CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In most of the human societies, social differentiation between the sexes, the male and female existed and in majority of them women were assigned an inferior position. In recent times in the socialist societies equality of status has been assigned to women, but it is often legal than existential. Thus women accounting for nearly one half of the human population live in perpetual subordination to the other half the men.

1.2 The Social Framework

In order to understand the status of women in India we have to study the problem in socio-cultural context. Our ancient holy literature, such as Rigveda shows evidence that, women are fully the equals of men as regards to access to and capacity for the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of the absolute Brahma. The brahmavadinis were products of educational discipline of brahmacharya, for which women were also eligible. The Rigveda refers to young girls completing their education as brahmacharinis and then gaining husbands, in whom they were merged like rivers in the ocean. The Yajurveda also states that a daughter who has completed her bramhacharya should be married to one who is similarly learned. The Atharvaveda also refers to maidens qualifying by brahmacharya, the disciplined Life of studentship, fit for married life in the second ashram Grihastha ashram. The Upanishad also emphasizes that, the men and women were equal participants of knowledge.
1.3 The Political Context

The status of women towards the last part of the British rule in India i.e. in the first quarter of 19th Century, some remarkable social changes took place. Law relating to Abolition of Sati in 1829, suppression of Female Infanticide etc., was the steps taken towards liberation of women. Introduction of English as a medium of education provided a gateway to the changing ideas of Western liberalization and democracy, based on the ideals of individual freedom, liberty and secularism. The social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M.G. Ranade Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Dr. Anne Besant, Sister Nivedita contributed significantly to the social reform movement in India, and aimed at liberating women by fighting against social evils like sati, purdah, child marriage, female infanticide, prevention of widow remarriage, devadasi system etc.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

More than 70 years after Independences women in India are still fighting for rights and social justice and the social, economic and political status of women has not improved. The important causes affecting the social status of women in India are child marriage, dowry, widows, sati, abortion, female infanticide, feticide, son preference, infant mortality, sexual harassment, abuse, rape, pornography, atrocities on women, eve teasing, domestic violence, trafficking of women and children and cyber crime - and online harassment. The important causes affecting economic status of women in India are poverty and hunger, access to capital, discrimination within occupations and equal pay for equal work, special problems created for women in the factory and right to property. The important causes affecting the political status of women in India are lack of proper representation of women in the governance and
administration. In order to liberate the economic, social and political status of women, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programs have aimed at women’s advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1993. But still they are fighting for social equity and justice. This problem has to be understood in a historical perspective. Therefore, the researcher thought it appropriate to take up a research study on the social and political status of women in Colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947.

1.5 Review of Literature

Review of literature is a significant part of any research. The investigator acquires information about what has been done in the field of study, gather up-to-date information about previous researches in the area and obtain information on the topic of investigation. A familiarity with available literature in the area of research is required for making new grounds and the proper designing of the study. Review of related studies further avoids duplication of the work that has already been done in that area. It also helps the investigator to study the various aspects of the concept in its multi-dimensional perspective. The scholar has reviewed some of the literatures
relating to social and political history of India with reference to Tamil Nadu and the social, economic and political status of women in India.

Literatures Relating to Social and Political History of India with Reference to Tamil Nadu

In the following pages an attempt has been made to provide the data relating to social and political history of Tamil Nadu.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay’s book titled “From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India” is an eminently readable account of the emergence of India as a nation. It covers about two hundred years of political and socio-economic turbulence. Of particular interest to the contemporary reader will be sections such as ‘Early Nationalism: Discontent and Dissension’, ‘Many Voices of a Nation’ and ‘Freedom with Partition’. On the one hand, it converses with students of Indian history and on the other it engages general and curious readers. Few books on this crucial period of history have captured the rhythms of India’s polyphonic nationalism as From Plassey to Partition.

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal in their book titled “Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy” provide a challenging insight for those with an intellectual curiosity about the history, culture and political economy of South Asia. After sketching the pre-modern history of the subcontinent, the book concentrates on the last three centuries. Jointly authored by two leading Indian and Pakistani historians, it offers a rare depth of historical understanding of the politics, cultures, and economies that shape the lives of more than a fifth of humanity. In this comprehensive study, the authors interpret and debate the striking developments in contemporary South Asian history and historical writing, covering the entire spectrum of the region’s modern history – social, economic and political. The book provides
new insights into the structure and ideology of the British raj, the meaning of subaltern resistance, the refashioning of social relations along the lines of caste, class, community and gender, the different strands of anti-colonial nationalism and the dynamics of decolonization. This third edition brings the debate up to the present day, taking account of recent historical research and covering the closer integration of South Asia with the global economy, the impact of developments in Afghanistan on the region as a whole, and the fresh challenges to South Asia’s nation-states.

Judith Margaret Brown’s book titled “Modern India: the Origins of an Asian Democracy” covers the last two centuries of Indian history, concluding with an epilogue written from the perspective of the 1990s. It thematically and analytically discusses the emergence of India as one of the world's largest democracies and one of the most stable of the states to emerge from the experience of colonialism. The foundations of this rare phenomenon in either Asia or Africa are seen in India's society, the ideas and beliefs of her people, and the institutions of government and politics which have developed on the subcontinent, in a process of interaction between what was indigenous to India and the many external influences brought to bear on the country by economic, political, and ideological contact with the Western world. Modern scholarship has shown how diverse and complex was India's socio-economic and political development; and this theme runs through the study which eschews any simple understanding of India's political development as a clash between "imperialism" and "nationalism", or the making of a new nation. The complexity reflects many of the continuing ambiguities and inequalities in the subcontinent's life and suggests why the structures of the state, and indeed the very nature of the Indian nation, are now being questioned, often with unprecedented public violence. India's
dilemmas are not hers alone: they also raise economic, political, and social issues of profound significance throughout the contemporary world.

