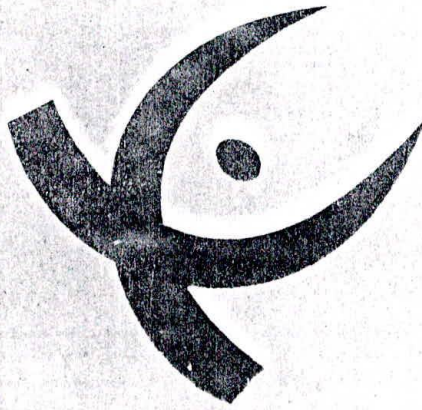


WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

III



GENDER TRAINERS MANUAL

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WOMEN'S STUDIES AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA
AN IMPRESSIONIST OVERVIEW

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NEW DELHI

WOMEN'S STUDIES AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA:

AN IMPRESSIONIST OVERVIEW

VINA MAZUMDAR

Prior to the investigation of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, research focused on women's problems reflected motives very different from the research that has taken place after 1975. The objective of the pre-Independence research was often to justify social reform or to provide a backbone for 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 or modern India, was on the minority of women in upper classes. For a variety of reasons such research declined after Independence.

The political context of the post-1975 research was distinctly different. The need to justify the culture of the colonised in the face of colonial oppression was no longer present. The guarantee of women's equality in the Constitution (a feature unavailable to this day in the far older United States constitution) provided a completely different set of standards to assess women's situation in all its aspects. The Committee's report Towards Equality - presented a grim picture of social reality and trends of change that sharply contrasted with the goals of equality laid down by the Indian Constitution. The guiding principles of the Committee are significant, they could well be read as the manifesto of women's studies in India.

1. Equality of women is necessary as a basic condition of social, economic and political development of the nation;
2. Improvement of employment opportunities and earning power should be given the highest priority in order to release women from their dependent and unequal status.
3. Society owes a special responsibility to women as mothers; safe bearing and rearing of children, therefore, is an obligation that must be shared by the mother, father and society;
4. The contribution made by an active housewife to the management of a family should be accepted as economically and socially productive and as essential for national savings and development;
5. Marriage and motherhood should not become disabilities, preventing women from fulfilling their full and proper role in the task of nation building, in which society, including women themselves, must accept their due responsibilities.

6. Disabilities and inequalities, of which women are victims, cannot be removed for women only : such action must form part of a total movement for the removal of all inequalities and oppressive social institutions;
7. Some special measures will be necessary to move in the direction of the goals set by the Constitution and to transform de jure equality into a de facto one. The result of the report was to define a new agenda for women's studies in the country, an agenda which stressed the dynamism and pluralism of Indian society in contrast to the often monolithic discourse of the nationalist/or the development schools. A new programme for Women's Studies, initiated by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, emerged after the report with three distinct objectives:
 - (a) to identify and work for needed policy changes;
 - (b) 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 role, status and situation from the entire arena of social investigations; and
 - (c) to revive the social debate on the women's question, which had emerged as a major issue during the freedom struggle, but had faded in the post-Independence period.

While there were other significant reasons for unrest among women of different classes, it is also clear that women's studies contributed, among other factors, to the revival of the women's movement in this country in the post-1977 period. For the first time, the movement was armed with a much larger body of information about women of the non-privileged classes, and was thus able to draw in the concerns and 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 mainly in the urban middle class, and at a later date, some problems of women workers in organised industry. The extension of the post-1975 research to peasant women and women in the informal sector generated new sources of information for the fast growing women's movement.

THE ISSUES

The revival of the women's movement in the late seventies brought new dynamism and directions to women's studies. Issues of violence - domestic and social, sexual exploitation in old and new forms, identification of complex structures of domination and their reassertion in new forms in the ideology of revivalist,

fundamentalist communal and ethnic movements - are some of the most significant of these new dimensions that the movement has brought into women's studies. Similarly, 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 issues being raised by ecological and environmental movements. Investigations into women's marginalisation and exploitation in the economy - formal and informal, in the educational process, in communication and media and also in the political process have turned women's studies into one of the major critics of the pattern of "development" and the choice of strategies.

By its very scope (as evidenced from the catalogue of subjects given above) women's studies was part of a broader process or critical evaluation of the nature of social science, taking place on a world scale after 1968. The formalisation of disciplinary boundaries in social science i.e. the division of social research into politics, economics, history, sociology etc. had grown rapidly in the 20th century. The development of capitalism in Europe generated the need for specialised knowledge to run the social order - thus the expansion of education systems was accompanied by the growth of specialisation within every branch of knowledge. The fragmentation of the 'humanities' into several social sciences restricted within disciplinary boundaries was not without considerable problems. Each discipline soon developed in isolation from sister disciplines, generating its isolated theories, research and analytical tools, complex jargon and mystifications. Social science degenerated into an obsession with micro studies with pre-designed models for enquiry, rather than locating analysis in a broader social perspective.

By the late 1960's critical voices, muted earlier, began to become stronger within the various disciplines, calling for the development of a holistic perspective and the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries. In this struggle to restore social investigations to their original role, or examining the social process as a complex mosaic in which several processes are inextricably interconnected, women's studies was to play a major role. By its very nature women's studies could not be imprisoned within the formal boundaries of the established disciplines. At any rate, the established disciplines had distinguished themselves by obliterating gender concerns from their research agenda. Women's Studies solved the problem with a critique of the established disciplines and calling for a rich interdisciplinary perspective. It also questioned the dependence of most social scientists in India on theories and methods developed in the West, applying them blindly to the Indian context - despite the latter's marked difference from the west in political economy, history and cultural plurality. Lastly, it challenged the Western concept of a value-free social science, or the role of academic neutrality, trans-atlantic in origin - that had penetrated Indian academe with considerable success.

Soon after the First National Conference on Women's Studies (Bombay, 1981), a group of women's studies practitioners in India defined it as "the pursuit of a more comprehensive, critical and balanced understanding of social reality. Its essential components include (i) women's contribution to the social process; (ii) women's perception of their own lives; (iii) 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 academic development".

Another area in which women's studies intervened was to contest the notion of "development". Developmentalism was for many years the received orthodoxy not only in much of social science, but also among policy and planning circles. During the 1950s and 1960s, US social science put forth a "modernisation" theory as the solution to the ills of the Third World. Here social analysis was premised on a simple dichotomy : between "traditional" and "non-traditional" societies. Traditional societies were rural and stratified, while in non traditional societies, the catalyst being "modernisation", the modernising agents were identified as an educated middle class, improved communication and methods of governance. The benefits of growth, it was claimed, would "filter" down to the poorer classes. This crude analysis, of course, reflected the goals of western states at the time of the Cold War, where "modernisation" was seen as an antidote to social revolution.

Many Indian social scientists, especially historians whose anti-colonial heritage had made them sensitive to the political underpinnings of colonial interpretations of Indian society, found little difference between this approach and those developed by the intellectual ideology promoted by the British Raj since the 19th century. Firstly, such an approach totally ignored, or deliberately avoided, the conflicts of interests latent within the social system. Secondly, it altogether avoided the challenges to the system articulated not only during the freedom struggle against the Raj, but through repeated assaults against the hardening hierarchical patriarchal values promoted by the system, throughout India's history.

Unfortunately developmentalism also increasingly infected the approach to and methods of planning in post-Independence India. It was assumed, rather naively, that "development" would resolve the contradictions of the Indian social order. Further the simplistic binary oppositions with which the modernisation theory operated e.g. urban versus rural, progressive versus regressive etc., crept into the framework of Indian planning, offering glib, but unrealistic models of growth which need not tamper with the unequal social structures - in which resources and power were unevenly distributed, between classes, castes,

communities and gender. The 'modernisation' theory only helped to strengthen the view of women's status as an issue of 'social reform' uniform for all sections of society, and enabled the Indian planners to ignore the class, caste and gender dimension of economic, political and infrastructural growth and the negative consequences of such strategies - visible in simple demographic indicators like the declining ratio of women to men in the population and the economy.

Against the rather simplistic analysis of the modernisation theorists and the Indian planners, work within women's studies showed that "development" is not an innocent term, but rather value laden. Any analysis of development cannot be only a quantitative one, i.e. more or less development but needed a qualitative analysis. Development does not affect people equally, but differs across social classes, castes and other groups. In the case of women in particular, evidence showed that "development" has in fact marginalised the vast majority of poor women, in rural and urban areas. The question, therefore, is not "development" as such but rather what kind of development, one which only increases inequality and gender exploitation or that development which is sensitive to egalitarian and gender concerns.

We have stated above that by its very nature, women's studies is inter-disciplinary. Apart from being inter-disciplinary, women's studies is also a critical discipline. It is critical because it raises crucial questions about the way social theory has traditionally posed questions of analysis, and by doing so women's studies makes way for a broader and receptive social science, alive to the crucial questions of the day. Thus the practitioners of women's studies - why did women's historic roles in the discovery of agriculture, pottery and textile production in India (and the world) remain hidden from the educated community for so long and the massive infrastructure for agricultural research and development failed to see even their contemporary roles and problems? Why has women's labour in the family remained outside the framework of any analysis of the production and reproduction of commodities and services and their valuation? And why have investigations into the caste-class-community nexus failed to examine its connections with controls over women's labour freedom and behaviour? Women's studies has been crucial in helping social science to broaden the notion of the 'social', thus transcending the earlier narrow formulations. A crucial example in this respect is redefining old notions of 'class'. In the orthodox formulation, 'class' was often opposed to divisions of gender, caste and ethnicity. In this reading, class was seen as the central organising principle of social analysis, in contrast to differences of gender, caste and ethnicity, which were seen at best as transitory phenomena with the onset of "modernisation". As women's studies has shown, this analysis does considerable violence to the situation on the ground. Thus class is not a 'model' which can be 'applied' to the real world, but rather class is a real historical product.

Women's Studies practitioners argue that disposition of gender is crucial to an understanding of class differentiation. Historical, in opposition to formal class analysis shows that class exists not in opposition to differences of gender, caste and ethnicity but in and through them. The Indian theories of purity-pollution, or boundary maintenance between dominant and suppressed caste and tribal groups also operate through greater controls on women. Such controls also prevent women and their children from acquiring any identity beyond the one of birth - defined by the family, caste/ethnicity and class. In the final analysis, women's studies has actually enriched our analysis of these central organising social principles of our time and society. M.N.Srinivas, doyen of Indian sociology, describes women's studies as the "only significant development in Indian social science in the last two decades", and as "a thrust from below".

From its embryonic origins in the mid-1970s, women's studies has now become a national movement. The first National Conference on Women's Studies was convened in Bombay in 1981. The response was overwhelming, and the mandate given by that Conference led to the establishment of the Indian Association for Women's Studies in 1982. The Association membership now includes 18 universities, 10 colleges and 15 research institutes, apart from more than 650 individuals, many of whom are from the academic profession. Since the Association came into existence, the University Grants Commission has drawn the attention of the Universities to promote an understanding of women's issues through the teaching of research and extension activities of various disciplines, and nearly 40 universities have entered the field. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, adopted by Parliament, for the first time, prescribed a new 'role' for the national educational system - of providing 'education for women's equality', through the revision of curricula, reorientation of teachers, planners etc. and direct involvement in women's empowerment. It is important to remember that the National Policy on Education did not design women's studies but only accepted the demand of academic participants in the women's movement - voiced through a decade of struggle. The perspective, the ideology, and the strategies adopted by the women's studies movement was thus not evolved by the government or the academic establishment but by the movement and its allies. The primary objectives of the movement have remained constant:

- a. to change social perceptions, attitudes, values and structures that obstruct or deny gender equality as a value. Some of these are traditional and deep rooted in our past. But some are very new - ideas, institutions and movements that manipulate old practices, norms, customs and primordial loyalties of people to set the clock of social development back. Typical illustrations of such new wine in old bottles is the escalation of dowry and dowry related violence, the spread of female infanticide and foeticide, market-propaganda that glamorizes women's role as primarily

consumers, and communal and ethnic movements that project protection of cultural or religious rights of a group at the cost of gender equality and women's freedoms;

- b. to promote, activate and support processes of reform of the education and communication systems, so that instead of being a tool in the hands of reactionary movements, they play "an active interventionist role" against such attacks.

Women's studies, as viewed by the Indian women's movement is meant to be a potent instrument to play a deliberate and active role in the battle for people's minds and values now raging all over the world. A typical manifestation of this is the growing cynicism about education, and higher education in particular. The powers that be (the real manipulators are often hidden under the cover of international or national development strategies) would like to transform education from its original role as a value generating process to one for skill transfer only. They would like to discourage questioning and dissent or academic freedom to reanalyse the past and the present from more humanist perspectives. The same forces, however, quite often compromise with and even encourage the use of false history and selective cultural symbols by revivalist, fundamentalist, and chauvinist movements. A common element in all these movements across the world and definitely in India, is opposition to gender equality. The time has come to question the rationale behind such opposition.

The issue appears to me to be primarily one of conflict between the political, cultural or communal identity of a group and human rights, the future of civilisation and social transformation with a humane face. Gender equality or elimination of women's subordination, by its very nature, threatens all movement for preservation of narrow group identities, which require control over women's minds and bodies. Women play a double role - of transmitting a sense of identity to future generations and of maintaining the cultural practices and values which are tied up with that sense of a group identity.

Similarly, forces that require keeping the majority of people in subordination as a passive group to be exploited or manipulated also need to control women and through them the rest. Unfortunately many scientists have become willing instruments of such manipulation. Experiments in genetic engineering or reproductive technology, diverting major investments to research and development for destructive weapons and encouraging environmental destruction or mismanagement of natural resources are typical examples of the prostitution of scientific knowledge to serve vested interests.

The Indian women's movements have laid a special responsibility on women's studies to combat and counter such forces. Acceptance of this fighting role and the higher social responsibility that it entails has to influence women's studies'

approach, methodology. organisation and operational perspectives. It is not possible for this struggle to be carried on by a small group. The objectives of women's studies cannot be achieved by a monopolistic attitude or by confining it to a discipline, a course, a programme or a degree. Still less can our objectives be realised by creating new institutions for this purpose.

There is a close parallel between women's studies and the women's movement as a whole. Autonomy continues to be a battle cry of both. But a choice has to be made between autonomy for autonomy's sake, and the far more difficult role of the catalyst to influence the larger systems and movements. Separation can also lead to isolation, marginalisation, and even possible alienation. Women's studies practitioners, when they confine their dialogue to only persons in the movement, do tend to develop jargons and terminologies of their own - which reduce their ability to communicate with others. Some times it also promotes a kind of hierarchy within the women's studies movement - between those who claim longer experience and greater theoretical rigour and new entrants who have the concern but not the experience. It has also been occasionally noticed that such pursuit of theoretical rigour within an autonomous framework encourages elitism and a drift away from the burning concerns of the majority of women. If this trend succeeds, it would defeat the basic objectives of women's studies as the academic arm of the women's movement.

This is not to underestimate the dangers of working within structures that have acquired increased rigidity over the last few decades, or of being co-opted within the academic establishment and losing contact with the women's movement. It is however refreshing to note that while many of the pioneers of women's studies in India expressed acute apprehensions of such 'possible cooperation' when women's studies centres began to expand within the Universities after the Education Policy of 1986, much of this apprehension disappeared in the face of the enthusiasm to innovate, experiment and learn from each other displayed by a large majority of coordinators of the University Centres, when they gathered together for a review and planning workshop at SNDT University's Research Centre on Women's Studies in October 1989.

One of the outcomes of this workshop is a massive project on the Girl Child and the Family, taken up jointly by 24 University Centres with inter-disciplinary teams. The objectives of this project are quite unique in the Indian context. The studies have been undertaken not to win academic laurels for the individual or the institutions, but to identify areas for intervention by the Universities, with all the human and infrastructural resources at their command. If the gamble succeeds, it will create a network of institutions directly involved in reducing, if not eliminating, discriminations and deprivations of girl children on a sustained basis. Such a role cannot but influence the thinking and behaviour of teachers and students in these institutions in

the long run. It may also create a network of bases to mount programmes for the development of girl children which will not suffer from the usual problems associated with massive national programmes or campaigns (e.g. family planning, child immunization etc.)

SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPACT OF WOMEN'S

STUDIES AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Assessing the socio-political impact of the twin movements is not an easy proposition. Comparing today's situation with the time when the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India was released, however, one can get a few pointers. At that time there was no women's movement. Since the late '70s the movement has been a growing social reality. Political parties, government agencies, the media, and academic establishments have been forced to accept its existence and the rationality of some of its demands, even if in a limited degree. The level of information and awareness of some of the problems is far higher today than in 1975. Anti-women measures cannot be enacted or introduced without inviting protests.

May be that is one of the reasons why some of these measures are introduced in a surreptitious manner by the government. It is regrettable that the Government of India's decision to curtail the right to maternity leave of its own employees to two children only was introduced without informing Parliament or any process of consultation with the general public or women's organisations. The net result? Even women officers of the government remain unaware of this measure, three years after it was introduced. A few national women's organisations who learnt about it recently have already lodged their protest and are waiting for the present inter-regnum to be over before demanding its withdrawal, or challenging its legal validity.

On the other hand, the story of enactment of the National Commission on Women Bill in 1989 may be taken as a demonstration of successful pressure by women's organisations. The Commission had been demanded by the organisations persistently since 1975. The demand was ignored with equal persistence by successive governments. When the Bill was finally introduced in Parliament early in 1989, many advised that it should be passed without debate - "as something is better than nothing". Women's organisations however thought otherwise, and demanded extensive consultations before enactment. Such consultations did take place and the Act that was finally passed in August 1990 was very different in its structure and form than the original Bill.

Divisions within the women's movement - ideological and otherwise - and differences in its intensity and strength in different regions of the country have affected its socio-political impact. A second reason for this limited impact is the

time that the movement has taken to clarify its own perspectives vis-a-vis the burning issues now convulsing the country. A third reason that has contributed to this limited impact is the media's limited perception of the role of the women's movement. As long as the movement confines its protests and demands to women-specific issues, they are considered legitimate. When the movement gives expression to broader political views on issues like communalism or the general political situation in the country, these are not taken with the same degree of seriousness or reported adequately. Such limited perceptions have their reflections within the movement also.

As compared to this, issues relating to women and development, the feminisation of poverty, the need to organise women at the grassroots and expand their opportunities for participation in the broader decision making process have found much wider acceptance. Similarly, the role of women's studies as an instrument to revitalise and reform the educational process appears to have found credibility in the Acharya Ramamurthy Committee appointed in 1989 with the objective of reviewing and eliminating some of the anti-democratic elements of the Education Policy of 1986.

One may also point to the sharper expressions of resistance to gender equality that are becoming increasingly frequent in some political movements and various types of establishments as a reaction to the women's movement. Within academic establishments such hostility goes hand in hand with increasing interest among students and a limited section of teachers.

The Programme of Women's Studies of the Indian Council of Social Science Research was initiated in 1975 with three specific objectives

- (a) to undertake policy oriented research with a view to bring about changes in policies that had marginalised women;
- (b) to promote re-examination of social science theories and concepts that had made women's lives, roles and contributions invisible in social analysis; and
- (c) to revive the social debate on the women's question which had erupted during the freedom struggle and then faded from the public arena.

A fourth objective, which was not recorded (for obvious reasons) was to create space and opportunities for people's democratic struggles for their rights, using research as an input. The programme was planned within two weeks after the declaration of National Emergency in 1975. The decision to use women focused research as a counter instrument to the suspension of democracy was taken by the veteran freedom fighter who then headed the ICSSR, the late Prof.J.P.Naik.

When I look back over all that has happened since 1975 I am tempted to say that women's studies has tried to contribute to all the four objectives, though perhaps in differing degrees. The changes introduced in collecting information relating to women's work in the Census of 1991 is an acknowledgement of the sustained work done by women's studies practitioners during the last fifteen years. The current debate on the declining sex ratio, identified again by the 1991 Census, however ill-informed, is a refreshing contrast to the utter indifference to this persistent trend in earlier decades. Similarly, the reference to women's issues in the manifestoes of various political parties, however limited or rhetorical in substance, do find space in media analysis of these manifestoes - again a refreshing contrast to earlier years.

The multiplication of women's organisations, the number of conferences/seminars/workshops and networks that have come into existence over the last decade and half may lack cohesion and clear-cut strategies, but they do display dynamism and an activist orientation. Whether they can sustain the strength of the movement and deepen its socio-political impact will depend to a great extent on their capacity to draw strength and sustenance from an expanding base of women at the grassroots.

The concept of empowerment of the most deprived groups of women to enable them to enjoy their constitutional rights has given way to the understanding that the empowerment is mutual. Women at the grassroots, when they are organised, emanate a kind of energy and determination for change which galvanizes all those who work with them. Today's women's movement is no longer a movement from the top percolating downwards. The question facing us today is whether all at the top can effectively participate in the aspirations and concerns of the majority.

THE EVOLUTION OF WID PROGRAMME -
FROM THE MARGIN TO THE CENTRE

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THE EVOLUTION OF WID PROGRAMME
FROM THE MARGIN TO THE CENTRE

C.P.SUJAYA

The imperative of women's development in India's post-independence era is rooted in the Constitution. Equality of the sexes before the law was one of the most important fundamental rights (Article 14). All discriminatory practices on the basis of sex were to be abjured (Article 15), yet, in the very same Article, the Constitution legitimised positive discrimination in favour of women and children by the State (Article 15 (3)). It was the basic promise of the framers of the Constitution that "special provisions" were necessary for the benefit of women to ensure that they could successfully claim the fundamental right to equality. It is significant, that, along similar lines, while Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste, Article 15(4) empowers the State to make special provisions for Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes and socially and educationally backward classes.

The evolution of development planning for women, therefore, was strongly influenced by the concept of women as a distinct category, for whom special and separate programmes were to be formulated. Social Welfare services were seen as appropriate to tackle the endemic problems of women such as illiteracy, poor health and malnutrition (of both women and children), vulnerability to social ills and general backwardness and ignorance. It is important to note the difference in concepts between "social services" and "Social Welfare Services" in the 50's. Social services, in its broadest allocative definition, included the subjects of education, health, housing, labour welfare, rehabilitation of displaced persons, welfare of Backward Classes and Social Welfare. Social Welfare Services, on the other hand in a more limited context, are services aimed at vulnerable groups such as women, children, the handicapped etc., Duby (1973) divides them into the following categories:-

1. Socially underprivileged groups e.g., orphans, widows, unmarried mothers, women in moral danger, the aged and infirm.
2. Women and children.
3. Socially maladjusted e.g. beggars, prostitutes, delinquents, newly discharged persons from correctional and other institutions.
4. Physically and mentally handicapped persons.
5. Economically underprivileged, such as destitutes and the unemployed.

In the first Five Year Plan, Rs.340 crores were allocated to the head **Social Services**, out of a total Plan allocation of Rs.2069 crores, forming 16.4% of the total Plan outlay. The biggest chunk of Rs. 152 crores was earmarked for education, about Rs.100 crores for medical and public health service, Rs.49 crores for housing, Rs.29 crores for backward classes (including SC/ST) and nearly Rs.7 crores for labor and labor welfare. The first Plan also made a provision of Rs.4 crores for assistance to voluntary social welfare organisations, so that "Their work can be expanded and dovetailed into the national development programmes." There was, as yet no national administrative infrastructure to provide the welfare services to women. During the first Five Year Plan, school feeding schemes were started in order to counter the malnutrition problems of young children. Maternity and Child Health Centres were planned in response to the needs of mothers and children, in view of the high maternal and infant mortality rates prevalent. The official health and education agencies in the State were expected to achieve wide coverage of women without any separate machinery being instituted to focus on the special needs and problems of malnourished mothers, maternal morbidity, female illiteracy and school drop-out etc., a position, which, by and large, exists even today. On the other hand, the setting up of the various protective, correctional and rehabilitative institutions for those who were socially handicapped, or vulnerable, as required by various statutes, was seen as squarely falling into the mandate of Government agencies, such as the Directorates of Social Welfare, Correctional Services, Social Defence etc. Examples are the "homes" and other institutions under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act (1956), the various Children's Acts, the Probation of Offenders' Act, Beggary Prevention Acts etc.

An important contradiction or divergence surfaces at this point. On the one hand, the special attention given to the needs and problems of women to enable them to enjoy and exercise their Constitutional equality of status has strengthened the "Social" nature of the Constitution as a document, containing, as it does, important policy statements. The thrust for women's equality is a part of the overall thrust contained in the Constitution towards economic and social justice. Besides the fundamental rights to equality before the law guaranteed to women, and the ban on discrimination in respect of employment on the grounds of sex laid down in Articles 14,15 and 16, the Constitution contains provisions such as equal pay for equal work for men and women, protection of the health and strength of men and women workers, just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. On the other hand, a review of the wide variety of approaches and strategies adopted in the 4 decades succeeding the adoption of the Constitution, to translate these goals into policies and programmes show that the centrality of women's existence in the country's development scenario has not so far been recognized. "Women in development" policy debate has undergone a process of organic growth and qualitative change, as

evidenced from the purely "welfare" approaches of the early fifties giving way to the questions about status and opportunities and legal rights raised in the seventies, along with the new participatory approaches to women's development. In the early stages of the centralised planning process, women were treated as recipients of welfare measures and doles. They were classed as an under privileged group and tagged on with scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other "weaker sections" of society. Women were seen as "consumers" of government doles, hand - outs, charity and essential services, covering the wide range of "products" such as education, nutrition, health-care, skill training and even Institutionalisation. "Women were viewed as vulnerable, weak, unskilled and incapable of standing on their own feet without outside help and intervention. The perception of women's vulnerability and weakness rose not so much out of the socio-economic context, in terms of landholding, caste and class, but more out of a notion that women, especially when they suffered from social disabilities such as widowhood, spinsterhood, destitution and abandonment, were lesser beings in the household". Where women were fortunate enough in having the support of a male in the household, that is, the husband, her role was seen as a supplemental one, helping the man who was the bread winner in the family. It then fell on her to be responsible for the care of the child, its nutritional needs, its health etc. Besides, she was also responsible for the internal management of the house. Her world was circumscribed thus, and programme interventions were designed to meet these needs. Under the Community Development programme, therefore, we see women taking up such activities as kitchen gardening, home-science applications in the kitchen, such as preparation of nutritious food, jams, pickles, jellies etc. Lessons imparted to them included basics of hygiene, home-sanitation, food-storage and communications etc.

The removal of normal barriers to women's participation in political, economic and social activities, through enactment of progressive legislation by itself did not succeed in bringing about significant changes in women's participation in the development process. The Constitutional and legal framework of equality could not convert women's historically disadvantaged positions into one of equality or equal participation. It failed because adequate attention was not paid to the identification of the roots of inequality and to attacking the structural infirmities and defects which led to women being unequal partners in the development process.

The "welfare" approach being severely limited in its scope and coverage, other direct interventions in areas like health, nutrition, education, etc. were introduced. This was based on a tacit assumption that the "gender neutral" approaches could not succeed in effectively reaching services to women. Theoretical equality had to be bolstered with a set of special measures for women. The Committee on the Status of Women in India had observed in 1974 that "though women do not constitute a minority

numerically, they are acquiring the features of one, by the inequality of class, status and power- therefore special temporary measures may be necessary to transfer de jure into de facto equality." The poverty alleviation programmes of the seventies saw a great deal of attention focused on interventions to deal with the problems of poor women. Women-specific projects were attempted in such areas as literacy, nutrition, population control etc. These projects and schemes remained marginal to mainstream development efforts.

Another approach or strategy much talked about in recent years is the "integrationist" approach. We talk of integrating women in the development process. This approach received attention during the International Women's Decade (1975-1985) and was much discussed and debated in the United Nations forums, including the Mexico and Copenhagen World Conference. The question can be raised as to why women need to be integrated in the processes of development, when the over-whelming majority of poor women, who form a large part of our working force, are already working for survival, and are fully engaged in economic activities. Their being asked to take on more burdens is therefore unthinkable, as their working day consists of as long as 12-14 hours. The combination of the productive and reproductive roles of the woman, leads to her carrying a double burden. "Integration" however, makes sense when we consider the fact that the economic contribution made by the women goes largely unrecognized as a result of which her needs are rarely taken into consideration when planning programmes or in project design. "Integration" therefore should lead to certain strategies being followed which take into account the particular characteristics of women as members of the labour force. However, it is a fact that the "integration" approach has not been correctly followed or interpreted in all sectors, sometimes leading to isolated efforts at involving women in certain programmes and activities only.

Another pervasive debate on policy options centres round the treatment of women as a special interest group, as an alternative of securing for women a fair share of the general programmes. Many have criticised the lack of understanding, the neglect and the apathy shown to women's issues in general development administration. On the other hand, treatment of women as a "special" group for the purpose of formulating "women-specific" programmes, has also come in for a great deal of criticism, on the ground that these programmes have marginalised women, since they are ill-equipped.

The failure of many programmes, either "general development", or "women specific" has been increasingly attributed to a lack of attention on the part of the policy planners to the formation of "receiving mechanisms", as the emphasis always has been on the shaping of an efficient "delivery system". It was felt that policies, converted into programmes, either area-specific or beneficiary-oriented, could not be

implemented on the ground, without the women of the target group, (the poverty households) being mobilised and made aware of their own situation and the kind of changes intended to be brought about by these programme interventions. There is therefore, now a greater stress on providing in the Project Design itself, an organisational or a group base, which will work on several levels, for providing cohesion and solidarity on one level, and for providing a forum for undertaking economic activities on the other.

The failure to see women's development programmes as part of mainstream sectoral development strategies and their being relegated to marginalised and peripheral activities is nowhere so well illustrated as in the case of agriculture related occupations. Women's work in agriculture and the crucial nature of their contribution to agricultural development is well acknowledged and accepted. But much of this work remains invisible, both in statistical work profiles, as well as to policy planners and formulators. The result is that women's access to new and emergent technologies has been very very marginal, whether it be the T&V system, general agricultural extension, co-operativisation of dairy programmes, Green Revolution technologies or anything also. The very large group of women agricultural labourers, (many of whom have also small plots of land of their own) remain one of the most, if not the most elusive, target groups, whether under IRDP, or NREP/RLEGP or DWCRA or the CSWB socio-economic or other programmes. The efforts to involve them in economic activities leads to their being asked to learn skills which are unrelated to their everyday working environment and which need efficient marketing and other inputs for ensuring success.

The centrality of women's role in the economy, is that of a producer, not a mere consumer or a recipient of governments' welfare measures. It is on women as a producer that we have to focus on, which entails a thorough review of the structural obstacles that stand in the way of her increased access to resources such as land, capital, training, skills, credit, legal rights, etc. The several approaches adopted since Independence towards women's development, have not fully come to grips with this centrality. The result is a proliferation of programmes with no coherent framework to address the multisectoral and multi-dimensional problems faced by women.

Luthra sees the birth of the Central Social Welfare Board (1953) as making the first entry of the State in the field of Social Welfare.* Up till this event, social welfare services were delivered to the client groups almost wholly through the non-government or the voluntary sector. There was no specialised

* Luthra, P.N. "Central Social Welfare Board - Its role & Challenges" in Social Welfare - Legend and ---(ed) S.D.Gokhale (1975).

agency of any kind at the national or the State level, which co-ordinated the programmes sectorally or spatially. With the coming into existence of the Central Social Welfare Board, programmes for women, children and the handicapped received a boost. The Board was to be given a great deal of autonomy: indeed, the very rationale for it ---being set up outside the Central Secretariat was to enable it to act as a catalyst in promoting and strengthening voluntary action in the field. Shortly after the setting up of the Central Board, Boards were set up in the States and Union Territories as well. The Central Social Welfare Board has, thus a fairly extensive field net-work and infrastructure. Its importance lay primarily in the fact that when it was set up, there was no Ministry or Department in the Central Secretariat for Social Welfare. The Board was, therefore, the first national Machinery set up by the Government of India for the advancement of women.

The functions and objectives of the Board were to assess the needs and requirements of social welfare organisations; to perform the role of co-ordination vis-a-vis- the Central and State Ministries funding social welfare activities; to evaluate the programmes and projects of the aided agencies; to promote social welfare organisations on a voluntary basis in places where none exist; and to render financial aid to deserving organisations or institutions.

Over the nearly 4 decades of its existence, the Board has tended to concentrate on the last-named objective/function to the almost complete exclusion of the others. In other words, the Board has developed into a grant giving body; the catalytic processes it should have released or generated in order to build up voluntary effort in women and child development have failed to take place. The Board funds a variety of programmes to be implemented through voluntary organisations. These cover education for school drop outs, vocational training, child-care socio-economic programmes, welfare of children of less privileged groups, nutrition, grant-in-aid for general welfare, family and child welfare, mahila mandals, awareness generation camps, crimes against women, counselling etc. These schemes have tended to become rigidly defined blue prints over the years, with very little flexibility and capacity to adopt to local needs. The schemes have become an end in themselves and not a means for achieving well-defined goals such as gender equality, empowerment of women, building up confidence and awareness etc. The pre-eminent position that the Board held as the sole national implementing machinery for women's advancement and development, no longer exists. With the coming into being of a Central Ministry for Social Welfare/Social Security in 1966, even the functional autonomy of the Board was seriously eroded. The Chairman of the Central Social Welfare Board complained of having to seek permission for matters which were previously considered to be within the scope of the Board. This departure from the earlier established convention whereby the Board could, on its own, develop programmes which were within the limits set out for

itself, was resented by the Board. The Government's presence dwarfed the personality and the image of the Board and its schemes. Since new programmes can be launched by the Board only by following the detailed, time-consuming procedures laid down by the Government, the tendency has been for it not to take up new programmes or to go in for modification, re-orientation, overhauling, structural changes etc. in the existing programmes in keeping with grass-root demands, to any appreciable extent. Thus while approaches to rural development, delivery of services through extension systems, poverty and gender, female-headed households, asset-creation for asset-poor or asset-less families, micro-enterprise development for women in the informal or subsistence sector etc. have undergone evolutionary changes or have surfaced as new concerns in the seventies and eighties, this ferment has scarcely touched the form and content of the Central Social Welfare Board (with one or two exceptions). This has resulted in the sapping of the initiative of the local organisations to whom local needs provided the main rationale for programme formulation.

The setting up of the Board in 1953, however, did represent "an important step in the policy of active participation by the State in dealing with social inequalities and promoting social justice".* It remains a bold experiment in institution-building for fostering social development and change.

The Community Development Programme was another national movement initiated by the Government in 1951. One component of the CD programme was the Applied Nutrition Programme, consisting of nutrition education, food production, pre-school children feeding, mahila mandals, and provision of nutritious feeding to pregnant or nursing mothers. There was considerable overlap between the Central Social Welfare Board and the CD programme in delivering social welfare services to women and children. A limited measure of departmental co-ordination was also achieved between the two systems as well as other Government agencies, the Panchayati Raj system and even the voluntary agencies. However, the participation of women in the CD programme centred around prevailing middle-class concepts of women's role as a house-wife, a maintainer of family health, nutrition and welfare. Women's productive roles were not perceived, though her capacity to earn "supplementary" income was recognised in a very limited way, as for example, from kitchen gardens, sewing, fruit-processing, crafts, embroidery etc. Land-based activities such as crop husbandry, dairying, fisheries, small animal husbandry etc. were not seen in the women's context, or the fact that very large numbers of women were already working in these employment systems. This led to a stereo-typed approach to the whole question of vocational and skill training for women, especially the illiterate and assetless women, and to the emergence of the concept of "suitable" trades and vocations for women.

* Kumud Sharma "Central Social Welfare Board" CWDS (1988).

The shift in approach from looking at women as a part of the "welfare" constituency to seeing them as actors in the "development" scenario took place in the seventies. In fact, there is a widely held perception that the "Women's question" had been almost forgotten during the first 3 decades of post independence in India, or at best, it had been subsumed under the general rubric of social welfare; and that it surfaced for the first time in the 70's. This coincided with various political and socio-economic developments which took place in this decade, both in the country and outside. "It had become increasingly clear that the Constitutional promises of equality did not mean much unless basic assumptions regarding social power and control were challenged. During the late sixties and early seventies many older women's organizations which had become relatively inactive following the end of the freedom struggle, began a new phase of activity marked by increasing interaction and cooperation with one another. This time, their focus was not only on mobilising women, but on understanding and attacking the sources of their oppression. In addition, newer efforts towards forming organisations with women as leading protagonists occurred in a large number of situations. The political and organisational unrest of the late sixties gave these efforts room for growth."*

The publication of the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India coincided with the beginning of the International Women's Decade. There was, in the Decade, a growing body of evidence unearthed by grass-roots research on the situation of Indian Women and the type of changes taking place in their lives, which showed that the assumption that women had been left far behind in the "development process" and that therefore, what was needed was to bring them back into the "mainstream" was not the whole truth. The reality was that some of the very processes of development itself has marginalised and adversely impacted on women. Women, in this sense, were not really excluded from development - they had become the victims of development. How could we think of integrating women in development when "development" has been so adverse for women and their livelihoods? In 1990, a Third World woman activist - leader, who was deeply involved in the International Women's Decade (1976-1985) and the various international conferences and meetings, looked back to that period to question the phrase "integrating women in development" and to substitute it with "empowering women for social Change." In India, the knowledge of "the contradictions that appear when policies aimed at achieving gender equality have to be pushed within social structures which are based on unequal power and resource base" was present even in the beginning of the Decade. This dilemma still continues, as a major contradiction between WID integrationist rhetoric and the ground reality.

In terms of policy statements, the Sixth Plan chapter on women constituted a break through. While the earlier Plans had

emphasised social disabilities and the need for special programmes, the Sixth Plan emphasised the potential of women to become agents of development and the need to boost her self-image and self-confidence. In terms of programming, area development and spatial schemes in the rural sector were replaced by individual beneficiary - oriented programmes. The links between gender and poverty were operationalised through earmarking a special component for women in the anti-poverty programmes such as TRYSEM, IRDP etc. The earlier exclusive emphasis on health, education and social welfare services for women gave way to a recognition of the centrality of woman as a productive worker. The emphasis, therefore, shifted to economic opportunities for women. The links between survival needs of the household and women's work were revealed in a profusion of micro-studies. The importance of subsistence work sectors such as dairying, fisheries, sericulture, forestry, handlooms, handicrafts, khadi and village industries etc. for supporting women's livelihoods gradually came to be appreciated. Certain new, hitherto untouched areas such as women and violence, came to the fore-front, based on a mass of evidence of the growing trend of crimes against women. Emphasis was also placed on basic needs and support services for women such as fuel, fodder, water, child care, transport, housing etc.

The new knowledge, however did not fully translate itself into the necessary changes to be carried out in programme design. Much of the dead weight of ideology, attitudes, biases, and ethos inherited from the past is still being carried round by the implementing machinery of the Government and its extension agencies. While non-government organisations have fully involved themselves in issues relating to gender equality, the non-government sector is always an uneasy one, and very susceptible to disturbances in the external environment. Even as the Seventh Plan document, for the first time, devotes an entire section to the involvement of voluntary organisations' in development, statutory restrictions, Enquiry Commissions, tax laws, accounting formalities etc. emanate as visible signs of the State's power and dominance.

Evidence of lingering biases and stereo types shows up in the choice of trades for TRYSEM - by and large, women are still taught sewing, tailoring, embroidery, knitting, garment-making etc. The number of TRYSEM trained women who were able to avail of bank finance and start their own production units was abysmally low, as a consequence of the restricted choice of skills taught. Pre-conceived notions about the importance of family strategies and the house-hold approach impact adversely on the programmes aimed at poor women within poor households such as IRDP & DWCRA. Though there has been quantitative improvement in coverage of women following the 30% reservation in IRDP, the

Irina Sen "A space within the struggle "Kali for Women" (1990)
New Delhi (P:5)

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impact in terms of incremental income to the women and its sustainability is quite doubtful. In DW CRA, lack of appreciation of the effectiveness of the collectivity of women as a programme strategy has left the groups weak. It is important to note that by and large, the field machinery responsible for implementing the anti-poverty programmes is the same cadre or extension workers (including the women workers) inherited from the Community Development era. Their re-orientation, skill upgradation etc. have remained by and large a neglected subject. Earlier biases against support services for women (such as child care) being seen as either a welfare activity or a consumption expenditure, has resulted in child care and other basic needs/supports still being seen as marginal to women's productive or income earning programmes/schemes. Even where, as in NREP, RLEGP etc. the provision for child care on work sites exists in the programme design, in implementation it has turned out to be a non-starter. Centralising tendencies in directing women's development from within the Government structure have a contradictory effect of marginalising the women's question. "Special mechanisms and machineries set up to advance the cause of women very often have the opposite result of treating women as a "special category"...the true cause of women can be furthered only if a holistic view of women as producer, reproducer, manager, opinion moulder, community leader etc., is developed and all Ministries and Departments of the Government of India are mandated to include women in their agencies and plans of Action."*

It is essential to underscore, in conclusion that women are not a homogenous group nor are they a specific "class, caste, race or community." Their situation depends on the socio-economic context in which they are placed. One of the possible dangers in moving women to centre-stage position is a homogenization that sweeps away specificities that should in reality, be respected. There is already, disturbing evidence that efforts to "mainstream" marginalised groups such as Adivasi women, through well-intentioned moves to formalise personal and land laws of the community end up in further dispossessing the women. Traditionally sanctioned land tenure and cropping systems and rights might be kinder to women in these communities. Culturally accepted modes of behaviour and interactions might contain more free and expansive spaces for the women in marriage, custody, maintenance, divorce etc. The risk of formalising or making applicable the majority groups' laws on these communities could sometimes be a "disempowering" process. This, in turn, calls for a high degree of decentralisation and local decision-making, not only in the context of women's development, but in the total endeavour to reach "development" to all.

**PATRIARCHY AND SOCIAL CONDITIONING AND ITS IMPACT
ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN INDIA**

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ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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Global awareness of women's position particularly after World War II and the subsequent Human Rights Declaration, gave a special impetus to the women's movements world over. A major thrust to studies with a specific focus on the women's lives in India was undoubtedly given by the International Women's year, 1975. Even after 25 years of Independence and a progressive constitution, ensuring equality and gender justice, the status of women did not show improvement to the extent desired. On the contrary, women's oppression showed an increase in certain areas of life and their economic position showed further deterioration (Towards Equality : STATUS Report, 1975)

The primary factor distinguishing the post-1975 women's studies from the earlier ones, is the specific focus on 'gender' as an analytical category, in addition to, but at the same time distinct from the more commonly used categories of class, caste, race, religion etc. Underlying this focus, is also the recognition that women are frequently a specially oppressed group, within each unit of socio-economic stratification, be it class, caste, race or religion.

Feminist scholarship, for over two decades now, has been engaged in tracing the origins of women's sub-ordination and oppression, trying to locate its basis in biological, social, cultural, economic, political, historical and psycho-analytical aspects of individuals and groups. Though, they may not have arrived at a universally accepted theory, this concerted research has thrown much valuable light on the different forms of oppression that one half of humanity perpetrates on the other half, and the various ways and means used by different societies to perpetuate it.

There is also a clear recognition, that gender stratification has to be reckoned as a pre-capitalist and pre-class phenomenon and that its understanding can be obtained by focusing on sexual relations of production based on kin-group membership and rights resulting from it.

Recent feminist studies have located the roots of women's subordination on differentiation based on the sex\gender system (Rubin, 1978). It refers to the institutionalized system, which allots resources, property and privileges to persons according to culturally defined gender roles. That is, on the basis of sex or biological differences, a cultural superstructure is constructed governing the behaviour of sexes. Thus while sex(nature) determines that women should be child-bearers, it is the sex-gender system(culture) which assures that they should be child-reares.

One of the direct outcomes of the sex-gender system is patriarchy, the most pervasive cultural artifact of women's oppression. Under patriarchy, the source of women's social oppression is located in the family structure and also provides a framework for analysing how the forces oppressing women have survived and adapted to societies with different modes of production.

MEANING OF PATRIARCHY

The term, patriarchy, thus takes off from the literal meaning of the rule of the father within the family and is used to embrace the rule of men over women in society. Patriarchal authority is based on male control over the women's productive capacity and her person.

There is some confusion, however, regarding the term patriarchy. In its traditional, narrow meaning, patriarchy refers to the system, historically derived from Greek and Roman law, in which the male head of the household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and family members. When it is used in this sense, it has a limited historicity for it. Patriarchy began in classical antiquity and ended in the nineteenth century with the granting of civil rights to women and married women in particular.

But strictly speaking, patriarchal dominance of male family head over their kin is much older than classical antiquity and it may be argued that in the nineteenth century, male dominance in the family simply takes new forms and is not ended. Thus Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are totally deprived of rights, influence and resources. (Lerner, 1986).

Patriarchy has been one of the strongest, most resilient of ideologies, that has survived over centuries, spanning across the most numerous of existing known societies. It has been created, nurtured and preserved by the males in the different societies over time, giving divine sanctions to enable its survival. Thus traditionalist societies may have become modern, feudal to capitalist or socialist, technology might have introduced several changes in mastering the forces of nature, but the cultural tool of patriarchy still remains as forceful as ever.

The traditionalist explanation focuses on women's reproductive capacity and sees in motherhood woman's chief goal in life. Women's maternal function is seen as imperative to the survival of society, hence the sexual division of labour based on biological differences is seen as functional and just.

Another oft-quoted explanation related to biological factors affecting the males, is that their greater physical strength and aggressiveness causes them to become hunters. So they become providers of food for their tribes and are more highly valued. The skills derived from hunting enable them to become warriors. Man-the-hunter, superior in strength ability and the experience derived from using tools and weapons, naturally protects and defends the more vulnerable female (referred to as the weaker sex) whose biological equipment destines her for motherhood and nurturance.

Anthropological evidences have refuted these traditionalist notions of male physical superiority (Mead, 1949) and the universality of male dominance. The most recent new evidence being of women divers of Korea (Myong-Jo, 1991) who dive deep into the sea to gather sea food, while their menfolk stay at home with the children. Besides, they have found societies in which sexual asymmetry carries no connotation of dominance or subordination. Rather the tasks performed by both men and women are regarded as equal in status in most aspects. In such societies, the sexes are considered as complementary their roles and status are different but equal (Rosaldo, 1974).

In many hunting and gathering societies it was found that the main food supply was provided by gathering activities and small game hunting, which women and children do. Further, the essential, cultural innovative contributions that women made to the creation of civilization by their invention of basketry and pottery and their knowledge and development of horticulture, revealed the significant role played by women in providing and preserving food in the hunting\gathering societies. Many feminists argue that the limited number of proven biological differences among the sexes has been vastly exaggerated by cultural interpretations and value put on sex differences itself is a cultural product of mainly androcentric bias.

Another explanation of women's sub-ordination, is based on Engels theory of the acquisition of private property, which has received much support from Marxist feminists. According to Engels, the development of animal husbandry led to commerce, and surplus from herding were appropriated by men and became private property. Once having acquired such private property, men sought to secure it to themselves and their heirs. They did so by controlling women's sexuality and instituting the monogamous family. Engels stressed the connection between the breakdown of older kinship relations based on communal property ownership and the emergence of the individual family as the economic unit. In linking sexual relations to changing social relations, Engels broke with the biological determinism of the traditionalists. In focusing attention to the sexual conflict built into the institution as it emerged within private property relations, he reinforced the linkage between economic-social change and what we today would call 'gender' relations.

Levi-Strauss (1969) and Claude Meillassoux (1972), however, believe that it is the exchange of women that led eventually to the creation of private property. Levi Strauss reasons that in the process women are 'reified': they become dehumanized and are thought of more as things than humans. This occurs, according to him, with the development of agriculture. In fully developed plough agriculture, women and children are indispensable to the production process. Hence, tribes seek to acquire the reproductive potential of women, who are exchanged. This practice becomes institutionalized in incest taboos and patrilocal marriage patterns leading to the overthrow of matriliney and matrilocality. In Meillassoux's scheme, the control over reproduction (women's sexuality) precedes the acquisition of private property.

Aaby (1977), the Danish anthropologist however, cites cases of societies where control of women existed (Australian hunting tribes) even in the absence of horticultural activity and societies like Iroquois, a horticulturalist society, where women are neither reified nor dominated. Nevertheless it has been observed that in the course of agricultural revolution, exploitation of human labour and the sexual exploitation of women seems to have become inextricably linked.

A refreshingly new insight has been provided by Eisler (1988) in her Cultural Transformation theory which re-examines human society from a gender-holistic perspective. Weaving together evidence from art, archaeology, social science, history, religion and many other fields of enquiry, she tries to show how in our distant past, there were periods of peace and prosperity when social, technological and cultural evolution moved upward. Many thousands of years, when all the basic technologies on which civilization is built, were developed in societies that were not not make sense to conclude that these were societies where women were dominant.

She says that it makes eminent sense that the earliest depiction of divine power in human form should have been female rather than male. Our ancestors, noting that life emerges from the body of a woman, may have imagined the universe as an all giving Mother from whose womb all life emerges and to which it returns after death to be reborn. These societies which worshipped the life-generating and nurturing powers of the universe - in our time symbolized by the ancient chalice or grail - was interrupted by the pre-historic horizon invaders from the peripheral areas of our globe who ushered in a very different form of social organisation. These were people who worshipped the lethal power of the blade, the power to take rather than to give life, that is, the ultimate power to establish and enforce domination.

She describes the earlier societies characterized by the principle of linking as the partnership model and those based on

the principle of ranking of one half of humanity over the other as the dominant model which could be patriarchy / matriarchy. She prefers to call the male-dominated model as andro-centric and the partnership model as gynany (gy deriving from the Greek word Gyn - for female - l for linking and any - for andro or male).

On the basis of latest archaeological evidences she analyses how the partnership models based on qualities such as caring, compassion and nurturing were replaced by dominant models - where force, aggression and violence came to be valued. These observations have great relevance to our violence-filled societies and needs careful consideration.

PATRIARCHY : THE INDIAN SITUATION

It is indeed difficult to generalize for a country as huge and as culturally diversified as India. With the improvement of communications and media, one is becoming even more aware of the inter-regional, inter-religious, inter-caste differences, besides of course, the rural\urban differences. But today, along with the differences, we are also becoming increasingly aware of certain common features or culture traits which seem to cut across regions and religions, and one of the most glaring of these, is the sub-ordination and oppression of women.

It is interesting to note here that most studies on the position of women in India, begin with the Vedic period or the Aryan civilization. Though archaeological evidences (Harappa and Mohenjo-daro) and other literary sources have revealed the existence of an earlier civilization, not much systematic attention has been focused on the pre-Aryan or non-Aryan social life and organization of family structures. Mention is made here and there about the existence of matriarchal (?) or matri-lineal and matri-local societies (the most commonly cited is the Nair 'Taravads' or Kerala) and the worship of the Mother Goddess, which have survived to the present times in various forms in different parts of the country. Whatever little evidence that we do come across, however, indicates that the relations between the sexes were more egalitarian and social life was less hierarchic and peaceful, than found in the later Aryan context. At least much of the trauma associated with the girl leaving her natal home seems to be absent. However much more systematic research into historical records and archaeological evidences is called for in this area. This neglected aspect of our history, may provide many clues to the various contradictions that we find, regarding the position of women in the Vedic period.

As far as the Aryan culture is concerned, there is little doubt about their adherence to the patriarchal cult, which can be discerned in the early Vedic period itself and whose fundamental feature has been hierarchy. With the advent of Aryans, the Mother Goddess recedes to the background, while 'Purusa' the supreme man in the Rigveda, pervades the world with a fourth part of Himself. All beings come out of him and he pervades things,

animate as well as inanimate. Thus the conception of one great Being from whom the Universe is said to have emanated, is sometimes described as one with the Universe and transcendent, gradually prepares the way for the later polytheism of the Upanishads", (Kapadia, 1955). The four varnas were also created from the different parts of His Being - in a descending order of hierarchy - Brahmins from His Mouth, Kshatriyas from His arms, Vaishyas from His thighs - and Sudras from His feet - thus providing the 'Divine' basis for the hierarchical divisions in society.

Recent research throws some light on these early Aryan people. Gimbutas (1982) using radio-carbon dates, postulates that several migratory waves of steppe pastoralists of Kurgan people swept across pre-historic Europe. According to her, in old Europe - the physical and cultural disruption of the Neolithic societies that worshipped the Goddess has been attributed to the Kurgans, which began in the fifth millennium B.C., The Kurgans were of what scholars call Indo-European or Aryan language speaking stock, a type that was in modern times to be idealized by Nietzsche and then Hitler as the only European race. They were nomadic pastoralists who swarmed down on the continent from the Asiatic and European North East. Ruled by powerful priests and warriors, they brought with them their male gods of war and thunder and gradually imposed their ideologies and ways of life on the lands and people they conquered. Patriliney and patri-local residence then became the norm. With the appearance of these invaders on the pre-historic horizon, the Goddess and women were reduced to male consorts or concubines. Gradually male dominance, warfare and the enslavement of women and of powerless men became the norm.

Kapadia writes, "the Vedic seers moulded their Gods on their own models. They lived the life men lived, Hence, their ambition in life was a full life here on earth to be followed by and equally happy life in the other world in the company of the Gods. May we live a hundred years (RV I, 89, 9, VII 66, 16). And this was natural, as the life offered gold, cattle, sons and grandsons in plenty." The preference for male progeny for its racial continuity seems to have been well established. Uma Chakravarti's (1988) comments on Altekar's description of the early Aryan life are interesting. Altekar's pre-occupation with the propagation of the race often assumes fascist overtones. For Altekar, even a comparison with Hitler and Mussolini seems perfectly in order and he goes on to suggest that like Hitler and Mussolini, the Vedic chiefs were anxious for "heroes, more heroes, and still more heroes". The gospel they preached to the householder was not that of eight sons of the later days, but of ten. The non-Aryans were probably outnumbering the Aryans and they were anxious to have as strong and numerous an army as possible.

On the subject of antiquity of Sati as a custom, Altekar (1959) puts forward the view that the custom was pre-historic and

that it was not revived during the early Vedic period, due to the Aryan's anxiety in having sons and heroes. Hence, the custom of Niyoga, (marrying the younger brother of the husband) was sanctioned. But perhaps, it may be more true to surmise that the custom of Sati began with the Aryans, particularly of those women who did not accept Niyoga or to prevent the Aryan women from marrying men of non-Aryan origin. It must be also mentioned here that Sati was never a widely practiced social custom. It was restricted to certain groups or castes in certain regions and its incidence in the South has been quite negligible. This however, does not make it in any way a lesser social evil.

There has been much debate on the relative degree of equality and freedom that women enjoyed in the family and society, during the early or later Vedic period but most authors are, however, agreed on the point that "male supremacy" was an established feature even in the early Vedic period.

In fact one wonders, whether, because of the prevailing egalitarian values in the non-Aryan society, it took some time for the cult of Aryan patriarchy to be institutionalized among the various non-Aryan groups and communities in the different parts of the country. This unevenness and variations in its degree of the influence can be witnessed even today, though several intervening factors in later times may have helped in accentuating or lessening this process.

But by and large, the establishment of patriarchy as the ruling ideology seems to have been achieved by the time of Manu smriti, when all the loose ends were neatly tied in the form of the now familiar Dharma Shashtra (A code of Dharma or Justice). With its rules of Karma and Dharma, it lays down the prescriptive and proscriptive behaviour for men and women belonging to the different varnas, for all times to come. This code of Dharma was however, highly biased in favour of the three upper classes, (dvijas) and blatantly prejudiced against the Sudras and women of all classes.

Manu seems to have had his counterparts elsewhere, in other parts of the globe too particularly, where the Kurgan culture had spread. This is evident in the writings and scriptures of various religions of the time. All the legends and laws related to earlier egalitarian or matrilineal societies on which Judaism, Christianity or Islam were based were being re-written by the priests to suit the cult of patriarchy. Thus inspite of attempts to give an impression of unity, Eisler points out the many contradictions and internal inconsistencies in some of the religious scriptures. One well known example she cites in the Bible is the two different stories of how God created human beings, found in Chap 1 of Genesis. The first tells that woman and man were simultaneous divine creations. The second, more elaborate one, tells that Eve was created as an after-thought out of Adam's rib (and that too a supernumery one).

Many of these inconsistencies were obvious clues to the still ongoing conflict between the old reality, which lingered in the people's culture and the newer realities the priestly ruling class was trying to impose. As a result of this, one finds certain common features in the attitudes towards women and their sexuality across the major religions of the time, where the cult of patriarchy was gradually being imposed, giving rise to certain common stereotypes, about the nature of woman's character and temperament, the need to guard and control her sexuality, her role to be confined to the home as wife and mother and complete subservience to the man and the master of the house.

Malladi Subbamma (1985) also points out to the various contradictions in the different Vedic texts and sometimes in the same text, in different places. These contradictions can be seen both with regard to the creation of Varnas as well as the attitude towards the position of women. For example, giving or demanding any kind of dowry is nowhere mentioned in any ancient Hindu Shashtra. Even the practice of bride-price, which seems to have existed earlier in some parts of the country is condemned by Manu. "No father shall receive even a particle for giving his daughter in marriage and thus become seller of this offspring..." (Tiko, 19185). In fact 'kanya dan' was eulogized as the most supreme of all the 'dans'. However, the later provision of a share for the daughter in the father's property, as 'Stree Dhana', seems to have been converted into 'Vara dakshina' or present day dowry with the emergence of capitalist patriarchy.

SOCIAL CONDITIONING AND IMPACT ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN

It is interesting to note that despite these inherent contradictions in Manu's code, his model of the ideal woman has reigned supreme in the Hindu male psyche for centuries. One of the important reasons for this is the nexus between the intellectuals and the ruling elite and the management of the information system. It was these men who later influenced and guided the British rulers in their attitude towards women's education etc. and of course, took their place in the post-Independence era. They have now become the chief instruments in preserving the patriarchal legacy as it serves their own vested interests. It has never occurred to even the most liberal minded amongst them, to question the very basis and rationality of a lop-sided code of conduct. When voices were raised occasionally, they have been conveniently ignored or suppressed.

In Manu's Samhita, ideas about womanhood are laid down and morality is assigned in authoritarian codes which lower women almost to the level of sub-species. Manu equated women with slaves and his laws epitomise complete submission of woman to man and they are still the sanctioned codes of conduct ascribed for and by and large, accepted by women (Tikoo, 1985). He lays down that "though destitute of virtue of seeking pleasure (elsewhere) or devoid of good qualities (yet) a husband must be constantly

worshipped as God by a faithful wife". Thus the 'Pati-parameshwar' model persists, with the man demanding such worship and the woman offering it unquestioningly. Manu also lays down that "where women are worshipped, Gods reside" but he does not make it clear how women are to be worshipped and by whom (fathers, husbands, brothers or men in general.)

Writing on the Hindu value system, Suma Chitnis (1988) describes how women have been conditioned to revere the father and to serve the husband as a devotee serves God. Devotion to the husband is cultivated among girls of all religions but it was particularly idealized and firmly institutionalized in the Hindu concept of 'Pativrata'. The term pativrata (literally translated as "one who is vowed to the husband") connotes a wife who has accepted service and devotion to the husband and his family, as her ultimate religion and duty. The examples of Sita and Sati Savitri are all quoted repeatedly in their daily lives. This ideal of 'pativrata' is romanticized through legend, folklore and folksongs and re-affirmed through ceremonies and rituals. As a result, the values thus conveyed penetrate into the deepest recesses of the mind, where even in our time, they are guarded as hallowed and immutable truths.

Zarina Bhatti (1988) states that the Ashraf concept of a woman is derived entirely from her role as a 'wife and mother' and is garnished with traditional feminine virtues of pre-marital virginity, modesty, self-denial, graciousness, sensitivity and devotion to the family. A girl, right from birth, is moulded for marriage and motherhood.

