questions on personality, dealing with stress, husbands, or being a good mother with a rating for scores. These questions and quizzes are used to make women behave in a correctly feminine way, acceptable to male. They are made to negate their impulses, likes and dislikes. They are made to live upto the male definition of beauty and sexuality.

These magazines clearly tell the women that it is a pleasure and privilege to act all the roles of earner, wife and mistress, cook, sweeper, cleaner, interior decorator, surrogate mother, teacher and should any one complain about these, then there is something wrong with them.

By such an attitude, these magazines do not cater and fulfill the intellectual needs of women. The emphasis on romantic, short stories, fashions, and beauty care reduces women to unthinking, uncritical human beings. These magazines hardly talk of current events and issues with the general impression that women are not interested in these matters.

Thus these magazines promote the conventional notion that successful woman is one who manages to look attractive, wear nice clothes, looks and acts glamorously and prepares new and mouth watering dishes. There is a total absence of articles creating an awareness among women of the principle of proper nutrition, good health and human values. Women have been conditioned to accept the roles, views and values that these magazines have defined for them. It is a consumer culture that makes women the prime target of manipulation and keeps women distinct and separate and exploited.

16.4 WOMEN IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Children's books also present a stereotyping of various images of women. Often we find that women in these books are described in such a way so as show them as weaker than men. In a modern setting women are shown as being incapable of mastering mechanical devices- women drivers are more figures of fun, causing traffic jams and are accident prone. In all these situations it is often a man who would come and help them.

Women are represented primarily as mothers and they excel in skills such as sewing and ironing. Most of the jobs at home like cooking cleaning and ironing are always done by women. This passes on the message to children that women are expected to perform these jobs.

There is a stereotyping of roles of both husband and wife who are both shown as engaged in stereotape activities, arbitrarily presented as universal. In every country and situation

the mother prepares the food and looks after the children while the father goes out to work. This drives home the point to children that a woman's place is at home.

Women are rarely shown working outside the house and whenever they are working outside the house it's primarily as teachers, saleswomen, nurses or secretaries. These are nothing but an extension of the work women do at home. Often this conveys the message to children that women are there to receive only orders because often the Doctor, the Boss in the office would be a male.

In the modern world whose values tend to be economic ones, the textbook image of a woman is one of well-fed contentment. She receives gifts, buys clothes and fills shopping bag. She is nowhere shown as doing anything productive.

Women are thus constantly subject to sexism. This kind of an image is passed on to the younger generation. The process of conforming to sexist social norms is more heavily imposed on girls than boys. Children's magazines and picture books clearly tell us about the values of society and the concepts and norms which dominate it.

16.4.1 Areas Where Change is required

Some of the areas where a change is needed are

1. Sex Roles

There has to be a change in the representation of father and mothers. A father is always depicted as reading a paper, or smoking a cigarette and the mother always doing household work. All this conveys to the readers, the children, the traditional concept of mother father roles- the dichotomy of man outside and woman inside. What is needed is the portrayal of women as social being. Today women are active in various fields and this should be highlighted. The books can create a major awareness by not showing household work to be inferior in status than doing work outside, and basically presenting house work as the responsibility of all members of the household and not women alone.

2. Masculinity and Femininity

• Most of the books very stereotypically present sexual traits. Boys are often shown as active, teasing and kicking foot ball etc. and the girls are often shown as passive, being teased, protected by boys, receiving flowers etc. Boys are often portrayed as having interesting ideas, acting on them and even fighting to have their dreams come true. Girls on the other hand are shown as emotional, easily crying or everready to cry, helpful, to others and often watching and following actions. What we need is not children's books which have even divided emotions into feminine and masculine. We should talk about human emotions like pity, pain, humility, aggression without dividing them into masculine and feminine traits.

3. Mother role

• Because of the dichotomy of man outside and woman inside, in most cases it is women who appear in relation to children. Today women's roles are changing women are doctors,

engineers, authors, artists, editors and publishers. But most of the children's magazines affirm the traditional concept that women's roles are only those of housekeeping. Today there are thousands of examples of mothers who are working outside the home, leaving their children in day care centres, and also many women married or unmarried who are actively involved in various occupational fields but the children books just ignore them. We need children's book that reflect this image of a strong struggling women. We need more books that highlight even the father child relationship, so that the message is passed on that household and children are the concern of both the parents.

