3.1 Introduction

The question of mainstreaming gender has emerged as a dominant theme in the development theory and practice during the past few years. It is largely because the traditional mode of development has marginalized women from the mainstream development process. Gender mainstreaming was identified as the most important instrument for achieving gender equality (Moser 2005: 11). Gender mainstreaming is often viewed as a method for evaluating the effects of measures on men and women. The idea has its origin in development studies where researchers realised that initiatives and projects failed due to a missing gender perspective (Cook 2000). Economic participation of women is a major influence in social change and leads to greater empowerment and positively contributes to the political system. In gender mainstreaming “gender” implies a historically constructed asymmetrical relation between women and men. “It transforms the women question from a vertical special issue to horizontal special concern” and it encourages the development of new policy instruments (Woodward 2003: 68).

The power relations that impede women’s attainment of fulfilling lives have been found to operate at multiple levels right from the personal to the public levels. The equal participation of men
and women in decision-making has been identified as important prerequisites for attaining equality and equity through democratic means. The private-public divide associated with men and women is the most important cause of gender inequality in governance. Women’s bargaining power at the household is restricted due to lack of access and control over resources and restricted autonomy in decision making. Patriarchal structures, stereotypic attitudes and ideologies prevailing in both public and private domain have deteriorated women’s status and their participation in governance. Despite the political priorities that have been set in strategies and plans, gender concerns have tended to gradually vanish out of focus in implementation and reporting. The strategy of mainstreaming has in fact undermined responsibility and reduced focus on women as targets for and partners in development cooperation. For empowering women, it is necessary to develop institutions that can curb the patriarchal tendencies of various authorities. This chapter traces the nature and impact of various political and civil society initiatives in engendering women.

3.2 Gender and Development

Gender i.e., the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity by which men and women are identified, is a widely used and often misunderstood term. The term gender is differently explained by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion and age (Momsen 2004). Like race and ethnicity, gender is a social construct which defines and differentiates the roles, rights, responsibilities, and
obligations of women and men. The innate biological differences between the sexes form the basis of social norms that define appropriate behaviour for them and determine the differences in social, economic, and political power between them. The concept of gender also includes the expectations about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). The concept of gender, applied to social analysis, reveals how women’s subordination (or men’s domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed for ever (UNESCO, 2003).

Although the specific nature and degree of these norms vary across societies and over time, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, men and boys are still typically favoured, receiving more resources and opportunities than do women and girls – factors important for the enjoyment of social, economic, and political power, and well-being.

As a basis for gender mainstreaming discussions most researchers (Jahan 1995, Meier 2006) make a distinction between integrationist and transformative mainstreaming. Integrationist approaches aim to promote women’s position within the existing policy paradigms whereas transformative approaches involve the reorientation and complete change of the existing policy structures. Gender mainstreaming is a transformative approach since the aim is to alter and not to modify existing social structures.
Some argue that gender mainstreaming is purely transformative and relates it to discourse and power. Mainstreaming is constructed, articulated and transformed through discourse, which is related to power (Walby 2005).

Male privilege has been part of the culture all over the world since time immemorial. Within the household and beyond it, men exercise control over women’s labour, their sexuality, their choice of spouse, their access to labour and other markets, and their income and assets through local decision-making and legal bodies. In other words, men mediate women’s access to social, economic, political, and legal institutions. Women are dependent on men throughout their lives, from father through husband to son. State legislation and institutions underpin this gender subordination and dependence, in spite of constitutional affirmations of sex equality.

Since the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Beijing Platform for Action, there has been significant progress and greater awareness of gender equality issues among governments and the public at large. Recognition is increasing of the negative effects on women of major global political and economic changes, including globalization, market liberalization, and use of new technologies, migration and conflicts. The UN Secretary-General’s 2005 Report states:

“There have clearly been some notable gains for women [since 1995]: increased visibility in elected assemblies and state
institutions; some closing of gender gaps in primary, and to a lesser extent secondary, school enrolment; a larger female presence in the labour market and in labour flows that cross international borders; and lower fertility rates. One of the remarkable achievements was in bringing issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women and inequality of power in gender relations to the centre of global and national debates” (United Nations 1995).

It is obvious to note that the standard of living of the world population has increased considerably than it was a century ago. Women have greater voice in their public and private lives. The spread of education and improvement of communications has made this possible. But the developments are not equally available to all. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the post-Cold War transition in Eastern Europe, the structural adjustment programs created new gender differences in Eastern European countries, where women were generally losers. The structural adjustment policies had increased the quantity of employment of women in the non-regular employment and self-employment sector. One of the effects of SAP in most countries is the adverse impact on public services, including education and health. This is both due to demand restraint policies and introduction of user charges on these services. The experiences of women as producers and reproducers, workers in industry and agriculture, wives, consumers, mothers, and crisis managers during adjustment programs show the unequal distribution of costs and benefits of SAPs. The gender-blind nature of neoclassical economic
theory and gender biases inherent in societies and cultures have served to obscure the increased burdens imposed on women, which manifest themselves as deteriorating health and well-being in adjusting economies (Bharati, 1997).

Female workers are often not getting the protection of labour legislation and also job security. Downsizing of the public sector, budgetary restraints and privatization have adversely affected women. Rapid advancement of technology are affected by the poor women by devaluing their traditional skill, thus they were pushed in to extreme poverty (Sahay, 1998).

Gender equality does not mean treating the male and the female in the same way. It means equality in opportunity and society in which women and men are able to lead equally fulfilling lives. Men and women have different needs and priorities. In 1946, the United Nations set up the Commission on the Status of Women. The commission had two basic functions viz, to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting Women’s rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields and to make recommendations on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the fields of women’s rights (United Nations 1996, 89). On 1997 the area of the commission was expanded to include advocacy for equality, development and peace and monitoring of the implementation of measures for the advancement of women at regional, sectoral, national and global levels. The disparities between men and women are widening. The life
expectancy at birth for women varies from 82 years in Singapore to 39 in Swaziland. While male life expectancy ranges from 41 years in Angola and 42 in Zambia to 78 in Singapore, the same in Spain. Globally 69% of women but 83% of men over 15 years of age are literate (United Nations 1996)

The concept of bringing gender issues into the mainstream of society was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing (China) in 1995. It highlighted the necessity to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of social and economic development.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as, "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality." (UNDP, 1997). In the UN system, UNDP and UNIFEM were among the early voices and support for gender mainstreaming, but most international development partners and donors are now equally committed to gender mainstreaming. There
have also been significant improvements in concerted regional and international actions for women’s rights and gender equality³.

The most frequently cited definition of gender mainstreaming in the European literature is that devised by Mieke Verloo as Chair of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making (Council of Europe, 1998: 15).

The Council of Europe (1998) specifies the need for the ‘equal participation of women and men in political and public life’ and the need for ‘the individual’s economic independence’, and that ‘education is a key target for gender equality.’ This defines equal participation in political and public life, in education and the achievement of economic independence, as universal goals while other spheres (notably the family and care-work) remain sites of difference.

