I INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The real aim of development is to improve the overall quality of human life. It is only to draw attention to gender issues, UNDP’s Global Human Development Report (HDR, 1995), has introduced the concept Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Equality Index (GEI). The most basic capabilities for human development are living a long and healthy life, being educated, having a good standard of living, enjoying political and civil freedom to participate in the life of one’s community (UNDP, 2003). A holistic assessment of human development will lose its intrinsic value if it does not highlight the status of women. Gender equity is an essential dimension of human development. If females don’t enjoy freedom and opportunities that males have, this is not consistent with human development.

“Gender and Development” is an approach to development that became popular in the mid 1980s. At that time, the dominant approach to include women in development initiatives was the Women in Development (WID) approach. WID focused primarily on women, without considering their relationship to men and how development initiatives would affect both men and women in society. The GAD approach includes the participation of both women and men. It emphasizes gender balance in access to the resources and benefits of society, and in participation in decision-making. When changes are made in a society, there can be winners and losers. Sometimes the winners are women and the losers are men, and vice versa. The aim of gender and development is to ensure the change benefits both women and men. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development is aimed at ensuring an equal distribution of opportunities, resources, and benefits to different population groups served by a particular intervention. In many parts of the world, women have few resources or rights and little opportunity to improve their lives. They are restricted in terms of education, ownership of property, monetary return for their work, financial opportunities, and opportunities to influence decision-making at the level of the family and society. Country by country, the lack of resources and opportunities open to women is strongly associated with society-wide poverty or lack of development. Charles and Alberto Abouchaar (2003), for example, reports that almost all the countries ranked in the top quintile of wealth provide social and economic equality to women; none of those in the poorest quintile do.
1.1 FEMINIST ECONOMICS VS ORTHODOX ECONOMICS

Orthodox economics, which claims to be gender-neutral, is seen to negatively affect women, exacerbate gender inequality and undervalue the contribution many women make to the economy at all levels. This has led to the emergence of the body of thought known as Feminist Economics. Feminist economists argue that orthodox economists ignore the differing inputs that men and women make to the economy due to their focus on the productive economy and markets (Sweetman 2008). Feminist economics has made a significant contribution to the understandings of gender equality in many different ways, the majority of which is centered around its emphasis on the recognition of women’s unpaid work, and women’s time-burden (often referred to as the double/triple-shift). Its contribution to understandings of gender equality has been instrumental in the context of Western countries and countries in the Global South.

Essentially, feminist economists criticize the orthodox economics for solely focusing on equality of opportunities. Feminist economics states that it is important to consider equality of outcomes alongside equality of opportunities, due to the fact that “systemic inequality in outcomes contributes to unequal power and, as a result, unequal opportunities” and vice versa. Equality of outcomes needs consideration because a focus solely on opportunities ignores the gendered dynamics of many economic systems such as labour markets. So policies that ignore the possibility that outcomes can vary, end up perpetuating gender inequalities (Berik et.al., 2009).

Neo-liberal models of market-led growth accompanied by certain economic and trade policy choices have proven to be problematic for much of the world’s population, including rural women, men, and their communities. These policy choices assumes that free trade, investment liberalization, private sector and financial system deregulation, and the privatization of public-owned enterprises and services would lead to sustained economic growth, improved productive capacities, and higher growth and productivity, all leading to increased employment opportunities, improved food security, and better lives overall. Yet, the results of these policy choices—typically treated as “gender neutral” have been mixed, with women and men impacted differently through the distribution of key economic and financial resources through markets and state interventions that are anything but gender neutral.
Despite women’s critical contribution to rural development and notable improvements in both developing and developed countries, rural women’s rights and priorities remain insufficiently addressed in legal frameworks, national and local development policies and investment strategies at all levels. They continue to face serious challenges in carrying out their multiple productive and reproductive roles within their families and communities, in part due to lack of rural infrastructure and essential goods and services. They are at disadvantage as a result of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination that deny them equitable access to opportunities, resources and services.