If we examine the image of women in Christianity, here again one finds the same contradictions as in the Hindu scriptures. While in early Christianity, women took active part in preaching, teaching and even liturgical services, later many of these activities became impossible. The image of woman in Christianity is far from uniform, it always includes several aspects, possibly exclusively of each other (Ursula King, 1980).

One feature, however, which is different in Christianity as compared to the Hindus and Muslims is that, virginity was ranked higher than married life. Marriage came relatively late in the early history of Christian thought, to be considered a sacrament. In the first centuries, marriage was mainly a family and civic affair, and had the status assigned to her by society. Only the consecrated virgin could claim equality with men as a member of an ascetic elite. Though earlier, in Buddhism and Jainism also women took to ascetic life, this had much more acceptance in Christianity than in the former. But in practice even the women ascetics in Christianity were treated as inferior to the male ascetics.

Another oft-quoted dictum of Manu is, on woman's dependence on her father in childhood, on her husband in youth and when her lord is dead, on her sons. Applying the same logic, he does not

recommend, however, the remarriage of child widows. Instead they are condemned to a life of abject deprivation and become victims of male sexuality ending up in prostitution. (Rao, 1983) Leela Dube (1988) describes in detail the mechanisms through which women acquire the cultural ideas and values which shape their images of themselves and form the visions they have of the future. Patriarchal values are internalized by a systematic process of socialization. To understand this process it is necessary to keep in mind the implications of the family structure and its wider context of kinship relations in the caste in which it is embedded. It may be noted however, that the superiority of the male members is more or less a common feature that cuts across caste, class and religion both in rural\urban areas.

As a result, women have a negative image of themselves. They regard man's superiority as divinely ordained and take it for granted, or as given. In fact, a large number of women are even unable to identify that they are subjugated and oppressed. They regard it as natural that men are their lords and masters as can be seen by the vernacular terms used to refer to the husband as yajamana or owner. They have, internalized the idea that the men have a right to control them as they are his property. When wives are battered, even the other women do not think it proper to interfere because a man has a right to beat his wife.

The recognition of special values accorded to male children comes early. The joy expressed at the birth of a boy (with the beating of drums or distribution of sweets) and the absence of it when a girl is born cannot escape the attention of even young boys and girls. So growing up as a boy in an Indian family is to enjoy various types of social, psychological and material types of privileges, whatever these latter may be depending on the economic status of the family. Even the boy in the labourer's hut is relatively better placed than the girl in that family.

The negative attitude towards the girls as mentioned earlier starts from birth itself. Apart from the disappointment and frowns that greet the girl child on her arrival in this world, child rearing is marked with indifference and neglect. The uselessness implied in rearing a girl child can be seen in idioms like 'Bringing up a daughter is like pouring water in sand' or the Telugu expression which conveys it more effectively 'Bringing up a daughter is like watering a plant in another's courtyard' (Dube 1988). Girls grow up with a notion of their temporary membership within the natal home.

Writing about the Muslim women of Uttar Pradesh, Bhatt (1988) states, that the daughter is regarded as a potential alien in her father's house, for she belongs to the patriarchal lineage of her future husband. She is referred to as 'amaanat' or 'paraya dhan' (another's property). The reason is the same as in Hindu society, namely that the girl is a liability. Her family has to spend on her marriage and though she does not really

belong to her parents, she has to be protected till she is handed over to her real owners. The Muslims often use the phrase "a guest of four days" to describe her.

This emphasis on the transient aspect of a girl's life, acts as an obstacle in building her self-confidence. Her present is very much overshadowed by the inevitable "uprooting" that she has to face in the near future. The differential value of sons and daughters and the unshakable association between marriage and departure from the natal home is driven home not only by various folk songs but sometimes by repeated nagging by the women of the house.

The onset of puberty, is characterized by severe restrictions on the girl's movements and her interaction with males. One of the direct consequences of these restrictions is that in rural areas most parents withdraw their girls from school as soon as they become big. Secondly, despite the legislation prescribing the age limit for marriage, parents are anxious to get the girls married as soon as they attain menarche. Without adequate protection against male marauders lurking around the corner, they cannot afford to take risks. The most important concern here is the management of the girls sexuality which is tied to her future as wife and mother. Motherhood is the highest achievement in a woman's life; and marriage is the gateway to motherhood. Everything is secondary to these two goals (Dube, 1988).

A lot of importance is attached to how a girl carries herself. A girl should walk softly, should not run, hop, jump, climb as all these are masculine traits. This is one of the reasons, why females are not encouraged to take part in sports and games. The girls if they do go to school must return home straight, preferably in a group or cluster, so that there is less fear of being sexually assaulted by boys.

Besides, since marriage and motherhood are still the main goals for a woman as prescribed in the scriptures, many middle class families, feel, that it is a waste to send girls for higher education, whereas for a boy education is considered as investment for the future. Even when the girls are sent for higher education, the parents ensure that they conform to the traditional models of submissiveness and maintain a low profile, for, otherwise the newly acquired knowledge may come in the way of their marriage, by encouraging independence or assertiveness.

It is difficult to speak of any single pattern of gender based division of work since it is characterized by considerable diversity across regions and social groups. Even in agricultural work, some tasks are done exclusively by women, like transplanting. But as far as household and child care work is concerned it may be mentioned that these generally fall in the feminine sphere in most parts of the country. The distinction between masculine work and feminine work comes early in childhood

and becomes sharper as the child grows. Thus, though men may work as cooks in hotels and as sweepers or attenders in offices, doing dusting or cleaning, to do such tasks in their own homes, is certainly not manly. So much so, in rare cases, even if a man wants to assist his wife in her house-work, he is not only ridiculed by other men but by most women. In many middle class homes, the male members eat their food and leave the plates to be washed by the girls or women in the house. It is considered as a male privilege which only adds to the woman's work.

A girl is constantly reminded of her sex and the feminine tasks that go with it. If some girls do not show interest in domestic chores, they are chided and reprimanded to conform. Other important values that are inculcated in the girl is the notion of service, self denial, and sacrifice. Girls should learn to bear pain and deprivation, to eat anything that is served and not to complain. This is part of the training for reality that they are likely to confront in the house of the mother-in-law.

Quite often women are accused of being their own oppressors particularly in the role of mothers-in-law. This is because they have internalized the voices of their men and speak like patriarchy enforcing the patriarchal values (Das, 1985). The social self of an Indian woman is the looking glass self constructed by patriarchy.

The notions of tolerance and self-restraint are also rooted in a consciously cultivated feminine role which is embedded in and legitimized by cultural ideology, which ensure the reproduction of a social system characterized by the subordination of women. Thus, women do not think it proper that they should have any needs of their own, as they are supposed to sub-ordinate their needs to that of the men in the family. A woman should efface herself and her identity as defined by that of her husbands. Women often curse their own fate for having been born as women and pray that girls are not born as they are sources of misery, which is one of the main causes of female infanticide. They do not think, that it is possible to change the course of their lives. They feel that they do not have any options in their being or becoming.

While a great deal has been laid down regarding the duties of women, not much is stated for the men. It is perhaps to be implied, except that "considering that the highest duty to all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.." (Buhler, 1964). Thus, if a man has extra marital affairs, it is viewed as man's nature to wander. Nobody questions why Rama is not portrayed as a model of 'Eka Patnivrata'. The men are quite used to these double standards. Hence though legislation is there against bigamy, in practice if a man has a second wife, it is not viewed very seriously.

In the case of the Muslim women, it is even worse. The two practices that have been most detrimental to the status of women in Islam, are 'talaq', that is, unilateral divorce and seclusion of women. Legally, a Muslim man can marry up to four wives. He can divorce at will, without assigning any reason. He is not required by law or custom to pay any maintenance to the wife thus divorced, though he is obliged to pay a compensation of Mehr (dower) fixed in the marriage contract provided the divorced wife insists. The conditions are very stringent to get a divorce. Incidentally, polygamy is not recognized as a reason for seeking divorce. So one can imagine the insecurity that our Muslim sisters experience in their married lives.

Thus, we find that cultural beliefs and religious scriptures, whether Vedas, Manu Smriti, Quran or the Bible were all used as effective instruments in conditioning the minds of men and women that, male dominance was natural, universal and divinely ordained. This notion still persists in many quarters among the different societies in varying degree even to this day and to a large extent in our own society.

The last century has witnessed a new weapon in the armoury of patriarchy in addition to culture and religion, in enforcing subordination and oppression, namely capitalism, leading to economic exploitation of women. With the emergency of capitalist patriarchy, the commoditization of women has reached new heights, leading to exaggerated dowry demands, bride burning, suicides, trafficking in women, even sexual exploitation of women workers etc.

Thus, it can be seen that improvements in education and employment per se have not been able to fulfill our expectations of bringing about equal status for women. The stress and strain in a woman's life only seems to be increasing with no improvement in her social status.

Even in a state like Kerala, which recently celebrated cent per cent literacy with much fan fare; one is disgusted to learn that dowry prices have sky rocketed in the marriage auction market. And, that too among Syrian Christians, a community with a high percentage of educated men and women, the rates range anywhere from two to five lakhs in cash, plus kind which include Maruti cars, colour TV. etc, depending on the educational level of the groom. So unless education enables critical conscience raising and interventionist strategies to change the socialization process in order to cultivate egalitarian values or mutual respect between the sexes, education will have only a limited impact on social change and will remain largely an exercise in statistics showing the increase in the number of schools and colleges for girls/boys.

Even in the economic spheres, though some industries do employ women in large numbers, they do so only for certain

specific tasks, mainly to exploit the cheap labour of women workers. What is sad to note is that even trade unions, supposed to be working in the interest of wage workers, discriminate against women. Most development programmes for rural women, whether IRDP, DWCRA etc. end up in exploiting the women. Instead of empowerment, it has led to their enslavement. While their unpaid labour has increased, they have no share in the benefit of their labour, because the programmes do not provide for their participation in crucial areas of management and decision making, in co-operatives and marketing etc. Thus, in the capitalist patriarchy, the woman is exploited both in the private/public spheres of work and has no control over the income-generated by her.

Most working women even in middle class families have no control over their economic resources. In addition, they suffer from various psychological stresses. They are afraid to move-up in their professions, for their status should be lower than that of their husbands. Some of them refuse promotions and transfers because it comes in the way of patriarchal attitudes.

Thus capitalist patriarchy denotes the system which maintains exploitation plus oppression (Mies, 1986). Capitalism and patriarchy mutually reinforce each other. The mutual dependence of patriarchy and capitalism not only assumes the malleability of patriarchy to the needs of capital (cheap labour of women) but assumes the malleability of capital to the needs of patriarchy (sexual division of labour).

Here, I do not wish to go into the details of the various legislations that have been passed in post-Independent India affecting the women like the Hindu Code Bill, Minimum wages, Anti-dowry, SITA, Divorce and maintenance etc. for most of these have remained on paper. The government has not shown equal commitment in implementing them. Besides, its dual standards was exposed in its unnecessary intervention in Shah Bano's case, betraying our Muslim sisters.

Veena Mazumdar (1985) rightly states that the woman's question today is no longer an issue confined to the position of women within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life. It is part of the far broader question regarding the direction of change that our society is taking...economic, social, political and the intellectual perception of that process.

Thus, if the position of women has to improve and be liberated from oppression and exploitation, one has to get to the root cause namely patriarchy. As Gisler states - our society has to make a conscious choice between the androcentric or male dominance model with its values on aggressiveness, force and violence, perpetuating, more violence and wars, or a gynanic, partnership model which is based on mutual respect, peace and nurturance.

It is said that when male oppression increases in the family, it also leads to greater violence in the larger social system, which we are witnessing already. Hence, partnership has to begin in the family and by linking, extend to the larger society.

NOTES

1. According to D.N.Mazumdar "the status of women in India can be more understood in the context of Indian ethnology than in that of religion or Brahminism...Brahminic influence appears to have been overestimated, and the rigid mores of the woman's conduct have been read in the context of the doctrines of Karma and Dharma, but if Brahminism had such a great influence, how is it that the majority of social groups, castes and tribes escaped it or did not conform to such a....system?
2. It is said that in the beginning the word varna was used on the basis of colour to distinguish the 'fair' Aryans from the "dark coloured" Dasyus, and that the Aryans were divided into three classes, namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vis or Vaishyas (dvija) and Dasyus were the Sudras - the non-Aryans.

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IMPACT OF PATRIARCHAL VALUE SYSTEMS ON INDIAN WOMEN

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IMPACT OF PATRIARCHAL VALUE SYSTEMS ON INDIAN WOMEN

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A characteristic feature of the homo sapiens, as distinct from other living species, is their ability to adapt the environment to suit their needs. This they do by the use of tools and through organisation. The faculty of reasoning enable them to use tools to lighten their labour and organisation to apply it collectively to a given task. History in reality is the story of this struggle of the human being to develop newer tools and fashion appropriate organisations to suit them.

Division of labour is a basic condition of Organisation. In the earliest and most primitive societies, the division was based on the needs of biological reproduction and by the differentiation of the species into Male and Female. Though both had a role in creation, conceiving, delivering and nurturing the infant child was the responsibility of the female. But both were involved in the production of the material requirements of survival. The primitiveness of technology precluded the possibility of generating surplus and hence social relations were forced to be on the basis of equality. And since women performed the more important function of procreation which was the essential condition for the survival of the tribe, she could even have a more important role. This was possibly a reason for the emergence of the matriarchal societies.

The gradual developments in technology created the conditions for the generation of surplus possible. The division of labour became more complex and depending not merely on biological reproduction, but also on physical strength and stamina. Since the function of biological reproduction, imposed certain limitations on the female, Man emerged as the dominant factor in society.

Though the quantum jump in technology created the conditions for the generation of surplus, it was still primitive and hence labour was more important in production. Therefore the control over the tools and the labour to operate them became essential for the expropriation of surplus. The concepts of private property in the tools of production and family as a unit in the organisation of production emerged. Since Man was the dominant factor in such society's, and human labour a major factor in production, the ownership of human labour became important. Since females were the weaker sex, ownership of the women by the able-bodied men was the earliest known form of property.

Family as an institution can be classified into four:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| (1) Matriarchal | (2) Matrilineal |
| (3) Patrilineal | (4) Patriarchal |

Matriarchal family is one where the Mother has the dominant role in the family and kinship ties are established through her. Matrilineal family is one where the lineage is traced through the woman but normally a male member will be the administering head of the family. In such a family, woman will have property rights and though her role may be subordinate, it may still be better than that in the Patriarchal and Patrilineal arrangement. Patriarchy is one where the Male is dominant and lineage is through him. Patriarchal families are also Patrilineal families.

The emergence of family and property naturally lead to the urge for establishing dynasty and passing on the assets of one generation to the next. Man being dominant wanted to ensure that the benefits of his assets should be inherited by his own progeny and hence developed concepts of virginity before marriage, and loyalty and devotion during marriage. Patriarchal value systems therefore emerged in the desire of Men to establish their dynasties and pass on the benefits of their acquisition to their progenies.

In pre-industrial societies, the family was the unit of production. The Industrial revolution wrought a major change in the organisation of production. To exploit fully the possibilities of division of labour and introduction of machinery, the factory system was created. Family as a unit of production disappeared and though all members of the family had to work, they often worked in different locations. Since hours of work were long with practically no holidays, it became increasingly difficult for even members of the family to meet and have contacts.

The quantum jump in production and surplus, created new types of stratification. Among the lower classes, women had not only to attend to domestic chores, but also participate in material production. But among the upper sections, who lived on the surplus generated by others, women not only did not participate in material production, but even domestic chores like cooking, cleaning and washing were done by hired labour. But in both cases, women performed a secondary role. While among the lower classes, they invariably had dual responsibilities, among the upper classes, the role of women become more ornamental and ceremonial.

Essentially it is brute force that enables the strong to dominate the weak. It has been the case among human beings also. But in their case, other more subtle forms which are more effective like economic domination and ideological conditioning are also used effectively.

The dominant values of any society are the values of the dominant classes. They have the function of legitimising and perpetuating the domination. Ethical values, social codes, moral beliefs, behavioural patterns, statutory rights and obligatory duties will all be designed to subserve this objective. Even the

laws of biological and social sciences are manipulated subtly to subserve this end. Life-styles like eating, dressing and speaking also have the same objective.

The tradition of past generations weigh like an incubus on the brains of the living. In most societies, the male has been the dominant factor. The traditions he created to establish and maintain his dominance have been influencing the thinking of society. He formulated the rules and shaped the beliefs. He decreed that women is the weaker of the sex and hence relegated her to a secondary and adjunct role. This was institutionalised through the patriarchal family system in which property rights were monopolised by the male and kinship ties established through him.

The revolutionary was developments in Science and Technology has for the first time in human history created conditions for altering the system. Work is becoming more a function of brain - power rather than muscle - power. This has become the case even in that male preserve, War. The development of computers and modern communication technology has created possibilities for people to work from their homes. The amount of labour required to produce sustenance has been drastically reduced and new organisation of work make it possible to have flexi-timings. Mechanical devices have made domestic chores like washing, cleaning and cooking less monotonous and time consuming. Institutional arrangements for the education of children, looking after the aged and the daily needs of life have all made it possible to have new systems of human relations where both men and women are economically independent and self-supporting, and the need to be dependent is not compulsive.

It is, however, the strength of tradition based on male domination which prevents the liberation of the majority and the full exploitation of their inherent potential for the benefits of society as a whole.

But such liberation can only be achieved if the shackles enslaving all the oppressed are removed. Partial attempts at the solution of these problems, though welcome, will not succeed, because within the existing value systems, the primary objective of every individual will ultimately be to conform and get acceptance. Therefore the liberation of women is inextricably tied up with the liberation of all the enslaved.

As already indicated, social structure, cultural norms and value systems are determinant factors in the role and status of women in society. They influence their behaviour as individuals as well as in their relations to each other.

Indian society is a community of different religions. Practitioners of practically all the major religions from Zorostrainism to Judaism live in the country. The majority, more than 80 per cent are Hindus, Orthodox Hinduism has produced

strong reactions and resulted in the establishment of new religions and sects such as Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Vashnavism and the nineteenth century reform movements like Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj. The other important religions in India are Islam and Christianity.

All these religions have their own separate systems of values and beliefs. But there is also a dialectical process of interaction. Thus some of the newer religions like Islam and Christianity had to contend with the traditions established by the older religions. In turn, these new religions have also influenced the values, beliefs and practices of the older religions. Indian Society, can thus be said to be an amalgam of the important religions of the World.

Religions play an important role in shaping the attitudes of people. This affects the status of their members, particularly women. The Family systems of all Indians, except perhaps a few isolated tribes, irrespective of their religious beliefs is essentially patriarchal. Even where matrilineal systems exist as in the case of Nairs in Kerala, its influence is confined to the establishment of kinship ties and the inheritance of property. The Male is the dominant factor. Therefore even where matrilineal systems exist, the value systems are essentially patriarchal.

Within this broad pattern, there may be differences in attitudes between members of the different religions. Islam may permit polygamy and divorce. But Catholic Christians do not permit either. Among the Hindus, there are subtle differences in the attitudes and practices in the different parts of the country and among the various castes. Women of the Nair Caste in Kerala and some other castes in South Kanara enjoy property rights equal to that or even better than that of a Man. Hence their status in Society is better.

Hinduism has always given an important role to women, but only as part of Man and secondary to him. She is considered to be fickle - minded, sensual, seducer of men, given to falsehood, trickery, fool-hardy, greedy, thoughtless, root of all evil, inconsistent and cruel. A woman should never be independent and always kept under control. According to the great Law-giver of the Hindus, Manu, 'in childhood, a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to the husband and when her lord is dead to her sons'. She is enjoined to be chaste, loyal and devoted to her husband and his family. Her duty is to her family and her salvation is through her dedicated and virtuous life.

Hindu lore is replete with stories of women who have attained fame, but always in the service of Man. Such women are idealised and shown as examples worthy to be emulated. Though other religions possibly do not idealise women as possibly the Hindus do, they too assign important roles to women, but always inferior and secondary.

The Movement for Freedom culminating ultimately in the attainment of independence and the adoption of a new Constitution inaugurated significant and progressive changes in Society's attitude to women. The Indian State, being secular, does not assign any role to religion in the conduct of its affairs. But since, India is a multi-religious society with the minority constituting nearly 20 per cent of the total population, special safeguards had to be provided to assure them that the State shall not interfere in their private beliefs. Therefore matters of religion do find mention in some of the provisions of the Constitution.

The preamble of the Constitution resolved to secure to all its citizens; Justice, social, economic and political, Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation.

To attain those objectives, the Constitution has provided for certain fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, movement and organisation, protection of life and liberty, right to religious beliefs, freedom from exploitation and the right to judicial remedies in the event of all or any of these rights being encroached on by the State. Practice of discrimination on the basis of religion, caste or sex is prohibited. There are also provisions for affirmative action to eliminate social injustices and disabilities which have their roots in history.

The Directive Principles of State Policy, though non-justiceable, but nevertheless fundamental to the governance of society, enjoins on the State to promote Welfare of all its citizens and strive for the enactment of a uniform Civil Code.

The Rights and Freedoms provided in the Constitution are Normative and embody the ideals for the realisation of which social endeavours are to be directed. Existentially, there is however, a wide gap between these high ideals and ground realities. No doubt, in the past four decades, a number of progressive legislations affecting the status of women have been enacted. The State has also initiated a number of positive steps to realise the ideals of the Constitution. But the inadequacy of those steps will be evident from some of the instances cited below :

While no steps have so far been taken to enact a uniform Civil Code as enjoined by the Constitution, there is a move to extend Muslim Personal Law which puts serious limitations on the Women to the State of Goa where it does not now exist, inspite of opposition from progressive Muslim Women. Among the Bohra Community, Women are still subject to practices like clitorectomy to curb their sexual appetite and 'misak' in which

she declares herself to be a slave of the Syneda (the High Priest) and willing to abide by his wishes.

Hindus, and to some extent, even some other religions in India practice the Caste system. A Caste is a 'hereditary, endogamous usually localized group having traditional associations with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relation between castes are governed among other things by concepts of pollution and purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the caste. Caste endogamy is a mechanism of recruiting and retaining control over the labour and fertility of women. The caste system exercises an enormously powerful influence to give a subordinate role to women by prescribing the 'dos' and don'ts.

In India, marriage is almost universal and residence invariably patri-local. The Institution of family is used to regulate and control women.

A very disturbing trend in the demographic profile of the country, which can be attributed to the domination of the patriarchic value system is the declining sex ratio of women to men and the higher mortality and morbidity rates among women. It was Ashok Mitra, who as the Registrar General of Census in the 1970s first drew attention to this phenomenon. He went to the extent of declaring women in India as the 'declining sex' and warned that if this trend is not arrested, it will have grave consequences for the country, Given below is a table showing the ratio of women to men in India since 1901:

TABLE - 1

Census Year	Sex Ratio
1901	972
1911	954
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	945
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	929

The proportion of sexes at birth is universally 104 to 106 males to 100 females. Since biologically, the male is the weaker sex in infancy, in all countries where women enjoy a good status, the ratio gets equalised by the time they reach puberty. Thereafter, the increased mortality among women due to the hazards of child-birth is compensated by the higher risks to life for men due to occupational hazards and accidents. After the age of 45, when the hazards of child-bearing are over, expectation of life is higher among women and consequently in all countries where the status of women is good, the number of women per 1000 population is invariably higher.

In India, as shown in the Table (Table 1) the number of females per 1000 males have been constantly declining. While it was 972 in the Census of 1901, it has come down to 929 in the latest. A major cause for this is the larger mortality of women due to the hazards of child-birth. The following table is an index of the mortality among women due to causes related to child birth and pregnancy :

TABLE - 2

PERCENTAGE OF DEATH BY CAUSES RELATED TO CHILD - BIRTH AND PREGNANCY (MATERNAL) 1976 TO 1980 (RURAL)

Specific cause	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Abortion	11.6	8.2	11.0	11.7	12.5
Toxaemia	10.4	11.2	21.2	16.1	12.4
Anaemia	22.1	15.9	14.6	15.0	15.8
Bleeding of PREGNANCY pregnancy and Puerperium	17.2	20.6	18.2	20.0	15.8
Malposition of child leading to death of mother	8.6	9.4	9.3	10.5	13.4
Puerperal sepsis	13.5	18.8	12.1	11.7	12.4
Not classifiable	16.6	15.9	13.1	15.0	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample of deaths	163.0	170.0	137.0	180.0	209.0
Percentage of total deaths	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2

Source: Survey of Census of Deaths (Rural) 1980 - A Report of the R.G. of India - Health Statistics of India 1981. Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi.

When we look at infant mortality, the same phenomena of higher mortality among female children in relation to male children is evident :

TABLE - 3SELECTED INDICATORS OF INFANT MORTALITY BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC
LEVELS (1978) - ALL INDIA

i. Infant Mortality by Sex - Rural\Urban			
Area	Sex		
	Male	Female	Persons
Rural	130	142	136
Urban	69	71	70
Total	120	131	125
ii. Infant Mortality by Religion			
Religion	Rural	Urban	
Hindu	136	70	
Muslim	105	79	
iii. Infant Mortality by Educational level of Women			
Educational Level of Women	Rural	Urban	
Illiterate	132	81	
Literate but below Primary	105	59	
Primary and above	64	49	
Literates	90	53	
iv. Infant Morality by Occupation of Women			
Occupation	Rural	Urban	
Farmers, fishermen, hunters, loggers and related workers	127	119	
Production on related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	194	121	
Workers	130	98	
Non-workers	123	63	

v. Infant Mortality by Mother's age at Marriage

Below 18 years	141	78
18-20 years	112	66
21 years and above	85	46

Source : Infant & child mortality survey, 1979 conducted by the Office of the Registrar General of India, New Delhi - A Preliminary Report.

It is evident from the above that infant mortality is very high and that among female children, it is relatively higher. As the mothers get educated and have better occupation, infant mortality also come down. It is also seen that infant mortality rates of women who marry at elder ages is also low.

Women in India are a neglected lot does not need any emphasis. Health care facilities do not take into consideration, the special problems of women. Even in regard to family planning, the tendency is to put the responsibility on women and most of the methods tried out are on women.

However, the worst performance of the country is in the sphere of education given below is the literacy levels of males and females in India as revealed by the Census:

TABLE - 4

LITERACY RATES

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971	34.45	45.95	21.99
1981	43.56 (41.42)	58.37 (53.45)	29.75 (28.46)
1991	52.11	63.86	39.42

Note :

1. Literacy rate for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 and above. The rates for the year 1981 and 1991 relate to the population aged 7 and above. The literacy rates for the population aged 5 years and above in 1981 have been shown in brackets.

2. The 1981 rates exclude Assam where the Census could not be conducted. The 1991 rates exclude Jammu and Kashmir where the 1991 Census is yet to be conducted.

The evidence cited above, though sketchy, is an indication of the inferior status of women in India under the Patriarchal system. Even though normatively, the Constitution has accepted an equal role for women in society, existentially, it is made difficult by the dominance of the patriarchal value system.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE; AGENDA FOR 1990S.

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE ; AGENDA FOR 1990s

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Inequality in status and of opportunity, discrimination on the basis of sex, immoral traffic in women and enforcement of disabilities on disadvantaged sections of the people including women are violative of the basic structure of the Constitution. There are clear Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution to effectively remedy such abuses of human dignity and freedom. The Indian Constitution is the best guarantee for equality and social justice to everyone particularly women who, for long, suffered injustices and discrimination based on a variety of customs and practices sanctified by law, religion and authority.

The Constitutional strategy for restoring human dignity and gender justice is three-fold. These include:

- (a) While guaranteeing equality and equal rights as Fundamental Rights enforceable against the State through Constitutional jurisdiction, the Indian Constitution provides for "protective discrimination" in favour of women, under which the State is enabled to adopt special provisions (including reservation) to improve the status and opportunities of women unequally placed;
- (b) Certain principles of State Policy fundamental for the governance of the country have been laid down by the Constitution itself under which the State has been directed to secure equal pay for equal work for both men and women, provide maternity relief as well as equal justice and free legal aid;
- (c) Recognizing the fact that gender discrimination is not only the result of State action but also that of individual citizens, the Constitution of India has stipulated certain judicially enforceable Fundamental Duties under which every citizen is obliged to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women and to develop scientific temper and humanism in their social relationships.

Under the Indian Constitution therefore, women are entitled not only to claim equal rights with men but are eligible under certain situations to enjoy rights and entitlements not available to men. Acknowledging the need to raise the status of women, the Constitution has empowered the State and its agencies to resort to affirmative action in respect of education, health,

employment, representation in political activities etc., which indeed are laudable steps towards gender justice and an egalitarian social order.

GOVERNMENTS' ACTION TO FULFILL THE CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

The performance of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary both at the Central and State levels in discharging the Constitutional mandate on gender justice is on all accounts unsatisfactory. It may be characterised as "little done, vast undone". On the legislative side, during the last four decades the country saw the enactment of a vast variety of pro-women laws some of which are the following:

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976; The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; The Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act, 1986; The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; The Family Courts Act, 1984; The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986; Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Hindu Succession Act, 1956; The Commission of Sati (prevention) Act, 1987; The Maharashtra Regulation of Use of Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1988.

Similarly, there are numerous decisions of the various High Courts and the Supreme Court of the country which struck down anti-women provisions of the law and actions of the government and interpreted relevant provisions to the advantage of equal justice for women. Among these decisions which have helped to develop a new jurisprudence favourable to women are the following;

1. Air India Vs. Nergesh Meerza, AIR 1981 S.C.1829
2. Ms.C.B.Muthamma Vs. Union of India, AIR 1979 S.C.1868
3. P.Bannerjee Vs.Sm.Swapna Bannerjee, AIR 1981 Cal.123
4. P.Sagar & Ors. Vs. State of A.P., AIR 1968 A.P.165
5. Sheela Barse Vs.State of Maharashtra, AIR 1983 S.C.378
6. Soumithri Vishhnu Vs. Union of India AIR 1985 SC 1618
7. Shobha Rani Vs. Madhukar Reddy, AIR 1988 SC 121
8. Prathibha Rani Vs. Suraj Kumar, (1985) 2 S.C.C. 370
9. Mohd.Ahmed Khan Vs. Shah Bano Begum, AIR 1985 S.C.1730
10. Bharat Heavy Plastics and Vessels Ltd. AIR 1985 A.P.207

It is, perhaps, at the implementation level that the gap between promise and performance is quite pronounced. The Executive did show occasional interest in programmes and activities directed towards improving the status and conditions of women. The National Committee on the Status of Womn (1971 - 74) identified the causes for backwardness among women and recommended several measures for planned development of education, health and welfare of women. Through the Central Social Welfare Board and Mahila Mandals, several maternity and child welfare services were taken up early during the Second Five Year Plan. Social defence and social health programmes were also

organized through Departments of Social Welfare of State and Central Governments. Family Planning and health care of pregnant women also received attention though not adequate to the needs and requirements. Several State Governments and the Central Government established Ministries and Departments exclusively concerned with women's development. The usual committees and commissions were set up from time to time to prepare status reports and produce action plans to organize better implementation of the Constitutional goals in respect of development of women and equal justice to them. Among these reports, three are particularly noteworthy though nothing much was implemented out of their recommendations.

The Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector (1987-'88) titled "Shramshakti" outlined a number of comprehensive proposals to enlarge the scope of economic opportunities for women, to promote their occupational health and to ensure social security and human dignity to them. The National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000 A.D. prepared by a core Group set up by the Department of Women & Child Development of the Union Government raised expectations on many fronts of developmental activity concerning women. This document, inter alia, identified areas such as violence against women, discriminatory family relations law and property rights, exploitative employment practices and lack of access to justice and legal aid as key issues deserving special attention. A Uniform Civil Code for all citizens by the year 2000 A.D. was part of its recommendation. A National Commission for Women and State Commissions for Women were promised to be set up to follow up implementation of laws for women and to co-ordinate efforts in this regard.

Yet another national initiative during this period was to examine the problems of women in the criminal - correctional process in general and in prisons in particular. The Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1986 -'87) gave a series of recommendations to ensure the dignity of women in police processes and in custodial situations. Finally, the National Expert Committee on Legal Aid (1973) also devoted a full chapter of its report in suggesting ways for increasing access to justice for women and organizing legal aid for them.

Anyone concerned with the legal status of women would be impressed by reading the equality provisions of the Constitution and the innumerable laws and programmes directed towards the protection and welfare of women. Of course, there is still scope for further legislation in achieving gender justice in all spheres of life. Nevertheless in the last forty years and more the record of the State in this regard appears on the face of it to be impressive.

But, what is the ground reality? It is one of non-implementation, indifferent implementation and implementation in parts and pieces. The system and its personnel have somehow

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maintained the dualism between theory and practice, sometimes aggravating the existing problems and at other times creating new problems for the beneficiaries they were supposedly serving. This is true with women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and similar other disadvantaged sections of people. The blame for this is to be largely owned by the executive government including the political parties though the legislature and the judiciary are not totally free from responsibility.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND POLITICS

In this regard it is interesting to note what the manifestoes of different political parties (Tenth General Election, 1991) have to offer for women in the 1990s. The Congress promises to check the dowry menace, suppress immoral traffic, reserve 30 per cent seats in local bodies and implement with vigour the National Perspective Plan and the Equal Remuneration Act. The National Front will grant women rights in parental property, review all discriminatory laws, provide social security to destitute women and implement 30 per cent reservation for women in local bodies. The Bharatiya Janata Party offers women equal share in husband's wealth, employment as School teachers, more hostels and homes, smokeless chulas, more family courts and a commission to look into their problems. Communist Party will take stern measures against atrocities and crimes on women, end discrimination in recruitment and pay, improve working conditions, grant equal property rights and implement social security schemes for women workers in the unorganized sector. From the statements made, it appears that all political parties are concerned with the non-implementation of Constitutional promises concerning women and they are prepared to implement them on a priority basis.

AGENDA FOR ACTION IN THE 1990s

Given the findings of the Committees and Commissions on Women and the experiences of the past, one may suggest the following approaches for better implementation of the equality guarantee of the Constitution:

- (a) The Uniform Civil Code for all citizens promised by Article 44 of the Constitution and proposed under the Perspective Plan be taken up as a priority item in the legislative agenda of the Tenth Lok Sabha.

It is universally admitted that all religion or custom-based personal laws and family relationships have been discriminatory to women in varying degrees. Social attitudes have been structured in such a family setting and rationalised on the basis of a pre-conceived role of women in family and in society. The Indian Constitution has suddenly turned many aspects of the religion-based personal laws relating to marriage, separation, maintenance, custody and guardianship of children, succession, inheritance etc.,

which substantially determined status of women, discriminatory to women. Ordinarily, these laws would have been radically changed to suit the Constitutional norms immediately after the commencement of the Constitution. This did not happen partly because of the lack of organized pressure from women groups and partly as a result of a wrong impression on the nature and scope of religious freedom under the Constitution.

Though a Uniform Civil Code may not make women equal in society, yet its absence can certainly perpetuate the existing discriminatory practices and provide legitimacy to dangerous customs and superstitious beliefs prejudicial to women's dignity and rights. The distribution of property rights can make a great difference in man-woman relationships within the family as well as outside. The concept of matrimonial property and its disposition demand careful attention in the proposed code.

- (b) Closely related to the Uniform Civil Code idea is the strengthening of the institution of Family Court and streamlining its procedures and reliefs to deliver gender justice in all aspects of family relationships, be they civil or criminal matters.

Family Courts evolved out of constant demand from women groups in the country. Today it is mutilated, deformed and defiled even in the few places where they are established. If it were to function in the usual style of ordinary District Courts dealing with matrimonial disputes, it hardly helps to deliver equal justice to women. Let the entire legal framework including procedures and reliefs now available in the Family Court be looked afresh in the light of the Uniform Civil Code and be made an integral part of that Code. If the system requires radical surgery in its process, it should not be disposed of with minor cosmetic treatments.

- (c) Violence and cruelty against women have, of late, assumed alarming proportions. Rape law has been repeatedly amended by Parliament enhancing punishment, and creating the offence of 'custodial rape'. Domestic violence and cruelty arising out of demands for dowry or otherwise continue despite the creation of the offence under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code and raising presumption of abetment of suicide under Section 113A of the Evidence Act. The Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act was strengthened and The Dowry Prohibition Act streamlined in the hope that women in distress would receive better treatment from their oppressors and from legal institutions. Despite all these legislative measures, criminal statistics reveal increasing crimes against women including young girls. Even the State apparatus designed to give protection to women is reportedly behaving in a manner which aggravates the malady.

The Expert Committee on Women Prisoners felt the need for clear statement of the criminal justice policy by the State followed by a comprehensive Criminal Code on the law and procedure vis-a-vis women. Perhaps like the Prevention of Atrocities (Against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Act of 1990, there is need for an extreme legislative measure to protect the dignity of women against criminal exploitation. In any case, the procedural laws concerning police, prosecution, courts, legal aid, prisons and correctional institutions need a fresh look in their dealings with women if gender justice in the criminal process were to become closer to reality in the near future.

- (d) Another issue of great significance for women's development is in respect of employment and social security for women in the unorganized and rural sectors. The available statutory provisions in this regard are feeble and inadequate. The Shramshakti Report and the Perspective Plan contain many ideas which are awaiting legislative recognition. It requires major policy shifts in a number of areas and administrative and financial support commensurate to the tasks involved. It is not for the Government alone to implement the policy. The private sector has a great role to play.
- (e) Finally, the most decisive factor in the delivery of equal justice for women, lies in fair and expeditious implementation of the rights and entitlements already guaranteed by the laws and the Constitution. Implementation is all the more difficult when attitudes are not supportive, resources are extremely limited, and the machinery is non-cooperative if not positively inimical to the tasks assigned. In such a situation how does one go about in a democratic set-up for seeking justice using the resource of law?

Legal Aid Committees have recommended a multi-dimensional approach to get the administrative system to function in the desired direction. Firstly, with the support of voluntary agencies and the media, an awareness of rights and responsibilities will have to be generated on the personnel of the system as well as on the consumers of justice. Secondly, an independent agency must co-ordinate, oversee and intervene in the administrative process to ensure effective implementation of the laws. In this regard the Commission of Women now set up in Kerala demands attention. Thirdly, personal and institutional accountability should be fixed in the implementation of specified laws concerning women. Fourthly, judicial reforms should be introduced to provide free legal aid, to promote social action litigation and to dispense meaningful remedies as dispensed by writ courts. Courts should perform an educational role as well with increased public participation and with enhanced flexibility in procedures and reliefs.

Law does not operate in vacuum. The social processes interact with legal processes and limit its reach and efficacy. Law cannot lag much behind public opinion; nor can law be far ahead of the mores and practices of a given society. The gap between policy and performance can possibly be reduced by a responsible media, an educated citizenry, an active judiciary and a dynamic professional organization. The challenge before us is to mobilise as many of these forces on as many fronts as possible in a dynamic socio-legal action programme.

Rule of law and constitutional government are valuable acquisitions in a democracy. They have to be necessarily preserved while agitating for fundamental freedoms and social justice. Law is a great resource of the weak in this democratic struggle. People have to be endowed with the capabilities to use that resource intelligently and decisively. Social mobilisation in this regard is the task of social action groups and public-spirited individuals in the community. Restructuring of society and its institutions on egalitarian principles is managed by the very same people in society whose attitudes and behaviour are the subjects of change through law. Hence, some degree of distortion and delay are inevitable. But the success of the democratic experiment lies in letting the process continue with greater vigour and determination.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE INDIAN WOMAN

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DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE INDIAN WOMAN

SOBHIA NAMBISAN

The subject of women's problems and the status accorded to them in our society has been the focus of unprecedented publicity in recent years. Never has there been so much spoken and written on this subject or so much concern expressed in workshops, seminars, programmes on TV and radio as well as in books and periodicals on the low status of most Indian women and the disadvantages they suffer from birth to death as a result of unequal treatment meted to males and females, whether it is in the intake of food and nourishment, in health care, opportunities for development or payment for work done. The newspapers every day drive home the point that crimes against women are on the increase and that these crimes are perpetrated because they are women and arise from their low status and helpless position.

At the same time, our Constitution places emphasis on the equality of the sexes and our laws are fairly liberal. A large number of women hold top managerial and executive positions and one of them had been Prime Minister for 16 years. The point, of course, is that these women are exceptions and do not reflect the position of the majority of Indian women. On the other side of the coin the horrendous incidents related in the daily newspapers also show things at their worst.

How then can an objective assessment of the status of women be made ? The best way appears to be to select certain indicators which can be quantified. Since we are discussing the status of women as compared with that of men, most of these indicators will be relevant only when the comparative positions of men and women are studied; a few, however, like the maternal mortality rate will apply only to women. Sri Ashok Mitra in his paper "Participation of Women in socio economic development - indicators as tools for development planning" has listed what he feels are the important indicators for assessing women's status. The list is appended to this paper. Of course this list is not necessarily exhaustive and is only appended for the purpose of illustration. It is, however, essential to have indicators in order to assess women's status. Most States have now separate Directorates for Women's Welfare and some have Women's Development Corporations which implement socio economic programmes for women's welfare and development. The indicators that are selected for assessing the status of women would also serve to monitor the improvement made in the condition of women on account of these programmes and thereby determine their effectiveness.

It is now being realised that national progress is not possible as long as almost one half of the population is condemned to illiteracy by reason of their sex alone and from earliest youth to nothing but child bearing, child rearing and

unremitting drudgery. Education, training in skilled jobs and proper reward for their work will lead to women participating more fully in the economic life of the country and thus increase national productivity. It is also realised now that there is no short cut to slowing down the growth of population except by improving the status of women through education and change of attitude. But these are not the main reasons for ensuring a better deal for women. The most important reason is the simple claim of justice ; every individual, whether male or female, has a right to be treated as an individual, encouraged to realise his full potential and be justly rewarded for work done. As John Stuart Mill wrote in "The Subjection of Women" in 1869, the subordination of one sex to another is "wrong in itself and is now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement".

Reverting to the subject of indicators, it is necessary, before thinking of measures required to improve the status of women, to first assess that status and this can only be done by applying the yardstick of the indicators. It will be noticed that almost all the indicators given in Ashok Mitra's paper can be quantified and that in order to do so accurate data has to be collected. In this paper I shall be speaking of only the demographic indicators and of these, prominence will be given to those for which data is collected through the population census, which is the largest data collecting exercise. These indicators are (1) the sex ratio (2) literacy (3) educational levels attained (4) age at marriage (5) fertility and (6)) employment. In addition, we shall also discuss the death rate, maternal mortality rate, and life expectancy. For all these indicators, with the exception of age at marriage, fertility and maternal mortality rate, it will be possible to compare the relevant figures for males and females. Since the 1991 census was over just two months ago, provisional figures for only the sex ratio and literacy are available. For all the other indicators we shall have to fall back on the figures of the 1981 census. However, since no dramatic change in these figures is expected to have occurred during the last decade, the figures for the last census should serve to draw a fairly realistic profile of women in India.

SEX RATIO

The sex ratio is defined as the number of women for every thousand men. In normal conditions nature maintains a balance of men and women and the two sexes should be approximately equal in number. In developed countries women have a slight edge in numbers over men, partly because they are the biologically tougher sex and partly because the men may have more unhealthy life styles and be subjected to more stress. However, the difference in the number of men and women in these countries is only marginal. Given below is the sex ratio in some of the developed countries :

TABLE - 1

Country	Census Year	Sex Ratio
1. Union of Soviet Socialist Republic	1979	1145
2. United States of America	1980	1059
3. Japan	1980	1033
4. Federal Republic of Germany	1970	1101
5. United Kingdom	1981	1060
6. France	1982	N.A.
7. Canada	1981	1017
8. German Democratic Republic	1981	1128
9. Australia	1981	1006

On the other hand, the sex ratio in some developing countries is as follows:

TABLE - 2

Country	Census Year	Sex Ratio
1. Pakistan	1981	905
2. Sri Lanka	1981	962
3. Egypt	1976	964

The sex ratio in India from 1901 - 1991 i.e., from the first to the last census of this country is given below :

TABLE - 3

Census year	Sex Ratio
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	945
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	929

It will be seen that in India the sex ratio has been unfavourable to women in all the 10 decades of this century. In fact, except for the very slight improvement in 1951 and 1981, there is a steady decline in the sex ratio and the provisional figures for the 1991 census are the lowest of the century.

This imbalance in the numbers of the two sexes can be explained by one of two factors : (1) the out-migration of one sex, thus leading to a larger number of members of the other sex and (2) higher mortality rate for one sex.

The first reason is patently absurd, there being hardly any case of more women than men outmigrating from any part of the country and certainly not from the country as a whole. The second reason will, therefore, have to be accepted as the explanation - that the discrimination against females and the neglect of their health and welfare from birth onwards has resulted in greater morbidity and mortality of females, resulting in the imbalance in the sex ratio. Studies have indicated that very often baby girls are weaned earlier than boys, that even as small children, girls in poor families receive less food than the boys, that while sickness in the case of boys and men receive attention early, in case of girls and women it is often only when

the situation becomes critical. It has commonly been observed in the anganwadis of the I.C.D.S. Scheme that there are far more girls than boys in the stages of Grade III and Grade IV malnutrition. The average age of marriage for girls in rural areas is even now around 16 which means they enter wedded life and bear children at a time when their own growth is incomplete. The strain of numerous pregnancies, lack of proper food and hygiene and sheer overwork - studies have indicated that in rural areas the women on an average have a working day at least 1.1/2 times as long as that of the men - lead to weakened health and higher mortality rates for women, particularly in the child bearing years.

One would like to think that female infanticide is now rare but periodic reports show that this is still practiced in some parts of the country. However, the latest strategy for avoiding undesired female children is of course that of the selective killing of the female foetus through abortions and aminocentesis - a practice which only shows how terribly dangerous it is to allow the use of 20th century technology by people with medieval minds.

The explanation that the adverse sex ratio is a consequence of the discrimination against women is much more than an educated guess. It is also borne out by the fact that the sex ratio is lowest in those States in the country which are economically and socially most backward, where the status of women is lowest and female illiteracy is highest. Conversely, the only State in the country with a positive sex ratio in all the censuses of this century is Kerala where the status of women is comparatively high and literacy, including female literacy, is highest. The Table given below illustrates this fully : The figures are from the Provisional Tables of the 1991 Census.

TABLE - 4

State	Sex Ratio	Percentage of literates to estimated population aged 7 and above		
		Persons	Males	Females
INDIA	929	52.11	63.86	39.42
Andhra Pradesh	972	45.11	56.24	33.42
Arunachal Pradesh	861	41.22	51.10	29.37
Assam	925	53.42	62.34	43.70
Bihar	912	38.54	52.63	23.10
Goa	969	76.96	85.48	68.20
Gujarat	936	60.91	72.54	48.50
Haryana	874	55.33	67.85	40.94
Himachal Pradesh	996	63.54	74.57	52.46
Karnataka	960	55.98	67.25	44.34
Kerala	1,040	90.59	94.45	86.93
Madhya Pradesh	932	43.45	57.43	28.39
Maharashtra	936	63.05	74.84	50.51
Manipur	961	60.96	72.89	48.64
Meghalaya	947	48.26	51.57	44.78
Mizoram	924	81.23	84.06	78.09
Nagaland	890	61.30	66.09	55.72
Orissa	972	48.55	62.37	34.40
Punjab	888	57.14	63.68	49.72
Rajasthan	913	38.81	55.07	20.84
Sikkim	880	56.58	64.34	47.23
Tamil Nadu	972	63.72	74.88	52.29
Tripura	946	60.39	70.08	50.01
Uttar Pradesh	882	41.71	55.35	26.02
West Bengal	917	57.72	67.24	47.15

What is of special concern is that inspite of the advances of modern medicine, improvement in rural water supply and general economic development, the gap in the numbers of men and women has only widened, thus indicating further deterioration in the status of women vis-a-vis that of men.

MORTALITY RATES

From the sex ratio it is logical to go on to the mortality rates for men and women in different age groups.

TABLE - 5

Age-group	Year	COMBINED		
		Male	Female	Both Sexes
0 - 4	1975	52.4	57.7	55.0
	1980	40.1	43.5	41.8
	1984	39.5	43.0	41.2
5 - 9	1975	4.4	5.2	4.8
	1980	3.3	4.0	3.6
	1984	3.6	4.6	4.1
10 - 14	1975	2.0	2.2	2.1
	1980	1.7	1.7	1.7
	1984	1.6	2.0	1.8
15 - 19	1975	2.1	3.8	2.9
	1980	2.0	2.9	2.5
	1984	2.0	2.8	2.3
20 - 24	1975	2.6	4.7	3.5
	1980	2.3	3.8	3.0
	1984	2.8	3.9	3.3
25 - 29	1975	3.1	4.4	3.8
	1980	2.2	4.0	3.1
	1984	2.8	3.8	3.3
30 - 34	1975	4.1	5.3	4.7
	1980	3.4	3.6	3.5
	1984	3.2	3.5	3.3
35 - 39	1975	6.8	6.2	6.5
	1980	4.7	4.6	4.7
	1984	4.4	4.2	4.3

Contd...

TABLE - 5

Age-group	Year	COMBINED		
		Male	Female	Both Sexes
40 - 44	1975	8.2	6.8	7.5
	1980	7.2	5.5	6.4
	1984	6.6	5.4	6.0
45 - 49	1975	13.2	9.6	11.5
	1980	9.6	7.3	8.5
	1984	10.0	6.5	8.3
50 - 54	1975	15.0	14.6	14.9
	1980	14.6	10.4	12.6
	1984	15.6	10.9	13.4
55 - 59	1975	28.7	23.6	26.3
	1980	21.5	16.7	19.2
	1984	21.0	15.5	18.3
60 - 64	1975	39.6	33.3	38.5
	1980	35.0	27.3	31.2
	1984	36.1	30.4	33.3
65 - 69	1975	59.0	53.7	56.3
	1980	59.0	41.2	50.0
	1984	50.6	41.9	46.2
70 & above	1975	120.3	106.4	113.2
	1980	98.5	85.3	91.6
	1984	110.8	103.4	107.1

The figures speak for themselves and corroborate what has been said regarding the reasons for the adverse female sex ratio. Females have a higher mortality rate than males in all age groups from 0 - 34 and of these, the highest differential mortality rate is in the group 0 - 4. This certainly indicates that female infants are discriminated against to such an extent as to lead to the death of many more baby girls than boys.

The difference in the mortality rate decreases by the time the children reach the age group 10 -14 but increases again as soon as the girls reach the child bearing age of 15+. In the child bearing age group the peak in differential mortality rate is reached in the group 20 - 30 which also corresponds to the age group wherein women bear most of their children. Although mortality rate of women as compared to men continues to be higher in the age group 30 - 34, it has declined appreciably from that in the lower age groups. From age 35 onwards, the mortality rate

is in fact favourable to women as compared to men, the difference increasing with age, demonstrating thereby that women are naturally the stronger sex once they have overcome the trauma of unfavourable circumstances in the more vulnerable age groups of early childhood and youth.

LITERACY

In to-day's world, the first step towards independence and self development is undoubtedly literacy and an illiterate person is a severely handicapped person. Literacy and education is the basic and essential requirement for the economic and social development of a country. It is for this reason that the goal of free and compulsory free education till the age of 14 is enshrined in the Directive Principles of the Constitution.

Each succeeding census has recorded the progress achieved towards full literacy. Literacy, in terms of the census definition, is the ability to read and write with understanding and may or may not include formal schooling. While calculating the literacy rate, i.e., the percentage of literate population to the total population, children below the age of 5 have been excluded till the 1981 census, since children below that age are considered illiterate whether or not they are going to school. For the 1991 census children below the age of 7 i.e., from 0 - 6 years have been excluded while calculating the literacy rate.

While there has been a considerable improvement in the literacy rates from census to census, the number of illiterate persons has also increased and until the 1981 census, continued to be in excess of the number of literate persons. In the 1991 census, for the first time, the literate population has exceeded the illiterate population. But there are two riders to this - (1) these figures are obtained after excluding children below 7, many of whom will grow up illiterate and (2) the female literacy rate is still extremely low and the number of female illiterates exceeds the number of literates. The table below makes this clear :

TABLE - 6

Literates/ Illiterates	Persons	Males	Females
			(in 000's)
Literates			
1981	233,947	156,953	76,994
1991	352,082	224,288	127,794
Increase in 1991 over 1981	118,135	67,335	50,800
Illiterates			
1981	301,933	120,902	181,031
1991	324,030	126,694	197,336
Increase in 1991 over 1981	22,097	5,792	16,305

The increase in the number of illiterate persons in the country after the 1981 census is 22.10 million, 5.7 million of whom are males and 16.31 females.

Female literacy is, in fact, increasing at a more rapid rate than that of the male but because the number of female illiterates is so large, the gap between the number of literate males and females has remained as wide as it was 40 years ago.

TABLE - 7**LITERACY RATE**

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97
1981	43.56 (41.42)	56.37 (53.45)	29.75 (28.46)
1991	52.11	63.86	39.42

NOTES :

1. Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the years 1981 and 1991 relate to the population aged seven years and above. The Literacy rates for the population aged five years and above in 1981 have been shown in brackets
2. The 1981 rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted. The 1991 Census rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census is yet to be conducted.

Considerably more than 50% of the women in India remain illiterate at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century. Moreover, there is wide discrepancy from State to State, from urban to rural areas and among the different communities. The Table given below shows the literacy rates for males and females for the States of the Indian Union.

TABLE - 8

Persons		Males	Females		
State/Union Rank Territory	Literacy rate	State/Union Territory	Literacy rate	State/Union Territory	Literacy rate
1. Kerala	90.59	Kerala	94.45	Kerala	86.93
2. Mizoram	81.23	Lakshadweep	87.06	Mizoram	78.09
3. Lakshadweep	79.23	Daman & Diu	85.67	Chandigarh	73.61
4. Chandigarh	78.73	Goa	85.48	Lakshadweep	70.88
5. Goa	76.96	Mizoram	84.06	Goa	68.20
6. Delhi	76.09	Pondicherry	83.91	Delhi	68.01
7. Pondicherry	74.91	Chandigarh	82.67	A & N Island	66.22
8. A & N Islands	73.74	Delhi	82.63	Pondicherry	65.79
9. Daman & Diu	73.58	A & N Islands	79.68	Daman & Diu	61.38
10. Tamil Nadu	63.72	Tamil Nadu	74.88	Nagaland	55.72
11. H Pradesh	63.54	Maharashtra	74.84	H Pradesh	52.46
12. Maharashtra	63.05	H Pradesh	74.57	Tamil Nadu	52.29
13. Nagaland	61.30	Manipur	72.98	Maharashtra	50.51
14. Manipur	60.96	Gujarat	72.54	Tripura	50.01
15. Gujarat	60.91	Tripura	70.08	Punjab	49.72
16. Tripura	60.39	Haryana	67.85	Manipur	48.64
17. West Bengal	57.72	Karnataka	67.85	Gujarat	48.50
18. Punjab	57.14	West Bengal	67.24	Sikkim	47.23
19. Sikkim	56.53	Nagaland	66.09	West Bengal	47.15
20. Karnataka	55.98	Sikkim	64.34	Meghalaya	44.78
		INDIA	63.86		

TABLE - 8 (Contd.)

Persons		Males		Females	
State/Union Rank Territory	Literacy rate	State/Union Territory	Literacy rate	State/Union Territory	Literacy rate
21. Haryana	55.33	Punjab	63.68	Karnataka	44.34
22. Assam	53.42	Orissa	62.37	Assam	43.70
INDIA	52.11				
23. Orissa	48.55	Assam	62.34	Haryana	40.94
				INDIA	39.42
24. Meghalaya	48.26	Madhya Pradesh	57.43	Orissa	34.40
25. Andhra Pradesh	45.11	Andhra Pradesh	56.24	Andhra Pradesh	33.71
26. M Pradesh	43.45	Uttar Pradesh	55.35	A Pradesh	29.37
27. Uttar Pradesh	41.71	Rajasthan	55.07	Madhya Pradesh	28.39
28. A Pradesh	41.22	Bihar	52.63	D & N Haveli	26.10
29. D & N Haveli	39.45	D & N Haveli	52.07	Uttar Pradesh	26.02
30. Rajasthan	38.81	Meghalaya	51.57	Bihar	23.10
31. Bihar	38.54	A Pradesh	51.10	Rajasthan	20.84

* Excludes Jammu and Kashmir where the 1991 Census is yet to be held.

A. Pradesh = Arunachal Pradesh; H. Pradesh = Himachal Pradesh;
D & N Haveli = Dadra and Nagar Haveli

Rajasthan has a female literacy rate of only 20.84 percent which means that 80 per cent of the women in Rajasthan are still illiterate. The situation is not much better in the other large States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

TABLE - 9

Sex	Cohort (age in 1961)	Cohort literacy rates in		
		1961	1971	1981
Persons	5 - 9	19.6	23.2	30.6
	10 - 14	42.2	49.8	56.6
	15 - 19	38.4	51.4	55.4
Males	5 - 9	24.8	27.3	35.1
	10 - 14	54.4	60.1	66.9
	15 - 19	52.0	63.5	66.1
Females	5 - 9	14.2	18.9	25.8
	10 - 14	28.3	38.2	44.8
	15 - 19	23.7	37.7	43.3

It will be seen from the above that although the literacy rate for boys aged 5 - 9 years is only about 10 points higher than that of girls of the same age group, in the space of 10 years, when the children enter the age-group 15 - 19, the gap has more than doubled. This only means that not only do fewer girls than boys join school but the drop out rate is much higher for girls than for boys. The chances of a girl remaining in school as compared to a boy is much less in the higher age-groups, leading to increases in the male-female difference in literacy rate with age and time.

In this connection we will now examine how many decades it will take for males and females separately to achieve 85 per cent literacy and 100 per cent literacy in the age group 5 - 14. These are of course projected figures :

TABLE - 10

India/States	85% projection based on total Population			100% projection based on population aged 5 - 14		
	P	M	F	P	M	F
INDIA*	7.2	5.2	9.8	7.5	6.2	9.0
1. Andhra Pradesh	10.3	7.5	13.9	6.8	5.2	9.1
2. Bihar	9.4	6.3	14.6	7.5	5.9	9.5
3. Gujarat	5.2	3.7	7.0	3.9	3.4	4.4
4. Haryana	5.3	3.4	8.5	4.9	3.9	6.0
5. Karnataka	6.7	5.0	8.5	7.2	6.6	7.8
6. Kerala	1.5	1.1	1.7	1.9	2.1	1.8
7. Madhya Pradesh	10.0	6.7	15.1	10.7	8.4	13.6
8. Maharashtra	4.7	3.4	6.0	4.0	3.6	4.3
9. Orissa	6.3	4.3	8.9	6.6	5.3	7.8
10. Punjab	6.1	5.6	6.6	4.0	3.8	4.1
11. Rajasthan	11.4	6.4	24.9	14.4	8.9	25.1
12. Tamil Nadu	5.2	4.1	6.2	5.9	6.1	5.8
13. Uttar Pradesh	10.6	6.4	20.3	11.7	8.3	17.6
14. West Bengal	5.7	4.4	7.0	9.1	9.0	9.0

* Excludes Assam.

Kerala has in fact done better than these projected figures and in the space of just one decade has achieved a literacy rate of 90.59 per cent (94.45 for males and 86.91 for females). However, the future for all the other States is bleak.

It is a sobering thought that the country on an average requires more than 10 decades to achieve full literacy. Women lag behind men in this respect by about 50 years. At the present rate of progress, Rajasthan will achieve full female literacy after more than 250 years !

Literacy, the basic knowledge of reading and writing, is the skill without which, in to-day's world, no meaningful development is possible, either for society or for the individual. Twice as many women as men are severely crippled through ignorance of this basic skill. Their productivity, income, potentiality for development and independence is thereby automatically curtailed. It is commonplace to say that female literacy is even more important than male literacy in its repercussions on social and economic development. However, the urgent need to improve literacy, particularly female literacy, is not reflected adequately in Government plans and programmes. In the meantime socio economic factors continue to place the girl child at a cruel disadvantage as compared to her brother, in the matter of schooling and education.