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming do not take place in isolation from other forms of inequality. The category ‘woman’ is internally divided by many other forms of difference and inequality. There has been increasing attention paid to the nature of the relationships between these diverse forms of inequality and their implication for the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming (Ferree 2003; Woodward 2003).
Mainstreaming includes gender-specific activities and affirmative action, whenever women or men are in a particularly disadvantageous position. Gender-specific interventions can target women exclusively, men and women together, or only men, to enable them to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts. These are necessary temporary measures designed to combat the direct and indirect consequences of past discrimination.

Gender mainstreaming and property rights to women always go hand in hand. In many countries, women and men do not have equal rights to inherit and own property. Gender inequities in inheritance and property rights are attributable both to laws and policies that openly discriminate against women and also to the failure of many countries to implement existing, equitable laws on property, ownership and inheritance. Women’s disproportionately low land and property ownership rates also renders them less likely to be able to secure credit with which to embark on entrepreneurial activities that could result in their own and their communities’ economic growth (Agarwal, 2003). In addition, women who owned land or other immovable property were least likely to suffer domestic violence, irrespective of household income (Panda & Agarwal, 2005).

In South Asia it is argued that the gender gap in the ownership and control of property is the single and most critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well being, social status and empowerment. In South Asia, women’s struggle for egalitarian gender relations is marked with the struggle for the ownership and
control over the landed property. The Marxist thinkers are of the opinion that, even the female folk enter in to the labour force and earn income; independent right to property is the effective way to their empowerment. Engels is of the opinion that even in the capitalist societies gender relations would be hierarchical among the property owning families of the bourgeoisie where women did not go out to work and economically depended on men, and an egalitarian gender relationship can be viewed in propertyless proletarian families where women were in the labour force (Agarwal 1995). Thus the abolition of private property and the move to socialism, in his point of view, is the right way to provide the rightful status to women.

Millennium Development Goals of the UN (MDGs) were designed to achieve the alleviations of poverty and the promotion of Gender Equality. It has been evidently noted that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a price in more poverty, slower growth and lower quality of life, while gender equality enhances development. For example it has been estimated that increasing the education and access to inputs of female farmers relative to male farmers in Kenya would raise yields by as much as one fifth. Literate mothers have better fed children who are more likely to attend school (Momsen. 2004).

It is a notable fact that in no country in the developing world, women enjoy equality with men in terms of political, legal, social and economic rights. The lowest equality of rights is found in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle- East and North Africa. After the
Fourth World Conference on women in 1995, the equality of rights has improved. By 1996, the convention on the Elimination of All form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by 152 countries in the world

3.3 Women Empowerment: Meaning and concept

The concept of women’s empowerment appears to be the outcome of several debates initiated by women’s movements throughout the world. Third world feminists have contributed much to the development of this concept. During the past two decades empowerment practice in the human services has emerged from efforts to develop more effective service for women and other oppressed groups. The main aim behind this practice is to address the role powerlessness plays in creating and perpetuating personal and social problems (Gutierrez 1995). Empowerment may be broadly defined as control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It is the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the power sources (Batliwala 1995). In its simplest form empowerment is the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance (Chandra 1997).

The concept of women empowerment, throughout the world, has its roots in women’s movements. It is since the mid of 1980s that this term become popular in the field of development especially in reference to women. In India, it is the sixth five year plan (1980-85)
which can be taken as a land mark for the cause of women, where the concept Women and Development was introduced for the first time.

Some of the generalizations that can be made about women’s empowerment as a social change process are shown below (Hall 1992).

Empowerment of women is a social process that neutralizes women’s oppressions. Women are under some traditional subordination and will continue if women do not take decisive action on their own behalf. Women’s empowerment will provide them equity and equal mindedness in the society. These are not accomplished at the expense of others, but in a mutually cooperative spirit wherever possible. Women’s empowerment will result in traditional female values being more respected in society at large. Women’s empowerment is a base for human liberation and empowerment of all. It will bring more balance to the male value hierarchies in current traditional and modern societies. Empowerment will establish Co-operation as a viable process leading to the development of all people (Hall 1992).

Empowerment should also generate new notions of power. Present day notions of power have evolved in hierarchical, male-dominated societies and are based on divisive, destructive and oppressive values. Women’s empowerment process must evolve a new understanding of power and experiment with ways of democratizing and sharing power. This will provide collective
responsibility, decision making and accountability. (Batliwala 1995).

3.4 Women Empowerment Initiatives: A Historical Perspective.

Women's march towards the so called empowerment has a historical perspective. When the women folk began to lose their rights and when the patriarchal system started, they started their agitation. The first event recorded in history happened in 1642 when 400 women submitted a representation before the House of Commons about the problems faced by them. This representation addressed the marginalization of women in religion, family etc. (Bhasin: 1993).

In 1866 demand was raised to grant franchise to women in Britain. But this was granted only in 1918. In 1856 a law for granting property right to married women was initiated in the House of Commons. But this Bill became a law only in 1970. In United States of America women movements came as an offshoot of the movements for the rights of Black. In both the Black and the women were denied voting right. In 1948 'Snake Falls Convention' demanded voting right to women in the US. Only in 1920 Voting Right was granted to women in all states of the United States.

The first phase of women movement was for legal equality. But the second phase was against discrimination. In 1960, many political and philosophical developments were initiated throughout the world. Among them feminism was of utmost importance.
In America and in Europe, women organizations emerged by demanding equal wages, child protection centers, prevention of rape etc. In India women organized particularly against unauthorized production of liquor, protection of environment, wife beating etc.

Women took part in the Total Revolution Movement by Jayprakash Narayanan. They joined in organizations like SEWA in Ahmadabad. They established banks and produced videos highlighting their problems.

3.5 Third World Approaches to Gender mainstreaming Policy

A review of the perspectives adopted by researchers and development agencies and activists reveals a variety of approaches and assumption about women and development. The dominant approaches in this respect are welfare, equity, antipoverty, and empowerment. Buvinic (1983) categorized the policy approaches towards women from welfare to anti poverty. These approaches have been supplemented by adding two more, ‘efficiency and empowerment’.

It is necessary to analyze how far the different policy interventions satisfied the practical gender needs and the strategic gender needs\(^5\) (Moser 1999). There is wide range of confusion about these definition uses and consequences of these approaches because of their similarities and their overlapping emergence and growth. To add to this confusion, other terms have emerged to cover the different perspectives on women within the development arena.
These are Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), Women and Environment and Alternatives to Development (WED), and Gender and Development (GAD)

3.6 Welfare Approach

The Welfare approach is the oldest and still the most popular approach in development policy for the Third World in general and women in particular. This model has been implemented by the colonial authorities in many Third World Countries prior to independence. These governments had low priority for social welfare. Social needs are satisfied by individual efforts and the state dealt with ‘deviant’ behavior. In 1957 Paul Baren defined development as the economic growth that means growth in production of physical goods.