1.2 THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX

The Global Gender Gap Index examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment. World Economic Forum (2005) assesses women empowerment in five dimensions viz., Economic participation, Economic opportunities, Educational attainment, political empowerment and Health and Well-being. Economic opportunities of women have been discussed for the past four decades. The qualitative aspects of women’s work have been emphasized in all conferences and seminars at national and international level. It is concerned with the quality of women’s economic involvement, beyond their presence as workers. This is a particularly serious problem in developing countries like India.

India is dominated by villages and rural women’s works in the villages are poorly estimated. Wage discrimination can be witnessed in rural informal sector, where their employment is either concentrated in poorly paid or unskilled job “ghettos,” characterized by the absence of upward mobility and opportunity. This is most commonly the result of negative or obstructive attitudes, and of legal and social systems which use maternity laws and benefits to penalize women economically for childbirth and child care responsibilities, and discourage—or actively prevent—men from sharing family responsibilities. Internationally, women are most often concentrated in “feminized” professions, such as nursing and teaching, office work, care of the elderly and disabled—termed “horizontal occupational segregation”—where they tend to remain in lower job categories than men.
1.3 RURAL WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Rural economies are characterized by distinct gender roles. While women mostly produce basic food stuffs for consumption within the household, men are engaged in commercial farming targeted at international markets. Women tend to manage smaller plots than men and generally work in more precarious situations with only seasonal contracts. What is more, a large share of women participates in economic activities as contributing family workers with no pay or control over productive assets responsible for some 60 to 80 percent of food production in developing countries. They are important for fuel and water provision, raise children and offer care to the sick and the elderly. By engaging in community activities, women are furthermore crucial for the well-being of their families and society at large. Considering these additional activities, international comparisons reveal that women in many rural areas spend considerably more time working than their male counterparts.

Most women are secondary or supplementary wage earners in the household. They are more likely to have part-time, intermittent or seasonal jobs, and have higher job turnover rates. Women fulfill a dual role in the household, combining wage earning with their primary role as mothers and household workers. Women earn less than men on average, and wage rates for typically female jobs vary less than men’s wages. Women’ economic returns to commuting do not justify long work trips. Unlike men, they will not earn significantly more at some locations within the metro area, and might as well minimize commuting costs, thus increasing their real wages (Hanson and Pratt 1992). Women’s jobs are distributed more evenly across space than are men’s. The sectors in which women are more likely to work are either closely tied to consumers (such as retail, personal services, education or health) or may be decentralized to cheaper back-office locations (clerical and other white collar employment). Men on the other hand are more likely to work in producer services, higher level management or professional or blue collar industries and occupations, which are best located in concentrations of economic activity downtown or away from residential environments (Erickson, Julia, 1977).

1.4 DALIT WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

In the context of gender development the situation of dalit women needs special attention. Dalit women are one of the largest socially segregated groups
anywhere in the world: they make up more than two per cent of the world's total population. They are discriminated against three times over: they are poor, they are women, and they are dalits. Although both dalit men and women suffer under the same traditional taboos, dalit women are confronted with these more often. They are discriminated against not only by the people of higher castes, but also within their own communities, where men are dominant. Consequently, dalit women have less power within the Dalit movement itself. Although they are active in large numbers, most leadership positions in the organizations, local bodies and associations have until now been held by men. There are about 250 million dalits in India but there is no proper survey to give the correct number of dalit women in India. They are generally scattered in villages and they are not a homogenous group.

The gender discrimination starts at the very early stage in the life of a dalit girl. Normally girl children are retained at home to look after the siblings. Another thing is the compulsory marriage of the girls at very early age after which the education is stopped. Generally in the male-dominated society, polygamy is allowed and more so in many dalit families. Because of this the position of the dalit women deteriorated. 85% of the dalit women have the most formidable occupations, working in traditional sectors of economy. They often work as agricultural labourers, Safai Karmchari, sweepers and disposers of human waste (Ministry of Labour). That is why the contribution of SC women to the economic development of India is significant especially in the agricultural sector. But they are exploited by the higher caste landlords. Not only in agriculture sector, they are exploited in industrial sector and service sector as well.

