Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter is schemed in such a way that it throws light on the key concepts of the study regarding gender mainstreaming and it furnishes the background and theoretical information on these concepts and gives conceptual clarification. It is in the light of this information that the empirical data is analysed in the later chapters of the study.

Women comprise half of the world’s population and contribute in multiple ways to society. As homemakers they runs the household, as farmers, they cultivate crops, as workers they produce goods and as professionals they serve in various positions. Considering all this, the status of women should be high corresponding with their hard work and contribution. Yet they remain invisible, unsung, unheard, unwanted and subjugated. One of the major intentions of development workers is to bring change in their status. To enable them to improve their positions, development initiatives have been taken measures from time to time. Initially, the focus was on women getting education and good health so that they could play their reproductive roles in a better way. Gradually, development planning focused on women’s needs and priorities so that they are empowered and eventually it shifted to gender mainstreaming.

The importance of gender mainstreaming has been widely discussed since government’s commitment to the concept in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. In recent years it has become generally accepted that gender equality is a prerequisite for, rather than a result of sustainable human development. Gender mainstreaming is an essential strategy not only for
attaining gender equality, but also for the sustainable development of societies as a whole.

Since the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, National Women’s Machineries (NWMs) around the globe have been grappling with the complex task of turning the concept into reality. To implement gender mainstreaming strategies, they often had to redefine themselves and their roles, structures and mandates within their communities and governments.

Gender equality contributes substantially in improving the well-being of women, men and children and it has become an issue of development interventions. Principles of equality and social justice requires ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity for expressing and using their potential irrespective of sex, race, colour, caste, class, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation and disability. The importance of gender concerns to successful project and programme implementation and to promote social welfare and economic efficiency as well as in addressing social, economic and political inequalities are now widely acknowledged. Gender and development is becoming an accepted perspective in practical development work. The emancipation processes initiated by Social Activists, Women’s Groups, Governments, NGOs & Diocesan Social Service Societies have helped to bring this agenda to the forefront and now it has become a major concern across the spheres in development.

World leaders, NGOs, donor agencies and multilateral institutions agree that development and democracy both fail unless women are included on an equal footing with men. Every Diocesan Social Service Societies are giving paramount importance to ensure gender participation for bringing out gender equality and for this, they are giving maximum opportunities in decision
making, education, planning, implementation etc., with this they become self reliant and they stand for the sustainable development. The opinion of Justice Chinnappa Reddy in relation to law and social change is that, “The discovery of new principles and the creative application of old principles is the only way for the judiciary to keep pace with the vast social changes taking place outside the courts and to contribute to these changes.” Thus women are agents of change and not victims of change.

1.1 Gender and Sex

The term ‘Gender’ refers to the social construction of differences between men and women. These are determined by social expectations, and it is a matter of culture. Gender also refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. Sex is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible differences in genitalia, the related differences in procreative function. (Oakley, A., 1985)

Scholars say that sex determines gender because gender varies across cultures. Gender is culturally relative. It even undergoes change over time. Gender also connotes a hierarchy. Gender relations are relations of power—men constitute a class which dominates women and keeps them subordinated. It is not that women are innately inferior to men. Overall, the concept of gender differentiates the sexual differences based on biology from those assigned by culture to men and women to play their respective roles in a society.

1.2 Difference between Sex and Gender

The most obvious and easily perceived difference between men and women is the physical difference. This is covered by the term sex. The sexual difference between male and female lies chiefly in their reproductive organs
and their secondary sexual characteristics. (Rubin, G., 1975) uses the term sex-gender system to describe this organization. These differences vary from country to country, culture to culture and through historical periods of time depending on the manner in which each society chooses to regulate its reproduction. This socially constructed difference which caters to the organization and ideological/ cultural needs of a society is called gender.

Sex refers to the biological difference that is related to the act of reproduction and is on the whole fixed. The basic difference between sex and gender is that sex does not vary across geographical, historical and cultural planes. Differences between males and females are by and large constant and easily perceived. Gender however, varies across contexts, is constantly changing and fluid while giving the illusion of being fixed and permanent.

Gender refers to the socially constructed and culturally variable roles that women and men play in their daily lives. As a conceptual tool it has been used to highlight various structural relationships of inequality between as manifested in the labour markets and in political structures, as well as in the household. The class distinction on which the term’s legitimisation depends rests on the progressive demarcation of a biological ‘sex’ and a socially constructed ‘gender’. ‘Sex’ refers to the anatomical differences between male and female, which are much the same across space and over time. Gender, the socially constructed differences and relations between males and females varies greatly from place to place and from time to time. Gender can therefore be defined as a notion that offers, a set of frame works within which feminist theory has explained the social and discursive construction and representation.
The institutional context says that the state, NGOs and mainstreaming Women’s issues are increasingly taken seriously by the Indian Government (e.g. increasing references to women in Five Year Plan documents, the issue of special policy documents on women; and the setting up of various national and state-level bodies to handle women’s affairs). There has also been an increase in special development schemes for women and in gender training of government functionaries. There is no consistent overall policy framework on gender issues to which government departments can be held accountable. The national machinery dealing with women and development lacks co-ordination, resources and power. The system needs reform.

Women have been portrayed in the past as economically dependent on men. This relationship is changing now that the majority of the women are in employment and the number of men in full-time employment is reducing. In the 1990s, the majority of new jobs in Britain are being filled by women. These changes in the work patterns of men and women are to the disadvantage of both young men and women without qualifications or who are unskilled. Men have to respond to these changes as well. The impact of male unemployment on relationships with women and children, its link with ill-health, depression and suicide, and the use of violence and abuse against women and children all have an impact on the relationships that women have with men both within and outside the family. Holding the focus on women and their needs remain difficult. The charge that women’s gains inevitably undermine men continues to be made. It is children, men and other dependent adults who are psychologically, and often socially and financially, dependent on women. Their state is similarly dependent on women carrying out their reproductive (within due limits) and caring functions. However, this reverse dependency is invisible, hidden within an ideology that defines
women as dependents of men. To reframe the dependency of women as founded on the dependence of others upon them is to reveal a more complex and valid truth.

Men still hold most of the power in the family, even when they are living outside it, and in the work place. Gender and class interact in complex ways, and women workers have the same problems in their relationships with men as do the women who services.

**Women and access to economic resources**

Many middle class women would be unable to maintain their economic position on their own. In the main, their husband’s incomes are essential to their class position. Furthermore, even when women earn, they often earn less than men, and even when they earn the equivalent of the man or more, they may not have control over their own incomes (Homer et al., 1984).

Women’s work patterns tend to be concentrated in the less-secure areas of part-time and time-limited work. Their economic independence relies on job security and reductions in the resources- including the human resources- available to meet social needs. For women workers, a loss of earning power means becoming depended, directly on men or independently through the state.

Power and powerlessness affect women of all ages, but in a society where youthfulness is valued and identified with vigour, beauty and creativity, and where downsizing in organizations include early retirement packages, ageing brings specific difficulties. Younger women, in contrast, suffer restricted access to benefits and higher levels of unemployment even though the majority of the new jobs in the UK are expected to be filled by women.
Inequality in access to and participation in economic activities of women as compared to men is another aspect of feminization of poverty. Women in relation to men are seen as dependents who are cared for. The washing, cooking, cleaning, nursing, entertaining and so on that women do for men are invisible labour and remain so in spite of the fact that women in the 1990s are now key contributors to the household income. Younger women are defining themselves less and less in terms of their relationship with a man or of supporting him to achieve his own goals.

The lack of reciprocity is ignored or is masked by the assumptions about the amount men contribute towards carrying out household tasks. There been little change in the allocation of responsibilities over the past 10 years in spite of major continuing changes in the composition of households and in the number of working parents. (Wilkinson, 1994)

Women here are not carers but social subordinates; labour is a right, a gift that cannot be recognised or counted in assessing the nature of the relationship. Failure to comply with these unrecognized labour requirements becomes a justification for maltreatment.

All approaches to working with women treat identity as crucial in overcoming specific symptoms of distress and in empowering women to use their own resources and those of others to overcome the social problems they face (Burden and Gottleib, 1987; Phillipson, 1992; Morris, 1996). In many life experiences, women report a lack of self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness.

Commonly cited problems in working with women are lack of self-esteem, depression and lack of confidence and motivation (Langham and Day, 1992; Smith and Nairne, 1995).
The survival behaviour of women creates and maintains a sense of self-worth that enables women to continue to meet or alter the demands made upon them. Survival behaviour is also affected by important differences between women, such as social class, ethnic group or specific life events. Women take positive action in everyday of their lives that is more than survival in holistic conditions. Sometimes, women use survival strategies that no longer fit their circumstances, undermine their self-esteem and close down options.

Women live in a web of relationships through which family members and others intervene in women’s lives (Hanmer., 1996). In their daily lives, women are active participants who not only struggle against domination, control and coercion but use skills and strategies to confront and manage in adverse social conditions, such as poverty, a lack of community resources and discrimination. Women participate actively in the web of relationships in which their lives are located, seeking and offering support, friendship and caring. Women’s most supportive relationships are often with other women in the family and with their children.

Woman’s capacity to care is based on her subordinate position to men. Women ‘become highly attuned to the dominants, able to predict their reactions of pleasure and displeasure... Here... is where the story of “feminine intuition begins”’. (Baker Miller, 1976, P.11)

Women contribute earnings to the family income that help to keep a substantial number out of poverty. While many women succeed against the odds, prioritising the home can mean that some women are socialised out of their skills and abilities (Gottlieb, 1980)
Women’s powers over men are dependent on their ability to manipulate; it is covert rather than overt (Gottlieb, 1980).

The husband’s position of power as a male is permanent. He may choose to give up some or all of it, but the ‘equality of the “equal” marriage depends on the man’s refusal to use the power society has given him’ (New and David, 1985, P.232).

1.3 Perspectives on Women and Development

1.3.1 When we analyse the paradigm of development earlier it was Women in Development approach, emerged during 1970s. This approach to or paradigm of development that recognises the distinct needs and capacities of women and focuses on developing programmes, projects and activities that would make women an integral part of the productive sector.

1.3.2. Women and Development: An approach to or paradigm of development that focuses on the relationship between men and men, and the development process. It recognises that men from developing economies who do not have elite status are also adversely affected by the structures of inequalities within the international system. It gives little analytical attention to the social relations of gender within classes.

1.3.3 Gender and Development: This approach started in the year 1980 as an enhancement to WID. This approach recognises women as agents of development, not merely as passive recipients of development. Gender is not a “women’s issue” but a relational issue. Women and men have special and different needs and cannot be treated as a homogeneous group. Women tend to be disadvantaged relative to men and the nature of inequality is often systemic and structural, the gender differences can also result in men being disadvantaged.
Men and women are different. Society treats them as different and pays detailed attention to maintain and emphasising that difference through clothes, ornaments, gestures and roles. Men and women are also similar but there is no general interest displayed in the similarity. Although women and men are human beings, social beings who share many things in common, their similarity and commonality of interests are often forgotten. If anything the similarity is dismissed, and yet women’s separate and specific needs do not receive much attention. At best, their needs and interest are subsumed under the “general” interest which is men’s. We are used to hearing words “men include women”. This assumption instead of including women ensures that men are the norm and women are perceived as “also” there. This perception affects the quality of women’s lives in profound ways and so we need to examine and understand the difference and similarities between men and women and the basis for this assumption. And gender is the basis of these assumptions.

To understand the various levels at which gender operates, one must take a look at the family, at interpersonal levels, and at the way society is divided into the public and private spheres. One needs to go beyond production to reproduction, beyond the family to each institution to understand how gender operates there. Gender relations are present in all types of institution from the school, market, street or workplace to the state and religious institutions. It is important to understand how gender structures these institutions. And as we begin to understand each specific gender relations we can begin to work out strategies to transform them.