There created two parallel approaches to development assistance. On the one hand, financial aid for economic growth and on the other hand relief aid for socially deprived groups. The policy chiefly aimed at the Third World Women.

Moser (1989,1993) describes the welfare approach as being based on three assumptions.

1. Women are passive recipients of development rather than participants in the development.

2. Motherhood is the main responsibility of women and

3. Child rearing is the most effective role of women in all aspects of economic development.
The welfare approach claims to be “family centered” in orientation, but it focuses on women in terms of their reproductive role. At the same time it assumes men’s role to be productive. Thus in this approach women are recognized only on their reproductive role (Rogers 1980). The main method of implementation is through ‘top-down’ handouts of free goods and services, or through training in those skills deemed appropriate for nonworking housewives and mothers. The main concern of the welfare programme was providing food aid and nutritional education. Most recently since 1970s the welfare policy has extended to population control through family planning programme (Weeda 1987) Welfare approach treats women as passive beneficiaries of development with focus on their reproductive role and aim to meet their practical Gender Needs (PGNs). Hence this has been widely popular especially with governments and NGOs.

3.7 Equity Approach

This is another approach put forward within 1976-85 (UN Women’s Decade). This view recognizes the triple role of women and also seeks to meet their Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs) through direct state intervention, giving political and economic autonomy to women. By the 1970s, studies showed that although women were often the predominant contributors to the basic productivity of their communities, particularly in agriculture, their economic contribution was not referred to either in national statistics or in the planning and implementation of development projects. (Boserup, 1970) At the same
time new modernization projects with innovative agricultural methods and sophisticated technologies were affecting women negatively, displacing them from their traditional productive functions and diminishing the income status and power they had in traditional relations.

The original WID approach was in fact equity approach. The approach recognizes women as active participants of the development process. They must ‘bring into’ the development process.

The approach accepts women’s practical gender need to earn livelihood. This approach identifies that the origin of women’s subordination not only in the context of family but also in relations between men and women in the market place. Hence this approach gives more importance to economic independence. Equity approach tries to reduce the inequality between men and women in the gender division of labour, so it meets an important Strategic Gender Need.

3.8 The Anti-Poverty Approach

This approach can be identified as the second WID approach. In this approach economic inequality between men and women is linked not to subordination but to poverty. It aims at reducing the inequality in terms of income to reduce the gender inequality. Even though the national income of the state has been increased, the fruits of it have not benefited the poor, especially women.
In 1972 the World Bank officially shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to a broader concern with the eradication of absolute poverty and the promotion of the ‘redistribution with growth’ Integral to this was the “basic needs strategy” with its primary purpose to meet ‘basic needs’ such as food, clothing, shelter and fuel, as well as social needs such as education, human rights and ‘participation’ in social life through employment and political involvement (Ghai 1978; Streeton et al, 1981)

This approach focuses mainly on their productive role, on the basis that poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth requires increased productivity of women in low-income households. It aimed to increase the income generating options of low-income women through better access to productive resources.

There are some criticisms levelled against this approach. One is that since this approach has the potential to modify the gender division of labour within the household, there may be changes in the balance of power between men and women in the family.

The programme for low income women may reduce the already insufficient amount of aid allocated to low income groups. Hence the Third World countries are reluctant to allocate resources from national budget to women

Again there is a problem in separating reproductive from productive work, and also a problem of ‘balancing’ productive work,
alongside domestic and child care responsibilities. There are cultural constraints that restrict women’s ability to move freely outside the domestic arena and to compete equally with men running similar enterprises (Moser 1981):

When men control household financial resources, women are unable to save unless special safe facilities are provided (Sebsted 1982). Also women cannot obtain equal access to credit, due to lack of collateral, they are often unable to expand their enterprises unless non-traditional forms of credit are available to them. (Bruce 1980; IWTC 1985).

3.9 The Efficiency Approach

The efficiency approach is the third WID approach, since the 1980’s debt crisis. Its purpose is to ensure that development is more effective through women’s economic contribution. This approach seeks to meet practical gender needs of women. In this approach, women are seen through their capacity to compensate for declining social services by extending their working day. In this approach the emphasis has been shifted from women and towards development. It is assumed that the increased economic participation for the third World women is automatically linked with increased equity. Economic participation of women will increase their status. It is assumed that lack of education and under – productive technologies constrain female economic participation.
The shift towards efficiency coincided with the marked deterioration in world economy. To alleviate the situation, economic stabilization and adjustment policies were announced by the IMF and the World Bank. This has been implemented by an increasing number of national governments. Increased efficiency and productivity are the two objectives of structural adjustment policies; efficiency is the policy approach towards women, which is currently gaining popularity amongst all international aid agencies and national governments alike. In this approach, emphasis is on women’s increased economic participation, this has implications for women not only as reproducers but also as community managers. However, in most cases this approach fails to address strategic gender needs and seriously reduces the number of practical gender needs that are met, because of reduction in resource allocation.

3.10 The Empowerment Approach

This is the most recent approach, articulated by the Third World women, the purpose of which is to empower women through self-reliance. This approach treats women’s subordination not only as a result of the problem of men, but also of colonial and neo-colonial oppression. This seeks to meet the strategic gender needs indirectly through bottom-up mobilization. This approach appears similar to equity approach. But equity and empowerment approaches are different. This approach derived more from the emergent feminist writings and grass roots organizational experience of Third World women. Women’s movement was not imposed on women by the
United Nations or western feminists, but has an independent history (Jayawardena, 1986).

This approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women and the origins of women’s subordination in the family. It also acknowledges degrees of female oppression according to class, race, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. The approach acknowledges the importance for women to increase their power. Here the term power is referred in terms of the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. It seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within as well as between societies.

The best-known articulation of empowerment approach has been made by the Development Alternative with Women for New Era. (DAWN) i.e. a loose formation of individual women and women’s group set up prior to 1985 World Conference of Women in Nairobi, the purpose of which was not only to analyse the conditions of the world women but also to formulate a vision of an alternative future society (Moser 1999).

Klenk(2004) in her article ‘Who is the Developed woman?’ analyses gendered discourses of Development in rural North India and addresses the usefulness of recent Scholarship on development as ‘discourse’ for understanding connections between development and subjectivity. Development discourse and processes originating in Euro-American, industrial nations after 1945 not only produced the
notion of ‘Third World’ but also created an efficient apparatus for providing knowledge about, and the exercise of ‘power over’ this geopolitical region (Escobar 1995). The Third World problems that are to be rectified are illiteracy, under development, mal nutrition, the problem of small peasants etc.

Women In Development (WID) of 1970s and 80s and Gender and Development (GAD) strategies since the late 1980s were widely criticized for treating women as an abstract, isolated category (Escobar 1995, Kothari 2002): WID and GAD characterized women as victims of capitalist development schemes, i.e. the victim of patriarchy, poverty and increasing work burden in a degraded natural environment (Behar 1993).