They are paid very marginal salary for the hard work in the field for the whole day. In industries the tanning process is considered to be an unclean job which is done only by socially backward class. The condition of scavenger and sweepers in service sector is very deplorable and they remain the most vulnerable sectors among SC. The working condition is very poor and the remuneration is also very poor. In spite of decades of reservations and the government claiming to have spent crores of rupees for dalit welfare, Tamil Nadu has a poor record of empowerment of dalit communities. Most of the caste clashes involving dalits, in the recent past in Tamil Nadu are linked to visible disparities in terms of access to productive resources like land and credit to the disadvantages of the dalits. Heavy
disparities in access to services and resources like jobs, credit, land entitlement and ownership as well as denial of basic human rights have forced the dalits of Tamil Nadu to mobilize them and demand their rights and due share in the development of Tamil Nadu.

Issue of dalit women in India is an extremely volatile and sensitive one. There is no restriction on dalit women going out to work. They are free to perform jobs which are normally kept off from upper caste women. i.e, menial, filthy and income ones. Dalit are poor and live below poverty line. So to feed the family, the dalit women have to go out and work, but sphere of work is very limited. What problems this stratum of upcoming dalit women is facing? Are they accepted as socially equals by their co-workers belonging to higher social status groups? How do these dalit women from rural areas look at their counterparts who are engaged in the low paid, low status, occupations? There is need to find answers to these questions in order to assess the levels of unity and disunity among different sections within rural dalit women.

1.5 ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Women are more likely to find employment closer to home than are men. Labor markets do not operate on a city- or metropolitan-wide basis. They are spatially segmented at quite a fine scale, frequently by the race, skill-levels and gender of the labor pools they draw from. Many employers locate at least partly on the basis of local labor supply characteristics. Highly segmented local labor markets based on particular sorts of labor available constrain and shape the employment opportunities available to women. In some occupations and industries, local labor markets may operate as “ghettos” of female employment, low wage but conveniently located. Home location must be considered jointly with work location if we are to understand commuting patterns adequately. Home and work are intimately entwined in a variety of ways, and these links have different consequences for women than for men. Distance may pose different kinds of constraints on women with different human capital (skills and job experience) and transportation (drivers’ license and availability of a car) resources. The threshold costs of the investment required to commute to a job in a more distant less accessible
location, and the likely economic returns to commuting for women with different levels of advantage in the labor market, differ substantially among women. Different women’s labor force participation patterns maybe shaped enabled or constrained in quite different ways depending on the relative burden that commuting represents for them. While household labor has had to be reorganized to accommodate this shift, household incomes have not risen as fast as the increasing numbers of two-earner (and even two full-time earners) households would suggest. For many, household incomes have declined in real terms even as labor force participation has increased. Despite sharp increases in the labor force participation of married women since the 1970s, median family income increased by only 6% (11% among married couples) between 1973 and 1990, compared to a 104% increase between 1947 and 1973 (Lugaila, 1992).

This is important for what it suggests about how the role of women wage earners has changed. Once perceived as discretionary or secondary workers with a less stable attachment to the labor force (and thus a different set of commuting preferences) the meaning of work appears to have changed in fundamental ways, with implications for the relative burden that space poses. The impact of married women’s contribution to the household can be seen in the fact that families with children where only the father worked had incomes 36% less than those with two full-time workers (Lugaila 1992). For the growing numbers of single mother families (from 11% in 1970 to almost 20% in 1990) work outside the home is anything but discretionary, if childcare responsibilities and a host of other barriers can be surmounted. With a family income approximately 42% less than that of married couples, families headed by women have considerably higher poverty rates (Lamison-White 1992).