EDUCATION

Literacy is the basic skill; education is the use of that skill to gain knowledge. Some amount of formal education is required to obtain a job in the organised sector or to set up one's own business and generally speaking, the higher one's educational qualification, the better the job one is likely to secure. Education is therefore necessary for self-advancement. We have just seen that less than half as many girls as boys learn to read and write. We shall now turn to the minority of women who are literates and see where they stand, as compared with men, in the field of education.

TABLE - 11

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATES BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL
LEVEL COMPLETED FOR MALES 1971 - 1981

Year	Total lite- rates	Highest educational level completed				
		Less than primary	Primary	Middle	Matri- culation or higher secondary	Graduate & above
INDIA						
1991	100.0	31.2	34.6	18.7	13.1	2.4
1981	100.0	29.4	30.3	18.0	17.9	4.4

TABLE - 12
 PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATES BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL
 LEVEL COMPLETED FOR FEMALES 1971-1981

Year	Total lite- rates	Highest educational level completed				
		Less than primary	Primary	Middle	Matri- culation or higher Secondary	Graduate & above
INDIA						
1971	100.0	36.6	38.2	15.6	8.2	1.4
1981	100.0	33.4	34.0	16.8	12.8	3.0

It will be seen that among literate males, 59.7 per cent are at the primary or below primary level, 18 per cent at the middle school level 17.9 per cent are matriculates and 4.4 per cent are graduates and above. In the case of literate women, 67.4 percent are at the primary or below primary stage, 16.8 percent are at the middle school level. 12.8 percent are matriculates and 3 percent are graduates and above. In other words, even among literate women, the percentage who have matriculated or gone on to higher stages of education is much less than the percentage of literate males who have completed matriculation and above. In absolute terms, since the literacy rate of males is double that of females, the discrepancy in attainment of educational levels among males and females is of course much greater.

TABLE - 13

	Males	Females
Total Population	343,930,424	321,357,426
Illiterate	182,644,826	241,611,118
Literate (without educational level) :		
Non-formal	3,346,732	1,367,567
Formal	46,297,728	26,395,569

Educational Level :

Primary	46,770,288	26,077,286
Middle	28,860,862	13,340,557
Matriculation/Secondary	20,385,735	7,510,275
Higher Secondary/Intermediate/ Pre-University	7,425,067	2,395,980
Non-Technical Diploma or Certificate not equal to Degree	108,961	67,196
Technical Diploma or Certificate not equal to Degree	1,052,565	273,951
Graduate and above	7,037,660	2,317,891

Education is not, of course, merely a matter of different levels of schooling. It is the opening of doors which were closed before. The uneducated man is imprisoned in his place and time, whereas the whole universe, both past and present, lies unfolded before the educated man. It not only helps him to earn more but to use the money better. It creates self awareness, increases his self-respect, makes him sceptical of accepted mores and enables him to think for himself. A woman who is deprived of education by reason of her sex is therefore deprived in more senses than one.

Improvement in female literacy and education has very visible and indeed dramatic demographic impact. Thus, although there are laws on the minimum age for marriage, child marriages are still common and the average age of marriage for the Indian girl is only 16. However, the age at marriage increases with literacy and with educational level as the table below shows :

TABLE - 14

Educational Level	RURAL				URBAN			
	Mean		Median		Mean		Median	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
All Educational levels	15.4	16.5	15.3	16.0	16.8	17.6	16.5	17.4
Illiterate	15.2	16.3	15.1	15.8	16.2	16.7	15.9	16.4
Literate but below Middle		17.1		16.9		17.4		17.2
Middle but below Matric	16.5	{ 17.8	16.2	{ 17.6	17.2	{ 18.1	16.8	{ 17.9
Matric but below Graduate	19.3	19.3	19.4	19.2	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.7
Graduate & above	21.2	21.6	21.1	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.6	22.1

Thus in a society with high female literacy rate, the women will marry at a higher age, probably after completing their education. This would naturally mean a decrease in the number of children born. In addition, educated women know how to look after their children and this leads to lowering of the infant mortality rate. Improved chances of child survival also leads to fewer children being born. The consequent improvement in the health of the women as well as the benefits of the higher status they enjoy in a society with a high female literacy rate results in lower mortality rate and higher life expectancy for women, thus bringing about a more balanced and favourable sex ratio.

The development co-relates of female literacy are given in the table below :

TABLE - 15

India/States	Literacy rate among females aged 15+ 1981	Infant Mortality rate 1981	Sex ratio (females/males) 1981	Mean age at Marriage 1981	Total Fertility rate 1981
INDIA					
1. Andhra Pradesh	25.7	100	934	18.7	4.5
2. Bihar	20.0	86	975	17.6	4.0
3. Gujarat	13.2	118	946	17.1	5.7
4. Haryana	33.2	116	942	19.6	4.3
5. Karnataka	28.2	69	963	18.2	5.0
6. Kerala	70.8	37	1032	21.9	2.8
7. Madhya Pradesh	15.9	142	941	17.2	5.2
8. Maharashtra	34.6	79	937	18.9	3.6
9. Orissa	21.2	135	981	19.1	4.3
10. Punjab	32.4	81	879	21.1	4.0
11. Rajasthan	12.0	108	919	17.0	5.2
12. Tamil Nadu	34.7	91	977	20.2	3.4
13. Uttar Pradesh	13.9	150	885	18.3	5.8
14. West Bengal	33.3	91	911	19.4	4.2

It will be seen that states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, which are socially and economically backward, have low female literacy rates, high infant mortality rates, low sex ratio, low age at marriage for women and high fertility rate. Kerala, at the other end of the spectrum, has

all these indicators in the reverse order. The co-relation between female literacy and education and other development indicators is quite clear.

FERTILITY

There was a time when the chief function of women was considered to be that of procreation and that too, of males. The traditional blessing at a marriage was "may you be the mother of a 100 sons" ! However, at the present rate of population growth, if a women bore 5 sons, leave along a 100, it would spell disaster. In the first decade of this century, although most women bore 10 or more children as a matter of course, epidemics and famines contrived to contain the population growth. By the middle of the century, however, the great strides made in the control of epidemics had made this, by and large, a thing of the past. Improvements in agriculture similarly banished the specter of famine. The result has been a dramatic fall in mortality rates and improvement in life expectancy leading to an explosive growth of population after the 1950s. The table below illustrates this :

TABLE - 16

Year	Population	Decadal Growth		Progressive growth rate over 1901 (Per cent)
		Absolute	Per cent	
1901	238,396,327	-	-	-
1911	252,093,390	+ 13,697,063	+ 5.75	+ 5.75
1921	251,321,213	- 772,177	- 0.31	+ 5.42
1931	278,977,238	+ 27,656,025	+11.00	+ 17.02
1941	318,660,580	+ 39,683,342	+14.22	+ 33.67
1951	361,088,090	+ 42,420,485	+13.31	+ 51.47
1961	439,234,771	+ 77,682,873	+21.51	+ 84.25
1971	548,159,652	+108,924,881	+24.80	+129.94
1981	683,329,097	+135,169,446	+24.66	+186.64
1991	843,930,861	+160,601,764	+23.50	+254.00

The rapid growth of population over the last four decades has neutralised all development efforts and we are rapidly approaching a stage of crisis. Hence the heavily funded programmes for family planning which has in recent times stolen the limelight from all other programmes of the Government Health Department. The message is loud and clear : It is no longer a matter of good fortune to have a large number of children. It is much more desirable to have one or two healthy children.

However, just as, while wishing women a 100 sons, the effect of bearing a large number of children on their health and happiness was ignored, so too, Government family planning programmes, with their emphasis on operations and contraceptives, have not taken into sufficient account the women themselves. It is, however, now being realised that a woman's fertility is influenced immensely by various factors such as literacy and levels of education, age at marriage, employment and income. If she is educated, marries after the age of 19, is employed and enjoys good health, (thereby increasing the chances of bearing healthy children) then it is likely that she will have few children. On the other hand, if she is illiterate, poverty stricken, with no control over her body or life and no decision making powers, there is strong likelihood that she will, like her mother, bear a large number of children, some of whom may not survive.

Given below are various tables which show the links between these various factors and women's fertility :

TABLE - 17(a)

Per-centage	Level of education				
	Illiterate	Literate but below primary	Primary but below Matriculation	Matriculation and above	All level
15-19	104.9	72.1	31.2	16.1	73.7
20-24	270.4	257.7	212.2	132.9	248.2
25-29	251.1	233.6	213.0	184.2	238.4
30-34	183.9	145.5	106.6	99.2	165.7
35-39	113.6	75.2	48.1	36.1	99.7
40-44	58.1	35.5	20.9	13.6	51.9
45-49	45.1	25.9	22.6	7.1	41.0
Total	5.1	4.2	3.3	2.4	4.5
Fertility Rate (TFR)					

TABLE - 17(b)

Percent- age	Annual Income (Rs.)			
	5,000 and below	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 and above	Total
15-19	76.2	73.3	71.9	73.7
20-24	242.5	253.1	284.3	248.2
25-29	227.3	253.5	233.5	238.4
30-34	166.1	177.3	150.4	165.7
35-39	98.6	111.2	85.2	99.7
40-44	48.5	61.2	43.3	51.9
45-49	36.6	47.1	38.6	41.0
Total Fertility Ratio (TFR)	4.5	4.9	4.4	4.5

TABLE - 17(c)

Percent age	Per capita expenditure on food items (Rs.)			
	80 and below	81-100	101 and above	Total
15-19	81.4	63.2	47.7	73.7
20-24	265.5	228.4	190.6	248.2
25-29	256.8	210.0	182.2	238.4
30-34	186.0	136.5	97.0	165.7
35-39	118.0	73.4	41.0	99.7
40-44	63.5	35.7	16.5	51.9
45-49	49.8	27.5	17.7	41.0
Total Fertility Ratio (TFR)	5.1	3.9	3.0	4.5

TABLE - 17(d)

Percent- age	Age at effective marriage (yrs)				All ages
	Below 18	18-20	21-23	24 & above	
15-19	290.4	127.5	-	-	215.4
20-24	394.2	313.8	260.2	-	311.6
25-29	211.0	274.7	303.0	289.0	257.4
30-34	148.3	187.1	211.2	226.9	175.3
35-39	76.6	118.4	137.4	160.3	107.0
40-44	42.4	62.0	88.5	107.6	58.4
45-49	38.0	49.7	49.7	85.4	49.1
Total Marital Fertility Ratio (TFR)	6.1	5.7	5.2	5.0	5.9

It may be seen from the above that the single most important factor for determining fertility - more important than the annual income of the family - is the level of education of the woman. Control of the growth of population is thus directly linked to the status of women. Population control will be possible not through family planning camps and targets given to Government functionaries but when importance is given to women's education and they are considered as individuals whose welfare and happiness are as important as that of men. Decreased fertility will, at the same time, improve the health of women, release them from the burdens of child bearing and child rearing earlier and give them more time and energy for productive activity.

EMPLOYMENT

As mentioned above, reducing women's biological role of human reproduction will improve their economically productive role. This in turn will improve their status in society and their own self image.

The population census enumerates the number of male and female workers and the census questionnaire also seeks information on the kind of work they are doing. This data, when presented in the form of tables, presents the employment scenario in the form of 9 broad industrial classifications. We shall now examine what proportion of women are workers and the kind of work they are doing.

Work, as defined by the census, is economically productive activity. Thus the work of cleaning the house, looking after the children, bringing fuel and water and cooking, all of which is customarily done by women, is not considered as work although it is no doubt indirectly economically productive, since it releases the remaining people in the household for economically productive activities. But since these activities are not income earning and are difficult to quantify, they are omitted from the reckoning of work. All these, of course, comprises the duties of women as housewives.

Data collection is a tricky business since the accuracy of the data collected will depend on many factors : the way the questions are framed, the manner in which the enumerator or data collector understands them and his ability in communicating what information he requires to the respondent. There can be slips all along the way and the four economic questions asked in the census are the most difficult. In addition to the normal difficulties of understanding and communication, preconceived ideas regarding women create insuperable difficulties while enumerating the number of women who are workers. There is the commonly held belief that all women, except for the very few who work in the organised sector, are housewives, with the result that they are automatically classified as non-workers. In the 1971 census, the first of the economic questions related to " main activity " whereby most women were immediately classified as housewives and no further questions were asked of them regarding the work they did. This drawback was noticed and remedied during the 1981 census by replacing the first question with a question regarding the work which women did on the land which was, as is normally the case, held in the name of a male member of the family. This had been discounted, although it was economically productive. Similarly, post-harvest operations, which normally fall to women's lot, were often considered as part of the women's household duties and were therefore not considered as work at all. Women, who play a subsidiary but essential role in pottery making, blacksmithy etc., were also not considered as workers. Besides all these difficulties, there is the general tendency to underplay women's economic role and since it is usually the male head of the household who answers the enumerator's questions in respect of women of the house, there is every possibility of the questions regarding women's work not being answered properly.

In rural areas, almost all women work in the fields. They take part in all agricultural activities except ploughing and normally we see more women than men at work in the field. Yet the figures for women workers for both the 1971 and 1981 censuses were ridiculously low. The table below should therefore be studied keeping in view the observations made above.

TABLE - 18

INDIA/STATES	Persons Males Females	Percentage of main workers to total population	
		1971	1981
INDIA	P	33.06	33.45
	M	52.61	51.62
	F	12.06	13.99
1. Andhra Pradesh	P	41.39	42.26
	M	58.22	57.12
	F	24.16	27.02
2. Bihar	P	31.03	29.68
	M	52.24	52.19
	F	8.88	9.06
3. Gujarat	P	31.45	32.22
	M	51.24	52.19
	F	8.88	9.06
4. Harayana	P	26.44	28.35
	M	47.27	48.94
	F	2.41	4.69
5. Himachal Pradesh	P	36.95	34.37
	M	52.43	49.59
	F	20.79	18.71
6. Jammu & Kashmir	P	29.76	30.37
	M	52.50	52.20
	F	3.86	5.91
7. Karnataka	P	34.74	36.76
	M	54.40	53.90
	F	14.20	18.95
8. Kerala	P	29.12	26.68
	M	45.00	41.04
	F	13.49	12.77
9. Madhya Pradesh	P	36.72	38.41
	M	53.74	53.52
	F	18.65	22.35

TABLE - 18

INDIA/STATES	Persons Males Females	Percentage of main workers to total population	
		1971	1981
10. Maharashtra	P	36.48	38.71
	M	53.74	53.52
	F	19.70	23.98
11. Orissa	P	31.22	32.75
	M	55.32	54.38
	F	6.81	10.70
12. Punjab	P	28.87	29.35
	M	52.82	53.14
	F	1.18	2.27
16. Rajasthan	P	31.24	30.48
	M	52.09	49.92
	F	15.09	22.36
17. Tamil Nadu	P	35.78	39.90
	M	56.02	55.85
	F	15.09	22.36
18. Uttar Pradesh	P	30.94	29.22
	M	52.24	50.31
	F	6.71	5.39
19. West Bengal	P	27.91	28.26
	M	48.83	48.71
	F	4.43	5.81

One reason given for the low work participation of women is that women in the child bearing age are too engrossed in household activities to find time for economically productive work. That this is not true is shown by the table below which denotes work participation of women in different age groups :

TABLE 19

India/States		Total	Age Group											
			Rural	All	0-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49	50-59	60+	15-59
			Urban	Ages										
INDIA	T	13.99	2.95	18.46	20.39	22.59	24.59	26.13	25.99	21.53	10.15	22.61		
	R	16.00	3.52	22.74	24.36	26.20	27.76	29.37	28.92	23.90	11.27	26.07		
	U	7.28	0.91	6.21	9.32	12.26	14.45	15.52	15.39	12.40	5.63	11.71		
1. Andhra Pradesh	T	27.02	7.21	36.71	38.90	41.72	45.08	45.44	46.34	40.27	19.75	41.94		
	R	31.94	8.79	47.12	48.62	50.44	52.60	52.60	52.39	45.38	22.16	49.90		
	U	10.49	1.79	9.64	12.51	16.27	19.80	20.61	22.55	19.22	9.39	16.47		
2. Bihar	T	9.06	1.56	12.34	13.38	14.66	16.21	17.26	17.81	15.20	7.26	15.23		
	R	9.70	1.71	13.84	14.55	15.70	17.29	18.35	18.76	15.87	7.54	16.32		
	U	4.17	0.45	2.89	5.07	7.34	8.32	9.37	9.98	8.61	4.50	7.08		
3. Gujarat	T	11.03	2.22	16.98	17.59	17.55	18.82	19.53	18.86	14.66	6.38	17.70		
	R	13.46	2.95	22.76	23.10	21.99	22.51	23.04	21.66	16.52	7.30	21.83		
	U	5.49	0.41	4.53	6.82	9.09	10.95	12.04	12.24	9.59	3.98	8.86		
4. Haryana	T	4.69	1.08	7.24	8.27	8.85	9.47	9.10	7.60	5.01	2.51	7.90		
	R	4.89	1.29	8.61	8.94	9.02	9.14	8.78	7.62	5.12	2.11	8.25		
	U	3.99	0.20	2.52	6.30	8.34	10.55	10.12	7.52	4.59	2.30	6.75		
5. Himachal Pradesh	T	18.71	4.25	28.14	31.47	31.87	32.96	31.74	29.96	25.50	11.72	30.16		
	R	19.38	4.49	29.91	33.46	33.17	33.68	32.51	30.80	26.32	12.07	31.39		
	U	9.59	0.63	5.20	11.46	18.42	24.70	22.04	18.42	12.19	5.17	15.23		
6. Karnataka	T	18.95	4.87	26.12	26.36	30.99	34.11	34.98	34.27	26.71	11.51	30.52		
	R	22.28	6.02	33.20	35.17	37.02	39.38	40.20	38.82	30.47	12.98	36.23		
	U	10.53	1.79	10.69	14.29	17.75	21.11	21.83	21.63	16.03	7.23	16.95		
7. Kerala	T	12.77	1.89	12.18	17.83	21.85	25.98	28.58	26.63	18.65	6.96	20.58		
	R	13.47	0.77	13.44	19.46	23.41	27.27	29.77	27.78	19.61	7.44	21.89		
	U	9.67	1.12	6.75	10.93	15.48	20.91	23.41	21.79	14.73	4.88	15.13		
8. Madhya Pradesh	T	22.35	5.27	31.20	32.75	35.52	38.73	40.29	42.05	36.29	18.56	36.49		
	R	25.78	6.30	38.54	39.52	41.88	44.46	45.92	46.93	40.09	20.38	42.42		
	U	8.31	0.92	6.57	10.00	13.04	16.06	18.38	20.13	17.30	8.77	15.13		
9. Maharashtra	T	22.35	5.27	31.20	32.75	35.52	38.73	40.29	42.05	36.29	18.56	36.49		
	R	31.39	6.86	44.45	49.50	51.69	55.43	57.08	56.29	44.78	18.64	51.30		
	U	9.11	0.76	6.82	12.34	15.48	18.09	19.29	19.47	15.73	6.94	14.80		
10. Orissa	T	10.70	2.45	14.88	14.83	16.85	18.80	20.24	20.12	16.03	7.19	17.30		
	R	11.07	2.60	15.84	15.55	17.44	19.49	20.87	20.44	16.12	7.22	17.90		
	U	7.65	1.21	7.65	9.86	12.72	13.69	15.25	17.01	15.14	7.22	12.52		
11. Punjab	T	2.27	0.27	1.92	3.29	4.74	5.82	5.30	3.89	2.76	1.26	3.74		
	R	1.72	0.31	1.94	2.49	3.31	4.06	3.55	2.83	2.14	1.07	2.78		
	U	3.71	0.18	1.87	5.06	7.84	10.23	9.61	6.71	4.62	1.91	6.14		
16. Rajasthan	T	9.32	2.73	15.38	15.33	15.82	16.30	16.63	15.91	12.14	4.80	15.40		
	R	10.58	3.27	18.93	18.18	18.00	17.97	18.28	17.31	13.09	5.07	17.51		
	U	4.45	0.52	3.74	6.05	8.22	9.82	10.21	10.07	7.95	3.59	7.60		
17. Tamil Nadu	T	22.36	4.52	28.05	29.77	32.29	36.33	38.86	38.80	32.45	16.47	33.57		
	R	27.85	5.76	36.92	39.04	40.87	44.29	46.58	46.45	39.36	20.70	41.88		
	U	11.01	1.94	11.65	13.73	16.52	20.04	21.50	20.67	15.88	7.09	16.68		
18. Uttar Pradesh	T	5.39	0.91	6.68	7.50	8.59	9.61	10.38	10.69	9.57	5.63	8.95		
	R	5.90	1.04	7.90	8.42	9.38	10.36	11.18	11.39	10.12	5.98	9.81		
	U	2.99	0.27	2.12	3.79	5.21	6.08	6.51	6.99	6.42	3.46	5.04		
19. West Bengal	T	5.81	0.91	7.76	8.79	10.23	11.44	11.82	11.20	8.39	3.48	10.04		
	R	6.69	0.93	8.65	10.34	11.45	12.31	12.47	11.90	8.72	3.65	10.70		
	U	4.66	0.86	3.51	12.07	7.14	9.31	10.18	9.32	7.39	3.00	8.28		

It will be seen that the majority of women workers are in the age-group 15 - 34 when they may also be expected to have the care of small children.

The table below gives the percentage distribution of male and female workers by industrial classification as well as occupational classification. All workers are classified as coming under nine broad industrial classifications. Within that classification, the description of the actual work that the person is doing is termed as the occupational classification.

TABLE - 20

INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORKERS BY MAIN ACTIVITY			
	1971		1981	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
Cultivators	45.90	29.84	43.70	33.20
Agricultural Labourers	21.54	50.86	19.56	46.17
Division-0 Agriculture, hunting, Forestry and Fishing	2.24	1.91	2.37	1.84
Division-1 mining and quarrying	0.54	0.40	0.63	0.35
Division-2 & 3 Manufacturing and Repair	10.13	7.01	12.09	8.19
Division-4 Electricity, gas and water	0.35	0.03	0.54	0.05
Division-5 Construction	1.36	0.65	1.88	0.87
Division-6 Wholesale and retail trade and restaurants and hotels	5.57	1.67	6.46	1.80
Division-7 Transport, storage and communications	2.86	0.47	3.36	0.37
Division-8 Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	0.80	0.11	0.95	0.24
Division-9 Community, social and personal services	8.71	7.05	8.46	6.92

TABLE - 21

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORKERS BY MAIN ACTIVITY			
	1971		1981	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
Cultivators	45.90	29.84	43.70	33.20
Agricultural Labourers	21.54	50.86	19.56	46.17
Division 0-1 Professional, Technical & related workers	2.71	2.84	3.16	3.21
Division-2 Administrative, executive and managerial workers	1.12	0.07	1.30	0.12
Division-3 Clerical & related workers	3.40	0.68	3.86	1.05
Division-4 Sales workers	4.74	1.46	5.36	1.51
Division-5 Service workers	3.36	3.13	3.12	2.69
Division-6 Farmers, Fishermen, hunters loggers and related workers	2.35	1.97	2.24	1.81
Division-7-8-9 Production and related workers, transport equipment operators & labourers	14.40	8.94	16.56	9.58
Division-X Workers not classified by occupation	0.48	0.21	1.14	0.65

Though detailed analysis is not possible, what strikes the eye immediately is that almost half the women workers, according to the 1981 census, and more than half, according to the 1971 census, are agricultural labourers. As against this, only about 20 percent of the men are agricultural labourers and almost half of them are cultivators. Therefore, in the field of agriculture alone, where 70 percent of the workers of both sexes are concentrated, the division of labour is clear : the women are

relegated to the lowest paid jobs, and hire out their labour in others' fields while the majority of the male agriculturists are shown as cultivating their own lands (some of them may also be doing agricultural labour but this is as a subsidiary occupation).

Even while doing similar work, women are paid much less than men. Except for a few jobs in the organised sector, this is the universal practice and women constitute a subservient pool of labour which is handy for all employers, who by using women, cut down on labour costs. Women do the bulk of very low paid low skilled, arduous and often noxious manual jobs.

Since women's work is unduly undervalued, special measures are necessary to estimate it accurately. This will create the consciousness that women are economically productive. Wage laws must be implemented strictly and emphasis should be given to the training and improvement of the skills of women workers so that they are not relegated to low paid and unskilled work. Jobs in a given sector are commonly sex stereotyped and it is taken for granted that certain jobs (usually the better paid jobs) cannot be done by women. Training will overcome these obstacles and improve the earning capability of women.

All the demographic indicators discussed in this paper point in one direction - that even though the overall condition of women may have improved marginally, with general improvement of living conditions, their status vis-a-vis that of men has not improved and, in some respects, has deteriorated. If we are to exist as a just society, and progress as a modern nation, it has to be ensured that such discrimination is stopped and measures are taken at all levels, demographic, social, economic and political, to give women a fair deal.

ASHOK MITRA'S INDICATORS

Annex A : Demographic Indicators

Indicator	Priority	Purpose
1. (a) Perinatal mortality per 1,000 Females live born ----- Perinatal mortality per 1,000 males live born	Low	Planning and monitoring
(b) Postneonatal mortality per 1,000 females live born ----- Postneonatal mortality per 1,000 males live born	Low	Planning and monitoring
(c) Infant mortality per 1,000 females live born ----- males live born	High	Planning and monitoring for and immunisation and nutritional needs.
2. Mortality rate of female children 1- 4 years old ----- Mortality rate of male children 1-4 years old	High	Planning and monitoring health and nutritional needs. Also to monitor extent of family care.
3. Differential mortality of the sexes at significant young ages : Mortality rates for females aged (5-14)(15-24)(25-34) ----- Mortality rates for males aged (5-14)(15-24)(25-34)		
4. Age-specific fertility rates: ages 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34	High	Planning, monitoring and evaluators
5. Age-specific maternal mortality rates: ages 15-19, 20-24 25-29, 30-34 or for 15-34	(15-34) High 5- years age groups for fine grained analysis	Planning, monitoring and evaluators

6. Differential mortality by sex in older ages
- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---------------------|
| (a) | Mortality rates for females 50+ | Low | Planning |
| | ----- | | |
| | Mortality rates for males 50+ | | |
| (b) | Mortality rates for females aged 50+ who die in inactivity | Fairly high | Planning for social |
| | ----- | (Direct dates security, pension difficult; schemes. | |
| | Mortality rates for males aged 50+ who die in inactivity | estimations possible) | |
7. Net years of active life (15-59) for females
- | | | | |
|--|---|------|----------|
| | ----- | High | Planning |
| | Net years of active life (15-59) for males. | | |
8. Proportion of female teachers to male teachers in each of the five main levels of education.
9. Ratio of female to male boarders in school and college hostels by each of the five main sectors.

It seems important to obtain data on school attendance of girls graduated physical distance from school or supply of transport and also by duration and functioning of school hours and vacations.

ANNEXE : HEALTH AND NUTRITION INDICATORS

A. FEMALE CHILDREN'S HEALTH :

1. Number of pediatricians per 100,000 children aged 0-4 (male and female proportions separately)
2. Number of children aged 0-4 attended by pediatricians in a calendar year as proportion of total number of children aged 0-4 (male and female proportions separately).

B. ADULT FEMALE'S NON-REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH :

3. Proportion of female annual attendance to male annual attendance at PHC, RHC, CHC, Dispensaries and Hospitals.
4. Percentage of female bed days occupied in a calendar year to male bed days occupied in PHCs and Hospitals per annum.
5. Proportion of women treated suffering from (i) diseases of malnutrition, (ii) diseases of the digestive system, (iii) diseases of the respiratory tracts and (iv) diseases of the circulatory system to men treated for these groups of diseases.
6. Consumption of carbohydrates and proteins by females as a proportion of consumption by males.

C. ADULT FEMALE'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH :

7. Percentage of pregnant women who have been visited in their homes by peripatetic midwives, doctors and other medical personnel. This is to check performance of mobile public health and medical units.
8. Percentage of pregnant women who have visited primary health centres (PHC), Rural Health Centres (RHC), Maternal/Child Health Centres (MCH) or Community Health Centres (CHC), or Dispensaries and Hospitals.
9. Percentage of pregnancies delivered in hospitals.
10. Proportion of all pregnancies and hospital confinements who had to travel (a) less than 5 kilometres, (b) 5 to 10 kilometres, (c) 10-20 kilometres (d) more than 20 kilometres, to obtain services.

11. Percentage of pregnancy and confinement cases "well satisfied" with services obtained.
12. Proportion of pregnant women administered anti-tetanus before confinement per 1,000 women confined.
13. Number of women per 1,000 of women in the age group 15-34 visited by family planning counselors in a year.
14. Number of married women per 1,000 of married women in the age group 15-34 who have undergone tubectomy classified by number of existing children further classified whether (a) employed or (b) unemployed.
15. Distribution of (a) medical termination of pregnancy cases and (b) tubectomy by educational status of woman.
16. Number of recognised training centres for different courses (a) nurses; (b) female health visitors; (c) family planning counsellors; (d) other female para-medical staff and the number of candidates who qualify in successive years.
17. Mean daily attendance of infants and babies at day-care creches to total number of women attending establishments.

D. GENERAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION INDICATORS :

18. Percentage of population enjoying protected or centrally filtered water for drinking purposes.
19. Percentage of population using septic tank latrines or enjoying facilities for disposal of nightsoil safe from contamination.
20. Information on height by weight by age for infants and children upto 5 years.
21. Information on vitamins and other protective supplements to pregnant women in their third trimesters and to infants and children upto age 2.
22. Proportion of infants administered DPT, (BCG, mumps and measles where administered) to total number of infants in the population before they attain 1 year of age.

ANNEXE C : MONITORING AND EVALUATION

INDICATORS OF LITERACY AND EDUCATION

1. Ratio of female to male students enrolled in each of the first five or six grades of primary education.
2. Ratio of females dropping out in mid-term to male dropouts in each of the first six successive grades of primary education; or alternatively.
3. Ratio of female to male students successively promoted to the next higher grade in the first six grades of primary education.
4. Ratio of female to male students in single-teacher schools, two-teacher, and multi-teacher primary schools. Also the proportion of female students to male students in schools having nil, 1, 2 or more female teachers.
5. Ratio of female to male students in classes arranged by teacher-student ratios in each of the first six classes of elementary schools.
6. (a) Outlay and actual expenditure (including instruction, equipment, building and accessories) on primary school education per student enrolled..

Similarly

- (b) Outlay and actual expenditure on secondary school education per student enrolled.
- (c) Outlay and actual expenditure on undergraduate education per student enrolled.
- (d) Outlay and actual expenditure on post-graduate education per student enrolled.
- (e) Outlay and actual expenditure on vocational and technical education per student enrolled : ratio of female to male students in each type of vocational and technical education to be shown in each curriculum.
7. Teacher-student ratios
 - (i) primary education;
 - (ii) secondary education;
 - (iii) undergraduate education;
 - (iv) post-graduate education;
 - (v) vocational and technical education.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 8. | Age at marriage by age groups
15 - 19, 20-24, etc. | High | Planning, health,
education and occupa-
tional needs, maternal
and child health and
creche requirements |
| 9. | Probability of widowhood at
stated age groups | Low | Planning for training
and jobs for women |
| 10. | Median age at maternity by
birth order from age 15
atleast to age 34 and the
number of children lost by
death of each party | High
rural
areas but
may be
difficult
to obtain | Input for planning
models |

ANNEXE D : LONG-TERM ECONOMIC INDICATORS

1. Proportion of women to men employed in agriculture and in non-agricultural occupations.
2. Proportion of women to men employed in the age-groups 15-24 and 25 and over.
3. Proportion of women to men unemployed who have completed second-level of education or above.
4. Proportion of female to male workers working as employer; employee ; employed in family enterprise or business self-employed or on own account.
5. Proportion of female to male workers in
 - (1) public sector and
 - (2) private sector undertakings classified by major and minor divisions and groups of industries.
6. Number and sex ratio of workers classified by major industrial divisions, and 5-year age groups.
7. Number and sex ratio of child workers by main activity classified by major and minor divisions of industry.
8. Number and sex ratio of workers according to main activity and educational level.
9. Average daily employment by sex classified by broad age groups in factories and establishments etc.
10. Average daily employment by sex in mines and quarries, and in plantations.

11. Number of employees by sex in the organised sector.
12. Number of employees by sex in all government offices and establishments classified by
 - (a) each recognised type of services, cross classified by
 - (b) type of work, executive, professional, technical or scientific and
 - (c) grade or salary scale.
13. Holders of technical, professional and scientific diplomas and/or degrees classified by sex for
 - (1) level of education,
 - (2) monthly earnings,
 - (3) employed by type of organisation of present employment, and
 - (4) subject fields.
14. Number and sex ratio of apprentices and trainees under different training programmes.
15. Number and sex ratio of applicants on the live register of employment exchanges, according to educational level and age-groups.
16. Number and sex ratio of applicants, classified by educational levels, for whom placements were made by employment exchanges in different sectors of industry.
17. Number of applicants and employees by sex in selected "women-prone" occupations, classified by applications in the private and public sectors.
18. Index or real earnings of employees by sex. Also average daily earnings of males and females and average daily or monthly earnings by occupations and operations.
19. Working days lost per employee by sex on account of industrial accidents, industrial dispute and absenteeism, establishments being classified by proportion of male/female workers.
20. Total male and female workers classified by those who are and are not members of trade unions.
21. Number and sex ratio of male and female economically active population covered by social security schemes.
22. Proportion of women to men employees and dropouts in employments of different income grades.

GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

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GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

ESTHER GALIMA MABRY

To be asked to prepare this paper on Gender Dimensions of Women's Health has been a challenge. It is a challenge in that as a medical person I have been schooled in the ideology of the dominant health care system. Even so there have been nagging questions in my mind which I have not explored in its depth in the past. Preparing this paper has given me an opportunity to challenge ingrained values.

Some people use gender and sex interchangeably, perhaps because gender may be a milder form for those who want to avoid using the word "sex". Gender is the cultural definition of behaviour defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. Gender is a set of cultural roles. It is a costume, a mask, a straight jacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance.¹ Sex is the male or female sex and defines our biological differences. This paper will deal with the health status of women and its gender dimensions leading to an exploration of directions of action.

The first part of the paper will review the health care system. The second part will deal mainly with the health status of women and its gender dimensions. My intention is not really to be exhaustive but mainly to highlight gender biases so as to make us stop and consider whether the steps we take as policy makers and administrators support the status quo or further women's development. What we do depends on people's gender awareness.

I

The development of the health care system evolved from a health care system which was developed in the West which is not particularly suited to the conditions in India. It gradually replaced the existing traditional medicines which developed in the Indian cultural milieu. In the historical development of the medical and nursing professions and the health delivery system, there already developed sexual division of functions. The hospital functioned like a patriarchal family with the doctors as fathers, nurses as mothers, and the patients as children dependent and waiting only to be cared for. The realization of this situation in the inherited system led government leaders to accept the responsibility of evolving a health care system for Independent India and to recommend ways for improvement. The healthy self criticism embodied in the Statement on National Health Policy of 1982 in its analysis of the situation was a welcome sign that our planners are seriously concerned about the inequalities the system has produced. I quote in part the Statement:²

The existing situation has been largely engendered by the almost wholesale adoption of health manpower development policies and establishment of curative centres based on the Western model, which are inappropriate and irrelevant to the rural needs of our people and the socio-economic conditions obtaining in the country. The hospital-based, disease and cure-oriented approach towards the establishment of medical services has provided benefits to the upper crusts of society, especially those residing in the urban areas. Furthermore, the continued high emphasis on the curative approach has led to the neglect of the preventive, promotive, public health and rehabilitative aspects of health care. The existing approach, instead of improving awareness and building up self reliance, has tended to enhance dependency and weaken the community's capacity to cope with its problems. The prevailing policy in regard to the education and training of medical and health personnel, at various levels, has resulted in the development of a cultural gap between the people and the personnel providing care. The various health programmes have, by and large, failed to involve individuals and families in establishing a self reliant community. Also, over the years, the planning process has become largely oblivious of the fact that the ultimate goals of achieving a satisfactory health status for all our people cannot be secured without involving the community in the identification of their health needs and priorities as well as in the implementation and management of the various health and related programmes.

The statement fully realizes the inappropriateness and irrelevance of a curative oriented health care system to the vast needs of the rural areas. The vast concentration of health care services in the urban areas which comprises only 20% of the country has deprived the other 80% in the country side. This inequality of distribution of resources greatly discriminate against a certain section of society. The maldistribution of resources is also linked with inequality to make use of health services usually located at a distance and in case of emergency they travel great distances before help is available. Unequal accessibility is not only in terms of unavailability of services but also in terms of the cost of services. Cost in a distant facility also includes cost of travel, food, and loss of wages which people often can hardly afford. These inequalities are also linked to inequality in participation in the people's own health care and subsequent inequality in the resultant health status. The present health care system greatly favours people in the urban areas, those who can afford the cost of medical care, and for whom distance and cost are no barriers to accessibility, and those who are healthy enough to ward off infections which easily affect the poor and malnourished. People in the rural areas are

left to continue to practice their own traditional health care practices, without denying the fact that western medicine still is the best for any of their major medical problems.⁴ D. Banerji and others in their study of various Primary Health Centres (PHC) in the country reveal that the major constraints of using medical services are unavailability of health services where the people are and inability of patients to meet the cost of care.

The plan allocation for health during the past Five Year Plans belie such good intentions of providing health services at the cost people can afford and at a distance near them. The decreasing allocation, seen below just shows the low priority health gets.

TABLE - 1
PLAN ALLOCATION FOR HEALTH⁵

Plan Period	% Share of Health Budget
1st Five Year Plan	3.30
2nd Five Year Plan	3.00
3rd Five Year Plan	2.60
4th Five Year Plan	2.10
5th Five Year Plan	1.90
6th Five Year Plan	1.86

Source : India, 1986, Ministry of I.B., Government of India

The conference on Primary Health Care at Alma-Ata in September, 1978 was followed by the National Policy Statement by the government. A proposed alternative strategy for Health for all by 2000 A.D. by a study group set up jointly by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the Indian Council of Medical Research was in response to the government proposal.⁶ The major recommendations include the necessity of the people's participation in the implementation of health care services in the community through a restructured community based, decentralized, and democratically planned and implemented services.

Table 2 shows the goals set by the government in 1982.⁷ What effects has the health system on women through the years and the inherent biases meted out to them? They are the major targets of the health and family welfare programmes, but who really are the beneficiaries?

Table 2

Goals for health and family welfare programmes

1. No.	Indicator	Estimates in 1992	Goals 1990	2000
1.	Infant mortality rate	Rural 136 (1978) Urban 70 (1978) Total 125 (1978)	87	below 60
	Perinatal mortality	67 (1976)		30-35
2.	Crude death rate	Around 14	10.4	9.0
3.	Pre-school child (1-5 years) mortality	24 (1976-77)	15.20	10
4.	Maternal mortality rate	4-5 (1976)	2-3	below 2
5.	Life expectancy at birth (year)	Male 52.6 (1976-81) Female 51.6 (1976-81)	57.6 57.1	64 64
6.	Babies with birth weight below 2500 gms (percentage)	30	18	10
7.	Crude birth rate	Around 35	27.0	21.0
8.	Effective couple protection (percentage)	23.6 (March, 1982)	42.0	60.0
9.	Net Reproduction Rate (NRR)	1.49 (1981)	1.17	1.00
10.	Growth rate (annual)	2.24 (1971-81)	1.66	1.20
11.	Family size	4.4 (1975)	-	2.3
12.	Pregnant mothers receiving ante-natal care (percentage)	40-50	60-75	100
13.	Deliveries by Trained Birth attendant (percentage)	30-35	80	100
14.	Immunization status (% coverage)	20	100	100
	TT (for pregnant women)			
	TT (for school children)			
	10 years			
	16 years	-	100	100
	DPT (children below 3 years)	20	100	100
	Polio (infants)	25	85	85
	BCG (infants)	5	70	85
	DT (new school entrants) (5-6 years)	65	80	85
	Typhoid (new school entrants 5-6 years)	20	85	85
15.	Leprosy-percentage of disease arrested cases out of those detected	2	85	85
16.	TB-percentage of disease arrested case out of those detected	20	60	80
17.	Blindness-Incidence of (percentage)	50	75	90
		1.4	0.7	0.3

Source: Statement on National Health Policy, Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi (1982).
 From National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000 A.D.
 Report of the Core Group set up by the Department of Women Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 1988.

II

The International Women's Year in 1975 and the International Women's Decade (1975-1985) ushered in impetus to research on the status of women, including the important work of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI). The report highlighted the fact that social changes and development in the context of the changing social and economic conditions of the country has created new imbalances and disparities among a large section of women. Let us examine salient indicators which need to be looked into to get at the root causes of the prevailing health conditions of women.

Karkal in her study of women and population says this about women and their health: "It is now accepted that to understand the health status of women, health and health care system must be seen from beyond the medical framework". Whether this is accepted by the health professionals or women or government policy makers, Karkal did not say. The wider the acceptance however, the better for women and their health and the country as a whole. Whether health professionals, health administrators, and policy makers accept this concept or not it is for those women in development work to become more sensitive to women's issues in any programme or project. Women need to participate in decision making as well as monitoring progress of programmes. The attainment of better health for women is an important stepping stone to their development and empowerment. For the discriminating health worker, realizing that the health care system is but a microcosm of the wider society in its power relations helps in developing working strategies. The health care system has been perpetuated by the same social values which perpetuate social control on people. The health status of women can best be looked beyond infection, hygiene, and unsanitary conditions.

INFANT MORTALITY RATES

It is said that infant mortality rate is a good indicator of the social status of women. Infant mortality is usually influenced by factors before and during pregnancy, delivery, and during the child's first year of life. These factors include nutritional practices, child care practices, and the status of women and girls. Beyond food and child care are the issues of the status of women and children.

The infant mortality rate has come down from 240/1000 live births in 1921-23, 146 during 1951-61, 132 in 190-72 to 110 in 1981. While these data do not show gender bias, it is necessary to look into age specific and sex specific rates. Many studies have shown that there is excess in female mortality.^{10,11,12} In Clark's study of excess female mortality in India, she asked what ought to be the ratio of mortality rates in infancy if there is

no excess female mortality. She claims that what really matters is whether this excess sex effect on child mortality differs significantly with the expected normal ratio. Normally there is an excess of infant male mortality during the first year of life. However, a conservative standard can be taken as 1.057 beyond which there is an excessive level of mortality for the interval between one month and five years of age. Using the data from Padmanabha in 1982, Clark shows that it is abundantly clear that there is excess female mortality from 1 - 4 years of life, the ratio being 1.262 against the standard 1.057. The figures below show this.

AGE SPECIFIC FEMALE/MALE MORTALITY RATE

less than 29 days	0.863	0 - 1 year	0.977
29 days - 1 year	1.202		
1 - 4 years	1.303	29 days - 4 years	1.262

The excess female mortality can be seen in the next two tables in a more detailed manner.¹³ Table 3 shows the preponderance of mortality of male newborns (below 29 days) which is a normal phenomenon, but after that female children show higher mortality rates.

Female infanticide is one of the reasons given for the excess female infant mortality. Barbara Miller¹⁴ categorizes infanticide into active killing and child abuse and neglect. Infanticide has been documented in North India and North west India which was first reported in 1789. Subsequent to its banning by the British in 1789, neglect of children became more prominent. There are strong socio-cultural reasons for son preference. Sons are economic assets while the female drains family wealth with dowry and flow of gifts after marriage; sons play important roles in local power struggles over right inputs to land and water. Sons take care of older parents while the daughters marry out and do not contribute to the natal family maintenance. Among Hindus sons perform death rites for the father which daughters cannot perform. Miller also refers to class/caste variations in juvenile sex ratios. There is a great disparity between survival rates of male and female children and their nutritional status, more so among the upper class and landed families. While the lower class landless families also mirror this disparity, it is less so. There are four points she emphasized regarding female infanticide in India. (1) Although it is common in the North, the South is not completely free of this practice;

TABLE - 3

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DEATHS IN AGE GROUP 0-4 YEARS
TO TOTAL DEATHS (1977)**

Rural	Urban	Age Group	Male	Female	Person
Rural		Below 29 days	20.32	17.59	18.94
		29 days to 1 year	9.90	12.09	11.00
		Below 1 year	30.22	29.68	29.94
		1-4 years	16.65	20.58	18.64
Urban		Below 29 days	14.03	11.25	12.70
		29 days to 1 year	10.01	10.66	10.32
		Below 1 year	24.05	21.91	23.02
		1-4 years	10.27	15.74	12.90
Total		Below 29 days	19.50	16.83	18.16
		29 days to 1 year	9.91	11.91	10.92
		Below 1 year	29.41	28.74	29.08
		1-4 years	15.82	20.61	17.92

Based on results of Sample Registration System

TABLE - 4

INFANT MORTALITY BY SEX

Rural	Urban	Year	Male	Female	Person
Total					
Rural		1972	141	161	150
		1973	141	144	143
		1976	133	146	139
		1977	136	146	140
		1978	130	142	136
Urban		1972	85	85	85
		1973	88	90	89
		1976	78	82	80
		1977	80	82	81
		1978	69	71	70
Total		1972	132	148	139
		1973	132	135	134
		1976	124	135	129
		1977	126	135	130
		1978	120	131	125

Source - Sample Registration System

NH-100
06578



(2) Unbalanced sex ratios as a result of infanticide are not only associated with poverty; (3) Most information indicates a worsening situation; (4) Payment of large dowries is often associated with female infanticides. However, she cautions about this generalization because there are also cases where there is no female infanticide even when large dowries are the norm.

There are two components of infant mortality (mortality up to one year): neonatal mortality, which is death below 29 days, and post-natal mortality, which is death from 30 days up to a year. Neonatal death is usually influenced by endogenous factors, like prematurity, congenital malformations, etc.; whereas, post-natal mortality is caused by exogenous factors like infections, malnutrition, injuries, environmental conditions, etc. which can be controlled by medical intervention. It is also generally known that female babies are more resistant to infections. Table 4 indicates that male children, in urban as well as in rural areas, have higher mortality than female newborns. However, inspite of the greater resistance of the female child from one month of age onwards, there is higher mortality. Table 5 shows the major three causes of death at different ages.¹⁵ Tetanus in the newborn is a number one cause in rural areas and a second cause in urban areas. This is due to unhygienic conditions during delivery. There is a higher percentage of male newborns dying of prematurity. After these two causes, the other causes of death are infections which are preventable. In these cases there is generally a higher degree of mortality among female children. Studies on sex differentials in mortality give us a few clues on the reasons. As Miller has mentioned infanticide was suspect in the higher female infant mortality in some areas. Where it is not practiced some researchers claim that there is female child neglect. Malnutrition is one of the ways which give us some clue to child neglect.

MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN

Malnutrition among girl children is well documented in many studies.^{16,17,18,19} Karkal quotes several studies where even breast feeding of female children is differentiated from male children.²⁰ The feeding of the male child "on demand" and of girls at "the mothers' finding time" from their duties result in discrimination in the nutritional needs of children and lays the foundation of "gastropolitical socialization of children into roles of demand (boys) and deference (girls)".²¹ Mothers are encouraged to take time to feed their sons, while there is excuse to postpone feeding of female infants.

Table 5

Per cent child deaths by major three causes for deaths by age and sex, 1978

Rural				Urban			
Cause of Death	Per cent			Cause of death	Per cent		
	M	F	P		M	F	P
Below 1 year							
Tetanus	14.7	15.6	15.2	Prematurity	13.4	8.7	11.1
Prematurity	8.8	7.0	7.9	Tetanus	8.5	4.6	6.6
Pneumonia	5.3	8.3	6.8	Dysentery	4.3	6.6	5.4
One year							
Pneumonia	10.1	11.4	10.9	Pneumonia	15.4	15.1	15.1
Typhoid	3.1	14.3	9.9	Typhoid	8.8	8.6	8.7
Dysentery	8.5	9.1	8.8	Influenza	8.7	6.0	7.1
Two year							
Dysentery	8.6	12.4	11.0	Pneumonia	5.9	13.4	10.6
Typhoid	10.9	10.1	10.3	Diarrhoea	-	15.0	9.4
Diarrhoea	6.5	11.5	9.5	Dysentery	-	12.4	7.8
Three year							
Typhoid	10.3	10.2	10.3	Pneumonia	7.4	22.4	16.5
Influenza	10.5	9.5	10.0	Influenz	7.4	16.9	13.2
Pneumonia	7.2	11.4	9.5	Typhoid	11.5	7.5	9.1

This ideology of son preference leads women to breast feed longer a male child, but stop feeding a girl child sooner.

Studies of hospital attendance of children have also shown a preponderance of malnourished female children than those of males. Tables 6, 7, & 8 show this inequality. Malnutrition in different parts of the country as shown in Tables 7 & 8 shows this same trend. Whether in I degree malnutrition or II degree or III degree malnutrition, the female is at a disadvantage. Studies in Punjab which has one of the highest per capita income in the country (third to Delhi and Goa in 1986-87)²² shows this sex differential. The relative neglect of the girl child from infancy imparts insults to her which eventually affect her life as a woman and future generations as well. We are familiar with the practice of men eating before women and often women are blamed for perpetuating the same even as she allocates food for her family. That is blaming her for thoroughly internalizing the culture of deference to the male species in all aspects of life, including preferential food allocations, especially of prestige and 'good food'.

TABLE - 6

**NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SAFDARJUNG HOSPITAL
NEW DELHI : DEGREE OF MALNUTRITION**

Age group	No.		Normal	1st	2nd	3rd
0 - 1 year	3910	M	38.10	34.21	20.12	9.1
	3627	F	39.01	35.31	19.29	9.5
1 - 2 years	804	M	26.12	37.81	23.38	12.69
	644	F	23.29	30.12	20.19	26.40
2 - 3 years	629	M	30.05	31.81	25.76	12.62
	439	F	20.50	32.80	25.05	21.64
3 - 4 years	317	M	31.55	36.91	18.93	12.62
	220	F	29.09	32.73	23.64	14.55
4 - 5 years	334	M	34.43	38.92	16.17	10.48
	194	F	32.28	51.02	15.46	15.46
			Male % Female			
Severe Malnutrition	Infants			2.35	18.35	
	Toddlers			7.98	14.71	
	Pre-schoolers			4.26	6.71	
Moderate malnutrition	Infants			15.33	30.38	
	Toddlers			21.00	25.29	
	Pre-schoolers			21.57	38.16	
Mild Malnutrition	Infants			25.64	30.47	
	Toddlers			34.42	35.67	
	Pre-schoolers			39.48	37.20	
Normal	Infants			56.67	20.81	
	Toddlers			36.62	14.33	
	Pre-schoolers			34.68	27.93	

Source : Malini Karkal and Divya Pandely, Studies on Women and Population : A Critique, (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1989), p.39.

Table 7

Malnutrition on the Gomez's Scale in Male and Female Infants

Centre	Male							Female						
	Retardation grade							Retardation grade						
	Exce- llent	Normal	I	II	III	NR	N	Exce- llent	Normal	I	II	III	NR	N
Bombay	12.5	21.9	42.5	18.3	2.8	2.0	958	8.2	17.4	43.2	25.4	4.5	1.3	862
Calcutta	5.4	14.2	42.7	25.0	8.2	4.5	667	5.5	14.8	36.9	27.5	10.6	4.7	710
Madras	10.2	19.9	41.7	23.0	3.1	2.1	846	5.6	14.8	43.8	28.3	5.7	1.8	89

Notes : N = Total number of samples
NR = No response

Source : C. Gopalan, "The Mother and Child in India, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XX, 4, January 26, 1985, p. 162.

TABLE - 8**MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN IN PUNJAB**

		Male Percentage	Female Percentage
Severe Malnutrition	Infants	2.35	18.35
	Toddlers	7.98	14.71
	Pre-schoolers	4.26	6.71
Moderate Malnutrition	Infants	15.33	30.38
	Toddlers	21.00	25.29
	Pre-schoolers	21.57	38.16
Mild Malnutrition	Infants	25.64	30.47
	Toddlers	34.42	35.67
	Pre-schoolers	39.48	37.20
Normal	Infants	56.67	20.81
	Toddlers	36.62	14.33
	Pre-schoolers	34.68	27.93

Source : Shanti Ghosh, "Discrimination Begins at Birth", Presented in the Conference on the girl child, UNICEF, 1985.

From National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000 A.D. Report of the core group set up by the Department of Women and Child Development Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, 1988.

THE GIRL CHILD

The ideology of son preference is so deep rooted in the culture that it has religious as well as social sanctions leading to the neglect of half of the population. The life of the girl child has been highlighted during the past year being the SAARC Year of the Girl Child. I have already mentioned the mortality and nutritional status of the girl child. Found below are summary statements from a pamphlet on the girl child brought out for the SAARC Year of the Girl Child.²³

1. Data show that girls in India do not achieve their full height and weight on account of dietary insufficiencies.
2. Several micro-studies have found that a girl's diet is inferior both in quality and quantity to a boy's diet, and that a higher number of girls and women suffer from malnutrition as compared to men and boys in the same age groups.
3. According to the well known Morinda study, the most significant determinant of nutritional status is sex, that is, a child's sex per se more consistently accounts for nutritional status than any other independent variable.
4. Discriminatory feeding practices start early in life. Girls are breast fed for shorter periods (often this is prompted by the anxiety to conceive and give birth to a son soon after a daughter's birth) and receive less supplementary foods than boys. Sons are shown preference in the distribution of more nutritious foods such as milk, butter and eggs.
5. Clinical data indicate a preponderance of protein energy malnutrition among boys, however, field studies and home visits show a much higher prevalence (4-5 times in one instance) of the disease among girls.
6. Research studies consistently show that diarrhoea which is a major cause of malnutrition, morbidity and death, is more widespread among females.
7. Fewer girls than boys receive timely and/or adequate health care; if they are treated, it is usually by a traditional healer; boys are likely to be taken to a more qualified doctor.
8. Hospital records show that more boys are brought in for treatment than girls, who are usually admitted only when the illness has become critical.

9. The care of the sick girl is inversely related to her birth order; higher birth order girls (e.g. those born third or fourth) tend to receive less treatment than first or second born daughters.
10. Access to essential medical care becomes a pattern for life and is reflected in attendance and admission figures at hospitals which are significantly lower for women than for men.

That such neglect of the girl child is possible is an indictment of the cultural norms which perpetuate inhuman treatment in the name of sex.

THE INDIAN SEX RATIO

The declining sex ratio in India which is at present 935 females to 1000 males²⁴ is a much studied subject. It is said that it can take place because of four reasons: "(1) differentials in enumeration of the two sexes or undercounting or omission of population of one sex compared to the other; (2) differentials in births of males and females or sex ratio at birth; (3) differentials in migration of population of the two sexes; and (4) differentials in mortality or deaths of the two sexes."²⁵ I do not intend to repeat the various arguments for its production here; however, it is obvious that the excess female mortality that we have been talking about is responsible for the adverse ratio. There are socio-economic reasons for this. The inferior status of women, their role and work opportunities have influence on this. The adverse family food allocations for the women, the delay of treatment for illnesses suffered by women, the injury imposed on the women for multiple pregnancies so that she does not fully recover from the strains and stress of successive pregnancies, the double work that she does without complaining surely contribute to the insults to her body accumulated throughout her life - discrimination as a child, early marriage and child rearing, malnutrition, and recurrent infections aggravated by other accumulated insults - all contribute to her early demise. It is very clear that the sex ratio at birth does not give rise to this differential. The major force is mortality differentials in the various stages of her life.

The census of India, 1991 preliminary findings of a decline in sex ratio from 935 to 929/1000 males has brought much concern and a flurry of newspaper articles trying to speculate on the causes of the phenomenon. There is a general acceptance of the biological advantages of women over men in terms of longevity, but the sex differentials favouring men is appalling. The pervasive discrimination of females and son preference ideology, less access to health care services seem to be the common explanations for the higher mortality of female over male in both urban and rural areas.²⁶ Table 9 shows the preliminary data on the sex ratio and literacy in the country.²⁷

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

The emphasis of the maternal and child health services is the promotion of health in the mother and child. The care of the woman is concentrated during her reproductive period in order that she is enabled to have a healthy pregnancy and give birth to a healthy child. Having said that, it appears that the woman is taken care of just like a machine so that it works perfectly. She is handled mechanically to the

TABLE - 9

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION, SEX RATIO AND RATE OF LITERACY

India/States	Population	Sex ratio		Literacy rate	
		1981	1991	1981	1991
India States	84,39,30,861	934	929	43.56	52.11
Andhra Pradesh	6,63,04,854	975	972	35.66	45.11
Assam	2,22,94,562	910	925	-	53.42
Bihar	8,63,38,853	946	912	32.03	38.54
Gujarat	4,11,74,060	942	936	52.21	60.91
Haryana	1,63,17,715	870	874	43.85	55.33
Jammu and Kashmir	77,18,700	892	923	32.68	-
Karnataka	4,48,17,398	963	960	46.20	55.98
Kerala	2,90,11,237	1,032	1,040	81.56	90.59
Madhya Pradesh	6,61,35,862	941	932	34.22	43.45
Maharashtra	7,87,06,719	937	936	55.83	63.05
Orissa	3,15,12,070	981	972	40.96	48.55
Punjab	2,01,90,795	879	888	48.12	57.14
Rajasthan	4,38,80,640	919	913	30.09	38.81
Tamil Nadu	5,56,38,318	977	972	54.38	63.72
Uttar Pradesh	13,87,60,417	885	882	33.33	41.71
West Bengal	6,79,82,732	911	917	48.64	57.72

Note: 1) The figures for Jammu & Kashmir are only estimates

2) The literacy rate for all persons refer to the population above seven years of age.

Source : "CENSUS OF INDIA - 1991", Economic Times, (Midweek Review) 18-4-91

neglect of her other needs and if she does not follow the doctor's orders, she is called names, like negligent mother, lazy, ignorant, etc. She is given tablets to take for her anemia,

told to eat properly, and make herself clean. She is even asked to take rest if she has time. Before and after her pregnancy, nothing is done for her until she gets her next pregnancy. The same treatment is directed to the child. She is a mere appendage of the mother. She is weighed, height measured, immunized, and sometimes given supplementary food, until she is five or six years old. Until the conditions making women and children unhealthy in the home environment and in society in general are changed, maternal and child health services are mostly palliative and not directed at the root cause of their ill health. Nutrition programmes are more to our psychological well being. Women and children must be freed from the shackles of societal conditions that keep them unhealthy.

A study of the goals of the health and welfare programme would reveal the target orientation of the programme. What ideology guide these goals? Are women involved in setting the goals for the maternal and child health services? Women health workers implement most of its programme, but do these women have a voice in the target setting or in strategizing to fulfill the targets? In previous sections I have already dealt with infant and child mortality and malnutrition, so let me turn to life expectancy of women.

The life expectancy at birth of men and women in most of the countries of the world is always favourable to women, except in India and a few South Asian countries. The life expectancy of men in 1981 was 52.9 years and 54.0 years for women. It is the first time since 1921²⁸ that females have higher life expectancy. However, Karkal states that the figure is a little deceiving. Review of age group mortality shows that the apparent gain is due to lower mortality above the age group 55 years and above. The actual situation is that many more women continue to die at a higher rate than males at the lower age groups. This is precisely the age group which is the concern of the maternal and child health services.

