Chapter IV

Economic and Educational Liberation of Women and the Press
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History reveals how women enjoyed a privileged position in ancient India. We feel proud of the social order and culture that recognized women’s worth and accorded respect to them. We hear of women sages and women scholars in the Rig Vedic period. But women were pushed into the background in the following ages. With the coming of the Islam, they completely lost their glory. Cut off from the mainstream of life, they became devitalized; secluded and sheltered they grew dependent of men folk. All moral and social norms ignored their identity, individuality and integrity. Women were also reduced to mere household drudges and with this the Indian society degenerated into abysmal darkness.

To uplift the status of the women, economic liberation and education are the two integral parts to attain it. In Tamilnadu, the press realized the emancipation of women and fought for it. Economy and education are inter-related. It is important to note that the inferior status of women considered with the denial of property rights and education as well as the denial of occupations to them.\(^1\) Economy is the basic necessity of attaining anything; education is found to be the means for the economic well-being. With education and employment, the women can attain economic freedom, upon which the edifice of empowerment can be easily built.\(^2\) The rationalistic paper *Kuviarasu* insisted that the lack of property right to women and female illiteracy were the two important causes for the women slavery of our country.\(^3\) Even a conservative Tamil paper *Ananda Bodhini* also insisted on the same thing.\(^4\) In the field of liberation

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of women, economy and education played their vital role. It is said that the economic status is the very foundation on which the structure of equality can be built.5

1. The press on the Economic Liberation of Women

According to the *Stri-Dharma*, a woman's economic freedom is greater than even her social freedom and political suffrage. Because hunger is one of the greatest forces in the world and it is governed more by the science of economics than by political or social sciences.6 The position of women depends upon the economic policies and priorities of the state.7 The status of women in Tamilnadu also depends upon their economical freedom. The thinking of having money makes confidence in mankind. The economical liberation of the women consists of two important things, possession and profession. In short, the right to property and the right to employment serve as the two predominant features in the economical liberation of women in Tamilnadu.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the status of women in Tamilnadu was worst due to their economic slavery.8 Property relations within families depended on women's inequality.9 The daughters and the wives did not have any rights neither to the property of their fore fathers nor to the property of their husbands. They were forced to live in a dependent state. Even after the death of a husband, the wife was not given any share in the property even for her livelihood. Due to female illiteracy they could not attain decent jobs. Thus, women’s involvement in the economic development process was neglected.10

From time immemorial, women did not realize their economic freedom and the thought of going for an employment was considered as taboo on the basis of tradition, culture and chastity. Fundamentalists and male-chauvinists curbed their urge with dogmas which was against the women empowerment. Eventhough a slight

6 *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, August 1922, p. 150.
8 G.O. No. Ms. 174 Law (General) Department, 19 January 1935, TNA.
10 Ibid., pp. 955-956.
transformation occurred by the advent of Christian missionaries and their educational system, the status of women remained unchanged due to their dependability on menfolk. At this juncture, they realized the necessity of property rights. With the help of the press and with the liberal minded menfolk, they raised their demand for economic liberty. The magazine Madhar Marumanam propounded the theory of Karl Marx, that unless the women achieved the economic freedom, the victory of labour community would be a mirage.¹¹

**Struggle for Property Rights**

The press played a vital role in moulding the society which had traditional beliefs regarding women’s property rights. The press not only instructed the society regarding the importance of it but also answered the queries of fundamentalists on behalf of the women.¹² It also reiterated that the property right was an essential basic right for the women community.

The property position of women in any system of law represents the thoughts and feelings of the community. The property status of women in Tamilnadu in the nineteenth century also was fully influenced by the traditional male chauvinistic thoughts. The British Government of India took initial steps for the property right for women. It enacted Married Women’s Property Act in 1874. The Act had many shortcomings.¹³

As usual the Stri-Dharma started campaigning for the women’s property right. In 1921, it observed that in the age of culture and enlightenment, the financial freedom was essential for women’s progress in all the directions, and therefore independent rights to property would be necessary and women’s all disabilities would be removed. With regard to these considerations and the neutral attitude of our government in such matters was to be hoped that kind hearted gentlemen would take early action to move the Legislature to remove all obstacles in the path of women’s progress.¹⁴ In October 1921, it asked the women that they should wage war against all that was suppressing the inherent power and strength of women;

¹¹ Madhar Marumanam, Karaikudi, July 1937, p. 45.
¹³ Kulwant Gill, Hindu Women’s Right to Property in India, New Delhi, 1986, p. 43.
¹⁴ Stri-Dharma, Madras, September 1921, p. 4.
they had to fight against a system and take pride in upholding women as weak and helpless. The above paper emphasized that according to the traditional laws, women could not become the owners of the property. Further it observed that the orthodox law makers believed that the women did not have sufficient strength to safeguard the property. It wrote in support of women that the women were lacking physical strength only because of house imprisonment for generations. To strengthen its view, it utilized the theory of Darwin that the women had more mental strength than men. To safeguard the property, the mental strength was much needed than physical strength. Thus, the paper insisted that there should not be any hesitation in giving women the property right.

Therefore, it was realized that unless the women raised their protest against the odds of customary beliefs, they wouldn’t be benefited in future with the right to property. This same notion was reiterated by the Chinthamani, published from Madras. It emphasized that the women should be given the due share compulsorily. The paper indicated that the women should have atleast the right in the husband’s property, if not in her father’s. Fearing about the social restrictions of those days, the paper reduced its volume of voice and tried to appease the conservatives to achieve women’s share at least from their husband’s property. But it realized the public support to the women’s property right; again it raised its voice that the women deserved to have the property of their father’s too.

The Kudiyarasu requested the Legislative members to legislate a proper legislation for women’s right in the family’s ancestral property. It also gave a note that the readers should convene meetings in various places in support of the women's right to property and sent the above request in various languages such as English, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada to the government and the Legislative Members. The paper asked its readers to print the matter in handouts and issue them to the public. Thus, the paper tried to make its campaign for women’s property right as mass movement. In

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16 Stri-Dharma, Madras, April 1922, p. 88.
17 Ibid., p. 89.
18 Chinthamani, Madras, December 1924, p. 171
19 Ibid., p. 173.
20 Ibid., January 1925, pp. 221-223.
21 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 13 September 1925.
the next issue, it condemned the Aryan Vedas for discriminating women from men regarding the right of parent’s property. The Chingleput Conference of 1929 was the turning point in the history of the Self Respect Movement. The conference is known for its resolutions regarding women liberation. The Kudiyarasu ornamented its columns with the resolutions such as the women should be given property rights and hereditary rights equal to men. The Stri-Dharma demanded to give the daughter the right of inheriting a share of her father’s property.

To have better results, the Government of India enacted the Hindu Law of Inheritance (Removal of Disabilities) Act in 1928. According to this Act, no Hindu Law or custom should prevent a person or exclude a person from inheritance or from any right or share in joint family property unless he had been from birth a lunatic or idiot or mental defect. The Act was amended in 1929 without repealing any clause. The Act recognized a son’s daughter, daughter’s daughter, sister and sister’s son would, in order to so specified, be entitled to rank in the order of succession. But the Acts were insufficient for the women’s economic liberation and it did not provide any prospective assurance to the widows.

The papers published during this period pointed out the pit-falls and inadequacies in that Acts. The Kudiyarasu insisted the property right to women with an example that a father used to share the edibles and sweets among his children without any sexual discrimination, likewise the property also should be shared equally. The same paper insisted the property should be given to wife, grandmother and daughter also. It advised the public not to follow the age old anti-female customs against the women’s property rights. It insisted that there should not be any difference between men and women regarding the property rights.

The Second Self Respect Women’s Conference was held in Erode on 11th May 1930 under the Presidentship of Muthulaksmi Reddy. In the
conference, a resolution regarding the women’s right to property, guardianship rights, adoption rights were resolved and it was enthusiastically welcomed by the Kudiyarasu. It published that E.V.Ramasamy too had supported it.\textsuperscript{30} The Kudiyarasu demanded that the legislation should be enacted with rights equal for both the sexes and the legal-heirs right for the women after the death of the husband should also be incorporated.\textsuperscript{31}

The paper welcomed the efforts of the Government of Mysore in enacting a new Act regarding the women’s property and requested the Government of India to follow this.\textsuperscript{32} The Stri-Dharma quoted an example from England that even in 1882 the English women secured the full property right through Married Women’s Property Act. The journal requested the British authorities to show their favorable attitude towards Indian women too to by making a suitable legislation.\textsuperscript{33} It expressed its unhappiness of the status of women that all sons of a Hindu family had an inherent right in the family property and were called co-parceners. Female children of the family were not considered co-parceners, but their maintenance and marriage expenses were necessary charges on the family property, in the case of an unmarried daughter, she was not considered co-parceners. It recommended a change in the present law, making women’s status absolutely equal with that of men. It was an urgent need of the Hindu women.\textsuperscript{34}

**Hindu Women Inheritance Bill of 1932**

To provide the widows the right of property over their husband’s belongings, the known social reformer Harbilas Sarda introduced a Bill called the Hindu Women Inheritance Bill in 1932. But the Bill was opposed even by the government on the ground that the three Hindu Members who took part in the debate on the motion were against it. The government had thrown the Bill out. Condemning the activity of the government, the Dravidan observed that the objection of the government to this Bill had no doubt caused much dissatisfaction to all persons of the nation. It was indeed regrettable that, while the government should help the progress of the women community of the country by accepting at least such bills introduced in the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 18 May 1930, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 27 September 1931, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 4 October 1931, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{33} Stri-Dharma, Madras, July 1931, p. 420.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., December 1931, pp. 70-74.
Legislative Assembly for effecting social reform, through they did not grant all facilities for such reform, they should have opposed the Bill while sympathies with its object in words.\textsuperscript{35}