The past three decades have seen equally dramatic changes in the spatial organization of work, and substantial continued changes in residential structure. Jobs have changed their content (and their labor needs) in response both to firm reorganization and to technological change (Chapman and Walker 1987). Employment centers have shifted away from the downtown core to suburban office, research and industrial parks. Much of the pink-collar clerical employment in which women are concentrated relocated to cheaper peripheral sites as communication networks became more sophisticated. Retail and consumer service jobs (also
overwhelmingly feminized sectors) moved along with decentralizing offices, homes and factories. New consumer needs generated by the rise of two-earner families (for more commercialized household services, for daycare, home care and maintenance, and a variety of previously “unpaid” tasks) have added new kinds of jobs in new, more dispersed locations. While the downtown core may retain a solid employment base, the composition of those jobs have changed to include more sophisticated “command and control” functions, and the lower skilled support services that must be provided on location. Intermediate managerial and clerical positions that once provided the bulk of CBD employment are now far more footloose.

Rural-based women’s labor force participation rates have risen much faster than those of urban women over the past three decades, and women have thus accounted for a larger proportion of non metropolitan than metropolitan employment growth (Brown and O’Leary 1977). However, rural or non-metropolitan-based women continue to be rewarded at lower rates than urban or metropolitan-based women (McLaughlin and Perman 1991), to experience much higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than urban or metro women and to experience more marginal, discontinuous work histories (Ollenberger, Grana and Moore 1989), even after controlling for differences in human capital and occupational and industrial sector.

Women contribute substantially to economic welfare through large amounts of unpaid work, such as child-rearing and household tasks, which often remains unseen and unaccounted for in GDP. Women’s ability to participate in the labor market is constrained by their higher allocation of time to unpaid work. On average, women spend twice as much time on household work as men and four times as much time on childcare (Duflo, 2012), thereby freeing uptime for male household members to participate in the formal labor force. In many advanced economies, gender-specific career paths, characterized by more part-time work and career breaks for child care among women, result in higher risk for old-age poverty among women. While often a prerequisite for women’s labor market participation, part-time work arrangements can perpetuate gender roles, resulting in disadvantages in career development (OECD, 2012). With the increasing importance given to women’s political empowerment in policy circles, there is a need to provide robust indicators that gauge differentiation and improvement across countries. Indeed, “as the largest
group today that worldwide encounters current and historical barriers to political incorporation, women’s political empowerment should be viewed as a fundamental process of transformation for benchmarking and understanding more general political power empowerment gains across the globe”(Alexander et.al 2016).

1.6 WOMEN AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Women political representation is a failure of today’s democracies. The reality is that roughly half of the world’s voting population is women but the average percent of women in national parliament is not even a fifth (18.7%, Inter parliamentary Union (IPU), world average for women in national parliament, single or lower house, situation as of September 2009). Representation in politics where men and women are equally represented is called a gender balanced representation. The hindrance for women to participate in parliaments fall into three main categories: (1) political such as: the masculine model of politics, lack of party support, cooperation with women’s organizations and electoral system; (2) ideological and psychological like: traditional roles, lack of confidence, the perception of policies as “dirty” and the role of mass-media; (3) socio economic obstacles including: feminization of poverty and unemployment, the dual burden and lastly, education and training.