Medical professionals like to pinpoint the medical causes of these mortality. So let us look at these medical causes. Table 10 indicates that the most common causes of death among women is during child birth and pregnancy. Anemia which is easily preventable remains a major cause of death in addition to bleeding during pregnancy and after delivery. Anemia is associated with other nutritional deficiencies. These two conditions are also the leading cause of prematurity. Anemia and bleeding during pregnancy and puerperium plus puerperal sepsis (severe infection after childbirth) accounts for 54.3% of all causes of death among pregnant women in 1983.

Table 10

Percentage of deaths by causes related to child birth and pregnancy
(Maternal 1976 to 1983)

Specific causes	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Abortion	11.6	8.2	11.0	11.7	12.5	13.7	10.7	10.7
Toxemia	10.4	11.2	21.2	16.1	12.4	8.0	12.5	12.1
Anaemia	22.1	15.9	14.6	15.0	15.8	17.7	24.4	18.9
Bleeding of pregnancy and puerperium	17.2	20.6	18.2	20.0	15.8	23.4	26.2	23.8
Malposition of child leading to death of mother	8.6	9.4	9.5	10.5	13.4	9.2	7.2	8.3
Puerperal sepsis	13.5	18.8	12.4	11.7	12.4	13.1	8.3	11.6
Not classifiable	16.6	15.9	13.1	15.0	17.7	14.9	11.3	14.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sample no. of deaths	163	170	137	180	209	175	168	206
Not classifiable	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.2

Source : Survey of causes of Deaths (Rural) 1980, 1983

- A Report R.G. India.

From "National Perspective Plan for Women" 1988-2000 A.D.

Report of the Core group set up by the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 1988.

Table 11 indicates that untrained professionals, most often the untrained village traditional birth attendant, continue to attend almost three quarters of all births in rural areas and 29% in urban areas. This means that more than 60% of pregnant women do not get professional help to even detect the most frequent cause of their death. Testing for anemia is one routine examination done during antenatal care and about 61% of women between ages 15 - 29 years are known to be anemic.³⁰ No instrument is necessary to screen anemia. If only someone in the women's family or she herself could be taught to do a self examination, she herself could prevent her own morbidity or mortality. It is known that untrained village midwives do not see the women they deliver until they are called to assist in the delivery. The village midwife could also be a potential helper. Maternal death need not be at the level it is at 500 deaths per 100,000 live births. The nutritional status of woman, so important to produce a healthy baby and for her to survive the complications of pregnancy go unnoticed. With no proper data to assess the nutritional status of women, the data on maternal and infant mortality provide enough evidence of the incidence of malnutrition among women in the reproductive age groups.³⁰ The birth weight of children also reflects on the mother's nutritional status. A study in New Delhi from 1969 to 1974 clearly shows that low birth weight increases the incidence of infant mortality.³¹

TABLE - 11

Sector	Institutional	Attended by training professional	Attended by untrained professional
Rural	12.6	16.3	71.1
Urban	45.4	25.4	29.2
Total	19.2	18.1	62.7

Source : Sample Registration Bulletin

From National Perspective Plan for Women,
1988-200 A.D

Report of the Core Group set up by the Department of
Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human
Resource Development, Government of India, 1988.

It is not very difficult to find the causes of women's ill health. In infancy and early childhood woman faces the risks of malnutrition and death; in early adolescent she continues to be exposed to the same risks plus an additional greater risk of death resulting from early marriage and pregnancy. During her reproductive life, with the accumulation of insults to her body from chronic malnutrition and request pregnancies, she faces a much greater risk of dying of childbirth or even from abortion. Having said the above in terms of medical conditions used as indicators of health status, it is equally valid to say that the causes of these conditions and their management are right in the confines of the household and the family. No doubt the maternal and child health services need to be accessible and available to those who need it most, but the use of these accessible and available services depends on the power dynamics in the household and family.

The Committee on the Status of Women in India in its report states :

The cultural norms that particularly affect women's health are the attitudes to marriage, age of marriage, the value attached to fertility and sex of the child, the patterns of family organization and the ideal role demanded of the women by social conventions. They determine her place within the family, the degree of her access to medical care, education, nutrition and other accessories of health ... Cultural insistence of the marriage of women in the early phase of their child bearing period, leads to high fertility rate and each additional child is a burden on the mother, affecting her physical and mental health ... Furthermore woman's nutritional requirements are often sacrificed to provide a little more nutrition to others in the family. This is true not only³² among adult women, but also includes female infants.

It is very clear that women's health is not really in the hands of the health care system.

The perspective from the Women's Movement to the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) criticizes the draft plan when it states: "any serious attempt to improve the health of women must deal firstly with the biased social customs and cultural tradition." The report states that the draft statement above "seeks to negate the impact of a grossly inadequate health care delivery system on women's health."³³ While I agree that the health care delivery system is grossly inadequate, we can legitimately ask why is it grossly inadequate. Unless social customs and cultural traditions, to which I would add patriarchy, the caste/class ideologies that tend to pervade our decision making and life styles, I doubt if a restructured health care

system would suddenly begin to respond to gender issues in women's health status. No amount of greater allocation for health can really out balance the negative effect of biases because of sex and genderization of women's illness.

Guy Poitevin in his paper "primary Health Care as a Gender Issue"³⁴ studied in rural Maharashtra how female healthy animators (HAO, who are peasant women themselves) could relate their understanding of the village system of health relations in their work as health workers. He wanted to find out how these voluntary female HA of modern health education scheme relate these traditional beliefs and practices in their work and deal with them. There is a clash between modern practices and these traditional practices and so what is the status of traditional treatments in relation to the more modern ones? There is a widespread gender differentiation which makes woman assume a crucial role in health care. It is expected that she assumes the responsibility of caring for the sick whether she knows what to do or not. It is her responsibility to ask her neighbour or go to the traditional healers for help. If she does not, her husband or in-laws would remind her it is her duty. Why was she brought into the family if she does not do her duty, and who would take care of her when she herself gets sick? The awareness of this duty creates a lot of stress, lest she be left alone. When she falls ill, she is still expected to get up to take care of her family without expecting her husband to help. This certainly explains some of the ritualistic and symbolic practices, she performs to arrest illness in her family. These include fasting, making vows, singing psalms, doing puja, undergoing physical penance, and many various other practices to arrest the evil eye, especially as regards children. Further, Poitevin states that there is definite gender differentiation in the ritualistic/symbolic field and in the non-ritualistic field of medicine.

Women's roles are confined to listening and being taught, servicing and material attendance performing the ritualistic counter procedures meant to ward off the aggression against family prosperity, and administering modern medicines to the sick at home. Dependency and instrumentality seem the main characteristics of the women's status in the system of the social relations of health. Conversely men in both the modern and traditional therapies are teaching and revealing the secret reasons of diseases, with an unparalleled authority, prescribing the remedial measures out of a knowledge of their own, ordering and managing, paying and controlling.

The use of modern medicine may not alter the social relations. When the woman or girl falls sick, the husband or father is not asked immediately to go to the dispensary. The man on his own will eventually make the decision to do something. It

is also said that when a woman falls ill, it is generally assumed that she is putting on an act and is blamed for not wanting to work. When she becomes seriously ill, only then, might she be brought to a healer and only when that fails is she brought to a modern doctor. Poitevin advises that women need not discard the pivotal role they enjoy in the traditional social relations of health. Modern medicine however, should not replace the traditional ways. Modern knowledge should be able to provide them more confidence in what they can do. This would eventually help them to counteract several of the health hardships they have been oppressed with. Modern knowledge will give them enough control of their own sphere of responsibility which hopefully will eventually upset the patriarchal health relations.

Meera Chatterjee speaks along the same lines in "Competence and Care³⁵ for Women: Health Policy Perspectives in the Household context". Women are the main health providers in the household. However, power relations within the household determine the distribution of health goods among its members. Since the household is the main environment for distribution of resources - food, water, shelter, clothing, etc., health knowledge, the main socializing unit and reproductive unit, many health related decisions are made therein. The education of women on many aspects of health promotion, disease prevention, and curative care will go a long way. The use of the community health guide in a household approach will have great influence on the main actors and decision makers in relation to health.

FAMILY WELFARE PLANNING

Preponderance of female related family planning methods is no happenstance. Women have long been an object of research on how to control her fertility and how to control her power potential. Women, however, have no choice in the matter of method nor the timing of her acceptance of a method. That the family planning programme has not succeeded in reducing the birth rate is its target orientation leading to ineffective motivational work as well as improper selection of targets and methods used. Sterilization is practically forced on women with female sterilization being 90% of all sterilizations³⁶.

Anuradh K. Jain in "Revising the Role of Responsibility of the Family Welfare Programme in India"³⁷ claims that the Indian delegation to the World Population conference at Bucharest in 1974 was instrumental in coining the slogan "development is the best contraceptive", but development programmes continue to adversely affect women. He suggests that the family welfare programme should take the role of making available quality services and information. The objective of reducing fertility could not be done by the programme itself but it must be done in conjunction with the other sectors of development. He suggests identifying and optimizing the fertility effects of policies and programmes in the health and education sectors.

Reduction of the level of infant mortality should take priority if fertility reduction is found to be a worthwhile objective. The effect of infant and child mortality on fertility are both biological and behavioural. When breast feeding, which is considered effective in reducing fertility, is stopped after an infant's death, the interval between births is shortened thus increasing fertility. On the other hand, couples faced with high infant and child mortality are eager to replace the dead child by having another birth sooner. In this case, the health care services for children must improve its effectiveness in curtailing infant and child mortality.

There are many ways in which the education of the woman could reduce fertility. The linkage between education and mortality is not well known but it is shown that the education of mothers has³⁸ a role in determining the level of infant and child mortality. Tables 12 and 13 shows decrease of mortality rate with the increase of mother's education. Primary education and above³⁹ show a greater decline in the mortality of their children.

Age of marriage also contributes to the reduction of fertility. Educated girls tend to marry at a later age and some of them marry late enough to have fewer children. Sadly enough, inspite of the age of marriage being increased legally to 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys, young people continue to be married⁴⁰ at a young age. In a study of Maharashtra by Karkal and Rajan⁴⁰ women were asked at what age they were married. The older women in general married at an earlier age, between 11-14 years. Women who are presently below the age of 24 years had a mean age of marriage at 15.2 years and 15.9 years. This just shows that marriage continues to be at much lower age than is legally prescribed. These adolescent girls and even pre-adolescent girls will continue to be married young as long as women are considered sex objects. Not only are they allowed to develop sexually and personally, they still lack the decision making capabilities needed in married life.

Table 12

Infant mortality rates by education attainment of mothers, 1978

States	Illiterate		Literate		Below Primary		Primary & above	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
All India	145	88	90	50	101	57	71	47
Andhra Pradesh	128	70	75	46	75	28	77	59
Assam	126	124	116	75	149	105	51	41
Bihar	104	58	65	20	71	-	38	30
Gujarath	138	89	101	81	112	84	51	79
Haryana	122	79	94	42	96	41	93	43
Himchal Pradesh	134	61	23	73	47	101	-	64
Jammu and Kashmir	81	33	41	23	76	32	26	21
Karnataka	90	90	73	28	77	-	63	38
Kerala	55	29	37	25	44	40	29	21
Madhya Pradesh	145	107	140	71	89	62	117	76
Maharashtra	89	73	73	40	81	55	54	33
North Eastern Region	102	99	56	31	61	66	50	21
Orissa	141	99	107	49	124	60	56	35
Punjab	128	95	61	45	87	63	48	40
Rajasthan	142	71	84	51	98	73	59	35
Tamil Nadu	128	85	76	44	89	53	50	37
Uttar Pradesh	188	125	132	86	141	105	115	72
West Bengal	84	84	76	67	68	69	89	47

Source: Office of the Registrar, India, "Survey on Infant and Child Mortality, 1979", New Delhi, 1983.

From Leela Visaria, Infant Mortality in India: Level, Trend & Determinants Economic Political Weekly, Vol.XX, 32, August 24, 1985 p.1449.

Table 13

Infant mortality rates by (A) educational attainment and (B) work status/ occupational group of mothers, 1978

Characteristic of Mother	India		Gujarat		Kerala		Uttar Pradesh	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
(A) Educational attainment								
Illiterate	145	88	138	89	55	29	188	125
Literate	90	50	101	81	37	25	132	86
Below Primary	101	57	112	84	44	40	141	105
Primary and above	71	47	51	79	29	21	115	72
(B) Work status/ Occupation								
Non-workers	134	64	125	83	34	31	175	107
Workers	142	98	148	102	74	-	151	133
Agricultural	143	106	145	-	89	-	150	155
Blue collar *	150	129	203	143	50	-	236	164

Note: * Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers

Source: Office of the Registrar, India, "Survey on Infant and Child Mortality, 1979", New Delhi, 1983. pp 30, 189, 382, 703.

From Leela Visaria, Infant Mortality in India: Level, Trend & Determinants Economic Political Weekly, Vol.XX, 32, August 24, 1985 p.1449.

Jain and Nag strongly advocate the change in educational policy to advance female education, because of its important link to reduction in fertility. Table 14 and the chart next to it sadly shows that education of the female child is much less than the male child. Kerala of all the States has very high enrollment (83.97%) between ages 10 - 14 years and the rest of India is below 50% except in Punjab and Maharashtra. In a publication by UNICEF (see chart next to Table 14), there is almost 70% of non-attendance in ages 6 - 11 years and 11 - 14 years in rural areas. Urban attendance is much better. Furthermore, Jain and Nag recommend that the educational policy should give priority to female primary education and in the reduction of repetitions and drop out rates from primary schools. It is believed that primary education "enhances women's status within and outside her family and increases their exposure to information and ideas disseminated through printed materials. This brings changes in their general behaviour involving breast feeding, use of contraceptives and fertility. In addition staying longer in school increases their age at marriage".

The injectable contraceptives which are being experimented on third world women including here in India cannot be taken out of the context of the family/household ideology. Women who are motivated insufficiently become guinea pigs for those who continue to see women as sex objects and worthy targets only, not as human beings with full rights of choice on what to do with their own bodies.

Sex determination procedures are also within the ambit of the family/household ideology. A modern procedure to help identify congenital abnormalities in the foetus in order to strengthen couple counselling has now become also a procedure to identify the sex of the foetus as a preliminary step for aborting a female foetus. Has the female foetus come to be equated to a congenital anomaly? The way the procedure is being popularized is bringing the female foetus to the level of an anomaly and as such can be gotten rid of.

TABLE - 14

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOLS IN MAJOR STATES 1981

India/State	Age-group (in year)					
	5-9			10-14		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
India	38.45	44.33	32.21	50.45	62.07	37.47
Andhra Pradesh	40.51	47.04	33.88	41.12	51.64	29.73
Bihar	25.88	32.96	18.37	41.44	55.41	24.70
Gujarath	44.89	49.97	39.41	60.63	70.35	49.66
Haryana	39.14	46.57	30.70	54.89	71.12	36.23
Karnataka	43.25	48.71	37.78	48.07	53.14	37.80
Kerala	75.10	75.14	75.06	85.96	87.90	83.97
Madhya Pradesh	29.99	37.78	21.90	41.25	55.38	25.34
Maharashtra	52.46	57.60	47.12	62.59	73.07	51.23
Orissa	41.01	48.54	33.58	43.46	56.18	30.42
Punjab	52.00	54.36	49.33	62.85	69.20	55.53
Rajasthan	26.97	36.84	16.28	39.99	58.34	18.68
Tamil Nadu	59.35	63.93	54.61	55.47	65.93	44.62
Uttar Pradesh	23.35	32.08	17.41	43.60	58.46	25.05
West Bengal	36.85	40.77	32.83	52.86	60.18	45.11

Excludes Assam

Source: Census of India 1981, Series 1, India Paper 2. 1983

WOMEN IN THE RURAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Amar Jesani in her study of ANMs⁴¹ in PHCs in Maharashtra clearly shows the gender division of health work as exemplified in the work of the ANMs and yet they are alienated from the women whom they should be reaching out to as women relating to women. Just before Independence there were only 5000 ANMs and by 1987 there were 1,08,511. From the beginning ANMs were all females. Job functions were that of the care of women and children. However, when the multipurpose health workers came into being from the 'unipurpose' workers from the malaria control programme, the ANMs came to be called female health workers (HW) and the male workers from the unipurpose pool of workers were now called male HW. In 1987 there were 88,308 male HWs in the country. The creation of the multipurpose workers unfortunately brought about further genderization of the health delivery system with the social status of the male HWs increasing and the women as usual having a lower status. The male HWs acquired the image of 'doctors' with the accompanying advantages of slightly higher socio-economic background, political connections, and they unofficially expanded their scope of treatment activities commensurate to their image as 'doctors'. With the accompanying advantages of slightly higher socio-economic background, political connections, and they unofficially expanded their scope of treatment activities commensurate to their image as 'doctors' or 'malaria doctor.' The ANM remained the service provider commensurate to her gender role. Jesani claims that in the community the classical nurse-patient relationship is absent and the female HW is looked upon less as a health worker, nurse, or midwife. The community look at her more as a woman, trying to fulfill her targets for the health care system. There is no way in which she can assert herself as a nurse as in the hospital organization, neither has she the socio-economic background nor the political connections which have enhanced the status of her male counterpart. Jesani according to her study states that the ANM has in finding for herself an occupation and economic advantage to her family, further lowered her social standing as a family welfare worker. She walks around the village doing her work, which is contrary to the image of a good woman. She talks about reproduction, contraceptive methods and constantly motivates people to accept them. Such work is perceived as degrading as "only the prostitute can talk about sex so freely with so much knowledge about it."⁴² Being in the lowest rung of the hierarchy of functionaries, she is at the mercy of her superiors and male colleagues and treated not as a colleague but a woman. No wonder she does not have any credible standing in the community as well as among women themselves leading to a very poor image of herself.

WOMEN AND EMPOWERMENT

Jesani in another article⁴³ states that two thirds of the working time of PHCs are directed towards the programme of family welfare, immunization, and maternal and child health care. However, this has not drastically changed the health status of women and children, neither improved their bargaining power nor their capacity to control their own body. In other words emphasis on maternal and child health has not empowered women to improve their own health status. She claims that women are subordinated to targets and not to improve their health status.

By emphasizing family welfare programmes, woman is a mere machine and her care is the care of a reproductive machine. This care of the reproductive machine is subject to patriarchal values. She should not have too many children and with the advent of sex determination technology, she must produce male children. Her female foetus must be aborted. The absence of male contraceptives in itself is a patriarchal ploy to subjugate woman. She must bear the brunt of controlling her fertility with male made technologies. Health education and immunization of children are meant to control her fertility. Even her education is being encouraged not for herself but for the sake of changing her fertility behaviour. Children are bracketed with the women, but where are the fathers? What are his responsibilities towards the health of women and children?

Jesani pleads for delinking women's care and health care in general away from targets, and that health care is for the care of individuals and the community. Empowerment of women must emerge independently not subordinated to patriarchal domination even in the attainment of her positive health status. She must have control of her body as well as over forces influencing her life.

The main arena of change, however, must be within the family/household where the ideology which perpetuates inequality in the health system as well as inequality in health status. The family/household is the main socialization unit where women and men learn their sex roles and the sexual division of labour that pervades the whole society. Readjustment in the power relations in the household must extend to the larger society. For women to survive in society, she needs to learn how to cope first in the family/household environment. She need not remain silent, but start a family restructuring of relations within and find her power to do so in solidarity with other women.

In the health system there is a need to examine the ways in which women have been considered as a sex object, object of targets of programmes instead of being treated as a human being. Programmes directed to improve her health and her children must be looked into in the context of the household/family ideology, so that the very situations that make women and children unhealthy could be incorporated in the planning process. Women

as primary health care providers for her family, should be trained, not just told what to do, in order for her to make decisions and carry them out. She must also be brought into the decision making process at the local level of implementing programmes. She must be taken out of a dependency state and trained to become self reliant and strong in decision making, especially in matters affecting her life and affecting her body.

Administrators and policy makers must always take gender issues more critically so that in operationalising goals and objectives traditional values which have limited ones outlook can be overcome.

No amount of modification of goals, restructuring of the system, increase allocations for health and other development areas of without a serious questioning of the power relations in the family as well as in society will yield satisfactory results. Empowerment of women cannot be legislated; it can only grow when oppressive structures are changed allowing not only women but also men to see how they oppress each other, knowingly and unknowingly, in their own socialization.

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WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION - AN UNFULFILLED PROMISE

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WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION - AN UNFULFILLED PROMISE

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Of late critical issues relating to the status of women has attracted the attention of many social scientists who find many areas still unexplored. Many attempts are made but a satisfactory picture is yet to be seen.

In general women are burdened with inequalities as a result of socio-cultural and economic discriminatory practices which, until recently, had been taken for granted as though they were part of the immutable scheme of things established by nature. It is seen that women have been denied equal opportunities all over the world for personal growth and social development. In India, it is still worse because of sex discrimination, conditions of poverty and the traditional value system even though women constitute 50 percent of the population. The status of women in India is quite low. This is reflected in the status and standards of their participation in the numerous dimension of life including education. It is a well known fact that the development of women's education is integrally linked with the perception of roles within Indian Society. Education, as we shall see has had minimal impact on the liberation of women from age-old prejudices and beliefs. The situation is comparatively better today but still woefully inadequate. By and large, increase of educational facilities and opportunities without social taboo has made it possible for some women to gain entry to particular branches and levels of education and thereby has emancipated them. This move was promoted by all champions of women's emancipation. But how far this effort by champions has uplifted the status of women is a question to be pondered over.

The formal system of school came with colonial rule. Prior to this Patashalas and madarasas were the place of learning basic literacy skills. Very few had this privilege as there were many problems which beset women in their full effective participation in education. The problems even to this day do not surface in isolation and cannot be tackled with problem specific solutions. They are intricately woven into the whole fabric of social existence. Thus they warrant a thorough overhauling of the entire social system.

The notion that education can be harmful for girls is widely prevalent even today. The historical roots of prejudice against women's education, and later against its expansion in non-traditional areas lay in a basic conviction that there was something special about women's nature which would be destroyed by excessive education. However, middle class educated women, particularly in large urban agglomerations who are working and moving freely generate an impression that Indian women's status has substantially improved. Moreover, there is evidence of capable efficient powerful women at times with political clout, which reinforces the impression.

But in small towns or rural areas or in city slums, women still suffer social and economic oppression. The growing instances of suffering socially and economically by women of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes generate despair, frustration and expose the inter-twining of caste, class, inspite of the constitutional guarantee and many fundamental laws which came into force as major instruments to remove social disabilities.

Undoubtedly, one of the striking achievements during the last forty years has been the acceptance of the need, and spread of women's education. Many girls are getting opportunities of entering portals of higher education. On the other hand, the colonial heritage of poverty, unemployment, deprivation of basic needs such as adequate nutrition, health services, sanitation, etc., have been accentuated.

The increasing feminisation of poverty is a matter of grave concern. The reality of the subordinate position of women is indicated through adverse sex ratio of girls, the growing domestic violence, increasing number of dowry death and rape cases. The relative ease with which Indian women secured judicial equality, entered professions and occupied positions of power has led to the myth that Indian women enjoy a very high status in society; they are able to balance their two roles very efficiently and that they wield power naturally. This myth has been eroded during the last ten to fifteen years. The problems of educated urban women become more serious since the discrimination and disabilities operate in more subtle and covert ways. Thus the dual existence of women holding high positions and yet undergoing various types of suffering continues.

With all the deep rooted problems relating to women's education few girls who realised the importance of education ventured into formal education and higher education and trained themselves as teachers, doctors, engineers etc. as these professions were largely regarded as noble professions.

There are several indicators which reflect the nature and quantum of participation of women in education. Literacy rates, enrolment at different levels of education, employment position are illustrations of such indicators. There has been a growth of literacy among women in India from 7.93 percent in 1951 to 24 percent in 1981, and this growth has been steady; (6 percent of growth rate on an average for the three decadal periods) keeping in view the increase in population. However, the position has been far from satisfactory as compared to the literacy position of males, in India as well as in other developing countries in Asia and Latin America, not to speak of the developed world. New education policy noted that only 5.46 percent of the females in Rajasthan were literate. States other than Rajasthan such as Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh have remained quite backward in female literacy situation. In terms

of growth of female literacy Indian performance has been disappointing while in terms of regional parity it has been skewed.

There is a wide disparity between the education of men and that of women. Although there has been a progress, but it is far from adequate. The constitution of India promised in 1950 universalisation of primary education by 1960. This goal has remained a distant dream. Again states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have performed very badly. For instance in 1975-76, 66.1 percent of girls in the age-group of 6-11 years were enrolled in primary classes, mainly in class-I. If we look at the 1980-81 figures namely at the time when these girls should have been going to Class-VI, their enrolment figure in Class VI had fallen to 29.1 percent. In other words, before primary schooling is over, well over 50 percent of those initially enrolled leave the system i.e., they drop-out.

Enrolment is only one dimension. There is the tragic phenomenon of dropping out from school which is more pronounced among girls than boys. Around 2 out of every 3 girls enrolled at the primary level and 4 out of 5 girls at the middle level school at various stages before the completion of the term. The drop out rates are higher in lower primary education at the I and II standard stages.

High enrolment and low drop-out rates among girls have been recorded, as compared to all India average, both at the primary and middle levels of education in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Tamilnadu. Low enrolment and high drop-out rates have been recorded in Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana.

On the whole, girls, constitute only a third of total enrolment at every level of schooling and their drop-out rate is higher than that of boys. The overall enrolments have been steadily rising with each census recording, but there remain substantial differences in male-female rates of participation.

While girls overall school enrolment increased from 64 lakhs in 1951 to nearly 400 lakhs in 1981, this still accounted for only 12 percent of the relevant age-groups at all levels as against a figure of 20 percent for boys. It is now more or less accepted that an obstacle impeding universalisation of primary education is the non-participation of girls. Further the likelihood of the rural girls being out of school is much higher than that of the urban girl. At the secondary level while only 13 percent of girls in the relevant age-group are in school, a meagre 17 percent of these are from the villages (R.K. Bhandari, "Educational Development of Women in India", New Delhi, Ministry of education and Culture, 1982, P-36). There are a number of reasons which keep girls away from school. Important among these are (i) the high cost of education because of earnings forgone in poor families (ii) Social factors such as early marriage and a

widespread belief in female seclusion, increasing the demand for girls' schools and women teachers and (iii) discriminatory processes at work within the school system itself.

There has been a sluggish growth of female enrolment at higher levels of education also though it had been suggested that a higher participation of women in the teaching profession would attract higher enrolment, still it is observed that women teaching force has grown from a little over 15 percent in 1951, at primary, middle and high/higher secondary levels to 25.51, 31.19, and 29.18 percent respectively in 1982-83.

Despite regional variations, going to college is by and large an urban middle-class phenomenon which is more marked in the case of girls. As such the enrolment of women in higher education has been steadily growing. It increased from 2.55 lakhs in 1966-67 to 8.17 lakhs in 1981-82. Thus the proportion of women enrolled in higher education has gone-up from 21.5 percent to only 27.7 percent.

A great majority of women in higher education pursue arts courses. A declining enrolment in art courses is observed. It has steadily declined from 64.66 percent in 1971-72 to 55.71% in 1981-82. Around 1 out of every 5 women pursue science courses and this trend has not varied. There is a steadily increasing participation of women in commerce faculty. From an enrolment proportion of 2.23 percent in 1971-72, it has gone upto 12.85 percent by 1981-82. Only 20 out of every 1000 engineering students were women in 1971-72. Thus, women are grossly under-represented in the professional courses. Participation of women in Engineering was totally non-existent in 1960-61 in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and several other Union Territories. It was quite low in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. This status continues till 1982-83 in a few states and several Union Territories.

The situation is similar in regard to Medical courses in the Union Territories and some of the new States. To promote literacy, adult education centres were started especially for girls of SC's and ST's as heavy drop-out among them was reported. Vocationalisation of education was also recommended by the Education Commission in 1966 and it was implemented in several states in 1977.

In general, it can be inferred that the participation rates of women in education in India is abysmally low. It is true of all levels and forms of education such as the primary, middle, high/higher secondary, higher and especially, professional levels as well as in non-formal adult and vocational education.

There are regional variations in participation rates. While some states like Kerala, Punjab and Tamilnadu are relatively higher performing States, there are states like Bihar, Rajasthan,

Uttara Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh (whole of Hindi belt) and Jammu and Kashmir which require a heavy dose or fillip. According to the 1975 Report on the Status of Women in India, we are told that one out of every three girls dropped out before she reached class V. And only one out of five girls reached class VIII.

Even though female literacy rate has increased from 10 - 24 percent between 1971 - 81, one cannot ignore the fact that the total number of illiterate women has actually increased from 215 million to 241 million.

One wonders why the participation rate of women in education as in other areas of life is so appalling. What are the problems which women have in full and effective participation? Who is responsible for this situation?

To my knowledge, the problems that can be generally identified are defective socialisation, male-domination, caste-class, background, economic bondage and special problems like purdah.

If the same trend is allowed to continue my fear is there will not be any progress and women's participation in education will be limited to a cross section of one fourth of the total women in India. To promote education among women, an organised and peaceful social and cultural revolution is called for. A strong and dedicated wide network of community effort and voluntary action can do the needful. We need to educate society i.e., education of young and re-education of the old through formal and non-formal way. It is the duty of an organised rational scientific civilised and human society to fight discrimination and work for a full and effective participation of women in Indian society, so that authentic equality among the sexes prevails.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN

1. Though compulsory Education Act has been in force, its implementation is poor. Attractive incentives to the female children right from the first year itself may be given. Since economic factor is the main constraint, if need be, we should provide even cash allowances to such women.
2. Since girls generally drop-out for want of separate school, inadequate number of women teachers and neighbourhood schools, it is necessary to bridge the gaps, even though it involves additional cost.
3. If children from poor environmental conditions attend school at the primary level, special care like scholarships, clothes, books and special coaching should be arranged for their retention in school.

4. Constant effort through social service to convince parents about the need to educate their female children should be undertaken.
5. Family can be taken as a unit for purposes of identification of beneficiaries below the poverty line for any programme and the activities must be educational in nature.
6. The matter of growing inequality of access to education cannot be resolved by the expansion of today's formal education system. Most poor women live and work beyond the orbit of this system. The experience of the past two decades shows that formal education has been of little use to such women. Only a more comprehensive system of informal education appropriately suited to the real needs of the vast majority of poor women would perhaps be a more effective way of tackling this problem.

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TABLE - 1

LITERACY RATE BY SEX FROM 1901-1981 (PERCENTAGE)

YEAR	PERSON	MALES	FEMALES
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81
1931	9.50	15.59	2.93
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30
1951	16.67	24.95	7.93
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981	36.17	46.74	24.88

SOURCE : Census of India 1981.

Series - I, India paper I of 1981 P-43.

TABLE - 2

PROGRESS OF FEMALE LITERACY 1901 - 1981

YEAR	MALES	NUMBER OF LITERATE	LITERATE MALES
		FEMALES	PER 100 LITERATE FEMALES
1901	1,18,70,758	8,09,580	1466
1911	1,35,52,737	12,98,484	1043
1921	1,56,90,428	22,21,499	1208
1931	2,22,74,035	39,77,034	560
1941	NA	NA	NA
1951	4,62,72,335	1,39,16,683	332
1961	7,79,06,038	2,75,69,602	283
1971	11,20,12,994	4,94,23,270	227
1981	15,88,37,215	7,91,54,717**	201

** Excludes Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.

NA stands for not available.

Source : Census of India - 1981

Series I India, Paper - 1 of 1981, P-49.

TABLE - 3

**ENROLMENT IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BY AGE AND SEX
(MILLION PERSONS)**

PRIMARY LEVEL CLASS I-V AGE 6-11 YEARS			MIDDLE LEVEL CLASS VI-VIII AGE 11-14 YEARS			
YEAR	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1950-51	13.8	5.4	19.2	2.6	0.5	3.1
55-56	17.5	7.7	25.2	3.4	0.9	4.3
60-61	23.6	11.4	35.0	5.1	1.6	6.7
65-66	32.2	18.3	50.5	9.7	2.8	12.5
70-71	35.7	21.3	57.0	9.4	3.9	13.3
75-76	40.7	25.0	65.7	11.0	5.0	16.0
76-77	42.7	26.4	69.1	11.4	5.3	16.7
77-78	43.2	26.9	70.1	12.0	5.7	17.7
78-79	44.0	28.2	72.2	12.1	6.0	18.1
79-80(p)	43.8	27.2	71.0	13.0	6.5	19.5
80-81	44.6	28.1	72.7	13.3	6.6	19.9
84-85 (6th Plan target)	48.5	34.2	82.7	16.6	9.2	25.8

ENROLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF THE CORRESPONDING AGE GROUP

1950-51	60.6	24.8	43.1	20.6	4.6	12.9
60-61	82.6	41.4	62.4	33.2	11.3	22.5
70-71	92.6	59.1	76.4	46.5	20.8	34.2
75-76	95.7	62.0	79.3	47.0	23.3	35.6
78-79	100.2	67.8	84.5	49.4	26.0	38.0
79-80	100.2	65.9	83.6	52.0	27.7	40.2
80-81(p)	99.0	66.2	83.1	52.1	27.2	40.0
84-85	108.1	81.5	95.2	63.1	36.8	50.3

SOURCE : Ministry of Education and Draft Sixth Five Year
Plan 1980-85. Planning Commission. P = Provisional

TABLE - 4

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS ATTENDING
SCHOOL/COLLEGE BY AGE AND SEX - 1981

AGE GROUP	TOTAL		RURAL		URBAN	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
5-9	44.33	32.21	39.63	25.83	61.65	55.55
10-14	62.07	37.47	57.75	29.18	77.00	65.60
15-19	36.03	15.51	30.92	8.88	50.24	34.47
20-24	11.27	2.95	8.17	1.32	18.52	7.49
25-34	1.67	0.48	1.25	0.27	2.74	1.12
35+	0.48	0.18	0.35	0.12	0.82	0.40
10+	17.69	8.98	16.04	6.45	22.53	17.25
5+	21.95	12.75	19.99	9.66	27.93	23.00

SOURCE : Census of India, 1981, Series-I, India Part-II
Special Report and Tables based on 5 percent sample
Data, P-82.

TABLE - 5

WOMEN ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION 1966-67 TO 1981-82

(in 000's)

YEAR	TOTAL	WOMEN	% OF THE TOTAL
1966-67	1190.7	255.5	21.5
1967-68	1370.3	300.8	21.9
1968-69	1566.1	374.6	22.1
1969-70	1792.8	394.6	22.0
1970-71	1953.7	431.5	22.0
1971-72	2065.0	468.7	22.7
1972-73	2168.1	495.0	22.8
1973-74	2227.0	520.8	23.4
1976-77	2431.6	627.3	25.8
1979-80	2648.6	689.0	26.6
1980-81	2752.4	748.5	27.2
1981-82	2952.0	816.7	27.7

SOURCE : 1. Third All India Survey in Higher Education,

UGC, New Delhi, 1977.

2. U.G.C. Reports.

TABLE - 6

FACULTYWISE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ENROLMENT
1971-72 TO 1981-92

YEAR	ARTS	SCIENCE	COMMERCE	ENGG.	MEDICAL
1971-72	64.66	21.60	2.23	0.20	4.25
1973-74	65.52	19.44	3.09	0.20	4.09
1974-75	65.64	10.20	4.00	0.24	3.80
1975-76	65.98	18.77	4.62	0.34	3.23
1979-80	57.75	20.33	9.88	0.64	3.54
1980-81	56.15	20.55	11.04	0.66	3.60
1981-82	55.71	20.88	12.85	0.72	3.65

SOURCE : U.G.C. Annual Reports.

TABLE - 7ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY LEVEL AND SEX

	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	% OF THE GIRLS TO TL.
Ph.D./D.Sc./D/Phil	18,774	6,643	25,447	26.1
M.A.	1,08,711	66,300	1,75,011	37.8
M.Sc.	52,545	24,308	76853	31.6
M.Com	36,464	3,013	39,477	7.6
BA/BA (Hons)	5,72,220	318,811	8,91,031	35.8
B.Sc./B/Sc.(Hons.)	3,76,536	138,419	5,14,955	26.8
B.Ed.B.T.	40,360	27,890	68,250	40.9
M.B.B.S.	51,360	16,462	67,822	24.3
B.Com/B.Com (Hons.)	4,13,081	67,361	4,80,442	14.0
B.E./B.Sc./Engg B.Arch/B.Tech.	99,510	3,685	1,03,195	3.5
Intermediate/ Jr. college	11,62,054	308,951	14,71,005	21.0
Predegree/Pre-Univ.	1,46,280	94,326	2,40,606	39.2
Higher Secondary	9,83,628	321,877	13,05,505	24.7
Teacher Training School	54,101	51,487	1,05,558	48.8
Technical & Industrial Trg. School	2,93,098	69,206	3,62,304	19.1

SOURCE : Selected Educational Statistics 1980-81

Studies in Educational Statistics, 1982

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TABLE - 8
ENROLMENT IN MEDICAL AND ENGINEERING COLLEGES

Sl. No.	STATE/UNION TERRITORY	M.B.B.S.				B.E/B.Sc./ENGG./ARCH			
		BOYS		GIRLS		BOYS		GIRLS	
		60-61	82-83	60-61	82-83	60-61	82-83	60-61	82-83
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3559	4058	1046	1556	3511	12785	7	349
2.	Assam	706	1364	67	397	508	2089	-	74
3.	Bihar	1917	3399	341	793	4005	5764	1	49
4.	Gujarat	1979	3500	481	700	3516	9300	24	500
5.	Haryana	-	521	-	208	-	1564	-	14
6.	Jammu and Kashmir	131	699	51	247	-	1412	-	47
7.	Himachal Pradesh	-	262	-	78	-	-	-	-
8.	Karnataka	2120	4552	400	1329	4813	27120	12	849
9.	Kerala	1249	2464	424	1759	2138	5445	65	1203
10.	Madhya Pradesh	1559	3304	431	1074	2928	686	9	15
11.	Maharashtra	-	6400	6400	2700	2700	8600	8600	600
12.	Manipur	-	283	-	91	-	-	-	-
13.	Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Orissa	484	1557	178	283	451	2134	-	20
16.	Punjab	1770	1608	434	632	1677	1705	1	31
17.	Rajasthan	1287	2368	207	1091	1551	4038	0	47
18.	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Tamilnadu	3303	4524	1024	2782	5170	6308	-	419
20.	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	390	-	13
21.	Uttar Pradesh	3263	4992	466	1496	3385	11993	12	388
22.	West Bengal	3540	4288	651	692	5060	6890	32	155
23.	A.N. Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24.	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25.	Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-	1379	-	136
26.	Dadar and Nagarhaveli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.	Delhi	1005	1630	680	900	1085	2240	8	190
28.	Goa, Daman and Diu	-	164	-	112	-	453	-	14
29.	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30.	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31.	Pondicherry	166	345	45	101	-	-	-	-
	INDIA	32164	52282	8238	19021	42834	112295	333	5113

SOURCE : 190-61, Education in India, 1960-61 Ministry of Education.

Selected Educational Statistics, 1982-82, Ministry of
Education and Culture, New Delhi.

TABLE - 9

LITERACY RATES AMONG SCHEDULE CASTS/SCHEDULED
TRIBES AND THE REST OF THE POPULATION PERCENTAGES

YEAR	REST OF THE POPULATION	SCHEDULED CAST	SCHEDULED TRIBES
1961	27.86 (16.59)	10.27 (3.29)	8.53 (3.16)
1971	33.80 (17.11)	14.67 (6.44)	11.30 (4.85)
1981	41.22 (29.51)	21.38 (10.93)	16.35 (8.04)

(Figures in brackets represent female literacy percentages)

SOURCE : Seventh Five Year plan - 1985-90

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Govt. of India : Planning Commission P-330.

TABLE - 10

1991 CENSUS (PROVISIONAL FIGURES)

LITERACY

Sl. No.	State District	Total Population 1991			Literate Population 1991		
		Person	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
	KARNATAKA	44,817,398	22,861,409	21,955,989	21,074,117	12,868,146	8,205,971
1.	Bangalore	4,823,951	2,535,433	2,888,518	3,194,079	1,827,570	1,366,509
2.	Bangalore Rural	1,665,468	854,223	811,245	712,001	445,458	266,543
3.	Belgaum	3,520,406	1,796,735	1,723,671	1,552,848	993,129	559,719
4.	Bellary	1,892,715	967,215	925,500	700,818	458,180	242,638
5.	Bidar	1,251,060	640,454	610,606	456,335	304,810	151,525
6.	Bijapur	2,914,667	148,069	1,431,598	1,329,194	847,873	481,321
7.	Chikmagalur	1,016,839	514,250	502,589	531,929	310,893	221,036
8.	Chitradurga	2,177,638	1,119,950	1,057,688	1,010,747	626,804	383,943
9.	Dakshin Kannad	2,692,061	1,304,817	1,387,264	1,763,262	942,963	820,299
10.	Dharwad	3,498,814	1,799,089	1,699,725	1,707,299	1,069,446	637,853
11.	Gulbarga	2,573,900	1,311,664	1,262,236	798,163	543,890	254,273
12.	Hassan	1,566,412	783,189	783,223	744,157	449,310	294,847
13.	Kodagu	485,229	243,977	241,252	283,921	596,772	350,409
14.	Kolar	2,211,304	1,124,852	1,086,452	947,181	596,772	350,409
15.	Handya	1,643,626	837,529	806,097	675,862	422,065	253,797
16.	Mysore	3,155,995	1,615,626	1,540,369	1,258,152	764,119	494,033
17.	Raichur	2,307,049	1,166,200	1,140,849	663,780	460,323	203,457
18.	Shimoga	1,900,429	969,232	931,197	987,739	583,392	404,347
19.	Tumukur	2,301,448	1,174,610	1,126,838	1,069,000	665,660	403,340
20.	Uttar Kannad	1,218,367	619,295	599,072	687,650	398,603	289,047

Note : * Literates exclude children in the age group 0-6 who are treated as illiterates in the 1991 Census.

GENDER VIOLENCE

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GENDER VIOLENCE

VIBHUTI PATEL

Gender violence is the most non-recognized Human Rights issue in the world inspite of being the most widespread and insidious problem. It cuts across class, caste, religion, ethnic and national boundaries. The manifestation of gender violence may differ in different socio-cultural settings but its impact, intensity and consequences on women remain the same. Gender violence helps to perpetuate a situation that keeps masses of women in a state of despair and dehumanisation, indignity and intimidation, terrorisation and humiliation. Gender violence makes a mockery of the fundamental rights of women to a life of dignity and freedom granted to all citizens by the Constitution of India.

In a lifecycle of a woman, gender violence in different forms like foeticide, infanticide, homicide, child-marriage, sati, rape and sexual assault, eve-teasing, domestic violence, forced prostitution, pornography, abduction and forced confinement, communal\caste riots, forced pregnancy or forced sterilisation - hangs on her head like the sword of Damocles. In all life situations, women are more vulnerable than men to discriminatory treatment, criminal negligence and violence in public and private life. Due to the efforts of women's movement in the last one and a half decades, Gender Violence has received serious attention from the criminal legal system, media and administration.

FORMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE

- (a) **FOETICIDE** : The use of advanced scientific technology like amniocentesis, chorion-villai biopsy, sonography, foetoscopy to determine sex of foetus has come in handy for female foeticide. Selective abortion of female foetus has shattered the myth that Science and technology always bring bliss for humankind. Technodocs and medical mafia advocate it as a solution to the 'Dowry' problem. They advertise "Better Rs.500 now than Rs.5 lakhs later." Population control advocates visualise it as a solution to repeated pregnancy in the hope of a son. Economists apply the 'law of demand and supply' to this phenomena and tell us complacently that if the supply of women reduces, their status will enhance. Since 1901, there has been a continuous decline of the female population, as per the 1991 census, the sex-ratio (i.e. number of females per 1000 males) is 929. Has it enhanced women's status? There is a need for an affirmative action to stop the abuse of advanced scientific technology for femicide or else we will have to declare Indian women as an 'endangered species'. This form of Gender Violence is prevalent in all sections of the population in Maharastra, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Orissa, Gujarat. A

Bill has been introduced in the Parliament for regulation of sex-determination tests strictly for identification of genetic disorders.

- (b) **INFANTICIDE** : The culture of son-preference and aversion to daughters manifests itself in the practice of female infanticide. It is not a matter concerning the past. The Reform Movement of the 19th Century brought this issue on the political agenda of the country and demanded legal prohibition on this evil practice. We have a law prohibiting infanticide but we lack a 'political will' to implement the law. Now also, in various parts of Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar, M.P., and Gujarat, the custom of female infanticide is practiced not only by so-called 'illiterate' and 'ignorant' people but by the elites as well. The son is seen as a 'support in the old age'. For religious rituals and funeral rites, the son has a high premium. The subordinate status of a girl and a woman in socio-cultural, religious and economic life accentuates this process. We need to generate an alternate image of women by creating the role-models for women, by promoting socio-economic self-sufficiency among girls and women and by fighting against patriarchal powers that see girls as a 'burden', or as 'worthless' creatures. We need to emphasise that if we don't stop this practice there will be a social disaster. No society can progress if they eliminate women instead of eliminating inequality, injustice and inhumanity against women.
- (c) **CHILD-MARRIAGE** : The forcible marriage of the girl-child takes place all over India. One of the reasons for the high drop-out rates of girls from the schools is their marriage. The mean age of marriage of women is highest in Nagaland (Rural) - 20.4 years, and Mizoram (Urban) - 20.5 years and the lowest in rural Madhya Pradesh - (15.3 years) and urban Bihar (16.1 years). In Rajasthan also the custom of child-marriage is found in all income-groups. In the same states, female literacy rates are the lowest, 15.3% in Madhya Pradesh and 16.1% in Bihar. Child-marriage involves gender violence as the child-bride is forced to cohabit prematurely. She becomes a mother at an early age when incidences of still-births, maternal mortality and maternal morbidity are the highest. Health status of child-brides is the lowest. Saddled with familial responsibilities, forced motherhood and forced sex, she has to perform adult roles in her most creative, formative years of life. By the time she enters youth, she becomes haggard, famished and disease-prone. Several studies on the girl-child have shown that the practice of child-marriage is not limited to only rural or 'backward' areas but it is an urban problem too. Many school-going girls have approached women's groups for help when they were forced to marry. As they are 'minor' and under 'custody' of their parents, women's groups find it very difficult to intervene.

- (d) SATI : Even after an enactment of law against Sati in the pre-independence period, nearly 438 cases of sati have been committed in the post-independence period. The Deorala Sati episode created a great sensation as it happened in the life of a convent educated urban woman with a middle-class background. 'Sati' has become a big business that fetches millions of rupees to sati temples and to the families of the burnt widows. This lucrative trade has created several vested interests which glorify voluntary sati. In response to a national level agitation and mobilisations of women's groups, the Government of India came up with some amendments in the earlier law but it punishes the victim for her 'crime' of suicide. Women's groups have taken serious objection to this method of victimising the victim. The Deorala episode has shown us that the state enforcement machinery is totally ineffective when the woman is killed, burnt alive, murdered in the name of religion and culture, in the midst of hundreds of thousands of jeering people. In spite of the enactment of the law against glorification of sati, several communal organisations organise public functions, build sati temples and some political leaders openly support 'voluntary' sati; in the name of cultural legacies and religious ethos of India.

- (e) RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT : In the post - emergency period, the incidences of rape\gang rape and serious sexual assaults by the custodians of 'law of order' came into limelight due to the efforts of human rights organisations, women's groups and media reportage. More and more women are reporting this crime and seeking justice. In the Budget session 1990 of Rajya Sabha, Question No.2366 it was reported that in 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 there were respectively 7787, 8706, 8207, 7856 cases of rape reported in the police stations. During the same period the cases of molestation reported in the police-records were 16292, 17836, 18437 and 16683 respectively. Behind one reported case of rape there are 10 to 12 unreported cases. Women victims of rape, molestation and sexual assault have to face an extreme form of apathy, inertia, indifference, hostility and biases from the criminal legal system. Routine responses of the police and defense counsel in such cases are "There can't be smoke without fire". "Why was she dressed like that?" "She asked for it." "Who asked you to go alone?"

When 'gamekeepers turn poachers' how can women trust the law enforcement machinery? There is a need for serious public education to shatter several myths associated with this heinous crime against women's bodily integrity.

- (f) 'EVE-TEASING' : Lewd remarks, pawing and pinching of women on the roads, in the buses and trains, in the colleges and neighbourhood, nuisance calls on phones have become a routine affair of urban life. This offense curtails the

mobility of girls and women. Around certain festivals like holi eve-teasing takes a most aggressive shape where not only harmful chemical-based colours, but rotten fruits, tomatoes, eggs, cow-dung are thrown at women. In response to the active mobilisation of women's groups, the government has now enacted a law against it. As per section 509 of the Indian Penal Code, punishment for eve-teasing or sexual molestation is 1-year imprisonment or fine or both. More and more girls and women are coming forward to register complaints against eve-teasing the number of which was 7270 in 1987, 10,109 in 1988, 9,478 in 1989 and 9,625 in 1990.

Glorification of eve-teasing in commercial Hindi films provides role-models to the teaser. Every 'eve-teaser' thinks that he is a super-star and making verbal or physical sexual advances is a male prerogative. There is a need to have a dialogue with the media barons on this issue. Public debates in youth-forums, colleges and community organisations on this can also help to ensure seriousness on this issue. Most of the people either treat eve-teasing as a big joke and advise women to be indifferent to it. "Ignore it" is the standard advice given to women by their relatives.

- (g) **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** : Violence in the family in the form of mental and physical cruelty exists in our society both in the natal as well as in the matrimonial home. Official data on unnatural death reveal that unmarried girls and women also die in their homes in large numbers. They are the victims of violence perpetuated on them by their own parents, brothers etc. But girls generally don't speak against their own parents. In the last 15 years violence against married women by their husbands and in-laws have acquired major attention due to the efforts of new women's rights movements. Initially they had to face lots of difficulties as the state as well as our society's response was "Do not intervene in the sanctity of the family". In several parts of India, women's groups have evolved support structures for women in social distress, so aggrieved women also come forward to fight against domestic violence. Instead of finding fault with a woman for her so-called "poor performance as wife and mother", they empower women to take legal action by making use of section 498 A of IPC that considers, "Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine. "Harassment for dowry" is also covered by this section. Media and Police authorities try to project most of the cases of domestic violence as 'Dowry harassments' or 'Dowry-murders'.
- (h) **FORCED PROSTITUTION** : The statement of the 64th Law Commission on prostitution provides an excellent example of the double standard of sexual morality prevalent in our

society as well as in the functioning of the state machinery; "Prostitution should be regulated not banned so that it may be kept within its legitimate bounds without unduly encroaching upon the institution of marriage and family." This attitude divides women into two categories. One constitutes 'chaste', 'pure' and 'lawfully wedded' women who are mothers, sisters, wives and the second category is of 'whores', 'sluts' and 'vamps' who can be traded, brutalised and punished by the pimps and police, legal systems as well as society in general. As per the study of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, there are 817 red light areas and 2 million women in this trade. 60% of them are below 18 years. They are brought to brothels by pimps and an agents' network spread all over the country. After much hue and cry, some minor changes have taken place in the earlier law-Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act. Only the nomenclature has changed. The new law is the Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act. SITA and PITA both criminalise the prostitutes but pimps, owners of brothels and customers are left free to continue their jobs. Routine raids on brothels and arrests of prostitutes ensure regular bribes to the police men.

- (i) **PORNOGRAPHY** : Blue films, pornographic literature-books and magazines have flourished all over India. Video parlours and cinema halls showing such films have mushroomed all over. Obscene literature in different regional languages is sold openly at railway stations, markets and other public places. Occasional raids are organised by the police. Literature or films are taken away by them. Once they get their bribes, they allow this business to go on. When women's groups raise their voice against a particular pornographic film or advertisement or magazine, the police arrests either the manager of the cinema hall or a vendor. Later on they are released on bail. And this is repeated over and over. The Indecent Representation of Women in Films and Advertisement Act is full of loopholes. It leaves a lot of scope for the government bureaucrats to decide whether a particular journal or film or hoarding is 'indecent' or 'informative'. The Women and Media Group, Bombay filed a case in the High Court against the Marathi booklet 'How rape is committed.' Even after three years of court proceedings nothing is decided yet about a book that gives gory details of perverse practices of sexual violence against women.
- (j) **ABDUCTION, FORCED CONFINEMENT** : Abduction and forced confinement of women during normal periods and during socio-cultural tensions create havoc for girls and women. Cases of kidnapping of young girls from rural and urban areas by the pimps and mafia gang to induct them into prostitution have not been dealt with. Women abducted and confined during caste riots and communal riots (Bhiwandi riots - 1984, Delhi riots - 1984, etc.) have been disowned by their

family members as they are seen as 'defiled'. When two rival groups in the community are at war with each other, they resort to kidnapping and abducting of women from the rival group. By this act, they try to break the 'morale' of the rival group. Criminalisation of urban life also results in the escalation of abduction, to induct girls into beggary, prostitution and drug-trafficking. This form of Gender Violence does not get the attention of the social groups unless relatives of the victim are politically powerful.

Women are forcibly confined even by their own parents when they refuse to get married or if they have an affair with men from different castes or religions. In the 'inlaws' home, forced confinement of daughter-in-law for not bringing an 'adequate' amount of dowry or for 'answering back' or for being 'too outgoing' has been noticed by women's groups involved in support-work for women in distress. When a confined woman manages to contact neighbours or relatives or friends, legal action to release her has been taken up. But in most of the cases, she is unable to do so.

- (k) VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DURING RIOTS AND WAR : Since the 70s, India has been witnessing a spate of caste and communal riots that take a heavy toll of human lives as well as material things. The number and intensity of riots have increased. Caste-conflicts in the rural areas and communal riots in small town and big cities result in heinous forms of torture, sexual assaults and mass rape of women from the subordinate groups like Dalits and minorities by the men of dominant groups. Reports of investigation teams instituted by democratic rights groups and women's organisations have proved that women are the worst victims of communal riots. Gender Violence during riots leaves a permanent scar in the psyche of the victim and her relatives. Testimonies of women victims of riots in Delhi (1984), Bhivandi (1984), Hyderabad (1989), Ahmedabad (1983), Chandrapur (1987), Bhagalpur (1988) bear witness to this agonising phenomena.

The most neglected area of the plight of women in war-situations is very controversial too. Men of two warring countries not only loot, ransack or burn the property of the 'enemy' country but they also rape the women of their 'enemy' country. Only cross-country solidarity of women is the answer to deal with this form of Gender Violence. In private discussion, democratic rights groups acknowledge this problem but in public not much is done due to fear of being dubbed as an 'anti-national'. Men of our own country are supposed to be chivalrous and 'gentlemen'.

- (1) TARGETTING WOMEN FOR POPULATION CONTROL : Many unethical practices are actively propagated in the name of 'population control'. Experiences of Emergency rule proved that 'male sterilisation' can be politically counter-productive. Hence

the shift in policy. In the post-emergency period, poor and working class women have been the major targets for the population control policy. Many harmful and hormone-based long-acting contraceptive pills, injections, vaccines and subdermal implants are used on women's bodies without any follow-up. Side-effects of these contraceptives are seen as 'imaginary'. Women-victim of these devices suffer from heavy and irregular bleeding, headache, abnormal weight-gain, temporary loss of eyesight, giddiness etc. Most of the contraceptive pills and injections being used in our country are already banned in the 1st world which created a great hue and cry and got these drugs banned with the help of a strong consumer movement. In our country, due to the conspiracy of silence maintained by media and the medical mafia, contraindications of such contraceptives are not known to the public at large. Use of sex-determination tests and targets for abortion, also for population control, reveals to what extent the sycophants of population control can go. The use of methods like insertion of coppert-T or sterilisation as a precondition for an employment in public works programmes like EGS, IRDP, DPAP etc. are nothing but violation of human rights and women's dignity.

MYTHS ABOUT GENDER VIOLENCE :

(A) "SHE ASKED FOR IT", "SHE DESERVED IT".

Victim-baiting, finding faults with women and hurtful statements in response to Gender Violence are handy to rationalise inaction of the official agencies and society in general. Media will trivialise Gender Violence by a misleading caption of cartoon and by describing the event in a jocular tone. Police will demoralise a woman by talking to her in a cynical tone and making her feel guilty. The atmosphere in courts is so hostile to women that she will lose her confidence and err in her statements. "Women from good families don't talk of such things in public" - directly or indirectly a woman gets this message from everywhere and everyone whom she approaches for help. Whether it is a case of dowry-harassment, wife-battering, rape or molestation, murder (as in the case of the nuns murdered at Snehasadan, Bombay in 1991) the victims, 'sexuality' is scrutinised. All efforts are made to prove her 'a woman of easy virtue', 'slut', 'whore', 'an easy lay'. These black-mailing tactics of questioning victims' 'morality', 'chastity' and purity' becomes an effective tool to sidetrack the main issue of Gender Violence. Some landmark judgements on the Mathura Rape case, Suman Rani Rape Case, Maya Tyagi Rape case bear witness to this attitude. Manipulation of post-mortem reports, punchnama (inquest) and FIR to question women's sexual morality has been identified in several cases of Gender Violence.

(B) "WOMEN ENJOY RAPE", "SHE IS OF AN EASY VIRTUE".

The worst treatment that any victim of gender violence gets is the victim of rape. Family members ask her to 'hush up'. The community isolates her. Friends excommunicate her. Police jeers at her. The legal system mocks at her. The Media sensationalises the issue. The past sexual history of the victim is hotly debated and discussed. The Hindi film solution for the rape-victim is to commit 'suicide' or die in the process of taking revenge. The standard statement concerning rape is "There can't be smoke without fire." Rape of women at the time of investigation or after the arrest by 'the protectors of law and order' provoked a nationwide anti-rape movement in 1980. Mathura, a teenage tribal girl was raped by two police constables in the police station in 1972. The Supreme Court of India's judgement on the Mathura Rape case that she was of 'easy virtue' and the two policemen were innocent made women's groups react sharply. Because of their pressure, the government had to amend the rape law in which the 'burden of proof' has shifted on the men in cases of custodial rape. But things have not changed much. The ideology of victimising the victim has not been dealt with seriously. While campaigning against rape, the focus should not be on the 'victim' but on the 'accused'. Unless women's image as an individual, not as a sex-object, is established, we cannot ensure any consideration for bodily integrity of women. Myths concerning rape such as "she was raped because she was dressed provocatively" or Freudian analysis that "women hallucinate rape" should be shattered with factual analysis. How does one explain rape of a 2 year old girl child or a sixty year old woman?

(C) "IT IS WOMEN'S CHOICE"

While dealing with issues like female infanticide and female foeticide we encounter the argument that women are the worst enemies of women. Women despise girl-child. Mother discriminates against her own daughter. She only kills the female infant. Woman seeks sex-determination tests and aborts a foetus if it happens to be female. What can we do about it? Doctors, political leaders, law and order machinery wash their hands off. Why should not we ask; Are these 'choices' determined in social vacuum? Which are the forces that make women think like that? Why does society put a high premium on boys? Why is the birth of a girl mourned? Why is a mother of only girl-children threatened with desertion by her husband?

Subordinate status of women in our society is strengthened and perpetuated by religious preaching, social customs, family socialisation and evil practices of dowry. As a result 'daughters' are seen as a burden. In this

atmosphere, women themselves internalise the societal value. Her 'inability' to produce a 'male child' can make her the target of taunting and ill-treatment by her inlaws. If she gives birth to a girl-child, she is seen as a 'guilty-party'. She is expected to do the job of killing the baby. Between 1986-88, 6000 female babies were killed by their mothers, only in Tamilnadu. Thus women's 'choices' are not real choices but they are social compulsions.