The \textit{Desabakthan} condemned the attitude of the government as well as the orthodox people very strongly. It wrote that though a few Englishmen were accused of keeping races under subjection, they were able to stand erect in the world, despite their shortcomings, only because they deemed women to be superior to men and granted them equal status and liberty. It was only some petty and arrogant government officials, who had not a high education or sense or responsibility tried to beat and kick women in the cowardly manner and to subject them to insults even in a field of war, without appreciating their valor. Under these circumstances the Bill was defeated in the Assembly. The paper added that it knew that there were in the Assembly ‘male widows’ who have lost their wives. It was surprised at so many such ‘widows’ having been elected to that body and at their having retreated at a good opportunity. The paper concluded with the strong sentence that even the devil would pity women.\textsuperscript{36}

Without the support of the government, any reformation will result in failure. The government should uphold equality and democracy among the citizens. Unfortunately a good legislation was defeated with the help of the politicians and fundamentalists. The \textit{Kudiyarasu} criticized the government’s policy of appeasing the fundamentalists in the name of safeguarding law and order. It considered the failure as a set back and expressed its out burst vehemently in support of the women’s reform bills\textsuperscript{37}. It believed that the public awareness should be the only way for the reforms regarding the women’s rights.

The \textit{Ananda Bodhini} published the resolutions passed in the Tamilnadu Ladies’ Conference held in Coimbatore on 29\textsuperscript{th} October 1932 regarding the property rights to women. It demanded that the property right for women should be enacted without any sex disqualification as early as possible.\textsuperscript{38} By condemning the demerits of


\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Kudiyarasu}, Erode, 14 February 1932, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ananda Bodhini}, Madras, November 1932, pp. 323-328.
the existing Acts, the *Kudiyarasu* insisted that men and women should be treated equally before the Law; the widow should be given proper share in the husband’s property.\(^{39}\) It also emphasized the Russian model of property right to women should be followed in our country. In Soviet Union, the government provided property right to women and it resulted in the downfall of prostitution there. The major portion of prostitutes left their profession after getting property from their family.\(^{40}\)

In an article in the *Kudiyarasu*, S. Neelavathi, a female cadre of the Self Respect Movement wrote that the lack of property right to women was the main cause for women slavery in this country and she insisted on the proper legislation to overcome the problem.\(^{41}\) The *Stri-Dharma* expressed its dissatisfaction on the law that the widow was the nearest relative of the deceased but her husband’s sons or brothers and cousins took away the property and she got only maintenance. The male members in a joint family were the owners of this property who acquire interest in it by mere birth; while the females, one and all by they, daughters, or wives, mothers or widows, were regarded as dependents. Their legal status in the family was of mere dependence. A man could deal with his property in any way and nobody could question his authority. The woman rarely got the property and even when she got it by inheritance they could not dispose it of as an owner. She could spend its income only and had to keep it intact for the benefit of the next heir. If she exceeded her power, the next heir could challenge her authority and annul the transactions. The attempt made my Harbilas Sarda to end the inequality was defeated by the orthodox members of the Legislature. The liberal press in Tamilnadu criticized it as indigestible and cried decisively that the government should come forward to end the inequality by passing a fruitful legislation.\(^{42}\)

**Hindu Women’s Property Right Bill, 1937**

Because of the continuous demand of the public and the press, D.V. Deshmukh introduced the Hindu Women’s Property Right Bill in the Central

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\(^{39}\) *Kudiyarasu*, Erode, 22 September 1935, p. 3.


\(^{42}\) *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, May 1934, p. 307.
Legislative Assembly on 4th February 1937. It was referred to a Select Committee for consideration. The committee made some modifications in the Bill. In the modifications, the absolute right of the widow was not found and only the limited interest known as ‘Hindu Women’s Estate’ was allowed to the widows. Thus the widows’ right was restricted. Hence, the very aim of the Bill was spoiled. Inspite of the vehement opposition from the broad minded members and the liberal press, the Bill was enacted as the ‘Hindu Women’s Right to Property Act, 1937’.

Though the framers of the Act wanted to equate the status of widow with that of the man by giving her the absolute interest, their efforts failed and the widow was given limited interest, Hindu women’s estate. However, she was given the same right of claiming her partition as a male owner had. This was the only remarkable achievement of this Act. To amend the Act, a Bill was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly on 3rd March 1938. The amendment was given retrospective effect from 14th April 1937. Even after the amendments, the Act continued to be a source of trouble to litigate, lawyers and judges. Though the Act was short and simple it resulted in conflict of interpretations. According to the Amendment Act, the widow’s right to claim partition at par with a male owner was recognized. Thus, the Act had made the widow a co-parcener and only co-parceners had a right to claim partition. The fundamentalists and even most of the liberals opposed this Bill severely. The press considered it as an injustice to women because nothing was mentioned about the right to agricultural properties since the most of the properties were agriculture based ones.

During the time, the press continuously insisted the need of equal property right to the women. The Grihalakshmi published an article written by Kamalam regarding the property rights of women and dealt about the necessity of the property right to women and tried to mend the people for the good practice. She categorized the reasons as follows:

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43 Kulwant Gill, op.cit, p. 104.
44 The Gazette of India, 5 March 1938, Part IV, New Delhi, 1938, p. 33.
46 Ibid., p. 56.
1. If a husband would be an illiterate and incapable of earning, the property of the women would certainly help the family.

2. If he would neglect his wife and children, though he would be capable of earning, the property for women would be certainly of great help.

3. If he would indulge in gambling and drinking, the property of women would certainly help the family and

4. If there would be number of children, the property of women would come to their rescue.\textsuperscript{47}

This article added that the women's life could not be fulfilled only by having good husbands. They need property right to lead a neat, painstaking, disciplined and respectable life. The earlier laws provided them only nominal property rights instead of full-fledged property rights. The public should understand the necessity of them. The paper insisted the government to enact a proper law for the full-fledged property right to women.\textsuperscript{48} The article received heartfelt welcome from the masses for its reality to evacuate the age old fallacy regarding women’s property right from the society.

The \textit{Madhar Marumanam} published an article regarding the Act of 1937. It welcomed the Act introduced by D.V.Desmukh, for it enabled the widows to get their share in the property. But expressed its regret that if at all widows ventured to marry again, their eligibility to get the share in the property would be revoked again. Because of that, the marriages of widows were hampered which would yield adverse results in the society.\textsuperscript{49} It criticized the conservatives who opposed even the half boiled law too. The paper’s idea was considered as the idea of the liberalists of that time.\textsuperscript{50} Condemning the short comings of these Acts, the \textit{Kudiyarasu} stated that the daughters were given the right of \textit{seethanam}, which means dowry. Even the \textit{seethanam} was enjoyed solely by the husband’s family.\textsuperscript{51} The above paper honestly pointed out the passing of a proper and equal property right to the women immediately.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{47} Grihalakshmi, Madras, 1 January 1938, pp. 27-28.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibíd., p. 28.
\textsuperscript{49} Madhar Marumanam, Karaikudi, February 1937, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{50} Ram Prakash, \textit{Property Rights of Women in India}, New Delhi, 2001, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{51} Kudiyarasu, Erode, 10 March 1940, pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibíd., 12 August 1944, p. 3.
The Madras Hindu Women's Right to Property (Extension to Agricultural Land) Bill, 1947

In 1938, the Madras Presidency did not amend the Act passed in 1937. After ten years the Bill was passed, the Madras Government took it for consideration. The Bill aimed to give the right to agricultural property to the women. The Bill was passed into the Law in the Legislature in 1947, and it was called as The Madras Hindu Women’s Right to Property (Extension to Agricultural Land) Bill of 1947. By the Act, the Act of 1937 was amended and it included the agricultural property right for women in lieu of their maintenance. The Act was given retrospective effect from 1937.53

The opinion of the press gained public support even though it was not a speedy one, and remained incomplete for a long time. The process bloomed only in the latter part of the twentieth century and the contribution of the press for the cause was immense.

Women Employment

Many Indian households took it for granted that a married women settled in life could never take up any employment exclusively and independently of the family, even though she might be highly educated and culturally well-equipped.54 Majority of the women were employed almost in all sectors of unorganized economy such as agriculture and cultivation etc. for time immemorial.55 Despite this fact, the society didn’t consider women as workers. In non-agricultural sector, many employees believed in the maxim: “Employ a man and help a family.” Apparently they believed that employing women would mean help only one.56 Despite some efforts for controlling the gender bias in employment, the differences were carefully being maintained.57

The Family Budget Survey of 1922 defined family as a ‘unit’ comprising of father, mother and children. This unit was termed as the ‘self contained’

54 The Indian Ladies Magazine, Madras, August 1929, p. 11.
55 Poonam S. Chauhan, Lengthening Shadows, Status of Women in India, New Delhi, 1996, p. 29.
57 Poonam S. Chauhan, op.cit., p. 29.
family and held to be the representative of the working class period of the country.\textsuperscript{58} In the Family Budget Survey of 1932, the self contained unit was renamed as natural family. It also defined the natural family as consisting of “members who have a right to be fed, housed and clothed by the head of the family, that is to say the wife and unmarried children of an individual.”\textsuperscript{59} At that time in Tamilnadu, eighty percent of the total labour required for transplanting and about seventy five percent of the labour required in weeding was provided by women.\textsuperscript{60} But the definition of natural family ignored the fact that many women were the prime earners of their families as non-formal agricultural laborers.\textsuperscript{61} Thus, the government itself was not in a frame of mind to consider the women as workers.