A rapidly globalising economy, an intensely communal culture and a rising caste consciousness are major forces shaping India’s development today. The recent incidents of war, communal riots, disasters etc will have lasting
impacts which are as yet difficult to discern. These events will influence not only material gender inequalities, but also the construction of gender identities and the way in which questions of gender are debated in years to come. They have also fostered relations of conflict between women along caste and communal lines.

Historically and in the contemporary context, gender roles and relations have been key actors utilized in the determination of who has the power to define and enact justice, as well as the manner in which it has been put into practice. While gender may not be referred to explicitly in judicial decisions, closer scrutiny of popular discussions of justice and specific case studies of decision-making procedures and punishments frequently reveal deep-seated assumptions that produce differential representations and experiences of justice for women, men, and children of different social identities and backgrounds. Given the presence of patriarchal relationships-where males are granted greater power and status than females-in numerous locations around the world, women in particular have felt the brunt of, and have sought to challenge, their marginalization and under representation in popular conceptions and practices of justice.

In the same way that feminist scholars and social activists have argued that gender roles-behaviours and practices differentially assigned to women and men-are socially constructed (i.e., they are not biologically determined, but are produced through social practices and discourses), researchers and social advocates have attempted to highlight the ways in which many dominant notions of justice reflect gender inequalities and sexist attitudes about fairness, accountability, and crime. (O’Brien, 2009)
1.4 Patriarchy

Patriarchy means male domination. It is an institution of men dominating women, and keeping them subordinated in power relationships. This could show up in the form of harassment, violence and insult in the family, at the workplace or anywhere in the society. In all spheres of life, men claim superior status to women.

1.5 Feminism

Feminism is defined as ‘an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women’s labour, fertility and sexuality in the family, at the work place and in society in general, and the conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation” Feminism is an ongoing struggle for women’s rights. The Beijing Conference in 1995 describes feminism as “looking at the world through women’s eyes.” So, anybody (man or woman) who is conscious of the existence of gender inequalities, male domination and patriarchy, and acts against it, is a feminist (Bhasin and Said Khan, 2005)

1.6 Concept of Power

Power in relation to socio-economic and political aspects indicate control over resources and decision making. The exercise of power by one over the other determines their perception, preferences and choices of a group. This has happened in gender relation where women have ‘internalised oppression’. When the control is internalised then it is necessary to create power in oneself.

According to Batliwala. S., (1995) power is “control over resources, the ideology and self, exercised in a socio-economic and political context among individuals and groups”. The resources include physical, human and
financial resources. Control over ideology is the ability to determine and shape beliefs, values, attitudes etc. Control over self is having thinking power, self-image, self-confidence and articulation.

1.7 Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment is a term used to describe a process by which powerless people become conscious of their own situation and organize collectively to gain greater access to public service or to the benefits of economic growth. Empowerment of women is essential to emancipate women from the social evils called traditional and cultural customs. Women are marginalised over years together at various stages, and also they are branded as weaker and are kept aside from reaching the front stage. In this context, empowerment is required to increase awareness and capacity building for their greater participation in the decision-making and transformation action (Suguna B, 2001). This process enables women to make choices in personal life regarding education, employment, marriage etc. Providing various choices in woman’s life depends on the support given by family members, institutional and community support. In this line of thinking (Chandra 1997) defined “Empowerment of women as the redistribution of power that enable thus to challenge patriarchal ideology and the male dominance. It is both a process and the result of the process. In this process, not only increase their capacity; but also enable them to face new challenges in the overall development of the household and also to contribute to the local community development. This helps women to be more aware of their constitutional, legal rights, opportunities available for them to make their lives better. More importantly, the strategy of empowerment also helps women to achieve comprehensive development.
Empowerment of women as a policy objective implies that women legitimately have the ability and should, individually and collectively, participate effectively in decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives, especially about societal priorities and development directions.

1.8 Types of Gender Inequalities

There are many kinds of gender inequality or gender disparity which are as follows:

1.8.1 Natality inequality: In this type of inequality a preference is given for boys over girls that many male-dominated societies have, gender discrimination can visible itself in the form of the parents wanting the newborn to be a boy rather than a girl.

1.8.2 Professional or Employment inequality: In terms of employment as well as promotion in work and occupation, women often face greater handicap than men. A country like Japan and India may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic facilities, and even, to a great degree, in higher education, and yet progress to prominent levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more challenging for women than for men.

1.8.3 Ownership inequality: In many societies the ownership of property can also be very imbalanced. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very inequitably shared. The absence of claims to property can not only condense the voice of women, but also make it harder for women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social activities.
1.8.4 Household inequality: There are often sufficient, basic disparities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different outward appearances. Even in cases in which there are no overt symbols of anti-female bias in, say, survival or son-preference or education, or even in promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. The reach of this inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also plagiaristic inequalities in employment and recognition in the outside world.

1.8.5 Special opportunity inequality: Even when there is rather little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities of higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world, in India too.

Amartya Sen (2005) also points out to a correlation between women’s well being and agency, in his argument that when women lack decisional power within the family which amounts to a deprivation of women’s effective agency, this can adversely affect their own well being.

1.9 Gender Justice

Gender justice refers to the ability to receive, mobilize for, and be informed about social practices and procedures that reinforce certain ideals of accountability, fairness, equality, civil liberties and human rights by men and women. The concept of justice presumes that there is at least a minimally agreed upon moral and/or legal code that affords the opportunity to seek,
redress when individuals or groups have been victimized through physical or social hostilities and marginalization.

In relation to gender in particular, definitions of justice and the possibility of monitoring and penalizing unjust practices have been crucial components of addressing concerns such as sex discrimination in national and international legal frameworks, gender-related violence, gender-related stereotyping (e.g., in education and discussions around “appropriate” careers for women versus men), and gender inequalities in general. (O’Brien, 2009)

1.10 Constitutional provisions for gender justice

The constitution asserts that the equality before the law and the equal protection of laws shall be accessible for all. Similarly, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the basis of sex. Article 15(1) guarantees equalities of opportunities for all citizens in matters of employment. Article 15(3) provides that the state can make any special provisions for women and children. Besides, Directive Principle Of State Policy which concern women directly and have a special bearing on their status directly and have a special bearing on their status include Article 39(a) right to an adequate means of livelihood; (d) equal pay for equal work both men and women, (e) protection of health and strength of workers –men, women, children and Article 42 provides for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

In India, since independence, a number of laws have been enacted in order to provide protection to women. For instance the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, The Equal Remuneration Act 1986, The Hindu Marriage Act 1956, The Hindu Succession Act 1956, The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, the commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987,
Protection of the Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, etc. But, the laws have hardly implemented in their letter and spirit.

The sense of insecurity, humiliation and helplessness always keep a woman quiet. Our whole socialisation is such that for any unsuccessful marriage which results in such violence or divorce, it is always the woman, who is held responsible. Cultural beliefs and traditions that discriminate against women may be officially damage the reputation of but they continue to flourish at the grass root levels. Family relations in India are managed by personal laws. The four major religious communities are-Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi each have their separate personal laws. They are governed by their respective personal laws in matters of marriage, divorce, succession, adoption, guardianship and maintenance. In the laws of all the communities, women have fewer rights than that of man in corresponding situations. It is really that women of the minority communities in India continue to have unequal legal rights and even the women of the majority community have yet to gain complete formal equality in all aspects of family life.

1.11 Gender issues

The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that one in three women around the world will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her own lifetime.

The notion of “battered women,” with its emphasis on physical violence, fails to entirely capture the various ways in which intimate partners of either gender can be manipulated and abused and as a consequence, the term has been largely replaced by domestic violence (DV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and the more generic family violence.
According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, nonfatal IPV is most frequently committed by individuals of opposite genders. Females are more likely than are males to experience nonfatal IPV. Most victims of IPV are women. On average from 2001 to 2005, about 96 percent of females experiencing nonfatal IPV were victimized by a male, and about 3 percent reported that the offender was another female, whereas about 82 percent of males experiencing nonfatal IPV were victimized by a female and about 16 percent of males reported that the offender was another male. For homicides, intimate partners committed 30 percent of homicides of females, 5 percent of homicides of males. One of 14 men has been physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, or date at some time in their lives, and 86 percent of adult men who were physically assaulted were physically assaulted by a man and in only 56 percent of the times were these assaults by a stranger.

Battering appears to occur within every culture, and every religious orientation and all races are equally vulnerable.

Twenty-three percent of pregnant women seeking prenatal care are battered. In a survey of pregnant low income women, 65 percent of the women had experienced either verbal abuse or physical violence during their pregnancies.

From 2001 to 2005, females living in households with lower annual incomes experienced the highest average annual rates of nonfatal IPV. Females remained at greater risk than males within each income level.

The vast preponderance of violent acts in our culture are perpetrated by males and acted out against women, children, and other men. In about 95 percent of the cases of DV, the perpetrator is male, and even in situations
where women are violent, the violence tends to be less damaging and far less lethal than when men are violent. The dominant influence on male behavior is social expectation.

1.12 Gender and global issues

In the World Bank report highlights the major areas relate to gender and global issues are: gender and conflict, gender and the environment, gender and economic crisis and gender and culture.

Women and men experience violent conflicts in very dissimilar ways. The challenge is not only to act in response to the special but often deserted needs of women as a result of conflict, but also to better understand gender roles and processes relating gender and conflict throughout the phases of conflict, including male gender roles. Understanding in post-conflict reconstruction recommends that the demobilization and reintegration phase poses particular complications for women and girls. Women are not only victims of conflict, but can also make remarkable contributions to conflict resolution, management and peace building processes. In most cases of gender and conflict, gender tends to be equated with women, but only little mention about male gender roles in relation to violent conflict. Male identities, the link between masculinity and violence, and the particular situation of young males have received very little attention.

“Advancing gender equality may be one of the best ways of saving the environment, and countering the dangers of overcrowding and other adversities associated with population pressure. The voice of women is critically important for the world’s future – not just for women’s future.” (Amartya Sen)
According to UNEP, the discussion of Gender and Environment is based on two principles, that gender mediates human/environment interactions and all environmental use, knowledge, and assessment; and that gender roles, responsibilities, expectations, norms, and the division of labour shape all forms of human relationships to the environment.

As such UNEP feels that the issue of concern should be “gender and environment” rather than “women and environment”. The two broad principles noted above manifest themselves in a variety of environmental relations and interactions, including:

- Gender differences are evident in the use and management of natural resources, and unequal relationships in the family, community, etc. mediate women's access to resources;
- Gender differences are evident in livelihood strategies that are rooted in particular uses of the environment;
- Gender differences are evident in knowledge of the environment, knowledge of specific resources, and of environmental problems;
- Gender differences are evident in responsibilities for managing, owning, or stewarding resources, and in rights to resources;
- Gender differences are evident in encounters with the environment, in perceptions of the environment and in perceptions of the nature and severity of environmental problems;

All of the above contribute to the gender differences that are evident in accountability, stewardship, and action for the environment.

1.13 Women Empowerment Issues today in India

The issues facing women in India have their distinctive features as compared to the rest of the world. A confluence of history, mores and religion has kept the women subjugated by the patriarchal system for the past many centuries. The key issues facing women in India are the growing feminizations of
poverty- women, especially those from indigenous or minority culture suffer most from this abject poverty. This happens due to added responsibility, apart from the family and household functions, on the women to earn a living and the skewed patriarchal system that denies access to ancestral wealth. Around the world, and more so in India, while women work nearly 67% of working hours they earn only 10% of the income and own less than 1% of the land. Poverty often leads to economic exploitation and sexual abuse of the women. The most debilitating effect it has is in the fact that if the woman is unable to come out of poverty the cycle is perpetuated through her children, especially the girl child. Another aspect of this feminization of poverty is the inequality in access to and participation in economic activities as compared to men. Most of the work that women do, especially that at home or in the family fields, is not classified as an economic activity. Gender differences in the work place especially in the nature of work and the compensation continue to be widely prevalent.