Ian Copland in his book titled “India 1885-1947: The Unmaking of an Empire” has pointed out that the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked a turning point in modern South Asian history. At the time, few grasped the significance of the event, nor understood the power that its leader would come to wield. From humble beginnings, the Congress led by Gandhi would go on to spearhead India’s fight for independence from British rule; in 1947 it succeeded the British Raj as the regional ruling power. Ian Copland provides both a narrative and analysis of the process by which Indians and Pakistanis emancipated themselves from the seemingly iron-clad yoke of British imperialism. In so doing, he goes to the heart of what sets modern India apart from most other countries in the region its vigorous democracy.

Denis Judd in the work titled “The Lion and the Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj 1600-1947” has pointed out that the British experience with India began in earnest over four hundred years ago, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. For many years the English interlopers and traders who made contact with the subcontinent were viewed by Indians as little more than pirates and potentially troublesome, conquering barbarians. This period, and the century and a half that followed, saw two powerful cultures locked in an often bloody battle over political control, land, trade and a way of life. Professor Denis Judd tells the fascinating story of the remarkable British impact upon India, capturing the essence of what the Raj really meant both for the British and their Indian subjects. All aspects of this long and controversial relationship are discussed such as the first tentative contacts between East and West, the foundation of the East India Company in 1600, the Victorian Raj
in all its pomp and splendour, Gandhi's revolutionary tactics to overthrow the Raj and restore India to the Indians, and Lord Mountbatten's 'swift surgery of partition' in 1947, creating the two independent Commonwealth states of India and Pakistan. Against this epic backdrop, and using many revealing contemporary accounts, Denis Judd explores the consequences of British rule for both rulers and ruled were the British intent on development or exploitation? Were they the 'civilizing' force they claimed? What were Britain's greatest legacies - democracy and the rule of law, or cricket and an efficient railway system? Easy answers are avoided, and difficult questions tackled in this immensely readable, lively and authoritative book.

“A History of India” by Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund  is a detailed and authoritative account of the major political, economic, social and cultural forces that have shaped the history of the Indian subcontinent. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund provide a comprehensive overview of the structural pattern of Indian history, covering each historical period in equal depth. Fully revised throughout, the sixth edition of this highly accessible book has been brought up to date with analysis of recent events such as the 2014 election and its consequences, and includes more discussion of subjects such as caste and gender, Islam, foreign relations, partition, and the press and television.

“A History of Modern India, 1480-1950” by Claude Markovits provides a comprehensive chronological analysis of India’s vibrant and diverse history. As well as analysing the major empires of modern India, from the Mughals to the Raj, 'A History of Modern India' considers the economic, social and intellectual dynamism that accompanied intervening periods of political fragmentation, such as the 80 years that separated the Mughal and the British regimes.
“A Concise History of Modern India” by Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, has become a classic in the field since it was first published in 2001. As a fresh interpretation of Indian history from the Mughals to the present, it has informed students across the world. In the third edition of the book, a final chapter charts the dramatic developments of the last twenty years, from 1990 through the Congress electoral victory of 2009, to the rise of the Indian high-tech industry in a country still troubled by poverty and political unrest. The narrative focuses on the fundamentally political theme of the imaginative and institutional structures that have successively sustained and transformed India, first under British colonial rule and then, after 1947, as an independent country. Woven into the larger political narrative is an account of India's social and economic development and its rich cultural life.

Douglas Peers in his book titled “India under Colonial Rule: 1700-1885” has pointed out that between 1700 and 1885 the British became the paramount power on the Indian subcontinent, their authority extending from Sri Lanka in the south to the Himalayas in the north. It was a massive empire, inspiring both pride and anxiety amongst the British, and forcing change upon and disrupting the lives of its Indian subjects. Yet it is not simply a history of conquest and subjugation, or dominance and defeat: interaction and interdependency powerfully shaped the histories of all involved. The end result was a hybrid empire. India may have become by 1885 the jewel in the British crown, but by that same year a series of changes had occurred within Indian society that would set the foundations for the modern states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. This book provides a concise introduction to these dramatic changes.

out that the past twenty years have seen a proliferation of specialist scholarship on the period of India's transition to colonialism. This volume provides a synthesis of some of the most important themes to emerge from recent work and seeks in particular to reassess the role of Indians in the politics and economics of early colonialism. It discusses new views of the 'decline of the Moghuls' and the role of the Indian capitalists in the expansion of the English East Indian Company's trade and urban settlements. Professor Bayly considers the reasons for the inability of indigenous states to withstand the British, but also highlights the relative failure of the Company to transform India into a quiescent and profitable colony. Later chapters deal with changes in India's ecology, social organisation and ideologies in the nineteenth century, and analyse the nature of Indian resistance to colonialism, including the rebellion of 1857.

“Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870” by C.A. Bayly shows how networks of Indian spies were recruited by the British to secure military, political and social information about their subjects. He also examines the social and intellectual origins of these 'native informants', and considers how the colonial authorities interpreted and often misinterpreted the information they supplied. It was such misunderstandings which ultimately contributed to the failure of the British to anticipate the rebellions of 1857. The author argues, however, that even before this, complex systems of debate and communication were challenging the political and intellectual dominance of the European rulers.

“The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century” by Judith Brown and Wm Roger Louis is an assessment of the British Empire in the light of recent scholarship and the progressive opening of historical
records. This series helps to understand the end of Empire in relation to its beginning, the meaning of British imperialism for the ruled as well as for the rulers, and the significance of the British Empire as a theme in world history. This 20th-century volume considers many aspects of the ‘imperial experience’ in the final years of the British Empire, culminating in the mid-century's rapid processes of decolonization. It seeks to understand the men who managed the empire, their priorities and vision, and the mechanisms of control and connection that held the empire together. There are chapters on imperial centres, on the geographical ‘periphery’ of empire, and on all its connecting mechanisms, including institutions and the flow of people, money, goods, and services. The volume also explores the experience of ‘imperial subjects’ in terms of culture, politics, and economics; an experience which culminated in the growth of vibrant, often new, national identities and movements and, ultimately, new nation-states. It concludes with the processes of decolonization, which reshaped the political map of the late 20th-century world.