A large body of feminist research on women’s role in agrarian economies has shown that women usually do most of the productive work and if they earn income, they usually contribute more of their earnings to their households than men. Kenk observes that women are also more likely to pay back loans than men.

Recent research in South Asia shows that micro credit also has clear pitfalls for women borrowers. Rankin (2001) argues that the availability of credit can increase women’s work burden, and that men often control the income generated by women. So micro credit in South Asian contexts can actually reinforce rather than transform social hierarchies based on gender. This means that access to capital in the form of loans will be transformative for women entrepreneurs.
only if the programmes open spaces for women to develop critical consciousness of cultural ideology.

New challenges like globalization international migration, refugees and conditions of war, have brought gender issues in to public attention (Momsen, 2010).

Historically and even today women take care of the basic needs of the society like food, fodder, fuel, shelter, nurturing etc...

Empowerment of women can be achieved in a society by recognizing women contribution and her knowledge, helping women to fight their own fears and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, enhancing their self respect and self dignity, controlling their own bodies, becoming economically independent and self - reliant, controlling resources like land and property, reducing women work burden especially within home and finally creating and strengthening women’s group and organizations (Bhasin, 1993).

Hall (1992) enlists the characteristics of empowered women. They include maintenance of equal mindedness and challenge male dominance. They respond as equal and co-operate in order to work toward the common good. Women movement should be linked with peace movement, ecology movement and movement for decentralization of society (Sahay1998).

Mainstreaming Gender and Development (MGD) encouraged the participants to build on their community’s strengths minimized resistance among families and communities by including them in the
development process and succeeded in building a cadre of women activists. Drawing on its experiences, she questions the importance of collective action, suggests that the selection of participants should be based on aptitude rather than socio-economic status and highlights the potential for women’s empowerment in challenging environments. (Paterson, 2008)

Empowerment of women should begin with Women’s own understanding of their lives. There is a specific role of religion in Women’s empowerment. The programme MGD show how women can engage with their families and tradition to support redefined gender roles.

In many of the economically backward countries the mobility of women is very low. Most women do not move outside their home and if they do so when accompanied by a male relative. MGD appears radical and provides salient lessons for other programmes in such countries and in other challenging environments, addressing a gap in women’s empowerment practice and theory. In Balochistan gender discrimination is based on popular understanding of biological difference and Islam (Kabeer 1999).

Women’s empowerment is not too challenging for highly patriarchal environments (Paterson 2008). Societies that are traditional or conservative may embrace change if it is presented in the right way to highly patriarchal societies and it need not be made through men, but in a fashion to enable men to feel valued and
informed. Culture and tradition can be seen as assets to be built on where conventional strategies may create resistance.

3.11 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in India

In India, gender bias, its manifestations and consequences have been alarming for the last few decades. This is reflected from India’s declining rank in various indices like HDI, GDI etc. In spite of government’s constitutional, legal, political initiatives to protect and safeguard women and their rights, continuous gender discrimination happens at all spheres of Indian society. In a report compiled by the Guardian, India is listed along with Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan and Somalia as the top five countries in the world where it is not safe to be a woman. The report says: “India ranks high on the list because of the high levels of female feticide and infanticide”. This report comes on the heels of the 2011 census released in India, which showed that the child sex ratio has declined to an all-time low of 914 girls for every 1,000 boys. The report also said that according to UN Population Fund, approximately 50 million girls have gone missing over the past century because of female infanticide and feticide (www.theguardian.com).

The prevailing gender bias however, leads to extreme manifestations of various gender related crimes. The contemporary Indian society is grappled with many such incidents like rape, molestation, dowry death, honour killing, sexual harassment etc. Every day the newspapers are galore with incidents of gender related
crimes. They contain news of atrocities towards women and girls in one form or the other. The recent rape cases in Delhi and Mumbai and their effects have demonstrated the terrible culture of gender bias of Indian society:

While the Indian society has been afflicted with the crisis of gender inequality, the solution has been sought most often in addressing women’s problem and issues related to their lives only. No substantive attempts have been put forward in order to eliminate the rooted gender bias, which creates this gender inequality in society. The strategies to address gender inequality have been mostly designed around affirmative action for women (providing them with more education, more economic and political opportunity) and equal pay for equal work between men and women in the workplace, educational institutions etc. These strategies sought to bridge the gender inequality through the empowerment of women by economic sufficiency or skill enhancing policies. However, this could not transform the attitude and perspective of people towards women in society. Moreover, the welfare model of India also treated women as a ‘subject’ of welfare, and therefore designed various welfare programmes in order to improve the lives of women. Various welfare schemes were directed towards directly benefiting women for skilled and unskilled employment through education and vocational trainings.

Equality refers to equal opportunities in terms of access to sources of livelihood, health, and education, as well as to social,
economic and political participation without discrimination. Patriarchal structures aid the prevalence and perpetuation of gender inequalities despite the constitutional provision of equality (Agrawal and Rao 2004; Government of India 1974). Gender inequalities stem from relations of power and authority, class caste hierarchies and socio-cultural traditions, customs and norms. Empowerment may be defined as the process of transforming these structures and institutions, thereby ensuring equality.

Women’s work is one of the most crucial indicators and serves as an empowerment tool. However, the number of women who work is poorly captured or enumerated since most of the work they do is not remunerated and hence remains unrecognized. As a consequence, the rate of women’s participation in the workforce is shown as low. Given poor human capital investment, the share of women in the organised sector is also low. The only source that reveals a high rate of women’s participation is the time use survey that calculates the number of hours per day and hours per week women work. The perpetuation of gender stereotypes and the social division of labour that typecasts women mainly as workers in the domestic sphere has been the chief barrier to the recognition of women’s economic work participation (Bardhan 1985; Tinker 1990). The role played by women in the care sector, predominantly their reproductive work (bearing, rearing, nurturing children and household maintenance), falls outside the national accounting systems. Many of the tasks ‘non-working’ women are
involved in would be considered work if performed by a person hired for the purpose or unrelated to the household (Visaria 1999).

The shift from viewing women only as reproducers to recognising them as producers as well came gradually when the focus on their contributions, non-recognition of their work and their under-enumeration as workers began in the 1980s (Feldman 1998; Government of India 1988; Papola and Sharma 1999). This led to the shift within development planning from a concern with women’s livelihoods to alleviate their poverty to improving women’s access to and ownership of productive resources as well as increasing their labour force participation.

Women share in organised sector employment is only 17 per cent. Even within the organised sector most women are located in the lower rungs of the hierarchy (Joseph and Prasad 1995; Srivastava 1997). Very few are managers, bosses or decision-makers (Agrawal and Rao 2004; Menon-Sen and Kumar 2001).