Another issue is that of inequitable access to power and decision making. Inequities in the women’s share of decision making in the public domain as well as their private lives are Status of Women's Empowerment in the Poorest Areas of India evident in most societies. It is in this regard that international standards and conventions such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women); Conventions on the Rights of the Child etc. can be used as a powerful strategy of persuasion of governments. While women have enjoyed the right to vote for many years, they occupy only a small fraction of the seats in the legislature or parliament. The situation is slowly changing with the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments that have provided for reservation of 33% of the
seats in Panchayats and Municipalities for women, which was recently increased to 50%.

Violation of women’s human rights is the key issue that needs attention. The incidences of physical, sexual and psychological abuse of woman, even in her own home, are increasing by the day. Female foeticide and infanticide are still prevalent in some societies. Another form of abuse is trafficking in women, which is sometimes across international borders. Women often bear the brunt of riots, conflicts and insurgency. Violence against women, both domestic and societal, is also demonstrating an ever increasing trend. Cases of dowry deaths, rape and sexual molestation are regularly reported in spite of legislation and policies that specifically prohibit the same. Another horrifying violation of human rights that some women have to face at a very early age is being dragged into prostitution. Child Prostitution has increased dramatically over the years especially. Due to abject poverty, children especially girls, are exposed systematically to sexual abuse for the pleasure and profit of adults. Pornography and child prostitution are all pervasive evils. Parents are known to sell their girls to agents who take them to brothels and condemn them to a life of squalor and misery. Violence against women needs to be understood, recognized and addressed as a cross cutting issue of support, at individual and community level. This issue needs committed efforts and cannot be an appendage or an automatic offshoot of micro-credit programmes or even the ICDS programmes.

Another key issue which needs immediate attention is the inequalities and lack of access to education and literacy. While literacy rates have improved over the last fifty years, the female illiteracy rates are still alarming. This lack of education denies the women, their right to productive employment as also their legal rights. Illiteracy amongst women is mainly caused by
preference to the boys as compared to the girl in matters of education, textbooks and teaching styles that perpetuate gender type casting, poor infrastructure for the girls (especially those from religious minorities) and a host of other similar reasons.

Another area which requires prime importance is the inequalities and lack of access to health. While maternal mortality rates have decreased over the years much remains to be done in order to achieve parity with status of women's empowerment in the poorest areas of India the developed nations on this social indicator. This is mainly due to poor awareness of reproductive rights, poor nutrition, excessive workload and multiple children bearing.

The Gender Division of Labour that is prevalent in every society needs immediate and in depth intervention. Although gender roles and responsibilities differ widely among cultures, women typically have the major responsibility for tasks in the family related to reproduction, such as child-rearing and household maintenance. Both women and men are involved in productive labour, which includes wage employment and production of goods. However, their functions and responsibilities differ. At the community level, men tend to have formal leadership roles and perform high-status tasks while women often do the organizing and support work. Because women are active in all three types of labour (reproductive, productive and community), they are said to have a “triple role”. Most of the development projects have focused on women’s reproductive work as caregivers to children and families and ignored women’s economic roles and contributions. However, gender-focused projects recognize all the roles and responsibilities of women and men. They also recognize that women and men have different levels of access to resources and benefits from those resources.
1.14 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a new and dynamic process and the concept is highly contested in the development field. Gender mainstreaming (GM) has been endorsed officially at the international level since 1995. According to the Beijing resolution, “in addressing the issues and mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are made, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.” Gender equality is the goal of gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming gender within institutions and policy can be complicated because understanding about what it involves or looks like in practice is mixed. Gender mainstreaming is a strategic objective and it works towards this goal through communication and networking, capacity building, knowledge dissemination and informed policy advocacy. Mainstreaming requires the integration of gender equality concerns into every aspect of the development process, including the functioning of institutions of governance and development agencies.

Gender mainstreaming was defined by the UN in 1997 as “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels….. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”.

Gender mainstreaming has had a chequered history, with the loss of focus on women in policies and practice in some countries, but there is renewed attention to the need to ensure that women’s and men’s safety issues are taken into account at all levels of government, including through data
collection, and that women are specifically empowered to work in local contexts and with local governments. (Caroline Moser 2008).

Gender mainstreaming is a tool to better understand the causes of inequalities between women and men in our societies and come up with appropriate strategies to tackle them. The goal is to achieve equality between women and men. Equal participation of women and men in all aspects of society is crucial for lasting growth and democracy. It also symbolises a society’s level of political maturity. The failure to transform women’s (and thus also men’s) position has led policy makers and those in the equality field to question the impact of equal opportunities policies. They realised that society’s structures and practices and the relationship between women and men needed a radical rethink to root out the deep-seated and often hidden causes of inequality. They named this tool, the gender mainstreaming approach.

Gender mainstreaming recognises that initiatives specifically addressed to women, who often operate at the margins of society, although needed, are insufficient on their own to bring major change. While many are innovative and benefit the women who participate directly, they do not affect in a sufficient way the services or resource distribution of mainstream policies and projects and so do little to reduce or end inequalities between women and men. Gender mainstreaming challenges these mainstream policies and resource allocations. It recognizes the strong interlink between women’s relative disadvantage and men’s relative advantage. It focuses on the social differences between women and men: differences that are learned, changeable over time and vary within and between cultures.
Gender mainstreaming requires an equal representation of women and men in decision-making institutions. Every effort is made to broaden women's participation at all levels of decision-making. Gender mainstreaming is a potentially powerful tool for social change because it takes account of and responds to the intersections between power, wealth, knowledge, capabilities and rights in creating and sustaining gender inequality. The root cause of the problem lies in the social structures, institutions, values and beliefs which create and perpetuate the imbalance between women and men. It becomes imperative to understand the context and power structures, to listen and not preach, to respect and most importantly, to demonstrate patience. The issue is not how to “add” women to various processes but to reshape these processes to create the space for women’s and men’s involvement. Gender mainstreaming starts with an analysis of the everyday life situation of women and men; it makes their differing needs and problems visible ensuring policies and practices are not based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes. To tackle gender inequality effectively, one need to measure its indicators and identify its underlying causes. There is a need for more advocacy and more information campaigns explaining these issues, to make it clear that more gender-disaggregated information can help solve these problems. (Celia M. Reyes 2010).

The greatest challenge for gender mainstreaming lies in creating the willingness and attitude associated with working towards gender equality. This sort of influence and change is needed at all levels and it is important to enter any situation with caution and modesty. Change will happen slowly and will happen not on our behest, but on the willingness and the ownership of those who want it, when they want it.
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Policy-makers and programme managers can ensure better policy targeting, more effective delivery and greater equality if they take account of the different situations of women and men. Equality can mean treating all categories exactly the same (for example, when it comes to wages) and treating categories differently in recognition of their differences (maternity). It can mean introducing specific actions targeted at women or at men to
tackle persistent inequalities or changing mainstream policies to accommodate a diversity of circumstances.

The real challenge is to show that all can be benefited from a more equal society which built on recognition of difference, that addresses values of individual and group needs.

A woman focused approach views women’s lack of participation as the problem and the focus is only women. Here the problem is the exclusion of women and the goal of this approach is to be more efficient, effective development of women. Through this we can integrate women into existing structures. The strategies used were women only projects, increase women’s productivity, income and ability to manage the household whereas, a gender-focused approach is people-centred and the focus is on relations between women and men. The problem addressed was unequal relations that prevent equitable development and the full participation of women and men. The goal was equitable development with women and men sharing decision-making and power, opportunities and resources. The result was to transform unequal relations and structures; empower the disadvantaged and women and the strategies was to identify and address practical and strategic needs determined by women and men to improve their condition.

Gender mainstreaming can clear the way to seek common ground and meet the needs of each person, as a group and as an individual, avoiding a vision of the world that is defined solely by the unilateral dominant culture. Part of the problem is that equality is often perceived as a struggle between two groups-first group, in this case being men, giving up power and advantage in favour of the other group, in this case women. The real challenge is to show
that all can benefit from a more equal society build on recognition of difference, which addresses and values individual and group needs.

Gender mainstreaming covers- policy design, decision-making, access to resources, procedures and practices, methodology, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Gender mainstreaming recognises that existing structures are not gender-neutral but favour one sex or another in a variety of subtle and not so subtle ways. The result is that apparently gender-neutral policies can in fact reinforce divisions and consequently further disadvantage women or men. With gender mainstreaming, came the call for policies that accommodate a diversity of circumstances accepting that age, ethnic origin, disability and sexual orientation, for example, also have implications for a person’s ability to compete equally.

It is generally accepted that women have experienced systematic and persistent discrimination which reproduces itself giving rise to differences in women’s and men’s access to jobs, to resources and to power.

1.15 Gender-Based Analysis

Gender-based analysis (GBA) is the preferred terminology and is considered as the method for achieving GM. “GBA is a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programs and legislation on women and men. It makes it possible for policy to be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances. It is a tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options” [Status of Women Canada (1998) p. 4]
1.16 Women’s Safety Audit

Women’s Safety Audits are participatory mechanisms, similar to participatory rural appraisals, in which a group of women walk through a physical environment, evaluating how safe it feels to them and identifying ways to make the space safer. Recommendations made as a result of the audit process are presented to a wide range of social actors (local authority, landlords, bar owners, schools, etc). These exploratory walks may also include some men, and stakeholders such as local elected or city officials, and be conducted at various times of the day or night, and in different settings. They use a checklist incorporating principles including knowing where you are, where you are going, seeing and being seen, hearing and being heard, being able to escape and obtain help.

Gender and development is becoming an accepted perspective in practical development work. A focus on gender issues means looking at both women and men, whilst recognising that it is women who suffer from gender inequality and discrimination. The importance of gender concerns to successful project and programme implementation and to promoting social welfare and economic efficiency as well as in addressing social, economic and political inequalities, is now widely acknowledged.

1.17 Gender bias in social service provision

Gender bias in access to health care, education and other social services (e.g. water supply, sanitation and housing) is marked in India for two main reasons. There are inequalities within the household in food allocation and in spending on health care and education; and there are also clearly established gender biases in service delivery.
The combined result is that girls are less likely to receive medical care than boys, less likely to be admitted to hospital for treatment, and, in some instances, less likely to survive illnesses than boys. The poor nutritional status of girls and women means that their illnesses are of longer duration. Millions of children in India, but particularly girls, never attend school or drop out soon after initial enrolment. Considerable efforts are being made to increase girls’ access to education but the relative contribution of different interventions to increasing female enrolment is poorly understood.

The increasing burden of social sector expenditure on poor households is likely to reinforce existing patterns of gender bias, unless incentives are created for investment in female health and education.

NGOs are under increasing pressure to become alternative service deliverers to government, which may limit their flexibility, capacity for innovation and advocacy role. Scaling up may pose particular problems for women’s organisations and their multi-functionality may also limit their access to resources where these are channelled on a sectoral basis. Some women’s organisations may wish to retain an independent, social movement character, rather than become professionalised and reliant on external funds.