While the traditional school of thought confined women against seeking employment for their livelihood, the press stood as a beacon and laid its illumination in the minds of women regarding empowerment and even classified the types of employment fit for them. The press not only focused the problems of working women but also tried to solve their problems even legally and attained remarkable victory over it.

The \textit{Giruhalakshmi} stressed that women were competent enough for any assignment and cited the life of the veterans like Muthulakshmi Reddy and Vijayalakshmi Pandit as a moral booster for women.\textsuperscript{62} While answering a question raised by one of its readers, it stated that the very sentence ‘the suitable job for women’ was unsuitable for the time and the women were undoubtedly suitable for any type of job.\textsuperscript{63} \textit{The Indian Ladies Magazine} observed that a woman was looked upon with dismay by persons of the orthodox school of thought when she took up any self-governing occupation. The paper further opined for the best interests of national progress, women should be economically independent and self-reliant.\textsuperscript{64}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Family Budget Survey}, 1932-1933, Government of India, New Delhi, 1933, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Nirmala Banarjee, \textit{Women’s Work and Discrimination} in Devaki Jaun and Nirmala Banrjee (ed.), \textit{Tyranny of the Household}, Sakthi Books, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 149-150.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Radhakumar, \textit{op.cit}. pp. 139-140
\item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{Giruhalakshmi}, Madras, 1 January 1938, pp. 3-5.
\item \textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, April 1940, pp. 226-230.
\item \textsuperscript{64} \textit{The Indian Ladies Magazine}, Madras, August 1929, pp. 11-12.
\end{itemize}
To add effect to this, the *Madhar Marumanam* published a statistical data of the Soviet Union where two million Russian women were ready to serve in the fields, factories and even willing to serve in the Air Force during the time of war. The paper submitted this revolutionary news to the conservatives who suppressed and criticized the women community without releasing them from the conventional ties to act freely.\(^{65}\) This information acted as a catalyst in the minds of the Tamil women and proved the myth created by men, who would have lost their employment if women were allowed to work as wrong and baseless. The *Madhar Marumanam* questioned optimistically how many men lost their jobs in United States of America where nearly eleven million women were working.\(^{66}\)

In urban areas, due to the pitiable condition of families, the women prepared themselves to go to factory works. When ever the modernization process occurred, the plight of women was actually worsened. The development policies bypassed the needs of women and also eroded their existing positions without providing adequate alternatives.\(^{67}\) The Factory Act of 1908 threw interesting light on reasons for the sexual division of labour. The Factory Act on limitation of hours of work led to the gradual reduction of women workers in the industries. The working hours were increased to an optimum limit of 12 hours. The women came irregularly and did not work for more than 10 hours because of their duty at home. The situation led to the systematic exclusion of women from industry, the rationale being the necessity of women to return to their traditional place- the home.\(^{68}\)

The *Kudiyarasu* insisted that in order to eradicate the women’s slavery, women should learn an occupation for them and pleaded the government to protect their occupational rights too.\(^{69}\) This is how the plea for the percentage quota in employment for the women started. It expressed its long awaiting dream for the equality of women incorporating the data of women employees served as sailors,

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\(^{65}\) *Madhar Marumanam*, Karaikudi, April 1937, p. 44.


\(^{69}\) *Kudiyarasu*, Erode, 10 January 1932, p. 14.
clerks, industrial labourers, soldiers, agricultural workers and caterers in the Soviet Union.\footnote{Ibid., 10 November 1929, p. 13.}

“uthiyogam purusha lakshanam”, it is an old saying in Tamil. The meaning of the saying is, employment is the matter of males. In an article published in the paper Puratchi, Neelavathi, a Self Respect cadre criticized the above saying and coined the new saying “Uzhaippu Manitha Lakshanam” (work is the matter of mankind). The author added that the male chauvinistic society did not recognize women as employees; if a woman tried hard to attain employment, the orthodox people were asking her in which office she would be going to write the accounts. The author registered her dissatisfaction that such conservative questions and phrases isolated women from the main social stream. Neelavathi had an idea that those who rendered their physical work, they were all employees; in this context women also were employees, because they rendered their hard work physically inside the family for the betterment of the family and they were working throughout the year without taking any leave and without any remuneration. So, the author concluded with a message that the women had to celebrate the May Day as their festival.\footnote{Puratchi, Erode, 29 May 1934, p. 44; Valarmathi, M., Sayamariyathi Iyakka Veeranganigal, Chennai, 2002, pp. 124-128.}

Received awareness from the media, the women started desiring to work outside the home. The following were the causes for their increased desire:

1. Decline of joint family and growth of nuclear families,
2. Growth of women education,
3. Changing structure of employment where women could find jobs,
4. More leisure time,
5. Demand of Women labourers,
6. Change in the social mentality and
7. Gradual attainment of economic freedom.\footnote{Bedabati Mohanty, Development of Women, Bhubaneswar, 1996, p. 60.}

The above factors motivated the urban women to move towards the factories. In the factories they worked hard. Along with the factory work they had to do the family work also.
Types of works suggested by the press for the women

The Giruhalakshmi pointed out that in Russia, 150 qualified women pilots were there and optimistic that if rules and regulations were relaxed, Indian women pilots would also be available.\(^\text{73}\) The paper Kalaimagal further opined that instead of following western culture in dress and manners, women should concentrate more on the occupations like teachers and doctors.\(^\text{74}\)

The Dhravidabhimani thought that the Government of India was not well-advised in having resolved to import medical women from England for employment in India, instead of recruiting them from the educated women in this country. It also observed that the Indian medical women were well acquainted than others with the customs and habits of India.\(^\text{75}\) The Desabakthan observed the same thing in the case of nurses.\(^\text{76}\) The Chinthamani suggested matron and nurse employment for the patient, Indian women considered suitable.\(^\text{77}\) In its editorial it advised the women to select their future career as teachers, lawyers and doctors.\(^\text{78}\) It gave the Chinese picture that a bank in Shanghai was employed by all female employees. Money transaction was not at all a problem for the female employees. Here in India also the women could be allowed to do the banking jobs. The paper insisted that it was the need of the time.\(^\text{79}\)

Further the myth of incompetence to become lawyers and judges for women was broken by Anna Chandi, Senior Zilla Munisif in Travancore and the Giruhalakshmi was hopeful to have more women in legal studies also.\(^\text{80}\) To create interest among women for the work of advocate, the Stri-Dharma published that Anandabai, the first women law-graduate of Madras University. It congratulated her on her academic achievement and it requested women to follow her career with great interest.\(^\text{81}\) The Madhar Marumanam welcomed the appointment of Sumathra

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\(^{72}\) Giruhalakshmi, Madras, May 1940, p. 303.

\(^{73}\) Kalaimagal, Pondicherry, January 1915, pp. 9-13.

\(^{74}\) Dhravidabhimani, Salem, 24 October 1913, MNNPR., Vol. II, 1913, p. 1693.


\(^{76}\) Chinthamani, Madras, April 1927, pp. 515-516.

\(^{77}\) Ibid., November 1924.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., February 1925, pp. 288-292.

\(^{79}\) Giruhalakshmi, Madras, January 1938, pp. 4-5.

\(^{80}\) Stri-Dharma, Madras, May 1928, p. 49.
Darkundhi as the first public prosecutor of Bombay. It told that such news would induce the women aspirants. It emphasized its happiness over seven female lawyers working successfully in Madras High Court at that time and among them 4 were sisters. Durgabai Desmukh, the Congress Dictator of Madras during the Salt Satyagraha, became the first women advocate to appear and argue in a murder case in 1942. The *Kalki* exposed this news elaborately to motivate the women aspirants towards legal professions. The *Madhar Marumanam* published the news of women named Sarala Devi, who was appointed as the Hindi reporter in the Bihar Legislature. She was the first woman to get a job of this kind in India. It felt happy about the appointment of women for a new type of job. It also showed its satisfaction in appointing women ticket examiners in East Indian Railway. It noticed how the women passengers hitherto would certainly get relief from some problem.

The paper *Tamizhagam* listed the following professions done by the western women:-

1. Meat tasting in various hotels in London,
2. Travel organizing for the rich people,
3. Hair cutting for dogs,
4. Smelling the perfumes,
5. Counseling for widows and worried women,
6. Women police for catching the women thieves and
7. Tailoring with modernity.

It also noted that there was no sin in doing any legitimate job and the occupations which deemed fit for our culture and tradition were not considered as sin.