3.12 Women and Five Year Plans in India

The planners in India were not very much concerned about prescribing administrative structures for women’s development. The First FYP, the planning commission members wanted to give women the rights of self-actualization to the fullest extent, keeping their role as mothers and home makers in view. They accordingly stressed the need for maternal and child welfare centers. The second Five Year Plan (1956-61) did not enunciate any new goals of development for
women. The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) continued to lay emphasis on the welfare aspect of women. The plan also emphasized the need to give women special scholarships at the university level and also grant to women’s colleges. The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) did not innovate any schemes meant only for women. The Policy parameters continued to stress on an approach, through the Social Welfare Board, of assisting voluntary organizations dealing with the welfare of women. In the Fifth Five Year plan (1974-79) no new initiatives were there. There was not any policy statement as well. But in 1974, a report i.e. the Status of Women Report was published by the GOI. The Govt. made necessary preparations for the first Women’s Conference held in Nairobi 1975. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) was, the first in the plan history to allot a separate chapter for ‘women and development’ in the plan document. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) reviewed the achievement of the Sixth FYP for women. It stressed a greater integration between health and family welfare and the strengthening of primary health care which benefited women. Though the plan did not mention any programmes for women in agriculture and industry, it did recommend the need for the generation of more skilled and unskilled employment for women, through vocational training and proper education for women. The Seventh Plan spoke for the first time of the need for initiating integrated development projects for women. Again this plan spoke for the first time that confidence building and awareness of their rights among women must be accelerated so that women
realize their own potential for development and their rights to share from this process. It also spoke about the need for initiating integrated development projects for the women covering health education, nutrition, application of science and technology and creation of employment. The Eighth plan did not have a chapter on women as it was started in the sixth plan. Women are included in a chapter on social welfare which included children, disabled and the aged apart from women.\textsuperscript{11}

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) suggested to formulate ‘National Policy for Empowerment of women'.\textsuperscript{12} The most important was that the plan proposed a special Woman’s Component Plan (WCP) to ensure 30% flow of funds to woman development sectors.

The National Commission for Woman established in January-1 1992 was an autonomous body for advocating women’s issues. In connection with the establishment of this National commission states like UP, Gujarat, Andra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala & Orissa had set up State Commissions for Woman.

### 3.13 Rural Development Schemes in India Addressing Women

It was in the sixth five year plan that rural women’s development got priority for the first time in India. The main programmes were Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the training of Rural Youth for self – employment (TRYSEM). The main employment guarantee programme were National Rural
Employment Programme were National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) The Jawahar Rozgar Yogana (JRY), the shram Shakthi Employment Guarentee and the Integrated Area Development Programme (IADP) (Baxamusa (1992))

The IRDP was to cover 20 million families, using a package of subsides and institutional credit of which 30 percent was to go to SC/STs and at least 30 percent to women (Narasimham, 1999). Under the NREP and RLEGP utmost importance was given to SC/STs, but this was also produced expected results in terms of betterment of women’s status in these communications. Lack of identification with the spirit of the projects, circum location, failure to involve the beneficiary population as participants and treating them as targets, with decision making retained in the hands of officials etc. are the main reason for the failure of the projects. In spite of the outlay of Rs. 100,800 million by the Department of rural Development under the Seventh Plan alone, no appreciable improvement in the status of women has resulted (Narasimhan 1999).

In the second half of the Sixth Five Year Plan DWCRA was introduced. The project was specially targeted at the rural women. By the end of eighth plan it covered 291 districts. The women beneficiaries were encouraged to form thrift groups, which were expected to work better than the previous experiments which had many short comings.
During 1990s due to economic, liberalization and structural adjustment policies are introduced allocation for the DWCRA, JRY and IRDP programmes were stopped. (ICDS) was established for providing nutritional supplement and health services to pregnant and lactating women and to children below the age group of six. This project was criticised for misuse of funds.

Another Programme initiated by the government was jawahar Rozgar Yogana (JRY). This programme was on creating work for community asset formation (Water Tanks, Field channels etc). The programme provides for the village Sarpanch to be the supervisor. The weakness was that Sarpanch from a dominant caste may not be interested in or committed to SC/ST’s welfare. And if any malpractices in implementation, as per the guidelines, the development commissioner is to be contacted. But the weaker sections of the society, especially women are not in a position to approach the high strata of bureaucracy. In short, not only do the economic benefits not occur, but the expected spin-offs in terms of socio cultural changes also do not come about.

A new Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) was introduced specifically for women belonging to the SC/ST below the poverty line as a priority group and calls for at least 50 workers to make themselves available every day. Those who are unable to make this number become ineligible for assistance as per the rules. But at the same time, these women are eligible for assistance individually.
Another state-sponsored project for the poor women is the Mahila Samruddhi Yojana for the benefit of the rural women who deposit Rs.300/- in a post office account for a year and receive an incentive bonus of Rs.75 (i.e., 25 percent) When we analyse the outcome of the project a woman’s economic situation may improve, but her gender equation, within the family may not necessarily change.

In 1987 a tribal Co-Operative marketing Development Federation, and a National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation for employment Generation were set up. 12.15 million SC/ST families were officially listed as beneficiaries of economic assistance. But the amount that reached the beneficiaries was very low as the then Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi remarked, that out of every rupee spent for tribal welfare and betterment only 15 paisa reached the hands of the poor beneficiaries.

Almost all the rural development schemes in India, Initiated after independence show no community participation in its implementation. The people continued to be targets or beneficiaries and not participants or decision makers.

3.14 Other Initiatives for Women Empowerment Efforts towards Women’s Education

Foreign missionaries had promoted schooling for girls from the early part of the 19th century. Girls who attended these schools were from poor families. In the mid- of 19th century national efforts were started in this respect. In Bengal, in 1863, there were 95 school
with 2500 and 2238 school and 80,000 in 1890 by 1882, 2700 schools and colleges for girls with 1, 27,000 students From 1880s women also beginning to graduate from universities (Chatterjee 1990). In colonial India, female claim to power depended very largely on their intellectual achievements, since most of ‘manly’ and masterful enterprise were closed to them. Educated women therefore, posed threat to the very basic masculinity (Sarkar 1997).

In later half of the 19th century Muslim schools were established for females. In 1895 Muslim Girls School was founded by Amina Tyabji. In 1906 Begum Abdullah and the Begum of Bhopal opened a girl’s school in Aligarh in the face of opposition from the local Urdu press.

3.15 Emergence of Women Activism

When Gandhi assumed India’s leadership the average life span of an Indian woman was only 27 years. Babies and pregnant women ran a high risk of dying young. Child marriage was very common and widows were in very large numbers. Only two percent of women had any kind of education and women did not have an identity of their own. In North India, they practised the purdha system. Women could not go out of the home. The women movement in India can be viewed in the form of three waves. The first can be said to have begun with the mass mobilization of women during the national movement. After independence the policies and developmental programmes launched by the government started the rise of protest. Growing
unemployment and rising prices led to mass uprisings especially in Gujarat and Bihar. This spirit from the late 60s can be called the second wave with resurgence of political activity by women. Socialists and communists intervened in the women’s issues then. In Maharashtra the United Women’s Anti Price- Rise Front, formed in 1973, by Socialist and Communists rapidly became a mass women’s movement for consumer protection. This movement spread and linked with student’s agitation against corruption in Gujarat and became a massive middle class movement. This struggle led to the declaration of Emergency in India (Gandhi and Shaw 1992).