There are pioneering areas of NGO activity with a gender perspective in India which may need support, for example, attempts to increase the asset base (land, forests etc.) and secure the livelihoods of poor rural women; and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, linked to other health issues and to women’s empowerment.
1.18 Gender mainstreaming and Human Rights:

1.18.1 Declaration of Sentiments

The Declaration of Sentiments is a document that emerged from the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Three days before the convention, Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Mary Ann McClintock met to assemble the agenda for the meeting along with the speeches that would be made. During this meeting, the women, outraged at the lack of equal rights for women, began to draft a document outlining the rights that women should be entitled to as citizens. The women based this document, the Declaration of Sentiments, on the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Sentiments begins by stating that “all men and women are created equal” and “that they are endowed with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” It continues, arguing that women are being oppressed by the government and the patriarchal society of which they are a part: “The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her.” Following this statement are sixteen facts submitted to illustrate the extent to which women were oppressed by men in the society. Included were the following: Women were not permitted to vote and therefore could not participate in the government and were not represented in the government, women did not have property rights of their own in marriage, a woman gives up her own rights and promises obedience to her husband, and in the case of divorce a woman is subjected to the laws and decisions of men. Single, propertied women paid taxes on their property to the government, but were not allowed to participate otherwise in that same government. Also, women had avenues of wealth closed to them because educational institutions were
closed to women and those jobs that were open to them paid low wages. The last fact listed is the heart of the entire document: “He has endeavoured, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.” Following the listing of facts, the document insists that women be viewed as full citizens of the United States and as such be granted all the same rights and privileges that were granted to men. The women also acknowledge in the document that they will be ridiculed for making this declaration and that obtaining these rights will be difficult. Finally, the Declaration of Sentiments concludes with a statement of action, “We shall use every instrumentality within our power to affect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavour to enlist the pulpit and the press on our behalf.” The Declaration of Sentiments was read by Stanton at the Seneca Falls Convention, and following the reading, 12 resolutions related to the rights that should be granted to women were passed. Interestingly, the only resolution that did not pass unanimously was the ninth resolution that called for giving women the right to vote. After the passage of the resolutions, 100 men and women who were in attendance at the convention signed the Declaration of Sentiments. Once the Declaration was made public, it faced ridicule in the press, and among Church and government officials. In the face of these events, many of the original signers withdrew their names from the document.

1.18.2 Declaration of the Rights of Women

The Declaration of the Rights of Women was written in France in 1791 by Olympe de Gouges. Modelled on the 1789 document, the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the Declaration of the Rights of Women stated that women
were equal to men in society and as such were entitled to the same citizenship rights. The preamble emphasized that the women need to be included among those considered part of the national assembly. It continues in stating that women, like their male counterparts, have natural, inalienable, and sacred rights. These rights, as well as the related duties and responsibilities to the society are outlined in the remainder of the document. Following the preamble, de Gouges included 17 articles that outlined the basic rights that should be extended to women. These rights included the right to liberty, property, and security; the right to participate fully in the making of laws that they were to abide by; the right to participate at all levels of government; and the right to voice opinions in public. More radically, Article XI gives a woman the right to publicly name the father of her children and to be entitled to pass along property to these children. This was one of the controversial elements of this document because it proclaims that men who father children outside of marriage should be held accountable for those children in the same ways that they would be accountable to children fathered within marriage. Article XV gives women, who were for tax purposes counted as part of a male headed household, the right to ask public officials about the finances of the household, and Article XVII extends property rights to both men and women regardless of whether they are married or not. Following the articles, the document contains a postscript that calls women to recognize the unequal ways that they are treated in society and to take action to remedy these injustices. The document also includes a Form for a Social Contract between Man and Woman. In this contract, a man and a woman agree to unite in an equal partnership. Within this partnership, wealth is communal, belonging to both parties, and, as such, can be divided among all children belonging to either member of the
partnership. Furthermore, according to the contract, in the event of a separation of the two parties, that wealth will be set aside for any and all children of either party. Finally, the Declaration outlines measures that should be taken to provide for widows and young girls who were deceived by false promises.

1.19 Gender mainstreaming and social policy:

The United Nations Decade for the Advancement of Women (1975-1985) encouraged the growth of women, every development organizations established projects and programmes to improve the economic and social position of women. The progressive, liberal idea was to increase women’s participation and improve their share of resources, employment opportunities, and income in an attempt at effecting dramatic improvements in their living conditions.

- International Women’s Year Conference, Mexico, (1975)
- Middecade Conference on Women, Copenhagen (1980)
- Third World Women and Development Conference, Nairobi (1985)
  The conference called for the empowerment of women. It has organized around economic, environmental, legal, military, fundamentalism, economic dependence and violence against women.

- Fourth World Conference on Women, the Platform for Action, Beijing (1995) concerned the human rights of women: rights to education, food, health, greater political power and freedom from violence.

- World Conferences of Women by UN:
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)-1984
• Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) -1993

• DAWN (Development alternatives with Women for a New Era), (Bangalore 1984): Grassroots organizing experiences led the founders of the organization to link micro level activities to the macro level perspectives on development. The group argued that short term ameliorative approaches to improving women’s employment opportunities were ineffective unless they were combined with long-term strategies to re-establish people’s (especially women’s) control over the economic decisions shaping their lives.

• International & National Movements: to unite around issues of economic justice, human rights and degradation of the environment

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the principal human rights treaty derived from the United Nations to define discrimination against women. Adopted in 1979, the treaty consists of 30 articles and includes an Optional Protocol (OP). The purpose of the OP is to provide an alternative mechanism to hold governments accountable to a respective treaty or to further elaborate on any substantive topic within the treaty itself. In the case of CEDAW, the OP consists of the Communications Procedure, which enables people to complain directly to the CEDAW monitoring committee, and the Inquiry Procedure, which empowers the CEDAW monitoring committee to investigate systematic forms of discrimination against women. Known as the International Bill of Rights for Women, CEDAW had been ratified by 84 countries as of August 2006. As of this date, the United States was the only
industrialized country not to have ratified the treaty. Furthermore, the United States has inserted more reservations to CEDAW than to any other major human rights treaty. Reservations curtail the legal obligation to the treaty. Once governments ratify the convention, they are obligated to report to the CEDAW monitoring committee regarding their compliance. The initial report is due 1 year following ratification and 4 years thereafter. This reporting process then essentially requires states to adopt concrete actions to eradicate gender based discrimination. Failure to do so results in non-compliance and a violation of international law. Article 1 defines discrimination against women as follows: Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

This definition provides the basis for the remainder of the treaty. CEDAW proposes the incorporation of affirmative action policies and the re-envisioning of education for women and girls to move beyond educational access, and it is the only international treaty to protect reproductive rights. Other topics discussed in CEDAW include sex trafficking and exploitation; political and civil rights, such as the right to vote; health, employment, and marriage; and specific issues impacting rural women, such as access to agricultural credit and loans. Criticisms of CEDAW include its failure to integrate discrimination based on sexual orientation and race/ethnicity.
1.20 Women Specific Planning in India

An overview of the Five Year Plans in India, we can see that the First to Fifth plans were mainly welfare focused. In the Sixth Plan there were separate chapter on Women and Development, which includes multidisciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment were emphasized. Seventh Plan was continued with the developmental programmes with the major objective of raising their economic and social status. Eighth Plan gave due importance to Human development approach with women have greater role-life-cycle approach for women were taken. In the Ninth Plan - ‘Empowerment of Women’ became one of the nine primary objectives, adoption of the ‘National Policy for Empowerment of Women’, women component plan -Time –Bound Action plans for women were proposed and carried out. Tenth plan emphasized Strengthening Women Component Plan, adoption of Gender budgeting-Micro credit and 33% reservation for women in Local Bodies. Advice from feminist economists was sought for ensuring greater flow of resources for women in the Eleventh Plan (Times of India, April. 8, 2007). In the Eleventh Plan, for the first time, women are recognized not just as equal citizens but as agents of economic and social growth. The approach to gender equity is based on the recognition that interventions in favour of women must be multi-pronged and they must: (i) provide women with basic entitlements, (ii) address the reality of globalization and its impact on women by prioritizing economic empowerment, (iii) ensure an environment free from all forms of violence against women (iv) ensure the participation and representation of women at the highest policy levels, particularly in Parliament and State assemblies, and (v) strengthen existing institutional mechanisms and create new ones for gender mainstreaming and effective policy implementation. The plan is to
ensure that at least 33% of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children. Advice from feminist economists was sought for ensuring greater flow of resources for women in the Eleventh Plan (Times of India, April 8, 2007). The idea of a women component plan has been at a concession everywhere with the importance on gender budgeting. Vide letter no. PC/SW/1-3(13)/09-WCD, dated 5th January, 2010, Planning Commission, Government of India, has stated that, "the concepts of Women Component Plan and Gender Budgeting are not complementary but often contradictory and the world over countries have moved to using Gender Responsive Budgeting as a tool for gender mainstreaming and ensuring gender equity" and has clarified that, "Women Component Plan should no longer be used as a strategy either at the Centre or at the State level. In its place as already initiated by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Women and Child Development, we should adopt Gender Responsive Budgeting or Gender Budgeting only".

1.20.1 Major Programmes for Women at National Level

- Establishment of Dept. of Women & Child at Central Government
- National Women’s Commissions & State Women’s Commissions
- Women Police Cells
- Gender sensitization trainings to government officials
- Gender in planning

1.20.2 Major Landmarks

- Towards Equality Report, 1974: A re-conceptualization of the prevalent discourse on issues of gender and economic well-being,
political participation, law, health and family welfare of women and suggests measures and approaches for gender equality

Shramshakti Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector

- New Education Policy
- National Perspective Plan for Women
- University Grants Commission established Women’s Studies Centres
- Women Development Programmes –Women Development Plans, Mahila Samakhya-Reproductive and Child Health
- Reservation in Local Self Government Institutions- Decentralization of power at grass roots created opportunities for women in the political arena.

1.20.3 Women and local level Development in Kerala

- People’s Plan Campaign
- Reservation & Guidelines to ensure women’s participation at all committees
- Separate discussion group on women’s issues in Gramasabha
- Working group for Women and Development
- Women Component Plan – 10% mandatory allocation in the plan fund
- Statement of gender impact with all projects Gender Impact Assessment of all development projects
• Evolution of women self help groups – Kudumbasree and SHGs of NGOs
• Women’s Status Study Reports by various departments in Government sector
• Jagrutha Samitis at panchayath level

1.21 Gender and Inequality and the history and of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender describes socially constructed sex, mainly the norms and ideologies that are regarded as part of behaviour and actions of men and women in a society. Men and women tend to be clustered into different sections of society and are therefore likely to have different experiences, knowledge, and values. Integrating gender issues into the development process, when defining policy and developing programmes, means recognizing and taking into consideration that being a man or a woman significantly impact our positions in society, and our ability to participate in programmes or decision making. Gender largely determines our means and resources to make decisions, choices in life and it affects the way we are affected by political processes and social development. By and large, women as compared to men, have command over fewer resources both in terms of political power, economic power, and time. This deficit is global; women in all groups in society tend to be in command of less power, resources and opportunities as compared to men. This is referred to as gender inequality.

The efforts to integrate gender issues into development policy have about 30 years on its neck. The initial impetus came from the realization that women were largely excluded from development processes. The belief that the benefits of general development efforts would eventually trickle down to women turned out to be wrong. This led to initiatives specifically targeting
women often referred to as ‘women in development’ desks or projects, that were separate activities and programmes focused on women. These were usually run from a separate desk or unit in the development organization. Unfortunately, these efforts did not bring the expected benefits. They were not sufficient to change the situation for women on the ground and integrate them into the mainstream development process. In addition, other mainstream policy areas and interventions were still operating without taking gender issues into account, they were gender blind.

