

CONCLUSION

Women Empowerment is a concept of the modern world, discussed by most intellectuals in this world. It indicates the women advancement through constructive activities in all dimensions. There by, it is the centre point for political and administrative systems in the society. Gender issues have been plaguing our society for several centuries. Women were once invisible in political and public life. The issues of women has been brought to the public by Women themselves. As a result, the conditions of women gradually developed by facing the challenges and obstacles in the patriarchal society. The First United Nations International Conference on women was organized in Mexico in 1975, to present their activities and promote them for advancement and raise voice for their rights. Thereafter the issues such as violence against women, poverty, illiteracy, women's health, and reproductive rights gender equality, women's under representation in decision making have been focused. Women openly came out from the existing societal structures by participating themselves in freedom struggle. Christian Missionaries and other social reformers took tiresome efforts to educate women and abolish child marriage, sati and other evil practices in India.

The establishment of the British rule in India brought tremendous changes in the socio-economic and political life of India. The Socio-Religions Reform Movement of 19th century was one of the consequences of westernization in India. This impacted reforms both religious and a social life. In the religious field, the movements aimed to combat superstitions, attacked idolatry, polytheism, etc. In the social sphere, the movements aimed at eradicating social evils like Infanticide, Sati, Child Marriage, Ban on Widow Remarriage, Dowry Systems and Caste Systems prevailed in India. A lot of

evils had crept in the Indian society, which affected the position and status of women. The Christian Missionaries, who came to India, protested against the evil practices like Child Marriage, Polygamy, Sati, etc. This period also witnessed the emergence of social reforms. The social reform movement was a movement run by men on women's issues. Though rarely women could emerge as leaders like Pandita Ramabai, it was men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Rande, Veer Salingam, who were fighters for the social change. Sati, widow re-marriage, child marriage, women education formed the major themes of the movements and became the ground for fierce battles between reformers and the orthodox.

The beginning of the movement can be dated from Raja Ram Mohan Roy's inauguration of the campaign against Sati in 1818. Through the Brahmo Samaj founded in 1828, it aimed at eradicating all in human practices, which heaped sufferings on women in the name of religious sanctity. He refuted the idea that women were inferior to men and stood for equality in matters of education, social life and property rights. As a result of his campaign, came a government regulation prohibiting Sati in 1829, the first time the British colonial Government ventured into the sphere of personal law. It was the beginning of a whole era of effort to change women's subordination by both legal and social methods. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar initiated a movement for Widow Remarriage act of 1850's. Though this resulted in the enactment of Hindu Widow's Remarriage act of 1856, in terms of actual achievement the results seemed to be meager. The Window Remarriage campaign resulted in the formation of a number of associations like Bombay Widow Remarriage Association (1866) and the Rajamundry Social Reform Association (1878). Both these legislations were opposed by the orthodox sections of the society. Social pressures were brought against Hindu reformers ranging from social outcaste form threats of violence from orthodox people.

Throughout the 19th century, the conservative elite were making an attempt to define Indian culture and nationality in terms of a reconstituted Hinduism. These revivalists established powerful organisations like Dayanand Saraswat this Arya Samaj (1875), Vivekananda's Ramakrishna Mission (1879) and Annie Besant's Madras Hindu Association (1904). The new organizations attacked the reformers but supported some reforms of Hindu society. They started sponsoring for women's education, remarriage of child widows, raising the age of marriage and uplifting the low castes. They incorporated a good deal of the programmes of the original reformers but all this was to be done within the framework of Hinduism. They did not want to imitate the western model of liberation and to deviate from the ideals of chastity, purity, unselfishness and service pursued by women. The ideal of Sita, the subordinate and oppressed Pativrata, defined the limits of advance of Indian women. It is clear that staying within the frame work of Hinduism meant for women maintaining of class caste form of patriarchy, which defined their position as mothers, wives subordinates to men in the family and finding spiritual identity in their position as mothers, wives, subordinates to men in the family and finding spiritual identity in their service to their husbands.

Even though the reform and revivalist leaders were mostly men, it was also part of a process in which women were struggling against patriarchal structures to gain some opening. Women from the beginning were exerting their fore, though indirectly on the movement. With new spaces created, they tried to move directly into the movements into leading positions. They tended to go beyond, to transcend and transgress the barriers of Hindu revivalism. Every national liberation movement involves the issues of women's liberation to some degree. Especially, Indian national Congress supported voting rights for women and professed support for legal reforms, women's education and all the reform issues of 19th century.