Political Participation of Dalit Women

In the year 1993, 73rd amendment in the constitution granted reservation to dalits, tribal and women in local government. This amendment made it compulsory that one third of the seats reserved for dalits be filled by dalit women. In some states, there has been little or no acceptance of reservation for the lower castes and dalit women by the upper castes. In the political arena of the country the status of the dalit women was and still is the worst compared to others. The term dalit stands for change and revolution. They feel that the voices and protests of dalit women are almost invisible. In fact when they use phrases like, marginalization of women in the development process, or feminization of poverty or women’s contribution in the unorganized sector they are referring to dalit women without even being conscious about their specificity. Dalit women were actively participating in the Ambedkar Led movement in the pre- independence period. In the twentieth century slowly, changes occurred in the position of women after the movement started to educate by Gandhi. As a result dalit women are working in various government offices, they are active member of Zilla parishards.
“More and more Dalit” women should come forward to contest the elections and get elected to the panchayat and help the dalit community become liberated from their bondage. Like the dominant castes, the dalit should join hands with other dalit sub-groups and stand together against the dominant castes. They should be able to work independently in the panchayat and stop being proxies for the dominant castes. Dalit need to focus on their progress, throwing off their subordination.

“Reservation has meant little difference other than formal election: it has not meant any real change for women other than their ability to move outside the house”. Political participation of dalit women is a central human right in itself and enables and realization of a host of other human of other human rights. Political voice and decision making power concerning basic services, economic development and social justice are critical factors in challenging and transforming structural caste-class-gender discrimination and enabling dalit women to realize their fundamental rights. Political participation also demands accountability from state and non-state actors to guarantee and respect these women’s equal political voice and development. This requires a transformation of power relationships both within institutions of governance and in the women’s social environment.

**Constraints of Women in Political Participation**

Women and men are taught different roles in life where the home is the women’s area and politics and public life is seen as the man’s world. Another point in this sex-role problematic is the fact that house work and family responsibility hindrances women from participating in politics and public life she mentions male conspiracy theory, which derives from feminist ideology and is based on the idea that men are discriminating women therefore women have low representation in political office. There are also institutional constraints that women are less likely than men to become incumbents and therefore have less chance to get into office. The power, prestige and desirability of political office, has also been as a factor determining the level of representation of women since these characteristics are seen as male dominated where women have strong difficulties to complete with men (Clark 1991).

Factors that were found assisting for women’s participation in politics are: **support from the family**, leader qualities in women, political education for women to develop their leader qualities, which will ensure women’s legal right to be
represented in politics. **Low level of educational attainment** of women is a hurdle to their political participation. Their literacy in rural areas is lower than literacy in urban areas, and their participation in tertiary education is particularly low. Their lack of education renders them less likely to contest and win elections as they are perceived as being less capable of functioning efficiently (Helvetas, 2010). **Lack of education and requisite training** for the successful discharge of functions also present important barriers to their political participation (Sultana, 2000). In addition, women are hampered by their lack of political experience, familiarity with formal institutions and their functioning. **Lack of economic resources** is another obstacle to their participation, as most women candidates do not have a source of sustainable income, property or other assets and were generally dependent on their husbands or other male relatives for financial support (Shamim and Kumari, 2000). **Lack of political connections** limits their participation in politics. It is commonly known that political connections make it easier to access systems of governance and positions of power. Because women are less active in public life and dominated by men in decision-making outside the home, they are less likely to develop the required connections (Thesbjerg, 2007). As a result of cultural stereotyping, women often have to seek permissions from their husbands to participate in any processes.

### 1.7 WOMEN AND EDUCATION

“Human development, if not gendered, is endangered” (United Nations Human Development Report, 1995) Human development depends upon education, standard of living and health. Education is the most important component in human development. The role gender has significant influence on higher education of women. Illiteracy of women degrades women role. Gender and Education usually consists of formal, non formal and informal. Education is important for various reasons. Education is so critical to development that it is one of the goals of the MDGs (MDG) Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girl’s development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR in 1948). The right to girl’s education is one of the most critical of all rights because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.
Women education is one of the major and central problems of Indian as well as the society at large because in the past women were denied opportunity and had to suffer the hegemonic masculine ideology. This unjustifiable and unwarrantable operation had resulted into a movement that fought to achieve to equal status of women in all over the world. Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girl’s development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR in 1948). The right to girl’s education is one of the most critical of all rights because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.