There was also a realization that gender issues could not be tackled in isolation, but that any intervention needs to be grounded in analysis of its specific context. This means that the situation and relations between men and women needs to be addressed, that is, gender relations. These tend to change over cultures, history and groups—wherefore a priori assumptions about women’s positions should be avoided and interventions be grounded on evidence-based analysis where men are also included.

These issues were discussed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where a global Platform for Action to work on women’s empowerment was agreed upon. The discussions gave birth to the concept of gender mainstreaming and it was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality. Compared to the older strategies targeting women only in the development programmes the gender mainstreaming strategy aimed at an integration of women and gender issues into mainstream policy areas that were now blind to the different needs and capabilities of men and women. Gender mainstreaming is not something that has or should replace the efforts to focus on women separately. Instead it regards gender analysis as a base to any intervention. If the analysis concludes that a women specific approach is necessary to rectify harming differences between men
and women, than that will be an integrated part of the gender mainstreaming approach. By adopting the Beijing Platform for Action, the governments also committed themselves to establish mechanisms to promote women’s rights and the advancement of women as well as to develop instruments and implementation tools such as legal frameworks, National Action Plans, Gender Strategies, etc.

The women’s and gender movement remains strong and has laid the basis for both the academic discipline to study gender relations in different areas, as well as for changes in public policy. Examples date back from the national movements for women’s right to vote, to more recent achievements relating to equal pay, reproductive health and other family policies aimed at equal opportunities in the labour market for women. These efforts have also shed light on the need to examine roles of men as well. Although policy efforts to facilitate men’s withdrawal from the formal labour market have not been as widely spread as those supporting women to enter it, the awareness is raising and many countries now have policies in place to support men to take parental leave for example. In addition, issues such as mortality and life expectancy gaps between men and women have led to examinations of different forms of masculinities.

While the accessibility of justice is challenging for many social groups (particularly low-income women and men, ethnic and sexual minorities, and children), several individuals and organizations have galvanized around the concept and successfully worked toward creating more inclusive systems of accountability and representation. This activism has involved addressing accessibility in terms of (a) physically being able to seek redress in cases of inequity (e.g., being able to attend court hearings, having community advocacy groups based in local neighbourhoods or easily accessible
locations); (b) improved availability and dissemination of information related to justice (e.g., having materials related to human rights and legal processes clearly written and available in libraries, public offices, and online and the availability of affordable legal advice); and (c) increased social awareness, a broadening of what justice means, and context sensitive policies (e.g., public campaigns about relevant issues in local and national media and schools).

This activism has come in several forms: For some, it has involved reformulating practices of justice from more punitive processes in which retribution for unjust actions is integral toward processes of reconciliation through which perpetrators of crimes and socially exclusionary practices publicly recognize and accept responsibility for their actions at village, city, national, and international gatherings. For others, this re-conceptualization has involved redefining concepts of citizenship to be more socially inclusive in terms of gender, sexuality, race, nationality, and age (O’Brien, 2009).

1.22 Affirmative action

The term affirmative action refers to an organization’s explicit efforts to ensure that people are not discriminated against on the basis of race or gender. Affirmative action policies have led to greater representation of race and minorities across all levels of employment and in higher education. Attitudes toward affirmative action are generally positive, especially when policies are correctly understood. The positive effects of affirmative action include reducing unintended discrimination and increasing diversity. Negative effects are also possible, but can be prevented. (O’Brien, 2009).

Attitudes toward affirmative action vary based on individual differences and conceptualizations of the policy. Perhaps not surprisingly, race, gender, and
prejudice level affect attitudes toward affirmative action: Whites, males, and those high in racism and sexism tend to oppose affirmative action. Attitudes also vary based on definitions of the policy: People who view affirmative action as unfair preferential treatment of women and minorities are more negative toward the policy, whereas people who have a more accurate understanding of affirmative action generally have more positive attitudes. Overall though, public opinion polls indicate general support for affirmative action programs. (O’brien, 2009)

It is important that initiatives occur alongside more comprehensive safety approaches that work to address the root causes of gender based violence and gender inequalities experienced by women. Incorporating gender perspectives in planning the city can help to make transport and other public spaces safer for women and girls in attaining their rights.

Women’s rights advocates claim that local mechanisms can go further in challenging unequal power relations and structural sources of women’s disadvantage, rather than focusing on practical demands and creating conditions for women to carry out traditional social reproduction functions.

1.23 Discrimination based on gender

Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) defines the discrimination against women as ‘any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field’.
Men’s growing interest in gender-focused development is broadening our understanding of the limitations imposed by gender roles. The burden on women has increased as they have taken on new roles without commensurate changes in men’s roles. Gender roles limit women’s and men’s opportunities. This does not mean that other issues related to say access to natural resources, disaster situations etc are less important. In fact in actual life it is not possible to segregate development into neat compartments. In the final analysis, women in India often have to face the brunt of being born in a patriarchal, feudal society.

Women are under-represented in political office due to a lack of income, education and freedom, not to mention gender divisions of labour. Male-dominated leadership often lacks the political will to address gender inequality, making it a vicious circle that is difficult to break.

Gender inequality in developing countries is one of the key factors hampering wealth creation, poverty reduction and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. While international policy has made some progress towards addressing gender inequality, it needs to be converted into concrete changes on the ground, especially at the local level.

1.24 Violence against Women and Gender Based Violence

The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the first international human rights instrument to exclusively address the issue of violence against women (VAW) defines it as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” The term gender-based violence (GBV) has come to be used
more widely at the international level over the past decade. It reflects the fact that violence against women results from an imbalance of power between women and men.

1.25 Women’s Safety

In many countries much of the work to eliminate violence against women focused initially on private or intimate violence, and violence in public space remained unrecognized and unarticulated in policy terms. The concept of women’s safety has been defined as involving “strategies, practices and policies with the goal of reducing gender-based violence and women’s fear or insecurity of violence”. (Shaw & Capobianco (2004), p.5) It acknowledges that there is a continuum between private and public violence which requires us to work on both. (Sweet & Ortiz Escalante (2010)

Both the causes and consequences of gender inequality and women’s lack of safety are interrelated and multi-faceted. Fear of violence affects the everyday lives of women, restricting their freedom and use of the city and public space. Women’s safety is an important and positive paradigm shift which places more focus on communities and the role of cities, and encourages practical initiatives that help create safer cities. Recently, women’s safety has also been seen more generally to include freedom from poverty, financial security and autonomy, and having a sense of self-worth.

UN-HABITAT.

1.26 Situation of women in the church and in the society

Christianity exerts considerable socio-political influence in many societies, especially the specific roles that have been prescribed for women. Jesus’ message of gender equality often fell upon deaf ears, including his disciples.’ Indeed, the patriarchal culture from which Christianity emerged and grew
championed scriptural references to the inferior status of women and minorities over themes of equality and social justice. The consequences of male domination for Christian women have been felt since the first years after the death of Jesus.

In short, where patriarchal cultures persist, women endure subordinate positions in both the public and private sectors of religious existence. Theologians, philosophers, and social scientists alike expect that as gender discrimination education and awareness continues to proliferate around the world, women will increasingly be included in all aspects of Christianity. Even for entities in Christianity that welcome women into leadership positions, progress has been sluggish, and women have often felt rejected, overlooked, and at times assaulted for aspiring to become religious leaders. This varies by race, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, and so forth. These inequities are considered by many to be the growing pains in the body of Christ as Christianity enters its third millennium. As progress is made toward full inclusion of women and other oppressed groups, the global church is a more effective witness to the vision of social equality once promoted by its founder.

In connection with the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II, ‘Mulieris Dignitatem’, on the Dignity of Women. 28th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, The theme was the Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society. Already in 1984, there was a CBCI initiated Consultation on Women held in Mumbai, on the “Role of Women in the Church and Society”. In 1992, the concerns of women were taken up again at the plenary assembly of the CBCI in Pune and consequently a Women’s Desk was instituted with the appointment of the first Woman Secretary to the office of the CBCI. In 1996, the Women’s
Desk was raised to the status of a Commission. While the Church and society undergo rapid changes, women are being marginalised and continue to suffer and since their concerns are not adequately addressed both in the church and in society.

It was noted that the structures which facilitate collaborative partnership between women and men as well as clergy and laity needs improvement. In 1992, the CBCI General Assembly stated, “with a sense of sorrow we must admit that the women feel discriminated against, even in the Church”. In the decision-making and consultative structures like the Parish Pastoral Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocesan Finance Committee which is canonically advocated structures in the Church, the presence of women is inadequate.

In spite of the great contribution of lay women in spheres of education health care etc, their potentials are yet to be sufficiently tapped in the administrative and executive roles, as well as, theological, liturgical, pastoral and missionary apostolates of the Church.

1.26.1 Causes

The culture of domination, marginalization and exclusion which embody ideas, beliefs, values, traditions, rules, norms, perspectives (ideologies) that prefer males/sons has been styled the culture of patriarchy. Through dominating social structures men now control and manage financial, intellectual and ideological resources as well as the labour, fertility and sexuality of women, and thus perpetuate gender discrimination. Such a culture produces stereotyped notions of how a woman or man should behave (in words and action), whereby they themselves become transmitters of the
above value system. Consequently women also become both victims and victimizers.

The process of globalization which is market-centred and profit-driven, leads to further exploitation of women as cheap labour resulting in the increasing pauperization of women. Fundamentalism and communalism reinforce the subjugation of women to men, suppress women’s movements by dividing women along religious lines and intensify violence against women.

The socio-cultural situation of women should not be understood in the same way among all social classes and ethnic groups especially among the marginalised and the oppressed. It has its light and shadows. Though we have examples of empowered women in leadership positions and role-models, nevertheless the reality of women of all sections reveals instances of domestic and societal violence on young girls and women. Depending on the regions, female foeticide, infanticide, rape, molestation, kidnapping, abduction, battering, dowry deaths, murdering, trafficking for sex and slavery exists even today.

Women of the marginalized groups such as dalits, tribals, backward castes and minorities suffer much due to poverty, ill-health, lack of access to literacy and appropriate knowledge and lack of hygiene and are being displaced from their lands and livelihoods. They suffer systemic and structural violence that enslave them and dehumanise the economically, socio-politically and religio-culturally.

Gender discrimination has negative effects on boys and men as well. It damages their psyche and increases the incidence of morbidity and crime among them. Relations of distrust, conflict, competition and many types of subtle abuse emerge instead of those rooted in values of caring, sharing,
compassion, mutual respect, collaboration and partnership. Such discrimination thus has negative consequences on human relations.

Lack of development and articulation if a spirituality rooted in women’s experiences and insights into God, mission, the Sacraments and the Scriptures have impoverished the Church. The interiority of women and the capacity to endure suffering are the areas that are not adequately capitalized in the building up of Kingdom. (Letter to Women by John Paul II, 29th June, 1995).

**1.26.2 Signs of Hope**

The church has been spreading several initiatives to bring about positive changes in the life situation of women and girls. From the time of the early Christian missionaries who placed emphasis on the education of both girls and boys, through its multiple interventions in the fields of welfare, education, health and the empowerment process to organize women, the Catholic Church has played a prominent role to improve the status of women.

Besides the Church and ecumenical bodies, government and non-governmental organizations, trade unions and social movements have played a significant role in facilitating change. Through its policies, for example, the National Policy on the Empowerment of Women, and legislative measures, the Government has contributed to the cause of women. By signing international declarations and conventions such as Human Rights, Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Violence against Women, the Government of India has taken a stand in favour of gender justice.

As a result, many women leaders both lay and religious are emerging in the public sphere such as local governance and political leadership. The process
of counter-cultural literature and media material, and the revival of subjugated memories of resistance by women against oppression and exploitation are influencing change in mindsets of people to a greater or lesser extent across space and culture. The promotion of appropriate ecclesiastical ministries among women in the Church is another sign of their participation in the mission of the Church.