During this period middle class women in urban areas as well as organizations of working women were fighting for their right to independent livelihood and basic resources like credit, training and access to technology. The self employed women’s Association (SEWA) in Ahmadabad and working women’s Forum (WWF) in Madras were formed during this period. This period saw mass participation of women in popular upsurges against the government and power structures in general.

The third wave, which can be said to emerge in the late 70s had a specific feminist focus. There were autonomous women’s groups in towns and cities, without party affiliations or formal hierarchical structures, although individual members often had party connections. The critique from women in the left parties was that these ‘autonomous’ groups were urban and middle class and therefore could not represent Indian women. But the left parties and trade
union are patriarchal as any other organization, was the counter argument by the feminists within their autonomous groups. Hence it was necessary to stay independent while allying on a broad platform. There were nationwide campaigns on dowry and rape, and women resource centers were set-up in several cities.

From 1980s there was the emergence of a new feature which transformed the structure of these autonomous groups. These autonomous groups came to be funded Non Governmental Organizations. Since 1980s ‘empowerment of women’ became a slogan which was widely discussed.

As regards funding by international agencies, the compulsion of taking up and completing specific projects has meant that there is hardly any serious thought given to what constitutes ‘feminism’. Thus autonomous women’s groups, which began as an attempt to create spaces outside the orthodoxies of party women’s wings, are now far from autonomous of the compulsions of getting and retaining funding.

3.16 Challenges to Women’s Empowerment

The seventh national conference of women’s movements held in Ranchi, in December 1997, severely criticised the existing development model on the ground that this model had resulted in the increasing impoverishment of large sections of working people and caused severe ecological crisis while serving the interests of the dominant class /caste groups (Gopal 2007). The resolution sharply criticized the New Economic Policy for its assumption that the path of
maximum profit for capital is the best course for economic development. The restructuring of industry has led to women losing their jobs and being forced to the low paid and insecure informal sector. All marginalized sections are being further exploited in the interest of capital. The resolution states that all policy should be widely debated in public forums, and people’s responses considered in making policies.

3.16.1 Violence Against Women

Violence against women came in to public view from 1980s onwards, and became an issue of high, media visibility. Today the campaign against violence includes domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment, degrading portrayal of women in the media and the practice of selective abortion of female foetuses. There is the growing recognition of sexual harassment, especially at the workplace as a serious issue. In 1997 The Supreme Court issued a code of conduct at the workplace to prevent sexual harassment.

Dowry and dowry related murders have been an important issue for the women’s movement, especially in the 80s. The campaign launched at the time resulted in legislation which required any death of women within seven years of marriage to be investigated as a murder. Abortion as such has never been at the centre of much debate because of the discourse on poverty as resulting from over population, so that abortion has had legitimacy as a form of family planning. Abortion became an issue for women’s movement in 1975 when for the first time, amniocentesis, used to
detect foetal abnormalities, was used to selectively abort female foetuses’. Women’s groups formed a broad front with democratic and human rights organizations, and were successful in getting legislation passed, first in the state of Maharashtra in 1988 and then a central legislation in 1994, banning sex determination tests. But the legislation had many loopholes in the Act which enable such tests to be continuously conducted.

3.16.2 Health

Feminist groups and civil rights groups have expressed the concern at the insensitivity and medical dangers of the family planning programme. International agencies like UNICEF and WHO also treat women’s primary role in society as that of being mothers and as keepers of family health. It is assumed that high rates of infant and maternal mortality are due to women’s ignorance rather than poverty, malnutrition and lack of medical facilities. These organizations provide top-down services which ignore the structural constraints under which poor women work.

The women movements are aware that it has to break out of the framework that delimits women’s health into reproductive issue alone. The resolution passed at the sixth national conference of women’s movements in 1997 define health as socio-cultural and economic well-being of the individual. At the same time women’s reproductive health has been a focal point of struggles. The resolution put forward envisions, ‘health education, self-help, safe contraception,
easy access to medical facilities and support for alternative systems of healing’.

3.16.3 Sexuality and Marriage

It is only recently that sexuality has become a publically articulated issue for women’s movement. At the fifth conference on women’s movements held in 1994, in Tirupati, an attempt to pass a resolution, recognizing alternative forms of sexuality was confronted by great hostility. But at the sixth conference in Ranchi in 1997, a resolution was passed, which states:

‘We seek the right to make choices about our lives, our bodies, our sexuality and our relationships. Some of us are single, some of us are married. Some of us have our primary emotional/sexual/physical/intimate relationship with men, others with women and some with both. Some of us do not have sexual relationships. We feel that we must evolve even supportive structures that can make all of these choices a meaningful reality’.

Nivedita Menon (1996) has argued that feminist politics needs to take the issue of sexuality beyond the question of ‘Choice’. To consider homosexuality as an ‘alternative’ life style is to leave unquestioned institutionalized heterosexuality as a norm. The recognition and validation of gay/lesbian experience would require feminism to radically rethink what ‘genderness’ itself is and to question the naturalness of two biological sexes. We would then be led to a recognition that the boundaries of the apparently stable self
are cultural and historic constructs, not an immutable reality we are irrevocably faced with.

Despite their political differences, today, most feminist and non-feminists, rightist and Leftists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians in India, share the basic assumption that, although there are many abuses within heterosexual monogamy, this system is the best available.

Vanitha (1996) says there is need for changes in the Hindu Marriage Act and the Special Marriage Act. It is because it does not specify the sex of the partners involved. She illustrates with an example that two women tried to take advantage of this when they filed an application to marry under this act. They could not be legally prevented. Their marriage was registered in Court.

Vanita again asks a question that why should not three or four people of any sex be able to marry? If this were allowed, the institution of marriage would be open to such radical alteration that it would no longer be the same institution. She is of the opinion that, monogamy as an absolute principle is full of holes. If it is absolute, the divorce and remarriage are wrong. If serial monogamy is acceptable, why should group marriage not be acceptable?

So for as Muslim community is concerned one partner is able to end the marriage unilaterally based on the idea that no one should be forced to live with someone they do not want to live with. What is undesirable about verbal ‘taalq’ is that under Indian Muslim law only
men have this right. In fact Islamic law has a provision in operation in some Muslim countries called ‘Khula’, whereby a woman can exercise a similar right. She can leave her husband even if he does not want to leave her, making certain payment (Vanita 1999)

3.16.4 Work

In the area of work also women face the threat of marginalization. 94% of the Indian female work force is concentrated in the unorganized sector. Women’s jobs in industry are those that men do not care for i.e., unskilled, semiskilled, low grade office jobs etc. In addition when manual jobs are mechanized men take up that work and women have no alternative training or employment. For example, electrically operated flour mills replaced the traditional work of hand pounding of grains by women (Menon 1999).