4. Women's Occupation

We need a change in the perception of women's role as only that of a homekeeper and mother. Even if women are portrayed in these magazines and literature as working outside the house, their jobs are merely an extension of what traditionally have been considered, "women's works".

16.5 WOMEN IN POPULAR NOVELS

Here we will only discuss the role of women in paperback romance popularly called mills and Boons. There are more than 1500-2000 of these novels in the market with such title selling more than 50000 to 100000 copies. They have been translated into several languages Spanish, French, Dutch, German etc.,

Barbara Cartland, one the sellers of romantic fiction with over 300 books to her credit, states that the reason why her books sell are because all her heroines are good, pure and very womanly, tender and sweet. In contrast all her heroes are sporting and very dominating but honourable, because she thinks this is what women want. If we analyse any of Barbara cartlands novels, we often find the heroine to be always young 18 or 19 years old, beautiful, non aggressive and almost passive. Even when they are created as strong characters with a mind of their own, they always succumb to the will and power of the men and in the end live happily ever after.

The women portrayed in many of these romances are always either poor or having nothing to make a living. They are either typists, secretaries, nurses, teachers (at the lowest rung of professionals) or companions to old, rich widows, as governesses occupations which are extensions of the traditional female roles namely, houseworker, maternal and childcare, hostess, cleaners and houseminders. The heroine may be orphaned or women with no family ties the impression which is attempted to be created is that the woman is alone, vulnerable and in need of protection and care.

In contrast to this the men are either very rich, in positions of authority or high born aristocrats. They are always socially more superior to the women and more powerful. He is the Doctor, she the nurse, he the brilliant Industrialist, she the secretary. The hero is often portrayed as cynical cold and bitter with devastating good looks, fine stature sometimes arrogant, very masculine with a cool glint in his eyes. In contrast the heroine is dewy, with enchanting eyes, generous lips, slender, always inexperienced, exquisitely beautiful and with character to match. She is the personification of all feminine virtues, loyal, self sacrificing, the long suffering, martyred and misunderstood saint which all women should aspire to become.

Love triangles are also very much a part of the romance recipes. There is sometimes a villain of the piece, invariably a female. She is older, vain, experienced with men, glamorous and ruthless in getting what she wants. She exemplifies the anti mother anti wife image. She cannot stand children, servants or anything that smacks of wifely duties and responsibilities. She is selfish, self-centered, spirited and possessive. She is the anti thesis of the good, submissive, passive, helpless and self sacrificing woman, women are thus either virtuous and maternal, or cheap and whore like. There can be no in between.

The novels have a lot of impact on young readers, mostly college going girls. They tend to create a stereotype model and women tend to identify with these images of women. It teaches women that how much ever she may value her independence she must give it up because ultimately it is the man who is the master, the lord and she is there only to obey and serve. Little girls growing up with these paperback fantasies learn to believe that they must be good submissive and martyred like the heroines of these stories.

These flights of fantasy also act as an escape value for the bored, overworked housewives. The happy, idyllic endings provide an escape for most of them, who can thus pretend and dream that marriage means life's happy ever after instead of the daily drudgery and mundane existence of daily confinement. The novel acts as an apatite, which dulls them into accepting their present lot and live with it. Reading these novels becomes the only happy relief from the daily stress and strain.

Thus the stereotyped portrayal of submissive and unrealistic depiction of romance, love and sexuality in these novels, deny the existence and potential of women as individuals who are intelligent, self reliant and possessing strength of character as well as capable of genuine warmth and love.

16.6 WOMEN AND PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE

Pornography is the packaging and presentation of women as sex objects, as objects of male pleasure. It is the depiction of women as the natural possession of men. Here, through the use of words or pictures women are presented as objects or commodities in sexually explicit situation, which are degrading, demeaning and violent or abusing. Sex in this context is shown as enjoyable and exciting. Women may be shown as willing or unwilling participants, either way they are robbed of humanness.