1.26.3 The Vision of Christ

Situating the teachings and actions of Christ in the context of Palestinian Judaism, we see how the evangelists not only highlight Jesus’ concern for women, but also his radical re-defining of their place and role in the society. In a culture were women seen only in relation to men, Christ not only liberated them from their oppressive traditions but upheld their dignity e.g., the Samaritan woman (Jn.4:7-42) and Mary and Martha (Jn. 11:20-40). He used the life experiences of women as a paradigm of God’s love and Christian discipleship for all: woman and lost coin, woman and the dough and woman at birth pangs. Even at his death and burial, women were among those who bore testimony. Jesus entrusted to the women that they announce the Good News of Resurrection to his disciples.

St. Paul reiterates the equality of men and women (Gal.3: 28) and continues to refer to many exemplary women. The early Christian Community was sustained by the deep faith of women who shared in the apostolic ministry e.g., Priscilla, Lydia, Phoebe etc.

In her teaching, the Church continues to uphold the dignity of women, uniqueness of motherhood (Letter to Women, 2), and the complementarity and reciprocity between men and women. To this day, the Church continues to witness the heroic character of women in their testimony to their faith.
1.26.4 Action

It is necessary to mobilise collective efforts towards elimination of the root causes of the discrimination against women. Accordingly the CBCI, commit themselves as a body to evolve a gender policy by each one with monitoring mechanisms. The women’s Commission of CBCI, shared the general guidance and norms for developing such policy.

Since the role of voluntary agencies or NGOs has come up into prominence as part of a larger effort by the state to make the administration more responsive to people’s aspirations, needs and problems. It is felt that NGOs improve the effectiveness of developmental operations for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The initiatives of voluntary organizations towards the development of women can be traced back to the role of Christian missionaries. Today there are large numbers of such organizations working in different parts of the country. These organizations mostly work towards agricultural development, water conservation, education, health, training, eradication of social evils, conservation of ecology and struggle against all forms of exploitation including political action for alternative development. In the current scenario, development is seen in terms of active participation by beneficiaries and as doing away with dependency. This can be done only through building up critical awareness, organization and mobilization of the mass (inclusive of both men and women).

The intervention of the church is a pro-active process designed to tackle inequalities which can and do discriminate against either sex with an ultimate goal of social transformation. Gender arguably occupies a prime place in the development discourse of the day. Gender issues have emerged
at the central stage of developmental process in most countries including India. In fact, how to empower women to reduce gender inequalities in the society is presently a major concern of policy makers and planners all over the world.

Man- Woman dichotomy is somewhat artificial. From a purely linguistic angle and in a lighter vein, you would have heard it being said that the word female had male in it, woman has man in it and lady has lad in it. Therefore the conflict, if at all, is a conflict of perspective. Sustainable development is not possible without a twinning of focus on economic and social development. Investing in people and social protection programmes were the mainstay of national development.

Men and women are different. Society treats them as different and pays detailed attention to maintain and emphasising that difference through clothes, ornaments, gestures and roles. Men and women are also similar but there is no general interest displayed in the similarity. Although women and men are human beings, social beings who share many things in common, their similarity and commonality of interests are often forgotten. If anything the similarity is dismissed, and yet women’s separate and specific needs do not receive much attention. At best, their needs and interest are subsumed under the “general” interest which is men’s. We are used to hearing words “men include women”. This assumption instead of including women ensures that men are the norm and women are perceived as “also” there. This perception affects the quality of women’s lives in profound ways and so we need to examine and understand the difference and similarities between men and women and the basis for this assumption. And gender is the basis of these assumptions.
To understand the various levels at which gender operates, one must take a look at the family, at interpersonal levels, and at the way society is divided into the public and private spheres. One needs to go beyond production to reproduction, beyond the family to each institution to understand how gender operates there. Gender relations are present in all types of institution from the school, market, street or workplace to the state and religious institutions. It is important to understand how gender structures these institutions. And as we begin to understand each specific gender relation we can begin to work out strategies to transform them.

1.26.5 Gender mainstreaming strategy & approach

Women’s contributions to economic development can be strengthened if policies and practices are in place to:

- Improve rates of literacy
- Provide vocational skills training that is language and culturally appropriate
- Increase their levels of employment, and ensure that employment is meaningful
- Ensure that jobs match qualifications
- Recognize and support their contributions in the informal sector
- Address structural inequalities in the labour market
- Working with financial institutions to provide access to credit
- Protect their right to dignity and security in the workplace, and
- Prevent violence against women.
- Participating in sports, recreational and cultural activities can be an important catalyst to promote gender equity, and empower women and girls.

1.27 Anti-oppressive Practices as Transformational Practice

Anti-oppressive Practice seeks to understand and deal with the structural causes of social problems and address their consequences by altering social relations at all possible levels. Anti-oppressive Practice encompasses all aspects of social life—culture, institutions, legal framework, political systems, and socio-economic infrastructure and interpersonal relationships, which both create and are created by social reality—a form of social work practice which addresses social divisions and structural inequalities to provide more appropriate and sensitive services by responding to people’s needs regardless of their social status. Anti–oppressive practices embodies a person–centred philosophy, an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people’s lives, a methodology focusing on both process and outcome, and a way of structuring relationships between individual that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of hierarchy in the work they do. The chief goals of Anti-oppressive practices are, it celebrates diverse identities as being equal to one another, rejects the fragmentation of social life and hierarchies of oppression, with the ensuing isolation if individuals that this endorses and it also promotes people-oriented social environment.

Based on the theoretical knowledge generated by the international bodies, pass on to the national, regional and local level to implement it. There comes the role of Diocesan Social Service Societies, as practitioners of the global initiatives, they implement the knowledge shared at global level in their
operational areas, where they work with the intention of transforming the society.

With this sort of transformational practices there are NGOs working all around the globe. In Kerala, there are NGOs working in the lead role of transformation of society under the Catholic Church. Through this study the researcher tried to understand some of these Diocesan Social Service Societies.

1.28 Profile of the Diocesan Social Service Societies

The researcher carried out the study in Eight DSSSs, with proportionate representation, ie, 4 DSSSs from Syro Malabar rite & two each from Latin rite and Syro-Malankara rite. Profile of the Diocesan Social Service Societies where the researcher selected for the study are as follows:

Syro- Malabar Rite:

1.28.1 High-Range Development Society (HDS), Department of Social Works, Diocese of Idukki was established in 2003, dividing from the Diocese of Kothamangalam. The vision of the HDS is “A radically transformed and vibrant High range region of Kerala, where human creativity is high, where adequacy, equity and humanizing social order flourishes”. Its thrust areas are Tribal development, Natural Resource Management, Family Development Programme, People’s Organization, Housing and sanitation, Relief, Rehabilitation and Insurance, Vocational Training/ income Generation Programmes, Women Development Programmes and Integrated Development Through Empowerment and Action with Gender as its one of the core areas.
1.28.2 Pala Social Welfare Society (PSWS) is a registered secular voluntary organization established in the year 1964. It is the official social work organization of the Diocese of Palai. The aim of the society is the integral development of the people especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalized ones. It’s operational area consists of 167 parishes of Palai Diocese having 18,000 members from all communities irrespective of caste & creed. The organization is working with a vision of “Creation of a self – reliant society based on human values and social justice” and it is achieved through “Liberation of the poor and marginalized through a process of empowerment.

1.28.3 Tellicherry Social Service Society (TSSS) which is the official social development wing of the Archdiocese of Tellicherry is registered voluntary organization. It caters to the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed and community. The operational area comprises the two northern districts of Kerala namely Kasaragode and Kannur. From its inception TSSS had its focus on people at grass root level, which is in tune with the vision of “A society of equals founded on divine love, where everybody enjoys absolute freedom” and it is achieved through “The holistic development of the community towards self-reliance with preferential option for the deprived sections”.

1.28.4 People’s Service Society Palakkad (PSSP) 
Ever since its inception in 1978, People's Service Society Palakkad (PSSP) has engaged in the process of empowering the poor and the marginalized. It has been struggling with the poor and the marginalized for the realization of social justice and the common
good. As the name specifies, it has been people oriented, and has been working through participatory process in all developmental activities. PSSP symbolises the social concern of the Diocese of Palakkad and attempts to incarnate social justice into the structures of the society. The vision of PSSP is “Building up a community of Love based on Truth, Justice and Human Dignity” In line with the vision, it has the mission to organize and empower the economically, socially and culturally poor, especially, women, children and marginal farmers through participatory process, ushering them to self-sufficiency and thus enabling them to participate in and contribute to the common good of the society. To attain this goal, PSSP, adopts various means and measures, works as an effective agent of social change. The jurisdiction of the society is extended to the district of Palakkad in Kerala and Coimbatore, Erode and Karur in Tamil Nadu.

**Syro- Malankara Rite:**

1.28.5 **Thiruvalla Social Service Society (TSSS),** Bodhana is the professional social service wing and development department of the Archdiocese of Thiruvalla. Ever since its inception in 1972, they have been in the forefront of social transformation of the less privileged and is an inseparable sector of the Archdiocese of Thiruvalla. Considering the change in development scenario, Bodhana has shifted its focus to "Development through participation and empowerment of the community". Operating in 60 villages spread out in four districts of Kerala. Bodhana has empowered more than 100,000 families over the years and made them self-reliant. Moreover, they actively collaborate with like-minded NGOs, PRIs and government institutions to evolve new development strategies.
1.28.6 **Malankara Social Service Society (MSSS), Srothas** is the social work organ of Major Archdiocese of Thiruvananthapuram. It was constituted in the year 196. The vision of MSSS is to create a just society based on gospel values of social harmony and equity with democratic and human values. The mission of MSSS is to serve the poor, marginalized, unorganized sections of the society. MSSS extents its service for Social Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, Political Empowerment, Environmental Protection, Research and Documentation, Training and Consultancy, Information & Guidance, Micro Finance.

**Latin Rite:**

1.28.7 **Vijayapuram Social Service Society (VSSS)** is the official organ of the Diocese of Vijayapuram for socio-economic and educational development interventions. It was established in the year 1961. The operational area of the Society consists of highlands, undulating midlands and the low lands in the State of Kerala. The organization is working for the integral development of the poor and the marginalized people in the operational area for the last 50 years. The organization offered itself in organizing the rural poor to work for sustainable development of the entire community. The organization is working with the vision of “Establishment of a society vibrant with the values of Justice, Peace, Love and Self reliance” is the vision statement of VSSS and It is working with the mission of “Total development of the poor and the marginalized through empowerment towards a life of Self-reliance, human dignity, confidence and complete harmony with nature”.

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1.28.8 Cochin Social Service Society (CSSS)

Founded in the year 1966, the Cochin Social Service Society now stands on the threshold of its Golden Jubilee as the official organization of the Diocese of Cochin. Working with the poor and the deprived for their livelihood development and meeting all other challenges of existence including those arising from both natural and manmade calamities. The Society has been yearning for the bringing up of the target population from ‘less human conditions to more human conditions’. While deliberately proceeding with this mission, CSSS is bent upon establishing the poor people’s stake in the social capital and the judicious handling of it. The development philosophy that CSSS follow is, “Development with Justice to the Man and to the Nature”. They are working with the mission to help the people to unearth their inherent potentials and develop those faculties to its fullness for the common good and sustainable development of the community with the true sense of justice, development and social harmony. In geographical context, the Society has operational area extending 236 sq. km. along the Arabian Sea coast on the south west Kerala stretching out to the inlands across the backwaters of Lake Vembanad on the east, Vypeen on the north and Poonkavu on the south. In terms of civil administration, the reference area comes under the Revenue districts of Ernakulam and Alleppey. The Society has been always putting up a dynamic face in its social encounters and steadily moving ahead with the times in tackling various social and developmental issues from time to time by identifying thematic areas, mobilizing the masses, evolving strategies and conceiving appropriate developmental ideas that are realized as specific projects and program. Major activities are Gender mainstreaming, Integrated Children’s Development, Save A Family Plan, Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction

1.29 Interventions by the DSSSs

A Gender based analysis of the various programmes/ projects of DSSSs are as follows:

1.29.1 Seminars/ Awareness programmes:

This programme deals with the development and strengthening of Community Based Organizations. It focuses on capacity building of organizational staff and the people at the grass root level. It deals with topics on varied subjects such as gender equality, womanhood, human rights specially women rights, family life education, health care, issues faced by women in society, social evils & social development.