Improving educational opportunities for girls and women helps them to develop skills that allow them to make decision and influence community change in key areas. One reason for denying girls and women their right to an education is rarely articulated by those in charge that is their fear of the power that girls will have through education. There is still some resistance to the idea that girls and women can be trusted with education. Education is also seen in some society as a fear of change and now with globalization, the fear becomes even greater-fear to lose the culture identity, fear of moving towards the unknown or the unwanted, fear of dissolving in the many others. Female education is a catch-all term for a complex of issues and debates surrounding education (primary education, secondary education and tertiary education and health education in particular) for females, it includes areas of gender equality and access to education, and its connection to the alleviation of poverty. Education helps women take advantages of opportunities that could benefit them and their families. Preparing women for the labour force and helping them understand their legal and reproductive rights. The development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach.

In fact, educational expansion has a variety of roles that have to be carefully distinguished. First, more education can help productivity. Secondly, wide sharing of educational advancement can contribute to a better distribution of the aggregate
national income among different people. Thirdly, being better educated can help in the conversion of incomes and resources into various functioning’s and ways of living. Education also helps in the intelligent choice between different types of lives that a person can lead. All these influences can have important bearings on the development of valuable capabilities and thus on the process of human development. In recent decades, cuts in education and health budgets and the dismantling of public extension services have contributed to a poorly educated young population and stagnant smallholder agricultural sector. Continued gaps in rural education and training threaten the achievement of Millennium Development Goal (universal education) and the Education for All goals. When young people lack foundation skills such as the ability to analyze information and adopt new technologies, they are less likely to benefit from training programs. Equally challenging is the poor quality and limited relevance of rural education and training. These disadvantages are particularly stark for young women, for whom household work burdens and cultural attitudes are a barrier to gaining a decent education.

Recent statistics have shown significant gender disparities in female educational levels. Self reported rates of literacy are considerable lower among women than among men. The gender gap is narrower among the younger generation, reflecting increased access to schooling in recent years. Girls are also under-represented in formal education at all levels. Whereas boys and girls enrollment in school in equal numbers, girls tend to drop out in larger numbers than boys, and the gender gap increases as the level of schooling rises. Reasons for the gender gap in education are related primarily to two areas—first to costs, both direct costs and opportunity costs, and second to social attitudes towards gender roles. Particularly among poor and rural households, the labour of all household members can be crucial for survival. Reasons related to economic costs are the main reasons for the withdrawal of both boys and girls from school. However, stereotypical attitudes about gender roles, revolving around notions of men as breadwinners working outside the home and women as housewives and mothers working within the home, mean that girls’ education is not considered as important as boys’. Girls are expected to carry out domestic chores in the home and are more involved in income-generating activities. This means that a girl’s labour is more important to the household, and renders the opportunity costs of sending her to school higher than those of boys.
The gender gap in educational participation has immediate observable ramifications for the employment opportunities open to women, which in turn has wider social significance. Women’s lack of skills and qualifications means that they are unable to compete for professional and decision-making positions, which are also the positions that command status and wealth. This means that there is a lack of role models of women in professional positions for girls to aspire to and break the vicious circle. There are also practical implications in various sectors. For example, the absence of female health professionals inhibits women from accessing adequate health care. By restricting girls’ access to education, their life opportunities and choices are also restricted. Literacy and numeracy enable access to information on a range of areas which improve the quality of life of a woman, such as contraception, nutrition, sanitation. Education increases access to employment and economic opportunities. Illiteracy limits the choices available to women and restricts participation in many development activities.