“Imperial Power and Popular Politics Class, Resistance and the State in India, 1850–1950” by Rajnarayan Chandavarkar offers a powerful revisionist analysis of the relationship between class and politics in India between the Mutiny and Independence. Dr Chandavarkar rejects the 'Orientalist' view of Indian social and economic development as exceptional and somehow distinct from that prevailing in capitalist societies elsewhere, and reasserts the critical role of the working classes in shaping the pattern of Indian capitalist development. Sustained in argument and elegant in exposition, these essays represent a major contribution not only to the history of the Indian working classes, but to the history of industrial capitalism and colonialism as a whole. Imperial Power and Popular Politics will be essential reading
for all scholars and students of recent political, economic, and social history, social
theory, and cultural and colonial studies.

“The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917–1947” by Ian Copland is a comprehensive and fascinating study of the role played by the Indian princes, the maharajas and nawabs of South Asia, in the devolution of British colonial power is long overdue. By rehabilitating the princes as subjects of serious historical study, the author demonstrates that, far from being puppets under the control of the British, they were in fact significant players on the Indian political stage in the inter-war period. He goes on to explain how and why an order so deep-rooted, and outwardly so strong, collapsed so quickly after independence under the successor Congress government in New Delhi. The study adds a new dimension to the political history of late colonial India, and has implications for the wider history of the twentieth-century British Empire.

“Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1968 1st Edition” by Ronald Hyam is an authoritative political history of one of the world's most important empires on the road to decolonization. Ronald Hyam's 2007 book offers a major reassessment of the end of empire which combines a study of British policymaking with case studies on the experience of decolonization across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. He describes the dysfunctional policies of an imperial system coping with postwar, interwar and wartime crises from 1918 to 1945 but the main emphasis is on the period after 1945 and the gradual unraveling of empire as a result of international criticism, and the growing imbalance between Britain's capabilities and its global commitments. He analyses the transfers of power from India in 1947 to Swaziland in 1968, the major crises such as Suez and assesses the role of leading
figures from Churchill, Attlee and Eden to Macmillan and Wilson. This is essential reading for scholars and students of empire and decolonization.

1.6 Literatures Relating to Status of Women

The literatures relating to status of women are reviewed in the following pages. G. B. Reddy, in his work titled “Women and the Law”, has included both full text and/or relevant provisions of laws affecting woman's role in Indian society.

Justice Yatindra Singh, in “Gender Justice-Women Rights: A Legal Panorama’ Organized by National Judicial Academy at Lucknow”, has stated that it is heartening that the National Judicial Academy, British Council and Allahabad High Court are organizing this colloquium on 'Gender and Law'. Action in law is in the courtrooms and its outcome depends on how well equipped Judges are: better their knowledge, more satisfying the results. And who else but the National Judicial Academy, the highest body for training Judges, should undertake to equip them.

British owe a debt to Indian Women. Women's estate or widow's estate was unknown to Mitakshra and widow or daughter never had limited rights: they inherited like male heirs. Privy Councilors and the British Judges warped by status of women in England and influenced by later developments in law of Dayabhag (by Jimutvahan to get over difficulties in Bengal) interpreted the women’s rights limiting them to their lifetime. British Council is rightly redeeming that debt. Allahabad High court has unique contribution in the field of Gender Justice: it will be clear in my talk, just bear with me for some time.

Andrew. C. Byrness, in an article titled “The Human Rights Treaty Body: The Work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women” has pointed out that despite broad support for the Women's Convention, the Convention and the
Committee have attracted considerably less attention than the other human rights treaties and their respective committees among those active in the field of international human rights. The women's rights community and to a lesser extent, the human rights community, have made efforts to integrate women's rights issues into the human rights agenda, but progress has been slow. The purpose of this article is to fill some of the informational void about CEDAW by reviewing its work, to identify the major problems and challenges facing the Committee, and to suggest ways in which it can be more effective.

Jejeebhoy & Shireen J in her work titled “Women’s Education Autonomy, and Reproductive Behavior; Experiences from Developing Countries,”, has pointed out that women's access to education has been recognized as a fundamental right at the national level, educating women results in improved productivity, income, and economic development, as well as a better quality of life, notably a healthier and better nourished population. It is important for all kinds of demographic behavior, affecting mortality, health, fertility, and contraception, the personal benefits that women attach to education vary widely according to region, culture, and level of development, but it is clear that education empowers women, providing them with increased autonomy and resulting in almost every context in fewer children. Beyond these few general assertions, however, there is little consensus on such issues as how much education is required before changes in autonomy or reproductive behavior occur; whether the education-autonomy relationship exists in all cultural contexts, at all times, and at all levels of development; and which aspects of autonomy are important in the relationship between education and fertility. It is in the need to address these fundamental issues that this book took shape. The author reviews the considerable evidence about education and fertility in the developing world that has
emerged over the last twenty years, and then passes beyond the limits of previous studies to address three major questions. They are does increased education always lead to a decrease in the number of children, or is there a threshold level of education that a woman must achieve before this inverse relationship becomes apparent? What are the critical pathways influencing the relationship of women's education to fertility? Is fertility affected because education leads to changes in the duration of breast-feeding? Because it rises the age at marriage? Because it increases the practice of contraception? Or because education reduces women's preferences for large numbers of children? Do improvements in education empower women in other areas of life, such as their improving exposure to information, decision-making, control of resources, or confidence in dealing with family and the outside world? Supported by full documentation of the available survey data, this study concludes that such contextual factors as the overall level of socio-economic development and the situation of women in traditional kinship structures complicate the general assumptions about the interrelationships between education, fertility, and female autonomy. It lays out the policy implications of these findings and fruitful directions for future research.