Gains achieved through seminars/ awareness programmes include:

Awareness about the Rights of an individual and the Rights available in the society can be termed as the direct benefit. Men and women work jointly for social construction. Men get an impression of ‘what woman is and how important her role is in a family’. They realise the need for upbringing children based on gender equality and paying attention to the health conditions of the family, especially women’s health. Women’s role in the development of family/ society is understood and appreciated.

1.29.2 Neighbourhood Groups/ Self-help Groups (NHGs/SHG):

The crux of participatory development is community empowerment. This was best achieved through building up of People’s Organizations by which
the bargaining capacity of the people would be enhanced. Self help Groups and its federations were largely formed with this objective. This programme was given special thrust for the institution building process at grass root level and for that, it was linked with banks, which accelerated the accessibility on finance. Through SHG/ NHG, DSSSs promote the financial management and control enterprises promotion and poverty reduction measures. It also supports micro savings and credit operations in the community based organizations, SHGs and federations. The savings of the people were distributed to the needy in the SHGs as loans for income generation programmes, infrastructure development, education, marriage and treatment with easy terms and conditions.

Gains achieved through these groups include:

These groups enable the members to think and decide seriously about one’s life, to express opinion and take decisions on family matters. SHG/NHGs help them in getting legal advice, when required, as well as help them financially. SHG helps them to stand together and also provide self-confidence. The members gain the confidence and ability to participate in public programmes, to take leadership roles, to work confidently, to go alone and in groups to public places, to go to public institutions and get things done, to get organized and fight against social evils and work for social justice.

1.29.3 Rights Based Activities:

India is home to a promising democracy and to recent stunning economic growth. Unfortunately, this has not barred multiple serious human rights abuses from remaining a fact of life in many parts of the country. Political and separatist violence and the government's response have threatened the
well-being and human rights of millions. Economic development has often threatened the livelihoods, land, and lives of the poor who are in its way. Hundreds of millions live in severe poverty, and women, religious minorities, dalits and adivasis face harsh discrimination and shocking violence. Human rights are thus conceived as universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (the same for everyone). These rights may exist as natural rights or as legal rights, in both national and international law. Human rights violations occur when actions by state (or non-state) actor’s abuse, ignore, or deny basic human rights (including civil, political, cultural, social, and economic rights). In efforts to eliminate violations of human rights, building awareness and protesting inhumane treatment has often led to calls for action and sometimes improved conditions. DSSSs is committed themselves in protecting the rights of their stakes at all levels especially of children, women, differently able and of all human beings.

Gains achieved through these activities include:

Through these activities, they understand that the denial of human rights is the denial of fundamental rights, children too have special rights in the society and parents are responsible to protect it. They acquire knowledge about reservation rights. Such knowledge becomes beneficial to them while trying to assume a leadership role, to ensure human rights in all matters and to ensure the right to development of children. In short, these activities develop the confidence to get one’s rights.

1.29.4 Small Scale/ Micro Ventures

Micro enterprise development is one of the thrust areas of DSSSs. Sustainable livelihood security through viable micro enterprises make the rural communities self-sustained and productive in all aspects. Training on
different programmes like animal rearing (both small and big), vegetable garden, food processing, tailoring, small dairy farms, small scale industries development in the sectors of paddy treatment, coconut oil making, handicrafts development, production of toiletry products, fabric painting, trained house maids, trained geriatric care professionals were imparted. Many of the trainees used the opportunity and adopted that as a source of income for the family.

Gains achieved in their lives through the venture include:

The financial gains include increase in savings of the family as well as an increase in financial security of the family. The major social benefits are the increase in the standard of living of the family, the ability to know the market conditions for better sales and the knowledge gained about the economic sector. The individual gains are the ability to play an inevitable role in decision making of the family, increase in self-confidence, increase in acceptance in the family and the satisfaction from financial security.

1.29.5 Family Support Programmes:

DSSS supported through ‘Save A Family Plan’ with the aim to help the marginalized, downtrodden and helpless families financially and to become self-reliant through financial assistance in starting various income generation programmes. SAFP uplifts them to the mainstream of the society by giving support through this programme, irrespective of caste and creed. The partners of the project are the poor and the vulnerable families residing within the operational area of the DSSS.

Gains achieved through the support programmes include:

The needs addressed are children’s education, medical needs of the family members, construction/maintenance of house and starting income generation
programmes. The changes it brought on the families are increase in the family income, access to better health care facility at the right time, having a safe shelter and children doing higher education.

1.29.6 Management of Water and Energy Resources

Rain water harvesting projects, drinking water projects and watershed development programmes are yet another intervention by the DSSSs.

Rain Water Harvesting Projects: Rain water tanks were designed and constructed in Ferro-cement. It is a thin type of reinforced cement, sand and mortar with either a single or multiple layers of chicken mesh. The total cost of one tank is estimated to be Rs.12000, the materials required for the construction of the tank is commonly available in the rural areas. The beneficiaries also help in collecting the materials necessary for the construction of the tanks and support it by providing unskilled labour.

Rejuvenation/ Cleaning of public ponds: Through community participation DSSSs rejuvenated the water sources by constructing walls for the ponds, cleaning it up and by means of phyto-remediation (making a filter media by using locally available bushes and trees)

Backwashing of wells: Backwashing is essentially a diffusion and displacement process. The rise in water level results in a static head thereby causing seepage of rain water under pressure into the surrounding soil.

Construction of radial wells: Radial well is designed for getting pure and good quality water for drinking and household purposes. It consists of one well and 4 to 5 radii. Water on the ground will reach the well through the radii, which is filled with filter materials like stone, sand and charcoal.
Watershed management project: the primary goal of watershed programme is to improve the life of the community through people’s participation in environmental regeneration and resource mobilization. It require and substantial resources- human, technical and financial as it involves a number of measures to control soil erosion, water, bio-mass development and drainage line treatment to control and store excess runoff.

The changes these development activities brought about in their lives include:

Increase in the quantity of water resources resulted in an increase in biodiversity and agricultural production. Protection of soil, water and biodiversity is a necessity towards sustenance of life. These projects made available bio-gas for cooking. They contributed to gender mainstreaming in the sense that the increase in the availability of pure water reduced the workload of the women and production of bio-gas made it easy for them to cook. Increase in the quality of soil resulted in an increase in agricultural production. Increase in financial gains from agriculture lead to better standard of living and lesser pressure on men in providing comforts to family.

1.29.7 Production of food items/ Agricultural Items

Organic cultivation is promoted among the farmers to promote sustainable health and eco-friendly development practices. Organic farming teams were formed and they were given training in organic farming techniques. The agricultural activities with the assistance of DSSS include vegetables, mushroom, tuber crops, paddy, poultry, goat rearing, rabbit rearing and bee keeping.
The production of food items influenced their lives by:

Health benefits accrued by consumption of food items produced using bio-fertilisers and the reduction in the usage of chemical fertilisers. Increase in production and the better price organic food items fetched accrued financial benefits. Solid waste management, setting up of kitchen gardens in households and thus evolving a new culture can definitely be termed as social benefits accrued by this venture. Production of food items helped in mainstreaming gender in terms that it emerged health concern for women and men in the family increased the standard of living of the family by generating more income through organic farming and the fact that it improved the health of the society through the reduction in the use of chemical fertilizers.

1.29.8 Health Care Programmes:

DSSSs have launched Community Health Programme on the basis that health is a fundamental right and a social goal that is essential for the satisfaction of basic human needs and to improve quality of life and that is to be attained by the people. It is concerned with the holistic situations of public health that covers a whole lot of health conditions of all sections of the society i.e., poorer sections, child health and women’s health. The health staff and volunteers of DSSSs provide door step services, keeping track of children’s vaccinations, monitoring the health of pregnant women, meeting with groups of women and children to discuss basic hygiene issues. They give special focus to patients with diabetes and hyper tension. Patients in chronic situations are directed to hospitals for advanced treatment. Topics dealt with in these activities are the health of mother and child, contented
family life, diseases its symptoms and prevention, hygiene and substance abuse and its impact.

Gains from healthcare programmes include:

These activities improve the standard of living by correct and timely treatment, early detection of diseases and undertaking treatment and practising healthy habits for a healthy generation. Maternal and child health is helpful for national development. These activities enhance gender mainstreaming by ensuring complete health of the family, giving separate health care assurance to pregnant and feeding mothers, by discouraging drug abuse that improves the health of the individual and in turn improving the mental health of the family members and by helping to form a generation with healthy habits.

1.29.9 Disaster Management:

Communities battered by disasters are led through a process of change in small steps until they become capable to take initiatives with self-confidence. It aims to motivate and be proactive in the face of disasters. For this various intervention logics were implemented like public awareness building, disaster prone area mapping/ calendar, environmental task force composition and equipping, NGO networking, organizing and conducting people’s action on environmental protection etc.

Gains from disaster management programmes include:

It prepared the family psychologically to face the disaster, made them understand the first aid to be given at the time of disaster, imparted training to the community members to face the disaster jointly and made them aware of the essential documents to be carried with on the occurrence of a disaster. These programmes enhances gender mainstreaming since women and men
jointly work for disaster management and both men and women acts as a motivating force to face the consequence of disaster.

1.30 Theoretical Perspectives

During the 1960s of feminist activism and theory contested capitalism as biased, discriminatory and unfair. In 1990s, it was often associated with the entry of post structural and post modern ideas into a more differentiated feminism. During that time feminist interested in inequality, poverty and gender relations produced a significant body of critical ideas on development, and issues raised by feminists’ significantly impacted international agencies dealing with the development problems.

1.30.1 The Harvard Analytical Framework

The Harvard Analytical Framework is also known as the Gender Roles Framework or Gender Analysis Framework. It was developed by the Harvard Institute for International development in association with the WID office of USAID, and based on the WID efficiency approach, it is one of the most basic gender analysis and planning frameworks. The framework consists of a matrix for collecting data at the micro (community and household) level. It has four interrelated components which consisted of the activity profile, the access and control profile, the analysis of influencing factors, and the project cycle analysis. The merits of this framework are that it is practical and hands-on, once the data have been collected; it gives a clear picture of who does what, when and with what resources. It makes women’s role and work visible. It distinguishes between access to and control over resources. It can be easily adapted to a variety of settings and situations and it is relatively non-threatening, because it relies on "facts" only.
Moser's Gender Planning Framework

One of the most popularly used frameworks is that developed by Caroline Moser. It is based on her concepts of gender roles and gender needs, and policy approaches to gender and development planning. It links the assessment of women’s roles to the larger development planning process. The approach launches the idea of women’s “three roles” in production, reproduction, and community management and the repercussion that these roles have for women’s participation in the development process. In building these links, both between women and the community, and between gender planning and development planning more broadly, Moser’s framework encompasses both the technical and political aspects of gender integration into development.