The *Giruhalakshmi* suggested that the uneducated and under educated women should opt for jobs like tailoring. It gave an elaborate advertisement for the free tailoring training centre for ladies functioning at Mylapore in Madras. Thus it

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82 *Madhar Marumanam*, Karaikudi, March 1937, p. 47.
85 *Kalki*, Madras, 10 November 1942.
86 *Madhar Marumanam*, Karaikudi, May 1939, p. 42.
motivated women of less education to join such programmers for their livelihood.\textsuperscript{89} The Ooliyan from Karaikudi pointed out that the women community would opt for handicrafts. It also said that the profession was not new to the women community and the women of India involved in such professions even from the ancient times. It expressed its faith that the women had sufficient patience and confidence, the basic needs for profession. It advised women to involve with full commitment in that profession for their economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{90}

The Varthaga Mithran from Tanjore revealed the truth that the women in Canada were going to involve in the profession of doll making. It also pointed out that the women in Tamilnadu were equally talented. It requested them to involve in such profession without any hesitation in order to gain more profits.\textsuperscript{91} The Swadesamitran suggested carpet making for the women of Tamilnadu for their economic fulfillment. It added that the women could do the job even from their houses.\textsuperscript{92}

Printing, the male dominated profession should be offered to the women as it empowered their status and the photo of Josephine Roy, the first women in Madras got training in the printing profession was published by the Swadesamitran to encourage the new women printing experts.\textsuperscript{93}

**Women and the Police Profession**

The people considered that the police profession differed from other professions, it was considered as a power packed one. The people believed that the entry into the profession would mark as the power gaining one. The press asked the under powered women to opt for the police profession to empower themselves in the society. The press raised hue and cry for the appointment of women police for the forcible enforcement of laws related to the protection of women.\textsuperscript{94} The question of employment of women police to combat the traffic of women and children was first

\textsuperscript{89} Giruhalakshmi, Madras, November 1939, pp. 721-724.  
\textsuperscript{90} Ooliyan, Karaikudi, 21 November 1920, p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{91} Varthakamithiran, Tanjore, 9 August 1916, p. 526.  
\textsuperscript{92} Swadesamitran, Madras, 11 September 1932, p. 1001.  
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 1013.  
\textsuperscript{94} Shamim Aleem, Women in Indian Police, New Delhi, 1991, p. 1.
But the need for women police was really felt during the labour strike in Kanpur in 1938. The government laborers lay down at the entrance of the factory for obstructing the entry of the non-willing workers. The male police were faced with the delicate situation of lifting the women workers physically off the ground. To face only such eventuality in future, police women were appointed in Kanpur for the first time in India in 1939.

The Madhar Marumanam gave extensive exposure to the appointment of the police women in Kanpur to suppress the women labour during the textile mill strikes. It pointed out that they were provided with proper police uniforms. The journal appreciated the appointment of women as police for the first time in India. The press felt its satisfaction amidst its regret that the act of controlling the women labourers by the women police. Soon the hurriedly raised force of women police was disbanded after the strike was over. The Princely State of Travancore appointed twelve women police constables in 1942 on temporary basis in the regular police force. Referring to these instances, the press and the public of Madras Presidency started demanding the appointment of women police. While talking about a separate jail for women opened by the Government of Madras in Vellore, the Tamilnadu requested the government that the women police should be appointed to protect the women prisoners.

In order to induce the Government of Madras to appoint the women police, the Stri-Dharma published a list of duties that could be handed over to the policewomen in future, they were:

1. Taking charge of women and girls who have attempted suicide,

2. Taking depositions from women and children in cases of criminal or indecent assault,

3. Collecting all evidence from women and children indecently or criminally assaulted, accompanying them to take out warrant for arrest of offender and giving evidences in court,

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95 Home (Public), Police, No.785/III/ 1927, NAI.
96 Aruna Bhardwaj, Women in Uniform, Emergence of Women Police in Delhi, New Delhi, 1999, p. 47.
97 Madhar Marumanam, Karaikudi, June-July 1938, p. 48.
4. Dealing with charges of loitering, soliciting, etc., brought against prostitutes,
5. Conveying women offenders to and from prisons to court and back again,
6. Accompanying women who have to take long journeys in charge of a constable to be brought before the courts,
7. Dealing with cases where women are charged with drunkenness and other disorderly conduct,
8. Assisting with inquiries concerning women and children,
9. Searching women prisoners,
10. Taking charge of women in cells,
11. Attending women and children court,
12. Assisting in supervision of children’s street traveling licences,
13. Keeping observation on suspected houses,
14. Assisting at raids on brothels,
15. Finding shelter for women and children who are stranded,
16. Observation work (in plain cloths),
17. Observing and reporting on all cases of cruelty to children,
18. Making intimate investigations connected with cases of concealment of birth, child murder, abortion, bigamy and overlaying children,
19. Inquiries re aliens, cases of fraud, missing relatives, lost property, etc., and
20. Inspecting common lodging houses for women.\(^\text{101}\)

This was published to remove the wrong notion and fear from the minds of women. By revealing the responsibilities of the women police, the paper pointed out that the women police should involve only in the matters related to the women. Referring to the Senior Police Superintendent of Delhi having invited application from women for forming a women police corps, the Chandamarutham remarked that the government was compelled to organize such corps for controlling

\(^{101}\) *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, August 1931, p. 462.
the women who were freely participating in the present satyagraha. It further hoped that though this was tried only as an experimental measure, it would prove to be a means of liberation of women.\footnote{Chandamarutham, Salem, 22 January 1932.} The Tamilnadu welcomed the move of the government and wrote that it was reasonable to appoint women police.\footnote{Tamilnadu, Salem, 23 January 1932, MNNPR., Vol. I, 1932, p. 150.} The Dravidan welcomed the proposal, especially on the ground that it indicated the recognition, by the government, of the equal rights of men and women not only in local bodies but also in other political institutions, in view of the introduction of administrative reforms in the country.\footnote{Dravidan, Madras, 26 January 1932, MNNPR., Vol. I, 1932, p. 150.} The Ananda Bodhini remarked that at the beginning there would be some problems, and it would become quite natural in course of time and requested the government not to go back.\footnote{Ananda Bodhini, Madras, 27 January 1932, MNNPR., Vol. I, 1932, p. 150.} In support of the women’s liberation, the Vinotha Vikatan welcomed the proposal of the government.\footnote{Vinotha Vikatan, Madras, 26 January 1932, MNNPR., Vol. I, 1932, p. 150.} The Kudiyarasu welcomed the proposal of the government and requested the women to make use of this rare chance.\footnote{Kudiyarasu, Erode, 24 January 1932. p. 12.} Due to the continuous voice raised by the press, even before India became independent, a few women were appointed as police in Madras City.\footnote{Nigam, Scotland Yard and the Indian Police, Allahabad, 1963, p. 45.}

The Press on Unfair Sex Discrimination

In the year 1922, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs in India had ordered that the number of clerks in the Post Offices should not exceed one percent of the total clerical staff. This discriminative order certainly exploited the rare chances from the upcoming women. The Stri-Dharma condemned the order as unjust towards the women community. It said that the retention of the one percent was almost adding insult to injury, for it was pretence of giving women an equal chance in Postal appointments.\footnote{Stri-Dharma, Madras, November 1922, p. 2.} Thus, the paper harangued for the rights of the discriminated women community vividly. Because of the cry of the women employees and due to the
supporting voice of the press, the restriction on women employees was removed in 1929.\textsuperscript{110}

**Women in factories**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the industries were established in Tamilnadu and due to famine in the villages; people started migrating to the urban areas. The presence of women in the factories had given rise to some serious problems.\textsuperscript{111} The press raised its voice whenever the women faced problems. The place of women on the labour market was usually inferior to that of men. They had fewer opportunities of employment because fewer jobs were opened to them.\textsuperscript{112} There was distinct disparity between male and female workers regarding all kinds of work assigned to them. Women were given lowly paid jobs in the mills as reelers, winders and waste pickers. Other works came rarely to them.

Correspondingly, women were given wages lower than those received by their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{113} The principle of equal pay for equal work was not accepted in all the sectors in India and considerable differences existed between the wages of men and women workers.\textsuperscript{114} Unequal pay was the chief form of discrimination affecting all women wage workers. It hit them hardest economically and besides, it indirectly brought about some factors of discrimination.\textsuperscript{115} The *Stri-Dharma* exposed the Turkish matter to support salary equality. It related how in Turkey, the women were eminently successful in their fight for equal pay for equal work and won their point in their very first strike. They demanded wages equal to men’s and not only got them but also got their employers’ promise to cease economic distinction between the sexes in the future.\textsuperscript{116} At this juncture, the *Kudiyarasu* came up with another observation that the women also had to support their kiths and kins like

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Home (Establishment), File No. 370/1929, NAI.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Rajanikanta Das, *The Problem of Women Labour*, Usha Sharma (ed.), *Female Labour in India*, New Delhi, 2006, p. 65.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} S.R.Dhespande, The Position of women in Different Social Stratification and Occupations in India in A. Appadorai (ed.), *op.cit.*., p. 77.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, January 1930, p. 107.
\end{itemize}
the men, so that, equality should be maintained in wages irrespective of sex. It noted that the equality in wages was one of the ways to reach social equality.  

The next problem to women workers was the working time. They had to work for long hours between 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. They did ten hours of hard work in the factories, returning home in the late evening to begin their house hold duties. As a wife or a mother, women had to render their work besides their work in the factories. The main problem faced by the women workers was regarding their small children.  

The Stri-Dharma took up the challenges faced by the working class women. The monthly demanded compulsory provision of crèches in the factories for the maintenance of the children of the working women. It also demanded the reduction of working hours for women workers.