Sahay, S., in his book titled “Women and Empowerment” has stated that the accomplishments of ordinary women in developing and war-ravaged countries who have broken through the barriers of oppression to make a positive difference in their communities. The heroic examples set by these women, whose bravery and determination enabled them to move beyond victimization to leadership, speak to the universal themes of courage, empowerment, and human rights. As part of CARE's campaign to empower women everywhere, Women Empowered reveals how determined women of all ages have effectively turned their struggles into triumphs.
Sudha. T in her book titled “Education Employment and Empowerment of Rural Women in India” has pointed out that empowerment of rural women is a much discussed subject, but conceptualization of empowerment is still under discourse. Earlier it has been discussed in terms of access to resources, and later on it has been defined in terms of control over resources and control of ideology. After the millennium year, empowerment has been defined in terms of gender equality. The present researcher defines empowerment not only in terms of gender equality, but also in terms of power of autonomy over resources, and studies the significant factors that influence the empowerment of rural women.

“Women at Work in India - A Bibliography” by Anant Suchitra, is a comprehensive bibliography collating published and unpublished material. Because of its scope, it will enhance the understanding women's role at work and in the home. The book documents literature on areas such as time allocation, value of household work, and matriarchal households.

Baig, Tara Ali, in her book titled “Women of India” has discussed in detail the problems and perspectives of women in India.

Beth Anne Shelton in her book titled “Women Employees and Development Problems of Employed Women in Rural Areas” has stated that paid work and household responsibilities not only impact on each other but may conflict. That is time spent in one sphere mean less time spent in another. If commitments to paid labor and household labor call for full time participants in both, that time must come either at the expense of leisure or else some of the demands of paid labor or household labor must go unmeant. “Women and Work in Society” by Deborach and Judith was designed to elicit response from both parents and non-parents on how they have reached decisions in their work family choices. For example, 85 percent of the 902
women believe that reducing hours of work is detrimental to women’s career. Despite this widely held perception, 70 percent of the women with children decreased their hours of work after the birth of their first child. Knowing that the traditional rules of a male dominated work culture challenge their role as a parent, the Harvard women demonstrated a fierce determination to forge new definitions for being involved parent and a committed professional.

Drucker in an article titled “Men’s and Women’s Roles in India”, has stated that the labor force participation of married women under age fifty is now just as high as that of men. It is therefore unlikely to rise any further. But a very large number of women in the labor force the of those who entered when the inrush of women began are now reaching their mid-thirties. And also he states that most of the married women stay in the labor force after first child.

Kapur in his book titled “The Changing Status of the Working Women in India” has pointed out that the win roles of women cause tension and conflict due to her social structure which is still more dominant. In her study on working women in Delhi, she has shown that traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same basically and hence. Women face problem of role conflict change in attitudes of men and women according to the situation can help to overcome their problem.

Chatterjie, A.S., in a book titled “The Indian Women’s Search for an Identity” has stated that in the opinion of women have no roles in housing decision that is decision regarding choices of residence. In the housing plans, the fulfillment of women’s needs is not guaranteed.

Kalarani, P., in her study titled “Working Women in India - Their Problems” has classified motivations behind the decision to work as monetary, social and
personal factors. For the first preference she has assigned a score of 3, for the second preference 2, and for the third preference one. Her analysis shows that among the purposes ‘making use of education’ ranks first followed by ‘job as an engagement for spare time’, ‘Supplementing husband’s income’ and ‘to raise economic status’ occupies the third rank. ‘Gross necessity’ occupies the fourth rank and ‘to have independent income’ the last rank. She has proved that there is correlation between age and motivation and education and motivation.

“Women’s Two Roles - Home and Work”, by Myrdal, A., and Klein.V., is a international survey conducted on behalf of the International Labour Office about the motivational forces. According to it, women work due to economic needs on the one hand and due to national necessity for increased production on the other hand. They further continue to state that a sense of vocation influences the desire of women to continue their work after marriage and some are inspired by the feeling of social responsibility and so they continue to be in labour force.

“Women Today” by Kaur and Punia is about working women of Hissar District of Haryana. In their work it is observed that most of the working women apt for job out of the gross economic necessity (50 percent), followed by the urge to raise economic status (23 percent), to make use of education (11 percent) to have independent income (9 percent) and the remaining due to miscellaneous motives.

Drucker in an article titled “Men’s and Women’s Roles in India”, has stated that the labour force participation of married women under age fifty is now just as high as that of men. It is therefore unlikely to rise any further. But a very large number a women in the labour force the of those who entered when the inrush of women began are now reaching their mid-thirties. And also he states that most of the married women stay in the labour force after first child.
Kapur in his book titled “The Changing Status of the Working Women in India” has pointed out that the win roles of women cause tension and conflict due to her social structure which is still more dominant. In her study on working women in Delhi, she has shown that traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same basically and hence. Women face problem of role conflict change in attitudes of men and women according to the situation can help to overcome their problem.

Chatterjie, A.S., in a book titled “The Indian Women’s Search for an Identity” has stated that in the opinion of women have no role in housing decision that is decision regarding choices of residence. In the housing plans, the fulfillment of women’s needs is not guaranteed.

Jennifer in her book titled “Status and Role Perception of Middle Class Women” has showed that there is a significant difference according to their age, marital status duration of working, life and position at work.

Henning and Jardim in an article titled “Inter Role Conflict for Working Women: Careers Vs Jobs”, have stated that the women managers have achieved their position through progressive career advancement and their current positions through progressive career advancement and their current positions were ones not resgarded as feminine. The question being addressed was how they had managed to depart from traditional female roles to active success in a man’s world.

Lalitha Devi in a study titled “Working Couples as Parents” has points out that the need for extra income for family coupled with the demand for labour from industry is the greatest incentive for female workers. The availability of gadgets make household work light and less time consuming and enable women to work.
“Women’s Two Roles - Home and Work”, by Myrdal, A., and Klein.V., is a international survey conducted on behalf of the International Labour Office about the motivational forces. According to it, women work due to economic needs on the one hand and due to national necessity for increased production on the other hand. They further continue to state that a sense of vocation influences the desire of women to continue their work after marriage and some are inspired by the feeling of social responsibility and so they continue to be in labour force.