(D) "WE SHOULD SUPPORT VOLUNTARY SATI"

When the Deorala Sati Episode took place a major controversy took place amongst opinion-makers of the society namely politicians of different hues, intellectuals and religious leaders. Many statements were made in support of 'voluntary sati'. If a woman decides to give away her life after her husband's death, could we support or condemn this action? Women's groups who opposed 'voluntary sati' were alleged as a westernised lot, not rooted in Indian reality. Women's rights organisations retorted back by saying that there is nothing like 'voluntary' sati. If in her socialisation process, an Indian girl is forced to think that she has no identity of her own, she is merely a shadow of her husband, her only mission in life is marriage; an average Indian woman is bound to think that there is nothing left in her life after her husband's death. Moreover, status of widows in our society is very bad. Both, inlaws as well as her natal family treats her as a burden, her status and autonomy in social life is not recognised, she does not have property rights in the genuine sense of the term (though our law provides her with a share in her husband's property), she becomes a target of sexual advances of men. For upper-caste and upper class, widow-remarriage is not encouraged for economic reasons. In this situation, it is dangerous to support voluntary sati instead of empowering Indian widows to lead fuller life and fight for a dignified life.

(E) "IT IS AN 'ACCIDENTAL DEATH' OR 'SUICIDE'"

When a woman dies in her own home, before or after marriage the police records classify these cases as 'accidental deaths' or 'suicides'. Statements of relatives and neighbours are not taken seriously unless they also connect these deaths to dowry-harassment. All murders are not dowry murders. Demands for dowry can be one of the reasons for the unnatural death of women. Many times, caste panchayats or community leaders also persuade the parents or brothers of a dead-woman to declare the incidence as an 'accident' or 'suicide' so that 'community's prestige is not tarnished.

It is important to deal with these popular beliefs because they come in the way of rehabilitating or supporting women, ensuring community's backing, preparing authentic police records and granting gender justice in the court of law.

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Moreover, intervention after the crime takes place is important. But the more important aspect is to stop such crimes. That can be done only after societal values change. It can provide long-term solution by creating a realistic understanding concerning Gender Violence. With the help of concrete illustrations, supporting evidences, authentic data base and cultural alternatives we can sensitize our population on these issues. This aspect is much more difficult as compared to immediate intervention. Use of communication media, educational system and training programmes for public education must be emphasized as Gender Violence brutalises men too.

LEGAL SYSTEM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

As far as the laws on Gender Violence are concerned we have not gained much. The laws against domestic violence (498 A), rape (section 376), eve-teasing (section 509) etc. are full of loopholes, so at a conceptual level there are gender biases. Moreover, at an operational level things are even worse. To get a First Investigation Report (FIR) registered at a police station, medical examination done, panchnama prepared the victims have to face a lot of harassment, corruption and criminal negligence. By the time the case reaches the court of law, 95% of the damage is already done. Finally only 2-4% of the culprits are punished. The whole legal process is extremely slow. 'Justice delayed is justice denied'. This statement is most appropriate for the victims of Gender Violence. The legal system applies the double standard of sexual morality by treating men as 'poor-him' and woman victim as 'deviant'. Mysogynist culture and male-dominated values are seen, experienced by women in day-to-day court-proceedings as well as their judgements. Hostility toward women in the family courts have forced aggrieved women to stage dharna, hunger fast and demonstrations in front of family courts in Karnataka, Madras and Bombay. Without first hand experience, it is difficult to believe what type of verbal violence and assaults women victims of violence face in the courts.

STATE MACHINERY VIS-A-VIS GENDER VIOLENCE

IGP of Orissa, Mr.S.K.Ghosh in his book, "Women and Policing" admitted to molestation of women by police. He also admitted to inhuman behaviour of the police with women detainee, prisoners, witnesses and complainants. This type of official recognition of police-involvement in Gender Violence is important as "The maintenance of police morale depends not on white-wash but on a satisfying conception of the police-men's place in society" says Mr.Ghosh. When an individual woman accompanied by her relatives or neighbour approaches police she is not attended to or has to face rude behaviour from the police officials. Gender Violence is a 'minor offense' for the police. 'Major Crimes' are drug-trafficking, gang-war etc. A statement by a retired IGP in 1981 clearly conveys the police attitude towards

women complainants, "Those belonging to respectable families do not lodge complaints". Hence any woman approaching the police, be she a victim of molestation, rape, beatings, eve-teasing, theft, blackmail and threat, becomes a woman of 'licentious behaviour'. Response of the police to Gender Violence is marked by refusal to file FIR and other evidences for 'Panchanama', ensure timely and proper medical examination; tampering with crucial documents like FIR, inquest, forensic report, viscera report. Collusion of police with the local vested interests, bowing down to political pressures and open alliances with the criminals have been evident while examining many cases of gender violence. Class, caste and communal biases get added to gender-biases in cases of gender violence.

MEDICO-LEGAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER VIOLENCE

While dealing with the issue of Gender-Violence, medical dimensions remain the most neglected area. Irresponsible behaviour of forensic experts, medical examiners and the hospital staff towards women victims creates major bottleneck in pursuing the matter in court. There are comprehensive guidelines on the procedure for conducting the post-mortem reports as per forensic science. The doctor is required to carefully go through the content of the written order from the police or magistrate, mention identification marks on the body, note details on the condition of the body. In cases of rape and sexual molestation internal examination should be done with great care and sensitivity for the victim. In cases of beatings, all details of injuries must be recorded properly. The Nuns murder case has exposed the sham nature of medical examination conducted by prestigious doctors. Government of India has recently set up a fresh committee to lay out a code of conduct for the medical reports in Medico Legal Cases. Delays in giving medical reports also hamper the process of quick legal redress. Preventive and Social Medicine as a discipline is treated by the medical profession as 'Low-prestige', 'Low Status' discipline. Hence, the medical professionals and medical students don't take medico-legal issues seriously. Technicalities of medical issues should be explained to lay people through training programmes. Medico legal issues need to be demystified.

REHABILITATION CENTRES FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE

Gender Violence keeps women in a continuous state of fear. Hence safety and support that helps them to get out of feeling of isolation, dependence and self-hatred acquire great significance for their empowerment. Most of the rehabilitation centres run by private trusts provide physical needs to the victims of Gender Violence but their insensitive remarks, patronising attitude and inhuman behaviour make the victims feel that battered women are stupid, worthless and incapable. They are treated as 'perpetual minors' by the management of the rehabilitation centres who are doing their 'upliftment'. Government sponsored and controlled rehabilitation centres are full of corruption, malpractice and

callous behaviour. Hence, women inmates don't get adequate food, are caged in the premises and quite often used as prostitutes due to pressure of the local vested interests. Women's groups in Bombay have filed a public interest litigation in the highcourt to stop mismanagement in such institutions in response to several inmates running away from such centres and complaints to individual members of women's groups. Now there is a demand for collective monitoring of the refuge centres by the women's organisations. We need to inculcate a new ethos of 'self-help' for empowerment of the victims of Gender Violence staying in such homes. The residents of the refuge home should have control over the meals, overall management, children's care. They must be made to feel that they are not responsible for the violence done to them. "Mutual counselling method", "Group Counselling method" instead of traditional 'Social Work' approach should be promoted in such centres.

MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF GENDER VIOLENCE

Media sensationalises Gender Violence like dowry-murders, rape and sexual assaults. In the Nun's murder case media behaved in an extremely irresponsible manner by publishing a cock & bull story of the nun's 'sexual activity'. Due to commendable work of the nuns of Bombay along with secular groups, the Press Council of India has forced Times of India, Indian Express, Free Press Journal and regional language press to publish an apology. In the issues of Gender Violence, media focuses on women, that too in a 'humorous', trivial vain. By and large, collective struggles of women against violence are ridiculed by the media or it chooses to under-report the event. Visibility of violence against women in the print as well as audio-visual media had done a major function of bringing the issue of violence in the public sphere. Alternate media generated by sensitive women and men creative artists and women's groups have played an educative role. Sagari Chabra's film 'Brides are not for Burning', 'Mediastorm's film on Sati and Muslim Personal Law, M.K. Shankar's film 'Samadhan' on sex-determination tests, Gulan Kriplani's film on Domestic Violence, Meera Dewan's film on sexual harassment are some of the examples in this direction. Media can really do a lot in promoting ethos of Gender justice by conveying that cruelty and domination are not signs of 'manhood'. Media can also highlight survival strategies evolved by women to get out of the impact of Gender-violence. Training programmes of journalists of Gender Issues can aid this process.

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Action against violence against women has been one of the prime concerns of the women's movement, since the early seventies. Due to the collective efforts of women's groups more 'humane' and realistic understanding on Gender Violence has emerged. Violence against women is no more a 'personal' issue of the recipient of violent attacks but it is an issue demanding public concern and intervention. Women's movement is involved in

providing support to individual women, getting legal amendments passed, sensitizing the administration, awareness generation programmes on gender violence through exhibitions, slogans, songs, creative expressions, training programmes for volunteers and enforcement machinery. Resource kits, booklets, street theatre in different regional languages are evolved by the women's groups. They are trying to project: gender violence is not only harmful to the victim but it also brutalises men. If we want to build a healthy society that promotes 'mutuality', 'respect' and 'dignity' in a man-woman relationship, we must expose gender violence. Women's movement is trying to change societal response to Gender Violence that says "There is nothing wrong in it. It has been going on for ages". It is trying to convince the criminal justice system that Gender-Violence is not 'a Law and Order problem' but it is a weapon to keep women in a subordinate status and prevent them asserting their rights, personhood and individuality.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Active intervention to prevent the 'crime' or to get culprits punished is one aspect of dealing with the gender violence. The long term approach should be to question the ideology, ethos and practices that generate, perpetuate and rationalise gender-violence. Only acceptance of gender violence in our society is not enough but our active involvement in preventing it at micro-level is very important. Moreover, sensitization of media and mainstream thinking process, State enforcement machinery and political parties, education system and policy-makers must be done on a priority-basis. The focus of our efforts should be:

- 1) Legal reforms in the existing provisions on gender violence that covertly or overtly resort to 'victim-baiting'.
- 2) Sensitize the enforcement machinery-police, doctors, lawyers and judges on gender violence.
- 3) Orient media to generate realistic understanding of violence against women and to stop sensationalising the issue.
- 4) Educate public not to remain passive spectators when faced with violence against women in the domestic and public sphere.
- 5) Promote collective action to stop violence against women in every walk of life.
- 6) Create cultural alternatives to combat ideology of gender violence.
- 7) Empower women to question violence in their personal life and also question customs and traditions, proverbs and sayings that promote violence against women.

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TECHNOLOGY AND GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR

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TECHNOLOGY AND GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR

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MANAGEMENT OF WID & TECHNOLOGY

In their struggle for improving the physical condition and social status of women, NGOs have changed over from a welfare approach to a radical \ militant stance covering not only welfare but much broader and more basic issues concerning the role and status of women in society. There is increasing articulation of the rights of women and related issues one of which is the decreasing employment opportunities for women and their displacement in all sectors of the economy. Many of these adverse developments have been brought about by introduction of the so called 'newer technologies' and insensitivity of the planners in the arbitrary transfer of technologies, specially inappropriate to the developing countries and their callous application in many sectors without realising their consequences on the lot of women, especially rural poor.

The deterioration in the employment opportunities of women and their reducing contribution as commodity producers has given rise to questions as to whether the skewed development has been the outcome of random factors, or whether there are unseen forces emanating from a series of assumptions and cultural factors behind this pattern of development. As a result, the women's movement which had already assumed a militant hue, is now calling for major transformations (structural, ideological and operational) in the policies of the country. Women's organisations have become political and are calling for new constructive strategies, innovative approaches and networks involving social organisations so that women's concerns and issues can be debated and solutions found on the political plane.

The trend in development, with particular reference to WID, has been to seek a national audience in the resolution of WID issues, clarifying perspectives, establishing priorities and seeking solutions to arrest the deteriorating economic and social status of women brought about by the processes of development.

The increasing demands by the women's movements for broader involvement of women in planning and decision making have made WID issues more visible and the options more transparent. Nowhere are the issues more clearly defined or the solutions more obvious than in the sphere of technologies adopted in the process of development.

Women's issues cannot be discussed as a separate discipline, which it is not. Nor is it a transient focus because of the deteriorating lot of women. It incorporates ideologies and perspectives, debate on which has been lacking. Bereft of these ideologies and perspectives, blind and random approaches have

been adopted with disastrous effects. These negative outcomes are nowhere more glaring than in the application of new technologies affecting the majority of the women in the basic, informal and organised sectors.

Development is a normative concept. It is more than eradication of poverty or increase in welfare measures or reducing unemployment. Development will have to incorporate ideologies and perspectives which will eventually lead to equity, equality of opportunities (skill development and employment), job satisfaction and self-respect. These are probably the main ingredients of the term 'social status'.

THE INEQUITY OF OLD TECHNOLOGIES

This caption covers the various issues in the traditional gender based division of labour and the status of women under the system.

Technology is a term denoting the gamut of skills and processes involving equipment and material employed to produce goods and services at home and in industry for the community. Since both the producers and consumers are part of society, there is an important 'social context'. There is also a 'social content' in the processes of production depending upon (i) who (class, social status, sex) is employed to produce, (ii) whether the end product is produced at home for domestic consumption or in factories for public consumption. If there is a bias in employment based on class, status or sex, there is inequity and conflict.

The traditional arrangement is for men to work for wages and women to do unpaid work at home. The men's earnings are highly visible whereas the women's work at home is invisibilised in the absence of visible earnings. The fact that the women do productive work, (in addition to reproductive and maintenance tasks) has not been monetised by society. This arrangement has been sanctified with the saying that the woman's place is at home. The question of accounting/valuation of the women's work is therefore taboo.

This gender division of labour has been accepted by men and women over the ages as it helped to keep the households going without changing gender relations. The survival and prosperity of a family depends on the combined activities of its members and their contribution to the perpetuation of family interests. Man considered the gender division of labour as ordained by society or a higher being, to be equitable and suited to their ego and physical ability. Women, without any other options accepted the arrangement as being ordained by fate. The visible earnings of men helped them to have access to and control of resources, the hallmark of patriarchal society. Women were subordinated and they sacrificed their equality, rights and status for the sake of the family.

That the arrangement was inequitable was hardly debated till recently. Men assumed a dominant role in society and women's groups were ill organised to raise this issue. In many poor societies, the women, in addition to their reproductive function and other household tasks had to work for wages to augment the family income. These women's earnings were promptly appropriated by men in their role as heads of families. However there was a silver lining. When a family did not have a male head, the women were enabled to subsist on the wages earned from outdoor work as also have control over their earnings which was not the case with women entirely dependent on male dispensation. A large number (estimated to be 30%) now has women-headed households who have to bear a triple burden.

THE INEQUITY OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

In their quest for equity in the realm of employment, self-reliance and status, women's movement is waging a highly articulated struggle to show that introduction of new technologies have consumed jobs and earnings of women. The most telling evidence of this has been provided by Ester Boserup. (i) This has been accepted by all shades of public opinion as proof of the highly skewed fallouts from the introduction of new technologies which have been specially disastrous in the field of agriculture and rural services in the African and Asian societies.

Acharya (2) and Agarwal (3) have quoted Indian cases where introduction of new technologies in India have displaced millions of women workers. Acharya, in his analysis shows that during 1926 - 1951, the total employment increased by 88%, but women's employment rose by only 55%. For every job created for one woman, there were 12 available for men.

In agriculture, the introduction of new technologies in the '60s has been estimated to displace 10 million women. Rice mills (which now number one lakh), each displaces about 1,500 women's jobs and creates 45 jobs for men. The number of women displaced in rice mills and cereal processing activities works out to 15 crores.

In Andhra Pradesh over 1.5 lakh workers are engaged in the tobacco industry of whom 90% are women. The India Tobacco Co. employing about 20,000 workers, introduced a threshing plant which displaced 6,000 workers, mostly women. Threshing plants to be introduced by other companies will affect the jobs of thousands of women workers.

In the textile industry, cotton and jute textiles employed 20% and 15% women workers respectively before 1925. In the 50 years of industrialization this fell to 2.5% and 2.0% respectively, displacing lakhs of women workers. Technological changes were the main factors for loss of jobs of women workers.

Modernisation of traditional handloom industry in Kashmir under a UNDP assisted project displaced about 3,000 women workers from an original total workforce of 27,000.

There are similar studies in the dairy, fishing and other traditional industries where introduction of new technologies has been extremely detrimental to the economic and social status of women.

Studies have shown that the reason for the large displacement of rural women labour is that their work is simple and repetitive, for which machines can be easily designed. Given that innovations have to be made, why can't the machines which displace women labour, be operated by women? The answer is that the machines are designed for use by men only (design bias) and women do not have the same access to education and training that men have (education bias). This suggests that patriarchy still persists strongly in a new 'avatar'.

ANALYSIS OF GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR

Traditional Gender Based Division of Labour has contributed to the inferior economic status of women, both inside and outside the household. Introduction of new technology has accentuated the economic, intellectual and social differentials between man and woman. Introduction of new technologies are invariably accompanied by a small increase in jobs for men at the cost of a disproportionately large number of jobs for women.

Unlike other divisions of people (classes, regions, religions etc.,) the gender division is ubiquitous. This has exercised the minds of various researchers. The traditional division of labour had much to commend itself given the low mobility of women in outside work and absence of opportunities for higher education and skill training for women. A measure of co-operation within the household was necessary to ensure maximum returns for the household. Hence the tacit acceptance of their roles by women.

The introduction of new technologies has disturbed traditional gender division of labour. Firstly, there is a conflict at home between men and women since women would like to work for wages whenever they can to supplement the family income. The traditional cooperation has broken down. Tradition, culture and social norms militate against any change in the arrangement even though this results in sub-maximal returns. Secondly, the current environment is creating disparities and conflicts not only in the labour market (men competing against women) but also in the household where the wife wants to work which in men's view, may affect her household work. It is to be concluded that new technologies should not only not displace women from the jobs but prevent gender conflicts at large and in the households. Women should be able to use the new technologies as well as men. The problem is not in the new technology per se, but the way

machines and processes are designed or engineered to be more suited for operation by men than women and denial of education and training for women.

DUALISMS : GENDER, DESIGN, EDUCATION

The term 'dualism' is used extensively in literature on gender divisions in various fields such as labour, technology, education. Dichotomy can probably be more aptly used in many of these cases. In some instances, both the above terms boil down to the clearly understood term 'duplicity'.

MIND - BODY DUALISM

Sally Hacker (4) studied the impact of technological changes on women in four industries in the USA. She concluded that.-

- i. In agribusiness automation has reduced employment for women in particular.
- ii. Mechanisation of farmwork has reduced employment among migrant workers, male & female.
- iii. Women farmers faced a double threat in that the economies of large scale agro-technology and politics favoured males.
- iv. Over a 3 year period of technological change in a telephone company, women lost 22,000 jobs while 13,000 more jobs were obtained by men.
- v. The more sophisticated the technology, the more it worked against women's interests.
- vi. Women's home responsibilities, lack of employment opportunities / options, unresponsiveness of unions, opposition of husbands and male co-workers inhibited women worker's ability to protect their interests. These factors suggested patriarchal elements at work.
- vii. The above and the way in which work is organised heightened female attrition rates, further easing the process of automation.

Observing the way managers work in industries, Hacker found views that justified the exploitation of women including easier manipulation of their labour during times of technological change. Such attitudes were prevalent especially among those managers with a technical or engineering background in industry, which is predominantly male centred, and prone to gender the social and physical world.

Activities, styles of interaction, jobs, machines, devices, even bodies of knowledge were characterised as having masculine or feminine properties appropriate to men or women. These gender based perceptions were also stratified and hierarchically ordered.

What was womanly had low status, what was manly had high status. Women were considered suitable for routine, detail work and child care which freed the mind of man for decision making. What she found there suggested significant mind - body dualisms, a male-linked mind to a female-linked body.

OCCUPATIONAL DUALISM

The next dualism is in occupational segregation of women confining them to -

1. Primary sectors of the economy such as agriculture, animal husbandry, social forestry, fisheries, handicrafts etc., These sectors account for over 80% of all women workers in India. Of these 80%, a significant proportion is accounted for by women working at home in textiles, cereal processing, food products, handicrafts etc, which is understandable.
2. Within each sector, there is a further segregation resulting in women being employed in unskilled and labour intensive jobs with low value addition and earnings.

Of the women workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors the occupational segregation follows the pattern of women workers in the primary sector. More women workers in factories are used as unskilled labour involving simple and repetitive jobs, which are nevertheless fatiguing and hazardous. They are cheap labour so are displaced at the next round of modernisation when new machines are introduced. This affects women's employment much more seriously than that of men. In offices and service industries, women are usually employed as typists, data entry operators, telephone operators, reception clerks, nursing etc. where jobs are semi-skilled and at the bottom of the job ladder. As in the primary and secondary sectors, these women employees become the fodder of the next phase of the introduction of new technology. The question to be asked is why new technology is turning out to be so anti-women.

The confinement of women to routine, unimaginative and labour intensive jobs can only be the outcome of the mind-body dualism. In other words the mind-body dualism creates the occupational dualism which is sustained and nourished by successive generations of males who hold superior jobs and who are steeped in the mind-body dualism syndrome. Even unions (which are all male dominated) are not sympathetic to the cause of women.

New developments are taking place as a reaction to the widely articulated demands and militant stance adopted by women's organisations. Most jobs in the U.S. armed forces, including combat forces are open to women. Most advanced countries are set to follow the U.S. example. In India, women are occupying high positions in the Administrative Services, Police, Judiciary and S & T. This has, however, not helped to ameliorate the lot of the poor and rural women workers.

It appears that inspite of the impressive advances made by women in elitist fields, where the mind-body dualism is breaking down, it seems to be well entrenched in the organised and informal sectors of the economy which provide well over 80% of the women workers with employment.

EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DUALISM

The last dualism which is gender biased is that of the educational system. The number of illiterate men, in absolute numbers went up by 23% between 1971 and 1981 while women illiterates went up by 28% during the same period. 55% of men were illiterate in 1981 whereas the comparative figure for women was 75%. In 1981 there were 201 literate men to every 100 literate women and 127 illiterate women to every 100 illiterate men.

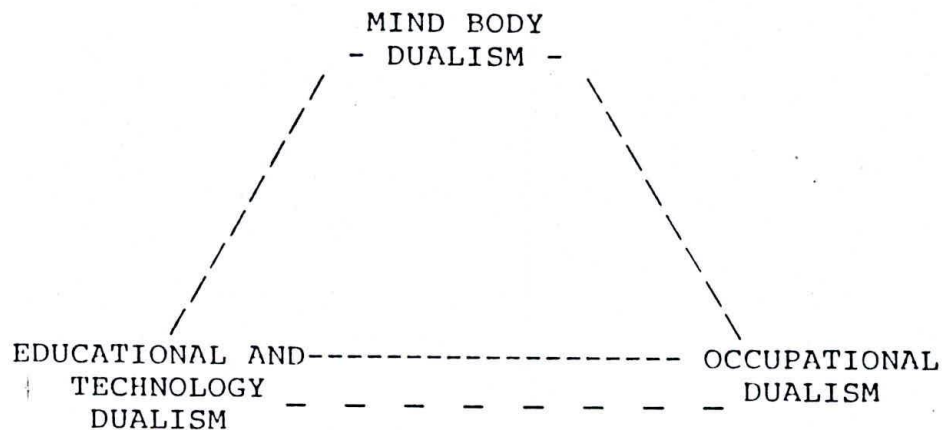
One of the reasons for the higher illiteracy among women, is the mind-body dualism which ordains that the women's place is at home and that when working out, they are only capable of simple and repetitive jobs. Kumud Sharma (5) arrives at a similar conclusion

"Cross country data on education, skill development, training & Women's access to productive assets and resources supports the observation that through an informal process of socialisation and mechanisms of division of labour and selection, the society channels women in what is considered suitable for them. The treatment of the female labour force is to a large extent a reflection of their low status in the labour market, lack of proper education and training. The report indicates that the majority of women in ITIs have been undergoing training in cutting and tailoring, embroidery and needlecraft."

The question to be asked is how women can be given greater access to education and technology. Tradition, cultural biases and social norms seek to perpetuate status-quo. A great deal of political will is required to bring about changes that enable more women to enroll in education and skill training. Conditions have been created to make such changes possible for women of the middle and upper classes in urban and rural areas, providing opportunities for employment in government services and industry

though occupational segregation still persists. The problem is in respect of the poor rural women who constitute over 80% of the female labour force.

Summarising the above dualisms, the mind-body dualism suggested by Hacker is based on assumptions by males regarding wonted superiority in thinking and decision making in complex fields of administration and industry. This is clearly one of the undesirable outcomes of a patriarchal society. These assumptions manifest themselves in occupational segregation and denial of educational and skill development activities specially to the poor rural masses of women where the inequity is the greatest. Occupational segregation is perpetuated by designs of machines and processes which are anti-women and which exclude women from operating them. This fact is used as an argument for denying opportunities to rural women and those working in labour intensive jobs, to education and skill development, specially when changes in technology take place. This chain of assumptions and outcomes has resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy to support the mind body dualism as illustrated in the following figure.



But things are changing. The myth that women are inferior in status and mind is being broken, though ever so slowly. Events have overtaken gender biases and made the supporting assumptions invalid and untenable. Women in armed forces in the US are flying aircraft and helicopters. Some women are managing mega-corporations and many women are working at the frontiers of technology in medicine, science and technology.

But as far as India is concerned, this trend has to be translated into actions and programmes which will benefit poor rural women. The first step is, of course, to stop women from getting displaced from the existing jobs by introduction of inappropriate and alien technologies.

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology, per se, is gender neutral though not value free. Technology, which degrades the environment and the quality of life of people could be operated by both men and women. However the focus here is so shaped that it has become gender biased to the detriment of women. Some examples are given below.

1. The specifications for a military fighter aircraft is that 90% to 95% of the population of air force pilots should be able to fly them. The height of pilots recruited by the airforces ranges between 5'6" to about 6'0". There may be some pilots who are shorter than 5'6" or taller than 6'0". It is therefore not possible to design the cockpit and controls of the aircraft to suit all pilots. Hence this particular specification. Very few women will be able to fly it as the number of women over 5'6" is a fraction of their population. But if the designers of aircraft are told to design an aircraft for people in the aircraft for people in the height range of say 5'0" to 5'6" they will be able to do so. This is an extreme example to show how specifications play a vital role in design. Specifications could be gender biased though the technology of fighter aircraft is gender neutral.
2. Lorries, buses, tractors and factory machines are all designed for operation by an average male and not by an average female. Drivers have to have a certain leg-reach to operate pedals and a minimum of strength to operate the steering wheels and gears. The specifications are gender-biased. They were not meant to be anti-women but in real life it has turned out to be so.
3. Most hand held agricultural equipment (saws, weeders, sprayers etc) have a similar gender bias. Use of such equipment has displaced female and male unskilled labour but provided work to a few males who can operate the equipment.
4. Powerlooms have been so designed that one operator can handle two or more. But the design and space/time considerations rule out their operation by women.
5. A trivial example is the hand-operated bicycle pump which is extensively used in households and petty repair shops. Operation by women is frowned upon.

On the lighter side, there seem to be some time honoured designs which are meant to exclude their use by men. These are in respect of household devices such as mud-choolahs and hand sewing machines without stands. The mud-choolahs are so low that it is inconvenient for men to sit down on their haunches to use them. Similarly the floor operated hand sewing machines prevent

their effective use by men as they have to sit cross legged and stoop over them.

Examples abound as to how technology has been engineered to be pro-male, and in effect anti-women. Similarly where women are segregated to do some jobs with certain devices, these preclude operation by men. In both cases, the system perpetuates the gender-based division of labour.

Introduction of new technologies, of whatever type, should not accentuate the gender based division of labour, occupational segregation and income differentials. On the other hand, new technologies should be so selected and administered that intrinsically they should try to eliminate gender biases, provide more opportunities for women in the traditionally male dominated jobs and reduce income differentials. This aspect should be kept in view in Government assisted projects which should have built in mechanisms to evaluate new technologies before they are introduced to assess their impact on women, only after which should the projects be approved with abundant checks to ensure their implementation as planned. There should also be a countrywide movement to design women-friendly machines, devices and processes.

Anderson (6) states that "By their nature, technologies are disruptive of old patterns precisely because these old patterns have not been sufficiently productive. People look for and adopt technologies in order to increase economic output and security. However, for a technology to be effectively adopted, the gains to recipients should outweigh losses. Some of these gains and losses are non-economic".

What should be women's response to the introduction of new technologies? Jan Zimmerman (7) prescribes that - "Women should adopt the time honoured strategy of resisting technological change and automation to safeguard their opportunities of future employment. They should do this even if this strategy subverts developmental goals." and she concludes "Women will find themselves dealing with the world of tomorrow, using yesterday tools, the technological hand-downs of their brothers; they will find themselves racing towards a technological horizon only to see it receding before them."

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Welfarist approach adopted by women's movements in the past, has become more ideological and raised issues of woman's status, equality in educational and economic opportunities and role in decision making.
2. The deterioration in women's employment and economic opportunities, specially in respect of poor rural women, has made the woman's movement more trenchant in its demand to improve the lot of women in every field. The increased

articulation of such issues has made the concerns more visible nationally and noticeable at the political level.

3. Women's movement has changed its approach from one of concern for women's physical and material demands to a concern for equality, status etc which are ideological and conceptual issues. This change in the stance of women's movement has helped to tackle these issues at the political level.
4. Old technologies which were highly stable over thousands of years, provided little mobility for women in the economic field. The patriarchal system is being perpetuated by confining women to their homes. There was little concern or debate about ideological issues such as status and equality for women in access to & control of resources.
5. New technologies, which are likely to be highly unstable in so far as women's employment in traditional sectors is concerned, have been disastrous to women's cause, marginalising or displacing women from their traditional areas of employment and denying them access to new technology. Patriarchy seems to have taken a new form in the guise of new technology.
6. The underpinnings of new technology are the male assumptions that they are more creative and better at decision-making. The process through which new technology is perpetuating patriarchy can be illustrated through the cycle of
 - (i) mind - body dualism,
 - (ii) Design / technology dualism
 - (iii) the education dualism with last mentioned reinforcing the mind - body dualism.
7. These three types of dualisms are operating in society affecting the absorption of technology by women and relegating them to the repetitive / labour intensive jobs which degrades them socially and economically. These dualisms are
 - The Mind and body dualism - this assumes that men are identified with mind which is an instrument of creation and that women are identified with the body which is dumb, sexy, unpredictable and much in need of discipline and control. -The above dualism results in an occupational dualism which relegates women to the low and menial jobs in administration and industry whereas the higher echelons remain the domain of men.
 - The cycle is completed by education and technological dualism which denies women access to education and the new technologies on the plea that women are not working in such technologies.

8. Through an informal process of socialisation and mechanisms of division of labour and selection, the society channels women in what is considered appropriate for them. The processes of 'natural selection' are suppressed by man-made mores and rules.
9. It is not as if women have not made advances and broken the vicious circle created by the mind-body dualism. Women's entry in sizeable numbers in administrative and scientific fields are examples. However women's advances have been restricted to a very small area of human endeavour and has so far benefited the elite and upper classes. The problem of poor rural women continues to deteriorate with large scale displacement of women workers and more rigorous occupational segregation. It is to be hoped that the breakthrough achieved by women at higher levels demolishes the mind - body dualism and that the effect percolates to poor rural women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Women's current occupations in the field of production (agriculture, industry, services) should be made more productive and economically rewarding by application of science and technology.

The middle and upper class housewives are using technology to lessen their burden at home. In a way, this could perpetuate their traditional place at home. On the other hand this could release them for full time employment outside. We should think of ways and means of designing and adapting science and technology to make women more effective producers in the mainstream of production on an equal footing with men.

There are two aspects in women joining the mainstream (i) in their current occupations with higher productivity and incomes and (ii) future access to jobs traditionally male dominated.

2. At the planning stages of future developmental projects, a conscious effort should be made to ensure that exploitation of a particular technology is not restricted to males but will give equal access to women, through appropriate changes in designs and processes. There are State laws which regulate the introduction of new technologies so that these do not adversely affect the survival and growth of small scale industry. Similar rules should apply to developmental projects to ensure that women are not displaced. There should be legislation to ensure reservations for women in new industries and expansion projects.

3. There should be a country wide movement to ensure that future designs of machines and processes give equal access to women and that the designs are not anti - women.

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THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF RURAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN
IMPROVED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of rural Asian women are unorganised and acutely isolated within the confines of the family. In the absence of any traditional forum where they can meet to discuss and articulate their common problems, they continue to bear the agony and consequences of the ongoing environmental degradation. Their lack of access to information or control over decision making in domains beyond the immediate concerns of the family - be it at the community, state or national level, leaves them particularly disadvantaged for initiating any resistance or proposing alternatives to the kind of 'development' being pursued. Most significantly, women's general lack of ownership or control over any productive resources in a patriarchal society, leaves them in a perpetual state of personal insecurity. Challenging or opposing decisions by male owners of the household's resources can easily result in the woman's getting thrown out of the home, a risk few women are willing to take in their state of isolation and resourcelessness.

Strategies for genuinely and sustainably increasing women's control over natural resource management, must therefore, of necessity, holistically address the question of gender relations in the specific context. Here, it is useful to clarify the different connotations of the terms 'women' and 'gender'. The focus on 'women' tends to result in problems of women being perceived in terms of their sex, i.e. their biological differences with men, rather than in terms of their gender, i.e. in terms of the social relationship between men and women, a relationship in which women have been systematically subordinated. (1) Gender relationships are socially constructed with gender differences being shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants.

Understanding gender relations in natural resource management in subsistence economies implies not only looking at existing gender 'roles' but gender divisions in terms of ownership and control over resources, knowledge, access to information and control over the product of one's labour. At a broad level of generalisation, one could say that in most parts of South Asia, whereas gender relations assign subsistence tasks of biomass gathering to women, they have little ownership or control over the local productive resource base. Further, women's work is perceived to have little value in conformity with women's subordinate social status. The socialisation process makes girls and women internalise this subordination so deeply that helping them become aware of it is often the most difficult first step in mobilising them for change. This paper

summarises the experience of attempting to evolve appropriate interventions for enabling women to participate in improved natural resource management in 3 different states of North India in collaboration with local NGOs. The experience spans periods of between 8 to 11 years. It focuses more on the evolutionary process by which priorities got defined, whether mixed or only women's organisations, were formed, and how the support strategies were altered in response to improved and changing understanding of gender issues in each context. Based on this, an attempt has been made to synthesise the learnings in terms of the process by which interventions by local organisations should ideally be defined and some necessary preconditions which need to be met for empowering women to gain greater and sustainable control over the way local natural resources are used and managed.

A basic premise of this paper is that both the short and long term goals of supporting women's participation in natural resource management must be defined clearly. Is the goal limited to integrating women in on-going or new programmes simply because traditional gender roles assign subsistence tasks of biomass gathering to women? Or is the goal to empower women to gain control over their labour, knowledge and local natural resources which may eventually lead to changing gender relations resulting in greater gender equity? Unless a commitment to working towards greater gender equity in the longer term is incorporated as a programme goal, 'success' in increasing women's participation in forestry or NRM programmes may end up being shortlived or may even result in increasing rural women's excessive work burden.

As all the three case studies are from India, the next section of the paper begins with a macro look at the role of natural resources in the Indian economy. Gender relations in natural resource management are first defined in relation to the national context.

The 3 case studies that follow highlight the differences and similarities in specific contexts necessitating evolving locally appropriate interventions. The strengths and weaknesses of different approaches for dealing with the common problem of male hostility\suspicions towards interventions aimed at women's empowerment, essentially changing gender relations, are discussed. The limitations of interventions restricted to only forestry or NRM issues without the ability to respond to other major problems faced by women are also highlighted.

The third section of the paper presents a synthesis of the learnings from the 3 case studies. This is followed by a brief final section of conclusions and recommendations for programme design and implementation.

SECTION - II

2. EXPERIENCES WITH RURAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 NATURAL RESOURCES AND GENDER RELATIONS IN THE INDIAN ECONOMY

70 percent of India's population continues to depend on agriculture with over half the country's land under cultivation. Much of this consists of private holdings of less than one hectare. Less than a third of the cultivated land is irrigated and a still smaller fraction of about a fifth is under intensive 'green revolution' agriculture. The bulk of India's population remains dependent on rainfed agriculture and on economically unviable small land holdings for their subsistence needs. Most of them do not have the means to purchase their additional requirements in the market. As a consequence, they depend on the local natural environment for collecting biomass such as fuel, small timber, fodder, material for agricultural implements, medicinal herbs\plants, fruit, mulch, leaf manure etc. for supplementing their agricultural production. This is done from public or common lands which may legally be owned by the Forest, Revenue or other government departments, some controlled by village Panchayats. About a quarter of the country's population is totally landless. The dependence of this segment on collecting subsistence biomass from common lands is even greater. Much of India's countryside is the habitat of this population. It is characterised by overuse of agricultural lands, conversion of lands unsuitable for agriculture to agricultural use and non-sustainable and unregulated exploitation of biomass from the surrounding non-agricultural lands.

It is the majority of the population dependent on rainfed agriculture or agricultural labourers and the tribal population dependent on forest resources that depend directly on their natural environments for their personal well being and survival. Yet, this segment of society has been increasingly marginalised in the country's power structure and government policies have tended to deny or overlook their needs. The symbiotic relationship between subsistence agriculture on small land holdings and availability of biomass from common access public lands has also been jeopardised through large scale privatization of common lands. Subsidised access to the produce of the remaining public lands to industry has depleted them acutely. The bulk of the population dependent on the natural resource base for subsistence is finding itself at a double disadvantage. While 'development' has created limited alternative employment opportunities for it, the natural resource base to which it earlier had access has shrunk dramatically besides becoming highly degraded. (2).

Women's predicament within this scenario can be understood given gender relations which generally assign tasks of biomass gathering from the natural environment to women. Although entire households are victims of macro developments, men are able to find escape routes with greater ease than women. This may be through migration to urban centres in search of wage employment, gaining priority access to the limited new jobs becoming available or simply through turning to alcohol and domestic violence to give vent to their frustrations. In most cases, this further increases women's vulnerability and work burden.

2.2 ISSUES RELATED TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BY WOMEN'S

GROUPS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

This case study is based on the work done by SUTRA (Social Uplift through Rural Action), an NGO based in Dharampur block of Solan district in Himachal Pradesh (H.P.). The author has been associated with the NGO as a resource person since 1981.

2.2.1 BACKGROUND

SUTRA began work in the area in 1976, initially focusing on conventional development 'projects' such as starting adult literacy classes, distributing improved seeds and fertilizers to farmers, providing better health services, etc. Fairly early on, it started realising that the most committed and active participants in its programme were women. From the early 1980s, it shifted its primary focus to assisting rural women in building up women's organisations at the village level. Upgrading the skills of traditional midwives and training selected women as improved stove builders were two of SUTRA's initial efforts of working with women only. The close, regular contact with these selected local women increased SUTRA's understanding of gender issues in the area. Many of them were later recruited as full time activists of the NGO to work with the 'Mahila Mandals' (village level women's organisations) SUTRA has been assisting village women to form. On the one hand, women talked about their increasing work burden in both the domestic and subsistence sectors. On the other, there was a persistent demand for income earning opportunities. When SUTRA attempted to respond to the latter, it was often found that women could not find the time for new economic activities because of their heavy existing work load.

Parallel to this, there were widespread reports of increasing domestic violence and social abuse against women due to growing alcoholism amongst men. Cases of men bringing in second wives to beget sons, desertion, rape (within and outside the family) and women committing suicide were also common.

After an internal evaluation in 1985, SUTRA decided to change its programme emphasis. None of the conventional

'development' projects could respond to women's genuine problems. It decided to shift its focus on building up women's organisations as its main goal, not simply as vehicles for implementing development 'projects' but to assist women in creating their own spaces for sharing their common hardships and evolving collective strategies for dealing with them through organised action. The commitment shifted to empowering women to work for social change which would enable them to live their lives as dignified, equal human beings.

Two inputs were considered essential for working for women's empowerment. The first was to provide them access to maximum information as information itself is power. The second was to create opportunities for women to spend time together away from their homes - to be able to reflect on their personal problems from a wider social perspective and rid themselves of the centuries old negative self perception inculcated in them. Since then, holding 3 to 5 day Legal Literacy and Awareness Generation camps and producing pictorial information booklets have become regular features of SUTRA's work.

Through these, women are informed about their legal and constitutional rights, the structure of government institutions and programmes, and where to go for the redressal of specific grievances. In addition, regular 3 day gatherings of representatives of Mahila Mandals from all the areas in which SUTRA and other collaborating NGOs are working are organised annually. During these, women exchange their problems, articulate common demands and work out strategies of action besides spending endless hours of singing, dancing and laughing together. A state wide federation of MMs has been formed to eventually articulate women's common demands at the state level.

It is through the fora of local MMs and the larger gatherings of women that SUTRA's work on forestry and NRM issues evolved. However, prior to looking into the experience, it is useful to briefly look at some special characteristics of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.), its economy and women's participation in that economy.

2.2.2 ROLE OF WOMEN IN HIMACHAL'S ECONOMY

Himachal is one of the smallest Indian states located in the North West of India. Most of its terrain is mountainous. It is also the least urbanised states of India. Over 90 percent of its population lives in small, scattered hill villages. Often, a village consists of no more than 10 to 15 houses and even these are spread over a large area.

The backbone of the state's economy continues to be subsistence farming on small hill terraces by a large mass of self-cultivating peasant proprietors. Atypical of India as a whole, there are very few landless agricultural labourers.

It is this peculiar agrarian structure of the state's economy which defines women's status in society as well as their relationship with the natural environment. As the majority of the small farms are economically unviable, the owners are not in a position to hire labour for cultivation. It is household labour, primarily that of women and girls, which sustains agricultural production. From childhood, girls are socialised into assisting with agricultural production, care of the livestock, fetching firewood, fodder and water to make the system work.

However, women do not receive a wage for the work they do and a lot of their work does not formally get counted as work as it is considered 'unproductive house work'. What they share with other women agricultural labourers is that they do not own the land on which they labour.

To deal with this problem, SUTRA commissioned a study which attempted to quantify women's actual labour inputs in agriculture and allied activities in 4 districts of Himachal. The study found that more than 75 percent of agricultural work, over 90 percent of work related to livestock rearing and over 95 percent of all housework is done by women in the state. (3). Thus, in a sense, the state's predominantly agricultural economy functions primarily with women's labour.

Altogether, the rural woman of H.P. puts in an average of 14 hours of work daily into agriculture, animal husbandry and house work.

2.2.3 CHANGING PATTERN OF NATURAL RESOURCE USE

Due to the smallness of landholdings, people in H.P. have always relied heavily on collecting biomass from surrounding common lands, which used to be thickly forested. 32 percent of the state's area is legally controlled by the Forest Department. In addition, in some parts of the state, each village had its 'shamlet' land for common use. Then, there are privately owned non-agricultural 'ghasanis' (grazing lands) meant to support the livestock sector of the economy.

However, since 1971, there has been a major shift in the pattern of natural resource utilization with the 'opening up' of the state to 'economic development'. On the one hand, the state govt. started commercial exploitation of the forests to raise revenue. On the other, 50 percent of the 'shamlet' lands were acquired by the govt. and distributed to the landless population. The remaining 50 percent of such lands, although retained for common use, were handed over to the forest department for proper 'management'. Basically, this meant even these lands being fenced off and replanted with non-browsable timber species popular among foresters.

Further, with the ever rising market value of timber, men have started replacing multipurpose local tree species even on their private lands with quick growing commercial trees.

Besides increasing soil erosion, land slips and drying up of water sources, these changes in the natural resource use pattern at the macro level have resulted in an acute scarcity of grasses, tree leaf fodder and firewood. Given the gender division of labour, inevitably, it is the women on whose shoulders the hardship has fallen.

2.2.4 INVOLVING WOMEN IN TREE PLANTING

It was during the drought year of 1987 that SUTRA first attempted to motivate women to plant trees. During MM meetings, awareness generation camps and other gatherings of women, the problem of firewood, fodder and water shortage had started being voiced repeatedly by the women. Due to the drought, cases of women having to walk 20 kilometres to fetch just one headload of fodder to keep their cattle alive started being reported. Drying of perennial springs due to increasing deforestation was making the search for water ever harder. And the women complained of the household's men simply demanding cooked meals without thinking about how hard collecting firewood had become. The women were somehow gathering it as its non-availability for cooking could easily result in humiliation or beating at home.

SUTRA started exploring women's interest in planting local multipurpose tree species as a means of reducing their hardship. Their response seemed positive and SUTRA raised nurseries for two consecutive years on an experimental basis. The MMs were asked to send list of plants required by their members with names of the preferred species.

Simultaneously, the women staff of the organisation were asked to put together local women's traditional knowledge about the uses and other characteristics of various local species. This led to the compilation of a rich storehouse of folk knowledge about local trees. Some of the women got deeply involved in this exercise. Not only were a diverse range of uses (medicinal, food, lighting material, fibre production, fruit, edible flowers, mulch and organic fertilizer besides fodder and firewood) of different parts of trees listed, but also a wealth of knowledge about proper management of different species surfaced. During the cold winter months, tree leaf fodder is the only green fodder available in the hills. Practically each terraced field has a row of local fodder trees along its edge. The household women manage these carefully for procuring maximum leaf fodder yields through lopping. They know when and how to lop without damaging the main tree. However, when the time of planting came, very few saplings raised by SUTRA were actually taken by the women and out of those taken, only a few survived.

On trying to analyse why this had happened, we realised that with the onset of the rains, women's already heavy workload increases manifold and they are simply unable to dig pits and plant saplings as well. In any case, they can undertake such planting only on their private lands. But that is not where the main problem lies. As far as the management of fodder trees along field bunds is concerned, hill women can teach a lot to the best of forestry 'experts'.

The problem with the private 'ghasanis' is that they are often too far from the house and difficult to protect. In any case, if there is a shortage of fodder trees on the ghasanis, it is largely because the men have got them cut or replaced by commercial species. What will prevent the men from doing the same with the new saplings planted by the women? As the legal owner of the land, the man has the last word on what will be planted there. If he does not share the woman's priorities, there is little she can do about it. This was also evident in the poor lifting of fodder plants by the women. Investigations revealed that while women had expressed their preference for fodder species, the men insisted on commercial fruit plants.

2.2.5 FOCUSSING ON BASIC GENDER ISSUES

Collective reflection on the experience led to SUTRA realising that it had made a classical error in formulating its strategy. Simply because women have the primary responsibility for gathering biomass for subsistence needs should not mean that they should also have the primary responsibility for replenishing the depleting stock of trees. Unless the processes causing deforestation or replacement of multipurpose species by commercial ones are countered, even the new trees planted by the women are likely to disappear. It is not the women who are causing deforestation. If we had succeeded in persuading them to plant trees, we would have only added to their work burden without increasing their control over the trees.

This experience led to a shift in SUTRA's approach. It was realised that the problem lay in women's lack of control over the management of both private and common lands despite it being their responsibility to collect essential biomass from them. The women did not yet have the strength to deal with the issue within their individual households. But they could start demanding collective control by women over the management of common lands.

This resulted in considerable discussion of the issue during various gatherings of women. The forest department's (FD) policies towards management of both village shamlat and forest lands was analysed. The women pointed out that the predominantly male staff of the FD interacted with the male dominated village Panchayats to seek their consent for planting commercial species on shamlat lands. Information on the legal status of different types of land and the legal procedures which

needed to be followed by the FD while planting on common lands was provided to the village women and SUTRA's staff with the help of a lawyer.

This led to a number of spontaneous, exciting initiatives by some MMs. In one case, the MM, on learning that the FD was planning to fence off their shamlat land and plant only the commercial Pine species on it, passed a resolution that unless at least 50% of the plants were of fodder species, the women would uproot them and replace them with fodder plants. This was sent to the concerned forest officials. The women also demanded that instead of the male dominated Panchayat, the MM should be consulted about what to do with their shamlat land. The forest guard ran around and somehow obtained the fodder species the women wanted. The women didn't have to do any additional work themselves.

In another village, the MM succeeded in forcing the FD to remove the fencing it had put around their shamlat land for new planting. They insisted that that was the only grazing land they had and the fencing had shut off their only path to the nearest source of drinking water for the livestock. During the following year, they worked out their own plan for improving the area's productivity and asked the FD to implement it.

At the next meeting of their state level federation, representatives of the MMs discussed the issue further and passed a resolution that the government should give the village MMs the power and responsibility for deciding how their common lands should be developed by the FD. Prior to the subsequent elections in the state, all candidates canvassing for votes were asked by the MMs to give in writing that they would support the above demand if elected. SUTRA is also assisting the women explore whether in the ongoing settlement of rights on forest lands in the state, the MMs can obtain legal rights over the management and use of village common lands. If that is achieved, the women will gain legal control over the use and management of an important local resource. That will enable them to influence the use of public resources in accordance with their priorities without adding to their work burden.

Beginning with these initial steps, once adequately strong, the state level federation of MMs can start influencing natural resource management policies at the state level.(4).

2.3 WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED

COMMON LANDS IN RAJASTHAN

This case study is based on the work of People's Education and Development Organisation (PEDO) in Bicchiwara block of Dungarpur District, Rajasthan. The author has been associated with PEDO as a resource person since 1983.

2.3.1 THE AREA

Dungarpur district falls in the semi-arid belt of southern Rajasthan. Bicchiwara is one of 5 administrative blocks in the district with 81.5% of its population belonging to the Bhil tribe. The district is known to be drought prone. The most recent drought from 1985 to 1987 was the worst since 1891.

The terrain consists of low, rolling hills. The majority of the Bhils practice rainfed agriculture on untterraced hill slopes.

During the four decades since Independence, the district has witnessed devastating deforestation combined with significant changes in land use patterns. While the population has more than doubled and the cultivated area more than trebled, the forest area has declined to less than one fifth during this period.

Compared to an all India literacy rate of 36%, the literacy rate in Bicchiwara block is only 13.7%. The literacy rate among women is a mere 3.81% compared to 23.9% for men.

The 1981 census put the forest area of Bicchiwara block at 5,436 ha (only 7.6% of the total area). It is estimated that at Independence, over 35% of the block was under dense forest cover.

2.3.3 DEPENDENCE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY ON THE NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

The predominantly Bhil population of Bicchiwara block historically subsisted by a combination of food growing and food gathering from the forests. Forests provided the people with a wide range of subsistence goods - firewood, timber for housing, furniture and agricultural implements, medicinal herbs and plants, edible fruits, gums, honey, roots and wild flowers. During earlier droughts, although there was undoubted hardship, the forests provided a back up life support system.

Unfortunately, today the area has been transformed into a moonlike landscape of bare, brown hills with barely a blade of grass on them. Semi-starved low grade cattle, with a preponderance of goats and sheep, can be seen searching for food for survival. With the symbiotic relationship between the forests and the local subsistence economy destroyed, a vicious poverty trap has been created. During years of crop failure, people either have to migrate to other areas in search of work or depend on daily wage work generated through govt. drought relief programmes. The remaining forests are hacked down further to collect firewood for sale to supplement declining incomes. The traditional subsistence economy is on the verge of collapse with mere survival having become a full time task.

2.3.3 WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Besides traditional women's tasks of child bearing, child care and domestic work, there is a clear gender division of labour in the subsistence economy. Fetching firewood and water are considered exclusively women's work. Similarly, taking cattle for grazing is by and largely done by women although children and older men also do this. And then, women participate in most agricultural activities such as sowing, hoeing, weeding, harvesting and post-harvest storage and processing. Today, with people's increasing dependence on wage labour, more women than men can be seen at work sites. Thus, women have also become major cash earners for the family.

However, ownership of all immovable property such as land and housing is vested in men and the only property considered to be women's is their jewellery. There is strong cultural resistance to giving even a part of the family's land to women and a family without male offspring considers itself highly unfortunate.

Thus, while having an intrinsic interest in maintaining a healthy natural environment, women find themselves devoid of control over decision making related to management of a basic resource like land because its ownership vests with men. This is in a context where domestic violence, alcoholism, bigamy and desertion are common among men.

2.3.4 THE ORIGINS OF PEDO'S WORK WITH LOCAL WOMEN

PEDO started an improved chulha (stove) programme, based on training selected village women in 1983. By 1986, 30 women had been trained as chulha mistris and supervisors. Each one of them had established contact with 100 to 200 local women in their respective areas. It was through this extended network of contact with local women that the organisation started gaining a better understanding of women's problems.

With the commencement of the three years drought (1985 to 1987), the near total collapse of the natural resource based subsistence economy started becoming evident. Its impact on all local people was terrible but clearly, women were the worst sufferers.

The situation led to a serious review and reflection within PEDO. It was clear that none of women's problems could be dealt with in isolation or at the individual level. Organised and collective action was a pre-requisite. To seek women's reflection and involvement in articulating dominant issues confronting them and defining appropriate strategies of action, a large mela (gathering) of women was organised in April, 1987.

The response to the mela, despite several problems, was overwhelming. During the 3 days 3,000 rural women, instead of

the planned 1,500 participated! Besides endless, uninhibited singing, dancing and playing games together, the women shared their experiences, joys and sorrows. For most of them, this was the first time in their lives that they had been away from their domestic chores or traveled so far away from home.

The major problems articulated by the women fell into two main groups. The first were linked to the collapse of the agrarian economy due to the drought. Topmost among these were the scarcity of fuel, fodder and water and increased dependence on wage labour.

The second group of problems were social; alcoholism among men, domestic violence, desertion, bigamy and the general insecurity in women's lives.

Due to considerable discussion on the causes and impact of the prevailing drought, women of several villages who had participated in the mela, asked for fuel, fodder and fruit plants for planting on their private lands. Women of 3 villages also asked for assistance in rehabilitating their totally degraded village common lands.

After the mela, PEDO initially received a demand for 30,000 saplings from women of about 60 villages. However, after the first monsoon rain of 1987, the demand for plants shot up phenomenally. A total of 1,64,000 saplings were eventually distributed to 602 women from 68 villages !

PEDO also supported the women of two villages to rehabilitate their village common lands that year.

2.3.5 TENSIONS GENERATED BY THE FOCUS ON WOMEN

However, at this stage it started becoming evident that the focus on working with only women was beginning to generate tensions and hostility not only among male villagers but also among PEDO's male staff. The male staff started questioning the objectives of the women's programme. They could see few tangible outputs from it unlike the hand pump installation, well deepening or contour terracing they themselves were involved with. The women's programme, with its emphasis on group building and eliciting women's participation, to them, seemed to consist of endless meetings with women with no tangible results. They complained that when they were asked to intimate village women about a meeting, the village men wanted to know why they were not being invited. Reports also started coming in of some of the village women being beaten by their husbands when they returned empty handed from a women's meeting. Some men had been permitting their wives to attend the women's meetings in the expectation that the organisation would provide some employment to them. When they returned empty handed, the men's frustration found release in wife beating.

We also started realising that although women were the greatest sufferers of environmental degradation and could take the lead in remedial action, gender relations made them dependent on men's support for taking any land related initiative. Very few women are strong enough to assert themselves in deciding how the land legally owned by men should be used.

All this led to the decision to involve men in the process of change. PEDO's objective was not to create yet another divide between men and women. Instead, the aim was to strengthen women's capabilities to deal with their problems and fight their oppression both individually and collectively. If men were made participants in the process of reflecting on how women's specific burdens had increased, they might cooperate in finding ways of reducing them. But, if instead, they felt threatened, it was likely to result in increased oppression of women in a situation where women were ill equipped to deal with it.

2.3.6 WORKING WITH JOINT GROUPS OF MEN AND WOMEN ON COMMON LANDS

Taking these developments into account, it was decided to modify the approach and work with mixed groups of men and women.

There are large chunks of degraded common lands in the block. Residents of particular villages or hamlets have clear, defacto grazing rights in specific patches of these lands.

While defining clear principles for PEDO to work on common lands in early 1988, it was decided to build upon the existing group identity of sharing traditional rights in them. Thus, all right holding families were to be involved in the group. To make every family feel equally responsible for protection, each family was to be assured a right to an equal share of the produce. Each group had to make a prior commitment to protect the plantation before PEDO was to get involved. Day to day management decisions had to be taken by a managing committee (MC) elected by the whole group. There had to be at least an equal representation of women on the MC which was to meet regularly every month. Regular meetings of the entire group were also to be held and every effort made to encourage women's participation in these.

In any case, as traditional use rights to common lands are family based, it was felt that working on them with only women would generate avoidable discord. At the same time, due to women's subordinate status, there was considerable concern about whether women would have any effective participation in groups in which men were also members. All that the organisation could do to facilitate women's participation was to make it a precondition for working with any community and ensure the availability of women staff during village meetings to encourage women to come out. But this cannot be always ensured due to inadequacy of women staff or some of them being unable to provide continuous and regular support due to instability and personal problems in their own lives.

Further, equal participation by women was being sought in a cultural context where there is a strong surviving tradition of men getting together twice every month on the 11th day of the lunar cycle to discuss village affairs. Women are completely excluded from this traditional forum. As a consequence, the men are always better informed and used to taking decisions related to village affairs. Also, despite winning over the male staff to the cause of facilitating women's involvement, and providing them periodic training inputs for developing the skills for it, it is too easy for the male staff to revert to their traditional dominating or patronising role towards women.

2.3.7 EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S GROUPS

The performance of mixed groups was reviewed during a training programme for women staff in September 1988. The consensus was that women's lack of land ownership and traditional male domination effectively inhibited them from playing a leading role in plantation related decision making, except in a few villages. Joint meetings of men and women, while successful in reducing male hostility and securing their cooperation, tended to diminish free expression and articulation by women. The need to create a separate forum for women in which they could express their views and concerns uninhibited by the presence of men, was strongly felt.

At the same time, the 1988 monsoon was exceptionally good after 4 to 5 years of poor rains. Instead of problems of fodder and water, now the women were more pre-occupied with getting credit for buying grain seeds for sowing. All the stored grain had been eaten up during the scarcity years. Also, due to a dramatic increase in illnesses during the drought years, there was an increased need for emergency loans. The only accessible credit was from moneylenders. The women talked about the extreme exploitation by local moneylenders. They responded enthusiastically to the idea of starting women's savings groups as a long term measure for getting out of their clutches.

The development of over 30 women's savings groups since then has been a remarkable phenomenon and demand for assistance in forming new groups is continuing. Surprisingly, there has been next to no male hostility to this activity being undertaken exclusively by women. The monthly meetings of these groups have also provided the much needed forum for women to get together regularly for a non-threatening, non-controversial purpose. While some of the groups have kept themselves confined to the savings activity, many have taken up several other issues of concern to the women. The existence of active women's savings groups in villages where common lands plantations have been taken up has women in their management. 3 day awareness generation camps for women have been held in some of the villages discussions have been organised to facilitate learning from each other's experiences. In the process, group members have gained

confidence in articulating their problems, acting on them, and being able to talk even in gatherings where men are present.

2.3.8 THE SITUATION TODAY AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

There is considerable variation in women's participation in the common land plantation groups that PEDO is working with. There has been nothing 'automatic' in the extent of women's active participation in the development of village common lands, no matter how acute their hardship of searching for fuel and fodder. Even in the villages where women took the initiative and played a leadership role, this was preceded by enabling them to interact with other women's groups through melas, visits, training programmes and awareness generation camps. Continuous interaction with PEDO's women staff has been another crucial input for empowering women to participate.

Where either the opportunities for exposure or inputs by the women staff have been weak or limited, village women's participation in decision making has remained weak. The tradition of women being assigned a passive role in decision making in non-domestic matters and their isolation are just too powerful to break through by women on their own. What is needed is to help women create their own forum in the villages where they can meet and interact regularly to build up their confidence and develop the capability to work collectively as a group. Initial efforts to create such groups around development of common lands brought forth men's suspicions and hostility as it was a threatening land based activity. Modifying this approach to work with combined groups of men and women proved a setback to women's participation.