Another problem faced by the female workers was the lack of maternity facilities provided by the factories. A woman worker had to work hard up to the time of her confinement and very soon after childbirth without a sufficient period of rest. Even though the Maternity Benefits Bill was defeated by low margin of votes in the Central Legislature, the Stri-Dharma demanded for maternity benefits continuously. At this juncture, the paper pleaded for the protective legislation for Indian women workers. It demanded to appoint lady inspector to inspect the conditions of female workers. It appealed to the government to amend the Indian Mines Act to stop employing women in mines. The underground work in mines done by women and children was criticized and the argument of the mining federation that such prohibition would ‘wreck the key industries of the country’ was sharply countered in the December 1922 issue as follows, "Better than to do without this industrial

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117 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 27 December 1936, p. 16.
120 Stri-Dharma, Madras, September 1928, p. 211.
development if it exists only through the exploitation and ruin of the health, mentality and morals of women and children.\textsuperscript{127}

\textbf{Unions and Strikes and the Women Workers}

Though there is no evidence of women’s membership on any large scale in unions and their active involvement in the process of unionization, it is quite interesting to note that they were members of the union by the mid 1920s.\textsuperscript{128} In 1926, the management of Perambur Mills issued dismissal orders to 160 women workers for their sin of their having attended the meetings of the Madras Labour Union. In the same year 250 women workers were dismissed for the same reason from B & C Mills. The press joined with women workers and made demand for their reinstation.\textsuperscript{129} The \textit{Swarajya} praised the confidence of women workers and remarked that they had proved even more loyal and united than the women to the unions.\textsuperscript{130} In July 1945, nearly 5000 women participated in the labour conference held in Thiruchirappalli and showed their keen interest to know the resolutions of the conference and many participated with their new born babies. This was observed in praise of the women by the magazine \textit{Kalki}.\textsuperscript{131}

During the period from 1920, there were instances of women workers, either spontaneously or as part of the union, reacting to issues affecting them at the workplace, be it a question of wages, sexual oppression or victimization. The press rendered their whole hearted support to the women strikers. For example, when the women workers were involved strike in Madura Mills in 1920 against the behavior of the maistry (supervisor), \textit{The Hindu} published about the problem in favour of the women workers. It pointed out the difficulties faced by the women workers in the mills.\textsuperscript{132} The paper condemned the attitude of the management to side with the maistry.\textsuperscript{133} The \textit{Desabakthan} warned the mill authorities for safeguarding the mischievous maistry.\textsuperscript{134} It referred the sufferings of the women operatives of the

\textsuperscript{127} Mythili Sivaraman, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 74-75
\textsuperscript{128} Shobana.M.V., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 848.
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Kalki}, Madras, 26 August 1945, pp. 12-17.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{The Hindu}, Madras, 27 April 1920.
\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Ibid.}, 5 June 1920.
Madura Mills who had been on strike for the past one month and remarked that it was one of the duties incumbent on the government to relieve the misery of women.\textsuperscript{135}

**Women and the Co-operative Movement**

For the economical prosperity of the poor women, the press suggested the establishment of Co-operative organisations for women. The *Chinthamani* cited that co-operative movement for the women was successful in England and Ireland. Initial hurdles were by-passed successfully by Rockdale co-operative movement in England. By the way of setting this kind of co-operative movement in India would be of great help to women. They could get not only the commodities at the cheapest price but also could receive dividends out of it. This was an indirect method of attaining economical freedom of women.\textsuperscript{136}

The *Giruhalakshmi* went to the extent of listing the benefits once women became share holders. They could be share holders even by investing Rupees Five. Because of these, they could prevent poverty in their families. Unity among them would flourish and they could escape from money mongers and their high rate of interest. Even it requested women from the higher financial status to propagate the necessity of this co-operative movement among poor women.\textsuperscript{137} The *Stri-Dharma* appreciated the successful activities of women co-operative organisations at Thirunelveli\textsuperscript{138} and Adoor.\textsuperscript{139} It requested the Indian women to involve in such activities to attain economic liberation.\textsuperscript{140}

In this way, the press acted as a driving force for the economical betterment of the women and the salvation of their financial problems. It played its role as a catalyst in the minds of women to succeed in the economical field. The present success of the women in Tamilnadu in the economic field is an ample evidence for that.

\textsuperscript{136} *Chinthamani*, Madras, November 1924, pp. 161-163.
\textsuperscript{137} *Giruhalakshmi*, Madras, 1 February 1940, pp. 100-103.
\textsuperscript{138} *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, September 1923, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., February-March 1936, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p. 42.
2. The Press and the Educational Liberation of the Women

In a developed society, women’s education is as necessary as that of men; but in the developing and under-developed societies it has become more so for several socio-economic reasons.\(^{141}\) It is a potent instrument of social change. It is necessary for its effective exercise and implementation of rights conferred on individual women by constitution of law.\(^{142}\) It also widens the cognitive map and enables the women to compare their position in the society *vis-à-vis* men.\(^{143}\) But in the nineteenth century, girls’ education had faced plentiful problems in India. But it is now a ‘*sine qua non*’ of India’s social and national development.\(^{144}\)

Education for the women was an impossible task before the twentieth century. Even government did not take any positive steps for it. The development of women’s education in British India could be largely attributed to persistent private effort.\(^{145}\) The parents were keen to marry their daughters and the women did not comprehend the necessity of education. Only the reformers insisted the importance of female education. Although liberal encouragements were offered, the response from the Hindu and Muslim communities for the education of girls was discouraging. No Muslim or Hindu girl was matriculated at the University of Madras in the nineteenth century.\(^{146}\) There was a popular conservative saying, “Educate a woman and you put a knife into the hands of a monkey”.\(^{147}\) But in the twentieth century, the press in Tamilnadu played a vital role in sharing the necessity of education for women and cited the remedial measures to upgrade it by the government. Because of the awareness created by the press, a popular western saying, “Educate a girl, and you can educate a entire family” was imparted into India.\(^{148}\) There was a difference of opinions among the papers regarding the type of education.

\(^{141}\) Nathulla Gupta, *Women Education Through the Ages*, New Delhi, 2000, p. 11.
\(^{143}\) Indu Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 1.
\(^{144}\) Ibid., p. 106.
\(^{146}\) Premalatha P.N., *op.cit.*, p. 172.
\(^{147}\) Das S., *Purdah- The Status of Indian Women*, New Delhi, 1929, p. 147.
\(^{148}\) Ibid., p. 148.
Awareness on Women Education

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the press started its campaign in bringing awareness about the women education among the public. According to the Stri-Dharma the ignorance of women was the giant cause of national degradation, poverty, mutual distrust and downfall.\(^\text{149}\) There was a conservative thinking about the women’s education. Most of the people had a thought that the women’s education was an unnecessary one. There was an old saying in Tamil, “Aduppu oothum pennukku padippu etharku?, Panai surandum pennukku padippu etharku?” (Education is unnecessary one for the kitchen dwelling women community).\(^\text{150}\) The Kudiyarasu raised a question to the orthodox society if the education was unnecessary to the kitchen dwelling women, was it necessary for the men, who were believed to have already attained the so called knowledge.\(^\text{151}\)

While the Indian Universities Commission was set up for the promotion of higher education, there was stringent attitude to introduce even the primary education for girls in India. The press laboured hard to create awareness against this attitude among the masses. In 1901, the monthly journal Vichithira Vinotha Patrikkai classified the stages of women as three and the second stage was declared as the stage of attaining education.\(^\text{152}\) The paper Penkalvi\(^\text{153}\), published by Thayarammal also echoed the same thought for the upbringing of women. It stated that even to work as a coolie, the women should have minimum education.\(^\text{154}\) The Bhulokavyasan registered the same view in 1905. It strongly criticized the orthodox people who denied education to the women and considered them as fools and idiots.\(^\text{155}\) The Stri-Dharma insisted the learning as the primary duty of the Indian women.\(^\text{156}\)

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\(^\text{149}\) Stri-Dharma, Madras, February 1930, p. 145.

\(^\text{150}\) "Aduppu oothum pennukku padippu etharku?, Panai surandum pennukku padippu etharku?" (Education is unnecessary one for the kitchen dwelling women community).

\(^\text{151}\) Kudiyarasu, Erode, 5 April 1931, p. 5.

\(^\text{152}\) Vichithira Vinotha Patrikkai, Madras, January 1901, p. 213.

\(^\text{153}\) The title of the journal Penkalvi itself means the Women’s Education

\(^\text{154}\) Penkalvi, Madras, March 1914, pp. 149-150.

\(^\text{155}\) Bhulokavyasan, Madras, August 1905, p. 321.