1.8 HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF WOMEN

Good health and wellbeing brings many benefits for all of us. Healthier people tend to be happier, tend to play an active role and contribute to society and the economy through their families, local communities and workplaces. Conversely, poor health and wellbeing puts a huge strain on individuals, the NHS, the economy and society. Health care access is important for women as women’s body changes throughout her lifetime, from fetal development to post menopause. They use medical services more often than men, especially during their reproductive years. Many women also face huge social, economic and cultured barriers to having lifelong good health. Several reasons have been found to cause health problems all over the country. There is a strong correlation between illiteracy and women’s health. It has been found that children of illiterate mothers are twice undernourished as compared to the children of literate mothers. The educational level and place of residence has direct role in morbidity and mortality of women folk. However, women have overcome the traditional mind sets and have made important contributions in professions like teaching, medicine, science & technology.
Additionally women provide the majority of family health care by caring for both aging parents and children. Women manage health through their domestic work, through cleaning, sweeping, drawing water, washing clothes dishes and children and preparing food. But the realities of women’s lives remain invisible and this invisibility persists at all levels beginning with the family to the nation.

Although efforts have been taken to improve the status of women, but the constitution dream of gender equality is miles away from becoming a reality, even today. The attention needs to be focused on the following issues to maintain the dignity and respect for women’s health in our country. Physical health deals with ability to function and it can be gained and maintained by regular exercise, as it helps to give more energy, keep muscles fit & strong. Balance diet which creates a balance between what we eat and the way our body uses the food for energy and growth, another factor which is essential for physical health is sufficient sleep as daily 6-8 hour sleep is must for healthy mind. Regularity in sleep time is also one of the factor otherwise biological clocks of body get disturbed. The adverse impact on health of low socioeconomic status is compounded for women by gender inequities. Gender inequalities in the allocation of resources, such as income, education, health care, nutrition and political voice, are strongly associated with poor health and reduced well-being. Thus, across a range of health problems, girls and women face differential exposures and vulnerabilities that are often poorly recognized.

Thus after a brief introduction of the problem of research, the conceptual framework of the present research on dalit women development is presented in the chart.
Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Gender and Development

Economic Participation of Women
- 1. Benefits for Women
- 2. Gender Relationship
- 3. Dependency and Self Esteem
- 4. Awareness Level about Societal Problems
  - 1. Employment pattern
  - 2. Awareness on Employment Opportunity
  - 3. Problems of Working Women
  - 4. Support from the Family and Society
  - 5. Working Conditions

Economic Opportunity of Women
- 1. Employment pattern
- 2. Awareness on Employment Opportunity
- 3. Problems of Working Women
- 4. Support from the Family and Society
- 5. Working Conditions

Political Empowerment of Women
- 1. Awareness on Political Participation
- 2. Political Empowerment
- 3. Gender Preference in Politics
- 4. Support from the Family and Society
- 5. Involvement and Non-Involvement in Politics

Educational Attainment of Women
- 1. Importance of Women Education
- 2. Constraints of Women (External)
- 3. Constraints of Women (Internal)
- 4. Determinants of Women Education

Health and Well being of Women
- 1. Health Care Status of Women
- 2. Health Care Seeking Behavior
- 3. Preventive Health Care Measures
- 4. Health Care and Safety Measures
- 5. Prenatal and Post Natal Care

Source: Researcher
1.9 SCHEMATA

The thesis is organized in seven chapters to focus the scope of the study.


The second chapter focuses review of literature, which encompasses theoretical background as well as empirical studies related to development of dalit women.

The third chapter portrays the research design of the study. It includes research questions, objectives, hypotheses, methodology, tools of data analysis, operational definition of the concepts and delimitation and Profile of Tamil Nadu, Profile of Villupuram district, Profile of study regions including selected villages are described.

The fourth chapter describes the profile of the sample rural dalit women.

The fifth chapter embodies economic indicators such as the economic participation of dalit women and economic opportunities of dalit women.

The sixth chapter delineates non-economic indicators such as political empowerment of dalit women, educational attainment of dalit women and health well and being of dalit women.

The seventh chapter summarizes the major findings of the study in the form of integrated discussion and policy suggestions to improve the status of dalit women development and scope for future research are also provided in this chapter.

The next chapter describes the review of literature, comprising theoretical and empirical studies related to development of rural dalit women.