Anita Srivastav in her book titled “Women in India: Problems and Prospects”, has analyzed the different views regarding women and their position in society. The author not only gives the complete view on status of women in India and National Commission for Women is constituted by the government of India as a high powered autonomous body on the national level in pursuance of National Commission for Women Act 1990. The commissioner was constituted to safeguard the interest of women, gaining for them equally in status and elimination of any discrimination against them. In this book has elaborately discussed various issues activities of Women’s Commission in India.

Savita Krishnmoothy in her work titled “The National Commission for Women Act - 1990 – A Critical Review” has reviewed the real status of National Commission for Women and pointed out that the National Commission for Women can function better mainly by existing as a totally independent body with no affiliation with the Government as such by speaking for women’s organization forcefully.

Ahuja Ram in a book titled “Violence against Women” has explained the varied types of violence focusing adjustment, attachment and commitment of deviants. The problem of violence against women according to him is a little more intensive and comprehensive.
Rao Vijayeswari, in her book titled “Status of Indian Women” has analyzed the status of Indian women in ancient, medieval and modern period.

Kamala Behagin, in her work titled “The Position of Women in India” gives a graphic description on of women’s plight, distress and discrimination in Indian society and the government’s efforts to address their problems in post-Independence India.

Kaushik Vijay and Sharma Bela Rani, in their work titled “Indian Women through the Ages, have dealt with Indian women of different faith through the ages.

Anita Banerji and Rajkumar, Sen (Ed.), in their edited work entitled “Women and Economic Development” have successfully analyzed in detail women’s participation in education, social life, industrialization, science and technology, employment as well as in politics.

“Modernity, Feminism and Women Empowerment” by Abha Avasthi and A.K. Srivastav, is a path breaking edited work. The authors have tried to provide a new meaning for Indian Feminism which is the product of modernism in relation to the extent of Western feministic ideas and theories.

“Women and Society” by Pandit, S.K., makes an examination of the position of Indian women by identifying some of the core issues like working women, married and unmarried women’s legal and illegal issues, physical and mental torture for married women.

G. B. Reddy, in his work titled “Women and the Law”, has included both full text and/or relevant provisions of laws affecting woman's role in Indian society.

Andrew, C. Byrness, in an article titled “The Human Rights Treaty Body: The Work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women” has pointed out that despite broad support for the Women's Convention, the Convention and the
Committee have attracted considerably less attention than the other human rights treaties and their respective committees among those active in the field of international human rights. The women's rights community and, to a lesser extent, the human rights community, have made efforts to integrate women's rights issues into the human rights agenda, but progress has been slow. The purpose of this article is to fill some of the informational void about CEDAW by reviewing its work, to identify the major problems and challenges facing the Committee, and to suggest ways in which it can be more effective.

Sahay, S in his book titled “Women and Empowerment” has stated that the accomplishments of ordinary women in developing and war-ravaged countries who have broken through the barriers of oppression to make a positive difference in their communities. The heroic examples set by these women, whose bravery and determination enabled them to move beyond victimization to leadership, speak to the universal themes of courage, empowerment, and human rights. As part of CARE's campaign to empower women everywhere, Women Empowered reveals how determined women of all ages have effectively turned their struggles into triumphs.

“Women in Colonial India” by Krishnamurthy, is an excellent work edited with a very good introduction offered by the editor. Nine foreign and Indian scholars have contributed their well researched articles touching upon women’s issues in colonial India, like Hindu widows, remarriage, female infanticide, caste in relation to women, elite women development, property rights of muslim women, social welfare measures of women workers, the harassment of women in Fiji plantations, the invisible status of women and elite women’s groups and elections in colonial India.

Kaushik Vijay and Sharma Bela Rani, in their work titled “Indian Women through the Ages, have dealt with Indian women of different faith through the ages
Anita Banerji and Rajkumar, Sen (Ed.), in their edited work entitled “Women and Economic Development” have successfully analyzed in detail women’s participation in education, social life, industrialization, science and technology, employment as well as in politics.

“Modernity, Feminism and Women Empowerment” by Abha Avasthi and A.K. Srivastav, is a path breaking edited work. The authors have tried to provide a new meaning for Indian Feminism which is the product of modernism in relation to the extent of Western feministic ideas and theories.

“Women and Society” by Pandit, S.K., makes an examination of the position of Indian women by identifying some of the core issues like working women, married and unmarried women’s legal and illegal issues, physical and mental torture for married women.

Paramita Chauduri in her a paper titled “Sexual Harassment in the Work Place: Experience of Women in Health Sector’’ has explored women’s perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment in the health sector and pathways of action taken. Findings confirm the persistence of sexual harassment in the workplace, the reluctance of women to invoke the complaints mechanism and the ineffectiveness of existing complaints mechanisms in punishing the perpetrator. Findings also suggest that attitudes to sexual harassment in the workplace mirror society’s norms about sexuality and masculinity more generally that it is normal and harmless behavior, that it is women who provoke this behavior and that (aside from rape) it is an occupational hazard for women in the workplace.

The theory of perpetual tutelage of women, formulated by Manu, became prevalent. The position of women continued to be degraded till 1800 A.D. when lack of education, child marriages and the practice of Sati brought about tremendous
deterioration in her position at home and in society and in general. After A.D 1800, various socio-cultural and politico-economic circumstances, protest movements, social reform movements, freedom movement and the call of Gnadhiji during freedom movement in 1920’s brought about some improvements in the position of women through education, socio-economic and legislative measures. After independence, a pledge was taken to improve the status of women by the constitution makers and admitted by the Government from the very beginning, as one of the major tasks facing the country (Altekar, 1956; Rao 1959; Gandhi, 1964; Thomas 1964; Thapar, 1972; Gupta, 1982; Mukhi, 1984; Davendran 1985; Desai, 1987).