The framework is composed of several components (or tools). In the first, the triple roles of women are recognized by mapping the activities of household members (including children) over the course of twenty-four hours.

Reproductive Roles:
Childbearing and rearing, domestic tasks that guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the current and future work force (e.g., cooking, cleaning, etc.)

Productive Roles:
Work done for remuneration, in cash or kind. (e.g., wage labor, farming, crafts, etc.)

Community Management Roles:
Work that supports collective consumption and maintenance of community resources (e.g., local government, irrigation systems management, education, etc.)
The second component classifies and reviews gender needs, distinguishing between practical needs (to address inadequate living conditions) and strategic needs (for power and control to achieve gender equality). The third component, or tool, disaggregates information about access to and control over resources within the household by sex— who makes decisions about the use of different assets. The fourth component identifies how women deal with their various roles, and seeks to clarify how planned interventions will affect each one. Finally, the WID/GAD policy matrix appraises how different planning approaches (welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, and empowerment) have addressed the triple roles and women’s practical and strategic needs.

1.30.3 Women Empowerment Theory

Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered ones developing confidence in their own capacities. The empowerment theory of women emphasis the need of empowering women and thus enabling them for; having decision-making power of their own, having access to information and resources for taking proper decision, having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or.), ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making, having positive thinking on the ability to make change, ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power, ability to change others’ perceptions by democratic means, involving in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated and increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma.
In this theory, Marginalized refers to the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by the wider society and ostracized as undesirables. So the empowerment strategy is to assist marginalized people which are the women to make themselves creative and effective beings in the society. A structural change is needed for this fact, to reduce the need for dependence.

Another use of this process is the personal development. The empowerment forms an apogee of self realization and identity formation. This helps to exercise identifying the power within oneself and to identify the potentialities. The personal development will result in increasing self awareness and emotional intelligence. Empowerment is ultimately driven by the individual's belief in their capability to influence events.

Empowerment can be attained through one or many ways. An important factor in the discovery and application of the human "self empowerment" lies within the tools used to unveil the truth. It has been suggested that Yoga is one such tool that can be used for more than the obvious physical benefits. When Yoga is practiced consistently the mind/body connection is apparent. Through this connection, the individual finds him or herself with a stronger sense of self and the ability to change areas where bad habits rule, negative emotions run rampant, even controlling addictions through understanding them for what they are. What can be more empowering than gaining control over self?

1.30.4 Theory of Dependency

The debates among the liberal reformers (Prebisch), the Marxists (Andre Gunder Frank), and the world systems theorists (Wallerstein) were vigorous
and intellectually quite challenging. There are still points of serious
disagreements among the various strains of dependency theorists and it is a
mistake to think that there is only one unified theory of dependency.
Nonetheless, there are some core propositions which seem to underlie the
analyses of most dependency theorists.

Dependency can be defined as an explanation of the economic development
of a state in terms of the external influences-political, economic, and
cultural--on national development. Dependency is a historical condition
which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours
some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development
possibilities of the subordinate economics. It is a situation in which the
economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development
and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected.

In short, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped
state by examining the patterns of interactions and by arguing that inequality
is an intrinsic part of those interactions.

So, in the case of gender, there always exists an inequality between the two
genders and this is the prime cause of dependency in this case. For many
reasons, women are not allowed to perform many actions as men do, so it
will make them different form them. This will result in a depending state.

1.30.5 Gender Role Theory

The gender role has various factors affecting. There are social as well as
cultural factors which contribute to the creation of gender role. In biological
factors there are some innate biological differences between males and
females which create characteristic behaviour between men and women.
There are biological division of labour in reproduction which leads to the
foundation and elaboration of gender roles. Under cultural factors, Margaret Meade studied the three primitive peoples of New Guinea described above, and found significant differences in gender roles. This, she took to indicate that human nature is sufficiently malleable to rule out biological determination of gender roles. (Sheppard)

But, Meade's societies were the exception, not the rule. Cross culturally, the predominant feature has been for the men to be dominant and the women to be nurturing. Women are usually found to do the domestic chores, care for kids, and promoting family emotional harmony. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to provide for the family and to represent the family in activities outside the home (Sheppard, p. 346).

This is because, men have the physical advantage of size and women have been restricted to child care because of pregnancy and lactation. Physical advantages lead to economic, political and social advantages. Once these have been achieved, it is difficult to give them up.

1.30.6 Social Role Theory

The social role theory is the theory which studies the behavioural differences between the males and females as a result of cultural stereotypes about gender and result in the social roles which are taught to young people.

This is the principle that men and women behave differently in social situations and take different roles, due to the expectations that society puts upon them (including gender stereotyping). This includes women taking positions of lower power, meeting 'glass ceilings', having home-making roles, etc. Three common patterns are: (a) Women take on more domestic tasks, b) Women and men often have different occupational roles, (c) In occupations, women often have lower status
The main reasons for the social role in the society are, “The gender roles that emerge from a society’s division of labour by sex are thus not arbitrary cultural constructions.” “Gender roles thus emergent from the productive work of the sexes; the characteristics embodied in these roles become stereotypic of women and men and facilitate the activities typically carried out by the workers of each sex.” It is because of a division of labour that women and men are different and not because of evolutionary psychology characteristics. Because of the division of labour, women came to be regarded as housewives, not being able to work with men, but rather doing house related duties such as taking care of the children and cooking. Men are more strictly task-oriented in work groups, all female groups typically perform better than all male groups. Men are more likely to emerge as leaders in initially leaderless groups, Men are more helpful in short-term interactions with stranger, Men behave more aggressively to others than women, particularly when the aggression brings about physical harm or pain, women report more life satisfaction and happiness than men.

1.30.7 Feminist Theory

Feminism

The term feminism can be defined as the belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. The feminist Theory is an outgrowth of the general movement to empower women worldwide. Feminism can be defined as a recognition and critique of male supremacy combined with efforts to change it.

Philosophy of Feminist theory

Realism v. Idealism – Idealism – not one reality, but possibly multiples to be discovered
Realism v. Nominalism – Realist – feminist movements and actions to reform are real in their consequences of change

Idealism v. Materialism – Idealism – gaining power and voice through movements

Relevance of feminist theory

Feminism can be defined as a social movement and an ideology in support of the idea that a larger share of scarce resources should be allocated to women. Feminist believe that women should enjoy the same rights in society as men and that should share equity in society's opportunities. Feminist sociological theory represents an attempt to give a voice to women and female perspective. Feminist sociological theory is generally critical of the traditional scientific sociological approach that stresses a commitment to neutrality, objectivity, and empirical research. There are many criticisms of feminists. One is that they leave themselves wide open to attack because they themselves are very biased in their approach. Second, although a commitment to empirical research is not a must in designs of social theory; relying on such techniques as oral testimony and the analysis of such content a diaries risk a lack of objectivity and bias. When an individual is asked for his or her story, it is always biased from his or her perspective. Third, most feminists claim that all sociological theories are gender-biased but fail to provide any proof of this claim. Fourth, gender is just one variable in human interaction. Many feminist believe that interactions are based solely on gender distinction. Fifth criticism of the feminism comes from within feminist sociological theory itself. The fact that there is such a great variety of sociological feminist theories represents a clear lack of consensus among feminists as to the best means to go about fighting sexism, discrimination,
and oppression. Sexism and discrimination exists in nearly all social institutions. Religion is a long time perpetuator of gender inequality- like Catholic Church forbids females from being priests. Giving a voice to women remains feminist sociological theory’s greatest contribution to the field of sociology specifically and society in general.

1.30.8 System Theory

A “system” may be described as a complex of interacting components together with the relationships among them that permit the identification of a boundary-maintaining entity or process. Since social and psychological phenomena tend to resist quantitative modelling by posing basic difficulties already on the plane of boundary identification, alternative approaches must be relied upon. One such approach draws on the body of knowledge derived from General System Theory and its application in the domain of human activity systems.

The line that separates the aspects of a system from those of its environment tends to blur as the unit of observation moves from natural and designed physical systems to human and conceptual social systems. While the former are easier to define and have relatively clear-cut aims or purposes, the latter are more difficult to define; most often they do not have clear-cut and agreed upon aims or purposes, and even when agreed upon, these may change over time. In addition, human activity systems tend to have multiple and overlapping purposes, of which it is possible to distinguish at least three levels: the purpose of the system, the purpose of its parts, and the purpose of the system of which it is a part, the supra-system.

The method proposed by systems theory is to model complex entities created by the multiple interaction of components by abstracting from certain details
of structure and component, and concentrating on the dynamics that define the characteristic functions, properties, and relationships that are internal or external to the system.

The history of systems theories includes contributions from such seminal thinkers as Alfred North Whitehead, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Anatol Rapoport, Kenneth Boulding, Paul A. Weiss, Ralph Gerard, Kurt Lewin, Roy R. Grinker, William Gray, Nicolas Rizzo, Karl Menninger, Silvano Arietti, and, in more recent years, the dynamical systems theorists, the family systems theorists, and those who deal with dissipative structures and holistic paradigms.

1.30.9 Discursive Theories of Gender

Discursive approaches to gender are a useful approach for exploring the social construction of gender. Discursive theories of gender see gender as something that is enacted on a daily basis through discourse. This understanding is in contrast to seeing gender as a property of persons or a set of adjectives associated with a person. Discursive theories of gender are part of wider approaches that see gender as a social construction, and they are thus central to understanding gender and society. What is unique about discursive approaches to gender is that discourses are seen as producing certain gendered subjects. By adopting discursive theories of gender, it is possible to show how the availability and desirability of discourses in society is linked to the subject positions people adopt in talk. The strength of discursive theories of gender is that they are useful for learning how gender is created through talk and the availability of subject positions. Through discursive theories of gender, it is thus possible to show how gender is performed in society through discourse.
Discourse can refer to a post-structural definition often linked to Foucauldian theories and to a more linguistic understanding of language in use. In the Foucauldian understanding, discourse refers to the regulatory system that creates the order of things in a society through distinctions such as right/wrong, masculine/feminine, and so on. Discourse is here seen as a large sum of statements that regulate what is accepted as knowledge in a given society. Discourse can also be seen in a more linguistic version as language in use. This means that spoken and written texts can be subjected to an analysis of what is said when and how. Through this analysis, it is possible to analyze how the societal order is re-established through the use of language. Discursive theories of gender draw on Foucauldian as well as linguistic definitions of discourse to theorize gender as something that is performed. Judith Butler is one of the most prominent thinkers who use Foucauldian approaches to theorize gender. For Butler, gender is something that is done. This is in contrast to other understandings of gender where gender is seen as a property of persons or a set of adjectives. Drawing on Foucault, Butler argues that discourses, as large sums of statements, make certain subject positions available. Subject positions are the basis on which gender identities are formed. Discourse is thus powerful in defining what one understands to be gender and what it means to be a man or a woman in a given society. Gendered subjects are created through responding to or enacting these discourses. Although there are multitudes of discourses, certain discourses are more dominant than others, which make them hegemonic. These hegemonic discourses determine how the ideal man or woman is supposed to be and oppresses other ways of enacting gender. Another approach to gender as discourse is to understand discourses as the spoken word and as embedded in conversations. Various researchers have explored how gender is enacted
through talk. Such studies are based on the insight that gender is created through everyday interactions and that talk can be easily accessed to study these mechanisms and show how gender is enacted.

**Summing up**

The Beijing platform helped the world to make a look to the realities through woman’s eyes. As long as the reality remains the same, the intervention progresses as such without any change, may create some lacunae behind. This chapter helps the fellow beings to reduce depth and volume of the lacunae and promote them to conduct further studies to fill the vacuum spaces.
References


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