Women’s movements are struggling for security of employment, living wage, regulation of working hours, discriminatory treatment and the right to organize. These organized efforts also produced some positive results. For example Air India hostesses in 1981 obtained a judgement striking down the validity of regulations terminating employment on pregnancy and in 1983, another case against the Kerala Government led to the striking down of its policies designating certain jobs as meant for males (Gothoskar, 1998). Women also had to struggle within unions against patriarchal assumptions and sexist attitudes (Menon 1992)
3.17 Gender mainstreaming initiatives in Kerala

Kerala, situated in the southwest part of India was formed in 1956 by the amalgamation of three regions Travancore, Kochi and Malabar. Kerala is a state characterized by low levels of economic development. But it received international attention in terms of high levels of literacy, longevity, low infant and maternal mortality, falling birth rates and a strong public health system (Ramachandran 1997).

In 1957 the communists were elected to power. This brought worldwide attention to the state. In early 70s under the initiative of the communist party land reforms were passed. After that mass housing programme, pension schemes, fixing minimum wages, pension schemes and welfare funds for unorganized workers and state – run supermarkets were established for the poor sector of the population (Devika 2008). In the late 1980s and early 1990s the state saw a widespread campaign to attain total literacy in the state. The success of the above campaign helped the state to move towards political decentralization and the successful implementation of the peoples planning campaign of the mid-1990s.

The noted peculiarity of Kerala is the low participation of women in politics and public sphere, despite high human development (Erwer 2003:130). In the princely state of Travancore, the right to franchise and the right to be elected were achieved as early as 1920s. At this time the activists of the British India were launching a campaign to extend the franchise to women (Forbes 2000:10).
In the medieval notions of rulers in Kerala, political power in the major ‘Swaroopams’- the ruling houses-was not necessarily the prerogative of men. For example, in the royal house of Attingal, senior women ruled in their own right (Nair 2005). But from 18th century onwards, the possibility of female members succeeding to full political power decreased.

In 1932 women and men were given equal rights in voting. The first generation feminists also concentrated on the attainment of political rights (Chandy 1935). When these activists entered in to legislative bodies, they worked actively to realize these aims. By 1932, the nominated women legislators worked together to demand proportional reservation in governmental jobs, for better educational facilities and concessions, livelihood and better health care (Devika 2007). When the first elections based on universal adult franchise was held in 1944 in Travancore, the prominent political parties did not support the women candidates whole heartedly (Amma 1944). During the 1930s, when the nationalist and the communist movements were in their peak time, women were often asked to abandon their campaign for women’s interests and carry the virtues of the domestic and social into community movements and national movement. During this time, Gandhian ideals became the pioneering force towards the path of independence. Nationalist politics therefore inserted women equally in to constructive work and non-violent protest action. In Malabar where the national movement was stronger, women were active participants through Khadi and
spinning and also in Civil Disobedience. Many educated women joined these movements (Menon 1972) In Travancore Akkamma Cherian and Annie Mascrene played a major role in anti-Dewan struggle. But association of women in the non-political social work was not so strong (Cherian 1977).

In the post - independent period, many non-left women politicians, who demanded for more power kept a distance from domestic work.

In the autobiography of Annie Thayyil, she claims to have left behind the trappings of domesticity to a significant degree. Women affiliated with the Indian National Congress, considered themselves as carriers of this domestic identity. Shortly, in the post independent scenario, the tide had turned almost completely against women’s activities. The Gandhian argument could not help women in their transformation from activists to politicians, while activism was associated with pure service and sacrifice (Devika 2007).

In late 1940s and in the early 1950s there were major differences of opinion between women leaders and the INC's leadership against INC’s neglect of women (Jeffrey 2008)

In Kerala, the next chance for women to work with Congress and enter the public sphere emerged in the context of the ‘Liberation struggle i.e. anti-communist agitation of the late 1950s. This struggle was mainly led by the INC and the Catholic Church. Large number of women participated in the movement. Women leaders of this
movement formed an organisation called the “Akhila Kerala Vanitasangham’.

They declared their determination to stay in public and discussed their strategies in the forthcoming elections in Sept. 1959 (Nazrani Deepika 1959). But practically in the state elections of 1960, the INC fielded just seven candidates out of a total 80 candidates, out of whom five won. Sixty three INC candidates won in this election. In Kerala, the women in politics were increasingly identified as ‘street women’ (Devika2011).

In the communist movement in Kerala, there were a bunch of women leaders with extraordinary leadership abilities such as K.R. Gouri Amma, Koothattukulam Mary and Susheela Gopalan. These leaders obviously were not under the shadow of their husbands, who were prominent politicians, but were dedicated political activists engaged in radical mass mobilization (Devika2007).

From 1930, onwards working class women were organized by the communist trade unions under the political ideology of Marxism. These women had a visible presence in trade union struggles and struggles of the agricultural labourers. These women provided food, shelter and protection to communist leaders in hiding; they facilitated secret communications and so on (Lindberg 2001). But these facts were not properly conveyed even by the left news paper reports of strikes from 1960s to 1980s. It is interesting to say that the women workers were in a disempowered status; even they were in a majority
in Kuttanad region. Women contributed sixty percent of the CPI(M) union among the agricultural workers and not less than forty percent of the other unions in the region; they were completely absent in the leadership (Oommen 1985).

In short, by the end of 1960s, there were a few elite women who entered the upper strata of politics and power. But their working class and lower-middle-class counterparts remained outside power. It is to be noted that the articulation of women’s issues even among the working class was in strictly gendered terms. (Lindberg 2001)

1980s was a period, which saw strong challenge to left hegemony from oppositional civil society in Kerala. During this period women moved from the dominant left parties trade unions and mass organizations to more flexible platforms. There was an ideological shift from ‘social work’ to ‘Development activism’.

‘Social work’ carried the stigma of association with the ‘society lady’- the stereotyped upper class woman for whom charity work was a mere excuse for her philandering. ‘Development activism had no such stigma. It was not exclusive to women. This idea and activities were pioneered by Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). But with the KSSP there was a consensus that ‘the struggle for women’s liberation had to be along with women, as a part of the whole struggle. Further it was recognized that gender issues need to be raised in every area of activity and not alone as entirely a responsibility of women (Erwar 2003). This idea very much
influenced the People Planning Campaign (PPC), which heralded political de centralization in the mid-90s.

Another development that happened in the 80s was the politicization of women’s interests through the feminist groups. This was through the independent fish workers movement and through organization like Self Employed Women’s Association Kerala (SEWA Kerala). The activism of these subaltern women and their political participation was entirely different from that of the new elite women. These women raised both strategic and practical gender needs ((Dietrich and Nayak – 2002).