Scholars working on the status of Indian women opine that many changes have occurred in the traditional conception of role and status of women through new opportunities for education and employment, emergence of new socio-economic pattern, and privileges of equal legal and political rights. Women are competing with men on an equal footing and have entered into occupations which were considered as the domain of men (Desai 1957; Kapadia, 1958; Dube 1963; Hate, 1969; Kappor, 1972; Naik, 1974; Mahajan, 1982; Desai, 1987; Mies, 1981; Singh, 1988; Ranjijyothi and B. Rajaiah, 1988; Kaur S, and Punia, 1988; Singh, A. Sharma, J; Singh D. 1988; Seth, 1990).

However, the pressure of traditional customs and norms continue to determine the society attitude towards women. The institution of caste and the patriarchal family system in conjunction with religious mores and dominant value systems are still surcharged with the spirit of male domination. A number of scholars have found an increasing gap between men and women in literacy, education and training; an accelerated decline in women’s employment since 1951; starting disparities between men and women (among poor section of the population) in their access to health care.

1.7 Status of Women in Rural Areas

Women in rural areas lagged behind their counterparts in urban areas because different opportunities were not made available because different opportunities were not made available to them. They were, nevertheless, affected by the developmental processes ushered in during and after the first Five-Year Plan.

Agro-economists and rural-sociologists in India conducted a number of studies in different parts of the country to find out the impact of introduction of new technology on women labour force participation and its consequences on their status. Indian Journal of Agriculture Economics, Vol. 40, 1985, has cited set of studies depicts the positive role of new technology so far as the status of rural women is concerned. The second, however, indicates that the introduction of new technology has reduced the status of women to utter dependency. These two perspectives become very clear if we look at the results of different studies, which have shown varying results on the status of women.

Agricultural is a predominant sector which provides means of livelihood to the rural people. Introduction of new technology had varying effects on the life of the rural people. The availability of tractors, irrigational facilities, improved seeds, fertilizers and insecticides brought about changes not only in the production processes, but wastelands were also brought under cultivation resulting in the demand
for more manpower. The high yielding varieties of seeds revolutionized the production. To dispose of the surplus production, men looked after marketing and management. The shift of men to non-agricultural activities forced women to take their place.

Godre and Mahalla (1985) in their study in Vidarbha compared the level of female labour utilization in crop production with traditional technology and modern technology. They came to the conclusion that new technology has given more women. Their findings further indicated that in the case of male workers, there was a shift from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations while an increasing number of female workers found employment on farms.

Similarly, studies conducted in Punjab by Chand et al. (1985) and Malkiat Kaur (1988) in Haryana have indicated that modernization of agriculture has resulted into increased kinds of female labour.

Ray, Rangarao and Attari (1985) in their study in the States of Rajasthan, that as a result of adoption of new technology in agriculture, female employment in absolute and relative sense has increased in agricultural operations.

Singh and Bhatti (1985) in their study in Himachal Pradesh indicated that with the changes in crop production technologies, the work load of women has also increased.

Introduction of high yielding varieties (HYVs) has increased agricultural production and created greater employment opportunities for women in Maharashtra (Joshi and Alshi, 1985). The Study revealed that per jower farm was more as compared to the local variety farms. Similary, Ray et al (1985) conducted a study in the Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh where improved variety of paddy was
grown. The study revealed that female labor contributed a higher proportion of total labor input in paddy production activities on all farm sizes.

Suryawanshi and Kapase (1985) conducted a study in the villages of Pune and Ahamednagar Districts of Maharashtra to find out the impact of introduction of irrigation project on female labor employment. They observed that due to irrigation facilities the cropping pattern was changed and shifted in favor of labor intensive crops. They concluded that due to irrigation, for all the crops, labor employment increased more than two-folds. This trend was higher in the case of female than male laborers.

The above noted studies have established that with the introduction of new technology, HYV, irrigation, facilities and changing crop production, women labor force participation has increased. On the other hand, there was a relative decline in male labor force participation in the agriculture sector which was attributed to

(i) males devoting more time to arrange various inputs and sale of output,
(ii) younger males going for higher education, and
(iii) Out-migration for seeking employment in non-farm occupations which were more remunerative and dignified (Chand, Sidhu and Kaul, 1985; Pran Gunendra and Dipti Perkash Pal, 1995).

It is implicit that male labor force, perceives working on the farms as an undignified work and hence, they are shifting from farm to non-farm occupations. Nevertheless, greater work participation by women on farms has provided them with opportunities to make decisions on their own rather than depending upon the male members.

Bardhan (1984) found that with the outmigration of men, women were undertaking more of their farm management tasks.
Sesodia (1985) in his study in Madhya Pradesh revealed that women are now being variety of seeds, fertilizer application, etc. Singh and Singh (1987) in their study of Uttar Pradesh revealed that with the mechanization of agriculture operations and outmigration of male members, more than three-relating to the choice of the crops, technology credit and marketing, in addition to household activities. Singh Sharma and Singh (1988) in their study of the hill region of Uttar Pradesh highlight the played by rural women through their active have further indicated that women’s role in agriculture is so significant that without them nothing region enjoy a relatively better position.

As a consequence of modernization of agriculture, labor force participation of women has increased. This has provided them with an opportunity to have access to new knowledge, and women are now talking independent decision relating to agricultural production as well as household activities. Further, agricultural development has reduced the wage, differential of men and women workers (Chand et al., 1985). It is contended that introduction of new technology in the agricultural sector has increased women’s knowledge, awareness and participation in different activities. It is also maintained that with the mechanization of farm activities, the spread of education, and the development of transport, means of communication, medical facilities, and other rural upliftment activities the status of women has improved.

In contrast with the above noted studies, there are a number of empirical studies conducted in different parts of India, on the rural women where the researchers have come to the conclusion that different developmental processes undertaken in rural India, instead of raising their status, have adversely affected them
to the extent that their labour participation has decreased and their dependency has increased.