This much needed women's forum has finally emerged in the form of Women's Savings Groups. For the first time, women have been able to find a socially accepted space where they can get together regularly and have access to information on a sustained basis. Given the opportunity to participate in an uninhibited manner in exclusive women's meetings, they are increasingly gaining the confidence to articulate their views even in meetings where men are present. Indirectly, this has increased their genuine participation in the management related decisions of their common lands. In fact, the pattern which is emerging is that once women get mobilised to act on a particular problem, they leave the men trailing behind in initiative and commitment, sometimes having to drag the men along. This was evident in a few villages when the women decided to take collective action against corrupt cooperative society officials and the exploitative practices of moneylenders. The men were too scared of the repercussions of confronting their exploiters and the women often had to drag their men along as the loans are in the name of men !

Another pattern which is emerging is that women tend to be less manipulative in their actions. Due to being sidelined by

the increasingly corrupted male dominated leadership structures and govt. services, they have not absorbed those values to the same extent. They are more prone to honouring the commitments they make.

This is illustrated by the changed views of PEDO's male staff towards the women's programme. Their initial doubts and hostility of 4 years ago have changed to their specially going out to involve women simply because women's response is more rewarding. Many of them are now trying to get more such groups started in their field areas to enable women to gain the necessary confidence.

A similar attitudinal change is becoming evident even among the men of several villages which have strong women's groups. PEDO has once again started toying with the idea of experimenting with wastelands development by exclusive women's groups as a means of enabling women to acquire rights to some land, albeit as a group. If this happens, it will mean a step in the direction of changing traditional gender relations in the control of a basic resource like land. It will be interesting to see if the women's groups manage their lands differently from the mixed groups. (5).

2.4 REHABILITATION OF COMMON LANDS BY WOMEN'S GROUPS IN GUJARAT

This case study is based on the work done by SARTHI (Social Action with Rural and Tribal Inhabitants of India) in Santrampur Taluks of Panchmahals District, Gujarat. The author has been associated with SARTHI's work since 1983.

2.4.1 BACKGROUND

The socio-economic characteristics of Panchmahals district (including Santrampur Taluka) are similar to those of the adjoining Dungarpur district of Rajasthan where PEDO is working. Panchmahals is one of Gujarat's most industrially backward districts with 89 percent of the workers still engaged in agricultural and allied activities. Most of them are small and marginal farmers. 90% of the district's cultivated area is rainfed which leaves the area vulnerable to crop failures due to deficient or untimely rains.

The most recent drought years were 1985 to 1987 which brought acute misery to the people. Besides total crop failures, acute fodder scarcity resulted in heavy cattle mortality and forced large numbers of people to migrate to other areas in search of work. In fact, seasonal migration for wage work is common in the area as rainfed agriculture yields only one crop annually.

Compared to Gujarat as a whole, Panchmahals has a much higher density of population, a much lower literacy rate

(particularly among women), much less urbanisation and a much higher percentage of tribal population.

The forests of the Panchmahals are historically famous. It was here that the Sultans of Ahmedabad and the Mughal Emperors used to come on elephant hunting expeditions.

Unfortunately, little of the forests has survived the combined pressures of illicit felling, commercial exploitation, clearance for agriculture and uncontrolled grazing. Excessive grazing smothers natural regeneration and each drought year brings a fresh onslaught from a desperate population in search of fodder, firewood and source of income. The district's grazing (gauchor) land is under similar pressure. Out of a total of about 50,000 ha. of grazing land, at least 10,000 ha. has been encroached upon by a land hungry population. The rest of it is in a degraded and unproductive state due to the absence of any regulatory or management system.

16 percent of Santrampur Taluka's area is supposed to be under forests and 8.9% is 'Revenue Wasteland'. Almost two fifths of the latter is already under cultivation (authorised or unauthorised) and what remains is degraded hilly or plain non-cultivable land.

As a consequence, little of any type of public land is available for development of biomass resources. Due to the majority of cultivators being small or marginal farmers, a similar constraint governs availability of private lands for the purpose.

Gender relations in the area are similar to those in PEDO's area. However, there is greater diversity across caste and class lines. Higher caste Patel women from larger land owning families do not have to scrounge for subsistence biomass goods from the surrounding degraded public lands. However, women of the majority of poorer Scheduled Tribe and backward class households are in never ending search for firewood, fodder and other biomass.

Desertion, domestic violence, alcoholism among men (despite prohibition in Gujarat) and husbands bringing in second wives to beget sons are equally common in SARTHI's area.

It is in this context that rehabilitation of degraded common lands exclusively by women's groups has emerged as one of SARTHI's major programmes. The uniqueness and strength of the programme lies in the fact that it originated out of the poorer women of Muvasa village themselves articulating the need to find some means of solving their acute problems of fodder and firewood scarcity. This was during the 3rd successive drought year of 1987. Working with women's groups did not form a component of any of SARTHI's programmes till then. However, both SARTHI's male and female staff had been sensitised to gender issues in

natural resource management through participation in several training workshops, both at PEDO and SARTHI/ They helped the Muvasa women form the first women's group for rehabilitation of a piece of degraded common land. Being locally based, they were acutely aware of the suspicions working only with women were likely to generate among village men. They devised their own strategies for dealing with this. The role of the organisation was primarily that of giving its field staff the flexibility of experimenting with a new approach. Later, on seeing its effectiveness, SARTHI has accepted working with groups, not only women's groups, as its main programme strategy.

2.4.2 OVERVIEW OF SARTHI'S EXPERIENCE WITH WOMEN'S GROUPS

At present, SARTHI is working with about 17 women's common lands groups in 5 of its field centres.

The land in all cases is either Panchayat Gauchor (grazing) land or Revenue Wasteland. Subsequent to the organic development of the Muvasa group, initiation of women's groups in other villages has taken different routes. In some cases, SARTHI's field staff have first scouted around to find the necessary common land. They have then tried to motivate local women to develop it as a group. In other cases, seeing the work of the Muvasa group, some male village leaders have approached SARTHI asking for a similar women's group to be formed in their village, offering the necessary land.

As may be expected, the experience with the groups has been variable. While some are developing well others are weak. Some have fallen apart in early stages of their formation. A complex range of factors influence each group's development. These include power dynamics within the village, competing interests in the common land, women's status and extent of exposure to the outside world, men's attitude towards women taking such initiatives, the skill, experience and leadership qualities of the field staff, particularly of the women staff, and the extent of fuelwood and fodder scarcity in the area.

2.4.3 CASE STUDY OF THE MUVASA GROUP

It is useful to look at the process of formation of the Muvasa group in greater detail as it has played a catalytic role in getting other groups going. Bringing women of newly formed groups to meet the Muvasa group has become a regular feature at SARTHI. These visits have seldom failed to impress new group members and have invariably facilitated new group formation.

Muvasa is a largish village with 6 hamlets. The group members belong to 2 of these. One third of the families are higher caste Patels whose women do not go out to work. The rest of the families are Adivasis (tribals) or from backward classes. Both men and women of these families have to supplement agricultural incomes with wage work.

Women of small and marginal farmer families face acute hardship in meeting their fuel and fodder needs. Fodder scarcity is particularly experienced during the summer months. Firewood has to be fetched from the forests about 10 Kms away.

Scarcity of fuelwood and fodder is becoming more acute with further dwindling of the village's common land resources. Much of it has been encroached upon. The limited land left for grazing is under such intense pressure that it has become totally unproductive and barren. It is 4 ha. of this land on which the Muvasa group has planted.

FORMATION OF THE WOMEN'S GROUP

In early 1988, SARTHI had initiated private wasteland development with a few families in Muvasa. Due to many families not working on their own lands, SARTHI staff had to hire other labour to do the earthwork. Most of this labour consisted of Adivasi women from the most disadvantaged families.

Getting together to work, the women talked about their own hardships. They regretted their inability to participate in the programme as their own land holdings were too small. Champa Ben and Vikram Bhai, SARTHI's field staff, took a lead from this and started exploring the possibility of the women developing a piece of common land as a group. The women showed immense interest. SARTHI was willing to pay for the land preparation and planting work.

Impromptu meetings on the work sites resulted in some ground rules being worked out for the group. All those who became members would have to do the land preparation and planting work themselves. The group would have to accept collective responsibility for protecting the plantation. Each member would have a right to an equal share of the produce. All decisions related to the plantation would have to be taken collectively. Only women would be eligible for group membership as it is they who suffer due to fuel and fodder scarcity. All women interested in joining the group would be invited to join.

With the group beginning to come together, the Panchayat was approached. The Panchayat gave a no objection certificate to the women for planting on 4 ha. of common land with a commitment to renew the lease after 10 years and not claiming any share of the produce from the land.

Some of the more active women then went from house to house enquiring from other non-Patel women whether they were interested in joining the group. A total of 29 women decided to become members. All of them are from the poorest families in the village, with some owning less than 1 acre of land. Due to this process, no conflict was generated due to some women feeling excluded from the group.

DEALING WITH MEN'S SUSPICIONS

Even before the group started work on the land, village men had started questioning why the organisation was working only with women. The husbands of some members felt that housework was suffering and the time spent in meetings was wasted. At the family level, each woman had to use a combination of assertiveness and diplomacy. They started getting up earlier to finish their housework before going to work on the land or to attend meetings.

SARTHI's staff dealt with the men's suspicions by calling a meeting of the whole village to explain why they were working with a women's group. Women's increasing hardship due to scarcity of fuel and fodder and their having a greater stake in dealing with the problem were discussed. Although this helped reduce suspicions, many men continued spreading rumours that SARTHI would abduct the women, take away their jewellery etc. Some men would stealthily listen to the group's discussions.

Slowly, with the group working steadily and the women's increasing empowerment, the rumours and suspicions died down. The field staff ensured some men's involvement with SARTHI's other activities so that they got better acquainted with the organisation.

EVOLVING A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE PLANTATION

The group meets regularly on the 10th of each month. Many decisions about the plantation have been taken during these meetings. The first problem the group faced was getting the co-operation of adjoining Sadavra village in protecting their plantation. Some families of this village used to graze their cattle on the land before. This problem was solved with the help of Muvasa's Panchayat and persuading the concerned families.

Next, when planting on the land was started in 1988, some village men had spearheaded a demand that only Eucalyptus should be planted. They tried to pressurise the women's group to make the same demand. On being reminded about their primary need for fuel and fodder, the women refused to succumb to this. A diverse range of species, earlier selected by the women themselves, were planted.

In February, 1989, the group had harvested the first grass crop from its plantation. One evening, 3 drunken men from the adjoining village threw an unextinguished cigarette stub on the grass. All the grass went up in flames and many of the young plants carefully nurtured by the women were damaged.

Initially, the mishap sent a wave of despondency among the women's group and SARTHI. But the women quickly gathered their wits and called a meeting to discuss what to do. Were they going

to permit the 3 men to get away with such an act of irresponsibility? Did their labour have no value? If they did not punish the men, even their future efforts could be similarly nullified. The women decided to demand a compensation of Rs.1400 from the 3 men.

The men were summoned and told the group's verdict. Seeing the group firmness and sensing the entire village's sympathy for it, they paid the Rs.1400/-.

When the Muvasa field centre staff narrated this incident during SARTHI's monthly staff meeting, the rest of the staff felt envious and inspired. The women's group's response was worlds apart from the bickerings, irresponsibility and manipulations of private land owners. From then onwards, all the field staff started striving to replicate the Muvasa group in their own areas.

In November 1989, with the second grass crop ready, the women were asked how they were planning to harvest and distribute it. Surprisingly, most of them felt that it should be cut by voluntary labour and sold off. The money could be partly distributed among the members and the rest deposited in their common account. This led to an interesting discussion on the contradiction in this decision. How was it that although the group had raised the plantation for meeting their fodder needs, when fodder was becoming available from it, they were planning to sell it off? The women's initial response was that all of them had enough fodder from their own lands. They why had they raised the plantation? Was their own fodder going to be adequate for the whole year? To this the response was that while some members would have enough for the whole year, others would run out by the summer. What would the latter do then? Buy from the market at a higher price than the price the group would get at this time? Or would they again walk 4 kms to the canal daily to fetch headloads of grass? Of what use was the plantation to such members? The group had not given serious thought to these questions. It decided on a compromise solution. Members were invited to cut the grass on the basis of taking away half the amount they cut and leaving the other half for the common pool.

When asked similar questions about firewood, the women firmly assert that when firewood starts becoming available, it will definitely not be sold. They face firewood scarcity all year round and fetching it is even more arduous than fetching grass.

The women also have a lot of knowledge about local trees and shrubs and their suitability for different uses. SARTHI is attempting to compile this systematically for use as a basis for species selection by different groups in the future. SARTHI has also started a Seed Bank for collecting seeds of useful local species for its nurseries. Some members of Muvasa's group have

been earning some income by collecting seeds for the bank. Protection of the plantation continues to pose a problem during the fodder scarce summer months. The land is at some distance from where the women live. They cannot easily keep an eye on it while doing other work. The protection trench and the thorny plant fencing is not adequately effective yet. Most of the year, other villagers respect the group's efforts and keep their cattle away. But, it seems, some people cannot resist the temptation of letting in their cattle during the dry summer months. Recently, members of the group hid themselves on the plantation and caught a man stealing grass from it. He was made to swear that he would never steal again.

Besides discussing plantation related matters, the group's meetings have become an effective forum for discussing other problems of the women and increasing their access to information and knowledge. One member is a chulha mistri (stove Builder), another a trained midwife and a 3rd one has been trained as a para-vet. Each of them provide guidance to the group in their respective fields.

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE IN THEMSELVES

Getting organised as a group and taking collective action has clearly been an empowering experience for the women. They feel that they have established their right to access to information and knowledge which was earlier available only to men. Collective action enabled them to break through men's initial hostility to women treading into a non-traditional domain. Individual members can now better deal with personal problems knowing that they have group support behind them.

The group's strong stand over finding the 3 men who had carelessly started a fire in the plantation was generally supported and almost admired by the village men. Today, the husbands of many members genuinely feel that the women should get more opportunities for acquiring new skills and knowledge. This is partly due to the change for the better within the members' homes since they joined the group.

The group clearly enjoys the leadership role it is playing for members of new groups brought to interact with it. Despite their busy routines and heavy workloads, group members always make time for those visiting them. And their new found eagerness to learn and share is unfailingly inspiring and empowering for other women.

SARTHI has assisted the group in getting registered as a co-operative society which will enable it to seek grants or loans for other activities. The group is now exploring the possibility of rehabilitating and protecting some govt. owned forest land nearby in exchange for getting a share of the increased production from the land. (6).

SECTION - III

3. SYNTHESIS OF LEARNINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The three case studies illustrate the significant role local women's organisations can play in improved natural resource management. Due to their gender role of biomass gathering, rural women have the greatest stake in sustainable management of the natural environment.

However, as evident from the case studies, it is not easy to obtain women's genuine participation in natural resource management. Their gender roles have to be understood within the broader framework of gender relations which deny women ownership and control over the resource base and deprive them of access to information and knowledge. In their condition of isolation, subordination and powerlessness, it is difficult for them to initiate action aimed at improved management of resources they neither own nor control. Unless women are empowered to question their subordination and assert their right to live as equal, dignified human beings, their participation in forestry or NRM programmes is likely to remain superficial with few longer term gains.

Women's hardship due to degradation of the natural environment is only one of the many problems they face in their daily lives. Their personal insecurity due to not owning or controlling not only productive resources but even the product of their labour makes the issue of greater control over their lives the predominant issue. They can move in that direction only through organised, assertive action in all the domains affecting their lives. Demanding greater control over the management of natural resources can be only one of these domains and is unlikely to be achieved in isolation.

As illustrated by SUTRA's experience, by focussing simply on women's traditional roles, there is a danger of increasing women's work burden by expecting them to replant trees being destroyed by others. Had it not been for the sensitivity of the organisation and its constant search for a better understanding of gender issues, it may well have misunderstood women's poor response to planting trees. A commitment to analyse the basic issues involved resulted in the formulation of a new strategy. This is aimed at enabling women to gain greater control over the use and management of local natural resources instead of exhorting them to continue labouring on resource replenishment without being able to stop its depletion. SUTRA's present strategy has the potential of eventually resulting in natural resource management policy changes at the state level through co-ordinated assertive action by local women's organisations.

PEDO's experience in Rajasthan illustrates the hazards of taking up direct action with women on improved management of land resources without addressing the existing gender division in the control over those resources. The NGO had to backtrack from working exclusively with women's groups to working with mixed groups of men and women. In the mixed groups, although women's labour participation was much higher than that of men (in some plantations 90 to 95% of the labour was provided by women), their participation in management related decisions remained minimal. Once most of the physical work was completed, the superficial nature of women's participation became evident. Mostly men came for subsequent monthly meetings of the groups' managing committees. The few women who did attend these, by and large remained passive observers, inhibited in the presence of men. The rest of the women reverted to their role of performing subsistence tasks while the men discussed future use and management of the plantations. It became evident that unlike in Himachal, in Rajasthan, women's participation in physical work on the plantations was due to their need for wages. It was not until independent women's savings groups were formed, and a legitimate space for women to meet and discuss their problems created, that women's active participation in management and use of the plantations increased. Unless the women had been empowered to participate with the help of a wide range of additional inputs, their participation would have remained illusory rather than real.

SARTHI's exclusive women's groups emerged through a more organic grass roots process facilitated by sensitization of its field staff to gender issues in natural resource management. The problem of male suspicion towards working exclusively with women was dealt with through seeking men's support through open discussion and involving local men in SARTHI's other programmes.

However, even in SARTHI's case, strengthening and empowering the groups to assert their right to manage and control some of the village common land in accordance with their priorities necessitated a wide range of inputs not directly connected with NRM. These have included awareness generation camps, exposure visits to other projects and groups, imparting selected women with skills in other areas such as health, livestock care and improved technology and facilitating reflection on their common problems during group meetings. SARTHI's staff also facilitated women's working on their plantations by evolving a system of flexible working hours so that women could combine doing their household tasks with working on the plantations. While this enabled the women to continue earning badly needed wages, conflict caused in homes due to their not being able to perform other household tasks was minimised.

In all three cases, the NGOs felt the necessity to assist women organise themselves into groups before they could start dealing with any of their problems. While SUTRA started forming Mahila Mandals much earlier, PEDO and SARTHI did so at a later

stage. All three have realised that working for lasting change cannot be done with unorganised and isolated individual women. All three have reached the conclusion that for making any headway in dealing with any of their endless problems, including those related to NRM, women must be empowered to take organised and assertive action collectively. This necessitates enabling them to first shed their centuries old negative self image. Awareness generation camps, providing access to information and knowledge, creating opportunities for women to spend time away from their homes to collectively reflect on their predicament, understanding the power of negative images of women embodied in cultural traditions and myths, creating pride in the immense traditional knowledge they have, are some of the tools which the 3 NGOs have used for empowering the women's groups.

SECTION - IV

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experience of the 3 NGOs described in the paper suggests the following conclusions and recommendations for programme planning and implementation.

- In situations where gender relations assign tasks of biomass gathering for subsistence needs to rural women, women have the greatest stake in improved natural resource management.
- However, focussing only on women's roles without taking into account gender divisions over control and/or ownership of resources can result in programmes increasing women's work burden without increasing their control over the product of their labour. The gains, if any, are likely to be superficial without any long term change.
- For any lasting impact, forestry and NRM programmes must be designed with a commitment to change gender relations in a manner which increase women's ownership and control over the natural resources. For this, programme planning must be based on an analysis of gender relations in the context where the programme was designed were faulty.
- Programme staff must be sensitised to gender issues and committed to monitoring the impact of a programme on women in the area. Programme design must build in the necessary flexibility to alter programme strategies where on-going monitoring indicates that the assumptions on which the programme was designed were faulty.
- At least in the South Asian context, it seems that facilitating formation of exclusive women's groups to create a legitimate social space for women to get together are invaluable for beginning their process of empowerment. These could be formed on the basis of mobilising them for improved NRM or any other issue of concern to women. But, to begin with, care must be taken to ensure that their formation is not seen as a threatening development by men. That may result in the groups having to cope with male hostility before they are strong enough to deal with it.
- A major limitation of exclusive forestry or NRM programmes is their unifocal nature. Supporting and empowering women's organisations requires a diverse range of inputs based on a more holistic understanding of women's situation.

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GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR WITHIN THE RURAL SECTOR

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GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR WITHIN THE RURAL SECTOR

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Causes and consequences of gender based division of labour have differed in different socio-cultural contexts and in different times. The incorporation of subsistent economies into "modern" market economies has changed the nature and implications of gender-based division of labour within the rural sector as an organising principle of the economy. Penetration of cash-nexus has affected gender-based division of labour by drawing male labour in the commodity production and keeping female labour in the subsistence production. Land reforms and commercial agriculture have resulted into decline of women as cultivators but have increased the proportion of female agricultural labourers drastically. Separation of women from cash economy increases their reliance on men as intermediaries. Subsistence economy that involves diversification of tasks and is labour intensive is suitable to small-scale farming. In a competitive capitalist mode of production, the subsistence economy has a subordinate role to play in the overall economy. Hence the need for contextualisation of gender-based division of labour in relation to the complex socio-economic structure of developing countries.

SPECIFICITY OF GENDER-BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR IN ASIA, AFRICA & LATIN AMERICA

Intricate problem of women's productive and reproductive role in the society is at the centre-stage of gender-based division of labour in the subsistence economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. A large percentage of women in the rural areas of these countries are subsistence farmers of agricultural labourers. Worsening economic and environmental crisis have sharpened their survival struggles. As subsistence rural economy is made to play a subservient role in the overall development process, women's contribution also gets marginalised. They are seen as 'redundant' labour with no security of tenure or carrying the burden of work on their family land. Their work is perceived as unproductive or economically unimportant. Green Revolution, White Revolution, Agricultural Modernisation, land-reforms and all developmental schemes have thrived on the ideology of gender-based division of labour that grants a subordinate role to women. In India, gender-based division of labour has a very important dimension of caste as a crucial organising principle of society.

FEMINISATION OF POVERTY

Commercialisation of both agricultural and non-agricultural sector have rendered millions of rural women pauperised without a traditional support system. Decline of a traditional handicraft and cottage industry, the mechanisation of agricultural product processing tasks have posed a threat to women's chances of

employment in the rural areas. Table 1 depicts a profile of women workers in the household sector that is losing its economic viability in competition with machine made products. Concentration and centralisation of land holdings in rural India have marginalised small farmers and poor peasants. During 1951 to 1991, there is a secular decline of the percentage of women cultivators. It can also be partly explained by the fact that when land-titles were prepared after the land reforms in India in the fifties, they were made in the name of male heads of the households. As Table-2 shows the % share of illiterate women in the rural labour force is very high i.e. 88%. These women have to stick to low-paying, casual and irregular employment. One third of the rural households are headed by women. Female headed households are the poorest of the poor.

TABLE - 1

Female Workers in Household Sector as % of Total Female Workers in Manufacturing Industry.

Industry Group

* Weaving, Cane, Bamboo	80 - 90
Cotton spinning outside mills, pottery, coir products, sweets and condiments, butter, ghee, edible oils, rope, cordage, sugar-gur, shoes, leather, silk worm rearing, khadi, tanning, jewellery, cotton dyeing, bleaching, embroidery, lace-making.	
* Bidi, rice milling; garments; sheep rearing	60 - 80
wools, livestock	
* Clay products, jute spinning, weaving, medicines, iron smelting	10 - 30

Industries where the number of women exceed that of men are cane work, cotton spinning outside mills, coir products. Sweets and condiments, rope making, silk worm rearing, butter, ghee, jam, jelly making and tobacco processing. These are also industries that are facing increasing competition from the modern sector.

Source: Report of the Working Group on Employment of Women. Planning Commission 1978.

FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL INDIA

Non-recognition of work and worth of female labour in the rural economy has its dire consequences on the survival struggles of the female-headed households. Several micro-studies have shown women get 2\3 of the wages received by male labourers for doing similar tasks for the same or even more hours. Segmented

labour market discriminates against women in more than one way. One, they get less remuneration than their male counterparts. Two, as they lack required skills and technical competence, they are segmented in monotonous, back-breaking work and can easily be eased out when new technology, mechanised production is introduced. In this situation, female headed households i.e. households supported by widows, separated, deserted, divorced or single women face acute problems in the labour market. In the last ten years several comparative studies have proved that in all third world countries, among the poverty groups, the female headed households have faced a major setback in terms of their standard of living. Without direct affirmative actions by the government and the planning process to economically empower them, nothing can be changed as far as female headed households' plight is concerned.

PAID-UNPAID AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

When the 1971 census declared that only 13% of women were the main workers and 2.48% of women were marginal workers in rural India, (see Table-3) it created great controversy among the economists, policy-planners and data analysts. Census definition of 'work' was brought under scrutiny as it left out the whole category of 'unpaid family workers' (of whom a predominant section was women) from enumeration. Visibility of women in statistics and indicators becomes extremely important to remove gender-bias in policy planning.

Supervisory role of women in the family farms among the middle-farmers and rich farmers, is totally invisibilised. It explains the lowest work participation rate of women in Punjab and Haryana. Thus rural women from a property-owning class as well as women from the toiling class, both remain invisible in the statistics, indicators and the planning process. As women's work is seen as an extension of house work, it is not seen as economic activity even when it adds to family income or helps in augmenting family resources. In 1991 census operations, some efforts are made to correct these biases.

BURDEN OF CHILD- CARE AND HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

Rural women carry out life-supporting survival tasks in the context of the worsening fuel, wood, fodder and water crisis. Over and above cooking, cleaning and caring, which expose them to environmentally adverse situations such as dampness, dirt, polluted water and carbon-monoxide of chullas, for the members of the household, they augment family resources by fuel-wood, water, fodder collection as well as by taking care of animals and participating in unpaid agricultural operations. Young girls start working at the age of five or even less. Production for family consumption and production for sale by little girls have implications on female literacy. Girls helping their mothers in cooking, cleaning, gardening, poultry-work, animal-caring, collecting fuel-fodder-water are forced by circumstances to leave

their studies. Domestic labour of women lacks any social recognition. The same is true for the work of 'untouchables'. Women and 'untouchables' are assigned tasks of dealing with organic things of daily life (which stink and vegetate) which are considered unclean, dirty and ritually polluting.

"MEN DO HEAVY WORK"

Low social worth of women's work in the subsistence economy results in inferior diet for rural women. The popular myth that "Men do heavy work like ploughing and operating tools (among the artisan class) so they should be given a larger quantity and more nutritious food" has not been questioned sufficiently inspite of shocking data of a very high degree of mortality and morbidity among rural Indian women. No one has asked "Are not transplanting, husking, winnowing, carrying heavy loads and such other tasks performed by women in the rural economy 'heavy'?" Moreover women also shoulder the burden of repeated pregnancies. Women and girls face discrimination within the household in terms of their share of nutritious food. Society attaches lower premium to women's work which provides rationale for allotment of less nutritious food to women.

NSS data on employment and unemployment have revealed that women in poverty groups are actively seeking work. They have responded most positively to all public works programmes of road building, construction, digging canals etc. In Maharashtra EGS programmes, nearly 65% of the total labourers are found to be women.

RESISTANCE OF MEN TOWARDS ANY DRUDGERY-RELIEVING MEASURES FOR RURAL WOMEN

While working among the rural women, many NGOs and mass organisations have experienced strong resistance on the part of men towards any drudgery-relieving measure, may they be gobar-gas chulahs or smoke-less chulahs or introduction of appropriate technology for routine strenuous tasks done by women. In the rural development process also women's lack of control over family and community resources do not allow them to garner fruits of development. Even in the reforestation programmes only women exhibit genuine interest as they have to spend hours in fuel-wood collection. Insensitivity and resistance shown by male community leaders (who chose to side with the forest contractors in tree-felling programmes) towards the Chipko movement is a glaring example. In the Shramshakti report, the members of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal sector have succinctly revealed gender-blindness of Block Development Officials, members of Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayat who refused to accept that women were involved in concrete and strenuous tasks for survival of their families and were contributing a great deal for the economy.

"HOW CAN WOMEN HANDLE TOOLS"?

Several myths prevail in society about women's ability to handle tools due to 'Technology Fix' in the minds of the rural elites as well as the masses. Cultural legacy of "seed and soil theory" and women seen as 'pollutant' also prevents them from touching tools like ploughs, potter's wheels, handlooms etc. In these households only men are considered as "economically active." Women's role in the production process in agriculture, pottery, cloth-manufacture is not recognised. Hence when the issue of skill-training for women is put on an agenda, it is not taken seriously. Even while implementing the TRYSEM (Training for Rural Youth for Skills, Employment and Management) programme, there is a strong aversion to give them training to become electricians, welders, black-smiths, carpenters, potters, screen-printers etc. In most of the TRYSEM programmes, pet projects are sewing, knitting, tailoring which are an extension of women's domestic work. Here too, if the profession becomes economically viable, it is taken over by men. The main complaint of TRYSEM trainees is: "We don't get any assignments and our skills remain unutilised. What is the use of such training"?

RURAL WOMEN AND THE CASTE SYSTEM

As a result of an interplay of caste-hierarchy and the gender hierarchy, the worst victims of the development process have been women from the lower castes. In the absence of adequate facilities for female education of lower caste women, they have to continue doing traditional menial chores. Social sanction of a covert or overt form of prostitution due to economic compulsions among the Dalit women can also be seen as a part of gender division of labour in a caste-ridden Indian society. Survey of prostitution in the red-light areas of big cities and serious studies of the Devdasi system in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa have revealed how patriarchal control over women's sexuality, fertility and labour is exercised with the help of caste and class factors. Use of a woman's body (traditionally and ritually seen as the soil to be harvested) to earn income has become a customary practice in the tribal areas of M.P. Bihar, W.Bengal, Garhwal region of U.P. A double standard of sexual morality for high caste women (who should be protected and confined to the four walls of their homes) and low caste women (whose sexuality should be public property) operates in this case.

"IDEOLOGY OF PURITY AND POLLUTION"

This ideology exists at two levels. While assigning chores in the family and in the community a 'pure' and 'impure' nature of work becomes a decisive factor in determining which gender and which caste will have to do such chores. At other levels, guarding 'Chastity' and 'Purity' of women from the high caste, results in their seclusion and confinement to domestic life. At

an ideological level 'sexual purity' and 'defilement' leading to damage of 'honour' keeps all women under constant threat of rape. In the rural areas, open admission of rape and 'illegal' pregnancy can result in the excommunication of women. There is no alternative for such girls or women, but to be in the red light areas - in the absence of any other support structures. Ideology of women as property of men permeates in the customary laws concerning adultery and rape. In case of 'rape' the burden of the act lies on women while in case of adultery the onus shifts on men who committed adultery. In tribal communities in Singhbhum if a woman has sexual contact (either due to rape or wilful consent) with a non-tribal man, she loses customary land rights as she is seen as defiled.

SEXUAL SEGREGATION AND RURAL WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION

The Purdah culture provides the material base for home-based production in which a large proportion of toiling women in rural India are involved. The exploitative nature of home-based production leading to utter disempowerment of women has been highlighted succinctly in a study of lace-makers of Narspur by Maria Mies. Confinement of women to home-boundaries and their seclusion determine social relations surrounding their work. Informal family networks are used for super exploitation of women home based workers where patriarchs of the family take supervisory roles and deal with the outside world. Women home-based workers have endless work-schedule as there is a thin line between wage work and subsistence work. They rarely get any leisure time. The nature of oppression and exploitation remain veiled. Commercial interests capitalise on purdah culture and use women as the cheapest form of labour. No labour laws are applied, no standard minimum hours of work are observed. No concern for occupational health and safety is shown. Women home-based workers provide cannon-fodder for the exploitative informal sector.

WHY ARE THE RURAL WOMEN ASSETLESS?

The Shramshakti report has revealed that all over India, rural women's accessibility to tools and farm equipment is very limited. Among the artisan class also women were found to be assetless. When the National Commission on their visit to different states of India inquired from poor women about their asset-ownership, their standard response was "Children are our only assets". When the traditional support structures are eroding fast when new forest laws don't allow rural and tribal women access to minor forest produce, when village common land is encroached upon by the rural elite, it is very important for rural women to have assets of their own. Animals, land, tools and equipment, etc. owned by men enhance their income but it may not necessarily enhance the standard of living of the family. It may be used purely for recreation and comfort of the male members of the family. Moreover, assets in the hands of men can easily be disposed off or pawned as men indulge more in gambling

and drinking. If one out of three households is looked after by women, it is very important for women to own assets.

ECONOMICS OF WITCH-HUNTING

Rising incidences of witch-hunting in the past one decade has invited the attention of women activists but at the same time official agencies have chosen to maintain a conspiracy of silence. Witch-hunting should not be seen as a legacy of the past but should be understood in terms of violence perpetrated on women who question the status-quo. Why are women from subordinate groups dubbed as witches? Why 'witches' are only those women who are either widows or divorcees or militant activists exposing local level exploitation?

Property ownership indicates power. Hence if daughters and/or widows inherit assets in terms of land, animals or a dwelling place, witch-hunting comes handy for the relatives to grab those assets. Findings of researchers and activists in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Bihar have revealed that witch-hunting is also used as a weapon to silence assertive women who protest against barbaric customs or oppose sexual advances of powerful people. A Dalit or tribal woman aspiring to go for higher education or a widow demanding land rights can be easy prey for witch-hunting and this can also be a tool to silence the rest of the women in the area.

GREY REALITIES OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

The Green Revolution with its package of HYV, mechanisation, tractorization, commercial crops and capital intensive farming have accentuated class polarisation in rural India.

The Green Revolution has ensured employment of fewer male workers for more intensive work and phased women out of agricultural work. The most successful examples of the Green Revolution have been Punjab and Haryana and in these two states the work participation rate is the lowest. In the midst of 'economic prosperity' we find the most barbaric forms of violence against women in these states. Dowry -murders, rape, abduction of girls and women, forced polyandry, sex-determination tests leading to abortion of female foetuses are rampant.

Studies of women in the dairy industry (so called White Revolution) have revealed that here too, women are at the bottom of the hierarchy, doing the most back-breaking work for animal care. Milk cooperatives are controlled by men. The selling price of milk is decided by men. Control over money is exercised by men. Mechanisation of agricultural product processing industry has rendered millions of rural women involved in dehusking, winnowing, pounding, grinding and cleaning unemployed. In the absence of any other alternative gainful occupation, these women have to join the army of pauperised masses.

LANDLESS POOR AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

Landless poor women in the rural areas are losing ground due to decreasing economic viability of the cottage industry. Agricultural mechanisation, HYV, fertilisers i.e. capital intensive cash-crop farming have marginalised women from the rural economy. Landless poor women are forced by economic circumstances either to migrate to the cities in search of wage-work or seek wage-employment in the rural areas either in newly emerging small-scale industries or in the public works programmes such as Food for Work Programme, Employment Guarantee Scheme etc. In many government recognized 'industrially backward' areas, rural and tribal women's cheap labour is seen as an attractive economic proposition by small scale industries. Tasks performed by women workers in agriculture like sowing, transplanting, husking, winnowing, pounding are considered to be of low status as compared to ploughing. Hence women labourers get less wages as compared to their male counterparts. Even in plantations, women workers get less wages in comparison to male plantation workers. Due to the high level of unemployment, under employment and disguised unemployment, the bargaining power of landless agricultural labourers is very limited.

CUSTOMARY LAWS AND LAND RIGHTS

Social relations not only determine the gender-based division of labour but also the family laws that govern important aspects of gender-relations such as marriage, divorce, custody of children, guardianship rights, maintenance and alimony and property rights. Some of the earlier customary laws gave land rights to women. After codification of family laws during the colonial period, heavy patriarchal, patrilocal and anti-women biases have seeped into the personal laws. Now, on land titles, mostly names of men are found. Among rich-peasants and landlords households, land titles are often made in women's name merely to evade laws about ceiling on land-holdings.

Articulation of demands by deserted, divorced and single women have also revealed that support provided by kith and kin in earlier times when women faced crisis situations has eroded due to commercialisation of human relations. It is also found that the custom of 'bride-price' as well as 'dowry' have increased violence against women. Bride-price acknowledges women as productive human beings but at the same time reduces them to commodities. Dowry degrades women as it perpetuates the myth of women as a 'liability'. 'burdensome' and 'worthless'.

IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS

Land Reforms are seen as a sign of economic development. When the Tenancy Act was passed, land titles were made in the name of male heads of households. As a result, we found drastic reduction in the number of women as 'cultivators'. Women lost their customary land rights. Women's groups working in the rural

areas have to take up the demand of land-rights. Laru Janco of Singhbhoom (Bihar) and Bhuribai and Dhagibai of Dhulia (Maharashtra) have filed public interest litigation cases in the Supreme Court of India demanding land rights for women.

LAND-OWNING BY WOMEN VERSUS CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND

Even in the cases of statutory land ownership by women due to reasons of laws concerning ceiling on property-holding, women don't have real power to control and manage land. Their ownership is nominal, just on paper. Any decision making concerning land use is not in their hands. Even among the political parties there are strong differences on the issue of land rights for women. Our deputy prime-minister Mr. Devi Lal had brought a bill in Haryana assembly demanding that daughters should not be given land rights. In response to strong condemnation from the women's groups, the bill was shelved.

MEN DO DECISION-MAKING AND CONTROL ASSETS\ INCOME, WHILE WOMEN DO DRUDGERY:

Even with women involved in subsistence production, household industry, animal care, poultry or handicraft making, men are seen taking major decisions concerning quantum of production, negotiating terms and conditions with the agents, deciding the kind of technology to be used. Experiences of women in Kalamkari paintings, jari industry in Surat, silk industry in Tamilnadu, dairy industry in Gujarat, food and fish processing industry in Maharashtra have proved that gender-division of labour in these occupations is well defined. When a Kalamkari painter was asked a question about the joy of creating a painting she replied "What type of creation? We are just pushing our pens. After slogging for 14 hours a day we manage to get barely 5 rupees. One painting takes on an average 7 days to complete". This kind of alienation and dejection was expressed by women in innumerable occupations in the informal sector when the National Commission (on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector) members interviewed them during their field work. It is important to change the attitude of planners who see women as mere 'beneficiaries' but not the decision-makers to decide their destiny.

RURAL WOMEN AND COOPERATIVES

The Co-operative movement supported and encouraged in the course of 8 plans has not helped the subordinate groups of rural society. Discrimination in class, caste and gender-biases, prevalent in society, gets relected in the cooperatives of the fisher-folk, weavers, handicraft workers and artisans. Agents exploit the vulnerability of poor toiling women, charge compound rate of interest, force them to do distress selling of their products. Against this, male members of the cooperatives hardly show any sympathy to women members by giving them loans etc. Hence, in many places women have formed their own cooperatives.

Annapurna in Bombay, Self Employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad, Working Women's Forum in Madras, Astitwa in Valsad have formed their own Cooperative Banks. Fisher-women's cooperatives are formed in Kerala. Kalamkari painters' cooperatives are formed in Bihar. Women artisans have found a form in Dastaker fairs, held in different parts of India where they directly sell their products without any commission to be given to blood-sucking agents. Collective efforts by women can change the gender-based division of labour and empower women.

WAGE DIFFERENTIALS IN AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

Rural women are now vocalising their anger against wage differentials in agricultural operations. Due to their pressure, in the charter of demands of many peasant organisations "Equal pay for equal work" has appeared as not residual but a prominent demand. Women workers involved in the fruit-processing industry in U.P. raised objections to wage-differentials based on gender. The employers tried to quieten women by saying "After all they are men. We have to give them atleast 5 paise more or else they will feel hurt". The concept of 'status consistency' has an inherent gender-bias where men have to be at least one step ahead of women in terms of remuneration, occupational status and other rewards. As a result, even mass organisations, which use women to gain common demands like higher wages, better work conditions, famine relief programmes, implementation of government sponsored schemes etc., when it comes to women's demand for equal wage or land titles in joint names of husband and wife, quickly back out. Experience of land-struggle in Bodh Gaya and Shahda corroborated this bitter reality.

WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ

What has the panchayati raj system done for women? Has it empowered women sufficiently to be effective in the decision-making process at village, tehsil or district levels? To what extent is the 30% reservation of seats for women in the local self-government bodies going to help women in changing the course of economic development in rural India? These issues have been often raised in women's groups. Some of them have actively participated in the electoral process by putting up women candidates, supporting women candidates with commitment to women's development or by pressurising the political parties to take up women's issues. Struggles of tribal women to force the Government of Maharashtra to provide Employment Guarantee Schemes in drought-prone areas of Maharashtra was one such measure. Since the last two years, women's groups are lobbying for special allocation of resources for female-headed households. Demands for facilities of shelter-homes, education, job-reservation and allowance for deserted, old, divorced women were raised by several rural women's organisations in Maharashtra.

RECENT CHANGES

Visibility of women's issues in the official forums, mass media and in society in general due to the combined efforts of gender-sensitized researchers, planners, officials, NGOs and women's groups have resulted in recent changes vis-a-vis women in general and rural women in particular. Stereotypes based on gender-based division of labour are questioned. Women are encouraged to try non-conventional and more remunerative occupations. To improve their health and nutrition status, Integrated Child Development Schemes are introduced. Special allowances and scholarships to promote the girl-child's education and prevent their drop-out from schools are provided by the state. Mass electronic media is used to educate people about women's contribution to society. Discrimination between girl-child and boy-child is questioned through television spots and appealing slogans. Men are requested to take responsibility for limiting the number of children by use of birth control measures like condoms and vasectomy operations. Legal literacy programmes are envisaged to make every male and female member of society alert about gender-justice but, of course, without touching the most discriminatory family law which reduces women to mere 'property of men' and deprive them of equal rights to matrimonial or natal family property.

At one level, one feels encouraged due to these changes in thinking. 'Towards Equality' a report by the National Committee of Status of Women in India appointed by the Government of India in 1974 was a landmark in this direction. It gave danger signals by stating that 'Indian women are a declining sex' and 'economic development reduced the work participation rate of women'. The "Towards Equality" report helped us to get out of complacency about Indian women's 'high' status due to the Goddess Culture. In the last 17 years, mobilisation of women to highlight women-specific issues have provided alternate vision and collective wisdom on all issues affecting women's survival struggles. National Perspective Plan (NPP), 1988-2000 A.D., Shramshakti Report and debates on Women's Commission have put forward crucial issues.

CONCLUSION

To strike at the root of gender-based division of labour that perpetuate subordination of women in the economy and in society, we must change the course of economic development in the long run. But immediately we need to question it, in whichever field of life we encounter it. Women should be treated as important constituents of the economy not merely as auxiliary force to be hired, last, at the time of economic expansion and labour shortage, and fired first at the time of economic crisis. Only when subordination-domination relationship between women and men changes in all spheres of society, will we find changes in the gender-based division of labour. The need for division of labour as an organising principle of society is inevitable. But

it should not help development of one section of society at the cost of the other.

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A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO GENDER RELATIONS

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A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO GENDER RELATIONS

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BACKDROP**

THE HISTORICAL INEQUALITY OF WOMAN TO MAN

This apparently inherent imbalance is the single greatest obstacle to progress, which the women's development movements is supposed to have made so far, on a global scale. To set a definite direction for progress and to gain headway, the immense backlog of inequality needs to be dealt with first, and expressly so, as it is the root cause of the hitherto farcical policies on women's issues, and of the failure and frustration of all those engaged in the Women's Movement.

This is the state of affairs as reflected in the numerous papers published in India and overseas. The inequality only seems to grow in variety and complexity, and appears to be beyond the scope and grasp of legislation, especially in the Developing Countries. That it is so, even today, twenty years into the Women's Movement in India and nearly half a century after the statement of Equal Rights in our Constitution, is a sad comment on both Men and Women of our time. The ultimate threat of this basket of failures is to the entire Quality of Life today, resulting in an environment of pollution as our offering to future generations. Be that as it may, *BACKDROP is used rather **INEQUALITY : UNEVENLY MATCHED than "background" as an attempt to bring down a screen on the past to censor its active intrusion, so that we may enact in the present, with less inhibitions, that which would be.

ANALYSIS FOR DESIGN SOLUTIONS

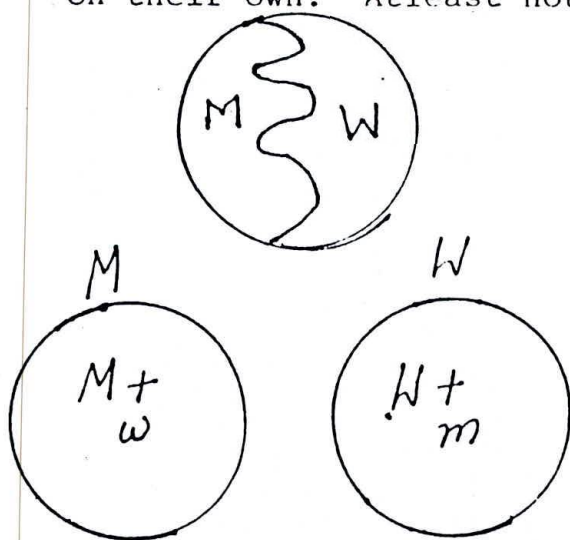
If the variety and complexity of the Man-Woman issue is beyond a successful assault, after all these years of global attempts, then it must be logically reduced to a more simple state, "which does not elude solution".

In other words, when you have lost your way, the best thing to do is to go back to the beginning and start all over again. That may seem a simplistic suggestion, but it is worth a try, when persistence along the avenues so far attempted only seems to have led us into a greater maze.

Therefore, let us consider the concept of Duality, as we understand it in everyday life and follow its expression :

The Natural State of the Original Design (OD) is the inherent concept of duality in creation, as manifested in our universe, and as described by Things Philosophy and Things Science. The Yin and Yang are equal to one another. The positive and the negative are equally important to produce electricity.

On observation, we find that Men and Women have a base of common traits, in which supposedly, every Man has stronger male traits and lesser female ones and likewise every Woman has stronger female traits and lesser male ones. Men and Women are both equally important to procreation. Neither of them can do it on their own. Atleast not yet.



The fusion of Man and Woman at a higher level is portrayed by the concept of "Ardhanarisvara" in Hindu metaphysics. This concept of the androgyne is universal and exists in some form or the other in folklore and mythology all over the world. Therefore we may take it that this fusion is intended in the Original Design and is evident at different evolutionary levels in a variety of manifestations.

"The hardness of man is enclosed by the softness of woman and the softness of woman is filled with the hardness of man; this is the way the whole universe meets itself Softness in hardness and hardness in softness is the wisdom in everything. It is the way inside understands outside, here touches there, one comprehends other, this knows that."

#15. THE WISDOM IN EVERYTHING

(The Tao of Relationships)

THE BEGINNING OF THE ABERRATION ; INEQUALITY CAUSES :

- a) Development of skills and capability with progress of knowledge. : In interacting with the environment and with each other, in providing themselves with food and shelter, protecting themselves from harm, M and W came to draw upon their innate intelligence. The stimulation and feedback that such processes provided led to the further development of the human intellect, aligned to these activities.
- b) The simplistic segregation of the sexes Male - Female : The business of life called for a certain efficiency, which demarcated roles, responsibilities and specializations, that naturally divided themselves along the dichotomy of the sexes.
- c) With the displacement of the nomadic societies by the agrarian came the vast attitudinal change towards

possessions, territories, relationships and procedures, that is well documented by historians and sociologists. The resulting culture, we may observe, was one that sought security and permanence by the acquisition of immovables, bulk and value, by a radical alteration in relationships between Men and Women and amongst Men. The holding of huge possessions called for more elaborate protection and security systems, that required large manpower, which in turn coerced Women into baby-making, cooking and cleaning for large scale families. Once Women were confined to domesticity, their whole development physically, emotionally and intellectually evolved along a teleological path that has since kept them bonded in a specific hemisphere. The birth of sons and her dedication to the care of the family were the sanctified measure of a woman's identity and status in society.

THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE INEQUALITY

The transition into the Industrial Age pronounced gender certainty further and Masculinism acquired more power, which was safeguarded by institutionalisation.

VESTED INTERESTS

- *re:power from physical strength, knowledge, possessions
- *re:comfort and freedom

MEN

LACK OF ASSERTIVENESS

- *abdication of active participation outside family
- *preoccupation with motherhood

WOMEN

CONFUSION in mind and distancing from child bearing/rearing

MEN

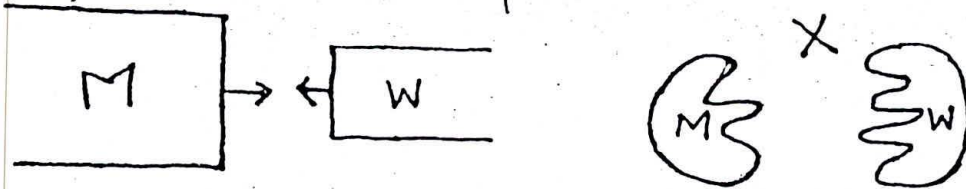
VESTED INTERESTS

- to retain acquired power (from motherhood)
- and re: security, comfort

WOMEN

To protect the vested interests, society demanded that demarcation of the sexes be made explicit and formalised. Therefore, the configuration with hard edges was advocated and promoted by appropriate role models, training, occupations and power segregation.

Thus Men were strong, brave, powerful and free. And womanly traits were ridiculed. On the other hand, Women were delicate, timid, pleasing, dependent. And any tendency toward independence of thought, word or deed was rooted out at the first indication, mostly by other women.



In romantic settings, Men were champions, warriors, heroes. Women were beautiful, inspiring, adoring. It followed then, that Men were rational, logical and intellectually superior, whereas Women were emotional, unreasonable and intellectually inferior.

In domestic quarters, the different roles assigned to Men and Women came to mean that Men were to be served by Women and Women's purpose was the service of Men. And so it was said "long live the difference".

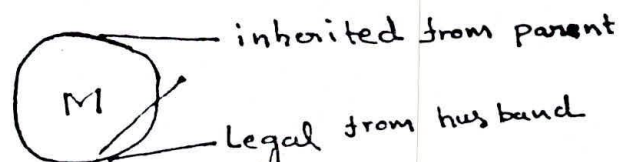
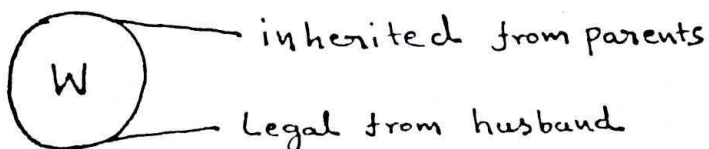
This difference between Men and Women developed into a context far removed from the Original Design of Nature, and was interpreted and practiced not as their being equal complementary roles for the enhancement of the quality of life. Rather, the difference was translated as an intended and necessary subservience of the one to the other, as if Men belonged to a higher chosen order of the human species and Women had as yet, one or more evolutionary spins to go. The difference was thus conveniently reflected as inequality.

"Gender is never simply an arrangement in which the roles of men and women are decided in a contingent and haphazard way. At any given moment, gender will reflect the material interests of those who have power and those who do not. Masculinity, therefore, does not exist in isolation from femininity-----it will always be an expression of the current image that men have of themselves in relation to women." (Arthur Brittan in MASCULINITY AND POWER).

THE PROPAGATION OF THE INEQUALITY

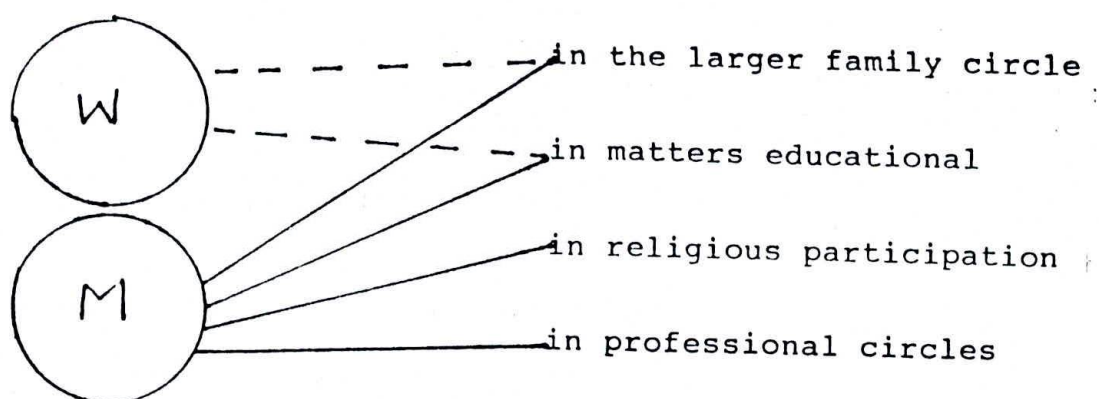
The slanted empowerment of Men versus Women was the methodology that achieved the propagation of the inequality that has been sustained till recently.

Status in
the family:



If the future is to be brighter for Women and fair to both sexes, then Masculinism, which is "the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination, the ideology of patriarchy," must be systematically countered. "In general, masculinism gives primacy to the belief that gender is not negotiable----it does not accept evidence from feminist and other sources that the relationships between men and women are political and constructed..." (Brittan)

Status in Society :



The coming of the Post-Industrial Society has brought a spate of powerful waves of change, that have swept away the pyramidal, hierarchical structures belonging to patriarchal and mechanistic outlooks of the previous eras. In this transition, we have witnessed the growth-to-disintegration of formations like the feudal family, the industrial corporation, tightly controlled nation states and trans continental empires. We now witness movements on both macro and micro levels simultaneously, as in the current global socio-economic mergers of a different scale, together with the antithesis, which is the stake of the individual entrepreneur. Women are part of this transition and only need to maximise the situation favourably and strategically, both at the entrepreneurial and sectoral levels. With the shrinking of the joint family, the extended family, clans, communities, etc., Women's opportunity for status reinforcement also shrinks. In the nuclear family, her status could increase marginally or not at all. However, with economic independence, she increases her capability and eligibility for empowerment considerably.

THE GENDER ENVIRONMENT : WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Adaptability/ resilience in adversity	1. Succumbs to dictates & inhibitions of the past	1. World consciousness of Women's issues & concerns	1. Rising aggression vs women
2. Creative & innovative	2. Dwindled numbers (1991 Census)	2. New open Indian economy	2. Present cash crunch
3. Highly imaginative	3. Health neglected severely	3. Greater interest worldwide in education & training	3. AIDS
4. Dexterity & skills	4. Lack of supportiveness of other women	4. Favourable cultural trends in India	4. Increasing polarisation of groups, races, nations, sexes
5. Patience, discipline & endurance	5. Lack of sufficient & appropriate role models from history	5. National programs	5. Social recognition of homosexuality and lesbianism
6. Hardworking	6. Inappropriate role models created by cinema & TV	6. Funding increase (Govt & Foreign agencies)	6. Societal "parthenogenetic" tendencies*
7. Trustworthy	7. Lack of self-esteem	7. Present era of global change : democracy and restructuring	7. Impatience of the young to knock off dependence on home
8. Growing numbers in Women's Movt.	8. Lack of judgement & discretion	8. Technology that equalises M & W muscle-wise	8. Terrorism
9. Emergence of contemporary role models	9. Ineffective Law	9. Younger Men seeking more companionship in partnerships with Women	9. Dubbing of W as aggressive when they are assertive
10. Caring	10. Global inequality of Women	10. Anti-drudgery technology (e.g. washing m/cs & electronic gadgets)	10. W blamed for being irrational & illogical

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 11. Rise in self-esteem | 11. W's confusion between "assertive" & "aggressive" | 11. Women's Solidarity Movement | 11. Very high expectations on Women's performance |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
- * emergence of male propagation of heroes in themselves, self-sufficient from women, e.g. Kerala Cinema: Mammootty and Mohanlal: bloated stars and ballooning male themes (Economic Times, Sun 13 Oct 1991 article by Sadanand Menon).
- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 12. Growing awareness of W's rights | 12. W's guilt over slighting traditional roles | 12. Rise in Women's literacy | 12. Resentment of W who achieve and own power |
| 13. Growing hope for equal opportunities | 13. Fear of losing femininity | 13. Rise in Middle class purchasing power | 13. Criticism by both M & W of Women who step out of traditional roles |
| 14. Men's empathy with Women's Movt. | 14. Fear of losing family ties | 14. Technology & know-how for W entrepreneurs | 14. Women in jobs breaking down from stress |
| 15. Men's active participation to remove inequality | 15. Deep need of security, therefore fear of taking risks | 15. Spl. Banking facilities for W entrepreneurs | 15. Rise in harassment of W in jobs |
| 16. Privilege of motherhood | 16. Repressed hostility toward authority manifesting as defiance | 16. Captive markets for Women entrepreneurs | 16. Lack of privacy due to sensational journalism |
| 17. More Women seeking education/higher educ. | 17. Fear of achieving and using power | 17. New norms, stds. & records of achievements | 17. Lack of norms, standards & records for new pursuits |
| 18. More Women employed & seeking employment | 18. Fear of making a mistake and being thrown out of the race | 18. Availability of media support for Women's cause | 18. Danger of incompatibility in marriage |
| 19. Women's success in male roles & professions | 19. Lack of objectivity in W in critical times | 19. Male bastions opening up to Women | 19. Competitiveness among M & W destroying possible homogeneous relationship |

NOTE : This is an application of the SWOT Analysis methodology to map the issues and concerns related to the subject of Gender in the present day context, of the Women's Development Movement. It amply lends itself to view the variety of elements that go to make up the complexity of this canvas, and to understand the reasons for the growing cynicism and frustration of those who have been involved in the Movement for sometime. Like all such struggles, where the opposition has much to lose, the reaction to the pioneering side gaining ground and impact is one of a greater show of strength and might, and a display of self-sufficiency, usually by resorting to auto-suggestion or gathering in groups. Such tendencies are thrown up in this table, as for example THREATS : #1, #4, #5, #6, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #15.

From the field laid out by SWOT, it is possible to evolve strategies for effective action towards the realization of Objectives and Mission.

For example:

Strategy A : STRENGTH #1, #8, #9, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #17, #18, #19 all contribute towards building up the WEAKNESS #7 using the OPPORTUNITIES #1 to #19 in block to counter THREATS #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #17. Note that strengths #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #10 contribute to building STRENGTHS #1 and #11.

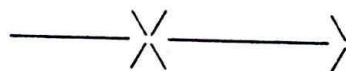
Strategy B : STRENGTH #9 builds WEAKNESSES #1, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16 and 17 using all the OPPORTUNITIES of course, but especially #1, #4, #7, #9, #17, #18, #19 to counter THREATS #4, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13

TOWARDS A SOLUTION

PREAMBLE : The first requisite is to reduce the complexity of the Man-Woman Woman issue to a simpler, more manageable state, for the purpose of translating the constitutional guarantee of new social values as goals of Indian society.

CONSTRAINT : The absence, in the implementation design of the Indian Constitution, of provision of the ideological and operational formulations to effect the transition.

PRINCIPLE OF
EQUALITY



REALITY OF
EQUALITY

KEY : The key to the solution, at this point in time, appears to be the route of economic independence.

THE NEED To validate Women's right of equality and to strengthen the efforts of all involved, there is need to prove that such a demand is just and viable.

JUST because it was so intended
in the Original Design of the
Creator.

VIABLE in the context
of modern India

THE CHALLENGE

1. To demonstrate with conviction that the legal right of Women, set down in the Constitution is merely the empowerment of their inherent right equal with Men, as decreed by the Creator of the Universe.

Legal Right
in Constitution

=

Inherent Right
of Creation

2. To adopt the appropriate measures of presentation and packaging to take care of the psychological and cultural resistance that is to be encountered in this endeavour.