\(^\text{156}\) Stri-Dharma, Madras, October 1919, pp. 114-115.
neglecting attitude of the parents, the Prajhanukoolan requested them to educate their female children.\textsuperscript{157}

Subramania Bharathi condemned the parents for making their female children very weak. In his paper \textit{India}, he further condemned the partiality shown to girls to study; whereas the boys in the families were given privilege to study.\textsuperscript{158} The \textit{Kudiyarasu} insisted that the liberation of our country solely depended upon the liberation of women, and their liberation depended upon their development, and their development depended mostly upon the progressive education they received.\textsuperscript{159}

The \textit{Kumaran} opined that women were enslaved by denying education to them; due to that, women lost their internal futuristic vision and became blind towards life.\textsuperscript{160} Even the conservative paper \textit{Gnanabanu} strongly registered the same idea with an example of Goddess \textit{Saraswathi}. If the Goddess \textit{Saraswathi} was praised for her wisdom, denying education to the women community was an act of foolishness.\textsuperscript{161} It further quoted that in Belgium, a women of seventy one years went to school to learn, as an example to boost the minds of women that age was not a bar for education.\textsuperscript{162} The \textit{Vidhya Banu} asserted that the right to education was for both the genders. The paper considered education for women as a right not as a favour.\textsuperscript{163} The \textit{Chinthamani} focused in its editorial that in past, education was common to all, but later it was divided into male education and female education and this division was the main cause for the fall of female education.\textsuperscript{164} To boost up the female education, the \textit{Nattukottai Vaisyan} vehemently criticized the conservative thinking that the educated women were always disobedient to their husbands and the education would spoil their chastity also.\textsuperscript{165} It also raised a question to the conservatives if there was any justice in denying education to the women community.\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{157} Prajhanukoolan, Thiruchirappalli, September 1905, p. 342.
\item \textsuperscript{158} \textit{India}, Madras, 2 May 1908, pp. 5-6; Seeni.Viswanathan, \textit{KalaVarisaipaduthappatta Bharathi Padaippugal}, Vol. III, p. 291.
\item \textsuperscript{159} Kudiyarasu, Erode, 29 June 1930, P. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{160} Kumaran, Karaikudi, November- December, 1930, pp. 169-173.
\item \textsuperscript{161} Gnanabanu, Madras, May 1914, p. 48.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid., June 1914, p.7 2.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Vidhya Banu, Madras, May 1912 , p. 174.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Chinthamani, Madras, September 1924, pp. 35-37.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Nattukottai Vaisyan, Palayamkottai, April-May 1917, p. 639
\item \textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p. 638.
\end{itemize}
The *Gunabodhini* counseled that arranging marriages for the young girls was not an achievement but offering them education was an achievement.\(^{167}\) To develop the female education, it allotted a separate page under the title of women’s education. It revealed the scientifically proved truth that the brain of a woman was more competent than that of man. Depriving a chance to utilize their brain was the greatest setback for them.\(^{168}\) To induce the noble idea of female education in the minds of the male youth, it called the husbands of educated girls as blessed.\(^{169}\) It characterized the educated wife as an angel of the house and an asset to her husband, whereas the uneducated wife as a devil.\(^{170}\) It wrote that a sparrow could not be equaled to an eagle, likewise the uneducated women, in spite of her worldly knowledge, could not be equaled to the educated women. Thus, the paper considered the expenses for the female education as an investment.\(^{171}\) It further added that having an uneducated wife for an educated husband would be like a man without moustache on one side.\(^{172}\) To have better results from the menfolk, it utilized the example of moustache, which they considered as a symbol of their manliness. According to the *Ooliyan*, a family with educated husband and educated wife was ever better than that of illiterate wife with literate husband and both illiterate, such educated family used to set an example for the society.\(^{173}\)

There was an orthodox question whether the women would go to employment after she got educated and so providing female education resulted in waste of money and time. The *Gunabodhini* answered the question that the very purpose of education was to expand the horizon of knowledge.\(^{174}\) At least the women must be literate enough to read her personal letters.\(^{175}\) This basic education must be learnt from her husband or from her brothers.\(^{176}\)

\(^{167}\) *Gunabodhini*, Bangalore, September 1919, p. 76.
\(^{173}\) *Ooliyan*, Karaikudi, 24 September 1920, p.7
The Kalaimagal, published from Pondicherry viewed that the ignorance of the parents was responsible for the ignorance of women in the society. It pointed out that our society existed uncivilized by neglecting female education. Providing education to the women was the only means to civilize our society. It criticized the conservative thought of the society that the educated wives would be ready to write illegal letters to their illegal husbands. It requested the society not to preempt the female education in the name of culture and religion. Criticizing the conservative ideas, the Kudiyarasu asked a question if the educated wife was ready to write a letter to her illegal husband, was an educated man ready to write illegal letters to his illegal wife. It gave the answer too; one’s worst character and behavior depended upon the living circumstances but not caused by the education. As the answer to the conservative ideas, the Vivga Bodhini registered its strong opinion that the character and behavior of the women could be positively molded by the education she learnt and by the books she used to read.

The Thamilaham observed that the question, whether female education was necessary or not, itself was unnecessary. Contrary to this, any concept would become the butt of ridicule. The Kudiyarasu further simplified the concept that how the beautiful flower without fragrance would become useless; similarly, a woman without education would become useless. Education for a woman stood as a crown than her beauty. It added that the education would impart knowledge and discipline in the minds of women, so it was the best seethanam for a woman and it was impressible. The press utilized the examples of seethanam and flowers, the things liked by women to create awareness about women’s education.

In order to encourage the women’s education, the press used to publish the women celebrities often. The magazine Penkalvi published news proudly about

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178 Ibid., September 1915, pp.224-228.
179 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 24 April 1932, p. 6.
181 Thamilaham, Tanjore, 22 September 1931, pp. 57-60.
182 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 17 May 1925.
183 Seethanam is the gift given by the bride’s family to the bride groom during the marriage ceremony.
Kamkoti Natarajan, who was appointed as the first Indian lady teacher by the University of Madras in the Department of History in August 1916. Through this news, the paper insisted the necessity of the historical education for the women.\textsuperscript{185} The paper \textit{Vaisya Mitran} carried the same news in order to motivate the Indian women to learn to attain such great positions.\textsuperscript{186}

The \textit{Swadesamitran} observed that the female education mixed up with the social questions as the main cause for its slow progress. It requested the public to change some social customs in order to develop female education.\textsuperscript{187} It criticized the government’s lethargy in the matter of female education.\textsuperscript{188} The \textit{Vidyabhanu} expressed its unhappiness over most of the wealthy Indians who were not interested in starting girls’ schools in various parts of Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{189}

**Conservative Limitations**

The \textit{Stri-Dharma} categorized the important obstacles in the way of women’s education; they were conservatism, early marriage of women, \textit{purdah} system in the case of Muslim girls, inefficiency of the present system of education, missionary influence and the poor curriculum. The paper demanded not to bother about the obstacles but to give importance to the education of the women.\textsuperscript{190} The \textit{Hindu Nesan} observed the three causes which, according to the government, impeded the growth of female education, were the paucity of teachers, the unsuitability of the present system of education to girls and the flagging of spirit attendant on the rigour of examinations. The paper criticized the government’s view and said the main cause was the means of female education not being devised by the government. It urged the government to make proper means for the growth of female education.\textsuperscript{191} The following were the common conservative obstacles on the way of women’s education;

\textit{i) Conservative Thoughts}

Generally all the papers echoed the importance of education for the women. But some magazines fixed certain limitations for that. The \textit{Vedantha Dipikai}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{185} Pennkalvi, Madras, September 1916, pp. 286-287.
\bibitem{186} Vaisya Mitran, Devakottai, 18 September 1916.
\bibitem{187} Swadesamitran, Madras, 18 July 1906.
\bibitem{188} Ibid., 26 September 1913.
\bibitem{189} Vidyabhanu, Madras, 8 May 1915, MNPR., p. 541.
\bibitem{190} Stri-Dharma, Madras, November 1933, pp. 14-18.
\bibitem{191} Hindu Nesan, Madras, 3 December 1919, MNNPR., Vol. II, 1919, pp. 1847-1848.
\end{thebibliography}
wrote that though giving education to the women was a *dharma*, it could not be told as necessary one. It added that the women could not attain wisdom only through the education, and there were number of wise women without education.\(^{192}\) Such negative ideas caused the set back in the growth of women’s education.

**ii) Missionary Menace**

Another set back was that admitting women in the Christian educational institutions was vehemently opposed by the traditionalists. There were some instances of conversion into Christianity also. The *Anandha Bodhini* preferred illiteracy for women rather than studying in the missionary institutions.\(^{193}\) It expressed its view that while sending the girls to the missionary institutions; they were handed over to the hell.\(^{194}\) After much deliberation, it expressed its opinion that the public should not bother about such minor problems while giving education to women.\(^{195}\) In a later issue, it expressed the truth that the kitchen dwelling women made their step towards education in spite of social hurdles and demanded to establish Hindu institutions for the noble cause of women’s education.\(^{196}\) Thus, in course of time the paper widened its view in favor of female education. When there was a proposal of starting Women’s Christian College in Madras, even the liberal papers like *The Hindu* and the *New India* exposed their dissatisfaction\(^{197}\). The *New India* raised the question, “is it possible that the Hindu fathers would be sound to send Hindu girls over sixteen to reside under Christian care?” It added that the period was a *sine qua non* for the girl’s education and the starting of the missionary college would be a deadly blow on it.\(^{198}\) But the *Giruhalakshmi* expressed that having separate educational institutions for Hindu, Muslim and Christian women was a waste of money, that money could be spent in useful ways to improve women’s education and on the top of that it would affect the unity of the society.\(^{199}\)
iii) Future Fear

Another stumbling block was the fear about the future of men that due to the education of women, the life of men would be at stake regarding employment and the need for separate educational system was insisted by the Anandha Bodhini.\textsuperscript{200} This exposed the fear of this conservative paper that if the women would learn all the things learned by men, they would have understood the exploitations done to them by men for a long time.