Introduction of new technology in agriculture has resulted into both positive and negative labor demands. There is a positive and negative effect of HYVs and irrigation but the introduction of threshers and combines has a negative effect on labour demand. Even when there is positive labour demand, women do not gain. The introduction of HYVs of wheat reduced the producing of cotton, a female dominated work, adversely affecting female labor participation. Two studies conducting in Andhra Pradesh by Parthasarthy and Rao (1974) and Agarwal (1981) have revealed that with the introduction of HYVs, family income has increase. However with the increase in family income, women force. The same trend was noticed in North Bihar by Sinha (1980). With the adoption of pump sets irrigation and wheat threshers, female labor was thrown out of employment (Singh, 1972). The withdrawal of women from the labour force makes them dependent which further degrades their status.

The use of modern technology in agricultural producing has adversely affected women’s work participation. With the sophistication of production processes, e.g., with the use of wheat threshers there is a gradual displacement of women from active work. A number of studies have highlighted the negative effect of technology on rural women’s work participation (Boserup, 1970; Billings and Singh, 1970; Sawant and Dewan, 1979; Brandtzees, 1982; Patel, 1984; Hag, 1984; Ghosh, 1984; United Nations, 1987).

In spite of the developmental attempts made to elevate the status of rural women they continue to get lower wages than men. A number of studies get lower wages than men. A number of studies have tried to gauge the status of rural women
with regard to their wages. These studies have clearly established that women employed as wage laborers of domestic servants were generally paid lowers wages that the male laborers (Shah, 1975; Gulati, 1978; Pati, 1980; Saikia, 1980; Mitra, 1980; Sunder, 1981; Mies, 1981; Gangrade and Gathia, 1983; Banerjee, 1985; Gupta, 1986; Parmar, 1987; Singh 1988; Krishnamurthy, 1988; Arputhamurthy, 1990; Diwan, 1995; Dictrich, 1995).

Banjerejee (1985) further points out that women are consistently kept in jobs where the wage rates and working conditions are poor and employment is less secure. Singh (1988) found that wages of women are uniformly lower than those of men even within the low paid jobs. In fact they are outside the reach of most laws that seek to protect the security and working condition of labour.

The above noted review of literature clearly reveals that introduction of new technology in agriculture and modernization of agricultural processes, instead of elevating the status of women, have adversely affected them in so far as their work participation and wage differences are concerned. In short, modernization has made women more dependent upon men.

A number of studies have further established that women’s work participation in agricultural production is not related to new technology or lack of it. On the other hand, work participation of women depends on cropping pattern, landholdings, income and caste status of the family.

Saikia (1985) in his study in Sibsagar and Jorhat Districts in Assam found that work participating rate depends upon cropping pattern, crop intensity and economic compulsions to engage in farm activities. The female work participation rate and volume of employment were higher in paddy dominated villages than in those
growing wheat and sugarcane. Transplanting and harvesting were totally done by women.

Dhongada et al; (1985) in their study of Maharashtra observed that the participation of women in the farm work in different size of holdings and cropping patterns showed that in jowar and cotton regions the participation in the productive activities increased with an increase in the size of holdings. The study indicated that the labor is related to the economic development of the area low in families with large holdings and which were financially better, Padmini (1960); Joshi (1973); Sinha (1978); Mies (1980); Gulati (1982); Sardamoni and Mencher (1982); Diwan (1995); Mohanty (1995) also support this contention that it is the low family income which forces women to participate in the labor force and with the increase in family income they tend to withdraw.

Dutta and Sharma (1985) in their study of Bihar found that the percentage of females, most of which belong to the small and medium size classes. They also observed that women workers are generally allocated lighter work such as transplanting of paddy, weeding and harvesting and so on.

Bardhan (1984); Jain (1985); Sen (1985); United Nations (1987) also found that inequality in land distribution was an important factor underlying regional variation in female employment.

Ghosh (1985) in his study of Bengal found that although the pattern of women employment in the rural areas was very much related to land or income and caste hierarch, it had undergone significant changes in the recent period. Though women of upper caste households owning smaller area of land were found to be engaged in wage paid activities and field agriculture outside their homes, yet there were a majority of women from among the Scheduled Caste households in the village who
were engaged in multiple activities. Haragopal (1982); Indira Devi (1984) also of women, i.e., higher the caste, the lower is the participation and the lower the caste, higher the rate of female participation in labor force.

In addition to caste, cropping pattern, land holdings, income of the household, social and cultural traditions also play an important role in affecting women’s work participation (Saxena, 1969; Sawnt and Dewan, 1979; Singh 1980; Saikia, 1981; Khan and Ayesha, 1982; Papola 1982; Singh, 1988; Krishnaraj, 1992; Karkal, 1996).

In a study conducted in the hill region of Uttar Pradesh it was observed that not only the women actively participate in various agricultural activities but without their contribution, nothing could be done. Further, working in the fields is treated as customary and there is no inhibition resulting into greater work participation on their part. On the other hand, in the rest of the State, the contribution of female workers is negligible in farming due to social customs discouraging women’s employment (Singh, Sharma and Singh, 1988).

A few studies conducted in Himachal Pradesh endorsed the above observation pertaining to women’s work participation in the hilly regions of Uttar Pradesh. Sharma (1971) in his study on “Female participation in Rural Agricultural Labor in Northern India” found that the proportion of female workers was quite high in different regions of Himachal. He attributed greater female laborer participation to shortage of male labor who have diverted to non-agricultural work activities in rural and urban areas.

Mukerji and Mehta (1975) found that the spatial pattern of female agricultural labor is intimately associated with (i) Sex ration of rural population which itself if indicative of selective outmigration of male agricultural laborers resulting in their small numbers, (ii) Female participation among rural workers which reflects the
operation of economic exigencies and active support given by social value, (iii) Labor requirements associated with the cultivation of particular crops such as multiple cropped paddy and cash crops of cotton and oil seeds, and (iv) Lack of diversification of economy compelling women to engage themselves in agricultural labor. The determinates of female participation in agricultural labor operate others they work at cross purposes, introducing, thereby, considerable complexities within the broad spatial patterns. They also indicated that in the Himalayan belt the proportion of female labor accounts for more than half of the total agriculture labor. In Himachal Pradesh, men were found to be building, trade and commerce and women were engaged in agricultural activities. Further, local traditions encouraged women’s greater work participation.