THE SEARCH FOR EVIDENCE

It appears that evidence to demonstrate Women's Equality plausibly must be found in historical, religious and scientific sources. First, it will apparently be necessary to go as far back as to a design of society when Women were equal to men in status, in matters of social and religious significance. This, along with contemporary scientific data that has shown that Women are biologically and intellectually Man's complementary being, can successfully counter the depiction of Women in literature, music and art as conveniently unequal to Men. Such evidence can be readily found in the Rgveda, in pure Tantra, in Biology and Nature studies, in contemporary psychology and in historical documents, that are more and more becoming the subjects of research, with growing global interest in Women's issues.

What is coming to light is that evidence of Women's natural capabilities and legitimate status from early civilizations was deliberately submerged during certain developmental stages by Men's vested interests. Similarly, during the Indian Freedom Movement, it was found that all British records had carefully ensured that Indian heroes would be depicted as villains or weaklings and their heroic deeds would be misrepresented to kill Indian morale, (until Mahatma Gandhi). The post-Independence era discovered that this process of distortion had been so systematic an effort, that Indian art, music, education and scientific studies were left quite deplete of evidence of their worth, apart from the fact that a wealth of Indian intellect and culture had contributed to the British Raj. The plight of Women's status seems to have been the same, only it was considerably easier to erase whatever evidence in a culture which had only oral

traditions of depicting norms and recording events, for the greater part of its history.

The following examples offer a glimmer of an exciting revelation which should gain the credibility that is being sought from serious research. There is an immediate need for Women's groups to take up studies into the origins of Women's status and power from the Primeval, through Nature rituals, on to the early civilizations until the loss of legitimate status in the current era.

In the depiction of Sita, the gradual putting down of Women can be traced :

- Valmiki - exalted Kshatriya princess.
- Kalidasa - knowledgeable, beautiful,
but no choice of her own.
- Tulsidas - the acme of obedience.

It seems there was a time, before when, marriage was not conceived as an institution and was not binding on the freedom of women; before when polygamy did not exist; before when the birth of a son was not special. There are references in the Rgveda to "putrika" as well as "putra", when daughters and sons had equal rights to property and to perform religious and social functions.

Puschil, the German scholar, writes about the "samana" festival, as described in the hymns of the Rig Veda, where men and women took part on an equal basis, to present their talents and skills and to court their partners.

In the 10th Mandala of the Rgveda, Usha, goddess of Dawn is portrayed as the author of the "samana". She is described as "marching into the heavens, radiant and proud of her knowledge and beauty, inspiring admiration in the minds of all who look to her". In later literature, Usha lost all her earlier vigour as a phenomenon of Nature, capable of sweeping away the darkness of night, and gradually came to be personified as a maiden, shy, retiring and timidly emerging from the cloak of darkness.

Appala and Maitreyi were rishis, which is evidence that marriage was not the be-all and end-all for women of their time. Besides, we hear of Ghosha, who was an unmarried woman living in her father's house like any son with right to property.

Marriage was a union of two persons of full development. There was no reference to age and to its limitations. There were no child marriages.

In Andal's poetry and in "Silapathikaram", the classic in Tamil literature, there is no "thali" as the symbol of marriage

that woman must wear, the symbol of being a possession, dedicated to servitude.

The "saptapathi mantra" even from the Yajurveda, establishing the legality of marriage witnessed by Agni as "sakshi" is a most beautiful evidence of the recognition of the equality of the sexes. The groom chanting it, could be said to suggest that he is making the request, and that it is for the bride to accept his plea:

"By these seven steps, we become companions. I become your friend. I shall not stray from this path of my promise, and so also you. Let us be united into one. Let us be loving together. Let us be of good health and strength, and let us both experience life together. If I am the "samavedam" you are the "Rg". If you are "bhoomi", I am "akash". If I am "manas", you are my "vak".

No doubt, the imagery in the poetry is not rigid. A man and woman may be given the freedom to compose the verse between them and decide which one of them will be the earth and which the sky and likewise, which the thought and which the word !

How many modern brides and grooms know the meaning of the ceremony whereby they take each other as partners. Even today, the custom of the bride garlanding the groom first is considered as an act of worshipping her new "lord", rather than the bride making her choice, in the continuing tradition of the historic "swayamvara". It is no wonder, for if the gesture were put into the actual current context, it would rob the "boy's people" of the opportunity of lording it over the lowly "girl's people".

In the case of the interpretation of the relics of Mohen-jodaro is an example of the distortion of the feminine status in the universe. Either because of biases held by the scholars working in the field, or naivete, or the lack of technology, the story of these Neolithic findings was told in a way very different to what is emerging as the real thing, today. Of interest to this argument is that there is a definite feminine presence in the motifs on the seals unearthed, which was not noticed or presented to the world outside. Evidence points to the earlier Mother Goddess being replaced by a male god, which is "a very common factor in all religious cults of the ancient world as well as in modern Hindu cults". (Shubhanga Atre)

The late Western Civilizations have made much of the power of reasoning and logic that is considered a particular male faculty and qualifying male intellectual superiority. More recently, with the growing awareness of the importance of ecological balance and environmental care, there is a growing healthy respect for Nature. This renewed universal view has once more brought to light realms of thought that hold sacred the world of imagination. "Throughout the world at all times and in all places, men have pictured, in one form or another, the

imaginative image of the tree", says Roger Cook, echoing the poet William Blake.

Henry Corbin, scholar of Sufism and Islamic literature, suggested that the affirmative "imaginal" derived from Latin could replace "imaginary", when needed, as he did, when writing about the visionary experiences of Islamic mystics. They conceived the alam al-mithal (world of image) or the alam-i-malakut (world of imagination) "as an intermediary realm, existing between, and interpenetrating with, the realms of intellect and sense perception. According to this schema, imagination is the central faculty, that of the soul, acting as a vital bridge between senses and intellect, mind and body, spirit and matter."

The Tree of Life has perhaps been associated with all the religions and faiths of this earth, not just Buddhism, but also with the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Red Indians, throughout Africa, in Indian love poetry associated with Sri Krishna, in the Far East, in Persia and even by the psychologist C.G.Jung, who equated The Tree as a symbol of the human psyche's process of individuation. It is called "the Symbolism of the Centre" by Mircea Eliade, the famous historian of religion, depicting humankind's "desire to grasp the essential reality of the World". It is clear that the Age of Reason has passed. It is time that Men dropped their obsession and prepared for the development of the "left brain", in which circumstance they are equal with Women!

CRUCIAL ISSUES

In this third wave* of democratization sweeping through our civilization, Women along with other groups are "at the point of significant escape from private and individual confessions, bringing their emotional and bodily experiences into the public" and social arena. Such a statement was summarily banished from the patriarchal structure in the male orchestrated "age of reason". What is now called for is the creation of a "language" capable of recognizing and expressing the significance of emotional and bodily experience of both Women and Men. This need has so far been suppressed in the rationalist framework for moral and social theory and practice.

***THIRD WAVE :** The current era of democratic transitions constitutes the third wave of democratization in the history of the modern world. The first "long" wave began in the 1820s, with the widening of the suffrage to a large proportion of the male population in the United States, and continued for almost a century until 1926, bringing into being some 29 democracies. In 1922,.....the coming of Mussolini..... marked the beginning of a first "reverse wave" that by 1942 had reduced the number of democratic

states in the world to 12..... World War II initiated a second wave governed democratically, only to be followed by a second reverse wave (1960-1975) that brought the number of democracies back down to 30. At what stage are we within the third wave?....And will it be followed by a significant third reverse wave? (Democracy's Third Wave by Samuel P Huntington)

Women have denied aspects of themselves and as a result have denied the real formula of their power. Women have rightly and wrongly accepted "notions" of "individual freedom" and "collective power" donated to them by Men, who usurped the real thing. And yet, prompted by an universal consciousness, they have relented from time to time in support of the ideological statement of the preordained equality. Men, nevertheless, have in practice, safeguarded the inequality in the guise of protection and by virtue of their possessing logic and reason, which they found wanting in Women.

This dichotomy of theory and practice is manifested in the framework of the Indian Constitution, together with the reality of life in independent India, when the status of Women is as yet deplorable or even more so, than before.

Today, when Women at last refuse to be judged "by the standards of patriarchal moral culture, which constantly negated and invalidated their individual experience", comes the moment of truth. Men must now demonstrate the real intent of the ideology of the Indian Constitution, in this "critique of liberalism" that women have brought to the forefront. Does the Constitution, in fact, "stand for" equality, or does it in practice merely present a scenario of rational choices, perpetuating the old imbalances in the guise of protection, productivity and the viability of the nation?

What is crucial is the realization and acceptance of a grave responsibility by all activists for Women's equality, that in the assertion of feminism as a counter, when justice is the issue, reform must be sought courageously, clearly and with balanced argument. There is an accountability that must be adhered to by crusaders in the rising back lash to the Women's solidarity movement. By giving rise to expectations that cannot be met or by sensationalising and trading the plight of down-trodden women, contemporary feminism condemns women further to despair, to ridicule and to further "victimhood".@

Every instance of lack of supportiveness by Women, in politicking, back-biting, gossiping and whatever, must be deemed a betrayal of the feminist pledge. Such evidence of elements that are immature and insincere will mark the potential level of success of the Movement.

\$Victor J.Seidler
@Katherine Kersten

It has been described by Toffler that we now live in an era that is witnessing a massive restructuring of power relationships on all levels, from the macro transcontinental to the micro interpersonal. It would be the most insensitive, short-sighted, unintelligent act to ignore the opportunities and challenges of this human phenomenon, "for we stand at the edge of the deepest powershift in human history". In this "fight for control of the future", women can insist on balanced responsibilities and the return to equality and mutual respect.

In any argument like the present one, there must be room for examining the practices that have gone on, of discrimination by men against women, by men against men, and by women against women. Before we come to aggregate the differences between the sexes, let us first approach it from a perspective of the whole. There is need to regard the sexes from the base of humankind to recognize Men and Women as persons, created in compliment to one another, before the enumeration of differences.

A fair reassessment in contemporary terms would amount to a fresh calibration, in the New World context. Such a re-evaluation of the assumptions of systems, so far in vogue, trans races and subcontinents, could very well expose the missing dimensions in the fabric of current social jurisprudence and management. We would then clarify the significance of the absence of Women's experience in social theories and perspectives, which are the biased origin of the instruments and practices of this long discrimination.

If we were to now assign an impartial consciousness to once again interview the causes for the unequal status of women to men today, would we gain a better understanding? For example, was the burden of inequality solely imposed by Men? Was it also self-imposed by Women? Was the confinement of Women as much engineered by Men as it was submitted to be Women? Did Women abdicate participation in the outer arena of power by seeking the safer domestic power block? Was it the simple story of the victory of muscle and brute force, with the mindlessness that goes with it? Was it that Women had their bellies and hands full and left the rest of the world to Men, until suddenly, it was too late? Or was it all these things at some time or another, or all together?

If the answer is in the affirmative to any of these questions, then Women must acknowledge part of the responsibility for Women's their status through history. And Men must assume the awesome responsibility of having wrested and wielded the "power triad" of "muscle, money and mind" over the environment of all the world, for so long.

A proper understanding of the past, of the reasons, causes and circumstances of Women's unequal status vis a vis Men will provide the prerequisite data base to meet the challenges today. And those challenges are in the makeup of Women's intellectual and emotional fibre, which will spell out the strategies for success against the opportunities and threats in the new world we are about to inherit, along with Men.

Our hopes lie in those young couples, who seek each other in a refreshing new context, as the forerunners of a new order that has begun atleast in pockets of society. Possibly this trend will ripple through the world, in our age, or the next or the next thereafter. We see around us young people who are stepping out in a more balanced partnership and more honest interdependence. They do not need the millstones of the past. They are impatient to shrug off the compulsions and obsequies of the "older generations". It is time to lift the veil and step into the future, while the young are still willing to hold hands.

MEASURES TO COUNTER THE OPPOSITION OR TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S EQUALITY BID

It will be a necessary precaution to adopt the appropriate measures to eliminate the disabilities and discriminations that have been talked about in the volumes of publications associated with Women's Development. These measures, when founded upon the right evidence gain credibility and strength.

The next step would be to present the evidence in such a manner to gain quick acceptance by easy assimilation and understanding. This could be achieved by making the presentations by natural renderings, such as stories set to music and theatre, rather than by film and TV. Such participative exercises could form the most important part of the learning process in education and training. In this way, the message of the training programme will have a stronger impact and reach, as having a logical base with an imaginative treatment.

CAUTION

This evidence must be first authenticated by demonstrating that it comes from the embedded past and from Nature. Use of technology and electronic media needs to be done judiciously as that could well kill its credibility.

SOME MEASURES TO UPDATE WOMEN'S EQUALITY

1. Presentation of plausible evidence that such updation is an authentic and legitimate claim from Nature.
2. Enactment of stories and singing of songs on such themes should be a part of every gathering of the Women's Development Movement to increase consciousness.
3. Stories of creation of M = W, of love and romance and the joy of the union of M + W, to counter the growing aggression against Women due to:
 - a) emancipation of Women
 - b) lower tolerance of Men's behaviour by Women
 - c) further distancing by Men

(eg. Observe the many programmes on Star TV put out by BBC world service.)
4. Creation of new role models to counter the historical romanticisation, for the perpetuation of "the inequality", augmented by Cinema and TV.

W = Virgin, Mother, Mother-in-law, Vamp
 M = Hero, Patriarch, Law-maker, Teacher, Swami,
 Professional (artisan, trader, farmer), Villain

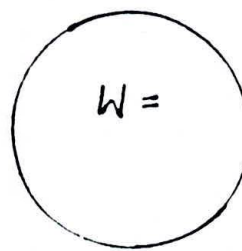
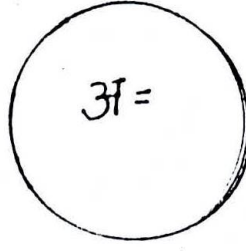
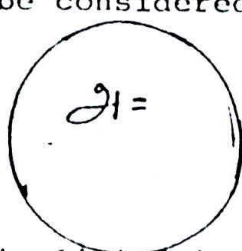
The avant-garde writers and film and TV programme makers must take up this responsibility on a mass scale for any perceptible impact in the near future.

5. Symbols as device, a quick language for mass communication to drive home the concept of equality.

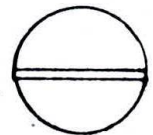
e.g. the family planning symbol ----- from Tantra, the Yoni
 to counter the Lingam.



Perhaps the combination of the alphabet along with a symbol may be considered:



or simplified into a mnemonic that speaks universally,



This is an area for research and development in graphics which needs to be dealt with by specialists in communication.

The success of the Women's Development Movement to result in equalizing Woman with Man, is dependent on securing the appropriate ideological and teleological formulations to effect the transition. The appropriateness is to be sought in precisely the reference that has perpetuated the inequality, namely historical, religious and biological data. So far, the references may be said to be submerged and/or skewed by male orientation. Those very same references contain the missing logic for the Women's Movement. The equalising elixir that Women need is in themselves.

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GENDER PLANNING : THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

MS. RANJINI KRISHNAMOORTHY

**INITIATIVES
WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT,
MADRAS**

GENDER PLANNING : THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

RANJINI KRISHNAMOORTHY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The gender relations approach to women's development stresses that the problem in women's development is not women, but the socially constructed relationship between men and women, a relation in which women are subordinated. It, therefore, recommends the empowerment of women and conscientization of men to transform gender relations and other social relations which oppress women like caste, class and race. The approach, thus, questions the very direction of the dominant development paradigm which aims at reform within existing structures.

Gender planning, one would assume, would facilitate the unfolding of such a process. Instead, most gender planning frameworks restrict their attention to increasing the access of women to material resources, related to pre-identified projects\programmes, in a top down manner, with the limited Women in Development (WID) objective of integrating women into the mainstream development process.

This paper calls for an alternative approach to gender planning, one which aims at women's empowerment and emphasises the transformation of both the material and ideological basis of women's oppression, in both the public and private domain and through a project\programme with no predetermined activities, but one where the project unfolds with the clarification of the needs and vision of the women themselves.

Such a gender planning approach would step beyond the programme arena to include institutional development: proper selection and gender sensitization of staff, critical and participatory reflection on organisational goals and objectives, organisational structure and processes from a gender perspective.

This paper elaborates the above critique of dominant gender planning frameworks in greater detail and draws upon the experience of 'Women's Development Project' (WDP) of Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Rajasthan in suggesting an alternative approach to gender planning.

The structure of the paper is as follows: The second section elaborates on the gender relations approach to women's development and its differences from the WID approaches. In this context, it examines the rationale for gender planning. The third section analyses the perspective, scope and methodology of some of the dominant gender planning frameworks from a gender relational approach. The last section elaborates on an alternative approach to gender planning.

2.0 GENDER RELATIONS APPROACH TO WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT:

2.1 GENDER RELATIONS APPROACH

Different people mean different things when they use the phrase 'gender and development' approach. I shall elaborate here the interpretation of a group from different parts of the world who met in 1979 at Brighton, England in a workshop titled "Continuing subordination of Women in development".

The gender relations approach towards women's development is based on three beliefs :

1. The problem in women's development is not 'women', but rather the relationship between men and women.
2. The relationship between men and women is socially constructed and not based on biology.
3. The relationship between men and women is not one of equals but one in which men dominate and women are subordinated. (Whithead, 1979)

Gender relations are constructed by an interplay of several factors: religion, media, mythologies, education, laws etc. on the one hand and social relations like class, caste, race, ethnicity etc. on the other.

It has further highlighted that gender relations are not the only source of women's subordination; gender relations interlock with caste, class, race, ethnicity in subordinating women. The gender relations approach, therefore, calls for a radical transformation of society, towards a society in which inequalities of all forms are eliminated (including gender) and where values of love, trust, tolerance, democracy, participation, nurturance, self-reliance etc. govern the functioning of society. This radical transformation, it was envisaged, could take place only through the process of women's empowerment.

The process of women's empowerment can be discussed at two levels: material and ideological. At the ideological level, it is concerned with conscientization of women and organisation for change. While at the material level, it is discussed with reference to women's access to resources, power and decision making (Bhatt, 1989). With regard to conscientization, Gramsci's (1971) idea on ideological hegemony of common sense is useful. Hegemonic control consists of the attempt by the dominant groups to diffuse the antagonistic interests of different groups in society and make them appear to be one and the same - the 'common sense'. This common sense forms the superficial and explicit consciousness, which is inherited from the past and unconditionally absorbed. However, there is a second level of

consciousness which unites the oppressed group, and leads to an understanding of the world in which all inequalities and oppressions are clear, and also to a new world view of society based on equality and the flow of human potential. Conscientization, is the process by which the second level of consciousness is brought forward. It involves challenging the dominant logic or common sense, so that it seems less logical, first in the minds of the oppressed (women in general), but also in minds of oppressors (men in general).

The process of women's empowerment has also got to take cognizance of other sources of women's subordination - caste, class, race etc., though gender relations is the main source. Women of oppressed class and caste may need to form alliances with men of similar background to struggle against such sources of oppression.

2.2 GENDER RELATIONS APPROACH IN CONTRAST WITH WID APPROACHES

The gender relations approach is a departure from the Women in development (WID) approaches, which developed in its different forms from the mid 1970s onwards. Moser (1989) classifies the WID approaches into three categories : equity, anti-poverty and efficiency. The equity approach, which emerged in the mid 1970s, sought to bring about equity between men and women in the political, economic and social spheres through reforms in laws and development policies. The agenda being threatening, this approach soon gave away to the anti-poverty approach, which aimed at creating assets and services for women through programmes designed in a top down manner. The late 1980s, in the context of debt crisis and scarce resources witnessed an added concern with tapping the potential contribution of women for producing economic resources for the country and services rendered by the state.

The concern was therefore, with increasing the efficiency of development programmes.

What is wrong with the WID approaches? The WID approaches believe that there is nothing wrong with the direction of the development process, but the problem was that women have not been integrated into it. Secondly, the WID approaches believe that women are not integrated as equals in the development process because of sheer lack of foresight or prejudices on the part of male planners and ignorance and superstitions of women. They, therefore, assume that top down planning and policy changes are adequate to bring about changes in women's position. That underlying women's subordination are certain relations of power between men and women, which can only be transformed through a process of empowerment of women is not recognised. Thirdly, the emphasis of these approaches is more on the public rather than private lives of women. That personal is political is not adequately recognized. Lastly, the equity approach does not recognise the division between men and women on the basis of

caste, class, region etc. Given these differences, the call for equality between men and women in general does not make sense - which women with which men is not specified.

The gender relational approach addresses many of the weaknesses mentioned above: it questions the very direction of the development process, it recognises the relations of power underlying women's subordination and calls for women's empowerment rather than top down policy changes and programmes and it recognises the divisions within women and men and the need for multiplicity of struggles on the basis of caste, class and gender.

2.3 RATIONALE FOR GENDER PLANNING

In this context, Gender planning, is required to help planners and implementors:

- disaggregate 'women' and identify the most oppressed women in terms of caste, class, gender etc.
- make it possible for women to understand the different relations which subordinate them.
- demystify the social construction of gender in the eyes of the oppressed women.
- help identify the practical gender needs of women (which arise out of acceptance of gender relations like fuel, water, fodder etc.) and the strategic gender interests of women (which challenge existing gender relations eg. gender division of labour, male violence etc.) and organise and empower women for meeting them.
- promote organisational development of development agencies from a gender perspective.

The focus, in gender planning, on organisation development is especially important as gender planning techniques, however well designed, can't be used effectively unless the organisation has developed to the extent of being able to put these to use. This will include critical reflection on the organisational vision, objectives and strategies, and also on the organisational structure, processes, staffing, systems from a gender perspective.

3.0 GENDER PLANNING PERSPECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY : STATE OF THE ART.

This section will examine the perspective, scope, and methodology underlying some of the gender planning methods in use in India from the gender relations approach outlined in the earlier section.

3.1 PERSPECTIVE

Let us first look at the perspectives of the gender planning approach developed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Coady International Institute (CII) and Overhold et al (1985) being used in India by USAID, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Oxfam (1991), National Labour Institute (NLI, 1991) and National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD, 1988) etc.

The purpose of these different gender planning approaches as cited in different documents is summarised below:

USAID on its Gender Information framework (GIF) for gender planning.

"Aid evaluation findings provide stray evidence that gender is an all important variable in the development process, that is projects matching resources to the roles and responsibilities of men and women are more effective than the projects that do not. Therefore to ensure more positive project and programme outcomes, planners need to identify key differences in male\female roles and responsibilities, analyze the implication of those differences for programming and incorporate that information into development activities. The GIF provides a framework for the process". (USAID 1991: 1, emphasis added).

Coady International Institute (CII) on the purpose of social\gender analysis handbook developed for CIDA.

"The purpose of this handbook is to introduce the concept of social\gender analysis and how it can be used to increase the effectiveness of CIDA programmes in terms of benefitting the disadvantaged (including women) in a socially sustainable way". (CIDA, Undated : 4, parantheses and emphasis added).

Overhold et al (1985) on the need for its framework for gender planning:

"Although there has been much activity, development planning efforts still fail to recognise fully women's actual and potential contribution to the development process or the effect of the development process on them. The imperatives for rectifying these inadequancies are based on both economic and equity concerns framework which will facilitate the process" (Overholt et al, 1985 : 4, emphasis added).

Thus the ideological underpinnings of the above gender planning frameworks are the WID approaches of efficiency (USAID) anti-poverty (CII) and equity (Overholt et al, also FAO, 1991). The term gender has thus been shorn off its ideological position.

The verbal ideology underlying Moser's (1989) gender planning framework is different :

"The methodological tools identified (in this framework) simplify theoretical feminists concerns relating both to the productive, reproductive and community managing roles of women, and to the nature of their gender subordination, such that they can be translated into specific interventions in practice." (Moser, 1989: 1817, Parantheses added).

Thus Moser's framework evolves out of an analysis of the process of women's subordination, and seeks to identify and address strategic gender interests which arise out of this process. It however, assumes that these strategic gender interests can be converted into needs and planned for in a top down manner. Like the WID equity approach it ignores the relationship of power in subordinating women, which can only be transformed through the process of women's empowerment.

3.2 METHODOLOGY, SCOPE AND PROCESS OF GENDER PLANNING

The above criticism of the perspectives of different gender planning approaches does not imply that they are without any use. Let us examine the strength and weaknesses of three gender planing frameworks from the view point of its scope, theoretical basis, emphasis and methodology, and also the process it recommends for planning :

- i. Moser's (1989) method of identifying and meeting practical and strategic gender needs of women.
- ii. Overholt et al (1985) method.
- iii. Social\gender analysis method.

The features of the above three frameworks are presented in Table 1.

DETAILS ON GENDER PLANNING FRAMEWORKS ACROSS DIFFERENT FEATURES

Features	Moser's framework: Planning for practical & strategy gender needs	Overholt et al Framework	Social\gender analysis framework
The method	<p>The framework distinguishes between practical gender needs of women, (ie. needs which do not question existing gender relations but arise out of it: water, fuel, food etc.)</p> <p>and strategic gender needs of women</p> <p>(which seek to transform existing gender relations - for eg. gender division of labour, control over resources, unequal wages)</p> <p>and suggests that development efforts should seek to address strategic gender needs.</p>	<p>The framework uses three inter-related components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activity profile in the production and reproduction arena. - access and control profile over resources and benefits. - analysis of factors influencing the above two variables. 	<p>The framework consists of an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the disadvantaged groups as related to the project, in terms of caste, class, gender etc. - the nature of the disadvantage of the disadvantaged (an assessment of gender division of labour, access and control over resources and distribution and consumption of benefits) - the social relations which maintain their disadvantage, and historical patterns in the same. - the relationship between local, national level in creating and perpetuating poverty. - In the light of this analysis, the project recommends participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to address the

Features	Moser's Framework: Planning for practical & strategic gender needs	Overholt et al Framework	Social\gender analysis framework
Vision	Gender equality	Gender equality and efficiency	disadvantage as related to the Project. Equality in terms of class, caste. gender etc.
Starting point	Sectoral activity already going on.	Project already determined.	Project already determined.
Scope	Programme planning	Programme\Project planning, monitoring and evaluation	Project planning, monitoring and evaluation
Emphasis of the Project	Public domain	Public domain	Public domain
The extent to which it addresses women's empowerment	Material aspects of women's empowerment, not ideological	Material aspects of women's empowerment, not ideological	Material aspects of women's empowerment, not ideological
Recognition of divisions between women and sources of subordination of women apart from gender relations.	Takes the divisions into account in analysis, but not while planning	Takes the divisions into account in analysis, but not while planning	Takes the division into account in both analysis and planning
Planning process	Top down	Top down	Participatory
Done by	Planners	Planners	The target group, planners and staff of relevant institutions in the project area.

What are the strengths of the above gender planning frameworks?

- i. All the frameworks draw attention to the heavy work burden of women arising out of the gender division of labour
- ii. All the frameworks visibilize the role of women in the production of goods and resources.
- iii. The framework of Overholt et al and social\gender analysis, in addition, stress the gender inequalities in access and control over resources and benefits inspite of their significant role in the economic arena.
- iv. There are development programmes and projects already in place in different sectoral areas. These gender planning techniques provide frameworks for integrating women into these development programmes with the WID objectives of equity, anti-poverty and efficiency.

On the other hand these frameworks suffer several conceptual and methodological weaknesses.

- i. They focus on the material rather than the ideological aspects of women's oppression & empowerment. The need for women to make explicit and challenge their superficial consciousness (whereby they accept their subordination as commonsense) is not given adequate emphasis. That the material aspects of development may not be sustainable without changes at the ideological level is not recognized.

For eg. productive assets and income envisaged for women under the development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme has in practice resulted in control over assets and income, created through the programmes, by men.

- ii. The starting point in all the gender planning techniques is the project, the broad sectoral activity (agriculture, animal husbandry etc.) of which has already been determined, rather than the women whose practical and strategic gender needs are inter-sectoral.
- iii. Women's oppression in both the private and public domain are political issues. The gender planning frameworks however restrict their attention to the public arena. Important personal issues like control over sexuality, violence against women, dowry, etc. do not receive adequate attention.
- iv. The division within women are taken into account in the analysis stage, but not in gender planning (other than the social\gender analysis framework).

Strategic gender interests of women will vary with class.

For example equal access to property is a strategic gender interest of the middle\upper class women but not the women from economically weaker sections whose families may not have any access to property at all.

Similarly, post-harvest technology may increase the access to income of women with large land holdings, but may reduce the employment opportunities for landless women.

Thus, it is important to disaggregate "women" in both analysis and planning and focus on the strategic gender interests of women who are the most disadvantaged, for example female headed landless and lower caste women.

- v. The frameworks (except social gender analysis) lay emphasis on the techniques rather than the process of gender planning. The need for people's participation both as an intrinsic value in itself, and to increase the effectiveness of the project in meeting the needs of women, is not recognised.
- vi. The primary thrust in all these frameworks is on programme planning. However programmes are implemented in the context of an organisation. Thus, there is a need for reflection on organisational visions, objectives, organisational structures, processes, systems, personal policies etc. which is not given due importance in the planning frameworks.

Many of the shortcomings listed above arise out of concerns and assumptions similar to the WID approaches. How does one move from planning for integrating women into the development process to planning for women's empowerment?

4.0 TOWARDS GENDER PLANNING FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.

The women's Development project, a joint venture of the government and NGOs in Rajasthan was launched in mid 1984. The principal aim of the project is "to empower rural women, through communication of information, education and training" (Jain et al, 1988). Empowerment is seen as integrated growth and liberation of women both individually and collectively as a group. The empowerment process involves sharing on the part of WDP staff, the existing body of knowledge about poor women, helping the women to use the information to question their oppressive social relations on the basis of caste, class, gender and articulate and move towards an alternative vision of society and their lives. The needs identified by the women through the

process are both practical in nature like water, grazing land, education, fuel etc. and also strategic like child marriage, prostitution, violence against women etc. Thus, the barriers between 'public' and 'private' are sought to be broken, both are collectively addressed by the groups. Further the struggle is not of women alone. Alliances with men of the same class are sought for meeting some practical needs of women. The role of the WDP in this process is not seen as one of meeting these needs through "schemes" but facilitating the empowerment of women so that they can avail of existing government programmes and legal provisions.

To foster such a process, the WDP is organised as follows:

VILLAGE LEVEL: Each selected gram Panchayat has a trained village level worker called a Sathin who belongs to one of the villages of the Gram Panchayat. She is responsible for the formation of women's forums at the village level. She works in close link with nine other Sathins of neighbouring Gram Panchayats. The cluster of 10 Gram Panchayats with 10 Sathins is coordinated by one Pracheta.

BLOCK LEVEL: The Pracheta, a block level Government functionary, provides support and guidance to the Sathin. She also provides the communication link with the district level.

DISTRICT LEVEL: (i) At the district level is the District Women's Development Agency (DWDA) under the Chairmanship of the District Collector. Each DWDA has a Project Director who is assisted by a Project Officer. (ii) Technical Resource Support is provided at the district level by the Information Development and Resource Agency (IDARA). This is a voluntary agency working in the field of adult education and rural development.

STATE LEVEL: At the State level:

- (i) The district IDARAs are coordinated by the State IDARA.
- (ii) The Director of WDP is the overall incharge of the programme.
- (iii) The monitoring and evaluation of the programme is facilitated by the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur.

The first activity of WDP was the selection, through training programmes, of Sathins and Prachetas. The training programmes gave an opportunity to get to know the potential candidates. Their socio-economic background, perspective on women's development, commitment to the programme, willingness to work with disadvantaged women, openness to new ideas, ability to take initiative and work collectively were some of the criteria used for selection.

The training programmes are a continuous activity through Jajams (the monthly meeting of Sathins attended by Prachetas and at times, other staff) and Shivirs (a meeting around particular issues/problems attended by staff at all levels). The focus in these meetings cum training programmes is on:

- enhancing self confidence
- internalization of WDP's perspective
- broadening perspective on women's development
- self reflection on application in one's own life.
- developing the ability to diagnose and solve problems
- developing the ability to work as a group
- building innovativeness and creativity.

In all these meetings, the staff at higher levels and resource persons played a supportive role, giving information, facilitating discussions, reflection and decision making on the issues at hand by the Sathins themselves.

What can we learn from this experience on the components for gender planning for women's empowerment?

- (i) Concern with developing the programme around the participating women, rather than integrating women into predetermined projects/programmes.
- (ii) Emphasis on conscientization and empowerment of women rather than reducing women's poverty or increasing the efficiency of the project.
- (iii) Absence of a distinction between personal and public domain.
- (iv) Recognition of divisions within women on the basis of caste, class etc. and the need to address sources of women's subordination arising out of these social relations, wherever necessary forming alliances with men.
- (v) Adoption of iterative participatory planning processes with collectives of women, rather than one shot top down planning techniques targetted at individual women.
- (vi) Emphasis on selection and development of staff with the right perspectives on women's development.
- (vii) Development of a shared vision within the organisation on the overall goal of the Project: women's empowerment.
- (viii) Evolving participatory decision making processes within the organization and gender sensitive personnel policies.

- (ix) Commitment at the policy making level of the government towards facilitating the process of women's empowerment.
- (x) The joint involvement of NGOs, government and research institutions in the project.

There are several NGOs working towards women's empowerment. There is a need for consolidation and analysis of these experiences so as to gain a better understanding of the planning process for women's empowerment.

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GENDER AND BEHAVIOUR

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INTRODUCTION

Gender is the cultural interpretation of sex differences. Gender differences are different from that of sex differences. Sex differences are physiological features related to procreation, to biological reproduction. Sex differences are found in all animals. However, humans from their very origins have interpreted and reshaped their physical and social environment through symbolizing. Though humans are self-reflective, culture-creating animals, humans have sex differences, like all other aspects of physical differentiation these are expressed symbolically.

While sex differences are physical, gender differences are socially constructed. Every culture has prevailing images of what men and women are "supposed to be" like. Concepts of Gender are ingrained and imbibed through the socialisation process. A child doesn't have to be spanked to produce a behaviour pattern or change a behaviour. A frown, a tone of voice is sufficient to effect a change in behaviour. Being born as a girl or a boy and the reactions shown by the relatives to the baby makes an impression on the baby's mind. This impression has a lasting effect on the baby's growing self-image. The socialisation process, by which the child learns in a small way at home of how to manage in society, is taught of each and everybody's role, their position in the community etc., For example, if a three-year old boy gets hurt and cries, a typical response would be "Don't be a sissy, don't cry like girls" - (Pombala madiri azhade - in Tamil and Hen makkalu tharah alu beda - in Kannada) thereby teaching them

1. Not to express through crying
2. Crying is a feminine behaviour and it is below a male's dignity to cry. Whereas, if a girl of the same age cries it is well accepted and is consoled, thereby encouraging the so-called "weaker part" of the personality to be developed.

It has been mentioned earlier "Gender" concept is built in and is socially constructed. Gender difference is reflected through behaviour. "Behaviour" includes anything a person or animal does that can be observed in some way. Behaviour, unlike mind or thoughts or feelings can be observed, recorded and studied. From what is said and done, we can and do make inferences about the feelings, attitudes, thoughts and often mental processes which may be behind the behaviour. The internal mental thought processes can be observed through behaviour. The basic unit of behaviour is an activity. All behaviour is a series of activities. Our behaviour is generally motivated by a desire to attain some goal.

The goal towards which we are working may just yield a reward of social acceptance. People interpret behaviour in terms of past experiences in their own frame of reference.

One of the main results of human evolution is that we have become a species in which behaviour is strongly influenced by learning. Our evolutionary heritage has given us the potential for great behavioural flexibility. It is through behaviour that human beings manifest Gender differences. Society has prescribed certain roles to both men and women. 'Roles' are seen as defining all behaviour such that the stability and equilibrium of the system is ensured so that society could function smoothly.

The term 'Role' has been used to describe patterns of behaviour. It is seen as complementary to social position, i.e., it is the behavioural component of social position. And the Gender component is inculcated and played out as 'Masculine' or 'Feminine role'. Even as children, boys and girls perceive the status accorded to their own sex in the family and society.

The reactions to the perceived status may be varied - either accepting or rejecting the role thereby questioning the society's verdict on their sex-role. The denial of the role may be simply refusing to play the typical sex-role or by emulating the other sex i.e., a female child acting like a tom-boy. Such children may also be seen to be enjoying the image of being a "tom-boy" since she may feel to be of a higher status than the other girls of her age. But rarely do we find a boy who is seen to be enjoying his "poor sissy" position - for obvious reasons.

DETAILS OF THE GENDER ROLES

A role is a set of prescriptions and proscriptions for behaviour - expectations about what behaviours are appropriate for a person holding a particular position within a particular social context. A Gender role is a set of expectations about what behaviours are appropriate for people of one Gender.

According to the traditional perspective, someone is "born into" the category "male" or "female" and by virtue of her or his birth becomes obliged to perform the male or female role - one is expected to behave in accordance with the prescriptions of one's Gender.

The obligatory nature of Gender roles is so firm that when dictionaries attempt to define woman and man, they often do so by listing Gender role behaviours (man: one possessing high degree of bravery, courage, strength etc.; woman: who is shy, timid, obedient etc.,)

Now to look into the differential emotions in men and women, as part of behavioural component, we will go through

Biological\Genetic theories. According to these theories, the purpose of emotions is to communicate about survival - related, approach - withdrawal processes; for example, fear helps to identify potential aggressors. The important issue relevant to an understanding of Gender differences in emotional development is that the two sexes historically differed in their interpersonal survival - related functions.

Women were primarily responsible for child - rearing; men, for gathering and hunting food. Hunting required communication among peers who were at relatively similar levels of physical, cognitive and social development, while child-rearing required communication between a developmentally more advanced caretaker (in physical, social and cognitive skills) and a developmentally immature, non - verbal and physically vulnerable child. These differences in gender - related interpersonal interactions have implications for two aspects of emotional functioning. Women should be more sensitive to non-verbal cues than are men, since non-verbal sensitivity is adaptive for child - rearing; and women should show anger less often than do men, since anger is theorized to be a precursor of aggressive behaviour, and is non-adaptive for interactions with children. The variation in expressing emotions can also be explained through social theory which says that the sons and daughters may be socialized differently or the behaviours of adult males and females are observed to differ and children imitate those differences.

Lewis explains that emotions are based on attachment systems, and that the threat of loss of attachment results in the emotions shame \ or guilt, which aim to restore the attachment. She says, women are more prone toward experiencing shame and men toward experiencing guilt. Her argument includes (1) Women's low socio - cultural status causes women to feel inferior which predisposes them to experience other's negative view of themselves; (2) because women care more about their relationships with others than do men (i.e., are more affiliative) In other words, women experience more negative feelings about themselves because of the importance they place on the approval or disapproval of others; (3) men's greater aggressiveness relative to women's, leads them to experience more Guilt. Guilt is aimed at actively making amends to another because of a wrong - doing or because of an injury inflicted on others.

Gender roles have many components including interests, activities, dress, skills etc. For each of these components, there are clear and different expectations for those who occupy the male and female role. For example, in the ideal traditional culture, the "good" woman is a Pativrata, subordinating her life to the husband's welfare and needs. The goddess Uma, laying down the guidelines of right conduct for women describes a "Pativrata" as one who is devoted to her 'Lord' which is her penance: her eternal heaven. The husband is the God which women have. The Husband is their friend, their high refuge. The husband's grace and Heaven are equal in the estimation of a woman.

In our Society, roles are prescribed for men and women as follows:- Female - Housewife, Cooking, Caring for the children, Husband and other members of the family. Male - protector, a breadwinner. Though there are no formal laws or rules to enforce these appropriate roles, they are being imposed through social norms which are sometimes stronger than formal laws.

Just social mockery, jokes etc., helps to keep the individuals in line who move away from the set norms. Husbands who help their wives in household activities are sometimes referred to as "hen - pecked" husbands. And in cases where individuals are not able to live up to their appropriate roles, sometimes they even go to the extent of ending their lives - for example, women who are not able to get married for various reasons, men who are not able to get jobs. The male is expected to be career-oriented, to look for rewards, self-esteem, achievement and personal growth.

For a female, the reward can be seen as one of husband's achievement, children's or other family member's success. In short, a man's growth can be self-centered whereas a woman's life is always oriented towards the others.

The so - called Gender-appropriate roles are being maintained strictly with the help of constricting do's and don'ts, to the members of the respective Genders. For example, society may not mind too much if the woman goes for work as long as her primary role of caretaking is not neglected. And in the same manner if the woman is only a supportive earner it is well accepted, whereas if she becomes the main earner of the family when the husband is alive and healthy, he will be scorned and made fun of - thereby maintaining the Female role-boundary. Choosing a girl who is less-educated, less-paid, or at least of equal status but never a girl of a higher status, is in order to conform to the societal Gender role behaviour ; the general opinion that the woman should always be a subordinate to the man. And the wife is expected to behave in such a manner that she doesn't in any way challenge the husband's image or his position.

Moreover a woman doing a purely 'male job' is better accepted as it is seen as emulating the stronger sex whereas a man doing a purely 'female job' is looked down upon as it is seen as derogatory to his position.

Rosaldo of Stanford University explains "Women are more involved than men in the grubby and dangerous part of social existence, giving birth and mourning death, feeding, cooking and disposal".

By contrast, men are often identified with culture, with human consciousness and its achievements etc; in short with the lofty realm of life that transcends nature. The human

male, Simone de Beauvoir says "remodels the face of the earth, creates new instruments, invents, shapes the future." "As a result", says anthropologist Sherry Ortner, "man assumes the dominant role. Culture at some level of awareness asserts itself to be not only distinct from but superior to nature. If women were considered part of nature, then culture would find it 'natural' to subordinate, not to say, oppress them."

Surprisingly enough, the female's tie with nature has been used as an excuse not only to diminish but also to exalt her. The second is no better than the first; both ways of looking at women deny them equality with men.

Men and Women are encouraged to develop certain personality traits which are different. They are not only different but the value attached to those personality traits which are to be developed by men carries higher social value than for those traits which are to be developed by women.

Ability to reason is a good example of how group pressures influence the development of admired personality traits. Even before the days of Intelligence tests, Reasoning was regarded as "higher" mental ability than memorising. Boys were encouraged to develop the ability to reason while girls were discouraged from developing it either by limiting their learning opportunities or by labeling those whose reasoning ability competed with men's as "masculine women". As a result, men developed this ability and were judged as "superior". Women were encouraged to develop the ability to memorize and were then judged as inferior because they possessed a trait that had less prestige. Men having developed the ability to reason were considered better suited to deal with situations where decisions have to be made.

It is not that all is well with the role prescribed for the men just because it offers higher prestige. Because to attain that prestige they must sacrifice being emotional, being dependent - in short, the men have to prove themselves to the high pedestal which is set by the society by being an "achieving automaton". From early boyhood on, his emotions are suppressed by others and therefore repressed by himself. In countless ways he is constantly being conditioned not to express his feelings and needs openly. Though he too has needs for dependency, he learns that it is not masculine to act in a dependent way. It is also not masculine to be frightened, to want to be held, to cry etc., While all of these expressions of self are acceptable in a girl they are incompatible with the boy's sought after image of being tough and in control. Emotionally repressed, out of touch with his body, alienated and isolated from other men, terrorized by the fear of failure, afraid to ask for help, it is ironical that the male is imagined to be superior. Even as young boys they would never be given a doll as a present, only mechanical things to play with and the parents would become extremely disturbed if they see boys playing with dolls or show any so -

called 'feminine' interests. Sometimes young boys become extremely confused since there is peer pressure to act like a boy, whereas usually the teacher's coveted classroom values are traditionally 'feminine' ones. The emphasis is on politeness, neatness and cleanliness with not much approval to show his aggression. Findings from studies show that the higher the boy scored on the masculine scale, the lower his report card average tended to be. Even the same emotions are manifested differently by men and women - for e.g., a woman would take the aid of verbal blows when she is angry whereas a man would show it through physical aggression. We can assume that this is one of the reasons for a larger number of male criminals.

As adults, men are not to show their emotions, least of all of being sad. So some men may find 'being drunk' as an alternative way of venting their feelings and emotions.

Role Denial happens when the person is not able to accept the prescribed role for himself/herself. This can happen for various reasons 1. When the person is not able to fulfill the required behaviour pattern 2. When the status attached to the role is perceived to be too low. Men very rarely deny their roles since they may be labeled as "failures".

Just as a superior role in the social group contributes to a feeling of superiority in men and boys, so also an inferior role contributes to the development of feelings of inferiority in girls and women. Here the term 'superior role' or 'inferior role' refers to the prestige and status given to the persons who play the respective roles. The uniqueness of the Gender role is that they not only prescribe male and female roles but also of higher and lower status, thereby creating a hierarchy. Many high - achieving girls and women fail to see the justice of being treated as inferior, and so they react with anger and resentment. Their capacity to achieve may in no way be inferior to those of men but still they would be meted the same treatment given to those of traditional women simply because achievement has no approval in the so - called "female role".

Whether this anger is expressed outwardly in "masculine protest" or suppressed behind a cloak of docile femininity, it will affect the personality adversely.

When a feeling of inferiority is well developed, the woman loses respect for herself and for members of her sex. In a social environment where the attitude toward women is low, girls grow up in homes where the role of women is so scorned, they lose respect for themselves as people. When this happens, some women become easy prey to the lure of money and glamour often associated with the life of prostitution. Harsh and Schrckel writes that "Prostitutes" are seldom sex-obsessed but more often are women who have a low regard for the female role; thus they experience little difficulty in offering themselves up as sex objects.

CONCLUSION

Gender concept is not static but flexible, and its meaning becomes clear in the beliefs that people hold and in the context of social interaction, where those beliefs are manifested, rather than in any inherent qualities of the male or female. Human life can be defined as the constant and endless process of healing an inner split. On another level, the soul and the brain were supposed to be divided into a feminine sensory part on one hand and masculine reason and will on the other. It is also accepted by a set of Psychologists that as humans we have an 'animus' and an 'anima' the other Gender component in us. So perhaps it would help us if we consider 'masculine' and 'feminine' aspects as complementary to each other than alien. We are subject to many myths that impede the human growth of women as well as men. We grow up in sex - defined cages, instead of reaching our full potentials. The so - called set - roles are slowly changing but not the old behaviour - patterns probably because of the built - in social conditioning. Both men and women find it extremely difficult to conform to the old behaviour - patterns. Perhaps it would be better if we change our behaviour patterns according to the changes in the role - patterns. By thus changing our set behaviour patterns we would also be able to change the lower status accorded to the female and the high expectation from the male.

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SOCIAL CONDITIONING AND GENDER BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN SOCIETY

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SOCIAL CONDITIONING AND GENDER BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN SOCIETY

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The great paradox of modern India, which is wedded to two Principal Political ideologies viz., Democracy and Socialism, is that we loudly proclaim equality between Men and Women even as we encounter the presence of glaring inequality everywhere.

Rovsseau classified inequalities as natural and social. Researchers have been trying to find out the role of heredity and environment in contributing to sex-inequality. Now the term Sex is confined to the biological mechanism and the term Gender to socially constructed traits attributed to males and females (Unger 1979).

Biologists' search for genetic transmission of sex specific differences has not been conclusive or productive so far (Carol, 1986). However, it is generally agreed that both biological and psychological factors typically interact in subtle and complex ways in producing differences in the behaviour of males and females.

Psychologists and Sociologists have concentrated on socio-cultural factors contributing to sex differences in social behaviour, because these factors exercise strong control over behaviour in general.

Gender research has become a field of study by itself wherein psychological characteristics assigned to the categories of male and female by an individual or a group and the variables that affect perceptions of gender and social constructions of sex stereotypes are examined (Deaux 1985).

Social interactions and related social cognitions (i.e. attitudes, beliefs, values, interests and attributions) of both individuals and groups have been found to be important in the adoption and expression of gender related behaviour. Therefore, the view that gender inequality is a 'cultural wrong' (Fenchol 1978, Peter Marea 1991) and that the psychological and social growth processes are the same for both males and females is gaining ground among the researchers (Austin 1984). It is gender identity developed in a growing child which ultimately determines maleness and femaleness from a social behaviour point of view.

Despite these views gaining ground, attitudes, beliefs, old alues and old habits continue to circulate, as they have a life of their own. These are collective representations held in common and shared by the members of the society and serve as means through which each member defines his identity in relation to others and to the Universe in general. They mediate one's perceptions and serve as filters through which objects, events and persons are perceived and evaluated. And they are passed on

from generation to generation and thus perpetuating sex-inequalities.

How do the gender related behaviours originate? How are they reinforced and maintained? Can they be restructured? These are the questions proposed to be answered here, with specific reference to the Indian context.

The origin of earliest perception of sex-differences must be traced back to Adam and Eve. The first man and women could not have but noticed the anatomical and physiological differences between them at first sight, but the folly of attributing inferior status to Woman based on external genital differences could be traced back to only Post-Vedic Period in India around 300 B.C. The position of the Hindu Woman in the early Vedic times was high. It is the great social changes that took place after 300 B.C. that led to a degradation in her status (Kuppuswamy, 1972).

The needs of the times may have dictated the assignment of sex-roles, like need to fight for survival and feeding the young. As more security and comforts of life were achieved man must have begun to assert himself to preserve for himself certain privileges he enjoyed before at the expense of woman. And to justify his actions he began to rationalise, and spared no scriptures to lend authority to his rationalizations. Even the great Manu was no exception to this process.

And women did not lag behind in assimilating these new values in perpetuating the same old inequalities they suffered and subjected their daughters to the same values and suffering. How did women fall prey to these manipulations and why did they continue to suffer this long?

The answer, perhaps, lies in the powers of the social conditioning process. We learn many things even before we could reflect upon them, particularly during early childhood (Veena Das). And Learning is highest at appropriate critical periods of life, and such learnings leave strong impressions that are hard to change, like attitudes towards sex, rituals, inferiority complex, basic fears etc., and a person may become unable to learn certain things once his critical period is past, like learning mathematics, grammar need for change, need to strive and achieve etc. And, as nature would have it, a girl child undergoes more critical stages of visible growth and development than a boy child. Using a complex system of rewards and punishments in various direct and indirect forms, Indian society has been nurturing certain values and beliefs among both boys and girls so as to land women under conditions we find them to-day.

In order to understand the operation of these social rewards and punishments and their effect on our behaviour in terms of our perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, the processes of conditioning in general and social conditioning in particular may be briefly

explained here. However, conditioning is only one of the ways we learn, as there are several other methods of learning. A review of other methods is beyond the purview of this paper. Suffice it to state here that different methods of learning actually complement each other and contribute to the acquisition of different kinds of skills, perceptions and attitudes of the child as it grows up.

CONDITIONING PROCESS

It was Thordike, an American psychologist, who gave laws of learning based on his experimental studies. Drawing on the Principle of Association that ideas and experiences tend to get associated, he tried to explain the conditions under which trial and error method of learning occurs.

One of the laws of learning is the Law of effect, according to which an experience should be satisfying to the learner to establish a link between the stimulus and his response. Satisfaction may be gratification of a need avoidance of a threat or reduction in discomfort.

The 'Law of effect' received strong support with Pavlov's experiments on dogs. Ivan V Pavlov, a Russian physiologist convincingly established that the law of effect occurs through a process of excitation-inhibition in the neural processes. He called his procedure of establishing links between the external stimulus and an internal autonomic response as conditioning. Now called the classical model, the procedure involved a dog learning to salivate to the sound of a metronome. The sound is the neutral stimulus, neutral because it does not elicit salivation in the dog. Whenever the dog became hungry food was served but only after a metronome was sounded. After several such presentations of bell followed by food, a coupling of the neutral stimulus bell and the food takes place, making the dog salivate at the sound of the bell itself. That is, the dog became conditioned to the sound of the bell.

Although, the experiment appears to be quite simple and the process discovered to be common knowledge, the implications for behaviour control have been far reaching. Beginning with bell, salivation could be built up to many other stimuli such as different types of sounds, lights, verbal commands facial expressions and so on. And by gradually withdrawing the conditions that strengthen the conditioned response, an established conditioned response can be extinguished. With right reinforcements they could be recovered also. Neurosis may be experimentally induced when contradictory stimulus situations are introduced and the animal, unable to give appropriate response, breaks down.

As human functioning is too complex to be explained on the basis of a simple Stimulus-Response model, many Complex conditioning models have been developed.

Skinner's model, the most widely used, involves conditioning voluntary activities while Pavlovian model involves involuntary activities such as salivation. A simplified explanation of Skinner's model is that a rewarded response tends to occur again and so also a promise of withdrawal of punishment, that is, positively reinforced outcomes are retained and even strengthened.

Even human emotions and feelings get conditioned. A telephone ring could set off a series of fear and anxiety responses. And it is not necessary that one should directly experience the feared object in order to get conditioned. For instance, one can show fear of snakes without directly encountering them. Even with little or no personal contact at the mere sight or a cue one can display strong emotional arousal.

Conditioning could occur from within the person also. Internal organs can be paired with electric shock to elicit a withdrawal response. After several repetitions or even just one intense experience, internal activation of the organ can arouse withdrawal behaviour to avoid the shock. Fear of social boycott can trigger off many feelings of physical discomfort in a girl when she is compelled to withdraw from achieving a desired goal.

Even emotional responses of another person as conveyed through vocal, facial or postural manifestations arouse emotional reactions in observers. Thus many social cues may eventually acquire emotion provoking properties. Watching a Woman who took initiative in life meeting with disastrous consequences, a girl may become anxious about her own initiatives in life.

SOCIAL CONDITIONING

Humans continually reinforce themselves through self-evaluation. Society enforces several standards and norms on the child which are gradually internalised as one's own. These are internalised norms of behaviour for self. Rewards and punishments are self awarded for reaching or not reaching the self standard. But in actuality these self prescribed demands are set by external social agents-like the father or the mother for the daughter on such issues as being an ideal wife.

The human tendency to imitate consciously or unconsciously is also used by socialization agents to control gender behaviour. Exemplary models are adopted by people for self reinforcement. These may be any significant other in one's life, for a girl child it may be the dominant mother. Self performance is evaluated against the model and such evaluations, gradually serve as their own reinforcing agents.

There are external reinforcing agents other than the family members, who may be classified as traditional and modern. Peers,

teachers, colleagues form the first group while Films, T.V., Video and advertisements constitute the modern social agents.

Many studies have shown how peer groups are effective social agents in enforcing society's sex role standards (Lamb, 1980). That members of one sex playing the role of the opposite sex is disapproved by peers was effectively demonstrated by Carter and M.C. Closky (1983). The differential treatment meted out to girls and boys in India is too conspicuous to be dealt with here.

Social pressure to conform to sex appropriate behaviour is exerted by teachers directly through teaching and indirectly by providing themselves as models for imitation.

Among the modern agents of socialization, many studies have shown how girls are shown to find happiness through self denial (Walkerdine, 1984), how girls who take initiative end in disasters (MC Robbie); that it is the business of girls to look attractive to the boys (Dulkin & Akther, 1983) and so on. Films and TV rank the most in India in reinforcing traditional sex roles.

Even a cursory glance under the classifieds of any Indian News Paper would show that women wanted for jobs or for marriage are desired to be 'young, attractive, charming, lovable' etc., and that the kind of jobs open to them are teaching, typing, selling, nursing and so on.

The attitudes and beliefs about sex differences established in childhood and reinforced during growth and development at various stages of life soon become generalised to all members of the same sex and of the opposite sex.

Thus, at the human level, in every day life gender based behaviour become conditioned and manipulated under control of multiple schedules of reinforcement operating concurrently or alternately. Social conditioning thus becomes the essential substratum of the sex-role socialisation process.

SOCIAL CONDITIONING AND GENDER BEHAVIOUR : THE EFFECTS

What is the effect of the gender related social conditioning on the behaviour of girls and boys in India? The most conspicuous effect among girls is a feeling of inferiority as compared to boys. Freud would explain it on the basis of his 'Castration Complex', but there is ample evidence to suggest that it is socially inflicted. It is an universally accepted principle that comparing children is injurious to their psychological growth and development. In our society girls are always compared unfavourably with boys. Even in the work place women employees are denied equal wages, or even if equal wages are given, are frowned upon on the ground that the quantum or quality of work turned out by them is not comparable to those of their male colleagues.

Negative feelings, once established, tend to make one feel inferior, which as a self reinforcing agent, makes one behave as a inferior person. They could force a woman to become humble and highly suggestive, under which condition her behaviour can be easily manipulated. Inspection of brides or Vadhu pariksha is an example. Such repeated exposures and rejections may force a girl to believe that she is inferior and in desperation she would feel relieved when she is accepted no matter by whom.

An attitude of resignation is another consequence that explains role acceptance. After being exposed to a series of physical and emotional trauma, the girl would desperately look for some immediate relief-like the Bekhrov's goat withdrawing feet to seek relief from electric shock. Anything that would bring peace and reasonable happiness to herself and to those whom she loves, even a vague promise of it, she would accept. Many ask why would a woman accept such hazardous jobs as policing knowingly and then plead concessions. For a common man it is hard to understand how a person gets trapped in unwanted roles.

Nature has also provided basic fodder for the society to turn out beliefs on sex inferiority. Pregnancy, confinement, breast feeding, periodic physical and psychological discomforts due to menstruation, scope for rape may serve to reinforce a sense of inferiority. Nature's processes are not viewed as different and complementary, but as 'inborn weaknesses'. In modern times the Indian woman, burdened with multiple roles, naturally feels these processes as very inconvenient. These experiences serve to reinforce a wish among women that psychoanalysts would be glad to call, 'a desire to be male'.

At times of stress many of us feel we should not have been born. So an oppressed woman could wish she was not born a female or the opposite, that she was a male. Interestingly, boys do not express a desire to be born a girl for obvious reasons. In many studies of drawings and verbalizations of girls it is found that they prefer male roles and masculine activities (Hurlock, 1974).

There are many behavioural implications for a man too. He has ample scope to feel that he is superior to women in many respects, which attitude only serves to perpetuate discrimination based on sex. It would be worthwhile to concentrate here on the negative aspects of this complex of superiority among men about themselves.

The motivation of men to achieve may suffer on account of the assumption of a 'natural superiority' over women. The underachievers may blame women in their environment for coming in their way. Boys may become cocky, arrogant and demanding towards women - especially at times like marriage. When the woman in his life becomes increasingly assertive he may react with abnormal anxiety which he may fight by derogating or sexualising women (Kim M 1978).

Some men, on realization of their behavioural inconsistencies towards women, which they find hard to explain, resort to defense mechanisms like Rationalisation. They may complain about the hard role they have to play in life being men, how they must suffer in the office under a tyrannical boss, swallow all insults to keep their family alive and so on. They may attribute to women such characteristics that would justify their own gender prejudices - like 'Policing is a man's job', 'Women are not safe drivers'.

RESTRUCTURING GENDER BEHAVIOUR

It is possible to overcome the unfavourable conditions of reinforcement that promote gender inequalities. The process of behaviour change is essentially substituting new controlling conditions. Situations may be restructured for intervention so as to build up new attitudes and values, eliminate the old and reinstate the extinguished and reinforce the desirable existing ones by planned reinforcement contingents.

Imprinting, conditioning, imitation and cognitive learning takes place at critical periods of life. Deliberate interventions for Gender training should be set off at these critical stages. While childhood is the most critical of these stages for both boys and girls, the onset of puberty, marriage, pregnancy, motherhood and widowhood are crucial stages for women.

Parents, particularly mothers are the first reinforcing agents for a child. They also serve as models. Studies show that disrupted families, educated and employed mothers and fathers with children have more opportunities to play non-traditional roles and therefore, are more likely to change their attitudes faster than others (Kiecolt, 1988). Besides, it is also necessary to support families that show inclination to change. Reward them to demonstrate the benefits of new practices.