The present study highlights the women's oppression under the male patriarchal society existed before in Tamil Nadu. And also it vividly narrates reformation happened in our soil, in which the condition of women is considered as the whole and restructured the existing norms with various welfare measures to uplift the community into equal in status. The reformers like E.V.R. Periyar stood for equality between men and women. He called for the rejection of Mangalsutra in which men help with housework and take up responsibility for child care. He stressed equality among the society. There were Social Reform Movements established for the welfare women in Tamil Nadu during 19th and 20th centuries. It witnessed the emergence of women's organizations in India. These organizations involve in social service activities such as relief work for orphans, destitute and widowed women by giving awareness, training and employment opportunities to sustain in this society. The social reformer K. Veerasalingam, the pioneer of social reforms in the south, founded the Widow Remarriage Association and Widow's Home at Rajmundry and Madras. The Hindu Social Reform Association was established at Madras in 1892 by G.Subramaniya Iyer, to promote social reform among the Hindus including female education removal of restrictions as to the marriageable age and the remarriage of widows.

The Bharat Mahila Parishad was established in 1904, followed by the formation of the Bharatstri Mahamandal by Sarala Devi in 1910. In 1917 the Women's Indian Association was formed by Annie Besant, Margaret Consins and Dorothy Jinarajadasa. It was the first organization to create an overall awakening among women and to train them to shoulder their responsibility in public services and bind them together for mutual service and the good of the country. Since its inception, the Women's Indian Association involved in political matters. The presence and leadership of Annie Besant

provided an impetus to women to think in terms of political freedom. The origin of Indian Women's Movement of 19th and early 20th centuries shaped the society into patriarchal free and gender equality in terms of economic and social setups. The above chapters remarkably described various women organizations, which helped the women to come out from their homes and fight against opposition and the structures of patriarchy. The fast growing women organizations consider women as good managers. They play multifaceted role in the society. They fulfill their organizational commitment and at the same time, render their responsible services to domestic activities like child care, food preparation etc. some women found exceedingly competent dedicated to their employers on their professions, really working hard, confident of their own skills and abilities and of course increasingly ambitious.

The main concept of this study is to identify the women as a challenging role, out-breaking social customized system in Tamil country by empowering themselves as equal dignified in the society. The extent of empowerment of women is based on three categories such as social empowerment, economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive economic and social policies for women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and thus advance gender equality goals.

The social empowerment of women enables them to maintain equal status in society, irrespective of gender, caste, creed and other discriminations. Besides, the developments of women, provide easy and equal access to all the basic services so as to enable them to realize their full potential. The next is economic empowerment, which ensures provision for training, employment and income generation activities with both forward and backward linkages with the ultimate objective of making all women economically independent and self-reliant. Participation in economic activities is the

women's key to their personal advancement and their status in the society. After women started associating themselves in Self Help Groups, many changes have taken place in all spheres of life. Self help groups have paved way for the emergence of a new awakening in women by giving them an opportunity to come out of their house, making them associate with others and providing them loan for their economic activities and also a ground to realize and practice their social and political responsibility. Their interactional position in the society has been elevated and they tend to involve themselves in community work, which was once considered men's sphere and they have got a hold on decision making both in the house-hold and outside. It also enables them to acquire knowledge, develop self-esteem and take responsibility for their own lives. Moreover activities through Self Help Groups will bring an end to the gender disparities in economic power-sharing, which is an important factor of the poverty of women. The experience through the Self Help Groups shows that, setting up of micro enterprises at grassroots level will help to cope with this problem.

Women contribute to the economy and eradication of poverty through their micro enterprises. In this way empowerment of women proves to be critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Since women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities, lack of access to economic resources and their meager participation in the decision making process, the opportunity and the freedom created through the Self Help Groups will meet their requirement. Self Help Groups enhance the access of disadvantaged women in the economic activity not only reflects on the economic development, but also has certain other implications for fertility and population growth access to educational opportunities, health care and so on.

As far as the welfare of the women is concerned one has to be extremely cautious of the cultural factors of the society. It has to be seen that the rival group of

male members of the society is not generated in the reaction of unnecessary and avoidable criticism of them. Without hurting their male ego directly, one has to take their cooperation and support. Unless, the economic development cannot be achieved. The success of the objectives regarding women's actual development depends to a great extent on the degree of acceptance of the modern values of social justice, equality and liberty.

The study shows that women play a significant role in the socio-economic as well as political development of the country and their contribution through the process of empowerment cannot be ignored as such. Opportunity and freedom have to be given to the women to exhibit their full potential for the all round development of the country.