In the hilly areas, because of the limited scope of mechanization, except for small land tools and implements, except for small land tools and implements, women will keep on participating actively in all agricultural operations, so long as economic backwardness of the area with overwhelming preponderance of workers in agricultural, lack of education and communication facilities and low productivity of workers continue. Green revolution will increase rather than decrease employment opportunities for women workers (Arjan Singh, 1976).

Sharma, U. (1983) found 100.71 female cultivators per 100 male cultivators in Himachal Pradesh. She further contended that in the lower foothills, a vast majority of women except do all kinds of outdoor agricultural work except ploughing. Even the wives of Brahmin shopkeepers worked in the fields although some of them could certainly employ hired labor. While finding out association in agriculture, Sharma further hypothesized that a greater reliance of Pehari households on earnings brought
in by migrant male members and a consequent absence of men for the most of the year means that is in the near future.

D.V. Singh and J.P. Bhatti (1985) in their study “Women in Hill Agriculture: A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh” made an attempt to examine the role of women in the agricultural economy of the State. The study revealed that among the farm workers the proportion of females was higher than the males. On an average each female worker devoted 4.2 hours of work per day on marginal farms, 4.1 hours on small farms and 3.6 hours on medium size farms. In crop production activities, women’s work accounted for 66 per cent on marginal farms, 55 per cent on small farms and 57 percent on medium farms. The study further revealed that with the changes in crop production technologies, the work load of women in all sizes of farms has increased.

Another study on the contribution of female workers in the farm sector by Guleria and Agnihotri (1985) was done to understand the female labor participation in various farm operations and also to examine their contribution towards total farm and household incomes in Himachal Pradesh. It was observed that participation of female working force under marginal, small, medium and large farm stood at 35, 44, 44 and 46 per cent respectively. Female Participation in the total working force was found to be higher than the male workers. However, the monetary contribution of the females in the farm income was found to be smaller than that of the male laborers because of low farm wages for female workers. In 1972, Himachal Government enacted a law under which Zamindari system was abolished and landless families were allocated 5 bighas of land per family. Such distribution of land also helped women in owning land; and in a number because of the migration of the menfolk. Ownership of land provided them with an opportunity, not only to manage their land, but also in taking
vital decisions in the family. In the hilly areas of Himachal labor force, absence of inhibitions against women’s working in the fields and cropping patterns have facilitated greater work participation by women.

The above noted studies have seen women’s status in terms of their work participation. It is implicit in their contention that greater work participation by women provides them with an opportunity to play ‘instrumental’ roles on the farms as well as in the family, in addition to playing an Expressive role. On the other hand, there with drawl from labor force puts them in utter dependency which implies low status. However, most of the studies reviewed have not made explicit the determinants of status. Work participation, per Se, does not help us to understand the status of a person unless we take into account associated prestige, privileges and power and the determinates of status.

Lowie (1940) held that the status of women was determined by four major factors, i.e., treatment of women in society, her legal status, opportunities available to her for public activities and the character and extent of her labour participation Gide (1977) gave a comprehensive picture of life options which measured the status of women. They were political expression, work and mobility, family formation – duration and size, education, health and cultural expression. She found that life options for women appeared to be related to modernization of both cultural tradition and structural features, and the status of women varied according to cultural was required in summing up the status of female sex in a given society.

Scholars have tried to understand the status of women in India by taking into account different variables. A few scholars have given a greatly emphasis to one set of variables whereas some have given importance to others. Therefore, a few studies highlighting different determinants of women status have been reviewed.
Research Gap

The research studies on history of modern India and the status of women in India have not analyzed in detail the social and political status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947. A research study on this topic could help to identify the problems faced by women and the measures taken to maintain a proper status of women in India. Therefore, the researcher thought it appropriate to take up the present research study.

1.8 Objectives of the Study

The important objectives of the study are:

1. To enlighten the social and political history of colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 for proper understanding of the study;

2. To analyze the economic status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the steps taken to improve the economic status of women;

3. To assess the political status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the steps taken to improve the political status of women; and

4. To evaluate the social status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the attempts made to improve the social status of women.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The main focus of the study is about the status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947. Therefore, the scope of the study is limited to the discussion relating to status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947.
1.10 Method of Research

Case study method has been made use of in this study, as the study is limited to the detailed discussions on status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947.

1.11 Sources of Data

The data for this study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources of data have been collected from Books, Journals, Manuals and Monographs. The primary sources of data have been collected from the Files, Manuscripts and Documents maintained in Tamil Nadu Archives and discussions held with the women activists of Tamil Nadu.

1.12 Study Design

The primary purpose of the study is not testing of any hypothesis. Being an exploratory-cum-descriptive study, its basic thrust is to gain familiarity and insight into the status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947.

1.13 Data Analysis

The purpose of analysis is to summarize the complete observation and to search for the broader meaning of the collected data by linking them to other available knowledge. In this study historical, descriptive and analytical methods have been made use of to analyze the data.

Presentation of the Report

After processing and analyzing the raw data the report writing work was undertaken. Sufficient care was taken to present the report as per the requirements of the study designed earlier.
1.14 Plan of the Study

The thesis has been presented in five chapters besides conclusion. In the introductive part of the thesis the data relating to the Introduction, statement of the problem, review of literature, objective of the study, methodology of the study and plan of the study are presented. In the first chapter an attempt has been made to enlighten the social and political history of colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947. The economic status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the steps taken to improve the economic status of women is analyzed in the second chapter for proper understanding of social and political status of women. The political status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the steps taken to improve the political status of women is assessed in the third chapter. The social status of women in colonial Tamil Nadu between 1920 and 1947 and the attempts made to improve the economic status of women is evaluated in the fourth chapter. Inferences drawn in the body of the thesis are reported in the concluding part of the thesis.