Pornographic literature by its very nature does not exist and grow as an industry it must constantly increase the levels of stimulation it provokes as its readers become numbed and desensitized. Because it is based on degradation and dehumanisation, the source of this stimulation cannot be found in increasingly sensitive and subtle portrayal of human experience based on communication, mutuality, sensitivity and love. So instead it goes the other way, to a more and more caned physical level, where physical sensation and stimulation is heightened by pain and through violence.

According to Rich Snowdon Cofounder of men against sexist violence, an American organisation that is fighting sexual violence against women in the media. "Pornography promotes violence against women because they are less powerful than men..... There is a recurrent theme in men's magazines that women enjoy paid and that the man inflicts pain to remain the master. This is the worst male culture.

Pornography can also be detrimental to the men in the long run. The pictures and dialogues of pornography present an image of men who are always on the move and getting what they want. They always perform super human feats of sex and violence. This conveys a message to the men that they are supposed to be all powerful and one way to get power is to be aggressive, then get an idea that they have to live to the image of someone who's in complete control, with lots of money, fast cars, beautiful women.

Pornography is thus the fantasising of sexual aggression towards women. Pornography can be seen as a continue, which begins in the area of advertising the media use of women for commercial purpose and the sexist media in general and finally pornography. Pornography can also be seen as the root for sexual violence, the culmination of which is rape. One can see the connection between violence in the media against women and the violence faced by them in day to day life. Thus to question pornography is to question male attitude towards women. To examine pornography is to realise that it both glorifies the forms that male domination takes over women such as rape, wife beating, incest, genital mutilation, enforced prostitution and expresses the underlying value system of those societies in which it is found.

Today Pornography is no longer confined to backlanes and red light districts, it is no longer with in the reach of only the lewed or perverse male. Through dirty pictures, books, erotic novels it has reached our homes and now through Television into our sitting rooms as well. Pornography has become part of the consumer culture that condones, enjoys and even thrives on it. It is no use protesting only against rape and turning a blind eye to the daily barrage of propaganda against women in so many films, magazines, pornographic advertisements a propaganda which builds up a mass culture and mass psychology which is rapist through and through. So long as such a culture continues, atrocities against women will continue. To fight against the oppression of women must also include the fight against this culture.

16.7 WOMEN AS PRODUCERS OF LITERATURE

16.7.1 Women writing and writings about Women

The involvement with women's writings or the idea of retrieving a lost tradition of women's literature has actually developed only over the last twenty years and has been largely an American one.

The interest in women's literature in American feminist criticism grew out of a movement best represented by Kate Millet "Sexual Politics" 1969 in which attention has been focussed on the images of women in mainstream literature. Disturbed by the realisation that women had invariably represented in stereotypical ways by a literary heritage that claimed universality, feminist criticism turned to women authors for alternative images of women.

Thus over the last twenty years witnessed the flourishing of feminist publications, the recuperation of lost texts by women, the reconceptualisation of the canon and literary history and the development of interdisciplinary methods of feminist teaching and research.

Feminist critics soon pointed out that the problem was much larger in its scope than the prejudice of male critics. Subsuming the female into the category of human was a political act.

Besides questions relating to the social, historical and ideological context in which literary production and consumption took place were crucial to the understanding of women's access to culture and their entry into literary discourse.

Feminist criticism can be divided into two distinct varieties. The first type is concerned with women as readers - with women as the consumer of male produced literature. Its subjects include the images and stereotyping of women in literature, the omission and misconceptions about women in criticism and the fissures, in male constructed literary history. It is concerned with the exploitation and manipulation of the female audience. The second type of feminist criticism is concerned with women as writers with women as the producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women. Its subjects include the psychology dynamics of female creativity, linguistics and the problem of a female language, studies of particular writers and works.

16.8 IMPORTANT WORKS IN LITERARY CRITICISM

Some pioneering works on literary criticism have given us new ways to discuss and interpret the culture of 19th 20th century. Here we discuss some of these books.