iv) Construction of Curriculum

It was believed that the female education had no economic functions, needs or development of professional skills or expertise among women. Women’s education was to make them more efficient in house keeping, cooking and child caring.\textsuperscript{201} The role of education was viewed as improving the efficiency of women as wives and mothers and strengthened the hold of traditional values on society since women were the better carriers of these values.\textsuperscript{202} On the basis of the thoughts, the curriculum was constructed. The papers in Tamilnadu also gave their ideas on the construction of curriculum for the girls. Some papers like the Chinthamani insisted that only the family oriented curriculum was enough for women.\textsuperscript{203} It showed their backwardness in future thinking. Their idea of worldly education for men and family education for women was the attempt to lock again the women in the dark rooms. From another positive point of view, it was an attempt to appease the fundamentalists in favour of sending their girls atleast for this type of education.\textsuperscript{204} Likewise, the Chakkaravardhini suggested own language, mathematics, religious matters, discipline matters, house hold economy, hygiene, child health, painting, embroidery, cookery and music to be taught to the women.\textsuperscript{205} Most of the above lessons oriented with family life. Thought provoking subjects like history were missing in the list. The curriculum

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{200} Ananda Bodhini, Madras, December 1930, p. 325.
\textsuperscript{201} Meredith Borthwick, \textit{The Changing Role of Women in Bengal, 1849-1905}, Princeton, pp. 60-108.
\textsuperscript{203} Chinthamani, Madras, August 1927, pp. 29-31
\textsuperscript{204} Rajkumar, \textit{Women Education in India}, New Delhi, 1998, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{205} Chakkaravardhini, Madras, January 1913, pp. 171-172.
\end{footnotesize}
was not based on women’s liberation and it laid its emphasis on women’s unsalaried
labour in the family. Similarly, the Islamic paper *Quami Report* suggested the
curriculum should include the necessary requirements of the family life such as
management of household affairs, handicrafts and above all the religious
instructions.206

But the education for women should be a type of education that helps
the fullest development of women’s personality and trains her to be a useful member
of the society. There should be no basic difference in the curriculum between men and
women since their duties as citizens did not differ.207 The *Kudiyarasu* trumpeted
bluntly and positively that the curriculum should consist of astronomy, science, health
education and history. The syllabus should be against the existing superstitions. The
outdated male chauvinist syllabus should be thrown out.208 In the same line, the *Non-
Brahmin Youth* insisted the education given to women in elementary, secondary and
higher levels should make them enlightened in their spheres of daily life. A girl who
stopped after the elementary stage should be able to possess an elementary knowledge
of subjects that were useful in every day life, e.g. hygiene, first aid, domestic science,
general principles of nursing the sick, care of children, in addition to the instruction
she got. But the paper expressed its dissatisfaction that the education system was sadly
neglecting the development of women community.209

v) Co-Education

Yet another obstacle to women’s education erupted in the form of co-
education. Sending girls to the co-educational institutions was considered as a gaffe.
Muslims of the Madras Presidency strongly opposed co-education system even in the
primary stages.210 But the liberal journals supported the system of co-education. The
Committee on Women’s Education of 1938 had recommended co-education to avoid
duplication of expenses.211 In order to attain equal status for women with men, the

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208 *Kudiyarasu*, Erode, 14 August 1932, pp. 4 & 17.
209 *Non-Brahmin Youth*, Madras, February 1928, p. 9.
Hyderabad, 1997, p. 78.
Giruhalakshmi compelled co-educational system. The Kudiyarasu remarked that nothing was wrong in the system of co-education. In a backward economic condition, it was the suitable system. Through this system, women could be given education along with social awareness. The Hindu observed that the co-education system should be the rule in the primary schools. Due to the campaign of the press, the objection to the co-education of girls and boys gradually disappeared. The number of girls in boys’ schools had increased by 40.4 percent against the same in girls schools by 14.7 percent during the period between 1911 and 1924.

vi) Education for Muslim Girls

But in the conservative Muslim society, another hurdle arose from different angle. By whom, the education should be taught was their primary debate. Again the Chinthamani illustrated the education could be imparted to them through Muslim religious men or through women teachers. But it was essential to offer education to the Muslim women, which was their basic religious right. Giruhalakshmi published a news about a Muslim woman of Bombay aged about fifty was going to madharasa for studies and passed in all the subjects. Through this incident, the paper tried to induce the Muslim girls of Tamilnadu in favour of education and indirectly announced that age was not a bar for attaining education. The Mukhbir-I Deccan recommended that the Urdu should be used as a medium of instruction for Muslim girls, while there was no use of teaching in English. It added that any change in the mode of education and training would be injurious to the Muslim girls.

Muslims of the Madras Presidency were alone in observing purdah system. It secluded women from others. It was considered as the major obstacle for receiving education. Particularly when the Muslim girls were not allowed to write

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212 Giruhalakshmi, Madras, 1 November 1939, p. 767.
213 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 29 January 1933, p. 10.
214 The Hindu, Madras, 4 February 1936, pp. 54-55.
216 Chinthamani, Madras, May 1925, p. 497.
217 Ibid., p. 498.
218 Giruhalakshmi, Madras, April 1940, p. 250.
220 More, J. B. P., op. cit., p. 78.
221 Ram Sharma, S., Women and Education, New Delhi, 1995, p. 152.
the S.S.L.C. examination with purdah, it created sentimental problems. The Janavarthamani suggested that girls in purdah should be permitted to appear in examinations here as in Mysore State.222 The Kudiyarasu raised its voice strongly against the eve-teasing strongly which hampered the education of women.223

The Appeal of the Press to the Government

The press enacted a powerful campaign to realize the necessity of education for women. For that they sought the help of the government. The Chinthamani recommended the compulsory education of women224 and that too should be a free education.225 Unless the education of women should be made in the form of legislation, the attainment could be impossible. It pleaded the various organisations to give pressure to the government so that the education of women could be a great success.226

Subramania Bharathi also insisted in his paper India that western countries evolved plenty of strategies like free dress and food for poor girls to uplift education in their countries. Similarly India should also follow the foot steps of the western country to upgrade women’s education.227 The Ananda Vikadan expressed its view that compulsory education for women was the need of the time. It added that if a woman would get education, the whole family would be benefited.228

In the year 1922, the Vellore Municipal council passed a resolution with regard to the introduction of free and compulsory education to boys within their municipal limits. The Nyaya Dipika condemned the activity of the municipal council. It observed that they had done a mistake in not extending the same to the girls also, and wondered how the Minister of Education had given his assent to the partial treatment which the municipality had meted out to the boys as against the girls in the area under its control.229 The Educational Sub Committee of the Madras Corporation

223 Kudiyarasu, Erode, 22 April 1928.
224 Chinthamani, Madras, August 1924, pp.3-6; August 1927, pp. 29-31.
225 Ibid., August 1924, pp. 3-6.
226 Ibid., August 1927, pp. 29-31
227 India, 12 March 1910, p. 4; Seeni.Viswanathan, KalaVarisaipaduthappatta Bharathi Padaippugal, Vol. VI, p. 742
228 Ananda Vikadan, Madras, 20 June 1937, p. 69.
had recommended free and compulsory education only for boys and was of opinion that the time is not yet ripe for making educations compulsory in the case of girls. The Trilinga from Madras condemned the above matter and wrote that the compulsory primary education should be imparted to both boys and girls between the ages of five and ten, the Hindu customary practices did not stand in the way of young girls of such a tender age attending schools. It added that the entire funds to be devoted to a matter of this kind for the coming years should be spent only for the education of boys was rather a narrow idea which betrayed the wrong attitude of man towards the women.\textsuperscript{230} The Dravidan asked the question, “When the time is ripe for women to become Councilors of the Madras Corporation, will any sensible person accept the argument that girls alone were not yet fit for free and compulsory education?” It added that if a country was marching towards the progress, both men and women therein should get the same degree of education.\textsuperscript{231} The Stri-Dharma demanded the inclusion of girls in all the schemes for compulsory and free elementary education that would be the justice for little girls.\textsuperscript{232}

But most of the Muslim papers opposed compulsory education for girls. The Azad Hind and the Quami Report opposed it by saying that women should not be made victims of any compulsory laws. Instead they advised home education by Muslim female teachers.\textsuperscript{233} The Hindu opinioned that free and compulsory education was the only way to abolish illiteracy in the country, but such scheme was not introduced officially in any province.\textsuperscript{234} Some Muslim papers like, the Mukhbir-I Deccan supported the compulsory elementary education scheme. It requested the opponents to remove the defects if any in the proposed scheme and benefit by the example of sister communities.\textsuperscript{235} The government charged Rupees Five from the Muslim girls for the conveyance arrangement to the school in certain areas of the presidency. \textbf{The Azad Hind} noted that the difficulties of the Muslim girls should be

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Stri-Dharma} Stri-Dharma, Madras, May 1922, p. 101.
\bibitem{The Hindu} The Hindu, Madras, 4 February 1936.
\end{thebibliography}
represented to the government and asked the government to provide needed facilities at no cost to spread education among the Muslim women.\textsuperscript{236}

The \textit{Kudiyarasu} reflected that the women should be appointed as a primary school teachers and put-forth the plea to the government.\textsuperscript{237} It also suggested that by appointing women teachers would enhance the strength of girls in the schools and education should be made compulsory even up to the age of sixteen.\textsuperscript{238} It requested the government to shoulder the financial burden for the development of women’s education. It added that the government to organize women’s meetings once in a weak in each and every village, in which special lectures were to be organized to impart the worldly knowledge to the drop out girls from the schools. In such meetings, the drop-out girls should be given proper counseling for their bright future.\textsuperscript{239}

The press even demanded scholarships for women’s education. It opinioned that imposing the financial burden on the parents would be an obstacle for their education and listed the scholarships rendered by private organisations to create an awakening among women.\textsuperscript{240} When a demand arose for grant of free scholarships to girls above twelve in 1914, the government refused to grant it. Condemning the above matter, the \textit{Andhra Patrika} wrote that it was improper and ruinous to female education while there were already many social obstacles to it. The paper further stated that among the higher classes, girls above the age of twelve were not sent to school generally. The courage to depart from the prevailing custom and continue sending their girls to school even after they had attained the age of twelve was considered as a Herculean task. It added that during that time, female students above the age of twelve are mainly widows belonging to higher castes, whose helplessness was a well-known fact whose social status was simply miserable. It pointed out that education was on all hands admitted to be a principal source of relief to them and if they were not granted scholarships, they had no choice but to give up education.