Maternal employment and mother's education help in role transition. Shared parenting and its advantages may be emphasized. School environment and teachers play the role of traditional socialization agents. In school curricula gender bias should be withdrawn and gender equality should be projected. It is important to stress here that more than information given to a child on matters of sex and gender, the attitude of the informant towards such matters is more important. Even play activities and reading materials should be specially designed to supplement class-room efforts. Teachers may be given orientation courses to make them gender cognizant for effective teacher student interaction and for providing appropriate modeling to the children. Parents must find their daughter's education as something worthwhile that would make the life of the girls better than their mothers or grandmothers.

Community intervention programmes are necessary to support and sustain attitude change. It would be advisable to start with small circumscribed groups, who have positive attitudes to change or those who show an attitude of least resistance. Enlightened religious leaders, social workers and voluntary groups can help in formation of such target groups.

Status and Power are important instruments of social change. The women in important positions in government, politics and business, leaders of Women's organizations, women from high socio-economic status, who are enlightened and committed to promote gender equality, should serve as instruments of change and also as models for emulation.

Representations for women in strategic positions of decision making should be insisted upon. All efforts should be made to develop competencies among women intellectually and vocationally, to provide for wide occupational choice, financial means for autonomy and higher status for greater control and freedom.

The modern socialising agents like T.V., Films and newspapers play a very powerful role in communicating messages. Using this media, it is possible to project carefully planned programmes to bring about attitude change. Disseminating new information, creating cognitive dissonance, appealing to reason and emotions, giving persuasive messages are effective communication methods for attitude change. People may be enlightened on women's contribution to economy, economic value of house work, importance of child bearing capacity that makes all capitalistic production possible and such other issues that help gender sensitization.

Counselling centres may be planned for people having trouble in adopting non traditional sex roles like shared parenting for women who have developed inferiority complex as against men and for women having emotional problems, such as fear of success. Sex role games are reported to be potentially valuable for people who need such counselling. (Greenblat 1978, Bear 1979).

Any programme of change is naturally bound to meet resistance. Even people without vested interests may become disinclined to try new ways. This applies to educated women also. The new ways call for time, energy and additional resources which could be utilized otherwise. If tried, the outcome is uncertain whereas existing behaviour offers reasonable security. And a part of socialization technique is the fear of consequences resulting from the departure from approved practices. So the programme should anticipate, both from vested and non-vested interests, troubles of many kinds and prepare people for initial social and economic discomforts. A venturesome adopter of the programme should be rewarded. Efforts should be made to secure legal sanctions and defiance should attract costly consequences. Social support to the beneficiaries to withstand repercussions from enforced changes should be extended.

As for the official programmes of the government for improving the status of women, there is a view that they have turned out to be programmes for contributing to the continuation of traditionally accepted socio-economic roles of women, for perpetuation of dependency as well as the iniquitous nature of family structure, for using women as instruments of employment generation and economic development and for accepting family as a unit of development ignoring the existing inequality of women within the family (Vindhya and Kalpana 1989). The necessity of dealing with social mechanisms by which women's subordination is perpetuated needs to be impressed upon the powers that be.

Any programme for change should aim at

1. Weakening the existing attitudes gradually,
2. Projecting the desired attitudes in a phased programme of increasing intensity,
3. Strengthening the existing positive attitudes and helping their sustenance with supportive programmes,
4. Conferring some immediate inspectional benefits on those who try to change,
5. Stressing co-operation between sexes rather than competition or confrontation in working towards shared goals.

It may be apt to quote here a message attributed to Swamy Vivekananda. 'There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the conditions of women improve. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing' (Ravindran Nair, 1991).

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER AND SOCIAL CONDITIONING

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER AND SOCIAL CONDITIONING

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The study of men and women as such has moved through three distinct stages in just the past twenty years, from an emphasis on sex differences through preoccupation with sex roles to the centrality of gender. The sex difference that maleness and femaleness are biologically given properties of individuals with clear implications for social behaviour of one sort or another. Within this perspective, the egalitarian view is that such sex differences are relative to intrasex variation, that they are rarely relevant for important behaviours, and that the differences are as likely to be instances of female superiority as male. Historically, a non-egalitarian view of sex differences has been more prevalent; these differences are used to explain male dominance by assuming that they are large, socially significant, and consistently favour men. In both cases, the source of sex difference is either sought among specific biological features or assumed to be known, and is not considered to need social scientific explanation to account for the degree and ubiquity of male domination observed in society.

Politically and conceptually, the move to a sex role socialization model was a great improvement. From this perspective, the biological determinants of maleness and femaleness could be combined with social determinants via upbringing in any proportion of nature and nurture that seemed appropriate. Sex differences were no longer intrinsically important issues, since both large and small differences could be explained by socialization. Specific socialization practices, especially those of early childhood was held to account for sex differences in personality or behaviour in adulthood.

Given the assumption that socialization practices are more susceptible to change than are biological features, the sex roles debate often questioned the desirability or feasibility of altering relationships between men and women with questions about whether a particular difference could be attributed to nature or nurture. In the case of transsexuals, some biological features are more readily altered than social ones. Social arrangements also accommodate or compensate for biological differences (e.g., spectacles for astigmatism) as well as reflect and reinforce biological differences that have been endowed with social significance (e.g., shunning short men or tall women).

This led to the presumption of continuity of sex roles throughout the life course. Advocates of nurture accepted the premise that early learning was one of the most influential determinants of later behaviour and assumed consistency between the behaviours and expectations typical of children (e.g., playing with dolls or trucks) and those of adults (e.g., male or female sex - typed careers). This perspective not only trivializes the consequences of adult learning and change

throughout life, but also rests on the idea of an abstract female role that exists apart from any interpersonal relationship and without concrete behavioural content. The focus is on personality traits that are presumed to be constant across situation and over the life cycle and that can supposedly be used to predict a wide range of behaviours. This ignores the individualised, essentialist view inherent in the sex roles.

The awareness of cross-cultural differences in what constituted maleness and femaleness was an important step in moving from a biologically determined view of sex differences to a socialization determined view of sex roles, but the increasing evidence of inconsistency of any one individual's behaviour across time and in different situations casts doubts on these views. Moreover, the only trait that links behaviours as diverse as sewing, nursing, and scrubbing floors is the sex-typing done by the perceiver. The fact that each characteristic could in theory be separately socialized into little girls does not begin to explain why they are packaged together conceptually. The label 'female' is itself an abstract categorization that links an incredible diversity of unrelated and frequently inconsistent behavioural expectations and outcomes. To describe anything that receives the label 'female' as part of a supposed sex role is to grant it a coherence, consistency, and constancy that the evidence does not justify.

As a result, recent years have seen the emergence of an entirely new perspective on maleness and femaleness. The key concept in this view is gender, seen as a principle organising social arrangements, behaviour, and even cognition. One of the central elements in gender systems is the taboo against the sameness of male and female "a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby creates gender" (Rubin - 1975). Because the gender system insists on and rewards difference, men and women are created who have an interest in presenting themselves and being perceived as 'real' men and 'real' women - that is, without elements socially defined as belonging in the other category. As Rubin put it, 'from the standpoint of nature, men and women are closer to each other than either is to anything else...the idea that men and women are two mutually exclusive categories must arise out of something other than a non-existent 'natural' opposition. Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities for social purposes and by social means.

Gender is not a trait but a system for dividing people into distinct, non-overlapping categories despite their natural variability on any particular characteristic and regardless of the inconsistency between features that are all supposed to be definitive. Doing gender specific work is part of what defines 'real' men and women as such; so too are gender specific sexual relations.

Because the gender system is not a reflection of natural differences, creating gender is a struggle. Unlike the socialization account of sex roles, the psychic process central to the gender model include ambivalence, conflict and rebellion.

We all bear 'the traces of conscription' (Rubin - 1975) into a system that represses parts of our potential and no one ever fully conforms to it. On the other hand, even those individuals who deliberately refuse to take their allotted place in the system cannot escape knowing what it is. Moreover, like other power relations gender is constantly being renegotiated and reconstituted and it is particularly visible at boundaries and points of change. Because gender is relational rather than essential, structural rather than individual, analysing gender requires consideration of changes in systems over time. The basic assumption is that gender is a property of systems rather than people, this paper concentrates on the developmental conditioning of people in a gendered social structure.

Gender roles have been studied both in relation to their specific content and to the processes underlying their acquisition. The first, represented by psychoanalytical theory, is to view male development as the core model and to refer female development to this core model. The second, represented by social learning theory and cognitive - developmental theory, is to concentrate on the processes common to each gender whereby role differentiation is acquired, and to give little emphasis to differences in content. Social learning theory emphasizes the learning processes whereby sex - typed activities are acquired, processes such as positive reinforcement of gender typed behaviour, negative reinforcement of cross gender typed behaviour, imitations of some gender models and vicarious learning that are equally applicable to both boys and girls. Whereas, in cognitive - development theory emphasis is on the mental activities through which the child incorporates external influences into a set of attitudes and beliefs about gender roles, and involves different levels in the understanding of gender role concepts. Yet, another perspective is to view female and male roles as separate as their development fundamentally differs. This paper concentrates on four related dimensions which describe aspects of gender role acquisition according to Archer (1984). Three of these are concerned with role requirements at specific points in development, whereas, the fourth is concerned with the nature of changes with age.

The first dimension is the degree of rigidity or flexibility, and concerns the extent to which any cross - gender - typed behaviour are permitted. There is evidence of greater rigidity in the gender role activities of boys than girls. First, in the activities in which children engage, secondly in children's perceptions of gender - appropriate activities; and thirdly, adult's reactions to gender - appropriate and cross - gender behaviour.

Studies of parental and peer group responses were consistent with the view that boys are specifically discouraged from cross - gender activities. Whereas, there is evidence that the masculine activities of young girls are partially legitimized under the label of 'tomboy'. On the other hand, behavioural femininity by boys is less commonly admitted and is viewed altogether differently - as a behavioural problem.

Overall, the evidence confirms the view of more rigid activities, role perception and role requirements for boys than girls. Boys learn avoidance of feminine activities at an early age, associating these with the derogatory label 'sissy'. The earliest form of gender role learning for boys is viewed as avoidance learning enforced strictly at a time when the boy cannot understand the reasons for the prohibitions. Such punishment - motivated learning is known to be long lasting and to be associated with anxiety.

There are conflicting findings in the literature on the issue of whether boys or girls show a wider conception of activities appropriate to their own role according to which aspects of gender role concepts are investigated. The degree of complexity or simplicity in the gender role concept is reflected in the availability of role models. For girls, the mother is usually present as a role model, and toys such as dolls provide consistent preparation for the adult female role. For boys, there is no such consistent male role model since the father is usually absent for much of the time. Hartley (1959) suggested that boys tend to build up relatively simplified and incomplete picture of their role since the models available to them (peer groups and older youths, and idealised media portrayals) are incomplete and contain only a few components of the typical adult male role. There is, particularly an over emphasis on physical strength and athletic skills. However, other studies suggest that boys have fairly detailed knowledge about the adult male role from an early age. Thus, there may be different types of idea about the male role, according to whether the child is being asked about boys, or men, or whether he is being asked about fictional or real men.

The dimension of consistency or inconsistency refers to the extent to which there are conflicting requirements for the male or female role. Such conflicts may be developmental ones, in that what is regarded as appropriate at one stage becomes inappropriate at another. Alternatively, they may operate at the same time during development, producing conflicting messages about role requirements. For example, boys viewed their own gender as behaving both positively (e.g.gently) and negatively (e.g.roughly) possibly reflecting the contradictions of their role requirements. Emphasis also changes from physical attributes such as toughness during boyhood to occupational status in later life. This form of inconsistency can be seen essentially as a temporal one, relating to the incompatibility of present and future role requirements. For male 'roughness' and

aggression in particular there are two messages - formal disapproval and informal approval. The former is seen in findings that mothers give more reprimands for boy's than girl's aggression. The latter is illustrated by the following quotation from a mother about her four - year - old son: I like the way he's rough. He is a proper lad.'

In girls, the inconsistency of role requirements is more minor - both aggression and adolescent sexuality are more unequivocally disapproved. In fact, any inconsistency of role requirements reflects the degree of inconsistency between the various role models. This may arise either because of a discrepancy between role requirements for different ages, or between ideal requirements (what the child is told to do) and what he or she observes that adults do, or alternatively, because of the conflicting opinions of different adults.

Furthermore, gender role development during childhood is essentially a discontinuous process in that there are qualitative difference in the understanding of gender role concept at successive stages. Such discontinuities are regarded as arising at approximately the same ages in both boys and girls.

Discontinuity in gender role development (Knox and Kupferer 1971) applies particularly to men. They suggested, that male socialization is heavily laden with the notions of achievement, power, independence and avoidance of feminine activities. However, when a man becomes a husband and father, he is required to carry out many activities that he has previously regarded as feminine, and many of the features of his earlier masculinity will now appear inappropriate.

David and Brannon (1976) suggested that there are three phases in the development of the male role, the first is the avoidance of femininity, during which the boy will learn a series of negative rules; the second stage, which is superimposed on the first, occurs before and at the time of adolescence and consists of a series of positive guides, mostly based on physical characteristics such as toughness, aggression and sporting success. The third phase, which again operates in addition to what was learnt before, consists of a notion of masculinity based on achievement in any one of a number of possible activities. The addition of each new type of dominant role requirement involves changes in external pressures, emphasizing rather different features as the main aspect of masculinity. Different individuals are likely to adapt to these changes in different ways, and rank - order changes occur at different ages: thus a boy may acquire high status during his school years for masculine activities involving toughness and sports success but subsequently his achievements may be poor in the world of work with its emphasis on intellectual and interpersonal competence. Likewise, a boy who is relatively ill - equipped physically for the masculine role at school may achieve a high occupational status in later life.

Katz (1979) concluded that discontinuities in female development between childhood and adolescence is greater for females than for males. Katz maintains, that during adolescence, the girl begins to follow a new more rigid set of rules instead of the more flexible requirements of childhood. Tolerance of tomboyish behaviour decreases drastically and sporting achievement and academic excellence are less valued. Interest especially in our culture becomes concentrated on attractiveness and preparation for marriage, and restriction of sexual access to girls as virginity is highly valued.

Although the empirical evidence is at present scarce, the general impression so far is that the female role progresses at a relatively wide channel during childhood and narrows at adolescence and in adulthood shifts to the traditional feminine role, with minimal divergence to cross - gender behaviour. Whereas, the male role begins relatively narrowly, but opens out later from the masculine stereotype to cross - gender behaviour.

This paper illustrates some of the possibilities that arise, when focusing on explaining gender attributions in the development of women and men.

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A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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It is now well accepted that societies all over the world, some more than the others, selectively discriminate against women. This bias operates from birth to death and allows the man greater say in decision making and greater freedom in making choices in life. This is bound to stress and distress women, resulting in difficulties in coping and sometimes causing serious mental disorders. Taking up the argument from the other end, rates of mental disorder in a community, and their relative distribution in men and women would be a sensitive indicator of the gender discrimination. By examining the mental disorders in different societies and in a society as it goes through the process of social change, one could indirectly examine the extent and nature of this discrimination.

The present paper is an attempt to explore the phenomenon of mental disorder in men and women with this specific question in mind. The comparisons are made both in the international and the Indian context. We then go on to examine the possible causes for the differences in the rates and patterns of mental disorders looking for social stresses which are peculiar to women's existence. Finally, we look at the understanding we have of the personality development of men and women that could make women more vulnerable.

Before we look at the rates of mental illness in men and women, it needs to be pointed out that there are various methodological problems in arriving at such rates starting from 'what is a case' (or who should be considered a mentally ill person), as well as difficulties arising in the classificatory system of mental illness used by different researchers. However, since these methodological drawbacks would affect the entire population being studied (i.e. men and women) equally, one can proceed to examine the sex differences reported in the epidemiological studies.

I. PREVALENCE OF MENTAL DISORDER

To begin with, we need to look at the status of women's mental health prevailing in our country over the last few decades. Since we lack appropriate indices of evaluating mental health the best index that could be used is the prevalence of mental illness in women.

It has been firmly established that the occurrence of mental illness is more in women than in men all over the world. Studies in varying cultures have shown that women suffer more i.e. as a function of their being women are more vulnerable to mental illness.

High psychiatric morbidity among women is reported by epidemiological work done by Hagnell (1966) and Leighton (1963).

This high prevalence of mental illness in women is reported in various Indian studies too (Verghese, Being, Senseman, Rao and Benjamin, 1973; Carstairs and Kapur, 1976; Nandi, Das, Chandhuri Banerjee, Datta, Ghosh and Boral, 1980; Shah, Goswami, Mawar, Hajariwali and Sinha, 1980). Females have a significantly higher rate of morbidity with male : female ratio being 2:3 (Nandi, Mukherjee, Boral, Ghosh, Almany, Sarkar and Biswas 1977). Total psychiatric morbidity for the two sexes as found in various epidemiological work done by Nandi et al (1979) (1980 b) is as follows:

Sample	Male R\thousand	Female R\thousand
Hindu + Muslim	90.56	114.60
Caste Hindu	76.7	145.4
Scheduled Caste	49.6	72.7
Muslims	70.5	109.5
Tribes	20.9	29.2

Higher psychiatric morbidity in women is found to be consistent irrespective of the rural or urban background (Verghese et al 1973; Nandi, Banerjee, Boral, Ganguli, Ajmany, Ghosh and Sarkar, 1979; Nandi et al 1980 a & b).

Women of various communities and belonging to various castes suffer from psychiatric illnesses to a greater extent than men do. (Carstairs and Kapur, 1976; Nandi et al 1977; Nandi et al 1980 b). Thus irrespective of the class, caste, community and rural \ urban upbringing, women have greater psychiatric problems than men do.

When examining the kinds of psychiatric disorders in men and women, most international literature reports no consistent differences by sex for psychotic symptoms and especially schizophrenia. However, rates of affective and anxiety disorders are significantly higher for women.

When the patterns of psychiatric illnesses and symptoms in the community in India are examined, one finds the following kinds of distribution reported by Carstairs & Kapur, (1976):

CLASSIFICATION OF SYMPTOMS

	Male %	Female %
Epilepsy	1	1
Psychosis	2	1
Depression	4	3
Anxieties & Worries	1	1
Other neurotic symptoms	14	20
Possession state and Hysteria	2	3
Somatic symptoms	7	11
No symptoms	68	60

Sen et al (1984) gives the following pattern of psychiatric morbidity for males and females (in rate\thousand)

	Male % R\1000	Female % R\1000
Schizophrenia	4.51	6.60
Depression	6.30	29.20
MDP	-	1.88
Anxiety	1.81	1.88
Hysteria	1.80	7.54
OCM	-	0.94
Phobia	-	2.82
Neurotic Depression	1.80	4.70

Depression is the most prevalent mental illness in women all over the world. This has also been reported for Indian Women (Nandi et al 1980) Kapur and Singh (1983) found male : female ratio for various kinds of depressive disorders to range from 1:2 to 1:3 with the following % for MDP and depressive neurosis:

	Male %	Female %
Manic Depressive Psychosis	30.2%	69.8%
Depressive neurosis	25.8%	74.2%

However, despite the fact that women suffer from greater number of psychological problems than men do, when one examines the hospital based data, it becomes evident that women seek consultation less often than men do. This is contrary to the trend reported from Western literature where women not only suffer from psychiatric illnesses more than men do but also seek consultations more than men do. An Indian study done almost 3 decades ago, shows that among the cases referred to the psychiatric outpatient clinic in a general hospital, 60.5% were males and 39.5% were females (Sathyavathi & Sundararaj, 1964). Another study comparing socio-demographic and clinical profile of patients attending a general hospital psychiatric clinic for 1967 and 1977 also indicates that one consistent feature in the profile over the decade has been that males outnumber females (Kala, Kala & Bathia, 1981). At the emergency outpatient services, males again outnumber females with a ratio of 1.62:1 at the department of casualty and by 2.21:1 at the department of psychiatry (Trivedi and Gupta, 1982). 60% of the patient admitted in a psychiatric ward in general hospitals are males (Chaturvedi, Varma, Malhotra and Pradeep Kumar, 1983).

In a state mental hospital, male long stay occupants were twice the number of female patients (Somasundaram, Jayachandran & Kumar, 1982). In an evaluation of the mental health delivery system, it has been reported that the number of beds occupied at any given time by males outnumbers females in all service centres (Channabasavanna, Subramanya, Gangadhar, John & Reddy, 1981):

BED STRENGTH

	NIMHANS	Private Psychiatric Centres	Government Mental Hospital (Service only)	Government Mental Hospital (Service, research & training.
Male	59%	60%	73%	66%
Female	41%	40%	27%	34%

When examining the occurrence of psychiatric morbidity in the community, two other socio-demographic variables need to be considered - age and marital status.

All studies show that psychiatric illnesses increase with age, irrespective of gender, probably as a function of increased complexities in life with work, family and society at large. However, while in childhood the rates for men and women are the same, the women continued to show higher rates in all age groups after puberty. (Verghese et al 1973, Sen, Nandi, Mukherjee, Mishra, Banerjee & Sarkar, 1984 : and Mehta, Joseph & Verghese 1985). Castair's & Kapur (1976) found the following age differences in 'case' rates in males and females that support the above trends.

Age Range						
	15 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	60+
Male	12%	20%	36%	43%	40%	45%
Female	20%	31%	42%	55%	56%	56%

Western literature also reports the same trend. Gove & Herb (1974) found that young boys have higher rates of mental disorder during childhood. At adolescence, girls show higher rates as they become subject to increased social pressure to adopt to traditional feminine roles in deference to males, motherhood and dependency on males.

At this point, one interesting research finding by Carstairs & Kapur (1976) needs to be highlighted. The matrilineal societies offer an entirely different role set to the women and a

comparison of the matrilineal system and the changed over system (i.e. adopting the patrilineal system) gives a deeper understanding of problems of women. Women hold much more power in the matrilineal system of family structure. When the symptom rate was examined for families following the traditional matrilineal system and those that changed over to a patrilineal system resulting in loss of power held by women, women showed a considerably higher rate of distress in the changed pattern.

PATTERN OF RESIDENCE

	Traditional (matrilineal)	Changed over (patrilineal)
Male	32%	38%
Female	36%	55%

This indicates that the amount of power held by the women within the family structure is related to the state of their mental health.

The second important variable is the marital status of women. This is a difficult variable to examine since there are various social processes that lead to a marriage being arranged. There is no consistent international report on the rate of mental illness in married and single women and same is true for the Indian context. We wish to only highlight the need to examine these variables when studying women's mental health in India, since for a woman, marriage would be a very significant life event as there are too many social pressures on women to get married. Further, the very nature of marital relationship that demands complete readjustment of the women to the husband's life, would be very stressful and again reflects the discrimination against women inherent in the stage of life itself.

However, in understanding the status of mental health in women, the impact of marital status and quality of marriage as well as the occupational role that women adopt needs to be examined.

Unfortunately, these are more complex factors as one cannot establish a one to one relationship in the marital status, occupational role and mental illness. How and why a person gets married and what makes a woman decide to remain a housewife or choose a career are complicated processes.

At the moment, sufficient data is not there to say that amongst the married, selecting a career is associated with higher

rate of mental illness. However, these issues are worth investigating. Even, independent of the occurrence of mental illness, one is justified in identifying these two as stresses that have a very significant impact on a woman's well-being.

To summarise,

- * International reports show that women have higher rates of mental illness than men.
- * Indian studies consistently show higher rates of mental illness in women.
- * This holds true irrespective of rural or urban background, castes, religious community and socio - economic status of women.
- * Women have higher rates of affective and anxiety disorders internationally and in India.
- * Depression is the most prevalent mental illness in women all over the world. This takes the form of somatic symptoms in developing countries.
- * Men outnumber women when compared on psychiatric consultations at hospital settings as well as admissions to psychiatric wards.
- * While mental disorder rates for men and women are similar in childhood, the rates are differentially higher for women after puberty.
- * Women in societies where they have more power show lower mental illness rates compared to other societies.
- * The role of marriage and having a career in producing stress and mental disorder needs to be fully investigated.

II FACTORS RELATED TO HIGHER RATES OF MENTAL DISORDER IN WOMEN

Now, we are left with the most important question. Why do women have higher rate of mental illness? Since higher psychiatric morbidity has been reported for women all over the world, one group of theorists propose that it is the biological differences in males and females that give rise to sex differences in mental illness.

However, it is well known that women are hardier than men in relation to major physical disorders. The rate of heart disease and cancers is higher in men. Also, women outlive men. If biological vulnerability was the cause for higher mental disorder in women, it would have shown up in relation to major physical disorder and life span also.

Further, to accept biological vulnerability would be too easy and convenient way of explaining away the question. We acknowledge the biological differences between the sexes yet how can one accept the idea of a universal 'weakness' in women that is based on a biased concept of health? How can one justify our definition of health or fitness that automatically excludes half the world's population.

GENDER BIAS IN DEFINITION OF MENTAL DISORDER

When we face the question of who is a psychologically healthy person, naturally the professionals who make judgement of health and ill-health (mental health professionals, psychologists and psychiatrists/clinician) come into the picture. Broverman, Clarksen, Rosen, Krantz and Vogel (1970) concede that the abstract notion of health tends to be more influenced by greater social value of masculine stereotypic characteristics than the less valued feminine stereotypic characteristics. In a classic study, they asked clinician for descriptions of a psychologically healthy woman, psychologically healthy man and psychologically healthy person. They found evidence that sex role stereotypes affect the clinicians' judgement too (psychologically healthy women are: talkative, tactful, gentle, aware of other's feelings, religious, quiet, have high need for security and express tender feelings. Psychologically healthy men are aggressive, independent, not emotional, objective, dominant, competitive, logical, worldly, adventurous, self-confident, independent and do not get easily hurt).

Further, the description of a psychologically healthy person is closer to that of a psychologically healthy man. So, in order to be considered healthy, a woman must accept behavioural norms for her sex, even though these are generally less desirable and considered less healthy in a competent, mature adult.

As the authors of the above study also pointed out, may be these biases arise out of the clinician's notion of health as good adjustment to one's environment. The environment already has different norms in society for male and female behaviour, so the adjustment for the two differs.

There are alternative definitions of mental health and maturity in the notions of self-actualization and fulfillment of one's potential, as put forth by Alport (1955) Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1951). However, such drives in women would be in conflict with the need for adjustment of the social environment.

GENDER BIAS IN THEORIES OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

In order to understand development of a personality, various psychologists have offered theories which are also being used to understand the dynamics of psychopathology of mental illness. Some of these theories explain why certain symptoms of distress appear in certain people, what makes a person select certain

forms of coping skills. However, these explanations would be easier to accept if the psychological theories are not biased against women. Many thinkers have lately become alert to the biases in these theories and warn about the difficulty in using them with women.

Let us see what understanding of women is offered by the various psychological theories of development. The psychological theories of development at our disposal have been found to be sadly wanting where understanding women is concerned. Freud's theory of psychosexual development is structured around the experiences of a male child that culminate in the oedipus complex. He considered women to be deprived by nature for a clear cut oedipal resolution because of the strength and persistence of women's oedipal attachments to their mothers. Thus, a woman's superego is not as impersonal and independent of its emotional origins as is required in men. Freud concludes that women have less sense of justice than men and are more often influenced by feelings of affection and hostility.

Piaget's work on children and moral development also uses a male bias. He finds that girls have more pragmatic attitudes towards rules, are more tolerant of rules, are more willing to make exceptions and are more easily reconciled to innovations. Thus, he concludes that legal sense, which is essential for male development, is less developed in girls. Piaget's work equates male development with child development (Gilligan, 1982). Both Piaget and Kohlberg emphasize the importance of respect for rules in moral development. This is learnt in opportunities for role-taking in the course of resolving disputes. Yet, such opportunities arise less often for girls since the kind of activities they learn involve indirect competition (e.g. games of ropes) whereas boys learn independence and organisational skills for coordinating activities of large and diverse groups. They deal with competition from the early childhood phase.

Chodorow (1974) proposes that the interpersonal dynamics of gender identity formation are different for boys and girls, since the primary caretaker for infancy and early childhood is a female. Female identity formation takes place in the context of ongoing relationship since the mother tends to see the daughter as more alike and continuous with herself. Thus the experience of attachment and identity formation fuses for girls but mother experiences boys as male opposites. Boys thus separate themselves from mothers curtailing their sense of empathic tie. So male development leads to individuation and defensive firming of ego boundaries. Chodorow agrees that this does not mean that women have weaker ego boundaries but women have empathy in their primary definitions of self. Women experience themselves as less differentiated than men and are more continuous with the external object world. Thus, women experience dependency differently. Separation and individuation are incorporated in the male gender identity but for women issues of femininity do not depend on separation or individuation. Femininity is defined through

attachment. Thus, a woman's failure to separate becomes failure to develop by definition.

Erikson also addresses these issues in detailing identity formation. He talks of the need to learn and master technology (industry Vs inferiority) that leads to autonomous, initiating and industrious self in adolescence. But this holds true for males. The female holds her identity formation in abeyance as she prepares herself for an intimate relationship with a man whose name she will adopt, whose status will define her and who will rescue her from emptiness and loneliness by filling the 'inner space'. For men, identity is formed before intimacy in any relationship is sought but for female intimacy and identity formation go hand in hand.

The point here is that till we are able to resolve what constitutes the development of a healthy personality in women and derive the definition of a healthy person equally from that of a man and woman, we have to be careful in using the existing theories as offered by various authors. It seems that an existential approach to understand and accept women is required. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) has tried to give an understanding of women from various perspectives.

PROBLEMS OF LIVING AS A WOMAN

In order to understand the features of psycho-social development that could explain the gender differences in mental health, one needs to look at the development of a woman since birth. Briefly, the early socialization pattern for a girl child are so as to make her fit into one or the other role that society has prescribed for her. This would hold true for men too except that since birth the female is constantly made aware of her secondary status in society. She has to cope with various problems of development like developing her identity, establishing it for herself and making it acceptable to others. She has to resolve psychosexual conflicts which are of very different nature for men and women. Because of her greater sexual vulnerability, she needs protection against child abuse, and sexual violence throughout her life.

The development of a woman's identity is the most crucial feature. Her concept of self depends on what she achieves in life. Here, as mentioned earlier also, if she pursues her growth and fulfillment that rejects the roles that society offers (mother, wife), she will be alienating herself from society. Acceptance by others is very important for development of a healthy definition of self. Women also require sources that could enhance their self-esteem.

However, increasingly, women face conflicts because of this constant struggle between self and others. Society offers very limited resources to the woman for her development. Women's interaction with the outside world is always restricted by the

family and culture. May be she is protected to her own disadvantage. She is made dependent on others for the smallest of activities. This pattern repeats itself for most women after marriage too.

Marriage itself causes tremendous amount of anxiety, since with her limited knowledge of sexual behaviour, she has to suddenly enter into an intimate relation with an almost unknown person. Despite marriage, woman is not encouraged to become a mature adult. Most of the decision making power lies with the husband or in-laws. However, her status improves tremendously once she attains motherhood. Here too, the mother-son relationship becomes prominent. Ashis Nandy (1980) has even gone on to say that it is the basic nexus and the ultimate paradigm of human social relationship in India. In fact, in a culture where the conjugal male-female relationship is not central but it is the mother-son bond that is prominent, the issue of woman's emancipation becomes much more difficult - as Ashis Nandy views it.

The development of sex-role through the socialization process could contribute significantly to our understanding of women. Although each culture has its own definition of male and female roles there are certain cross-cultural regularities like the concept of masculinity and femininity. Mc Clelland (1975) states 'sex role turns out to be one of the most important determinants of human behaviour: psychologists have found sex differences in their studies from the moment they started doing empirical research'.

Development of sex-role through the process of socialisation involves socializing agents in the form of family, peers, schools, colleges. At each stage of interaction and influence of these, society's norms for male-female behaviour is subtly imparted to the individual. Through various psychological processes involving learning, imitation, identification, interjection, cognitive processing and dissonance, the person is moulded in one or the other sex-roles.

However, sex-role learning is just the beginning that leads to sex-role stereotypy. Gilligan (1982) points out that it is difficult to just say 'different'. The judgement of 'better' or 'worse' has to be made and is based on men's interpretation of research data.

Psychologists have found differences in the personality of males and females, some of the differences reported from birth itself. Yet, unfortunately, the way society is defined, it is the male's conception of the world that forms the standard and the woman and the feminine is always at a disadvantage. The masculine characteristics of authority and aggression are valued over the feminine characteristics. Men act as leaders. Leadership qualities, aggression, ambition, competitiveness and dominance is more desirable in men and women need to be sensitive

to the needs of others, tender, warm, eager to soothe, affectionate, childlike and gullible (Ghadially and Kazi, 1980). Males respond with more overt aggressive reaction whereas females are more withdrawn. A woman's role as daughter, mother and wife have a certain framework beyond which a woman can not step out.

Parental beliefs and attitudes regarding women's role in society is crucial in shaping the personality of children. Das and Ghadially (1988) have found in their study on families with traditional, incongruent and non-traditional parents, that modern parental outlook and egalitarian sex role attitude is conducive to the development of androgynous adults and conservative attitude results in sex-role stereotypy. Even if one parent had a modern outlook (incongruent parents) it helped decrease sex stereotypy in children. They point out the importance of feminine traits and values for our culture since both boys and girls showed a preference for masculine traits.

Due to various socio-cultural processes like industrialization, urbanization, mobility, change in family structure, increasing acceptance of working women, the status of women is changing in our society. All these have affected the women particularly. There are certain role-changes for women yet the stresses on women have increased because there are no corresponding role changes in the role of a man and other family members that would support women in her changing role.

Rao and Rao (1982) have found in a study of sex role attitudes of college students that for a working woman household responsibilities and duties have not declined. New roles have been added to traditional roles, thus increasing a woman's burden. Husband and relatives do not oppose women seeking employment but unequivocal support including sharing household responsibilities is lacking. They found that students expressed traditional attitudes towards the wife role and father role but females expressed significantly less traditional attitudes towards wife role and mother role. Male and female students felt that a woman's most important task is to take care of her husband and children and that her greatest satisfaction comes from children. For most women family needs remain more important than personal ambition. One of the arguments is that if a woman has to increase her status at home, she does not have to add to the family income and also working women's status is worse than those who do not work. Yet, the less traditional attitudes in females towards sex roles can be explained in terms of perceived changes in status, power and prestige of employed women. Outside employment is seen as a sign of independence and equality between sexes.

Ramu's (1989) work on single career and dual career couples, employed in public sector reports contrary finding to the above study. Women, regardless of employment status were more traditional than men. Further, the dual-career husbands were more traditional than single-career husbands. This indicates a

greater stress on an employed woman, probably having to adjust to a more traditional husband.

Thus, does it mean that with education, influence of western culture etc, the women begin with a liberal outlook in the sex role, however, when married and employed, the stresses that they have to cope with increase, as in marriage the wife is expected to adjust to all aspects of the husband, his family and environment, friends and activities. She would be carrying certain role concept of what a wife should be doing, ingrained in her through her family and culture. However, with the additional role of employment and co-earner of the family, she gets no relief from the traditional role notions of wife that she has to live by.

For a working woman, various conflicts within the family and relationships with the husband and children pose a continuous challenge to her notions of self and identity. She has to clearly define for herself as to why career is important, will it provide her with the role of only a secondary co-earner or will the family be understanding and supportive in her pursuit of career.

Simultaneously, as the woman steps out in the world - a man's world, as it is usually defined, she faces many more stresses. One can make a generalised statement, that in almost all professional hierarchies, the route up the ladder differs for men and women, and in some it definitely stops much earlier than the top of the ladder. Why is that so? Is it that women lack in intellectual ability and skills required for professions? One has seen that the number of women in various educational institutions and professional colleges is increasing. Within the educational system, girls perform much better than boys do. Yet, very few of these continue further to pursue a career. Many opt out probably because of the necessity to adjust to husband and his family after marriage - a life-long stress which the women might find difficult to cope with if, in addition, she has to cope with the outside world. Those who make the decision to pursue a career are forced to contribute to the family's income without any advantages for themselves like lessening of household responsibilities. In their continuous struggle with the two roles, they forget to be achievement oriented. In fact, achievement orientation in women is negatively valued by society despite the increase in job opportunities for women. If a woman is ambitious, she is not appreciated since it would be assumed that she is neglecting her family and children.

In order to be appreciated at work, the women has to constantly give much more to it than men do. Many women would find the struggle useless and so become content in just getting a steady pay packet without investing in a career and achievement. Nyrop et al (1975) find that Indian women do tend to gravitate towards a service profession whereas men pursue higher education and technical training and develop careers on technical and

political leadership. In 1970-71, women science graduates numbered 48,000 of whom 60% were school teachers. 100 of 2090 officers in the elite Indian Administrative Services were women, although many more were employed in lower ranks of Government service.

Psychologist's explanation for lower achievement motivation in women has been that women 'fear success' (Horner 1971). Competitive achievement raises conflict in femininity and success for women, thus probably women tend to avoid occupational commitments which lead to success, in order to preserve their feminine identity. Sassen (1980) offers another explanation that the conflict is because women have a heightened perception of 'others' when in a competitive situation. Their sensitivity to others and need to avoid hurt makes them withdraw from competition, since largely in any occupational role success of one would mean failure of another.

These issues highlight the need to understand women's psyche better. With the tremendous amount of role transition taking place, there would be conflicts surfacing at various choices made in the life of women. What is the nature of these conflicts? What processes help in resolving it and where does that leave the woman who wants an integrated 'self', are questions worth further exploration.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

In our paper we have tried to demonstrate that women all over the world suffer from higher rates of mental disorder compared to men. This stands in contrast to higher rates for men with respect to major physical illnesses, e.g. heart disease. Also, the total life span for women is longer than for men. Thus, despite the relative 'hardiness' of women, their vulnerability to psychological stress is high.

We have tried to examine the causes of high rates of mental disorder in women. It turns out that the very definition of mental health/disorder could be biased in favour of men. We have also looked for other psycho-social factors which are stressful for women all over the world and for Indian women.

All women grow up with the threat of sexual violence since birth. Associated with this are stresses like rape, forced prostitution, wife abuse and incest. In addition, women need to define themselves through relationships more than men. The role of women as wife and mother seem to absorb her life. In Indian society, apart from these issues, additional stress is generated due to unresolved acceptance of a working woman. Society and family has not changed to accommodate this role transition in women. The pattern of marital relationship continues to hold man in the dominating position. Women still need to complete their identity by being wife and mother. They face prejudice at work since men cannot accept women in a competitive position.

It would have been interesting to see if the personality development in women makes them especially vulnerable to life stresses. But, when we examine the various theories of personality development, it turns out that some of the great theorists like Freud and Piaget have looked at it from a male's angle, either ignoring the female or when she is considered, the theories regarding her are derived as a counterpoint to the observations with males.

It is our submissions that the rates of mental disorder are a very sensitive and delicate commentary on the status of women in a society. As the Indian society takes notice of its obligation to women, it would be helpful to monitor its seriousness by examining the mental health of women as they gain status through education and increasing involvement in roles which take them out of the houses and work towards national development shoulder to shoulder with men. It is the experience of many that inspite of the technological advancement and greater involvement of women in work outside homes in the west, a subtle kind of bias continues to persist against women, reflected in higher rates of mental disorders. One hopes that India will set a trend in this respect that would show assimilation of altered role of women in society in a healthy manner.

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TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

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TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

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TRAINING AND LEARNING

The terms Education, Training and Development (of organisations and individuals) are used synonymously. Education is an all-inclusive term which takes into account all learning activities. The term education is now used as the process leading to acquisition of (paper) qualifications. Training originally referred to the communication and transfer of manual skills necessary to perform an economic task as in 'Apprentice Training'. While education is understood as the process leading to some qualification, and is not directed at the acquisition of particular skills, training is associated with equipping a person to perform a given job. Thus while education is general and extensive in nature, training is more specific and is job oriented and centred.

Another term, development, has been used over the last three decades to distinguish it from training. Protagonists of development argue that while training equips a person for a current job \ task, development is aimed at developing people for future responsibilities.

Be that as it may, the term training is used in this paper to cover all the terms connected with the effective transference of knowledge to a 'trainee' or 'student'.

Training is an activity which is planned and carried out by an individual, group or an organisation in order to make the trainee more effective in his or her present or future jobs. On the other hand, we refer to the phenomena of 'learning' in individuals (trainees \ students) during the course of training.

The effectiveness in training depends upon -

- clarity of training objectives, planning and design of the content of programmes, training methodologies and administration of programmes.
- Attitudes and motivation of learners, the training environment and the perception of the trainee about her\his progress.

A popular understanding of the term training is that it effects a change in behaviour in the trainee in a desired direction - i.e. the process of the transference of knowledge and skills to a trainee in a desired direction.

The process of the transference of knowledge and skills to a trainee has been influenced by learning theories. These theories

try to explain the process of learning in a trainee and the effective methodologies to be adopted in a training situation.

A theory of learning is a systematic set of propositions about the nature of learning. These propositions are based on observations and are developed to produce a coherent picture of learning.

LEARNING THEORIES

Learning theories can be classified into two groups, namely,

1. The Stimulus - Response Theories (S - R)
2. Cognitive Theories.

S - R THEORIES

The S - R theories are derived from the work of Pavlov (Russia) in conditioning and Thorndike (USA) who postulated the 'law of effect'. The S.R. theories represent learning in terms of changes in association with Stimuli and Responses.

The simplest of the S.R. theories is that of E.R.Guthrie's 'Contiguity Theory' which states -

'A combination of stimuli which has accompanied a movement will on its recurrence tend to be followed by that movement.'

This is the basic principle of learning by contiguous association between stimuli and responses. Guthrie's theory asserts that once a stimulus has been associated with a response, that stimulus will thereafter elicit the same response. That is, we learn by doing.

Hull's theory makes use of the Pavlov concept of 'conditioning' and Thorndike's 'trial and error' learning. Two key concepts in Hull's theory are the 'strength of habit' and 'drive'. According to Hull, a habit is a permanent connection that develops every time a given stimulus is associated with a particular response. 'Drive' is the need which provides the stimulus. If a need is satisfied to any extent the drive is proportionately reduced.

Thorndike's principle of the 'law of effect' states that the connection between the stimulus and response is strengthened when the association between them is associated by a state of affairs satisfactory to the organism, somewhat similar to the reduction of drive in Hull's theory. Thus Hull's and Thorndike's theories speak of reduction of drives or needs. Both these theories are described as 'reinforcement theories'. On the other hand Guthrie's theories do not refer to needs, drives, reinforcement

or rewards. Please note that 'punishment' is not explicit in any of the above theories. Pavlov had provided 'punishment' as a negative stimulus in his experiments with training animals.

Skinner represents a major school of thought with the S-R psychology. He did not postulate a theory to explain a theory of learning. He built up a system of learning based on 'descriptive behaviourism; which include factors such as stimulus, response and reinforcement. There is no mention here of theoretical notions such as 'law of effect' or 'drive reduction'. A reinforcer in Skinner's theory is not associated with 'drive and reduction' but with 'strengthening' of responses.

Skinner distinguishes between two types of learning :

- i. Respondent and ii. Operant

The **respondent type** is classical conditioning described originally by Pavlov. The key feature of this type of learning is the '**pairing of two stimuli**' which are

- i. the conditioned stimulus and
- ii. the unconditioned stimulus

The conditioned stimulus is so designed or selected as to evoke a response similar to that of the **unconditioned stimulus**. Pavlov had demonstrated that a dog could be conditioned to evoke the response of salivating by pairing the sound of the bell (the conditioned stimulus) many times with food (the unconditioned stimulus). Food naturally evokes salivation and the bell came to do so as a result of conditioning.

The **operant type of learning** requires that a response leads to a reinforcement. The operant is a response that operates on the environment to produce reinforcement. In the operant (or instrumental) learning, the emphasis is on arranging situations (the environment) so that responses to be conditioned are appropriately correlated with reinforcement. An example is the programmed instruction type of training. The design of the situations or environment to lead to reinforcement is unique to Skinner's system. In a sense, this could be termed a 'manipulation' as in brain-washing.

While in the respondent type of learning the stimuli are conditioned, in the operant type of learning the responses are reinforced.

COGNITIVE THEORIES

Cognitive theories emphasise the processes whereby the stimuli are differently perceived. Cognitive theories take the position that learning is a change in perception. Their basic question is 'Has the learner's perception of a situation changed?'

Cognitive theories are closely related to each other and include those derived from the Gestalt psychology. Kurt Lewin and E.C.Tolman are credited with adopting Gestalt psychology (propounded by Wertheimer Kohler and Koffka) in explaining the processes of learning. Lewin's theory makes use of the Gestalt concept of field (like a magnetic field) which stresses dynamism i.e. every part is dependent on every other part. A tea-cup is not the sum of its parts (the handle, the vessel portion and the base) but something greater since it serves a function.

A learning occurs, the field changes and the learner behaves differently because he perceives the stimulus situation in a different way. The change in the field comes about quite suddenly, and when it does, the new behaviour emerges quickly in a 'insighful' manner; Examples of such 'insights' are cognition in the solution of all types of problems, such as learning to ride a bicycle or swimming. A learner cannot be taught these skills by teaching the components of those skills piecemeal.

Tolman tried to combine parts of the Cognitive Theory with S.R.Theory which is known as 'Purposive Behaviourism'. According to Tolman all learning is goal-oriented. Learning therefore becomes goal-directed, provided the motivation is there. Learning takes place when the learner finds out the 'cause and effect' relationship. When he does this, reinforcement takes place and the learner develops a cognitive map in his mind, a phenomenon which takes place in complex situations such as individual and social relationships, influencing and leadership, problems solving in real life situations, etc. Summarising:

- Guthrie emphasises the stimuli which evoke response
- Hull emphasises reinforcement.
- Thorndike stresses 'law of effect' on the organism whether a particular response is satisfactory and reduces needs (drive).
- Skinner emphasises reinforcers that strengthen responses, especially operant conditioning.
- Lewin emphasises changes in learner's perception of stimuli and their inter-relationships.
- Tolman emphasises 'goal oriented' learning and reinforcement as a result of goal achievement.

LEARNING THEORIES AND TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

Training methodologies are the methods used in the transference of knowledge and skills. These methods may be verbal (teachers, discussions of various types etc.) or non-verbal (reading, demonstrations, games, doing etc.) Both these

classes of methods may be complemented with visual aids, demonstration equipment etc. Visual aids may be in the form of charts, programmes, slides, films etc.,

The content to be transferred to the trainee may be classified as follows:-

I. COGNITIVE

- i. **Facts** - names, dates, locations, heights, depths, distances, species, classes, families, simple relationships etc. Each item of fact is a piece of knowledge at the first level of cognition. Species, families, relationships involve a number of items and can be viewed as a second level of cognition.
- ii. **Theories, Laws and Concepts** - These are also cognitive in nature but involve a large number of items at the first level of cognition. Theories and concepts tend to become complex because of the number and interactive nature of the items involved. This can be viewed as the third level of cognition. Many of these areas are prone to different perceptions and interpretations.

AFFECTIVE & INTER-PERSONAL

This class of knowledge and skill is related to behaviour, emotions, feelings, sensitivity, awareness, values etc. which cannot be quantified and which are, by their nature very complex. This class of problems and constructs deal with real-life problems which tend to be complex.

PSYCHOMOTOR SKILLS

This type of learning involves manual and physical skills combined with simple facts, sequences etc. Coordination of manual skills is the crux of learning these skills which could become complex if complex sequences of actions and responses are required.

While there is no one single methodology which can be recommended for a particular type of learning, there is a broad agreement that a combination of some methodologies is more suited for that type of learning than other methodologies. At the same time, certain types of learning cannot take place with a particular methodology. The following are examples -

- i. Lectures, by themselves cannot teach learners to drive, cycle or swim. These types of learning require psychomotor skills supplemented with verbal methods. Training pilots to fly is made easier and more comprehensive by using simulators.

- ii. Any amount of 'doing' cannot transfer concepts and theories to learners. The transfer of such learning has to be by verbal methods supplemented by demonstrations and experiential learning.
- iii. Both lectures and psychomotor methods cannot make learners sensitive to others' feelings, establish good interpersonal relationships etc. This transfer has to be effected through case discussions and laboratory methods. It is sufficient to say that certain methodologies can be 'prescribed' for certain types of learning whereas other methodologies can be ruled out. This is not to say that the trainer cannot make innovations which can make the transfer of knowledge and skills more effective.

Some of the more common methodologies are described in the following paragraphs.

THE LECTURE METHOD

This is the most common verbal technique employed in training. The lecture is an oral presentation of a subject by a qualified person. Though this method is widely used, this should not be interpreted to be simple. In reality it is quite complex to plan, present and evaluate. Most often the weakness in a lecture can be traced either to the lecturer or his preparation. Lectures could also be ineffective because this method is not appropriate to a given type of learning. The lecture method involves four or more stages which are -

- i. Understanding the objectives of the lecture, the coverage desired and time available.
- ii. Planning and preparation which involves collection of materials, arranging training aids, preparing lesson plans and rehearsals.
- iii. Presenting the lecture.
- iv. Obtaining feedback.

Lectures are suitable to -

- i. Present facts, knowledge, ideas and information in an organised manner
- ii. Identify and clarify issues or problems
- iii. Stimulate or motivate the audience
- iv. Save time and reduce costs.

ADVANTAGES

- direct and clear
- conserves time
- allows facts to be presented in a logical order
- large number of students can be accommodated
- easy to use training aids
- economical in terms of time and cost

LIMITATIONS

- Passive as far as the learner is concerned.
- Non participation by the group
- One way flow of information
- Not easy to assess effectiveness
- Requires competent speakers

GROUP DISCUSSION

A group discussion is a training methodology used with up to about 20 participants to discuss a topic under the supervision of a moderator. Group discussions are formal discussions with an agenda to deliberate with the intention of arriving at a conclusion or direction for the group. This method allows adequate opportunities for individual learners to share their experiences and ideas with other members of the group. This method encourages learners to express their opinions, to identify, explore or solve problems or to clarify or amplify a topic.

A small number of people gathering and sharing ideas does not always make 'group discussion' a training methodology. When the objective of the discussion is not clearly defined and there is no likelihood of an outcome, the resulting talk degenerates into a group conversation. By contrast when we talk of a group discussion, we are dealing with a relatively formal process. It is purposive talk by people comprising the groups to make decisions, come to conclusions and solve problems. The process involves collection and sharing information, its analysis and arriving at a formal conclusion acceptable to the group as a whole.

As a training method it is especially suitable for use after a topic has been covered by a lecture or studied by the participants privately. Group discussion has the same stages of preparation, and evaluation as the lecture method. The advantages and limitations of this method are:

ADVANTAGES

1. Unlike a lecture, provides opportunities to the participants to share experiences, evaluate factors and courses of action.
2. Encourages individuals to work as a team.
3. Helps learners to develop confidence
4. Helps learners to gain group acceptance

LIMITATIONS

1. Suitable for up to 20 persons.
2. Requires study before discussion.
3. Some participants would like to dominate.
4. Requires supervision to ensure that silent participants are drawn into discussion and reduce domination by a few.

ROLE PLAYS

Role play is one of the best known methods of verbal simulation. It is the spontaneous acting out of a situation, condition or a set of circumstances by members of a learning group. The purpose is to emphasise relationships between people and groups. The actors portray typical attitudes, problems, situations and relationships which the learner may encounter in real life.

This method of teaching is valuable because of the emotional impact that comes from observing or participating in the presentation. Role plays allow the learners to come closer to the actual experiences of feelings connected with incident, problem or situation. This is best employed in training when the objective is to illustrate a dramatic aspect in such areas as managing people, organising, leadership or problem-solving under pressure.

To be effective, the faculty member supervising the presentation will have to guide the role players and get them to rehearse their pieces.

ADVANTAGES

1. Able to stimulate real life problems.
2. Stimulate learners to listen, observe, and analyse.

LIMITATIONS

1. Requires considerable preparation of effective roleplays.
2. Many participants are not used to role-playing and have to be selected and inducted with care.

3. Gives opportunities to some learners to project themselves into a role.
3. Tendency to use this as a gimmick.

CASE METHOD

The objective of the case method is to provide learners with opportunities to analyse social, economic and other problems and encourage them to develop solutions. With this approach, a wide spectrum of learners' skills and abilities can be brought into play. The case method is usually employed when the factors and issues involved are large, their interaction complex and possible solutions not obvious.

The learning focus in the case method is not so much on arriving at a solution, which is never there, but to (i) encourage participants to identify the factors and issues most relevant to the problems in the case. (ii) Be able to articulate these with conviction and bring out the interplay between these factors. (iii) Highlight the scope of possible options and (iv) develop a set of possible solutions ruling out some other courses of action.

The case method is non-directive, the instructor presenting the case problem allows sufficient study time, creates an environment for discussion and acts as a catalyst and guide.

A case may be written, filmed or orally presented. A case will usually be drawn up in sufficient detail to give the participants adequate data to understand the problem. Cases may be long or short depending on the time available for study and discussion.

Cases take time to develop as effective training tools. Cases have to go through a series of revisions and testing in groups before they can be administered with confidence.

ADVANTAGES

1. Exposes participants to a large area of social, economic and business factors and real life issues.
2. Forces participants to think purposefully, develop self-awareness and a capacity for sound judgements.
3. Develops habits of thinking, approaches, decision-making skills and looks at the totality of relationships.

LIMITATIONS

1. Takes time and effort to develop
2. Requires time to administer for study and discussion.
3. Not dynamic as it deals with a particular situation and connected problems.

4. Participants do not 'own' responsibility for solutions.
5. Many participants may take cases casually and show non-involvement.

INCIDENT METHOD

Developed at M.I.T, this is a variation of the case method. The incident process limits itself to one or a very limited number of aspects and as the name suggests, is confined to one incident whereas a case may cover many incidents spread over a period of time. In short, it is a case in a shorter form.

The scope for using the incident method is mostly confined to social issues, inter-personal and inter-group relationships, actions and reaction etc.

GAMES

Games, like role plays, are simulations. While role plays are verbal simulations, games are invariably presented in a written form.

Games are dynamic and involve sequential decision-making the outcome of the preceding decisions being used as inputs for the following periods. They, therefore, differ from cases which are static.

Simulations pertain to the design, manipulation and study of models of complex systems. A model is a representation of a system or process incorporating all major features of the system.

While simulations refer to the study of models, games refer to simulations used for training either by themselves or in conjunction with other inputs.

The design of games for training purposes depends on where (or in which junction of management or leadership) the learning is to take place. Games can be designed to cover important functional areas in social and service organisations (organisational structure, procedures, communications, project management etc.). All these types of games call for sequential decision-making to maximise a certain value or minimise other parameters. Use of games for learning provides insights into the interdisciplinary nature of society and business or any type of organisation. Apart from providing opportunities for studying the decision-making process, the participants are also exposed to other issues of group dynamics.

ADVANTAGESLIMITATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dynamic, provides opportunities for sequential decision-making. 2. Competitive, as different teams compete with each other to try to win. 3. Highly motivating and participant oriented. 4. Instant feedback on performance. 5. Participant's own decisions. 6. Gives insights into system organisational interdependencies. 7. Experiential learning provides for conceptual insights. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficult to design and test. 2. Time consuming to administer. |
|--|--|

LABORATORY TRAININGINTRODUCTION

Many organisations in the advanced Western Countries have used 'Personal Laboratories' or the 'Laboratory Approach' (Lab in short) as a vehicle for organisational change through increasing the personal skills of its members, giving them a deeper insight into the complex area of interpersonal relationship and for improving organisational policies and procedures. The Internal Revenue Services (IRS), which is the equivalent of our Income-Tax Department, the 'Peace Corps' and a number of public agencies in the USA have utilised lab methods to provide opportunities for the personal growth of their employees. The US Government has an agency ACORD (Action for Organisational Development) to promote this approach.

In the training context, lab methods can be used very effectively, to bring about behavioural changes in trainees largely through 'personal learning about the self' in interpersonal and Group situations.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Basically, the lab approach to training seeks to free an individual to be a more effective participant and to learn at various levels as under:-

- i. Personal learning about the self in group situations.

- ii. Transfer of personal learning to the work place (and to the home also). and
- iii. Restructuring the organisation to make it more satisfying and rewarding to its members.

'Lab' groups have been variously labeled T-Groups or Sensitivity Groups, T-Group is short for 'Training Group'. About a dozen members get together in 'structured' 'unstructured' settings. In an unstructured setting, the group has no specific task to perform nor does it have any agenda.

The intention in both types of settings is to learn about themselves and each other from interactions generated in whatever activities they engage in.

TYPES OF LABS T-GROUPS

T-Groups, can be broadly classified into two types:-

i. The Basic T-Group

The T-Group or 'Sensitivity Training Group', is composed of individuals who are strangers or normally do not work together. The focus in such group is 'expressing' and unfreezing old attitudes and creating and increasing trust and openness between group members. The Basic T-Groups tend to be 'unstructured'.

ii. Variant T-Groups

These are variously called 'Core Groups', 'Action Groups', 'Family Groups' etc. These groups are composed of individuals who normally work together. The focus here is more on conceiving and implementing changes in the members' work.

PROCEDURES

Basic T-Group

Usually this type of lab training is unstructured and comprises strangers.

Unlike psychiatric approaches to effect changes in attitudes and behaviour, Basic T-Groups consider mostly the 'public' (referring to data which is shared in the group and not 'Secrets' which have not been expressed) and the 'here and now' data available to all members.

The range of this target data is very wide.

- i. The specific **structure** members develop in their interaction, such as leadership rank order.
- ii. The **process** of their group life, with special attention to getting a group to experience the way each reacts to the 'here and now' group life coming to an end i.e. how they view the termination of the T-Group.
- iii. Their specific **emotional** reactions to one another's behaviour as in jointly 'fighting' the trainer or in fleeing from some issue which has over-whelmed group members.

Hence Basic T-Group can be said to have two major purposes:

- i. To analyse the data generated by their own 'here-and-now' interactions. and
- ii. To develop insights and behavioural skills that facilitate both analysis and action in the group as well as in the 'back home' situation.

The overall goal is to increase the level of trust among the group members so that each will provide to the others increasing, timely and 'unambiguous' feedback concerning-

- perceptions.
- feelings.
- reactions.

The type of sentences used in the conversation in Basic T-Groups are typically as given below:-

- "I feel that....."
- "The way you speak to me....."
- "I believe that....."
- "What I hear you saying is....."
- "Do I infer from what others are saying....."
- "I feel you are not being specific about.....etc."

Though much of the work that goes on in the Basic T-Group is based on the data internally generated, 'exercises' are sometimes used to clarify certain inferences, principles and reactions emerging from the group interactions. Such exercises can cover an extremely broad range from listening skills, barriers to communication, group decision-making process, appraisals, 'win-or-lose' games etc.

VARIANT T-GROUP

These T-Groups have been developed to facilitate 'back-home' learning, to encourage members of the same organisation to experiment at the work place with new behavioural skills or insights as also to create more satisfying work relationships. These T-Groups are ongoing processes intertwined with their routine work.

Variant T-Groups tend to range widely between 'here-and-now' and the 'there-and-then-. That is, their members often have intricate common histories for a long time in their organisation that do not enrich nor burden Basic T-Groups.

The variant T-Groups concentrates on behaviourally preparing individuals to decide upon and achieve their definition of the desirable organisational goals.

Variant T-Groups can take many forms as they seek to build useful learning processes into organisations. For example formal decision-making groups in organisations take heed of the learning and insights gained from the T-Groups. If the formal decision making group in their organisation does not change its way of functioning, the other members are expected to express their unhappiness. A special T-Group is then organised to allow members to voice their concern. Hence there is a process of checks and balances leading to a situation of advice and consent. Hopefully this will lead to more openness, frank feedback and more co-operation.