Literary Women by Ellen Moers, (Doubleday, New York, 1976) admitted to an initial reluctance to separate the writers on the basis of gender but cited reasons for doing so, such as the astonishing results such separation produces and there already was practised a segregation of the major women and for a better understanding of women's history. She argued that women's writing was actually a rapid and powerful under current distinct from but hardly subordinate to the main stream. She touched upon some important themes that were to be elaborated and refined in the subsequent discussion on women's writings such as the exclusion of women writers, who had been misled and misjudged by literary establishment, the need to find new strategies to open up canonical texts for feminist readings, the idea that a knowledge of feminist history was crucial for understanding of women's writing and the suggestion that women writers had shared a subculture that they often secretly kept alive.

Nany Cott's "The Bonds of womanhood, Women's sphere in New England", 1780-1835, (New Haven, 1977), explores the paradox of a cultural bondage, a legacy of pain and submission, which none the less generates a sisterly solidarity, a bond of shared experience, loyalty and compassion.

Ann Dayla's book, "The Feminisation of American Culture", (New York, 1977), boldly locates the genesis of American mass culture in the sentimental literature of women and clergymen, two allied and disestablished post industrial groups.

Elaine Show's, *A literature of their own*, (Princeton University press, 1977) traces the literary tradition in English fiction from 1840's to the present day. She talks of three major phases that she claimed were common to all literary subculture first a phase of imitation followed by one of protest and finally a phase of self discovery, a turning inwards in search of an identity.

"A Mad Woman in the Attic" by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Yale University press, 1979), sets out to explore a distinctively female literary tradition. The study charts the

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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

P.G. DIPLOMA IN WOMEN'S STUDIES
COURSE II : WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Time : 2 Hours

Note:

1. *Do not copy the answer directly from any of the books.*
2. *As far as possible, try to answer the questions independently in your own words.*
3. *If it is necessary to quote from any source, give the correct reference.*
4. *Use your own foolscap pages for writing the assignment.*
5. *Leave sufficient margin for the comments of the evaluator.*
6. *Completion of this assignment normally should not take more than two hours time.*

Assignment - I

Part - A

Max Marks: 15

Min Marks: 6

I. Answer any one question in about 30 lines

- 1) Discuss why women are invisible in data and measurement of work.
- 2) Discuss the impact of modernisation on Women.

Part - B

II. Answer any one question in about 15 lines

- 1) Discuss any two Non-governmental organisations in India which are working for Women's Development.
- 2) Discuss the role of literature in the development of Women.

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Assignment - I

Part - A

Max Marks: 15

Min Marks: 6

I. Answer any one question in about 30 lines

- 1) Discuss the different Roles of Women in the private domain.
- 2) Discuss any one social issue in the Indian Society.

Part - B

II. Answer any one question in about 15 lines

- 1) Child Marriage
- 2) Causes of Prostitution
- 3) Difference between work & domestic work.

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MODEL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Time : 2 Hours

Section - A : 60 Marks (4x15=60)

Max Marks: 100

Min Marks: 35

I. Answer any four of the following questions in about 30 lines each.

- 1) Discuss the roles and rights of Women in the patriarchal family.
- 2) Discuss the property rights of Women among Muslims.
- 3) Discuss briefly any two social issues.
- 4) Discuss the differences between organised and unorganised sector.
- 5) Discuss the conceptual frame work of development.
- 6) Discuss the various programmes undertaken for women in the plans.
- 7) Media has impact on the society. Discuss.
- 8) What kind of Technology do Women require in various fields.

Section - B : 60 Marks (8x5=40)

II. Answer any five of the following questions in about 15 lines each.

- 1) Discuss the property rights of Women according to Mitakshara system.
- 2) Discuss the constitutional provision for Women's Development.
- 3) Discuss why Women's work is invisible.
- 4) Write briefly about legislations passed for working women.
- 5) Discuss how girl child is socialized in the Indian society.
- 6) Discuss any one voluntary organisation which is working for the development of Women.
- 7) What is the impact of modernization of rural Women ?
- 8) What kind of Technology do Women in the informal sector need ?
- 9) What are the problems Women face in the informal sector ?
- 10) Discuss the changing role of Women in the family.

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