\textsuperscript{236} \textit{Azad Hind}, Madras, 11 August 1929, \textit{MNNPR.}, Vol. II, 1929, p. 1127.
\textsuperscript{237} \textit{Kudiyarasu}, Erode, 24 February 1929
\textsuperscript{238} \textit{Ibid.}, 18 May 1930, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{239} \textit{Ibid.}, 10 January 1932, p. 18
\textsuperscript{240} Premalatha, P.N., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 174.
paper concluded with a request that some members of the Legislative Council would endeavor to get the government order to be cancelled.\textsuperscript{241}

The editor of the \textit{Giruhalakshmi} wrote a note that the government should exempt the girl students irrespective of caste and religion from the payment of school fees. It said that the above demand was copied from the writings of Subramania Bharathi.\textsuperscript{242} The \textit{Giruhalakshmi} published an announcement of scholarships from Thakkar Jayanthi Organisation for Harijan girls for the purpose of higher studies. It recommended the deserved Harijan women to apply for the scholarship.\textsuperscript{243} The \textit{Swadesamitran} pointed out that although, the government was increasing the fund allotted for education year by year, it was not sufficient enough to the increase of the girl students. The \textit{Desabakthan} urged the government to increase the fund for education liberally, as equal to the increase of students.\textsuperscript{244} The \textit{Andhra Patrika} viewed the same thing and requested the government to increase the fund allotted for female education.\textsuperscript{245} The \textit{Stri-Dharma} condemned the government’s attitude in allotting the meager funds and demanded to increase the fund for female education.\textsuperscript{246}

As a result, the education of women gained its momentum. In order to improve the number of teachers, the \textit{Stri-Dharma} demanded for the establishment of the Teacher Training Schools.\textsuperscript{247} Likewise, the \textit{Sasileka} also insisted the government to establish more number of teacher training schools for women in various parts of the presidency to meet out the increasing demand at the girls’ schools.\textsuperscript{248} The \textit{Swadesamitran} wrote that sufficient number of girl students would not come to men’s college at Madras.\textsuperscript{249} It pointed out the fact that there was not one college for girls in the whole of Madras Presidency before 1914. It showed the government’s dormant attitude towards female higher education and it requested the government to show full

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{Giruhalakshmi}, Madras, 1 September 1939, p. 646.
\textsuperscript{243} \textit{Ibid.}, May 1940, pp. 258-259.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{Stri-Dharma}, February 1933, p. 212.
\textsuperscript{247} \textit{Ibid.}, June 1922, pp. 121-124.
\textsuperscript{249} \textit{Swadesamitran}, Madras, 10 February 1913.
interest on the higher education for women.\textsuperscript{250} It requested the government to establish a separate college for women as early as possible.\textsuperscript{251}

In order to promote the health education among women the \textit{Sasikeka} suggested that medical colleges for women should be opened in different parts of the country, and those women who secured high marks in the school final examination should be admitted into them, and trained for the L.M. & S. Degree examination.\textsuperscript{252} The \textit{Lokaranjani} prayed the Government of Madras to introduce industrial education forming part of the curriculum in the several girls’ schools in the Madras Presidency as it was in Bengal.\textsuperscript{253}

\textbf{Fruitful Reactions}

By 1921, there was a definite change among the educated Indians, who were eager to provide good education to their daughters for various socio-economic reasons.\textsuperscript{254} During the period the parameters of women’s education were redefined.\textsuperscript{255} The period (between the appointment of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 and the transfer of education to Indian Council in 1921) showed better progress in the education of women mainly due to the great public awakening.\textsuperscript{256} The public awakening was the primary result of the efforts taken by the press. Due to the continuous pressure of the press and the public, the Government of Madras passed the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920. It made provisions for compulsory education. But there was no provision for free female education. The \textit{Desabakthan} criticized the matter that if the female education was not made free, when it was made compulsory the poor girls would suffer a lot and so it requested the Government to make female education free and compulsory.\textsuperscript{257}

In 1921, the education became a Transferred Subject passing into the hands of Indian Provincial Ministers responsible to the elected Legislative Councils.

\textsuperscript{250} \textit{Ibid.}, 26 September 1913.
\textsuperscript{251} \textit{Ibid.}, 10 February 1913.
\textsuperscript{254} Nathulla Gupta, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{255} Malathi Ramanathan, \textit{Women’s Status and Education} in \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol. 32, No. 20/21 (May 17-30, 1997), pp. 1075-1076
\textsuperscript{256} S.P.Agrawal & S.J. Aggarwal, \textit{Women’s Education in India}, New Delhi, 1992, p. 22.
Girls were admitted into the classes at half rates of fees. A Deputy Directress of Public Instruction was appointed to monitor the girls’ education. The number of trained female teachers was increased. Additional facilities were provided for the training of women teachers.\textsuperscript{258} Up to 1914 there was no separate women’s college except two intermediate colleges in the Presidency. Due to the pressure given by the press and the public, the government took serious attempts to open separate women’s colleges. In 1914, Queen Mary’s College, the first Government college for women was started in Madras. In 1915, Women’s Christian College was started in Madras.\textsuperscript{259} In 1916, there were only 151 women students including 14 medical students admitted into the colleges. The number increased to 330 including 25 medical students in the year 1920-1921.\textsuperscript{260} In 1947, there were seven Arts colleges for women in the Presidency and 1585 women students were admitted in the women’s colleges besides 1961 women attending men’s colleges.\textsuperscript{261} The number of women students received medical education from the Madras Medical College in 1908-1909 was 13. It was increased to 14 in the year 1916, 25 in 1921, 38 in 1923, and 46 in 1926.\textsuperscript{262}

In 1945 there were 194 women students in Madras Medical College studying M.B.B.S.\textsuperscript{263} In Vellore, with the efforts of Ida Sophia Scudder, School of Nursing for women was established in 1909 and it was upgraded to the level of College of Nursing in 1946.\textsuperscript{264} In 1918, a Medical School for women in Vellore was started, which was upgraded to M.B.B.S. standard in 1942 and got the popular name, Christian Medical College, Vellore.\textsuperscript{265} In total, the number of educational institutions for women in the Madras Presidency increased by 180\% between 1920 and 1947.\textsuperscript{266}

In 1927, the Government of Madras made elementary education compulsory. But the Muslim girls were excluded from it due to the pressure of Muslim

\textsuperscript{258} Memoranda of the Administration of the Madras Presidency, Madras, 1930, p. 1207.
\textsuperscript{263} Madras in 1943(Outline of the Administration), Part-I, Madras, 1946, pp. 33-36.
\textsuperscript{264} The Official Guide to the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, India, p. 3
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{266} Mujibul Hasan Siddique, \textit{Women Education}, New Delhi, 2001, p. 125.
papers and people. The *Stri-Dharma* condemned the action of the government and demanded that compulsory primary education be provided for every Muslim girl. 267 Hence, the Muslim girls were in the backward state and it was a serious obstacle to the progress of the community. The *Stri-Dharma* further demanded that a hostel should be constructed for the Muslim girls studying in the Hobart School, the only secondary school in the Presidency especially for the Muslim girls. 268 Because of the continuous propaganda by the women’s organisations and the press, Muslims themselves later started demanding the extension of compulsory education to their girls. 269

The Government of Madras gave fifty percent concession to the girls students who were undergoing secondary level education in 1929. 270 But the parents were ignorant of the concession and continuously avoided sending their girls to the schools. 271 The *Kudiyarasu* did its level best to propagate it to make awareness of the concession among the parents. 272

Ignorance is the root cause of women enslavement. Through education and reading the windows of thought were opened through which they breathe the ideas of women liberation. So far their ignorance and male-chauvinist society segregated them from the main stream. They were deprived of that and that too was not realized by them. Education is a non gender biased one. It is common for all. The exodus of the press for ages came across many hurdles and reached its victory at last. The press in Tamilnadu manifested the dictum that there cannot be educated people without educated women. 273 It stimulated women to learn more and transformed the parents from their orthodox views. No man out of bedlam could deny the fact that the press played an integral part in the enhancement of women’s education on par with men at present.

267 *Stri-Dharma*, Madras, March 1928, p. 38.
268 Ibid., November 1927, p. 212.
270 Madras Education Rules 1929, Article 92., Madras, 1929.
272 Ibid.