In mid 1990s a number of feminists began to work closely with the state as gender experts and trainers, during this time the feminist movement, entered in to full-scale conflict with dominant political parties over well-publicized cases of rape, traffic in women and sexual harassment, in which a number of politicians appeared to be involved.

The 73rd and the 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution provided 33 per cent of reservation to the women in the Local Self Government. In the mid of 1990s, a large number of women entered the institutions of local governance and played an active role in improving welfare distribution. But even after the completion of three terms, even the widely accepted women presidents of the local bodies have failed to reach the upper levels of the political field.
Therefore, in contemporary Kerala, there is a clear demarcation of the political field as the male arena, where the power to make decision rests, and the minor development work and the welfare distribution etc are the major activities of the female folk (Devika2011). In October 2010, fifty percent of the seats were reserved to women in Kerala in the local governments. But it has not yet yielded positive gains for women in the political field. The local bodies have not much influence in reducing the social and economic inequalities. In such a context, women’s presence in the local bodies remained separate from the intensification of struggles by the poor, Adivasis and Dalits in the post-millennium Kerala (CDS-2008).

3.18 Conclusion

Gender mainstreaming is a new development in feminist theory and practice. It is also a tool, policy and feminist strategy that draws on and can inform feminist theory. Gender mainstreaming is essentially contested since it is constituted in the tension between the ‘mainstream’ and ‘gender equality’. There are many different forms of gender mainstreaming. The project of gender mainstreaming is itself partially constitutive of the terrain of struggle around the state as well as operating within this terrain.
Endnotes

1. This term is sometimes mistakenly conflated with sex or used to refer only to women. Gender relations, is the socially constructed form of relations between women and men have been questioned in terms of the way development policies change the balance of power between women and men. Gender roles, is the type of employment socially assigned to women and men, are not globally consistent and indeed become more flexible with the changes brought about by economic development (Momson 2004).

2. The term ‘adjustment’ refers to a range of macro-economic and structural measures that were promoted in the first instance by the Bretton Woods institutions - the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - to restore internal balances and increase the role of market force in the economy. Adjustment policies therefore denote the various mechanisms designed to reduce imbalances in Third World economies, both on external accounts and in domestic resource use. Adjustment frequently involved cutbacks in government expenditure. Consequently, real government expenditure per capita fell in over half the countries of the developing world in the period 1980-1984 (For more details see, Cornia et al. 1987).

3. First Gender in Development Division created in 1987. In 1992 Gender in Development Division converted into the Programme in Development Programme in the Bureau for Development Policy to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in UNDP, provide guidance on gender policy, and advance gender as a cross-cutting theme. In 1998 the Gender Balance in Management Policy Phase 2 (1998-2001) was formulated. In 2000 Gender becomes a strategic goal in UNDP’s Strategic Results Framework (SRF). A Gender Balance in Management Policy (2003-2006) was formulated. In 2004 Gender equality becomes a driver of development effectiveness as well as a service line in the strategic goal of achieving the
MDGs and reducing human poverty (UNDP Policy documents).

4 The different types of feminisms are liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, third world feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, Dalit feminism, environmental feminism etc. All these movements began to question the marginalization of women.

5 Practical gender needs are the needs, women identify in their socially accepted roles in society, which do not challenge the existing gender relations and the strategic gender needs are the needs they identify because of their subordinate position in the society. SGNS are related to gendered division of labour, power and control over resources, legal rights, domestic violence equal wages and women’s control over their bodies (Moser, 1999).

6 Empowerment of women means a personal strengthening and enhancement of life chances, equality of opportunity. It is a starting point and a continuing process for realizing the ideals of human liberation and freedom for all. Women empowerment cannot be separated from empowerment of nature, empowerment of all marginalized people, and countries. Empowerment of women also means avoidance of crime and atrocities against women and improvement in education, health etc.

7 The Plan contained nearly a one page discussion on the activities of central social welfare Board and its achievements. In the field of education, the need for promoting girls education through educating parents, making education more relevant to girl’s needs and the need to employ women teachers was mentioned. In the chapter on health, one paragraph discussed maternal and child health.

8 An increased allocation for the Central Social Welfare Board, which was the main instrument of state’s activity. Increased assistance to Voluntary organizations’ working in this field, was recommended. The adoption of the oral pill, relatively new method of family planning at that time was
recommended. Third plan noticed that the gap between boys going to school and girls was very big. In 1960-61, 80.5% of the boys were in school while only 40.4% of girls were attending elementary schools. The plan advocated the adoption of several recommendations made by the Council for Women’s education for accelerating girl’s elementary education and gave special emphasis on recruitment, training and housing of women teachers.

The sixth Five Year Plan reviewed the status and situation of women in general and came in to the conclusion that in spite of legal and constitutional guarantees, women had lagged behind men in almost all sectors. It used the adverse and declining sex ratio for women and their lower life expectancy compared to men. This indicates their low social status. The Sixth plan stressed that the main strategy for women’s development was three fold – education, employment and health. For the first time it clearly spelt out that economic independence would accelerate improvement in the status of women and suggested the setting up of cells at the district level to provide self-employment for women. The plan urged the Govt. to review the adequacy of the implementing machinery of various special legislations passed for the protection of women’s rights. It also suggested the need for increasing enrolment of girls at the elementary level, promotion of functional literacy and encouraging the promotion of education for women in backward areas. In the area of labour welfare, the plan again talked of providing women workers basic amenities at the workplace, better living conditions maternity benefits, education and crèche facilities and for the first time talked of training women in alternative employment.

The plan document stated that women had not benefited under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) to the extent that they should have. It noticed that only 7% beneficiaries were women. This was even after the large-scale migration of men from villages to cities for want
of employment. The plan further commented on the implementation of the Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) programme initiated on a pilot basis in fifty districts of the country in 1982, and stated that it should be expended. It also commented on the setting up of Krishi Vigyan Kendras and technology demonstration centres and stressed the need for involving more women in them.

11 The eighth FYP was built on the solid foundation already laid during the implementation of Sixth and Seventh plans. The strategy for women’s employment was to enable them to function as equal partners and participants in development, and not merely as beneficiaries. There was a circular to allocate resources in a manner that benefited women. The need for changing social attitudes towards women through awareness building and women’s groups was stressed. The plan emphasized for providing proper share of nutrition and health programme for women. In the sphere of education, not only the universal enrolment of girls but universal retention was stressed. Hiring of female teachers and technical education for girl was stressed.

12 In the field of development, the plan stressed for the first time in the plan history to reserve seats for women in Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies. The plan proposed to ensure 30% representation of women in the public sector and provides larger entry for women in the civil services. In the area of education, it initiated plans for free education of girls up to the college level and greater vocational training for them. The plan proposed to set up a Development Bank for Woman Entrepreneurs for assisting them in the small and tiny sector.